

A Good Shepherd  
Sacred Story

Spies Sent to Jericho

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## **SPIES SENT TO JERICOH ... MATERIALS**

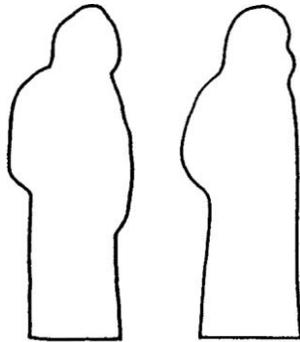
- medium wicker basket to hold:
  - wooden Joshua figure
  - 2 wooden spy figures
  - wooden Rahab figure
  - 2 wooden men from Jericho figures
  - red cord



Joshua



Rahab



Spies



Men of Jericho

## **SPIES SENT TO JERICHO .... JOSHUA 2**

### **ACTIONS**

After speaking, stand and get the story from the shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the basket next to you.

Gently stroke one or more of the wooden figures as you center yourself and the children in silence.

Place the Joshua figure at right center of the storytelling area.

Place the two spies next to Joshua, on the right.

Make a fist as you say "strong"; shake your head as you say "weak".

Move the two spies to the left, to the center of the storytelling area.

Place the Rahab figure just to the left of the spies.

Touch first one spy and then the other.

Place the two men from Jericho a distance left of Rahab and the spies.

Lay the two spy figures down and pretend to cover them with straw.

### **WORDS**

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me I can find all the words to this story of God's people.

Moses had died and a new man was made the leader of the people of God. His name was Joshua.

The people of God were very close now to the land that God had promised them.

But they did not know if the people in the land were strong or weak.

So Joshua sent two men into the land as spies to find out all they could.

The two spies stayed in the house of a woman named Rahab who lived in Jericho.

The king of Jericho heard that there were two spies in the city.

He heard that they had gone to Rahab's house and he sent his men to find the two spies.

When Rahab heard they were coming, she hid the two spies on the flat roof of her house and covered them with flax - a kind of grain.

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Turn Rahab to face the two men from Jericho and move them next to her.

Nod your head as you speak.

Point to the left.

Stand the spy figures up. Turn them and Rahab to face each other.

Touch the Rahab figure as you speak.

Touch both spy figures and nod as you speak.

Hold up the red cord.

Move the two spies a short distance to the right. Roll up the red cord and place it next to Rahab.

Move the two spies to the right, next to Joshua and nod as you speak.

When the king's men came to her house Rehab told them that the spies had been there.

But, she said, they had left just before dark.

She told the men from Jericho that if they hurried they could still catch them.

After the men left, Rahab told the spies, "I know that your God, Yahweh, has given your people this land. We've heard that your God led you from Egypt and helped you win this land. All of the people here are afraid of you."

Then Rahab asked the spies, "When you come to attack this city will you save me and my family?"

The spies promised they would save her and her family.

Then Rahab let them down through the window of her house with a bright red rope.

The spies told her that when they came back she must hang that bright red rope in her window so they would know not to harm anyone in that house.

Then the spies went back to Joshua and the other people of God and told them that God would give them the land because all the people were already afraid of them.

### **WONDERING QUESTIONS:**

I wonder why the spies chose Rahab's house?

I wonder why Rahab helped the spies?

I wonder if the spies were afraid when the king's men came to the house?

I wonder how it felt to climb down Rahab's rope?

I wonder if someone has ever helped you when you needed it?

Return all the materials to the basket carefully.

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to its shelf. Return to the circle.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Be sure all children have had a chance to choose their work before dismissing the circle.

I wonder what you will do for your work today? Let's go around the circle and decide.

## SPIES SENT TO JERICHO .•• TEACHER HELPS

Sometimes this story is confused with the one in Numbers 13 about spies being sent into the promised land by Moses. Of the twelve spies sent in then, only two say the land can be taken. One of those spies is Joshua. In Spies Sent To Jericho, Joshua is the leader and he sends the men into the land. This time there are only two spies and they are sent primarily to Jericho. No doubt the people of Yahweh had heard of the strength of this fortified city with its thick walls.

There are several questions about the story. How did the spies get into the city? Why didn't their language give them away? These kinds of questions come quickly to the mind of the western thinker, but the ancient storytellers were more interested in the quick events and happenings. As the story was passed down orally from one generation to the next, you can imagine the laughter as the listeners visualized the men of Jericho hurrying in one direction, thinking they were following the spies, when actually the spies were escaping by being let down from the window built into the wall of the city.

This story becomes particularly important when we consider Rahab. Much as the blood of the lambs protected the people of God in Egypt when it was placed on the door posts of their

homes, so the red cord protected Rahab and her family when it was put in her window. Undoubtedly, the red cord was something a harlot would have had in her wardrobe. Yet, with the children, I have decided not to deal with the fact that Rahab was a harlot. This is primarily because I'm not convinced of a way to describe a harlot to three through twelve year olds. However, this story helps us understand that God's saving grace is for more than those few chosen Hebrew people. Matthew 1 states that Rahab is the father of Boaz and therefore is part of the lineage of Jesus. Even a harlot can be part of God's faithfulness to God's people!

With the first two wondering questions we contemplate why the spies chose to be in Rahab's house and why she chose to help them. Since we have no answers to these questions in the story the children are free wonder without us imposing any limits on them. Who knows which of their answers may be right?

When we wonder about the spies possibly being afraid we come closer to a child's experience in life. They have been afraid, although probably for totally different reasons. The question about being let down on a rope will also be closer to their experience than the first two questions. They may have climbed a rope at school or on a playground. So they can understand something of the experience. Some of them may like that experience, others will not. Their answers will reflect their own experience, but some children may also put different feelings on the spies, expecting that they would be braver than themselves. This is a common theme for children. Adults are always braver, always less afraid. You may choose to wonder with them and share your own fears.

The final wondering question brings the story as close as possible to the child's experience. Each and everyone of us can remember a time when someone helped us. We may have asked for help, or it may have been offered before we even asked. We can help the children understand through this wondering question that everyone needs help and everyone needs to be helpful at some time in their life. The spies, these two strong men, needed to be helped by a woman. Sometimes adults even need children to help them. It doesn't matter about size, it matters that we are faithful and try to help when we know we should.

## **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN**

In this story the two spies are saved by a woman who is not one of the Hebrew people of God. Yet the men promise her that she will be saved because she helped them. What does this tell you about people who do not believe in God like you believe in God?

Rahab lied to the men of Jericho when they came looking for the spies. Can you think of a time when telling a lie is OK?

Many of us have been helped by other people who protected us. Think of a time when someone helped you get out of a tough spot. Share that experience and then ask yourself if you thought to thank God for that person's help.