

People of Faith

Moses: Obedience

Youth

Before Class

- Prepare* Prepare for this lesson by reading Exodus 3: 1-22, Acts 7:32, Romans 13:1.. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.
- Plan* What materials and room arrangements will you need for this lesson? Make sure all of your physical needs are planned for well ahead of time.
- Practice* Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

Introduce yourself to the youth. Tell them your name, a little general information about yourself and tell them something you like doing.
Ask each member of the group to share their name and something they like doing. It should be something they really enjoy, whether they do it every day or every so often

Memory Passage for Today

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.
Luke 10:27 (NRSV)

Introduction

Hand out a blank sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each student.

Ask them to make a list of things they do not like doing.

Give them time to write.

When they have finished tell them to cross out the things that are related to the things that others tell you to do.

How many did you not cross out?

Does any one want to share which items they did NOT cross out?

Let the youth share and go over the ones that they did not cross out. Are these items things they do not like because they bother them?

Are they things they don't like to do because they have to stop doing things they like doing?

Generally it is true, we don't like to do what we are told to do or we only want to do what we like, or what makes us comfortable, what is easy or what fits in our schedule or preferences.

Ask them to put away the sheets.

In reality, we think a lot about ourselves, about what we like, about what is comfortable but we don't really consider what may be the best thing to do or the right thing to do. Instead, God does think about what is best for the people who love him. God loves us and gives us instructions through the Bible about what we need to do. We need to follow these orders because they are from our creator and God knows best.

God does not ask us to do bad or wrong things. Sure, at times God asks us to do difficult things or things that no one does, or things others think are ridiculous, but never bad or wrong.

Bible Lesson

Let's look at an example from the Bible, looking at Moses.

Ask one of the youth to read aloud the passage Exodus 3:1-22

This is a small portion of the story of Moses. There are events that happened before which lead us to this moment in history, and events which came later which were the result of this story.

When you say "before" take a step to your right, and then return to the original place when you say "this moment in history." When you say "later" take a step to the left and then return to the original spot.

Can someone briefly retell the story of what happened before Moses came to the burning bush?

If the youth are not willing to tell the story, take the time to tell the previous story that led to this event, or guide the discussion by asking questions: why was the people of Israel suffering? Was Moses a part of the people of Israel? Then, why did he not live in Egypt?

Then ask another student to read again the same Bible passage for today from another Bible version

In this Bible passage, God asks Moses three things. What are they?

(Take off your sandals, Go and talk with Pharaoh, go and talk with my people, the Israelites.)

Which of these orders were easy? Why?

Which were hard? Why?

Speaking with Pharaoh would have been hard. Pharaoh was the ruler of Egypt, their king. There were even some who saw him as a god. What would you think if someone said: Go and talk to the president?

Speaking with the Israelites would have been hard. The Israelites did not know Moses; they only knew that some time back he had killed an Egyptian and they did not see him in a good light (Acts 7:32)

Which of these orders did Moses obey? (All of them. Even to take off his sandals – although the Bible doesn't say it, we know that God detests disobedience and would not have allowed it)

Can one of you tell us what happened during the time that Moses was in front of the burning bush?

Did Moses go see Pharaoh? How many times? (*many*)

Did Moses speak with the people of Israel? How many times? (*many*)

Moses was a person of faith. He showed his love for God by being obedient.

You can be a person of faith too; you can not only listen to what God is asking you to do, but do it. The Bible tells us that to be doers of the word, not just hearers of the word.

How do you show someone that you love them?

Allow the students to give you answers.

Well, one of the ways in which we show God we love him is through our obedience. I can't say that I love God if I don't obey God.

Reflection

- What is obedience?

*Divide the group into teams (not too large) and give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil. Tell the youth: **You have been called to participate in the creation of a new dictionary. This is no ordinary dictionary, but a dictionary for people of faith. The concepts have been handed out and you get to write the definition of the concept of obedience. Write a definition of obedience. You have 5 minutes to agree and come up with a definition.***

Give the teams a few minutes to work and then ask them to return to their places.

Ask each team to choose a spokesperson to share with the rest of the group what their definition of obedience is.

Listen to the definitions and write them on the board. As a group, they can then agree on a common definition

To make this definition for people of faith to be different from that of a normal dictionary, be sure to include something about the attitude present in obedience. For example, "with a joyful attitude."

Here are some sample definitions: "To do willingly what someone in authority asks me to do." "To submit my will to someone else's will, without complaining, argument or defiance." "To perform politely the task requested by someone in authority."

That looks good in writing. Is this definition similar to the way in which you all obey?

- Whom do we obey?

We speak about obeying but many times we obey the wrong voices.

Certainly our first goal is to obey God, but how do we know what God wants us to do? God has given us the Bible, which is full of instructions for us. These instructions tell us what are the good things we need to do.

God has also delegated to people here on earth the task of being in authority. And God asks us to obey these authorities because God himself has established them (*Romans 13:1*).

Who are people in positions of authority? *Let the youth answer (police, teachers, pastors, parents, government)*

Whom should we obey? *Let the youth answer. (People in authority, principally authority from God)*

Many times instead of obeying these people we obey others.

For example, our friends. Some times our friends tell us to do things that don't sound bad or illogical, but if we analyze them we can realize that they are different from what God asks of us.

- What are some obstacles to obedience?

What keeps us from obeying those in authority?

Let the youth answer..

Generally, it is not that we are forced to disobey, it is just that we decide ourselves not to obey.

- We may not obey because of fear. We might fear not looking good in front of our friends if we obey. We might fear that they'll mock us or call us a bad name. We might fear that they may change their opinion of us. We prefer to be well liked and not to look bad in front of our friends. We might be more afraid of our friends than of offending God.

What do you think Moses thought when God asked him to go talk with Pharaoh? Or with the Israelites?

- Another reason to disobey is because we do not like to be uncomfortable. Some times what we are told to do is something that is not easy or pleasant. It would be much more comfortable not to do it. Some times what we are asked to do takes time and we prefer to invest our time in something we like more.

Let's Take It One Step Further

Share with the youth something from your own life about obedience.

It can be a time when you really did not feel like obeying Biblical instructions but that even without wanting to you did it and received a blessing because of it

Or you can share an area in your life where it is difficult to obey but constantly you make yourself do it even when you might look bad to others.

