

Session 11

Help for the spies

This story is full of excitement and intrigue, but with all the espionage, hiding and escaping out of the window, it can be easy to miss what God is doing. Try to help the children experience the drama and excitement of this story, but don't let them miss the fact that God was with the spies during their dangerous and difficult mission.

To plan your session... Choose a selection of *Opening, Into the Bible* and *Living the life* activities to make your session fun and memorable.

Options to open your session...

Secret games

Activity time: 5–10 minutes

Aim: to think about spies

You will need: resources for your chosen game

- 1 Before the session, choose a game to play that helps the children think about spies, creeping about undetected or keeping something secret. You could try:

Grandmother's footsteps: One child stands at one end of the room facing the wall. The other children try to creep up and touch that child on the shoulder. The child should turn around to look at the others, who should immediately freeze. If the child sees anyone moving, that person has to go back to the other end of the room and start again.

- Steal the keys:** Invite the group to sit in a circle and ask for one volunteer to sit in the middle. Put a blindfold on the volunteer and place a set of keys behind them. The other players in the circle should try to steal the keys without being heard. If the volunteer hears anything, they should point in the direction they think the sound has come from. If they point at the player trying to steal the keys, that player sits down and another player succeeds, they take over as the blindfolded volunteer in the middle.
- 2 Finish by wondering what it was like to try and do something without being found out!

Construction play

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to think about building cities and walls

You will need: construction toys

- 1 Before the session, gather together some construction toys such as plastic bricks, wooden blocks or small boxes. Make sure you have enough for every child to make something.
- 2 Show the children the toys you have brought and challenge them to build a city. They should make it safe, strong and stable. Give the children as much time as you can for this activity – the majority of children will really engage (though be ready for those who might finish before everyone else). As they work, chat about what they're doing and why.
- 3 When everyone has completed their cities, marvel together at how different everything is. Say that you're going to read a story about two spies going into a great city!

Aim

To discover that God is always with us and has a plan

Bible passage

Joshua 2

Ready to use activity

'Who helps me' chart

Activity time: 5–10 minutes

Aim: to think who is with us and helps us

You will need: copies of the chart from page 85

- 1 Give out the copies of page 85, if you have them. Otherwise give each child a blank sheet of paper and ask them to divide it into nine squares. Read out the headings from page 85 and invite the children to write one heading per square.
- 2 Ask the children to think about who is with them in the different situations, and to write or draw their answer in the relevant space. Make sure you and your fellow leaders are available to help the children think about their lives and to help note down any answers for those who struggle to write or draw.
- 3 Talk through everyone's ideas. Wonder together at the vast array of people who are with us and help us: parents, carers, siblings, other relatives, friends, teachers, children's workers, other people at church, sports coaches, Brownies and Cubs leaders... Finally, ask the children when they think God is with them.

Into the Bible – options based on the Bible passage...

Ready to use activity

Bible with Splash!

Activity time: 15 minutes

Aim: to discover that God is always with us and has a plan
You will need: copies of the *Splash!* sheet from page 86

1 Bible Timeline

Show the group the *Bible Timeline* and point out the panel where today's story happens (God provides the land!). Look at the picture and wonder together what is happening. Go on to read out the text underneath the picture to give the children some background. If you have already done Session 10, remind the children what happened in Joshua 1.

2 Splash!

Give each child a copy of the *Splash!* sheet from page 86 and help them to make the storybooks: cut along the green lines, including the line in the centre; fold the storybook along all the fold (dashed) lines, then open it out again; hold pages 3 and 4, and pages 7 and 8, together, then push towards the centre; then fold the pages around to make the storybook, which begins with page 1. (For younger children you may want to do this in advance.)

Look at the storybooks together and guess what might be happening in the different pictures.

3 Bible story

Use the *Splash!* storybook to retell the story. Encourage the children to look at each picture in their own booklet, and to fill in the gap in the sentence.

Page 1: God had led his people to the new home he had promised them. Joshua, who was leading the people, told some spies to go and check out the big city of Jericho.

