

HOW GOD SAVED HIS PEOPLE

UNIT TWO: God Led His People

Lesson 8: The Promised Land**CONTENT:**

1. After journeying through the desert, the Israelites reached the Promised Land. Moses sent spies who came back with a report of a land of plenty; and of inhabitants who very big compared to them.
2. The people took fright and refused to enter the land. Caleb and Joshua, two of the men sent as spies, urged them to believe in God, but they would not. God was angry with the people and said that none of the elders except Caleb and Joshua would enter the land.
3. When Jesus hung on the cross, most of the people thought that he had failed and had no power. But one of the robbers who hung beside him believed in him. Jesus promised he would enter heaven with him.
4. Mother Mary also believed in Jesus. She obeyed God all her life and was taken body and soul into heaven. This is called the Assumption of Mary.
- 😊 5. We too must believe in Jesus and obey him so that he can take us to heaven.

ASSIGNMENT: Read the handout. Learn the Bible verse.

REFERENCES: Numbers 13:1-14:25. Luke 23:39-43. CCC 966-7; 149; 161.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts.

I. STARTER:

[The following story could be enacted by some students if they can be prepared before-hand.]

Once there were three cousins: John, Sanjay and Sanaya, who went to a hill-station called Panchgani for a week-end holiday. (Saturday and Sunday) Uncle had promised to take them up to a special place called Tableland on Sunday. There were lots of fun-things to do up on Tableland: horses to ride, games, snacks and special ice-cream.

On Sunday the children went for Mass with Uncle to the little church below Tableland. Then they began walking up the winding road to Tableland. But they couldn't get very far, because the road was completely jammed with cars, buses and motorcycles. The traffic was not moving at all.

"There must have been an accident on the road!" John said, "So now we can't go up." The children were very very disappointed. No rides! No games! No ice-cream! And they were feeling so hot!

Suddenly Uncle smiled. "I know another way up! My father showed it to me years ago. Come, let's go!" He led the children off the road and up a very steep hill. It was very difficult climbing, but Uncle helped them. He showed them how to place their feet so that they didn't slip. At last they came to a dark cave in the hill.

"Devil's Kitchen!" Uncle shouted. "Now we just have to climb through the hole on the top and we'll be there!" But when Sanjay and Sanaya heard 'Devil', they stopped. "I'm not coming into that dark cave!" "We don't want to meet the devil! He might cook us in his kitchen!"

"Silly children! It's just a name. There's nothing bad in there." Uncle said.

But the two children refused to enter. John climbed into the cave. He shouted out, "Come on dar-pokes! Don't you believe Uncle? He wouldn't fool us." He ran and looked through the hole on top of the cave. "I can see Tableland. Come on!"

But the two children wouldn't listen. At last Uncle said, "Okay, we'll have to go without you. Go back and wait at the church gate."

So that is what they did. John went up through Devil's Kitchen with Uncle and had a wonderful time. But Sanjay and Sanaya had to sit in the hot sun and wait till they came back.

II. DEVELOPMENT:

Today we'll hear what happened to the Israelites when they came to the land which God had promised. It was a bit like the Tableland story.

After all the exciting things that happened in Egypt and on the way, the Israelites at last reached the Promised Land. Do you remember some of the things that happened?

[Let the students talk about some of the incidents.]

When the Israelites came to the land that God had promised, they stopped and put up their tents. Moses sent 12 spies, one from each tribe, to check out the land. The 12 men quietly entered the land and looked at everything. They saw the rivers and the fruit trees and the crops; they saw what kind of people lived there. At last they came back to the camp. They carried a bunch of grapes from the vineyards. It was so heavy that 2 men had to carry it on stick.

"Look! This is the size of the grapes growing in this land!"

"All that God said about the land is true! It is a wonderful land, A land flowing with milk and honey! There is plenty of grass for the animals, and fruit trees and plenty of water to grow crops."

"But the people are scary! They are so big and strong, we look like grasshoppers in front of them!"

"It's no good trying to enter this land. It is better if we go back to Egypt!"

All the people began to shake with fright. They cried out to Moses, "Why did you and your God bring us here and waste our time? We were better off in Egypt!"

Then two of the men who had gone to spy the land came up to the front. Their names were Caleb and Joshua. They shouted out, "Stop this complaining! Believe in God! He has looked after us all this time, and he will take us safely into the land."

- In the Tableland story, who was like Caleb and Joshua? *[John!]*

But the people of Israel behaved just like Sanaya and Sanjay... and worse! They picked up stones and began throwing them at Caleb and Joshua. They said, "If you don't keep quiet, we'll stone you to death!"

Then God was very angry (and very sad) at his people's behaviour. He said, "How long will you go on fighting against me? I have worked such great miracles for you and still you refuse to believe in me! Now, none of you elders will enter the land. Only Caleb and Joshua and all the children will enter."

And that is what actually happened. The Israelites roamed about in the desert for 40 years. Only after all the elders had died (except for Joshua and Caleb!) were they able to enter the land and live there.

NEXT CLASS:

- Last time we heard 2 stories: One about the children who wanted to go to Tableland and the other about the Israelites and the Promised land. Let's see how these 2 stories match.

[Give out the handouts and do the exercise on the top, filling in the blanks as the children suggest the answers:]

1. God wanted to take the Israelites to the Promised Land.
2. Caleb and Joshua tried to get the people to enter the land.
3. But the Israelites wouldn't trust God.
4. Out of all the elders, only Caleb and Joshua entered the land.

Now we'll look at a true story that happened to Jesus. We saw how Jesus was arrested in the Garden and then how he was taken in front of the priests and Pilate.

We all know what terrible things happened after that. Jesus was whipped and had to carry a heavy cross up to a hill outside the city. There he was nailed onto a cross. Most of the people thought, "That's the end of Jesus! He's lost. He has no power left!"

There were two robbers also hanging from crosses next to Jesus. One of them also thought that Jesus had no power. He began to make fun of Jesus. He said, “Aren’t you the Messiah? Why don’t you save yourself... and while you are doing that you can save us also!” (That robber didn’t realise that at that very moment, Jesus was saving the world!)

But there were at least two people at the cross who believed in Jesus. One was the robber on the other side of Jesus. He told the first robber to keep quiet. Then he looked at Jesus and said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!”

Jesus was happy to see that the man believed in him. He said, “I tell you, this very day you will be with me in Paradise!” (Paradise means heaven) So the man went to heaven that same day!

- Does this remind you of the 2 other stories we heard? Tableland and the Promised Land are like heaven. God wants to take us all to heaven. But only those who believe in Jesus will be able to go to heaven.

- I told you that there were 2 people at the cross of Jesus who believed. Who was the other one?

[Mother Mary]

Mary believed God. She believed in Jesus. Because she believed, she lived her whole life for God. When her time came to leave this world, God did a very special thing. He took her up to heaven, body and soul. (Not just her soul, like the robber who believed.)

We call this the Assumption of Mother Mary. We celebrate this feast on the 15th of August every year, because it was the happiest moment of our Mother’s life.

[The students read the remaining part of the handout. They fill in the missing words and could colour the pictures.]

III. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

- Do you believe in Jesus? Do you know that he can take you to heaven? Will you trust him and obey him? Write a prayer telling him this. *[The students write in the space provided.]*

Home assignment: Read the handout at home.
