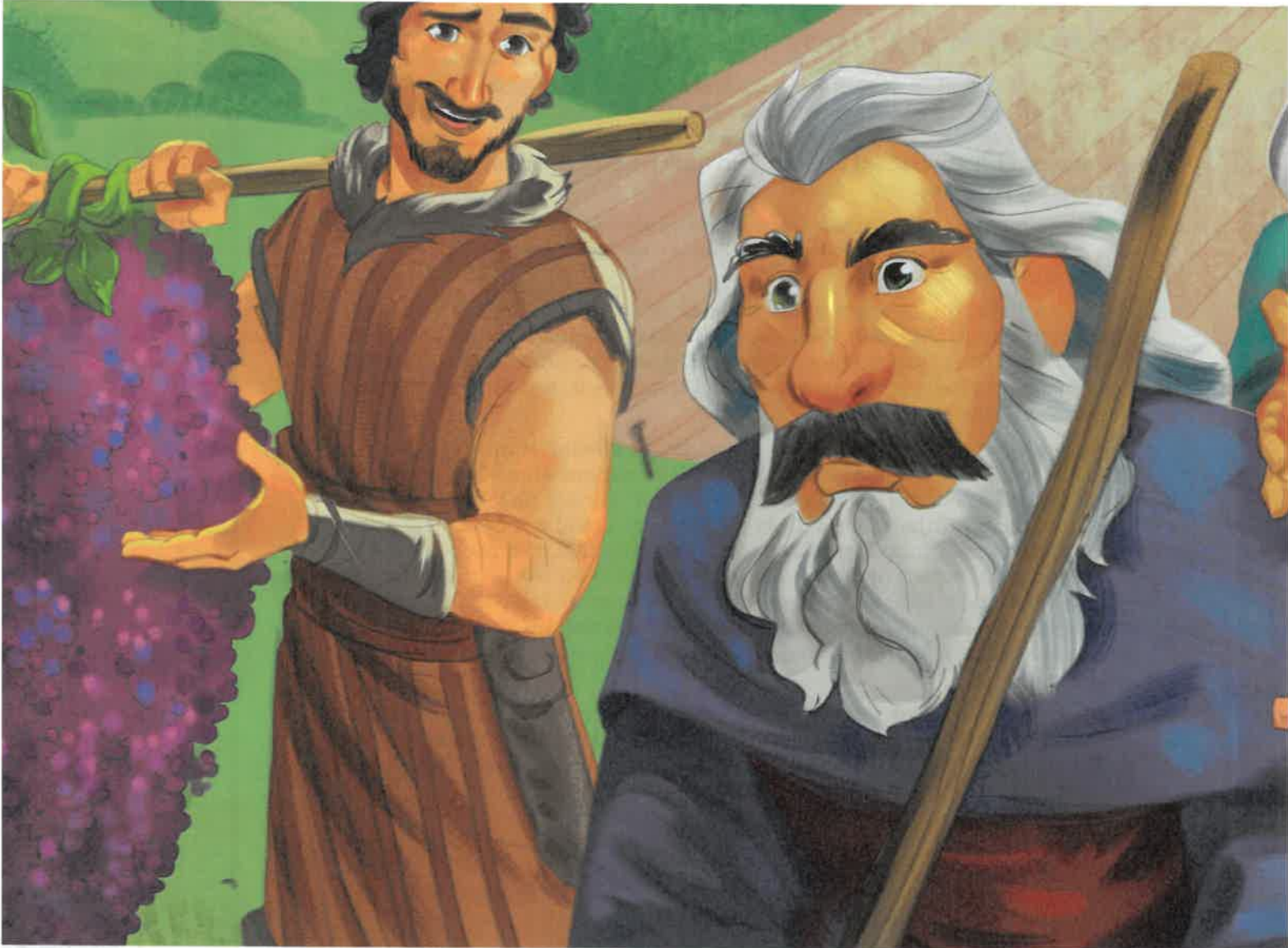


THE PEOPLE DOUBTED

NUMBERS 13-14



KEY PASSAGE: Romans 8:28

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Joshua and Caleb believed the words that God had spoken, and they were eventually allowed to enter the Promised Land. The people who did not believe would die in the wilderness. If we believe the words God has spoken about Jesus and place our faith in Him, we will be saved from our sin and will enter the new heaven and new earth.

STORY POINT: The people who doubted God were not able to enter the land of Canaan.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Numbers 13 and 14 describe the culmination of the Israelites' dilemma of doubt. Though God continued to prove Himself faithful, the Israelites clung to their perception of certain death rather than the assurance of their God-given victory. They trusted in their own understanding rather than in God's covenantal promises.

What stopped God's people from entering the land of Canaan? How do our doubts keep us from worshiping God as He leads us through difficult circumstances?