Page 2: The spies crossed the wide River Jordan and sneaked into Jericho through the large city gates.

Page 3: They went to see a woman called Rahab, who lived in a house built into the city wall itself. But, soon, the king of Jericho heard they were there and sent some soldiers to get them!

Page 4: Rahab told the spies to climb up to the roof – the roof was flat, not like the sloped roofs we have – and to hide beneath the plants she was drying there.

Page 5: Rahab got the spies to promise to keep her and her family safe, because she had kept the spies safe.

Page 6: The spies agreed. They told her to tie a red rope to her window in the city wall, so they would remember where she lived.

Page 7: The spies climbed out of the window on a rope, so that they could avoid Jericho's soldiers.

Page 8: They had to hide in the hills before they could go back to Joshua and tell him all about the city of Jericho, and about Rahab.

Encourage the children to use their storybooks to retell the story to each other. When everyone has finished, you might want to repeat the story yourself, to help the children remember what happens. Invite the children to take their booklets home with them when they go, so that they can remember the story and what they've discovered about God.

4 Chatting about the story

Ask the children these questions:

What's your favourite part of the story?

Can you see God in this story?

When was God with the spies?

Tip for Leaders: The beginning of a session is when children are likely to be at their most alert and ready to learn.

Active Bible story

Activity time: 15 minutes

Aim: to discover that God is always with us and has a plan

You will need: a length of blue material (or blue crêpe paper), chairs, sheets of newspaper, rope, cushions or beanbags

1 Bible Timeline

Gather the children around the *Bible Timeline* (or give out mini-versions, if you have those) and ask the group if they can see a picture with a wall on it ('God provides the land').

Say that this wall is very important to today's story. They're going to hear a story about someone who lived in this wall! Look at the panel before this ('God frees his people') and remind the children of the story that has led up to this point:

God rescued his people from Egypt; he promised them a home, but they disobeyed God; they had to wander the desert for years before God led them to their home; now they are ready to enter this Promised Land!

2 Active Bible story

Before the session, set out your props at different points in your space. At one end, place some chairs to be the camp at Acacia. Next to that, lay out the blue material to form a river. On the other side of the river, put a line of chairs to represent the wall of Jericho. Leave a space in the line to make a gate into the city. Put some sheets of newspaper on the chairs. Lay the rope on the floor leading from Rahab's house towards the river, then scatter the cushions/beanbags off to the side.

Gather all the children in Acacia and tell this story:

Story: God's people had travelled a long way, but soon they were going to reach the home God had promised them. Their leader, Joshua, chose two men to go and spy out this new land. We're going to be those spies. The spies cross the River Jordan. (*Guide everyone across your river. Mime swimming!*) They travel to a city called Jericho. They enter the gates and find the house of a woman called Rahab. (*Go into 'Jericho' through the gap in the chairs and gather on the other side of the wall, next to the sheets of newspaper.*) Rahab lives in a house built into the wall!

But the king of Jericho has heard about us and sent some soldiers! We need to hide! Rahab is drying some plants on her flat roof – we can hide underneath them! (*Everyone hide under the sheets of newspaper. After a moment, peek out.*) I think they've gone! We can come out.

Rahab has a message for us. She says, 'We know God has given you this land, and everyone is very scared. I will help you escape the city if you promise to keep me and my family safe.'

Shall we help Rahab? Yes! She helps the spies escape. (*Crawl along the floor next to the rope.*) We have to hide in the hills, to avoid the soldiers from Jericho. (*Everyone hide among the cushions/beanbags. After a moment, peek out.*) The coast is clear – we can go back to Joshua! (*Cross the river again, back to Acacia.*)

3 Chatting about the story

Ask the children these questions:

What's your favourite part of the story?

When did the spies feel scared?

When was God with the spies?

When you've finished chatting, experience the story again, if the children would like to do so.

More on this theme

If you want to do a short series with your group, other sessions that work well with this one are:

Session 10 Power with you, Joshua 1

Session 12 Across obstacles, Joshua 3:1 – 4:9

Session 13 Breaking the walls, Joshua 6

Living the life – options to help live God’s way...

