



Israelite Spies Overcome by Fear Plan



See also 'Dealing with Fear - Plan' and the 'Leaders Notes on Dealing with Fear'.

Aim

Looking at God and not ourselves when we face situations that may cause us fear.

Bible references

Numbers 13 and 14

Deuteronomy 1:19-46

Key verse Do not be afraid of the people of the land... Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Numbers 14:9

Resources –select/add

'James Bond' or 'Mission Impossible' theme tune

Map of Canaan

Visual aids: e.g. A bunch of grapes; spy kit e.g. camera, a pair of binoculars or ask them to invent some as a game

Starters

Discuss: What characteristics would you expect to find in a spy?

Perhaps: brave, fearless, observant, adventurous...

Tray game: Spies need to have a good memory. Place a variety of items on a tray and let them have a good look. Hide the tray and see how many they can remember. Or else take one item away and ask which one has been removed.

The story – introduction: Play the James Bond or the Mission Impossible theme tune while you use a dramatic 'spy chief' voice to say something like –

So God said to Moses – send out secret agents – not just 007, but the whole set – 001 – 0012.

Moses thought – wow – big mission – all the agents in the field at the same time.

So they went – into the fields – and the farms, the hills, the rivers, the forests, the orchards, and the vineyards.

It was a long mission – 40 days – they needed the full spy kit.

They brought back a full report – a cluster of grapes on a pole (give out grapes if possible), pomegranates, figs BUT- people powerful, some giants, strong cities. Agents 003 and 005 (Caleb and Joshua) said – let's go etc.

Use your imagination to make the rest of the story come alive for them.

Perhaps read the spies report directly from Numbers 13:26-33

Map (a good option if you are doing this as part of a series)

Maybe take a look at their journey so far.

Draw symbols on a map according to where each miracle occurred.

Activities

- Take a large piece of paper and invite them to draw 'a very special place to live'.
On a separate sheet ask them to write or draw things they are afraid of.
Discuss what they would do if they could have all the things they really wanted but had to get past all the things they were afraid of first.
- Start a 'Thank You Diary'
- Think of other ways of reminding yourself of how God has helped you or others in the past.

Discussion- *select from*

Why – after all these months following God did they suddenly decide to rely on human scouts? Was this a good idea or a bad one?

Why were the people too afraid to take the land?

When we face new situations, do we look up at God or down at the potential problems?

How does fear spoil our lives?

The Israelites were full of negative self-talk – seeing everything through gloomy glasses. What about us? Do we do this too?

Do we often whinge and complain to our parents, other adults or to friends?

How do you think they feel about this?

Do we enjoy complaining or only do it when we feel overwhelmed?

Extra: What can we learn from Joshua and Caleb? Was it easy for them to be the only 2 people saying the right thing?

Pray Especially for those facing new situations or about fears in general.

✚ See also 'Dealing with Fear - Plan' and the 'Leaders Notes on Dealing with Fear'.

'Lord, Change My Attitude' by James MacDonald focuses on this story

Some maps:

Children's Atlas of the Bible: Nicola Baxter

Web links or do a web-search of images for 'Map of Exodus from Egypt to Canaan'

1. <http://www.preceptaustin.org/map%20exodus%20wilderness%20journey%20major%20points.gif>
2. <http://www.bibleornot.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/exodus-route-map.jpg>
3. <https://revivetsf.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/exodus-map.jpg>
4. <http://aisz.romhirek.hu/Angol/Maps/Moses/Route%20of%20Exodus.bmp> (in paint)

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Image: Microsoft clip art

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Leaders' notes



Israelite Spies Overcome by Fear

It's not the usual sort of headline is it?

The Israelite people had all seen God perform many miracles on their behalf.

Egypt was the most powerful nation in the world at that time.

It had a strong army, a sizeable empire, great wealth.

Yet God set the Israelites free from slavery to them.

At first it looked as though their situation had gone from bad to worse.

Overnight they became a nomadic refugee group with as many as 2 million mouths to feed.

Yet God fed them.

The Amalekites attacked them almost as soon as they left Egypt.

They were as yet an unorganised collection of tribes with little military training.

Yet God enabled them to defeat this enemy.

By now the Israelite tribes should have been beginning to suspect that this God was somewhat different from any others they had heard of!

They even had the pillar of cloud/fire with them constantly to protect as well as guide them.

It probably took them about 18 months to reach Kadesh, after leaving Egypt. They moved slowly and stayed at least 9 months at Sinai where they had received the Covenant. They had also needed time to pause and organise themselves as a collective group.

During the past 18 months they had complained and whinged every time they met a new problem. Each time, God had provided for their needs.

They were no longer the ignorant people God had begun to work with over 2 years earlier.

They had experienced God's power, protection and loving provision for themselves plenty of times.

Sadly they still hadn't learnt to trust Him.

On arriving at the borders of the Promised Land, it was the people's idea to send spies (Deuteronomy 1:22) and God allowed this.

God would surely have understood a certain amount of nervousness on their part at facing a new situation, but did they have any excuse for not realising that whatever problem confronted them, He could deal with.

This time they didn't just complain, it was more like a full-scale rebellion.

No wonder He was angry and the punishment was severe.

Why should these people enter his blessing when all they ever did was complain about him?

There are times when we need to remind ourselves of how God has helped us and others in the past. When we need to step back from a situation, lift our eyes and thoughts to God and pray that he will help us – whatever it is.

Extra: The story also teaches something about peer group pressure, because Caleb and Joshua had to stand out and be different from the other spies.

There can be times when even our Christian friends do and say the wrong things and we have to stand by what we know is right before God - and that can be difficult.