

Men vs. Wild

Bible Story: Men vs. Wild (Joshua and Caleb) • *Numbers 13–14*

Bottom Line: I can be brave even when others aren't.

Memory Verse: "When I'm afraid, I will trust in you." *Psalm 56:3*

Life App: Courage—being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you're afraid.

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **COURAGE** and
God's character, as shown through God's big story

In the beginning of their relationship with Jesus, the disciples might not have been the most courageous bunch you've ever seen. Remember when the storm blew up and even the most seasoned fishermen woke Jesus in a panic (Mark 4)? But Jesus wasn't scared. He knew the power and reliability of God. Time and again Jesus showed His disciples that God would provide whenever they needed Him. As they learned to trust God, the disciples' courage grew—to the point that Peter and John boldly testified before the Jewish government (Acts 4) about Jesus' life and resurrection.

Courage is **being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you're afraid**. Peter and John were facing imprisonment—or worse—but they had courage to speak openly about Jesus because they knew God would give them the words they needed. We can also face potentially scary situations because we trust God will take care of us.

Courage is not the absence of fear but how you respond in the face of fear. When we approach situations, we can remember that God is bigger than anything we face. If we're afraid we'll be all alone, He will be with us. If we're afraid we're not good enough, He'll provide the gifting we need. And when we can't understand what's going to happen, we can remember that God sees everything that's happening and wants what's best for us. Then we can move forward courageously.

This month, let's think about how:

- (1) *God desires a relationship with us. Being courageous demonstrates trust and builds that relationship.*
- (2) *The Bible challenges us to respond to life with courage even when what we face doesn't make sense.*
- (3) *As we trust God and show courage, we become more like Jesus who was brave enough to say and do what God asked—even when He faced death on the cross.*

This week, we're discovering:

In this week's Bible story, 12 spies snuck into the land of Canaan (**Numbers 13–14**). Ten of them reported that they were afraid to attack the land, but Joshua and Caleb were the only two who spoke up and said God would provide a way for them to conquer the land.

Our Bottom Line is **I can be brave even when others aren't**. Sometimes others will let their fear overcome them and keep them from doing what needs to be done. In those moments, we can still have courage because we know God will provide wherever He leads.

The monthly memory verse is: **"When I'm afraid, I will trust in You." Psalm 56:3 NIV**. Everyone is afraid of something. Sometimes, everyone is afraid of the same thing. In those moments, we can be the one to have courage because we remember our trust isn't in our own ideas or strength. Our trust is in God.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY / REVIEW

MC: “God didn’t have to, but He did forgive the people for what they had done. BUT there were still consequences. None of the Israelites older than twenty would be allowed to enter the Promised Land. They would wander in the desert for the rest of their lives—forty years! (*Move 10 of the mini cans, the Coke bottle and the large can of Coke over to the edge of the table, away from Canaan.*) But God had seen that Joshua and Caleb trusted Him and were willing to face their enemies—even when no one else was. He promised He would bring Caleb into the land and give it to Caleb’s children as well.

“Joshua and Caleb did have to wait for a long time to see the land flowing with milk and honey again (*move the milk and honey back over to Canaan*). But God remembered their trust and bravery. At the end of forty years, Joshua became leader of the Israelites and led them into the Promised Land (*move the two remaining mini cans over to Canaan*).

“Joshua and Caleb knew something really important. They knew that:

[Impress] “I can be brave even when others aren’t.

“Since Joshua and Caleb chose to be brave, they didn’t miss out on the amazing things God had planned. God wanted ALL of His people to enter the land. But they had a choice, and almost no one chose courage. Only those who chose to bravely obey God got to see the Promised Land.

“Just like Joshua and Caleb, you may find yourself in situations where you are the only one with the courage to stand up for what is right. God knows what is best, and when you obey Him and bravely make the wise choice, even when no one else is, God will honor your courage. It may take a while for you to see that—after all, Joshua and Caleb still had to wait forty years before they saw the Promised Land. But eventually, they saw the results of their courage pay off. So, when you stand up to a bully when no one else does, or when the teacher steps out of the room and you’re the only one who doesn’t start cheating on your test—those times when you courageously decide **[Recycle] to make the wise choice**—think of Joshua and Caleb and how it must have felt to enter the Promised Land.

“‘Being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you’re afraid.’

“After all, it takes guts to stand up to a friend who maybe isn’t doing what they should. Caleb and Joshua stood up against ten other spies and a whole nation of Israelites, because they knew that trusting God was the right thing.