Likewise, ask the youth to share something from their own experience.

Youth like to disobey their parents because they do not want to stop watching TV.

What do the youth treasure that keeps them from obeying God?

If they are asked to follow an order while they are something they actually enjoy doing (one of the things they shared at the beginning of class), do they stop doing it and obey joyfully?

To be vulnerable in front of others is not easy to do, but it is an exercise in humility and recognizing our need for God.

Application

You are a person who can obey or disobey God. If you obey God, you show God you love him just like Moses did. The Bible tells us that people of faith cannot say they love God if they are not willing to obey God.

The Bible is full of instruction for us, God's people of faith. They are not bad or wrong orders. They are commands given by a God who loves us and wants the best for each of us.

So, next time you do not feel like obeying, for fear of what others will say, or because you don't want to leave your comfort zone, or because you want to do what you wish, in any event: obey!

Choose to obey in every situation in your life.

Choose to obey with a good attitude even if you don't feel like obeying.

Choose to obey without delay, without complaining or excuses.

Will you do it?

Obedience some times is hard but it is not impossible if we ask God to help us. God will give us courage and the ability to obey.

When we don't obey, we have to ask God forgiveness, because we have offended God.

Option : Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. Collect journals from students and store them in a safe place where no one else can access them. They will take their journals home on Friday.

Conclusion

People of faith love God and show it by being obedient.

God asks us to obey what he left us in writing in the Bible, which is his Word.

Obeying is glorifying God doing what is right and this brings peace and true happiness.

Obedience is not easy. Many times it interferes with our own interest and our comfort, but it is not impossible if we ask God to help us.

Obedience is truly an act of love towards God. If I obey I show that I love him with my whole heart, with all my soul, with all my strength and with all my mind.

** Disobedience is only allowed if...*

what they are ordering me to do goes against what God asks me. God will never ask me do something bad. God asks me to do things that in the end are good for me. For example, if someone asks me to lie about my age in order to get a discount, I should not do it because it goes against what God asks me in the Bible, which is to speak the truth.

People of Faith

David: Trust

Youth

Prepare Prepare for this lesson by reading I Samuel 17:1-58 Psalm 22:4-5 Psalm 28:7, Psalm 56:3-4, Proverbs 3:5, 2 Cor.12:5-10. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.

Plan What materials and room arrangements will you need for this lesson? Consider how you will make the telling of the Bible story come alive for the students. Make sure all of your physical needs are planned for well ahead of time.

Practice Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

Welcome the students.

Review the theme from yesterday (Obedience)

Go over the memorized passages for yesterday and today.

Memory Passage for Today

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13 (NRSV)

Introduction

Tell the students: Today we are going to focus on what it means to trust God. We are going to discover how God is always with us and makes us strong, so we don't have to be afraid.

Bible Lesson

Passage for the day: I Samuel 17:1-58

You may choose to tell the story using the following paraphrase or asking a couple of students to take turns reading the story right out of the Bible. Whatever method you use, make it as dramatic as possible so the students can connect with the events.

Today I am going to tell you a Bible story about a boy named David and a giant named Goliath.

David lived in Israel and was a shepherd (he took care of sheep) and Goliath was a soldier for the Philistines. There was a war between the army of Israel (the people of God) and the Philistines (who were Israel's enemies). The king of Israel, Saul, was with the army as they set up camp across a valley from where their enemies, the Philistines were. They were getting ready to go to battle. Just as they were getting ready to fight, the Philistines sent to the front of their army a soldier whose name was Goliath. Goliath was a giant of a man! He was nearly 9 feet tall (almost as tall as a basketball hoop!) and his armor alone weighed as

much as a person! Goliath stood there and yelled at the soldiers from Israel: “Why do you come to fight us? Look, choose one of your soldiers to come up and fight me, one on one. I dare you! If your soldier wins, then we the Philistines will be servants to Israel. BUT, if I win, then all of Israel will become servants of the Philistines.” When king Saul and all of Israel’s army heard this giant Goliath, they became very afraid. Morning and evening for forty days Goliath would shout at the Israelites like this, and they didn’t dare send a soldier to fight him.

David was a young shepherd who had three of his brothers as soldiers in Israel’s army. David came to where the army was to bring some food for his brothers because David’s father was worried about them. While David was there, he heard Goliath come out to threaten the army of Israel, and David saw that Israel’s soldiers were afraid of Goliath. David said: “This is terrible! Goliath is offending God’s army and poking fun at our God. What would King Saul do for the person who defeats this giant Philistine soldier?” The soldiers responded: “The King would be glad and reward that person.”

Someone told King Saul what David had said, and King Saul asked to speak with David. David told Saul: “Don’t be afraid, King Saul, because I will go and fight this Philistine.” Saul told David: “Look, you are much too young and inexperienced. You could never defeat him!” David replied “Listen, I have been out in the field watching my father’s sheep, and there have been times when lions or bears have come to try to eat the sheep. God has been with me in those moments, and with God’s help I have been able to kill these lions and bears. The God who saved me from lions and bears will save me from this Philistine.” So Saul said to David, “Fine, go, and may God be with you!”

Saul tried to help David prepare for this battle by putting on David a helmet on his head and an armor on his body and giving him his heavy sword. But David was so small that all these heavy things made it very difficult for him even to walk! So, David took these things off and instead of a sword he took his sling and chose five smooth rocks from a nearby riverbed and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch. With his sling in hand, and got close to the Philistine, and the Philistine began to make fun of young David and curse at him. “Is that the best you have? You send a little boy to come fight a man? You won’t last!” But David answered: “You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the LORD, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have offended. Today, God will give me victory over you! And just so everybody can see it was God, I will defeat you not with a sword or spear, because this battle belongs to God and God will defeat you.” Goliath was furious and ran towards David, but David took a stone from his pouch and with his sling he flung it at Goliath. The rock hit Goliath in the middle of his forehead so hard that the giant soldier fell and the battle was over. When the Philistines saw that their champion was defeated, they ran away in panic and the Israelite army ran after them

David alone could never have defeated Goliath, but with God on his side, God gave David the victory over Goliath and the Philistine army.

Connecting With The Passage

Discuss the following questions, and encourage responses from all participants.

