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Bible: Joshua 2

HELP FOR THE SPIES

THE AIM: To encounter the power of God at work

The aim unpacked

Whenever we are faced with difficult odds, we can sometimes focus on the mountain of work that we need to do to overcome our circumstances. How much do we see that God is already at work in that situation? The mission of the spies was dangerous, and they took risks, but God was there with the spies. Likewise, we might go into dangerous situations, but God is right there with us.

WAY IN



theGRID MAGAZINE

WHAT: dilemmas

WHY: to think about why we do scary things

WITH: magazine page 77

1 Give out copies of magazine page 77. Look through the dilemmas and ask the young people what they would do in each one. Try to facilitate some debate and discussion between your group members.

2 Using the dilemmas as a springboard, ask the young people what the scariest thing was that they have done. Why did they have to do it? What was the outcome? Would they do the same again in the same situation?

3 If you have young people who have grown up in church or have read the Bible quite a bit, ask them if they can think of any Bible characters who did something risky for God.



SCENE SETTER

WHAT: film clip

WHY: to think about going into dangerous situations (for good reasons!)

WITH: film clip where a character goes on a mission, even though they know it's dangerous, playback equipment

1 Before the session, find a suitable film clip where a character goes on a mission or journey, even though they know it will be dangerous. Animations such as *Finding Dory*, *Kubo and the Two Strings* or *The Secret Life of Pets* would be ideal choices.

2 Show the film clip and chat together about what the character decides to do and why they follow that course of action. How would the young people feel if they were in the same position? Would they make the same choice as the character?

3 Go on to discuss whether any of the young people have ever been in a similar position – having to do something that is risky or scary. How did they feel?



THEMED GAME

WHAT: hide and seek

WHY: to think about being spies

WITH: a space with lots of hiding places

1 For this activity, you'll need a venue with a lot of hiding spaces. If you're meeting on a Sunday morning, make sure you don't disturb any of the other groups that are using the building when playing. Before you start, let the young people know where they can and can't go.

2 Choose one person to be the seeker and send everyone else off to hide. After a short time, the seeker has to go and find the others in the group. The winner is the one who is found last. Play the game again with a new seeker.

3 You could play Sardines, a variant of hide and seek, where one person hides and all the other people are seekers. When a seeker finds the hider, they hide in the same place. This carries on until everyone is hiding in the same place! For safeguarding reasons, leaders shouldn't play, so that a leader isn't alone in a confined space with young people.



LEVEL 1: CONNECT

WHAT: Bible exploration with maps
WHY: to encounter the power of God at work

WITH: magazine page 78

- 1 Chat together about spies. Who do the young people think the best spies in films or on TV are? Which are the worst? Discuss what spies do and why they do it.
- 2 Read Joshua 2 to the group and ask them to listen out for what the spies are doing and how they go about it.
- 3 Give out copies of magazine page 78. Explore the story once again, using the maps and plans to plot what's going on, where the spies travel from and to, where Rahab's house is, etc.
- 4 This story is full of danger and intrigue, as well as promises made and promises to be kept, but where is God? Ask the group where they think God is at work. Why do the group think Joshua needs to use spies and traitors (Rahab betrays her own people in favour of joining God's people) and armies?
- 5 Wonder together what you would have done if you had been in Rahab's place. Would the young people have sheltered the spies and asked for their protection? Or would they have turned them in? Would they have trusted in the solid walls of the city and in its king? Or in the invading army and their God?



LEVEL 2: INTERFACE

WHAT: storyboarding
WHY: to encounter the power of God at work

WITH: art materials

- 1 Read or ask a confident reader to read, Joshua 2. Ask the group to try to imagine what's going on in the story as they listen.
- 2 Ask, 'What is God doing in this story?' Give out pens and paper and ask them to fold their sheet of paper into three. In one third, challenge them to write or draw what God is doing through the spies. In the next third, what God is doing through Rahab; and in the final third, what God is doing through the Israelites at Acacia. Once everyone has finished, share together your thoughts on what God is doing.
- 3 Give out some more paper and share out your art materials. Challenge the group to pick out the three most important events in the story and illustrate those in three panels of a storyboard. If you have some young people who aren't keen on drawing, pair them up with a more enthusiastic artist to work together.
- 4 Once everyone has finished, display the artwork and chat about the choices the young people made. Is there a big difference? Or did they choose similar events?
- 5 Finally, wonder together about what is happening in this story. What is God doing? What does that mean for us? You might get some questions about the threat God seems to pose to the people of Jericho—don't brush these away, but consider them together.



