



Spying on the Promised Land

Goal: To trust in God's faithfulness.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Numbers 13:1-14:9

By God's direction, Moses selected twelve elders to "spy out the land" (13:2, 16-17, 21, 25). *Spy* here means to be very deliberate in sizing up a situation or an opponent. Among the spies were Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, and Hoshea (meaning in Hebrew "salvation"), son of Nun, from the tribe of Ephraim. Moses changed his name to Joshua (Yehoshu'a; in Hebrew "Yah is salvation" or "Yahweh saves"). The twelve spies wanted to reach the promised land, but they could not just walk in and displace a settled people. Their mission would be critical for the decisions that had to be made.

The spies found the land to be rich in resources (13:27). But ten of the spies were fearful. "We are not able to go up against this people for they are stronger than we" (v. 31). Caleb spoke out forcefully in favor of an immediate advance into the land (v. 30). He had not been convinced that the land could not be taken. He was confident that the Israelites could prevail and overcome any resistance (v. 30). The ten, however, claimed that the people were like giants, and they would be like grasshoppers to these giants! Joshua joined Caleb in urging Moses and the people to move ahead with the plan to enter Canaan (14:6-8). Joshua's confidence was in God's faithfulness to be with them wherever they went.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Uncertainty can be a vicious enemy. There is no way to know fully what the future may bring. To plant the fear of uncertainty is one of the most effective ways to stop a movement or derail a plan. Many times, people would rather live with bad circumstances than risk moving and finding the future or change to be worse than the present. To help children learn to trust God in the midst of uncertainty, name ways they already trust God: Families have moved from one town to another, not knowing what lie ahead. That's trusting God. Children have given their time to help somebody. That's trusting God.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

God can speak to us and tell us to do something. We may think, "That's a good idea." But it doesn't take long to rationalize the thought: "We can't do that because it doesn't make sense." "We can't do that because it doesn't fit our schedule." "I can't do that because I'm not _____ (*fill in the blank*) enough." How can you model faith, obedience, and trust to your children? Practice saying yes to God and invite the children to do the same.

*Gracious God, when things don't look the way I think they should,
help me trust in you and your way for my life. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 4, 14, 16

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: real or artificial
fruit or pictures of
various kinds of fruit,
such as **SCM 4a, 4b, 4c**

choice 2: small items
such as pencil, eraser,
crayon, cotton ball,
fork, spoon, small ball,
envelope, ring, small
stuffed toy, key, small
bar of soap

choice 3: toilet-paper
tubes

Exploring

choice 3: card-stock
copies of **Grace Notes**
(**GN**) 1 and **GN 2**, seven
small adhesive-backed
circles of hook-and-loop
fastener for each child,
small envelopes

choice 4: copies of **GN 3**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

Before the session, prepare small paper lunch bags with a different item in each one for “Guided Play” choice 2. Close the bags.

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 3 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play

Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time.

Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers. Explain that the children will hear a story about the spies Moses sent into Israel and the different reports of what they found there.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity:

1. **Exploring Fruit**—Set out a basket of real or artificial fruits. If you do not have any fruit, use pictures of various kinds of fruit (see **SCM 4a, 4b, 4c**). Invite the children to explore and describe the various fruits. What color are they? What shape are they? Are they sweet or sour? Big or little? Where do they grow (on trees, on plants, on vines)? Do you have to peel them to eat them? Do you like this kind of fruit?
2. **What Is It?**—Invite the children to explore what is in the bags using only their hands. When they have guessed what is in the bag, pour it out to see if they guessed correctly.
3. **Being a Spy**—Provide toilet-paper tubes and tape. Help the children fashion two tubes into pretend binoculars or one into a pretend spyglass. Invite the children to tiptoe around the room and look through their binoculars or spyglass to see what they can see.

T *The session plans for Growing in Grace & Gratitude follow a common flow. This helps in planning an effective schedule with transitions to help decrease the number of behavioral issues.*



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “To the Promised Land”—**SCM 14**. Invite the children to follow you as you wander around the room until you get to your story space.