For 40 days, the Israelite spies traveled and scouted out the Promised Land before returning with their report. Indeed, the land flowed with milk and honey—just as God promised. However, it was also brimming with strong men inside fortified city walls. The fearful Israelites lacked faith in God and in the leadership He provided.

Moses urged God to relent from His anger, reminding Him of His perfect character and how the Egyptians would try to defame Him. God pardoned them, yet swore these unbelievers would not witness the fulfillment of God's promises for themselves. Only Caleb, Joshua, and the next generation of Israelites would inherit the land. Upon hearing this, the people tried to circumvent God's plan by now going to battle on their own. This failed, of course, and many of the people were struck down by the Amalekites and Canaanites. Doubt and disobedience became the Israelites' downfall. Rather than experience rest in the land of Canaan, they were left to die in the wilderness.

Though Israel failed to believe God and trust His Word, God remained faithful to His people. Today, because of the finished work of Jesus, we can turn from unbelief and turn to Him as the object of our trust. Though we may not know what is next on our journey with Jesus, we can trust that eternal communion with the Father awaits us and that the gift of eternal life is available to all who abide by faith. Lead boys and girls to see the great mercy of God in allowing the next generation of His people to enter into His promises. May the children who learn this Bible passage recognize God's call to abide in His love through faith in His Son.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Greater than Our Fears" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- empty cardboard tubes, 2 per kid
- ribbon strips, 4 per kid
- hole punches, 2 or 3 per table
- staplers or hot glue
- stickers

Session Starter (Option 2)

- "Are You Sure?" printable



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- snap together pin back buttons or create your own buttons using cardboard and safety pins, 1 button per kid
- "Button Up" printable

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- dry erase board and marker

Reflection and Prayer

- Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "The People Doubted" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 6, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Windham Family Photo" printable

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "All Things Work Together (Romans 8:28)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- hanger
- clothespins



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “What helps you feel better when you are afraid? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Greater than Our Fears” activity page.

| **SAY** “God can be trusted when we are afraid. Today, we’ll see that God’s people let their fears become greater than their trust in God.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: I SPY...

Before the session, gather materials to create binoculars: empty cardboard tubes, ribbon strips, glue, hole punches, staplers or hot glue, and stickers. Place the materials at tables.

Direct kids to take two empty cardboard tubes and staple them together side-by-side. Alternatively, you could hot glue them together. Then invite kids to glue ribbon strips around the top, middle, and bottom of the empty cardboard tubes. Tell kids to use the hole punch to make a hole on either side of the top of the binoculars. Direct kids to thread a strip of ribbon through the holes and tie it off to create a strap for their binoculars. Finally, invite kids to use stickers to decorate their binoculars. If time allows, play a game of “I Spy,” allowing kids to use their binoculars to find different objects in the room.

| **SAY** “Today, we’ll see how Moses chose twelve men to go spy out the land God promised to give His people. We’ll see that the land was good! But we’ll also learn that the people doubted God and let their fears keep them from trusting God’s promises.”

OPTION 2: ARE YOU SURE?



Print the “Are You Sure?” printable and display the pictures one at a time as you read the text below each picture. For example, display the Great Wall of China picture and read the text, “The Great Wall of China can be seen from outer space.” Provide kids with paper and guide them to label one side with a F and the other with a T. Challenge kids to determine if they think the statement is true or false. If they think the statement is false, they will hold up the F side and vice versa for true.

(Answers: 1. false; 2. true; 3. true; 4. false [troop]; 5. true; 6. true; 7. false)

| **SAY** “At any point, did you doubt your answers? Was it easy to tell the difference between which statements were true and which were false? [Allow responses.] It can be hard to believe the truth, especially when we are afraid. But we don’t need to doubt God because His Word tells us that He never lies and He always keeps His promises. Today, we will see that **THE PEOPLE WHO DOUBTED GOD WERE NOT ABLE TO ENTER THE LAND OF CANAAN.**”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)



Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and today we’ll be learning more about God from the book of Numbers. God’s Word is true and good. We can trust the Bible and know that God will keep His promises. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

In our Bible story, we’ll see how God led His people toward the land He promised to give them. God promised Abraham and his descendants that they would have a good land: the land of Canaan. Today, we’ll learn that some people doubted God’s promise. **THE PEOPLE WHO DOUBTED GOD WERE NOT ABLE TO ENTER THE LAND OF CANAAN.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray together to prepare to hear our story: ‘Dear God, please help us to have hearts that trust You and Your Word. Help us be reminded that we don’t need to fear because You are with us. Amen.’ ”



worship

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

* I Thank God
* same God
* offering

SAY “ What is our big picture question? [Allow responses.] Our big picture question is, Why should we obey God? How can we answer our question? [Allow responses.] We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.

