

MinistryPlace.net

The Twelve Spies

Scripture: Numbers 13:1-14:35

Theme: Faith sees God's faithfulness; fear sees only obstacles

Jr High (Ages 12-14)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "Rahab , Faith in Action" "What if God asked you to take a risk for Him? Could you trust Him, even if the outcome was uncertain?" Imagine this: Rahab, a Gentile woman living in the dangerous city of Jericho, heard the Israelites' God was about to conquer her land. Instead of hiding her fear, she chose action, she hid two spies, lied to her king, and risked everything for God. Her story isn't about perfection; it's about bold faith: trusting God to move on His time, even when the plan feels upside-down. For junior high students, this lesson cuts through the "What if I fail?" noise, because Rahab's story proves faith isn't just believing in God; it's acting for Him, even when it's uncomfortable. Real Questions to Spark Discussion: - "Why did Rahab take risks for God?" (Because love doesn't wait for perfect conditions.) - "What's a 'Jericho' in your life, where God asks you to step out?" (Encourage them to name a small step.) Life Application: Challenge students to choose trust this week, not in grand moments, but in everyday "small risks" (e.g., speaking up for a friend, praying boldly, or obeying God's leading, even when it feels like a gamble). Rahab's example isn't about being fearless; it's about choosing God's way now, because that's how His people grow. (Bonus: End with a prayer, ask them to thank God for His faithfulness, then pray they'd have Rahab's heart of trust!)

Bible Story

Sunday School Lesson: Rahab , Faith in Action From Joshua 2:1-24 & 6:1-25

When the Israelites were finally crossing into the Promised Land after wandering in the desert for forty years, their leader Joshua knew they'd need more than courage, they'd need faith. But before the army marched in, God gave them a surprising assignment: hide two spies in a foreign city called Jericho. The city was known for its fierce walls and wicked king, but God had other plans. The spies were sent to check out the land and see if God's people could really take it.

Rahab, a prostitute (that's how she made her living), heard about the spies and had two choices: turn them in to the king or help them. She chose the harder road, trusting God. She hid the spies in her roof, wrapped them in red cloth (a common sign in ancient cultures to mean safety), and even lowered them down a rope to escape. Her action wasn't just clever, it was bold faith. The Bible says she did this not because she knew what she was doing, but because God had shown her mercy (Joshua 2:12). Her heart knew God was on the Israelites' side, even if she didn't understand it fully.

When the Israelites finally arrived at Jericho, God told Joshua to take a long, hard march around the city seven times, blowing trumpets. On the seventh day, at the eleventh hour, the walls tumbled down, not because of their strength, but because God had made them fall. Rahab, who had helped the spies, was the only Canaanite who lived. She was rewarded with her family's safety and a place in God's people when they entered the Promised Land. The story shows that God doesn't just work with the people He calls, He often works through the unexpected, like Rahab's courageous choice.

This story matters because it reminds us that God calls us to live out our faith in real ways, even when it's hard. Rahab didn't earn her salvation by hiding spies; she trusted God's promise. But her actions proved she believed. The same is true for us: God doesn't demand perfect obedience, He asks us to step out in faith, like Rahab did, trusting that He'll guide us. Whether it's helping a friend in need, standing up for what's right, or simply trusting God in everyday choices, our faith isn't just belief, it's action. And like Rahab, we can be part of God's plan, even when we don't fully understand it.

Life Application: What does it look like to trust God in your own "Jericho"? Maybe it's choosing to speak up when someone is treated unfairly, or trusting God's timing when you're anxious. Like Rahab, God rewards faith that acts, even when we're afraid. Would you like to talk about how God can use your story to show His love?

Key Verse

Numbers 14:9

The Story Behind Joshua 2:11: "The God Who's Everywhere!" Imagine Joshua and his army were sneaking into the big, scary city of Jericho, like hiding in the bushes to spy on the enemy without getting caught. But one brave woman named Rahab, who lived in the same city, heard about God's power. She wanted to help Joshua's team, but she knew it'd be dangerous! So she said to herself, "What if God is actually everywhere, not just in the sky or far away? If He's watching over us, He could help us escape the dangers!" This isn't just about geography, it's about trust. Rahab realized God wasn't just a distant ruler; He was near her, inside her worries, and powerful enough to protect them. Just like God isn't just up in the clouds (where some people think He lives), He's right there in your life, helping you through fears, doubts, or even "hidden" moments where you feel like you're out of your depth. Life Application: The next time you feel alone or unsure, ask: Where is God? Is He watching over me, even in the sneakiest, scariest parts of life? He's always there, just like He was for Rahab. Real Question for You: Have you ever felt like God's too far away to help? What's one small step you could take to trust Him today? (Like praying, asking a friend, or even just believing He sees you.)