“But knowing the right thing to do doesn’t make it less scary. If your friends are cheating on their homework, it ain’t easy to stand up and say, ‘What you’re doing isn’t right.’ When someone’s being picked on or bullied, it might be easier to walk away and ignore it, but the courageous thing to do would be to stand up for the person who’s in trouble or at least find someone who can help you.

“That’s why it’s important to remember that **[Impress] I can be brave even when others aren’t.**

“That’s right! And if you start to feel your legs buckling and your teeth chattering because you’re just so nervous to be brave all on your own, remember our verse for the month—

“‘When I’m afraid, I will trust in you.’ Psalm 56:3 (*NlrV*)

“I do trust in God, so I guess that means I have to trust all the time.

Connecting (25-30 minutes)

Make the connection of how today's Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Quick Acting (*Choose 3 kids do with large group*)

What You Need: Timer or stop watch

What You Do:

Review the Bible story as a group, talk about the important points. (Israelites had escaped, not yet at Promised Land. Other people living there, 12 men scout out land. Men find plentiful fruit and milk and honey; bring back branch of grapes so big it takes 2 to carry. Also find big scary army; don't want to take the land. Joshua and Caleb stand up for God's plan. God forgives Israelites for disobedience, but only Joshua and Caleb got to see Promised Land.) Have kids get into groups of three. Ask each group to have one person stand up while the other two sit and watch. Have the kid who is standing act out the Bible story in one minute. Then, have him sit down and have the second kid in each group stand up. Have the second kid act out the story in 30 seconds. Then, have the third kid in each group stand up. Have him act out the story in 15 seconds. You may need to help kids think of ways to cut their time in between rounds, such as not using full sentences, leaving out details, gesturing instead of explaining, etc.

What You Say:

"Joshua and Caleb had to be brave when they went to explore a new land and also when they came back and told all their friends about the people who lived in the new land. They had courage and did what God told them to do, but it wasn't easy. They trusted that God was on their side and knew He'd give them strength and courage. **[Personalize]** (*Tell kids about a time when someone you know or read about was brave.*) Remember that **[Impress]** *I can be brave even when others aren't.* When we do this, it will help us know how to live and we will grow like Jesus did. **[Apply]** *This week, make the choice to be brave in front of others, even if you are the only one.*"

2. Brave Heroes (*application activity*)

What You Need: paper, markers

What You Do:

Have kids partner up and draw a picture of someone brave with all the details except the head. Brainstorm all the ways a brave person would look—maybe strong or wearing a cape or wearing a badge or saving people or standing up to someone, etc. Then, have kids pass their paper to their partner. Have their partner draw the original artist's (their partner's) face on the brave person's head.

What You Say:

"We often think of other people as being braver than we are, but the truth is anyone can be brave with God's help. **[Apply]** *Use these pictures as a reminder that you [Impress] can be brave even when others aren't.*"

Optional Discussion Questions

If you lead, consider asking these discussion questions:

- What do you think builds courage? (*Seeing the need to stand up for a value or a person, watching others model it well*)

- What would you say destroys courage? *(How people react to us when we respond with courage, when we feel we're the only one standing up for something)*
- What are some different types of courage? *(If they are stuck, give examples like standing up for a friend or tasting a food that looks gross.)* Which type of courage comes most easily to you? Which type of courage is more challenging for you? *(Courage needed to protect yourself or another person, speaking up instead of being quiet)*
- What do you believe stops people from taking a stance against something they know is wrong? *(Maybe they want to see what it would be like to be bad. They may be afraid of how it will look if they don't give in.)*
- Are there kids in your school who tend to sway other kids to do or think things that don't honor God? Has anyone ever come up with some other alternatives or options so that people had more than one option? Would you consider doing that? What would it take? *(It may be hard to know what to say since they seem so confident and popular.)*

[Personalize] (Share about a time when you were younger when you were really grateful that someone had the courage to stand up for you or helped you come up with a way that you could be brave in a hard situation.)

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Have students sit down and close their eyes as you begin to pray. You'll prompt them to pray silently or say the names of different people out loud who come to mind as you pray.

What You Say:

"Dear God, we want to pray right now for some of the different people in our lives and in our world who need courage to trust in Someone bigger than them—You, God.

- We pray for people we know who may have it tough at school or at home.
- We pray for our church leaders or volunteers who may need courage too.
- We pray for celebrities who are under constant pressure to do the wrong thing.
- We pray for world leaders whose actions affect others.
- We pray for ourselves in an area where we need to be courageous.

We ask for all of these things in Jesus' name, amen!"

Give each child a GodTime card and sucker as adults arrive to pick up.