

General Church Education



Rahab and the Spies

Joshua 2

Lesson 4

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

Rahab and the Spies

Joshua 2

Teacher Background

As the children of Israel waited to enter Canaan and prepared for battle, Joshua sent two spies to Jericho. Jericho was a walled city on the low plain five miles from the Jordan River. The people in Jericho worshipped other gods, so the city represented a state of evil in which true ideas and good intentions had been destroyed. Israel was to crush Jericho—symbolizing how we are to crush false ideas and evil intentions in order to begin a heavenly life.

Standing at the entrance to the land, Jericho represents one of the first states of heavenly life. It is called the “city of palm trees”, suggesting safety. Joshua sent spies to Jericho. The spies stayed with Rahab on the city wall. She helped the spies see clearly. They learned that news of the Lord’s victories had reached Jericho. People feared Israel, so Israel could win a victory. The king of the place sent men to get the spies but Rahab diverted the king and hid the men on her roof, under drying flax. At night the spies agreed her family would be spared during the invasion if she would help them escape. Descending by a rope, the spies fled to the mountains. Rahab would put a scarlet cord in her window to show where she lived. The spies reported “the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands”.

Key Ideas

- Rahab was a loyal trustworthy friend who was willing to help the Israelites.
- Rahab told the spies Jericho was afraid of Israel, so Israel trusted they could win in battle.
- The spies agreed to protect Rahab and her family. Hundreds of years later, Rahab’s descendant, Joseph, protected the baby Lord.

From the Writings

Rahab, who treated the Israelites kindly and was afterwards saved by them, represents enjoyment in the things of natural life that can be separated from the influences that have led it astray and made it evil and be guided truly and made a part of heavenly character. A simple good affection is also represented by the scarlet thread which she hung as a sign in her window: the warm, rich colors suggest affection and love. A deep ruby red (called purple in the Writings) stands for the deepest love of the Lord; and scarlet, which is less deep but more conspicuous, for neighborly love and charity. (Adapted from *The Sower*, Joshua 2, W.L. Worcester) See *Arcana Coelestia* 9468 and *Apocalypse Revealed* 725.

‘The mountains’ mean love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor.... ‘The roof of the house’ means a person’s higher state, and so a state as regards good, whereas what is below means a person’s lower state, and so a state as regards truth. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3652.

“‘Flax’ means the truth of the exterior natural.” *Arcana Coelestia* 7601

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Vocabulary

ford—a shallow place to cross a river

scarlet—bright orangey-red color

loyal—faithful to a promise, person or state

trust—confidence in the Lord or in another person

courage—a quality that allows a person to face danger or difficulty without fear

wicked—knowing what is right but doing what is wrong

The City of Jericho

The Jordan River was the eastern boundary of the land of Canaan. From its banks the children of Israel could look across a flat plain and see distant hills. The hills were steep and bare. The city of Jericho was at the foot of the hills. Jericho means “fragrant place” and “the city of palm trees”. These names probably came from plants that grew near the city.

The land of Canaan had a dry season and a rainy season. During the rainy season violent storms flooded the Jordan River. The river would overflow its banks and become hard to cross. Five miles west of the river, Jericho guarded the fords of Jordan. Fords are shallow places where a river is easier to cross.



Jericho was a fortress city with high strong walls that kept enemies out and protected its citizens. Many houses were built right into the wall. The only way in and out of the city was through a guarded gate. The armies of Israel would have to conquer Jericho in order to enter the Promised Land.

The people living in Jericho were not good. They worshiped other gods. They had heard of

the victories the Lord had given the Israelites as they journeyed towards Canaan. They were afraid of the children of Israel. They were on the lookout for them from inside their walled city.

Joshua Sent Spies to Jericho

During a war spies are sometimes sent to find out an enemy's strengths and weaknesses. Their work is dangerous. Do you remember when Moses sent twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan? As Joshua prepared to enter the land of Canaan, he sent two spies to find out about the city of Jericho.



Rahab Hid the Spies

The spies went to the house of a woman named Rahab. Rahab's house was on the city wall, near the gate. Like most other houses, her house had a flat roof made of rolled hard packed dirt. People often worked, slept or dried their crops on the roof. Rahab knew about the children of Israel and welcomed the spies into her house. She had heard of the Lord, their God. She believed He had all power in heaven and earth. She also knew that the people of Jericho were wicked. They knew how to do what was right, but actually did what was wrong.

