Preschool–Grade 6

Caleb Asks for the Mountain

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Follow the LORD wholly, even when the crowd won't, and keep following Him for a lifetime, because God keeps His word.
Bible passage: Joshua 14:6–15, with Numbers 13:17–14:38 for the background. Students read Numbers 13:25–33 and Joshua 14:6–15 out loud themselves.
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)* and "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it." *Numbers 14:24 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Numbers 13–14 and Joshua 14. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Crowd or Conviction? (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "go with the crowd" and the other side "stand alone." Read each situation; students walk to the side they think most people their age would choose. 1) All your friends say it's fine to keep the extra change a cashier gave by mistake. 2) Everyone in your group says a hard assignment is impossible, so they quit. 3) The whole team blames one player for losing. 4) Your friends say church is boring and you should skip youth night. Ask: *Why is it so hard to be the one who disagrees?* Say: "Caleb was one of only two men out of twelve who stood alone, and he had to keep standing for forty-five years."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Numbers 13:25–33. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **floweth with milk and honey** (13:27): a rich, good land
- **stilled the people** (13:30): calmed them down; **possess it**: take it and own it
- **evil report** (13:32): a bad, fearful report; **men of a great stature**: very tall men
- **giants, the sons of Anak** (13:33): the Anakims, very big people

Tell the middle part in your own words: The people wept all night and wanted to choose a captain and go back to Egypt (14:1–4). Joshua and Caleb **rent their clothes**, tearing them in grief, and said, "the LORD is with us: fear them not" (14:6–9). God said only Caleb and Joshua of that generation would enter the land (14:24, 14:30), and the people would wander forty years (14:33). Of the twelve men, only Joshua and Caleb "lived still" (14:38).

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Read out loud: Joshua 14:6–15. Old words in this passage:

- **the Kenezite** (14:6): the name of Caleb's family line
- **espy out** (14:7): spy out; **as it was in mine heart**: what he truly believed
- **made the heart of the people melt** (14:8): made them lose courage; **wholly**: completely, all the way
- **sware** (14:9): made a solemn promise; **inheritance**: land kept in the family for ever
- **fourscore and five** (14:10): a score is twenty, so 85
- **both to go out, and to come in** (14:11): able to lead and to do the work
- **fenced** (14:12): walled; **if so be the LORD will be with me**: Caleb's confidence was in God, not in himself
- **Kirjath-arba** (14:15): Hebron's old name, after Arba, a great man among the Anakims

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. All twelve men saw the same land. The others saw giants and grasshoppers; Caleb saw God's promise (Numbers 13:30–33). What made the difference?
2. God said Caleb "had another spirit with him" (Numbers 14:24). What do you think that means? What would it look like in your life?
3. Caleb had to wander forty years because of other people's unbelief, even though he had believed (Numbers 14:33). How do you think he kept his faith that long?
4. At 85, Caleb asked for the hardest mountain, the one with the walled cities and the Anakims (Joshua 14:12). What "mountain" might God be asking you to face instead of avoid?
5. Caleb said "if so be the LORD will be with me" (14:12). Is that doubt, or humble faith? Why?
6. Joshua 14:14 gives one reason Caleb received Hebron. Why do you think God's Word repeats "wholly followed" three times in this chapter (14:8, 14:9, 14:14)?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Numbers 14:24: **another spirit** means a different heart and attitude from the others. **Followed me fully** means the same as wholly followed: all the way. **His seed shall possess it** means his children and grandchildren would own the land.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Joshua 14:8 this week; keep working on Numbers 14:24 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Caleb's faith was in what God said, not in what he could see. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where in my life is the crowd saying "we be not able," when God's Word says something else?
2. What would following God "wholly," all the way, look like for me this week?
3. Write a short prayer asking God for "another spirit" like Caleb's: courage now, and faithfulness that lasts a lifetime.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: find one older believer in your church and ask them how they have kept following God for so many years.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You always keep Your word. Give us another spirit, like Caleb's: courage to stand when others are afraid, and faith that keeps following You all our lives. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks about driving out the Anakims: answer honestly and 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), and it doesn't give more detail, so we don't add any.

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