

## CALEB THE SPY

(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)

*Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.*

**Introduction:** In the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, Indy had to retrieve the cup of Christ to save his father. On his journey, he had to cross a vast open chasm. All he could see was darkness and what appeared to be a bottomless pit. He had to believe that a bridge was there even though he could not see it. In faith, he stepped out into the void. As his foot came down, it landed on the unseen bridge. In today's lesson, Caleb had the faith to see what God had called the people of Israel to become. Even in the face of challenges and among people who didn't trust God, Caleb did not waver in his faith in God. Ultimately, his strong faith in God's promises benefitted the entire nation.

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### 1. Weak faith will keep people from seeing God's power (Numbers 14:20-23).

**Biblical Background:** Moses sent twelve spies to scope out the Promised Land (Num. 13:1). Caleb and Joshua were the only spies who believed God would give the Israelites the land that He had promised them. The ten unbelieving spies were afraid God couldn't or wouldn't keep His promise and influenced the people to think the same way (Num. 13:30-31). The ten spies who brought the negative report were right; they could never take that land alone. Yet, God didn't ask them to take the land alone; they had almighty God with them. As a consequence of their weak faith, the Israelites never had the opportunity to see the Promised Land (Num. 14:20-23).

**Illustration:** Have you ever looked at the stars? What about with a telescope? A telescope allows our weaker eyes to see more of the universe than we can see without it. It shows us the depth of the universe that we can only see with the power of the telescope.

**Application:** Just like weak vision can keep you from seeing the stars, weak faith can prevent you from seeing God's amazing power.

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### 2. Bold faith will be rewarded with God's blessings (Numbers 14:24-25).

**Biblical Background:** According to this passage Caleb had "a different spirit" and followed God fully (v. 24a). His bold faith enabled him to stand firm and to sacrifice everything to follow God. Caleb made a difference for the whole nation by urging them to continue to trust in God and depend on His promises. God noticed that Caleb stood firm in his faith, so God promised to bless him by allowing him and his descendants to enter the Promised Land (v. 24b). God clearly demonstrated His holiness, mercy, and grace as He responded to disobedience among the Israelites and faithfulness in Caleb and Joshua. To protect His people from the inhabitants of the land, God sent them out into the wilderness (v. 25).

**Illustration:** In December 1955, Rosa Parks refused to move out of her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. The law at the time said African-American persons seated on a public bus had to give up their seat when a white passenger requested it. Ms. Parks, tired from a long day's work and believing deeply that she should not have to give up her seat, stood for what was right by staying seated.

**Application:** When we cling to our faith despite the opposition around us, we can also experience God's blessings in our lives.

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### 3. Weak faith can keep others from believing God's promises (Numbers 14:26-37).

**Biblical Background:** Because the ten spies incited an entire generation to grumble against God, God decreed that no one over the age of twenty would dwell in the land (vv. 26-30). Although their children would share their suffering in the wilderness, ultimately they would live in the land their parents rejected (vv. 31-35). The ten spies who led God's people to grumble against Him were killed by a plague God sent through the land (vv. 36-37).

**Illustration:** Have you ever caught a cold before? It's amazing how quickly a cold virus can spread. When you sneeze, germs leave your mouth and nose at a speed over 100 mph. When a person with a cold sneezes, he or she contaminates the room, making everyone else vulnerable to the sickness.

**Application:** Our faith—or lack of faith—can also be contagious. Ask yourself, “Does my faith strengthen the faith of others?” or “Does my faith weaken the faith of others?”

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### 4. Bold faith will bring you into leadership (Numbers 14:38).

**Biblical Background:** Caleb and Joshua were allowed to lead a new generation of Israelites into the Promised Land because they modeled strong faith before God (v. 38). Caleb's bold faith was born out of his conviction that God's promises were trustworthy and that **The Future is in God's Hands.**

**Illustration:** Jean Francois Gravelet-Blondin was one of the world's greatest tightrope walkers, acrobats, and circus performers. On September 15, 1860, he performed one of the most amazing stunts the world had ever seen by walking a tightrope stretched across Niagara Falls in Canada. The tightrope, made of strong steel cable, was over 164 feet above the falls and it stretched across the falls for almost 1150 feet. After he had walked across, he asked the crowd if they believed he could carry a person back across the falls. They all shouted 'Yes!' and cheered because they all believed he could do it! But when Blondin asked for a volunteer, no one spoke. Complete silence. Eventually, Blondin's manager, Henry Colcord, agreed to go. He had a bold faith in Blondin's tightrope walking ability and was willing to trust him. (Source: <http://www.historytoday.com/richard-cavendish/blondin%E2%80%99s-first-tightrope-walk-across-niagara-falls>.)

**Application:** Bold faith is necessary to be a follower of Christ in this world. We must be willing to stand firmly on God's word and step out in faith.

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**Conclusion:** We get to choose what kind of faith we will have: weak faith or bold faith. Weak faith operates out of fear and forgetfulness. It says, *I can't*. It looks more at what we cannot do than to what God can do. Bold faith says, *I can't . . . but God can*. And when we express bold faith, God ensures that our faith influences the Church body and builds up their faith as well.