Someone saw the spies go to Rahab's house and told the king. The king was frightened and asked Rahab to send the men to him. Instead of obeying the king, Rahab showed the men friendship and treated them kindly. She hid them on her roof, under stalks of flax that were drying in the sun. She was preparing the flax to make linen cloth. Rahab pretended not to know the men were spies and told the king's men that they had left. So the king's men ran out of the city to try to find them, just before the gate closed for the night. The king's men ran all the way to the river Jordan.

Read Joshua 2:1-9.

Rahab Made an Agreement with the Spies

Before she went to bed, Rahab went up to the roof to talk to the spies. She trusted the men and told them that the citizens of Jericho were terrified of the children of Israel.

For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea...and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites...whom you utterly destroyed. As soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. (Joshua 2:10-11)

Lesson 4 • Rahab and the Spies

Rahab asked the spies to protect her family, just as she had protected them. The spies promised to protect her family when the children of Israel attacked the city if she did three things:

- She must bring her whole family into her house. They must not go into the street.
- She must not tell anyone about the spies.
- She must tie a scarlet cord in the window of her house.

If Rahab and her family did not do all these things, the spies would be free from their promise.

Read Joshua 2:12-23.

The Spies Escape

Once Rahab made the agreement she let the spies down on a rope through a window to escape. She suggested they hide for three days, until the king had stopped looking for them. Then the spies crossed safely back over the river Jordan to Joshua and told him,

“Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.” (Joshua 2:24)

Many years later Rahab played a part in protecting the Lord on earth. Joseph was a descendant of Rahab. Joseph protected the baby Lord and took care of Him so He could grow up in safety.

Discussion Questions

- Before the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan the people there were not good. They worshiped other gods and not the Lord. How might we “worship other gods”?
- Just as we must drive bad thoughts and feelings away to become truly loving, the children of Israel had to drive their enemies out of Canaan to live there in peace and happiness. What could have happened if they had not obeyed the Lord’s command to do this?
- Compare the king’s trust in the spies with Rahab’s trust in the spies. Why did Rahab and the king feel differently about the spies? Who do you know that you can really trust? What qualities make you feel you can trust a person?
- The spies trusted Rahab because she believed in the Lord’s power. Rahab is like the part of us that loves good things for wrong reasons—like loving being good at something because you look good in front of others. Being good at things can become part of a heavenly life when we choose to do them for others and not just to look good.
- The spies told Joshua that the people in the land were afraid of the Lord’s power, and so they trusted the Lord and were willing to let Him lead them into battle. What can help us trust the Lord to help us break old habits and try to do what’s right?
- Just as the citizens of Jericho hid behind strong walls, evil spirits are afraid of anything good and true. They may pretend they are strong, but if we know the Lord is with us and try to do good, they will be afraid and cannot harm us.

Activity Overview | Rahab and the Spies

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

And they said to Joshua, “Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.” Joshua 2:24

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Rahab’s Good Qualities
- The Spies Escape from Jericho (project)
- Picture to color—Rahab Helps the Spies Escape from Jericho (Joshua 2)

Additional Activity Ideas

- Rahab hid the spies on the roof of her house where she was drying flax in preparation for processing, spinning and weaving it into cloth. Watch *Making Linen from Flax* online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeCXLiWqKw>, to find out how this was done. The historic video shows bundles of flax drying in a field. Rahab’s flax was laid on her roof to dry instead. Flax corresponds to true ideas.
- Try climbing up or down a sturdy rope. How easy would it have been for the spies to escape? How strong might they have been?
- Rahab and the spies agreed she would hang a red cord from her window so that the children of Israel would know where she lived when they attacked the city, and protect her family. What signal might you use to protect something precious?

Activity 1 | Rahab's Good Qualities

The people of Jericho were enemies of the Israelites. They did not love the Lord. Rahab lived in the city of Jericho, but she was a good woman. She knew about the children of Israel and she helped them enter the land of Canaan. Reflect on Rahab's good qualities and draw or write them in a silhouette of Rahab.