LEVEL 3: SWITCH ON

WHAT: hot seating
WHY: to encounter the power of God at work

WITH: flip chart or whiteboard, marker pen, Bibles, study Bibles and/or access to the internet, chair

- 1 Ask the young people what they can recall about the story of Moses and the Exodus. Write all the suggestions on a flip chart or whiteboard. Help them to piece together the story of God's people in the desert.
- 2 Give out Bibles and turn together to Joshua 2. Read the chapter together and then split into three groups. Assign one group the character of Rahab, one the spies and the other one the city guards. Ask the groups to reread the story and concentrate on the thoughts, actions and words of their character(s). Challenge them to wonder how they felt, why they acted the way they did and what they thought of these events. They can make notes, and use the study Bibles or internet to get extra background on their characters.
- 3 After about five minutes, draw the group back together and ask for a volunteer from each of the three groups to pretend to be their character. In turn, invite them to sit on a chair in the middle of the group. Encourage all the other young people to ask that person questions. The volunteer should try to answer these questions as if they were their character. If they get stuck, someone from their group can help them to answer.
- 4 Once you have interviewed your characters, ask the group what they have discovered about the story, the characters and their motivations. What stands out the most? Ask what this story says about God. How was he with Rahab? And the spies? You might start talking about betrayal, destruction and fairness—let the group talk about these honestly and openly. If you still have unanswered questions at the end of your session, invite your church leader to come to the next session to continue the discussion.

RESPOND



MUSICAL

WHAT: poem writing
WHY: to reflect on the power of God
WITH: guitars and pianos (optional)

- 1 Challenge the young people to create poems about God's power, referring particularly to the story of the spies and Rahab. When was God with the spies? And when was God with Rahab? The young people can write any kind of poem they like: rhyming or not, acrostic, haiku, limerick... They can write them in pairs or on their own.
- 2 Depending on the amount of time you have, invite anyone who would like to read out their poems to do so. If you have enough time, encourage the young people to set their poems to music. (If you know you're going to do this from the start, then pair keen writers with keen musicians to form creative teams.)
- 3 If any of the songs are finished by the end of your time, invite the creators to perform them.



PRACTICAL

WHAT: praying for others
WHY: to pray for people in difficult situations
WITH: red wool

- 1 Give out lengths of red wool to the young people and ask them to think about what it represents. It was the spies' promise to Rahab that she would be kept safe.
 - 2 Think together about the people in our lives who are also in dangerous situations. How might they be kept safe, just as Rahab was? Chat about the fact that we might not be able to do anything practical, but we can pray for them. Encourage the young people to choose two or three people they would like to pray for, and to take a length of red wool for each person. Invite them to hold these in their hands and to ask God to show his power and make a difference in those situations.
 - 3 Challenge the group to take the lengths of wool home with them to act as a prompt for them to pray through the coming week for the people they have chosen.
- (Note: If there is anything practical you can do to help, which won't put the young people at risk, then explore together what you might be able to do.)



CREATIVE

WHAT: model making
WHY: to reflect on the power of God
WITH: large sheet of paper or whiteboard, marker pen, modelling clay

- 1 The story of Joshua, Rahab, the spies and Jericho is one of many in the Old Testament where God shows his power. See if the young people can come up with some of those other stories and write them all down on a large sheet of paper or whiteboard. You could briefly retell (or ask the young people to retell) the stories so that everyone knows what happens in each one. You could talk about the Exodus, Elijah and Elisha, Daniel and his friends, among others.
- 2 Give out pieces of clay and encourage the young people to make a model of today's story or one of the ones that you have just talked about. Their model should reflect in some way the power of God.
- 3 As the young people work, chat with them about what they have discovered today about God's power. Be available for any questions they might have. If you can't answer them, be honest, and say that you'll try to find out an answer for the next time you meet.
- 4 Once everyone is done, if anyone wants to, give time for them to share what they have created and why.

MORE ON THIS THEME:

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

- 10 *Be big* *Joshua 1*
- 12 *Making a mark* *Joshua 3:1 – 4:9*
- 13 *The bigger they are...* *Joshua 6:1–20*

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Read these dilemmas and decide what you would do if you were the person involved.

Jamie is being bullied.

Every morning he has to walk past a group of lads who pick on him on his way to school.

What would you do?

Harriet wants to be an actor. She is going to an audition at a stage school. If she gets in, she'll get lots of opportunities to be on stage.

What would you do?

Ruth is studying to play the piano and is going to be taking her grade 5 exam.

What would you do?

Matt is going to see his mum. His mum left his dad when he was small and he only sees her every few months. The past few visits have not gone well.