1. **Why were the soldiers of Israel so afraid in this story?** *They were very afraid of Goliath, because he was such a giant. They did not think they could defeat him one on one.*
2. **Why do you think Goliath wanted to fight one on one with another soldier and have that fight count for the whole war?** *Goliath wanted the Israelites to be scared, and since he had such a size advantage of any individual soldier from Israel, Goliath knew that he would win. He taunted the Israelites for forty days! Without God, it is certain that they could not defeat Goliath or the Philistines. It is interesting that the Israelite army seemed to forget that God was on their side.*
3. **Why was David so upset about what Goliath was saying?** *Because he was disrespecting God and the army of God.*
4. **When talking with King Saul, what did David say had prepared him to fight Goliath?** *David tells Saul about the times when David had killed lions and bears threatening his family's sheep. Notice that David realizes that he was only able to kill these animals because he trusted in God, so he actually says it was God who saved him from the lion and the bear.*
5. **What made it look like David could never defeat this giant?** *David was not a soldier, was young and much smaller than Goliath. David didn't have the same weapons that Goliath had.*
6. **What did David know would make the difference to make David defeat Goliath?** *David knew that putting his trust in God alone would bring him victory, because he knew that God wanted Israel's army to win.*
7. **How did David make sure that anybody seeing this fight between him and Goliath would have known that it was God who was going to win the fight and not David?** *With no weapon other than his sling, David didn't seem well equipped to defeat the giant. David made it clear that the victory would come not from David's might, but from God's might. David says: "You come at me with weapons, but I come against you in the name of the Lord and with the Lord's power"*
8. **Do you think that David was afraid? Why or why not?** *Perhaps he was a little nervous, because he was human, but he was not afraid because God had delivered David before and so David knew that God would do it again, and David felt that God was definitely on his side against the Philistines.*
9. **Did David brag about being the one who defeated Goliath?** *No, instead he said it had been God all along who defeated Goliath.*
10. **What are some of David's qualities that we should emulate? What examples can you give of David displaying these qualities in the story?** *Hard working (shepherding), Obedient (to father, to King Saul), Faithful (to God), Brave, Trusted God, Humble (knew it was God doing all this)*
11. **What does it mean to trust in God?** *Let the class offer their thoughts, then read to them Psalm 28:7 "The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him." Trust implies knowing that the strength we need does not come from us, but comes from God. Trust means not relying only on ourselves, but completely relying on God. The more we trust in God and rely in God's power, the more God is able to do through us.*

12. **What are times when it is easy to trust in God and times when it is harder?** *How easy or difficult it is to trust God varies from person to person. Knowing that God has helped us in the past helps us trust God: “In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.” Psalm 22:4-5. “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me?” Psalm 56:3-4 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.” Proverbs 3:5 Still, it is human nature to try to be independent, and so we all need to grow in how we trust God to lead us in our lives.*
13. **What kind of difficulty or problem would frighten you if you had to face it all alone? How can you trust God completely in these situations so it is God fighting the battle, not you?**

Application

Have a student read aloud 2 Cor.12:5-10.

1. **What does it mean when Paul writes “[God’s] grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness... Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong”?** *Paul talks about being weak (on his own power) and being strong (only through God’s grace). You’re at the age when you want to do things on your own, you want to be independent, self-sufficient. The temptation is to think that you don’t need anyone to do what you want to do. Paul is saying that can only get us so far. The real strength does not come from us, but comes from God. And the only way for us to access that divine strength is to let go of our efforts to be “strong” and by being “weak” we let God be all of our strength.*
2. **Trusting God takes discipline, prayer, and risking “weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ.” But with Christ on our side, we have God’s strength, and like with David, although we are weak, we are able to do things far beyond what our own strength would have accomplished.**

Option 1:

Using the activity sheet, have the students write how their limits may be overcome if they put their trust in God. Encourage them to consider that it was not David who defeated Goliath, but rather it was God working through David. Encourage them to think of places in their lives (school, family, friends) where they might feel overwhelmed by themselves, but with God’s help they could overcome their difficulties. Our strength or courage comes from God, so it is not really our strength or courage but rather God’s.

Option 2, Seeing As God Sees:

Using the activity sheet, have students think of a particular challenge or problem, then have them write outside the glasses how we see things and inside lenses how we will see things differently if we trust in God completely.

Option 3: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. Collect journals from students and store them in a safe place where no one else can access them. They will take their journals home on Friday.

Remember that when you are doing something, no matter how difficult or scary it is, you are never alone. God is always with you and God will guide you to do the right thing. God helps you be smarter, braver, nicer, more patient and obedient. If we try to do things all by ourselves, we might not be able to get too far. But with God, we can do all things! *(review the verse for today)*

Let's Take It One Step Further

(This section is optional: if you decide to skip this section, go straight to Conclusion)

Option 1

TRUST FALL: *Have every group member find a partner of approximately equal height and weight. One partner will be the one who falls, and one will be the one who catches (it may be a good idea to have one person fall and more than one person be the catchers, to ensure no one is hurt). The partners will get the chance to act in both roles. The faller's responsibilities are to stay as straight as possible, not to bend at the waist or knees, keep their arms across their chest, and communicate with the catcher(s). The responsibilities for the catcher(s) are to get in a sturdy stance (usually one leg in front of the other in a lunge position), be aware, keep their hands right below the faller's shoulder blades, use the arms as shock absorbers, not to underestimate the force being generated by the faller, and constantly communicate with and reassure the faller. The faller will be standing with his/her back to the catcher(s), who is(are) standing three feet behind the faller facing the faller's back. When the faller is ready, the catcher(s) will hold out their hands very near the faller's shoulder blades without touching the faller yet. The catcher(s) will then give the signal for the faller to close his/her eyes and slowly begin to fall straight back, without bending at the knees or waist. As the faller's body leans backward, the catcher(s) follows the body's fall closely with his/her hands without touching the faller. Just before half way down the fall, the catcher(s) will catch the faller's shoulders in his/her hands and gently slow the fall's progress until the catcher(s) is(are) able to stop the descent completely before the faller reaches the ground. After three tries, the partners should switch roles.*

Option 2

Let's practice what it means to trust.