God loves us and wants to care for us. Sometimes we may not understand what God is doing or how He will work for our good, but we can trust Him because God always does what is right. Today, we’ll see that Israel did not obey God because they let their fear keep them from trusting that God was working for their good. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Last week, we learned how God provided for His people in the wilderness. He gave them everything they needed and even provided help for Moses to lead the people. Yet, God’s people grumbled and wanted more than what God provided. Their hearts did not trust God and believe He loved them. Today, we will learn how God’s people still struggled to trust God and His promises. We’ll see how they doubted God and refused to obey Him. ”



LEARN the Bible Story



1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Numbers 13–14. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The People Doubted.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE PEOPLE DOUBTED

“The Lord spoke to Moses and told him to send men to the land of Canaan. This was the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob many years ago. Moses selected one man from every tribe of Israel, twelve men in all. He told the men, “Go up into the land and see what it is like. Tell us how many people are there, and if they look strong or weak. Tell us if the land looks good for crops and if it looks like a good place to live.”

So the men went up into the land and spent 40 days there. When they returned, they showed the Israelites some grapes, pomegranates, and figs they had taken. They said, “This land is flowing with milk and honey. However, the people in the land are strong, and their cities are large and very well defended. The people in the land are giants.”

Caleb said, “Let’s go up there now! We can surely conquer the land.” But some of the other men said, “We can’t attack the people! They are stronger than we are. We felt like little grasshoppers compared to how big they were!”

The people were afraid. They didn’t think that they would be able to conquer the land God had promised. Some of them wished God had never led them out of Egypt. They doubted that God would keep His promise and help them win.

But two of the men, Joshua and Caleb, said, “The land we passed through is an extremely good land. If the LORD is pleased with us, He will bring us into this land and give it to us. Don’t rebel against the LORD, and don’t fear the people. The LORD is with us!”

The glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting, and He said, “How long will these people doubt Me after all that I have done for them? None of the people who doubted Me will ever see the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, except for Caleb and Joshua. Everyone else will die in the wilderness. Their children will enjoy the land, but they will not enter it.”

Christ Connection: Joshua and Caleb believed the words that God had spoken, and they were eventually allowed to enter the Promised Land. The people who did not believe would die in the wilderness. If we believe the words God has spoken about Jesus and place our faith in Him, we will be saved from our sin and will enter the new heaven and new earth. 🌟

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Invite kids to listen for Joshua and Caleb’s names. Each time these names are said, instruct the kids to shout, “Have courage!”

Define it: Tell kids that doubt means we are questioning the truth about something. Explain that doubt can lead to unbelief if we choose to let our fears or our wills keep us from trusting God.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY ☞ God instructed Moses to send spies into the land of Canaan, which He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But when the spies returned, they were so afraid of the people living in Canaan that they chose not to trust God's promise to them. Fear often leads us to doubt God's power, truth, and His good plans. How did Joshua and Caleb react differently than the people? [Allow responses.] Joshua and Caleb believed that God would give them the land He promised. They trusted God was working for their good, and He would be more powerful than the people in the land.

God gave the people who did not trust Him a consequence. What was their punishment? [Allow responses.] **THE PEOPLE WHO DOUBTED GOD WERE NOT ABLE TO ENTER THE LAND OF CANAAN.** The people who doubted God would die in the wilderness and never get to live in the good land God was giving His people. Our disobedience has consequences too. What is the punishment for sin? [Allow responses.] The Bible tells us that the punishment for sin is death. However, God has provided the way to be saved from sin and death through His Son, Jesus.

Joshua and Caleb believed the words that God had spoken, and they were eventually allowed to enter the Promised Land. The people who did not believe would die in the wilderness. If we believe the words God has spoken about Jesus and place our faith in Him, we will be saved from our sin and will enter the new heaven and new earth. ☞

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY ☞ God is good and has good plans for those who love Him. We can trust Him and His promises. God promises that anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved. When we turn away from sin and turn to Jesus, we are forgiven. And we receive the promise of life with God forever in His kingdom, where there will be no more sin, sadness, or death. ☞

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 6, Session 2" Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What if we have doubts about our faith. How do we know we're truly saved?
2. How can you encourage other Christians when they have doubts about God?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the "Windham Family Photo" as you tell kids about the mission work in Africa. Explain to kids that local pastors and local believers in the churches of the Sub-Saharan area of Africa can go to places that missionaries are not able to go. Tell kids that the missionaries train the local church leaders to tell people in their country about Jesus. They especially want to help train people to reach those who have never heard about Jesus.

