10/6/13 Joshua and Caleb—Facing a Hostile World

This includes:
  1. Leader Preparation
  2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW
Teenagers spend their days surrounded by a culture that runs contrary to the things of God. Their easiest, simplest response is to go with the flow, to blend in, to mask their faith, and to conform. But that’s not an option for Christ-followers. We are called to be people who stand up for our faith, who stand up for God. Joshua and Caleb did this in dramatic fashion. This lesson will highlight their bold stand and God’s resulting favor on them and will challenge your students to take a stand for their faith, too.

LESSON OBJECTIVES
1. WHAT: As God’s people, we’re called to stand up for God and for what’s right, even if people around us are hostile to our message.
2. WHY: God promises to be with us, even when we seemingly are standing against the world.
3. HOW: Students will consider the rewards of standing up for God and for what’s right, and they’ll be encouraged to prepare for future opportunities to make a stand.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE
Numbers 13:25–14:10, 26-30

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES
Romans 8:31 and 2 Corinthians 5:21

TEACHING PREP
The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you’ll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.


As we dive into this passage, God had freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, and Moses was leading them into the wilderness. The Israelites were poised to enter into the land God had promised them through his covenant with Abraham. Their God-ordained future was at hand. Yet when 12 spies returned with a report on the land, Israel rebelled against God. All of the spies except Caleb and Joshua found the obstacles in the land to be too great for the Israelites to overcome. Only Joshua and Caleb believed in God’s sovereign power and God’s ability to deliver the Promised Land into their hands. Only Joshua and Caleb stood up boldly for what was right.

Every Christ-follower faces moments when they can choose to take a stand. For your students, those opportunities are most likely to happen at school or with their peer group. When this happens, will your students have the boldness to do what’s right and stand up for God? Sometimes the presence of just one or two friends can make all the difference in these situations—teenagers can experience an extra measure of boldness knowing God is on their side and key friends are on their side, too.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [optional]
Text Message Questions
We’ve provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

• Have you ever been the only one standing up for what’s right? Let’s talk about it tonight at small group.

• What should you do when it seems like it’s you against the world? Come to small group and find out.

Parent Email
We’ve provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.
OLD TESTAMENT SNAPSHOTs: REAL PEOPLE OF THE OT
Week 1: Joshua and Caleb—Facing a Hostile World

LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [optional]
Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

Think about a time when you found yourself completely out of place. Maybe you were at a sporting event and you were sitting in the opponent’s section. Or maybe you were traveling in another country where you didn’t speak the language. Whatever the case, be ready to share a story in just a moment, after I tell you about an experience from my own life.

While your teenagers are thinking, share your own story. Be sure to talk about how you felt and whether your “standing out” created any problems, stress, or conflict. Then have students talk about their experiences.

ASK:
• What did it feel like when you were in the situation you described? What thoughts went through your mind?
• Did you choose to be there or did someone else get you in the situation? Is it easier to handle those situations when it isn’t your choice to be there?
• What lesson did you learn from being in this situation? Is there something you might do differently next time?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: It isn’t fun to be in a situation where we stand out or we’re out of place. Let’s be honest: It’s easier to just go with the flow, in many cases. But what we’re going to see today is that in certain situations, we must stand up and stick out. When it comes to taking a stand for God or for what’s right, we can’t compromise what we are called to do and who we are called to be. We’ll see an example in this lesson of two guys who took a bold stand for God and what happened as a result.

If you came up with an opening activity, movie clip, or game that worked well with your group, and you’d like to share it with other youth workers, please email us at ideas@simplyyouthministry.com.

TEACHING POINTS
The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) You can’t always anticipate “stand up for God” moments, (2) God will help you see what is right and true, and (3) When you stand for God, you never stand alone.

Remember: All throughout these lessons, it’s up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Numbers 13:25–14:10, 26-30 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.
This is the first of six lessons focused on some noteworthy men and women from the Old Testament. In this lesson, we’ll see how Joshua and Caleb professed great faith in God’s plan, and despite strong opposition, Joshua and Caleb didn’t back down.

1. You can’t always anticipate “stand up for God” moments

God had acted visibly and dramatically in the Israelites’ lives. God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt and had performed amazing miracles in doing so. Yet here was a group of Israelite leaders saying there was no way they could conquer this land. In their distress, they doubted God and God’s plan. It’s unlikely Joshua and Caleb had expected they would be the only spies who knew God would help them defeat their enemies—but they held firm to their faith in God.

Ask:

• Think of a recent time when you took a stand for God or for what’s right. Did the opportunity emerge spontaneously, or were you expecting it?
• How did you feel in the middle of this situation—and after you had taken your stand?
• What are some specific examples of how God has cared for you or protected you? How do these past moments give confidence and hope for the future?
• Why were Joshua and Caleb eager and ready to stand up for God?

2. God will help you see what is right and true

Ask:

• All 12 spies recognized the beauty and abundance of the land they had seen, but 10 said they couldn’t defeat the people who lived there. What words or phrases from this passage reveal the fear of these 10 spies? Why does fear sometimes keep us from seeing what is right and true about a situation?
• This was the land God had promised to give them, which must have meant God would help them defeat any enemies, so why did the Israelites listen to the 10 spies and not to Caleb and Joshua?
• What are some of the challenges you face if you stand up for God or what’s right?
• Why do we care what people think about us when it comes to making a stand?
• Compared to adults do you think it’s easier or more difficult for teenagers to stand for God and for what’s right? Why?

Say something like: It can be really tough to take a stand when everyone is against you. Most of us want to avoid conflict and keep our heads down. But in this passage, we see Joshua and Caleb standing up for what was right, in front of the entire nation of Israel. They knew what was true and right about God, and they had confidence in God’s plan and God’s promises. We can live with the same kind of boldness.

3. When you stand for God, you never stand alone

Ask:

• Is it easier to stand up for what’s right when you’re alone or when you have a friend or two by your side? Why?
• Neither Joshua nor Caleb were alone in standing up for what was right. How do you think they felt knowing that a friend believed the same way and was willing to boldly declare it—especially when the crowds began to talk about killing them?
• If you knew a friend or a group of friends would be standing with you, either literally or metaphorically, how might that inspire you to stand up for what’s right?
• Have you ever considered the impact your stand might have on others who might be nervous or scared to stand up for their faith? How would it make you feel knowing that you had given someone the strength to stand up for Christ?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** God honored Joshua and Caleb’s faith, and they found a measure of strength knowing that they didn’t stand alone, even when they faced hostility from the people. We may sometimes feel like the whole world is against us, but when we look more closely, we likely will see that others are standing up for what’s right, too. And ultimately, we never stand alone if we’re standing up for God, because God is right there with us.

**ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [optional]**
**ASK:**
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. When we internalize, or fully understand, what Christ did for us, how can that affect our willingness to stand up for him and for what’s right?
- Read Romans 8:31. How do these words echo the experience of Joshua and Caleb in our main passage?
- What is the cost of not standing up? In your mind, what do you stand to lose by going with the flow and not standing up for God or for what’s right?

**APPLICATION**
Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.
**ASK:**
- Think about your daily activities and interactions—especially ones at school. Brainstorm some situations where you might have opportunities to stand up for God or for what’s right.
- How can you begin to prepare yourself for the opportunities you will have to stand up for God? Are you ready for the next chance you will get?
- How can we support and encourage each other in taking a stand for God or for what’s right?

**SUMMARY**
End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

**FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]**
Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? (Romans 8:31).