

UNIT VERSE

Loving the LORD your God,
obeying his voice, and
holding fast to him, for he is
your life and length of days,
that you may dwell in the
land that the LORD swore
to your fathers, to
Abraham, to Isaac, and to
Jacob, to give them.
Deuteronomy 30:20

JOSHUA AND CALEB**LEADER BIBLE STUDY****CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND PREPARATION**

(For age-appropriate language, use the Bible story on the following pages.)

When asked the purpose of the Christian life, theologian R.C. Sproul responded with one Latin phrase, *coram Deo*. The words literally mean "before the face of God." Sproul explained that *coram Deo* means living all of life "in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God." The believer, aware of the nearness of God, lives a life of obedience and worship.

Moses understood the nearness of God. Exodus 33-34 reveals a mountaintop conversation between Moses and God. In desperation and weariness over the Israelites' rebellion, Moses begs to see God's glory. God expresses His pleasure at Moses' continued obedience and agrees to reveal Himself. Hidden in the safety of the rock, Moses sees a limited view of God's glory as he hears God's voice proclaim compassion, love, forgiveness, and judgment. Moses immediately falls to the ground in worship.

Facing yet another crisis moment, Moses draws on this experience in Numbers 14. Again Moses begs God to act. He pleads for God's mercy over the rebellious Israelites. He reminds God of the promises He made on the mountain. The Lord holds His judgment and honors the faithfulness of Joshua and Caleb.

Moses, as well as Joshua and Caleb, lived *coram Deo*. They recognized God's hand in Israel's journey. They chose to submit to God's authority and obeyed, even in the face of adversity. They glorified God through their obedience.

Take a moment today and read Exodus 33-34. Grab a notebook. Write *coram Deo* at the top of the page. Then create three columns labeled Presence of God, Authority of God, and Glory of God. In the first column, make a list of ways you are practicing the presence of God in your life. Are you spending time in prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with other believers? Next, think about how you're submitting to God's authority. How are you obeying God? What areas do you need to submit to the lordship of Christ? Write those responses in column two.

LIFE POINT

We can obey God even when others disobey.

LEVEL OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Numbers 13-14

WEEKLY VERSE

So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.
Romans 14:12

As you pray this week, write words that describe God's glory in column three. Pray those words back to God in adoration and praise. Commit to live coram Deo, before the face of the God who loves you.



TEACH THE SCRIPTURE

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Bring fruits from home, wash it and cut it into bite sized pieces. Check your roster for allergies!

Divide preteens into partners.

One partner standing is blindfolded. To each blindfolded player, provide a bite sized piece of fruit. After sampling it, the blindfolded player whispers to their partner what they think the fruit is, and that partner writes it down.

Place an example on a table of what fruit it was. Allow Player 1 to remove the blindfold and see.

Switch partners and play again with a different fruit.

Say: "In today's Bible story Moses challenged Israelite spies to see the land God wanted to give them and bring back fruit to show how great it was. In our story, we'll learn that we can obey God even when others disobey.

Inform students that this month they will examine four Bible stories about people who chose to obey God.

Note that although obedience to God is not always easy, these people chose to trust God through difficult circumstances.

Say: "The book of Numbers is about the Israelites after their exodus from slavery in Egypt. God made a promise with His people, and despite their disobedience, He provided a way for them to live near His holy presence in the tabernacle."

Invite a volunteer to share what she already knows about Joshua and Caleb.

Get Bibles, and instruct kids to turn to Numbers 13:3-16. Inform kids that these verses contain the names of the people Moses sent as spies into Canaan.

Invite preteens to count aloud the number of spies. (12) Inform kids that Moses chose one person from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

GETTING TO THE POINT

Form six groups of preteens. Distribute a poster board and colored chalk to each group.

Challenge each group to read a Scripture and illustrate that portion of the story on the poster.

Options include:

Numbers 13:17-25;

Numbers 13:26-32;

Numbers 14:1-4;

Numbers 14:6-10;

Numbers 14:11-19;

Invite groups to use their poster boards to retell their part of the story.

Lead preteens to analyze the story by asking: "What did it take for Caleb and Joshua to express faith in God while the other 10 spies were fearful?"

Answers will vary, but lead preteens to realize that they can obey God even when others around them choose to disobey Him.