SAY ☞ Missionaries Randy Windham and his wife, Kimberly, have trained many Zambian people



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

on how to start new churches and tell people about Jesus. From the Windham's first training until the most recent trainings, 17 new churches have been started in and around Lusaka, Zambia. Some of the new churches might meet under a shade tree, others might use a room at a school, and some have their own buildings. All the church leaders are taught to teach the believers at their churches as they fellowship, worship, and help start new churches. Let's pray for the Windhams as they continue training church leaders in Zambia. [Invite kids to pray with you.] ”

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)



Before the session, gather a hanger and clothespins. Write a word from the key passage on each clothespin, including the reference. For larger groups, consider creating two sets. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Romans 8:28 together.

SAY ” Just as God was working for the Israelite people's good, God is working for the good of those who love and trust Him. God is trustworthy, and we can trust Him. ”

Provide each kid with a clothespin. Hold up the hanger or hang the hanger somewhere in the room. Invite kids to say the key passage aloud. Then direct kids to bring their clothespin to the hanger. Guide kids to clip their clothespin onto the hanger in the correct order of the key passage.



Lead kids to sing "All Things Work Together (Romans 8:28)." You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY ” Dear God, thank You for keeping Your promises and for leading Your people to what is good. Help us trust You and believe in Your Son, Jesus, who died for our sins. In Jesus' name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Numbers 14. Present a Bible with a map in the index. Share how many Bibles have maps to help us know where the Bible stories took place. Tell kids that the land of Canaan is a real place, now known as the areas of Israel, West Bank, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.

Consider pointing out the land of Canaan (F9) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Numbers 14:6-9 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY 🗨️ *Maybe you can remember a time you thought you were going to lose. The Israelites thought that God had led them through the wilderness just to let them lose to their enemies. But Joshua and Caleb remembered what God had promised, and they trusted Him. They remembered the promise God gave Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: God would give them the land of Canaan.*

No matter what we face or the fears that come, we can take courage in remembering God's promises. We can remember that in Jesus, God has promised good to those who love Him. When we place our trust in Jesus, we no longer have to fear because Jesus has defeated sin and death. 🙏

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY 🗨️ *How can we trust God, even when we feel afraid?* 🙏

Tell kids that when we feel afraid, we should look to God's Word to remind us of who He is and what He has done. God's character is unchanging. Tell kids that God is faithful and has promised to never leave those who have trusted in Jesus. Just as God kept His promise to the Israelites, we can trust that He will keep His promises to His children.

SAY 🗨️ *What are God's good plans for His children?* 🙏

Remind kids that God's best plan is to save anyone who trusts in Jesus from sin and death. Explain that God also has plans to help us look more like Jesus. Tell kids that God gives believers the Holy Spirit, who lives inside them and helps them obey God's commands. Discuss how we have the promise of God's plan to create a new heaven and earth where His people will live with Him forever.

SAY 🗨️ *How can we be like Joshua and Caleb by encouraging others when they are afraid?* 🙏

Answers may vary. Discuss how Joshua and Caleb reminded the people that God was with them. If people are Christians, we can remind them that God is always with them because His Spirit lives in them. If someone is not a Christian, we can share the gospel with him or her. We can tell people how Jesus saves and delivers us from all our fears.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: BUTTON UP

Before the session, purchase snap together pin back buttons or create your own buttons using cardboard and safety pins. Cut the cardboard into circle pieces and hot glue a safety pin to the back of each circle. Be sure the cardboard circles are the same size as the “Button Up” printable circles. Create one for each kid.

Print copies of the “Button Up” printable that has the words *God Is Faithful*. Guide kids to cut out a circle template. Then provide kids with markers and invite them to color their button. Assist kids with inserting their button into the snap together buttons or direct kids to glue their template to the cardboard circle. Encourage kids to wear their buttons or put them on a backpack or bag to help share that “*God Is Faithful*.”

SAY “**THE PEOPLE WHO DOUBTED GOD WERE NOT ABLE TO ENTER THE LAND OF CANAAN.** But Joshua and Caleb trusted that God would give them the land He promised. These buttons are a reminder that God doesn’t want us to doubt Him. We can trust that He is faithful to keep His promises to us.”

OPTION 2: BIBLE POPCORN



Form kids into two teams. Tell kids that you will give them a topic about the Bible and they will work with their team to come up with as many responses to the topic as they can. Kids will randomly shout out their responses “popcorn style.” Use a dry erase board to write their responses, creating a column for each team. The team with the most responses wins each round. Consider using the following topics for each round: books of the Bible, people in the Bible, the Ten Commandments, names of people who wrote books of the Bible.

SAY “**God’s Word, the Bible, was given to us so we can know God and trust in His Son, Jesus. God’s Word strengthens our faith and helps us to not be doubtful or afraid. As we read the Bible, we learn more about how God is faithful, good, caring, and just. We learn how Jesus saves people from their sin and gives them new life so they can one day live with Him forever in the new heaven and earth. I challenge you to continue reading God’s Word on your own and ask God to help you follow Jesus.**”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.