Trust Walk

Materials: Blindfold

Have the students each get a partner. Blindfold one of each pair. The other person in the couple will lead the one blindfolded giving verbal instructions (and should only reach out

to hold them to keep them from stumbling over something). If possible, lead the kids on a walk around the building and outside (if it's not possible to go outside, guide them within the church building). Have the seeing partner guide the blindfolded partner describing what they are passing and being sure to steer them away from all objects in their path. Midway through the walk have the partners trade jobs. When you return to the classroom discuss the activity with them.

Ask: What was it like to be blindfolded? What was it like to be the guide? How did you have to trust each other? Trust the guide not to let us run into things, trust them to tell us the truth about what they were seeing. How is trusting in God like trusting your guide? Trust him even though you can't see him, listen to his word (the Bible)

NOTE Give the group members the opportunity to say "no" to these exercises. Trust activities are very serious activities.

Ask: What was it like closing your eyes and falling back? Who did you have to trust in this activity? How is falling back into your partners arms like trusting God? How do you know you can trust God?

Conclusion

It is easy to think that David was the one that defeated Goliath, that even though David may have been young and inexperienced it was his ability to use the sling that won him this battle. But what the Bible tells us is clear: it was God working through David. What David did was trust God so completely, that it was God acting through David to defeat the Philistine and show the people that they needed to trust in God. David didn't brag and say "I am a giant killer" but instead he proclaimed "God gave us this victory." Continue to think about areas in your life where God wants you to trust him more, so that it is not you alone fighting, but instead it is God giving you these victories to honor God. And when God gives you those victories, don't go bragging about what YOU did, but tell others that because you TRUSTED in God this happened, so therefore the one that deserves the credit is God.

People of Faith
David: Trust
Youth

*By himself, David...
Would have been too scared to
fight Goliath*

*Putting his trust in God, David...
Was able to feel God's power
and God used David to defeat
Goliath.*

By myself I ...

Putting my trust in God, I ...

Dad by himself or Mom by herself, they ...

Putting their trust in God, Mom or Dad...

People of Faith
David: Trust
Youth



People of Faith

Ruth: Love

Youth

Before class

Prepare Prepare for this lesson by reading Ruth 1 - 2:12, Jer. 17:9. 1 Cor. 13: 4-7, 1 John 4:8. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.

Plan Materials you will need for this lesson: Paper for each student, pencils and a blackboard or something to write on, your driver's license or another photo ID.

Practice Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

Greet the group.
Briefly go over the lesson learned yesterday.

Memory Passage for Today

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35 (NRSV)

Introduction

Show the group your license or ID
Ask them what these documents are for.
Let the students give answers.

One of the purposes of these documents is that they identify the ID's holder. This card identifies me. At the very least people will know my age. But there is in it other information about me that is important. Name, address, etc.

In summary, the ID identifies me in people's eyes
People of faith should show something that identifies us as such, but we can't show an ID card or wear a uniform. What we should show to identify ourselves is: love.

Listen to what John 13:35 says. *Read it or make a previous arrangement with someone in class to read it at this point.*

This passage says that ALL will know that we are followers of Christ or disciples by the way we treat one another.

Love is our ID card as people of faith. People will recognize us as part of the family of faith when they see the love we practice towards one another.

But, what exactly is love?

Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask each of them to write a definition of what love is.

Then ask them to return the pencils and put away their definition for now.

The Bible talks to us about a woman who showed love to the family of faith and this was her ID in the eyes of the community. She was Ruth the Moabite.

We are going to study her example to learn what the Bible tells us about love.

Bible Lesson

Read Ruth 1-2:12 ahead of time to prepare for the class.

Ruth and Orpah were two Moabite women who were married to Naomi's two sons. Naomi was a widow from Judah. After a few years of marriage, the two sons also died leaving Naomi and the two Moabites widowed.

Naomi decided to return to her land and send her two daughters-in-law back to their own people. Orpah decided to return to her people but Ruth decided to stay with her mother-in-law Naomi.

The kinship between them was through marriage. When Ruth's son (who was Naomi's son) died, the kinship was dissolved.

But Ruth said something very beautiful and interesting to Naomi in Ruth 1: 16-17.

Have a previous arrangement with a student to stand up and read aloud this passage at this time.

In what Ruth tells Naomi, she is establishing a link between them much stronger than linkage by marriage or by blood relation. Now they would have the same God. Now they would belong to the same people even if they had been born to different nations. Now they were part of the people of God. They were people of faith, part of the great family where members loves one another.

Now, as part of the same family, Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem, Naomi's hometown.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, it was the beginning of the barley harvest. In biblical times, it was allowed for people in need to glean in the fields so long as they had permission and gleaned after the gleaners (workers) had gone through the field first. This way, the main harvesting was for the land owner but from that same field people in need would also feed.

Let's read what happened then.

Read Ruth 2:1-12. You may ask the group members to take turns reading aloud a verse each until the passage is finished.

**In verse 12 Boaz says to Ruth "May the Lord reward you for your deeds"
Of what deeds is Boaz speaking?**

Let the group answer.

(Ruth did not have a husband; she was a widow. She did not have to stay with her mother-in-law but she decided on her own to do just that.

Ruth had to do some physical labor to help Naomi and get enough food for both of them.. The hard work would have been physically demanding: stooping to gather those ears of grain under the hot sun for hours. The workers had told Boaz that she had been at it since morning)

Verse 11 suggests that Boaz knew something about Ruth. Though seeing her work was the first time he had seen, he had already heard about her.

Boaz knew that Ruth was a widow; he knew that she had decided to leave her father and mother and stay with her mother-in-law. He knew that Ruth was far from her land, her people, and that she had voluntarily traveled to an unknown land.

The love that Ruth showed her mother-in-law Naomi was her ID card before Boaz and surely before other people.

This love was evidence she belonged to the people of faith, that she was part of this great family, a family where members love each other.

We are called to love one another.

But to know what it means exactly to love another person, we need to start by defining what love means. Let's look at what the Bible teaches us about love.

1. Love is not just a feeling.

Some times we define love as a feeling, and while it is true that feelings are involved, it is not only that.

God calls us to act out our love even when we don't feel nicely towards another person.

In Matthew 5:44, God asks us to love our enemies. What would happen if I had to wait until I felt like loving my enemy before I had to do it? *Encourage class participation (they could stop being my enemies; I'd never love them; it would be impossible to obey this commandment from God; etc.)*

That nice feeling we have towards some people is a blessing related to love, but it is not its essence.

