

RE READ *the big story*

NUMBERS 13-14

PREVIOUS BEDTIME STORY: SPIES IN THE LAND!
 CHARACTERS: YAHWEH, MOSES, JOSHUA, CALEB - SON OF NUN, THE SPIES, GIANTS OF CANAAN, THE ISRAELITES

RE VIEW *the context*

The dream had almost come true! After receiving the Law at Sinai, the Israelites were poised to become an actualized theocracy. A God-led nation! All the ingredients were there: a population (the 12 tribes), religious and governmental organization (the Levites and the priestly class), and a constitution (the Torah). They only needed physical land. But at the edge of Canaan, God's plan was stalled. The Israelites refused to enter for fear of the giants and, in judgment, God pronounced forty more years of wilderness!

RE ENTER *through the 2nd story*

A REIMAGINING OF NUMBERS 14:39-45

'Moses! Moses!' A voice called. **'Moses - you are needed!'** The voice was calm and familiar. **'Yahweh?'** Moses whispered, as if in a dream. **'Moses, your presence is requested.'** The voice grew desperate. Moses' eyes opened. **'Hmph!'** he grumbled. **'Of course! Those Israelites. What could it be now?'** Moses threw off his blankets, tied his sash, and opened the flap of his tent. It was early morning. The sun was hiding behind the distant mountains and the sky was alit with the morning stars. Joshua stood before him with a dim torch in hand. **'I apologize to have awoken you, sir,'** Joshua said. **'But I didn't know how to handle this... situation.'** Moses looked out. Surrounding his tent were hundreds of Israelites. They were standing silent, swords and shields in hand. Their faces were grieved and tear-stained but certain. **'What is the meaning of this?!'** Moses asked. **'You look to overthrow me in my undergarments?!'** A man stepped forward. **'No, nothing like that,'** he said. **'We are ready!'** Moses paused and scratched his head. **'Ready for what?'** Moses asked. The man stepped closer. A grim smile came over his face. **'We sinned. We know that now. We complained against God. But we are ready to take the land!'** The crowd murmured in agreement. **'We are ready to attack this very moment!'**

'What?!' Moses blasted. **'Are you serious? You woke me only to prove your disobedience to God - again? You cannot attack the Amalekites and Canaanites without Yahweh fighting by your side! They'll kill you!'** The crowd began to stir. **'God will be with us,'** the people replied. **'We will take our best fighters and possess the land God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!'** Moses shook his head. **'No, you won't. I don't know how else to tell you. We sent spies into the land. They returned. You got scared and complained against me, and against God. And so God called your bluster! You refused Yahweh's plan - so He refuses you! Your children will see the promised land. But you will not! It is over! Go back to bed.'** The crowd grew restless. **'We don't need you or your blessing!'** they shouted in anger. **'Storm the hill! To victory!'**

The makeshift army rallied and ran from their camp and into the land of Canaan. They disappeared over the hill. There was a sudden sound of clinks and clashing swords. Silence quickly followed. The people below waited for the horn of victory but none came. **'We are defeated.'** Joshua pointed. A handful of Israelites returned from the hilltop, stumbling and nursing their wounds. **'God was not with us...'** the soldiers said on entering camp. **'We cannot take this land... We will die in the wilderness.'**

RETHINK *in sacred sharing*

Spend some time in sacred reflection, conversation, and listening. Use the following questions as a guide.

- Q: Have you ever been given a promise?
- Q: Have you ever been given a promise you had to wait for?
- Q: KIDS: what was God's dream for the Israelites? What was their role in fulfilling God's promise?
- Q: Describe the feelings the Israelites must have had, being so close to the Promised Land - and yet so far away. Be as descriptive as possible.
- Q: Have you ever done something you regretted - apologized for - but still experienced the consequences?
- Q: Are there any dreams that Jesus is giving you now? Or any ways you can be a part of His unfolding story?
- Q: What steps can you take towards the dreams Jesus has given you?

RECREATE *in sacred play*

Spend some time in sacred play recreating the Spy-Canaan scene! Below are a list of props, characters, ideas to use your space, and a general flow-of-the-story. Your play may resemble more of a game of capture-the-flag. Let the children lead!

COSTUMES/PROPS: Cardboard swords, balloons as grape clusters, 'milk and honey' fun-foods (or literal glasses of milk and honey if you are brave!) to be hidden in the 'Land of Canaan'.

CHARACTERS: The characters should be divided.
 KIDS: Moses, Joshua, Caleb, and the spies of Israel.
 ADULTS: the Giants of Canaan.

SPACE: Set up the space into two sections: one side as the wilderness, the other as the 'Land of Canaan.' A mountain (couch, bed, or table) separates the two.
FLOW: Moses sends out the spies. The spies are to bring back milk and honey from the 'Land of Canaan' but must be careful not to be caught or thrown into prison by the Giants. If the spies snatch the milk and honey, and return to their side safely, they may eat the food they grabbed. Swap roles & characters.
 Reset! And play!

REMAKE *in a sacred meal*

When the spies returned after forty days in Canaan it was all bad news - except for the food! The land was 'flowing with milk and honey' which meant: lots of good food everywhere!

CHALLENGE: Have a milk-and-honey feast! Fill the table with a spread of delicious local foods, the bounty of the land! Cheese. Meat. Fruit. Veg. Pastries! Get the milk flowing and lay out a jar of honey (honeycomb if you have it - as that is what the Israelites would have eaten). Feast! Enjoy God's bounty!

RESPOND *in sacred prayer*

Dreams are often vague and difficult to articulate. Yahweh's dream for Israel was so extraordinary that metaphor was used to express and carry it forward: 'As many people as the stars in the heavens.' 'A land flowing with milk and honey.' These descriptions painted visual hope that endured generations.

Find a quiet spot in your home to reflect and pray. Express and summarize your dream with poetry, metaphor, or symbol in a way that will endure life's hardships - especially in these uncertain times.

**My family will be filled with colour and purpose.
 My life shine in dark places in Jesus' name.**