Materials Needed

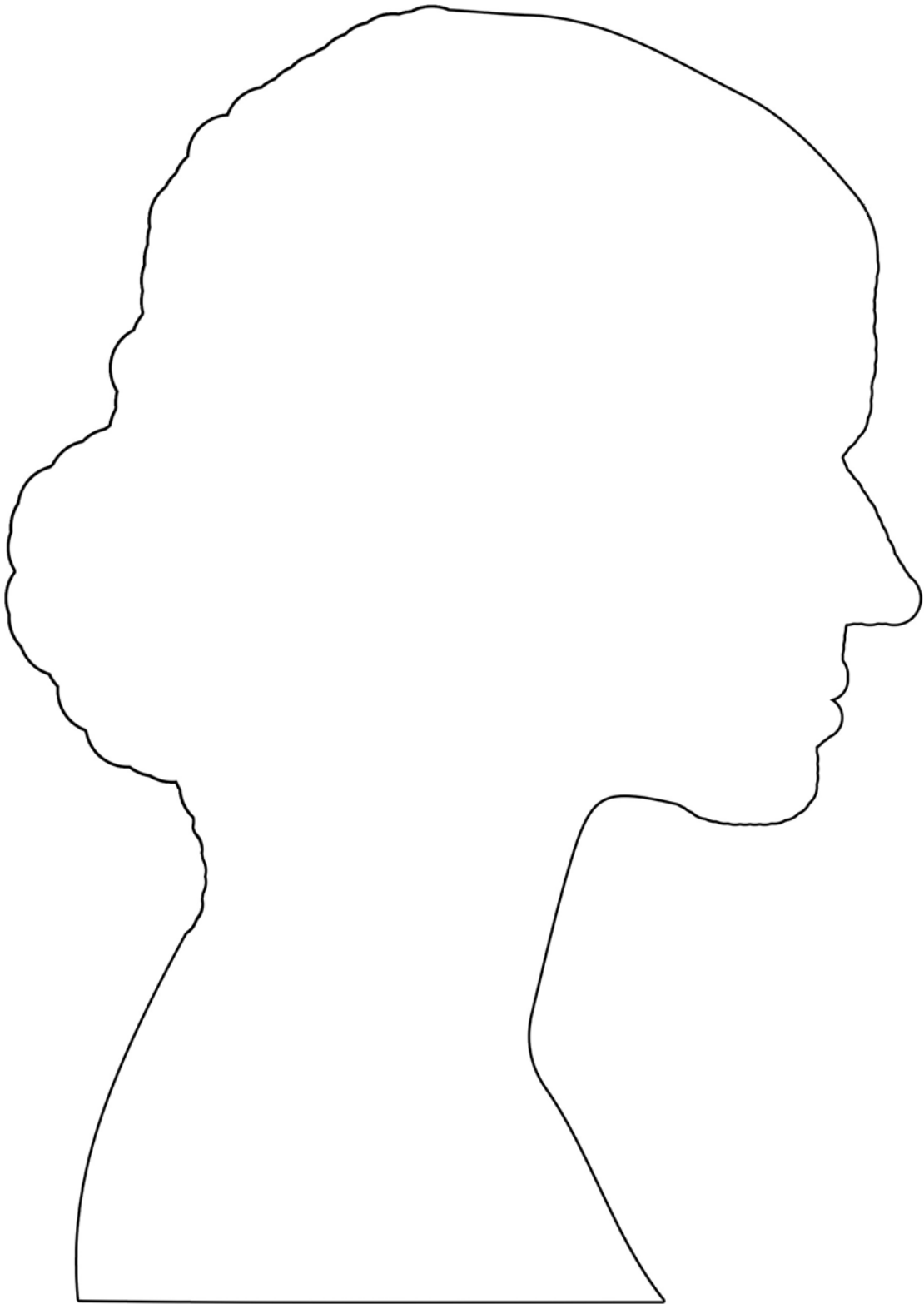
Rahab silhouette

pens or pencils

Directions

1. Rahab's kindness and bravery allowed the children of Israel to enter the land of Canaan. Think about Rahab's good qualities, and the ways she helped the spies find out what they needed to that gave the children of Israel the courage to enter Canaan.
2. Write or draw Rahab's good qualities in the silhouette.

Rahab's Good Qualities



Activity 2 | The Spies Escape from Jericho

Rahab knew the king was looking for two spies that had entered Jericho. She hid the spies on her roof, under drying flax, and when night fell, she let down a rope from her window so they could climb down and escape. Make a picture to illustrate the story.

Materials Needed

one copy of all three project pages

scissors

markers or crayons

a length of red yarn or string

tape

optional: dried grass or straw and glue to be “flax” on the roof.

Directions

1. Color the pictures of Rahab and the two spies.
2. Cut out the pictures.
3. Tape the two full sections of the city wall together, with the window section on top. Tape the picture of the partial section of the wall to the top of the picture, on top of the window section.
4. *Optional:* Glue pieces of grass or straw on top of the wall to look like flax on the roof.
5. Tape a piece of red yarn or string to the bottom of the window, so it hangs down to the bottom of the wall.
6. Tape the figures of Rahab and the spies to the picture as shown on the left.



Activity 2 | The Spies Escape from Jericho







