

3-6 | September 14

**Bible Story:** Joshua and the Spies • *Numbers 13–14*

**Conversation Starter:** When is it hard to trust God?

**Bottom Line:** God can give you courage when others are afraid.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *When I'm afraid, I put my trust in you.* Psalm 56:3 (NIRV)

*Pray for your group before they arrive. Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God for each preteen in your group and for the ways He is working in their lives. Recall a time when you felt afraid but chose to trust God. Thank Him for giving you courage when you needed it most. Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to help us be brave, even when others around us are afraid. Ask God to help you remind the preteens that they don't have to face fear on their own because He is always with them. Pray that they would learn to focus on God's presence and His promises instead of their fears! Pray that the Holy Spirit would give them the courage to do what's right, even when it feels scary.*

## 1. Opening Activity

**What You Need:** spot markers

**What You Do:**

- Before you begin, spread out spot markers on the floor.
- Instruct the kids to stand on a floor dot.
- Say, "We're about to play a fun game, and listening is key! I'll call out several actions for you to do, and you are to move in that direction! If you make a wrong move, sit down until the next round!"
- Challenge the kids by speeding up the actions you call out!
- Reset and keep playing quick rounds so no one sits out too long.
- Gather the group to discuss.

**Actions to call out:**

- "Front"
- "Back"
- "Left"
- "Right"
- "JUMP!"
- "Touch the ground."

**What You Say:**

"That was so fun! It took some serious focus to make the right move. Sometimes life feels like this—when we're unsure which way to go or wonder if we'll make the right choice. **[Transition]** Well, today's true story from the Bible is about Joshua and some spies who went into an unknown land. Most of them focused on their fears, but two of them put their focus on God, and it made all the difference! Let's go hear the story!"

**Inclusive Pro Tips:**

- To modify movements, allow the kids to choose how far or fast they move. Or, invite them to point instead of moving.
- Keep the energy of this game pressure-free and fun!

Lead your group to do worship and watch today's video lesson.

## 2. Take a Snapshot

**What You Need:** “My Journey” Activity Page, coloring supplies, pencils.

**What You Do:**

- Give each kid a “My Journey” Activity Page and a pencil.
- Set out the coloring supplies.
- Walk through the page one prompt at a time.
  - Mountain: Think about a challenge you’ve faced that felt hard—something that felt too big to face alone. Write about it or draw a picture in this box.
  - Bridge: Think of a time you did something brave and knew God was with you and was helping you. Use this box to praise God for being with you and giving you courage!
  - River: What’s something coming up where you need to ask God for courage? Maybe you’re trying out for a new sport, or you want to stand up for a friend being picked on. Ask God for help in this box.
- Fill out a “My Journey” Activity Page with the kids.
- Give the kids time between each prompt to process and reflect.
- Once everyone is finished, lead them to form groups of two or three to discuss their “My Journey” Activity Page together.
- ***[Make It Personal] (Share an age-appropriate time when you had to be brave and trusted the Holy Spirit to help you. Maybe you wanted to try out for a new sports team, or perhaps it was leading this Small Group!)***
- Point out 2 Timothy 1:7 on the Activity Page.
  - Ask: What do you think this verse is saying?
  - “Whenever you feel fear, that fear is **not** from God! It’s like a shadow trying to dim your light. God Himself lives inside you through His Spirit, and He gives us power and love!”
  - “God’s Spirit gives you power. The kind of strength you need to do what’s right, even when it’s hard.
  - God’s Spirit gives you love. The kind of love you need to care about others and put others first.
  - God’s Spirit gives you self-control. The kind of wisdom you need to know when to take the brave step, and when to wait.”
- Explain that when someone chooses to follow Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to live in them, so they can be closer to God, and help them be more like Jesus.
- Encourage kids that God knew life would be scary at times, but He is with them all of the time and can help them be brave, no matter what they’re up against.

***Inclusive Pro Tips:***

- Allow kids to keep their reflections private if they choose to do so.

### 3. Bible Story Extension

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Gather the kids together.
- Ask:
  - Why do you think Joshua and Caleb were brave when almost everyone else was scared?
- Explain how to play.
  - “I’m going to read some scenarios from the true story in the Bible about Joshua and the spies. I’ll give you two possible choices. You’ll give your most honest answer of what you would do, and travel to that side of the room.” (Point to the left for A, and to the right for B.)
- Read each scenario twice and give kids a chance to respond.
- After each round, ask a few kids why they made their choice and thank them for sharing.
- Continue until all the scenarios have been read.
- Tell the kids that we won’t always want to do what’s right. But the right thing is always the choice that God would want us to make.
  - Whether it’s standing up for a friend or walking away from a group of people gossiping, God can give them courage when others are afraid to do the right thing.
- Encourage the kids that just like Joshua and Caleb, God is with them and can help them be brave. Even if everyone around them is afraid, nervous, or doing the wrong thing, Jesus is with them, and the Holy Spirit can fill them with the courage they need!
- Ask:
  - Was there ever a time you had to be brave when everyone else was not?

**Story Scenarios:**

You hear rumors about giants in the land.

- A. Focus on God and the truth that He is with you.
- B. Focus on the giants and start to panic.

Your friends start saying: “There’s no way we can do this.”

- A. Speak up and remind them that God is with us, He is the strongest, and He can help us be brave enough to do hard things.
- B. Stay silent because you’re afraid of standing out.

You notice how good the land is—just like God said!

- A. Celebrate and tell everyone the good news.
- B. Worry about all the challenges ahead.

Most of the people want to quit and go back to what’s easy.

- A. Trust that following God is always better, even if it’s hard.
- B. Agree with the crowd because it’s safer.

**Inclusive Pro Tips:**

- To adapt the movement in this activity, have the kids show a thumbs-up for “A” and a thumbs-down for “B” instead of moving around your group area.

## 4. Pray and Dismiss

### What You Do:

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.
- Remind the kids that prayer is a conversation they can have with God anytime, anywhere, about anything!
- Ask: “What do you need courage for this week?”
  - *For example, kids might say: “to stand up for a classmate who’s being mistreated,” or “to apologize to a friend.”*
- Close in prayer, pausing to pray for each kid by name. If you have a large group, pray a general prayer.

### What You Say:

“Dear God, thank You for each of my friends here today. *(Name each kid in your group and pray a sentence prayer for each one as the Holy Spirit leads you.)* Fill us with courage! You, God, are bigger than anything we face! That means You are bigger than any fear. Help us believe that You are the biggest! Give us courage to do and say what’s right and stand up for what You would even when other people are afraid. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

### ***Inclusive Pro Tips:***

- Consider the needs of your group and adjust the activity accordingly.
- Be mindful of kids who may not want to pray out loud. Assure them that God hears every prayer—even the ones that aren’t spoken aloud!