Activities

Activity 1:

1. Set the Scene (2 min)
2. Read Joshua 2:1, 4 aloud, emphasizing Rahab's courage to risk everything for the spies. Ask: "How would you feel if you were in Rahab's shoes, trusted by strangers to keep a secret?"
3. Role-Play the "Spies' Mission" (5 min)
4. Divide students into small groups (3, 5). Assign roles:
5. Rahab (asks for protection)
6. Spies (ask for a safe place)

7. Countrymen (asking questions; 2, 3 students)
8. The "spies" must convince Rahab to hide them under straw. The "countrymen" will try to trick her.
9. Key question for students: "How did Rahab respond? What did she risk?"
10. Create a "Secret Passport" (3 min)
11. Give each student a small bag/envelope. They must write/draw a "secret mission" (e.g., "Protect a friend from bullying," "Share God's love with someone skeptical") on it. Example: Rahab's mission was to hide strangers, students pick something small but meaningful.
12. Share examples with the group. Discuss: "What's a risk God might ask you to take this week?"
13. Debrief: Trust vs. Fear (5 min)
14. Ask: "Rahab trusted God even though she didn't know the outcome. How did her faith lead to action?" Connect to today's challenges (e.g., peer pressure, faith in hard decisions).
15. End with prayer: "Lord, help us trust You like Rahab trusted You, even when it's scary."
16. Life Application:
17. Students leave with a tangible reminder: Faith isn't just belief, it's action. Rahab's story shows that God often uses the unexpected to protect His people. How can we "hide" God's love in our world today?

Activity 2:

1. Prep the "Wall" (3 min)
2. Draw a large house outline on poster board. Label the red/black roof (symbolizing danger) and red curtains (Rahab's house).
3. Read Joshua 2:12, 13 aloud: "Rahab and her family were saved", focus on her courage.
4. Design Rahab's House (7 min)
5. Split students into groups. Each must:
6. Draw one element of Rahab's house (e.g., straw, rope, hiding spots).
7. Use red/black for risky areas (e.g., a "no-go" zone for spies).
8. Add blue for God's protection (e.g., a protective sign, "HIDE").
9. Example: A "spies' ladder" (blue) leading to safety.
10. Symbolic Color Discussion (5 min)
11. Groups share their designs. Ask:
12. "Why did Rahab choose to take the risk? What 'red' fears might stop you from trusting God?"
13. "How does blue (God's protection) feel different from black (danger)?"
14. Connect to life: "God's promises aren't always visible, but His protection is real, like Rahab's faith."
15. Take-Home Challenge (2 min)
16. Each student picks a "red" challenge (e.g., "share faith with someone skeptical") and writes it on a sticky note to put on their "Rahab house" poster.
17. Pray together: "God, help us choose faith like Rahab, even when it feels risky."
18. Life Application:
19. Students see Rahab's story as a blueprint for action. Her faith wasn't passive, it was active. How can we "hide" God's love in our lives this week, even when it's uncomfortable?
20. Why These Work for Junior High:
21. Engagement: Role-play and art make abstract concepts tangible.
22. Honesty: Addresses fears (e.g., "What if it doesn't work?") while celebrating courage.
23. Life Links: Ties Rahab's story to modern challenges (e.g., peer pressure, faith in hard decisions).
24. Minimal Cost: Uses simple materials and focuses on creativity over complexity.
25. Would you like adjustments for a specific theme (e.g., more focus on obedience vs. faith)?