Jump and Shout

MS L

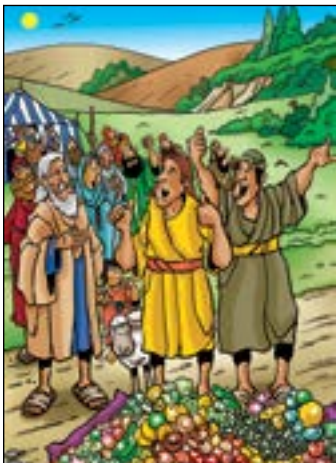
Say the following poem and do the motions indicated, inviting the children to repeat each phrase and action.

God made me to jump and shout. (*jump*) /
God made me to move about. (*walk around*) /
God made me to wiggle around. (*wiggle hips and turn in a circle*) /
And God made me to sit right down. (*sit cross-legged on the ground and fold hands in lap*) /

I Spy

VI B C

This is a variation of the “I Spy” game. Say, “I spy something big!” Invite the children to name or point to all the big items they can find. Play again with “tiny.” Play again, saying, “I spy something that reminds me of God.” Tell the children that they will hear a story where some people saw big things and felt very tiny, while other people saw God in all things.



Hearing the Story

C L T VI

Tell the children that, after Moses and the Hebrew people escaped being slaves in Egypt through the sea that God parted, they walked and walked a long way to get to the Promised Land. Explain that today’s story is about the time when they arrived, but before they entered the land, when Moses sent spies to see what it was like. This story tells about the different reports that the spies gave.

Open the Bible to Numbers 13 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Read **SCM 4**, omitting the directions in the parentheses. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Read the story again, inviting the children to follow your actions in italics in the parentheses.



EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. God's Faithfulness

L MS

Remind the children that God had been faithful to the Hebrew people, and Joshua and Caleb remembered that. Review the following excerpt from the story and invite the children to do the suggested activities to remember that God is faithful to God's people:

- ▼ "Joshua and Caleb remembered how God saved the people from slavery in Egypt." (*Act out leaving Egypt and walking through the parted sea.*)
- ▼ "They remembered that God promised them a homeland long ago." (*Point to head as if remembering.*)
- ▼ "God provided food and water in the desert." (*Pretend to gather food. Sit down and pretend to eat and drink.*)
- ▼ "God had given them rules to live by." (*Count to ten. Cheer together, "Love God! Love others!"*)
- ▼ "God had always taken care of the people." (*Hug yourself.*)
- ▼ "God was faithful." (*Make a "thumbs-up" and shout, "Thank you, God!"*)
- ▼ "Joshua and Caleb believed that God would always be faithful." (*Give "high fives" to one another.*)
- ▼ "Joshua and Caleb gave a thumbs-up: 'The Lord is with us. Let us be brave!'" (*Make a "thumbs-up" and shout, "Amen!"*)

2. Spies

VI C

The twelve spies went to see what they could learn. In this game, help children identify objects, words, shapes, and colors in your room. Remind the children that, when the spies went to the new land, they had to look around very carefully so they could tell Moses and the others what they saw. Tell the children that now they can be like spies. Give clues so they may guess.

If there is a clock in your room, you might start with it.

"Spies, look! I see . . .
something that is round.
It is (*describe color*).
It is hanging on the wall.
It has numbers on it.
It has two hands.

Continue with several objects, then let the children take turns spying and describing objects.



3. Trusting God



Before the session, cut card-stock copies of GN 2 apart so each child has a set of seven arrows.

Joshua and Caleb trusted God every day to lead the way and be with them. Have the children make a weekly calendar to help them remember that God is with them every day.

Hand out copies of GN 1 and sets of arrows cut from GN 2. Have them color the days and arrows as they wish. Help the children cut out each arrow.

Give the children seven adhesive-backed circles of hook-and-loop fastener. Have them peel off the backing from the loop side of the fastener circles (the soft side) and place one on the back of each arrow. Have the children peel off the backing of the hook side of the fastener circles (the scratchy side) and place one in the center of each calendar space.

Give the children small envelopes, and have them lick and stick the flap of the envelope to the back of the calendar so it hangs below the paper. The children can place their arrows in the envelope for safe keeping.

