Preschool–Grade 6

# Caleb Asks for the Mountain

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

**Main point:** Follow the LORD wholly, all the way, even when others are afraid, because God keeps every promise He makes.
**Bible passage:** Joshua 14:6–15, with Numbers 13–14 for the background. Read them before class.
**Memory verse:** "Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God." *Joshua 14:8 (KJV)*
**You need:** a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), masking tape, a marker, a whiteboard or large paper, paper and a pencil for each child, and one take-home sheet for each child.
**Before class:** write the memory verse on the board. Put a long line of masking tape on the floor. Write "40" at one end and "85" at the other end.

## 1. Opening game: The Waiting Line (5–10 minutes)

Ask kids to name something they had to wait for: a birthday, a trip, a new baby in the family. Ask: *What is the longest you ever waited?* Then have everyone stand on the "40" end of the tape line. Say: "Today's hero was forty years old when God made him a promise." Walk slowly together to the "85" end while you count by fives: 45, 50, 55... 85. Say: "He waited forty-five years, and he never stopped following God. His name was Caleb."

## 2. Bible story: Caleb Wholly Followed the LORD (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Joshua 14. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

**Forty-five years before.** Israel was camped at Kadesh-barnea in the wilderness (Joshua 14:7). God told Moses to send one man from every tribe, twelve men, to search the land of Canaan, the land God was giving them (Numbers 13:2–16). Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, was one of them (13:6). Moses said, "go up into the mountain" (13:17). They came to Hebron (13:22). They cut down one cluster of grapes so big that two men carried it on a staff (13:23). The land "floweth with milk and honey," which means it was rich and good (13:27). But the people there were strong, and the Anakims, also called giants, lived there (13:28, 13:33).

**Two kinds of report. Look up Numbers 13:30.** Caleb said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." But the other men said, "We be not able" (13:31), and they said they felt like **grasshoppers** next to the giants (13:33). The people cried all night and wanted to go back to Egypt (14:1–4). Joshua and Caleb said, "the LORD is with us: fear them not" (14:9). God said that Caleb "had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully" (14:24). Only Caleb and Joshua of the grown-ups would go into the land (14:30, 14:38). The people would wander in the wilderness forty years (14:33).


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**Caleb comes to Joshua.** Forty-five years later, Israel was in the land, and the men of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal (Joshua 14:6). **Look up Joshua 14:7.** Caleb was forty when Moses sent him, and he brought back word "as it was in mine heart." That means he told the truth he believed. **Look up Joshua 14:8.** The other men made the people's hearts **melt**, or turn to fear, but Caleb **wholly** followed the LORD. Moses **sware**, which means made a solemn promise: the land Caleb's feet had walked on would be his and his children's for ever (14:9).

**Old and strong. Look up Joshua 14:10.** God kept Caleb alive forty-five years. Now he was **fourscore and five**. A **score** is twenty, so fourscore is eighty, and Caleb was 85! **Look up Joshua 14:11.** He was as strong as on the day Moses sent him.

**Give me this mountain. Look up Joshua 14:12.** Caleb asked for the very mountain where the Anakims lived, with cities that were great and **fenced**, which means walled. He said, "if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said." Joshua blessed him and gave him Hebron for an **inheritance**, land to keep in his family (14:13). **Look up Joshua 14:14.** It was "because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel." Hebron used to be called Kirjath-arba, after Arba, a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war (14:15). Later, Caleb drove the three sons of Anak out of Hebron, just as he said (15:14).

## 3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

**Thinking questions** (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Caleb and the other men saw the same land and the same giants. Why do you think Caleb's report was so different?
2. What does it look like to follow God "wholly," all the way, and not just halfway?
3. Caleb waited forty-five years for God's promise. What helps you keep trusting God while you wait?
4. At 85, Caleb asked for the hardest place, not the easiest. Why do you think he did that?
5. Who is someone older in your church who has followed God for a long time? What could you learn from them?

**Recall questions**

1. How old was Caleb when Moses sent him? *(Forty, Joshua 14:7)*
2. What did God say Caleb had? *(Another spirit; he followed God fully, Numbers 14:24)*
3. What city did Joshua give Caleb? *(Hebron, Joshua 14:13)*

## 4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **nevertheless** means but, **brethren** means brothers (here, the other men who went), **made the heart of the people melt** means they made the people afraid, and **wholly** means all the way. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.


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## 5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Caleb followed God all the way, and God kept every promise to him. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
*Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.*
**This week:** when friends are afraid to do right or say "we can't," be like Caleb: say what is true and follow God all the way.

## 6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Numbers 13:6: Which tribe was Caleb from? *(The tribe of Judah)*
2. Numbers 13:23: What did two men carry on a staff? *(One cluster of grapes)*
3. Numbers 13:33: What did the other men say they looked like next to the giants? *(Grasshoppers)*
4. Numbers 14:9: What did Joshua and Caleb tell the people? *(The LORD is with us: fear them not)*
5. Joshua 14:6: Where did Caleb come to Joshua? *(Gilgal)*
6. Joshua 14:10: How many years did God keep Caleb alive? *(Forty and five, 45)*
7. Joshua 14:13: What did Joshua do before he gave Caleb Hebron? *(He blessed him)*
8. Joshua 14:15: What was Hebron's name before? *(Kirjath-arba)*

## 7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You always keep Your promises. Help us follow You wholly, all the way, even when other people are afraid, and help us keep trusting You while we wait. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

**If a child asks about driving out the Anakims:** answer simply. God had promised the land to Israel (Numbers 13:2), and Caleb trusted God to help him take it (Joshua 14:12). The Bible says Caleb drove the three sons of Anak out of Hebron (Joshua 15:14); it doesn't give more detail, and we don't need to add any.


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