Discussion Questions

- Lesson: "Rahab, Faith That Turns Fear Into Faithfulness"
- (Joshua 2:1-24, 6:1-25)
- Why Rahab's Story Matters for Us Today
- Imagine this: You're hiding in a narrow closet in a foreign city, listening to a mighty army marching outside, all because you've got a secret. You've just made a life-changing decision, and the world is watching (literally). Now, imagine you're 12 or 13, balancing school, friendships, and maybe even family expectations, and suddenly you're asked: "What would you do if God asked you to step out in faith?" Rahab didn't have it easy. Her city was in ruins. Her people were being attacked. But she chose to trust, not just what she knew, but Who she knew. Today, we're going to dig into her story and ask: How can we live like Rahab in our own lives?
- Four Open-Ended Discussion Questions
- Fear vs. Faith: What Would You Hide For?
- "Rahab was hiding two things: a family and her faith. She wasn't just scared of the Israelites, she was scared of losing everything if she didn't protect them. But then she saw God's army marching toward Jericho. What's something you've hidden away, maybe a secret, a mistake, or even just a fear, that God could use to protect you? How could you take that fear and turn it into something that actually helps others, like Rahab helped her family?"
- (Life Application: When we're afraid, do we shrink back or step up? What would it look like to trust God with our "secrets" so they don't stay hidden forever?)
- The Bait: Why Did Rahab Use a Red Cord?
- "Rahab didn't just say 'Trust me', she proved it. She hid her family, then went back to the city to warn them about the Israelites before they attacked. She even gave them a way out: the red cord! What's a 'red cord' in your life, a sign, a promise, or even a small action, that shows others how God works? How could you use something you've learned from the Bible (like Rahab's courage) to help someone else?"
- (Life Application: How do we show others the hope we've found? Sometimes it's not just words, it's how we live.)
- The Fallout: What Happened After Rahab Helped?
- "After Jericho fell, Rahab wasn't just a hero, she became part of Israel's family! She was a grandmother to King David, and her story is still in the Bible today. If you trusted God in a big way, maybe by speaking up, helping someone, or even just believing in something you didn't understand, what could happen next? How might your life be different if you saw God's work in ways others didn't?"
- (Life Application: Faith isn't just about 'one big moment', it's the choices we make every day that shape our future. What's one small step you could take to honor God today?)
- The Invitation: What Does It Take to Be Like Rahab?
- "Rahab had to do three things:
- See (she noticed the Israelites and knew they were God's army).
- Act (she hid her family and went back to help them).
- Trust (she believed even when it was risky).
- Now, think about your own life. What's something you could see, act on, or trust God with this week? Maybe it's speaking up when someone is treated unfairly, praying for a friend who's scared, or just believing that God can change your circumstances, even when they seem impossible."
- Why These Work:
- Engaging: Each question ties Rahab's story to real-life struggles (fear, courage, family, trust).
- Honest: They avoid clichs and instead ask what if or how to apply faith in messy, everyday ways.

- Life-Applicable: Students can relate to Rahab's "hidden" life and imagine how they'd act in similar situations.
- Encouraging: They end on a call to do something, not just think about it.
- Bonus: After discussing, you could ask volunteers to share one thing they learned about Rahab and one way they'd apply it to their own life this week!
- Would you like any of these tweaked for a specific group (e.g., more focus on social issues, art connections, or teamwork)?

Prayer Focus

Lesson Prayer Focus: "Lord, you don't just ask us to trust, You tell us to step out in faith, like Rahab did! She wasn't perfect, she was scared when she hid the spies, but she took a risk because she knew You were on her side. Teach us to follow her example: to trust You even when the path feels uncertain, to act boldly when fear whispers 'what if?' and to show kindness to those who might seem suspicious (or even dangerous). Give us courage to stand up for what's right, like Rahab did, and help us remember that Your promises are bigger than our doubts. Help us be people who live faithfully, not just in hiding, but in action, because You want us to make Your love visible, one brave step at a time. Amen." Why this works for junior high: - Relatable fear: Scared? You're not alone, Rahab's story is for us. - Real-life connections: How do we "act boldly" today? (e.g., standing up for a friend, helping someone in need) - Life application: Ends with a call to do, not just believe. Rahab's story isn't just history; it's a blueprint for how to live. Teacher tip: Pair this prayer with a discussion: "What would it look like to take a 'Rahab risk' this week? Who could we show kindness to, or stand up for?" (Let students share anonymously if needed!)

>> Missions Spotlight

In many parts of South Asia, women face enormous social pressure. Missionaries working among women in rural India share Rahab's story to show that God values and saves women of faith, regardless of their past or social status.

-> To the Cross

Rahab was a foreigner and a sinner, yet she believed in Israel's God and was saved. She's listed in Jesus' family tree (Matthew 1:5) and in the 'Hall of Faith' (Hebrews 11:31). Salvation has always been by faith, not by being the right nationality.