2. Love implies that a decision is made.

We decide to love and we act accordingly. When we relate with people that we love we don't always have nice feeling towards them but, even though I may not feel "love" at that moment, I have decided to love this person and I should act accordingly based on that decision.

The media sometimes may promote ideas that go contrary to this truth. For instance: "Do what you heart tells you" or "You can't tell the heart what to do." These are ideas that imply that we should act according to our feelings, but what happens if I am not feeling "nice feelings" at that very moment? What happens if I feel like offending or hurting someone? The Bible says: "The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse-- who can understand it?" Jer. 17:9

That is precisely when one should not act according to how one feels but one should make the decision to love and then act accordingly.

3. Love implies action.

Love is not something you see. Love is not just words but it is something that shows up through actions.

The saying: “Actions speak louder than words” is true. If you say to someone that you love them but you treat them badly, it is most likely that you do not truly love them. But acting lovingly is not always easy because many times it implies time and effort. When we love someone, many times we have to sacrifice for that person. Maybe it is time, or money, maybe it is not doing something you like or not going to a place where you would have liked to have gone , etc.

God not only told us that he loved us, but acted out that love by sending his only son to us. The Bible says that God showed his love for us by sending his son to die on the cross for us. This definitely was an act of love.

- This is an action intended to benefit the person whom we love. When we love someone, we need to seek their wellbeing, not our own. We should ask ourselves: what is best for this person?

It is not about what is best for me, but for the other person. For example, for a student, it would be great to be completely free in the afternoon after school for homework and other activities, but if they say they love their parents, then it is necessary to invest time helping mom with chores or errands.

How were you able to see this type of love in Ruth?

How did she decide to love her mother-in-law?

How is it clear that love implies action?

Let's Take It One Step Further

Give an example from your own life when you were angry at someone and you did not “feel” love for that person but you decided to treat them well, kindly and even to do something for that person instead of doing something “revengeful.”

In the example, show that love is more than a feeling, but it is a decision and a visible action.

Group Activity

Take out the paper on which you wrote your definition of love.

Read what you wrote. What do you think now about that definition you wrote?

Those who are willing may share with the group: what would you change? What would you add? What would you take out?

Ask the class to divide into groups and have each group try to write a definition of love. After working on it for a while, ask each of the groups to share their definition with the class and write a common definition for love on the board with their help.

(The definition of love which was provided to the adult class was: to seek the other person's wellbeing)

Reflection

There are many types of families.

Some people define family according to the people that live under the same roof.

Other people define family according to the blood running through your veins.

But when we talk about the family of the people of faith, we are referring to the family we form because we have the same Heavenly Father.

The family of the people of faith lives in different parts of the world, speaks different languages, belongs to different social classes but has the same Heavenly Father. And that makes us brothers and sisters.

Others should know that we are part of the people of faith by the way in which we love one another. We should be recognized by how we treat each other.

Do you actively love your spiritual family?

Do you decide to show love to your brother or sister even when you don't feel like doing it?

Do they know that you are a person of faith when they see the love you show to others?

Application

Read 1 Cor. 13: 4-7

This is a biblical definition of what love is.

Sometimes we think that love only refers to nice things but that is not always true, really.

If when you love someone you do look for the other's wellbeing and not your own, then you probably have times when you have to decide to do things that are not very pleasant to still show your love for them.

Can you give examples of what this might be like?

Invite the group to participate (Seeking out the person who doesn't say hello to you in order to greet them; seeking reconciliation with someone even if the situation was not your fault; being kind to someone we don't like much; being kind to the person who mocks us or is not nice to us, etc.)

Read again 1 Cor. 13:4-7

This is the type of love by which people of faith should be identified. This is the type of love we should show one another.

This is the type of love you should practice.

Look for opportunities to show this love to people around you.

Actively seek the opportunity to show love with your actions to members of the great family which makes up the people of faith.

- **Remember that it implies the decision to do it but it also implies action, even when the feeling is not present. (It is not being hypocritical, but it is being obedient, Matthew 5:44).**
- **Remember that God asks us to treat others like we want to be treated, and you like being treated with love.**

If you have not treated someone with love, you need to ask God for forgiveness. God will forgive you.

**Think of a person whom you have not loved in this way and do it.
If you think it will not be easy, ask God for help. God will help you.**

Option: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. Collect journals from students and store them in a safe place where no one else can access them. They will take their journals home on Friday.

Conclusion

People of faith show their love for God by loving their neighbor.

We can't say that we love God and then not love our neighbor, because the Bible says in 1 John 4:8 that is not possible.

So, if we truly love God, we will love our neighbor.

It is not about not doing to others what we don't like done to us, but it is about doing to others what we like done to us.

The people of faith are a big family where everyone loves each other.

Just like Ruth's love for Naomi was her ID, we should be known for the love we show each other.

Then we would be living out what God asks us to do:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27

People of Faith

Martha and Mary: Service

Youth

Before Class

- Prepare* Prepare for this lesson by reading Luke 10:38-42, Matthew 25:31-46, 1st Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31, Galatians 5:16-26, James 2:14-17. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.
- Plan* What materials and room arrangements will you need for this lesson? Make sure all of your physical needs are planned for well ahead of time.
- Practice* Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

- Welcome the children.*
Review the themes for the previous days (Obedience, Courage, Love)
Go over the memorized passages for the week and for today

Memory Passage for Today

The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all. I Corinthians 12:7 (Today's English Version)

Introduction

Tell the students: Today we are going to focus on what gifts God has given us (things we do well naturally or do well after much practice) and how we are to use them in the way God wants us to use them. Our focus will be the word Service, that is, how we serve God. God wants us to serve God with our unique gifts.

Bible Lesson, Option 1: Four Strand Garland

Passage for the day: Luke 10:38-42

Tell students: We are going to read today's Bible passage in a new way which is part prayer, part scripture reading. I am going to ask five of you to take turns reading the passage. Once you have the volunteers, make sure you have Bibles or photocopies of the passage available for them.