Have the children take out an arrow. The children may choose any arrow they'd like. Ask them which day of the week today is and have them place their arrow on that day. Tell them they can take an arrow out each day and place it on the day to remember that they are trusting God every day to lead the way.

FM *To help children build fine motor skills, encourage enjoyment in activity participation instead of focusing on a "successful" outcome, such as whether or not cutting is accurate. Enjoy the process and cheer the effort.*

Use "wonder" questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

4. Coloring Page



Hand out copies of GN 3 and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- I wonder, "What other things did the spies bring from the new land?"
- I wonder, "What is Caleb pointing to?"
- I wonder, "What did Moses think about what the spies told him?"



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children to snack time, singing “Hallelujah! Praise Ye the Lord!”—**SCM 16**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Have each child put away one toy or object. Invite everyone to sit around a table or on the floor.

Invite the children to repeat each line of the prayer after you:

Food to eat, /
food to share. /
We thank you, God, /
for all your care. /
Amen. /

Enjoy the snack.

Go around the circle, asking each child to name one thing she or he is thankful for. End with a simple prayer, such as:

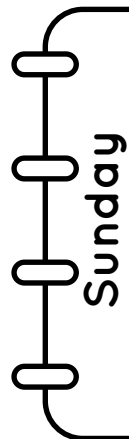
Thank you, God, for always being with us and taking care of us. May we be like Joshua and Caleb and trust you with a big “thumbs-up”! Amen.

As the children feel comfortable, invite them to share thumbs-up, hugs, high fives, or handshakes with one another. Send each child with a blessing, such as: “(Name), may the grace of God go with you.”