What would you do?

Benjamin lives in the bush in Malawi. He has to walk across a dangerous river every day to get to school.

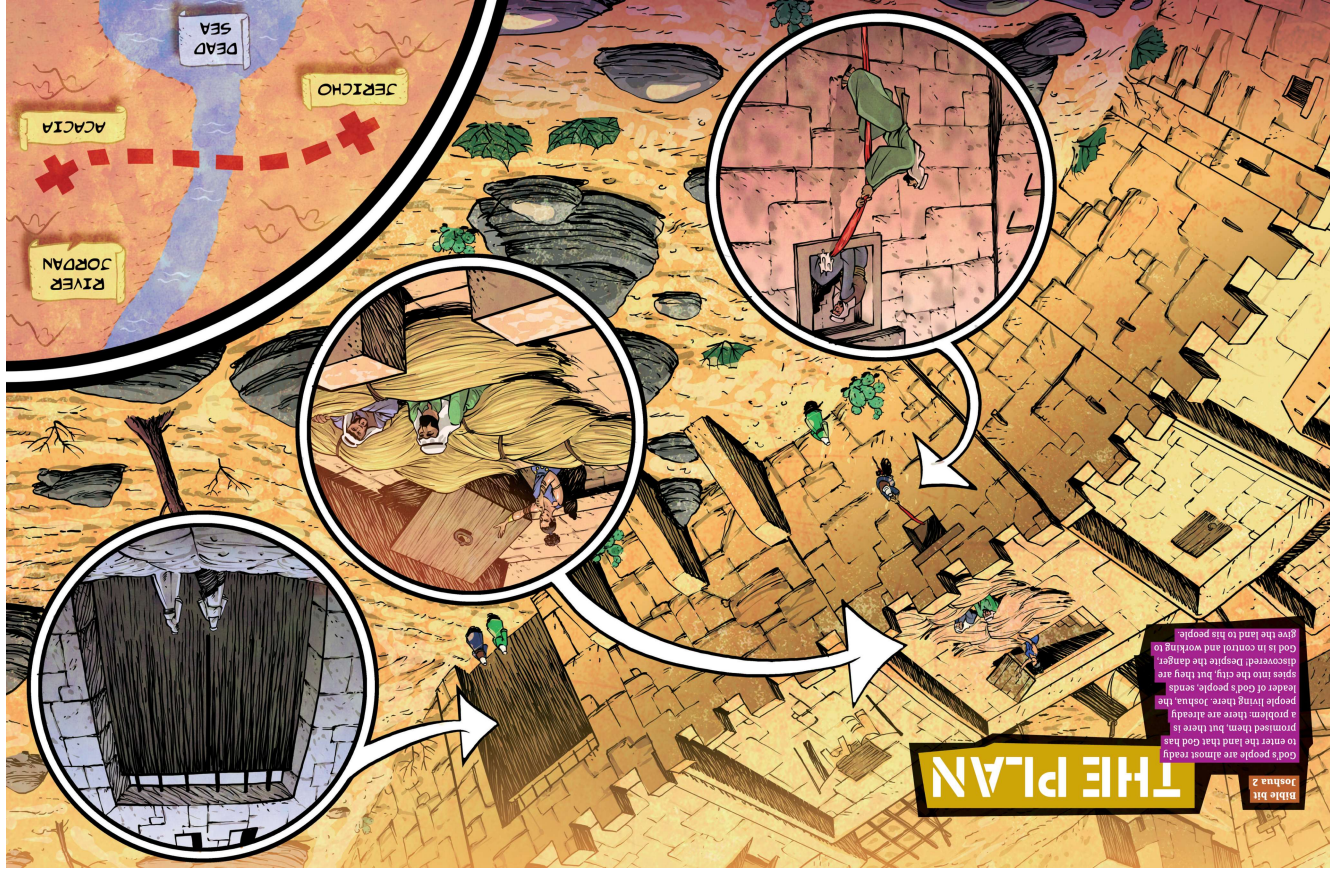
What would you do?

Grace has been suffering from a bad illness. It's had a huge impact on her life, and she's going to see the consultant to see how much she's got better... or worse.

What would you do?

DO YOU THINK GOD IS IN ANY OF THESE SITUATIONS? WHY? WHY NOT?





Bible bit
Joshua 2

THE PLAN

God's people are almost ready to enter the land that God has promised them, but there is a problem: there are already people living there. Joshua, the leader of God's people, sends spies into the city, but they are discovered! Despite the danger, God is in control and working to give the land to his people.