Here is how we are going to do this. We will sit here in silence for a few moments, trying to focus ourselves in God. If during this time of reading and praying you find your mind wandering or getting distracted, simply let those thoughts go and focus on quieting down your mind. **Let's begin.** Let them have about fifteen or thirty seconds of silence. They may close their eyes if they want to. **Pay attention to your breathing: feel yourself taking a breath; feel yourself exhale.** Let them have about fifteen or thirty seconds of silence. **Now our first volunteer will read the passage through once, reading it slowly. We will listen to the**

passage and on this first time through the passage, I want you to think of what the story is all about. *After this first reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.*

Focus on your breathing. *Pause for a few seconds.* Now our second volunteer will read the passage. This time, reflect about what God is trying to teach you with this story. *After this reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.*

Our third volunteer will read now. Remember to breathe. *Pause for a few seconds.* Now, how does this passage make you feel gratitude towards God? *After this reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.*

It's time to read it again, and this time what I want you to do is consider: Is there something I need to confess to God? Do I need to admit to God that I have missed opportunities to serve God? *After this reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.*

We will now hear the passage read one last time, and I want you to think about how God is using this passage to guide you and tell you how to serve God better. *After this reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.*

Let's slowly come back from our attitude of reflection and prayer. You may open your eyes now. Would anyone like to share some of what they felt God was saying to them? *Focus first on the lessons of gratitude and instruction. If the students don't feel comfortable sharing, invite them to continue to reflect on these insights internally.*

Bible Lesson, option 2: Dramatic Reading

Passage for the day: Luke 10:38-42

If you feel that your class would not get into doing Option 1, then ask several students to collaborate reading the Bible passage. Student 1 will read the narrator parts. Student 2 will be the voice of Martha. Student 3 will be the voice of Jesus. Encourage them to be creative and engaged in their reading. Be sure they are reading the same version of the Bible (you can provide them with Bibles or photocopies of the text).

Connecting With The Passage

Discuss the following questions, and encourage responses from all participants.

1. **When Jesus went from town to town, he and his disciples depended upon the kindness of the townspeople for food and shelter. When Martha saw Jesus in her town, what did she do?** *She invited him into her home for a meal.*
2. **A guest in those days would receive the best the host had to offer. Martha was hurrying around to give the best she had to Jesus. What did her sister Mary do?** *Mary sat at Jesus' feet to hear what he had to say.*
3. **Martha was upset that Mary did not help fix a meal for Jesus. Was Jesus also upset?** *No, Jesus was not upset.*
4. **What did Jesus tell Martha? What do you think that means?** *Martha! Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken from her. --- We need to focus first on learning from Jesus about God, and all other things can come after that.*
5. **Do you think Jesus appreciated Martha? Why?** *Answers will vary. Encourage reflection on the contributions Martha and Mary were making to Jesus' ministry.*

6. **When it comes to serving God, are you more likely to be like Martha or like Mary? Why?** *Answers will vary. Encourage reflection on whether they prefer action or reflecting, leading or following, etc.*
7. **Being here in Vacation Bible School means that we are like Mary, because we come here to learn about God. What are some of the things we have learned about God and Jesus so far this week?** *Answers will vary. Encourage reflection on the main themes: Being obedient, asking God to give us courage, loving other people. That's great! It is very important that we continue to learn about God, not just this week, but every week at church, and at home, reading our Bible. Since we are learning all those things about God, now God wants us to use the gifts God has given us to serve God...*

Application

1. **Each one of us has gifts that God has given us, things we can do and things we are good at. What are some of the gifts that God has given you?** *I am good in school. I can sing. I am good at playing soccer. I play an instrument. I help my parents with housework. I take care of my little brother. I am nice to people. etc.*
2. **Jesus needs each of us to serve him according to what we do to serve others. The Bible tells us that anything we do for others, we do for Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46). God said: "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me." But the people said: when did we see you like that, Lord? And God replied "I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did it for me."**

Let's think about what kinds of things we can all do to serve God by helping others or by being active in church.

***Option 1:** Give the students old magazines or newspapers which they can use to find pictures of people doing things that represent service. Instruct them to find pictures that remind us of ways we can serve God. It could be pictures of cleaning, singing, helping someone else, etc. Encourage creative responses that help others and that can relate to ministries in a church. Have them share their pictures and create together a class collage on a piece of poster board. Entitle it something like "Using our gifts to serve God."*

***Option 2:** Have the students consider what gets in the way of serving God. Give each student a piece of string, about 12 inches long. Ask them to name things that can be obstacles to serving, and when they do, have them make a knot on the string (leaving at least two inches free on either end of the string). They can make several knots, spacing them out. When they have made several knots, have them help each other tie the string somewhat loosely around their wrist as a bracelet. Cut off the left any leftover string. Encourage them to use the bracelet as a tool when they pray to ask God for strength to overcome those obstacles.*

Let's Take It One Step Further

God gives each of us spiritual gifts. “The Spirit’s presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.” (I Corinthians 12:7). This 1st Corinthians passage lists several spiritual gifts. Have a student read I Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31. Write down on the board (if one is available to you) each of the gifts or positions mentioned. (Remind the class that this list is only a partial list, that God gives other gifts as well.). Ask the class: **Name people they know in their families, in the church, who have these gifts. How do they use them to help others, to serve in the church? What are things you can do to follow their example of service? Do you have any examples in your own life of how you have used the gifts God has given you to serve God?**

*Invite your class to pause now and say a prayer. Tell them to be open to how God is guiding them to serve. Lead them in this prayer: **Lord, we are grateful that you give us gifts and that you offer us opportunities to use them. As we read these scriptures, deep down we can hear you calling us to use our gifts in new ways. Where do you want us to serve you, Lord? Pause here for a few seconds. How do you want us to serve you in your church? Pause here for a few seconds. How can we serve you by serving people in need? Pause here for a few seconds. Thank you for the way your Spirit speaks to us and guides us to love you and serve you better. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.***

Give students a blank piece of paper and a blank envelope. Have them write down on the top of the page: “three ways in which I feel God is leading me to serve Him.” Tell them this is a note they are writing themselves, a note no one else needs to see. Once they have finished the note, have them fold it and insert it in the envelope. Tell them that when they have sealed the envelope, they should write their name and address on it for you to mail it to them in two weeks as a reminder. If you think mailing the notes is not practical, have them write their name on the envelope and write: Open on date x (a date two weeks from the day you are conducting this lesson). If you are mailing the notes, collect them at this time. If you are not mailing them, ask them to take their note home and place it where they will be able to find it in two weeks.