Singing thanks

Activity time: 5–10 minutes

Aim: to thank God for being with us

You will need: music, instruments, flags, ribbons

- 1 Before the session, choose some songs that the children enjoy singing, that are about giving thanks to God. If possible, include children in choosing these songs.
- 2 Enjoying singing a song together, dancing and praising God. After the song has finished, ask the group to think about when God is with them. Acknowledge that God is always with us, but there are times when we are afraid or have to do something that we find scary, and at these times we can be reassured that God is with us.
- 3 Sing the other songs you have prepared and then shout out, ‘Thank you, God, for being with us!’

Creating symbols

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to create a reminder of God being with us

You will need: craft material

- 1 Ask the children to think back over the story. Briefly retell it or use the *Splash!* storybook, if the children are struggling to remember. What image in the story stands out to them? Perhaps it was the plants the spies hid beneath, the red cord Rahab hung outside her window or the spies themselves.
- 2 Encourage the children to create a picture or model of the thing that stands out most to them from the story. As you work, chat with them about what they’ve chosen and why. Revisit the idea of God being with us and that he has a plan.
- 3 Once everyone has finished, look at everything the children have decided to create. If anyone wants to explain what they have done, give time to let them do so. Encourage the children to take their creations home with them as a visible reminder of God being with them.

Ready to use activity

Prayer time

Activity time: 5 minutes

Aim: to thank God for always being with us

- 1 Chat together about how God was with the spies and with Rahab too. He kept them all safe and so kept his promises about giving his people a new home.
- 2 Say this prayer rhyme together: Thank you, God, that you’re with me,
Even though I cannot see.
I know you’re there by my side,
Whenever I cannot decide,
How to act or what to do –
I can always talk to you!
- 3 Encourage the children to ask God about anything they are worried about or that scares them. Invite one person to say out loud what they want to say to God.
- 4 Say the story rhyme again and invite others to say out loud what they want to tell God.
Repeat until everyone who wants to speak has had the chance to.
Thank God for always being with us.

Extra ideas for the session, and beyond...

Read other stories of God being with people from the Bible. You could read about Moses, Elijah or Daniel!

Make up spy kits, with magnifying glasses, simple codes and funny disguises!

At home

When I need a hug

When I'm at the shops

At church

When I've hurt myself

When I'm playing

At school

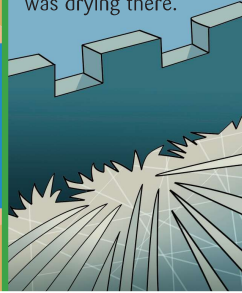
At a club

On my birthday

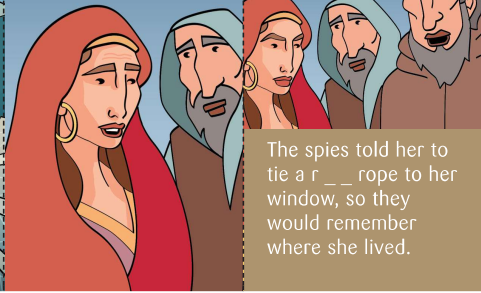
Splash!

Fill in the gaps to complete the story.

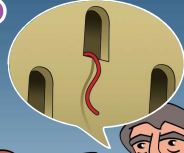
4 Rahab told the spies to climb up to the r ____ and hide from the king's s ____ beneath the plants she was drying there.



5 Rahab got the spies to promise to keep her and her f ____ safe, because she had kept them safe.



6 The spies told her to tie a r ____ rope to her window, so they would remember where she lived.



7 The spies climbed out of the w ____ on a rope, to avoid the soldiers.



8 They went to see a woman called R ____ who lived in a house built into the city w ____.



9 Joshua told some spies to go and check out the big city of J ____.



10 The s ____ crossed the wide R ____ Jordan and sneaked into Jericho.



11 They had to hide in the h ____ before they could go back to J ____.