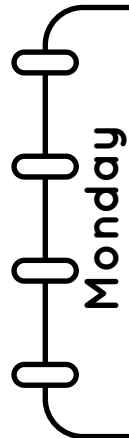


Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

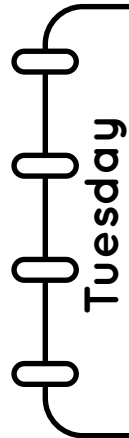
Trust God Every Day to Lead the Way



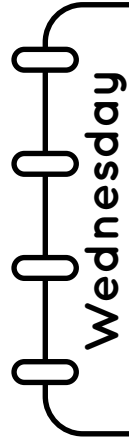
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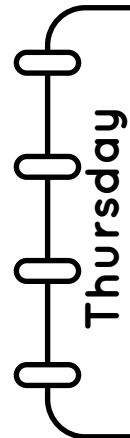
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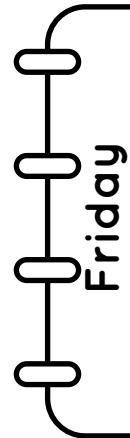
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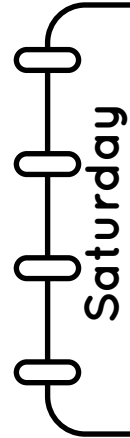
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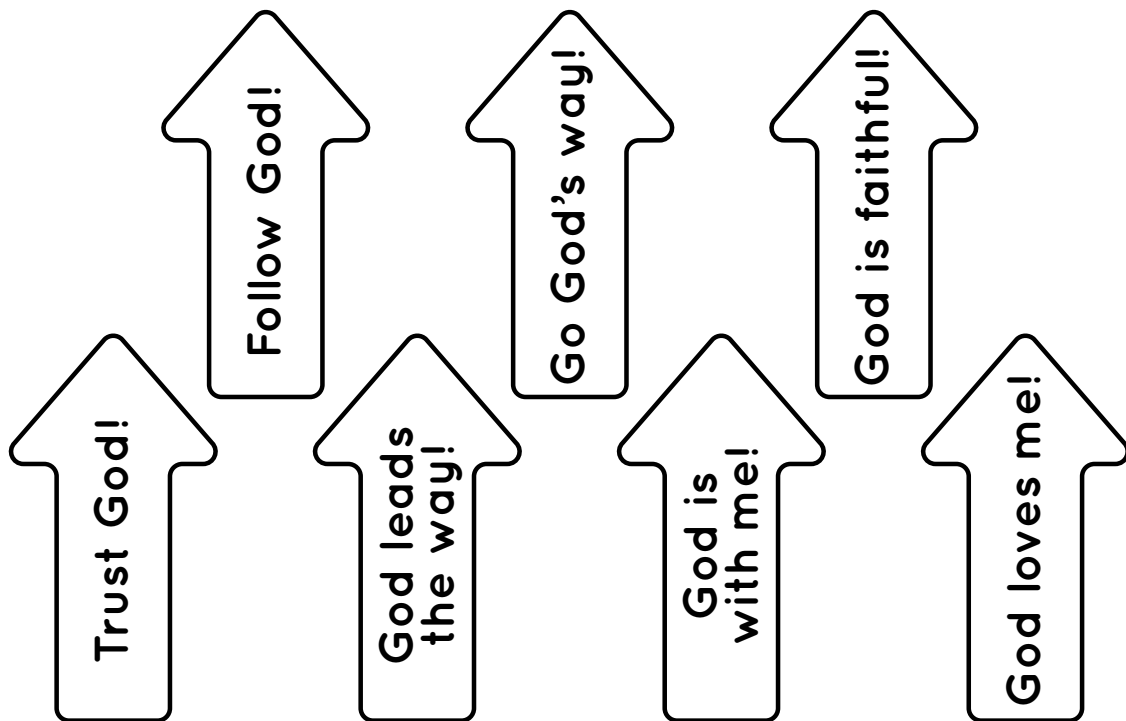
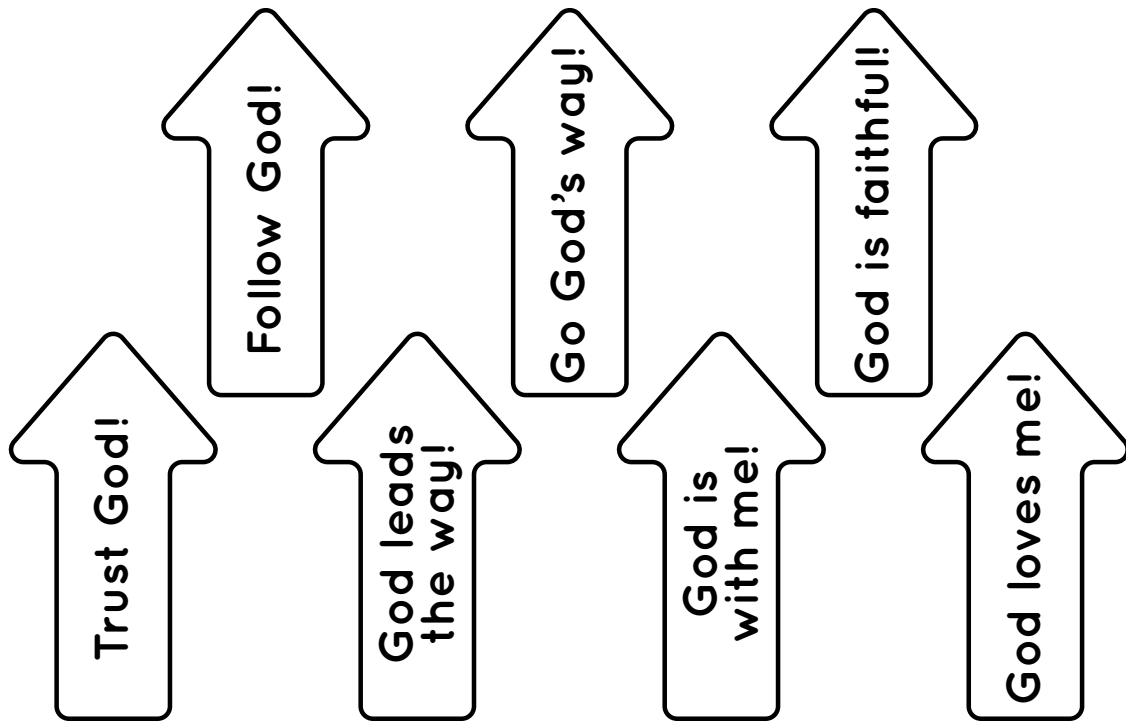
Thursday



Friday



Saturday



Spying on the Promised Land



**Joshua and Caleb trust that God is faithful
and will be with them in the new land.**