Option: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. Collect journals from students and store them in a safe place where no one else can access them. They will take their journals home on Friday.

Conclusion

Our week together is almost over, but I want to encourage you to keep thinking about ways in which you can serve God. Remember that God gives each of us a way to serve him with our talents and gifts. And remember that when we use those gifts to help others, we are serving God. People of faith serve God in any way they can.

People of Faith

Jesus and the Children: Faith Youth

Before Class

Prepare Prepare for this lesson by reading Matthew 18:3-6; 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18: 15-17, John 20:29, Psalm 14:1 y 86:15, Hebrews 11:1 y 11:6.. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.

Plan Materials that you will need for this lesson: Bible. Chair (be sure it is sturdy). Newsprint and marker or blackboard and chalk. For the optional activity, paper and pencil for each person

Practice Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

*Greet the group.
Briefly go over the lesson learned yesterday.*

Memory Passage for Today

Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Mark 10:14 (NRSV)

Introduction

This week we have been talking about what it means to be a person of faith, but we have not talked about what is faith ? What does it mean to have faith?

Listen to their replies.

We can explain what we understand faith to be with our own words, but God has given us a definition of faith.

Let's read Hebrews 11:1 to find the definition.

Read the passage together with the group if you choose a well known version. Read it aloud by yourself if you choose a less popular version.

- **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (King James)**
- **Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (New International Version)**

- **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (New Revised Standard Version)**

Let me give you an example:

Here is a chair (*show the chair and place it in front of the group.*)

I am certain that these four legs are going to be able to support my weight without a problem.

I am convinced, I have full confidence that this chair was designed and made so that I may sit down on it even though I cannot see how strong it actually is.

Now I am going to sit on it and I guarantee you that it will support my weight.

Sit on the chair.

I sat on the chair because I had faith it would support me.

A person that has faith does not act like a person who doubts or a person who worries. You do not doubt every time you sit down on a chair as to whether the chair will be strong enough to support you.

You do not worry about the chair you'll use when you sit down for dinner.

All you do is that when you want to sit down you do, and do it without worrying, without doubts, with full confidence.

In the same way, a person that has faith fully trusts.

They trust in God, at all times and in any situation.

God wants those who love him to have faith in him. The people of faith are precisely that: they are people of faith, that is, people that believe in God, and in this way, they show their love for God.

Jesus knows that children give a clear example of what it means to have faith, and in fact, we read in the New Testament that Jesus set them up as an example for his disciples and for the entire crowd with him.

Bible Lesson

Read ahead of time Matthew 18:3-6; 19:13-15; Mark 10: 13-16; Luke 18: 15-17

Read aloud Mark 10:13-16.

In this story we see that Jesus gives no instructions to prevent the children from coming to him, instead he sets them up as an example. Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them, but that is not all he said. Jesus says that we should receive the Kingdom of Heaven as children do.

Some of us could think that we should be like children, and that is what he said, but at times children do behave in ways they shouldn't (*tantrums, disobeying, being selfish, etc.*)

So, what does it mean?

Let's read the passage again. *Read it in unison.*

It says that we should be like children in a specific way, in the way they receive the kingdom of heaven.

How does a child receive the kingdom of heaven? With FAITH.

In the Matthew 18: 6 passage, Jesus is talking about children and mentions that they believe in him, that is, that they have faith in him.

So, children are examples of faith.

But, what is the child's faith like?

Let's analyze a child's faith to learn what it is that we have to imitate from them.

A child's faith is very clear when we speak of their relationship with their parents.

Write down on the board the following key phrases.

Try to share an example from your own experience with children (or someone else's experience) for each of the points.

✓ **Children trust instead of worry.**

A child does not spend all day worrying about whether his/her parents will feed him/her, because generally a parent will give the child what they need.

Parents, in general, give their children food, clothing, a place to sleep. So, the children will play during the day or do other things except worry about what they will eat or wear or where they'll sleep.

- **Just as children trust in their parents instead of worrying, in the same way we need to trust in our Heavenly Father.**

Listen to Matthew 6:26-32 (Read the passage or ask ahead of time for someone to read the passage at this point) . If the birds and the lilies do not worry, we should not worry because we are worth more in God's eyes.

Read again verse 30. What quality is displayed by people who do not trust that God will care for them? (they don't have much faith).

✓ **Trust shows the certainty that another person is trustworthy.**

Children trust their parents because they know that their parents will take care of them.

They know that they can count on their parents.

- **Just as the parents take care of their children, so God takes care of his own.**

Parents may be imperfect in their job as parents, but God is not.

God is a Father that provides for his children what they need. God is a Father that gives more than what we need, and fills us with blessings.

When he does not give us something it is because we don't need it or we should not have it.

I am not speaking only about material goods, but I am talking about any situation in life.

God is our Father and he has a plan laid out for us, and does not act on a whim or as it occurs to him, but acts according to what will make us better every day. We can trust in God in any situation because God is committed to the work he has in progress in each of us.

When we go through hard times, it may seem that God has forgotten us or that God is not in control of all things, but the truth is that even in our difficult moments God is with us.

When something happens that seems bad, do not ask yourself “Why?” but ask yourself “What was this for?” Remember that God has a specific purpose for all that happens. So, what is God asking you to learn through this tough situation? What virtue is God wanting you to practice in the problem you are working through?

God is all-powerful, is good, is sovereign and is trustworthy.

You have to trust instead of worry because God is trustworthy. Let God to take care of you.

✓ **Children believe their parents exist rather than doubt they exist.**

A child knows their parents are real. When they are in school and can't see their parents, they don't doubt that the parents stopped existing, but they know that even though they don't see them, they still exist.

- **Just as the children believe in their parent's existence even when they can't see them every minute of the day, in the same way we need to believe in the existence of our Heavenly Father.**

Parents are not immune from sickness, accidents or death, but God is.

For people, (*parents*) there are limits of time and space, but not for God.

God has always existed and will always exist, and we are always in his presence. Jesus told Thomas in John 20:29: “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Believing shows our confidence that we trust the other person exists and is real.

Children know that their parents are not trying to run away from them.