LOOK IN THE BOOK

Get Bibles, and instruct kids to turn to Numbers 13:3-16. Inform kids that these verses contain the names of the people Moses sent as spies into Canaan.

Invite preteens to count aloud the number of spies. (12) Inform kids that Moses chose one person from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Urge kids to keep their Bibles open as you tell a summary of the story: "Moses sent 12 spies to Canaan where they stayed for 40 days. When they returned, all the spies agreed that Canaan was a rich land. But 10 of the spies discouraged the Israelites, saying there were giants living in the land, and the Israelites should not try to conquer it. Joshua and Caleb disagreed and urged the Israelites to conquer the land because God would be with them. The Israelites complained saying they wished they had not left Egypt. God was displeased with their lack of faith and told them that anyone 20 years or older, except Joshua and Caleb, would die in the wilderness and not enter the promised land.

God Promise to spare Joshua and Caleb because of their faith in Him."

JOSHUA AND CALEB

Moses sent 12 spies to Canaan where they stayed for 40 days. When they returned, all the spies agreed that Canaan was a rich land. But 10 of the spies discouraged the Israelites, saying there were giants living in the land, and the Israelites should not try to conquer it. Joshua and Caleb disagreed and urged the Israelites to conquer the land because God would be with them.

The Israelites complained saying they wished they had not left Egypt. God was displeased with their lack of faith and told them that anyone 20 years or older, except Joshua and Caleb, would die in the wilderness and not enter the promised land. God promised to spare Joshua and Caleb because of their faith in Him.

— BASED ON NUMBERS 13-14

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What did Moses tell the scouts to find out from the land of Canaan? (*what the land, people, and cities were like*)
2. What did the spies report about the land? (*It was a rich land, but the people were large and frightening.*)
3. What did Caleb and Joshua tell the people? (*If God is pleased with them, He would bring them into the land and be with them. Don't be afraid.*)
4. What consequences did God announce to Moses? (*The disobedient people would live in the wilderness for 40 years. The adults would not enter the land.*)
5. What did the people try to do when they decided they were wrong? (*They tried to enter Canaan without God's permission.*)

6. What does Deuteronomy 30:20 say we should do? (*love God, obey Him, and be faithful to Him*)



BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. GRAPES OF CANAAN

Supplies: Purple balloons or beach balls; Pool noodles; Cones

Blow up balloons and pretend they are huge grapes from the promised land. Set up cones on the floor and provide students with pool noodles to try and hit the balloons around the cones. Explain how all the spies saw how good the land was, but only two obeyed and trusted that God was going to give the land to them.

2. GIANT FOOTPRINTS

Supplies: Markers; Construction paper; Scissors

Stand on paper and have a partner trace your foot. Cut out your footprint.

Inside each footprint write: I can obey God even when others disobey

As you walk by, remind kids that some of the spies were scared because of the height of the people living in the land, but two spies chose to obey and trust God.

3. MAP

Instruct students to draw a map, either pretending that you're drawing a path of how the spies went into the land, or a map of how you would sneak around your church, school, or home.

4. VERSE WRIST BAND

Supplies: Toilet paper roll; Elastic; Stapler; Markers or decorating supplies

Cut open a toilet paper roll longways.

Write the Life Point or Bible verse on the inside of the cardboard tube.

Staple one end of the elastic to each side of the tube to make a wristband. Make sure the sharp ends of the staples stay on the outside.

Decorate it with words, drawings, or symbols that remind you to trust and obey God.

Wear your wristband as a reminder to choose faith and obedience every day.

5. FOLLOW THE LEADER

Instruct everyone to stand in a circle. One volunteer stands in the middle of the circle and closes their eyes. The group secretly chooses one person to be the leader.

The leader begins making simple movements (clapping, stomping, scratching their head, etc.), and everyone else copies as quickly as possible without making it obvious who started the movement.

The person in the middle gets 3 guesses to identify the leader.

After playing a few rounds, ask:

Was it easy to follow the leader?

Did you have to think about every movement, or did you just copy everyone else?

How did you know what to do?

Then explain:

In our game, everyone followed one person. In Numbers 13-14, the Israelites also followed leaders. The problem was that they followed the ten spies instead of Joshua and Caleb, who were trusting God. We should ask ourselves, "Am I following the crowd, or am I following God?"

Life Point: We can obey God even when others choose not to.