THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

**CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE**: April 30, 2017

**SUBJECT: GOD’S CALLING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: God Called Joshua and Caleb**

**SCRIPTURE**: Numbers 13-14; Deuteronomy 1:22-35; Joshua 1:1-9

**AIM**: As God’s called ones we must believe God and His promises so that we may be strong and courageous to carry out His plan.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM**: Hebrews 11:6 (But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to* *Him,* for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.); Hebrews 3:12 (Beware, brothers, lest perhaps there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God.); Joshua 1:9b (…do not be afraid or dismayed. For Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.); 2 Corinthians 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by appearance)

**SONG SUGGESTIONS:** 25 (I Believe God); 9410 BSS (I Believe The Promises Of God); 20 (All thing Are Possible); 33 (When Your Fears Grow Mountain High); 22 (Faith Mighty Faith); 29 (Not By Might); 32 (Trust In The Lord); 4611 (My God Is So Great); 172 (Why Worry When You Can Pray); 3406 (I Can Do All Things); 62 (Ev'ry Promise in the Bible is Mine); 8324 BSS Moses (The Land We Saw Was Exceeding Good)

**CRAFT IDEAS**: 1) Glue a straw, twig or popsicle stick onto a piece of construction paper. Add a bunch of grapes (cut out purple circles, or use children's thumbprints). Children can draw two men (spies) holding the pole to carry the grapes. 2) Binoculars – adhere two toilet paper rolls together to make a pair of binoculars. Hole punch two holes and add a piece of string or yarn for the strap.

**BACKGROUND:** God promised to bring the children of Israel into the good land. In the good land, He wanted them to build a special house where He could dwell. He did marvelous things to bring them out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. It was His intention bring all of them into the good land. In today’s lesson we will see why instead of entering into the good land right away, they wandered in the wilderness for forty years.

**CONTENT:** For two years after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they lived in the desert under God’s care and provision. Finally the children of Israel came to the border of the good land. Jehovah told Moses to send one man from each tribe to search the land of Canaan (the good land). Moses sent twelve men, all heads of Israel, one from each tribe. One was Caleb of the tribe of Judah and one was Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim.

These twelve spies went out to see what the land was like and what the people were like, whether they were weak or strong, whether there were a lot of them or a few. They searched out the land for forty days and then returned to their camp. They brought a sample of the rich fruit of the land with them. It took two men to carry one bunch of grapes on a pole back to the camp. It was indeed a rich land flowing with milk and honey.

Ten of the spies gave an evil report and discouraged the hearts of the children of Israel. They told them that the land flowed with milk and honey, HOWEVER, the people of the land were strong, the cities were fortified with high walls and were very large, and there were many enemies dwelling in all the land. This was an evil report because it showed that they did not believe God’s promise to give them the land; rather, they feared that they would be killed by the inhabitants of the land.

But Caleb said, “Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (Num. 13:30). But the other ten spies continued with their evil report. “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.” They described the inhabitants’ great size and compared themselves as grasshoppers in their sight. They discouraged the people to such an extent that all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried and the people wept. Then all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and said that they would rather have died in the land of Egypt. They even decided to appoint a captain and return to Egypt.

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the congregation. And Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes, and spoke to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, saying, “The land through which we passed to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If Jehovah is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us; a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against Jehovah, nor should you fear the people of the land, for they are our bread. Their protection has been removed from them and Jehovah is with us; do not fear them” (Num. 14:6-9). But because the people believed the evil report of the ten spies, they were about to stone Joshua and Caleb to death!

Jehovah saved their lives but He would not tolerate the people’s evil, hardened heart of unbelief and provocation. He told Moses that He would strike the children of Israel with pestilence and dispossess them, and He would make Moses into a nation greater and mightier than they. But Moses reminded Jehovah how He brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. If He put them to death, the nations might say that Jehovah was not able to bring the people into the land, which He swore to give them and He has therefore slaughtered them in the wilderness. Moses prayed to Jehovah to pardon the iniquity of the people according to the greatness of His lovingkindness, just as He had forgiven them until now. So Jehovah forgave them. But none of them would enter into the good land; they would wander in the wilderness forty years until they died. Only the children under twenty years of age could enter in, along with Joshua and Caleb. And the ten spies, who had brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before Jehovah.

Forty long years of testing passed, and all those over twenty years of age died in the wilderness, never entering into the promised land. After Moses also died, the Lord called Joshua (Moses’ young attendant) and told him to rise up and lead all the children of Israel over the Jordan River into the land that the Lord would give them as their inheritance (Josh. 1:1, 2, 6).

Through Joshua’s leadership God’s people finally reached the goal He had intended for them over forty years earlier when they were delivered from the slavery of Egypt. “So Joshua took the whole land according to all that Jehovah had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land had rest from war” (Josh. 11:23).

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:** *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover for your group of children. Please do not feel obligated to cover all the suggested applications.*

* **Believing God’s word is pleasing to God.** We must have a heart of belief to believe God’s word. God was pleased with Joshua and Caleb because they wholly followed Him (Num. 32:12) and had a different spirit than those who provided an evil report (Num. 14:24). Instead, they had a believing and obedient spirit. They believed God’s promise to bring them into the good land. This strengthened them and gave them courage to obey even in the face of many enemies. They received God’s blessing and were the ones able to carry out His plan. We also need to believe God’s promises. This will strengthen us and make us courageous to obey His word despite our surroundings. Like Joshua and Caleb, we will receive God’s blessing and also be those able to carry out His plan.
* **Unbelief insults God to the uttermost and prevents God’s blessings.** We must guard against an evil heart of unbelief. God was very displeased and provoked to anger with the other ten spies because of their evil heart of unbelief. They did not believe God’s promise and they disobeyed. They were not strong and courageous, but weak and fearful in front of their enemies. Their unbelief caused so many others to join them in their rebellion and completely miss the blessing of the good land. We must not have an evil heart of unbelief like the ten spies and negatively influence others. We will cause ourselves and others to suffer great loss. We should have a heart of belief that fully trusts God’s Word!

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 5/22/94; 5/21/00; 5/14/06; 5/20/12