- **Just as children trust in the existence of their parents, we should believe that God exists and is in control over all things.**

If we don't believe this, we are being foolish (*Psalm 14:1*)

Sometimes we say that we believe in God, but then we act as if God didn't exist:

a) We go through life trying to solve our problems on our own instead of asking God for help.

b) When we have problems or difficulties, we go around asking ourselves: Where is God? as if God were hiding, instead of asking ourselves: How does God want me to act in this situation?

If we decide that we believe in God then we need to live according to that conviction. Living with the certainty that God exists, that God is not a myth or the creation of superstition.

You need to believe instead of doubt in God, knowing that God has always existed and will exist forever.

- ✓ **Children believe their parents are telling them the truth instead of doubt it.**
 - **A child generally will believe what their parent tells them, and does not spend time thinking whether it is logical or possible. The child simply believes.**
- In fact, sometimes parents may lie to their children in a very obvious way to everyone except to the child. For example, you can tell a young child that the stork brings babies to families and they will believe it.**

Children do not doubt that their parents are telling them the truth. They do not evaluate if their parents are telling the truth or not. When parents make a promise to their children, the children expect without a doubt that the promise will be fulfilled. Children do not go around all day doubting whether dad will or will not do what he promised.

- **Just as children believe what parents tell them without doubting, in the same way we should believe everything that God tells us through God's Word, the Bible. God has let us know all about his promises, commands and principles through the Bible. This is why we say the Bible is the word of God.**
- But we don't always take it into account or seriously when it comes to putting it to practice, and that is when we end up showing we don't fully believe it. At times we look for solutions or guidance in places like popular magazines that include "advice," or in the horoscopes, or in other places rather than going to the Bible.**

If we say that we believe in God then we need to live with the conviction that God has given us the solutions in the Bible for all difficulties we might face in life, and that God is in full control of every situation.

- ✓ **Believing shows our certainty that the other person will keep their promises and that what they say is true.**
- Children believe their parents because they are sure that they are not lying to them and that they will keep their promises (whether or not that is true). Even when parents are not able to keep all their promises, children continue to believe in them.**
- **God does not lie because God is truth, and God keeps his promises because God is a faithful God.**

Psalm 86:15 says God is truth, God is faithful, and because of this, we can believe in God instead of doubt.

You can believe in God.

✓ **You should believe the Bible instead of doubt it, because it is God's word.**

In summary, following the children's example, people of faith should:

- 1. Trust in God** (*instead of worrying*).
- 2. Believe in the existence of God** (*instead of doubting*).
- 3. Believe in the Word of God** (*instead of looking for truth elsewhere*).

These are some of the ways it is clear that people of faith love God.

Reflection

If I asked right for you to raise your hand if you believed in God, the majority of you would do it.

But if someone could secretly videotape your life, what would they see?

Would they see a person full of worries instead of full of trust in God?

Would they see a person who doubts God's existence and that God may be real when they face difficulties?

Would they see a person looking for answers to their problems in other places instead of in the Bible?

Let's Take It One Step Further

Share with the group an experience from your own life where in the midst of a problem you decided to solve it without really trying to figure out what God wanted you to do. This "solution" was more a product of your worrying and a byproduct of living like God really didn't exist or were trustworthy.

Optional Activity

Ask for 6 volunteers to come up front.

One of the children will stay in the center and the other 5 will make a tight circle around him/her; all of them are standing

The child in the middle should place his/her feet together on the floor, and keep his/her arms to the side. Then s/he should let him/herself fall either forward or backward without bending his/her knees.

The 5 others around him/her should not let him/her fall, but should push him/her back to the upright position at the center of the circle.

For the child in the middle, this is an exercise in faith.

The child in the middle needs to trust that his/her friends won't let him fall and needs to trust that this will be actually true.

That is what we should do with God: we should believe and trust.

Our friends, even if they really mean to hold us and keep us from falling, may or may not be able to keep us from falling. But with God, that is not true. God will never let us fall. God is real and we can fully trust him.

Application

✓ Trust

One of the clearest ways to show that a person has faith in God is to trust in God. A person of faith trusts in God through any situation. It doesn't matter how tough it is, how painful, or how unjust the situation may seem, you can trust in God.

When you find yourself in a situation in which you may be tempted to doubt or you feel tempted to worry about things that are not within your control, remember who God is, and don't fall for the temptation.

You can trust. You can believe. You can have faith.

✓ Seek communion with God rather than pull away from God.

As with children who are constantly seeking to be with their parents, we should also long for and actively seek a relationship with our Heavenly Father.

A child, even when s/he is independent, will always look for mom or dad to show them the things s/he enjoys or has accomplished. They look for approval from their parents; they want to know what the parents think about what they have done or plan to do. They seek the parents out even if the child has been disciplined recently. The children enjoy talking with their parents, tell them about the TV show they have watched or the joke they heard at school.

In the same way, we should seek communion with God. It is not only about coming to God when we are in need, because even if we don't realize it, we always need God.

Pray and talk with God. Read your Bible and learn who God is and what God expects of you.

Option: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. When they are done, they can take their journals home.

Optional Activity

Hand a half-sheet of paper and a pencil to every student.

Ask them to think for a few minutes about a difficult situation they are going through right now. Ask them to write that situation or problem on the paper and then to fold it in half.

*Then ask them to think if there is something in the midst of this situation which **they** should do.*

Do you get any guidance, in the Bible, for how God is asking you to behave? Is there any guidance, in the Bible, for how God wants you to speak?

Each person has to be responsible for their actions, words and thoughts while they are in a tough situation.

But everything else is in God's hands. God alone can change circumstances; God alone can change the people involved in those tough situations.

So, we can do what we are responsible for and then TRUST in the real and living God.

Write on the paper how God is asking you to be more obedient in the difficult situation you wrote down, and then fold the paper in half again.

Write on the paper: I should trust. I should have faith.

Ask the group to put away their papers and that when they see it in their pocket or purse, that they remember that they have to do what is their responsibility and then to trust in God for the rest. They also have to trust that God will help them to do what we are responsible for, whatever it is they wrote down that they should do.

Trusting in God will help us stay strong and do what is right even if God allows the tough situation to continue.

Conclusion

Faith is very important, because without it, it would be impossible to please God.

That's what Hebrews 11:6 says

“Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

So, have faith. You have a real and living God who is faithful and trustworthy.

Having faith, you will show God that you love God “with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27