



Peter Explains Belief in Jesus

1 Peter 1:3-9

Hard times for third- and fourth-graders may include things such as difficulty in learning new vocabulary or math, hurt feelings at being criticized, or not getting something they really want. These and other struggles can be serious concerns in the minds of your third- and fourth-graders. Help your kids understand they can have faith in God to help them learn during hard times. Then in later years, they can reflect on how God brought them through hard times and will continue to do so throughout their lives.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Hard Times <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Discuss hard times people face.	paper, markers	
2 Bible Exploration	Faith in Hard Times <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Answer questions about difficult situations Christians may face, and experience their teacher being "arrested" for being a Christian.	Bible, index cards, pen, 1 copy of the "Faith in Hard Times" Questions handout (at the end of this lesson), 1 copy of the "Arresting Instructions" (at the end of this lesson), scissors	Cut out the 4 questions on the "Faith in Hard Times" Questions handout. Arrange for someone to come into your meeting room and "arrest" you for being a Christian. Give him or her a copy of the "Arresting Instructions."
	Don't Give Up Faith <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Talk about the joy God gives and how they can endure hard times if they know something great is waiting for them at the end.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, gold star stickers, pens, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) Teacher Pack: CD	Tear out the Lesson 9 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.



► Bible Point

Have faith in Jesus.

Key Verse

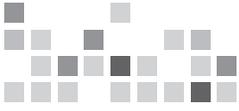
"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will grow in their faith in Jesus and share it with others.



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Letter of Hope <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Write letters of encouragement to friends.	Bible Truth Sleuth, pens, scissors	
	Exercising Faith <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Make faith barbells, and learn the Key Verse.	Bible, 1 piece of black construction paper and 2 black balloons per child, slips of white paper, white crayons, stapler, tape, pens	
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Commit to giving a letter of hope to a friend facing a hard time.	Bible Truth Sleuth, paper clips	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		



Hard Times Supplies

paper
markers

1 GETTING STARTED

Hard Times

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Give each child a piece of paper and a marker. Have them draw an outline of a person on the paper.

Say: **In our lesson today, we'll talk about having hope, even during hard times. So first we're going to consider the kinds of difficult things people go through. Find a partner and talk about hard times you've had, and then write them in the outline of the person you drew.**

Give kids several minutes to talk and write. Ask for willing children from each pair to share some of the things they wrote.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- What makes these things hard for you?
- How are our problems alike? different?
- What's the hardest thing you've ever gone through?
- Tell about a time you've gone through something difficult and found out that something good came out of it.

Say: **Sometimes when we go through hard times, we find out later that it helped us in some way. For example, if you've ever had to wait a long time for something you really wanted, that might've been very difficult for you. But when you finally got what you wanted, you realized it was worth waiting for, and now you know it will be a little bit easier to wait next time. We all face hard times in life. But we can ► HAVE FAITH IN JESUS, even during hard times. Today we'll discover more about faith in hard times.**





2

BIBLE
EXPLORATION

Faith in Hard Times



Tip Ideally, you'll have an assistant leader who can stay with the kids after you're "arrested." Otherwise, have the person who arrests you place you in a corner of the room rather than take you out of the room. During this activity, make sure you're holding your Bible.

What You'll Do

Say: **Our Bible passage today is from 1 Peter 1:3-9. Peter wrote a letter to some Christians who'd been going through hard times. He wanted to encourage them to ► HAVE FAITH IN JESUS. Let's think about difficult situations you might go through as a Christian.**

Have kids form four groups. Give each group one of the "Faith in Hard Times" Questions. Allow a few minutes for kids to answer the assigned question within their groups, and then have kids share highlights of their discussion with everyone. The questions are provided again below for your convenience.

1. What special problems do you think Christians face that other people may not face?
2. Has anyone ever been mean to you because you're a Christian? What happened?
3. Have you ever been made fun of because you're a Christian? Tell your group about it.
4. Have you ever felt left out of an activity because you're a Christian? Tell about that time.

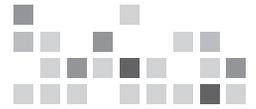
After all four groups have presented, say: **Christians have always faced problems because of their faith. Even Jesus' first disciples experienced discrimination, acts of violence, arrest, and having their things taken away from them!**

That last statement will be the cue for the person who will arrest you come in and yell at you, take away your Bible, and lead you out of the room.

After a moment or two, have the person who arrested you come back into the room and "arrest" the kids for being in Sunday school. Have him or her say, "Okay, all of you are going to jail, too, for being in Sunday school!" Then have the volunteer lead the kids to a corner of the room and put them in "jail." Afterward, come back into the room, and let kids out of jail.

Talk With Kids

Say: **We weren't really arrested today for being Christians or for being in Sunday school, but many of the people Peter wrote to were arrested and persecuted in other ways.**



Faith in Hard Times Supplies

- Bible
- index cards
- pen
- 1 copy of the "Faith in Hard Times" Questions handout (at the end of this lesson)
- 1 copy of the "Arresting Instructions" (at the end of this lesson)
- scissors

Faith in Hard Times Easy Prep

Cut out the 4 questions on the "Faith in Hard Times" Questions handout.

Arrange for someone to come into your meeting room and "arrest" you for being a Christian. Give him or her a copy of the "Arresting Instructions."





Don't Give Up Faith Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
gold star stickers
pens
copies of the lyrics page
(at the end of this lesson)

Teacher Pack

CD: "Faith" (Hebrews 11:1) (track 6)

Don't Give Up Faith Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 9 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Ask:

- What was it like watching me get arrested for being a Christian?
- What was it like when you were arrested, too?
- What are ways to respond when we're persecuted for our faith in Jesus?

Say: **Those involved in the cause of Christ are no strangers to persecution. Jesus himself was persecuted, and he warned that his followers would be, too. Although we pretended to be arrested here today, Peter heard about Christians facing problems and who were really being arrested, so he wrote them a letter to encourage them to ► HAVE FAITH IN JESUS. Part of that letter is today's Bible passage. Let's take a look at it now.**

Don't Give Up Faith

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids open their Bibles to 1 Peter 1:3-5, and ask a willing child to read the passage.

Ask:

- What's the very best gift you could ever wish for?
- What would you do to get that gift?

Say: **Imagine that someone told you he or she had that exact gift for you and to receive the gift, all you had to do was get through whatever problems you might face between now and Christmas—then the gift would be yours.** Give kids a minute to think about the perfect gift they'd like to receive.

Distribute pens, and then have kids turn to the "Don't Give Up Faith" activity in their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and draw a picture of that gift inside the box.

Have kids find partners and answer the question under the gift box on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

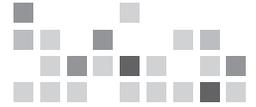
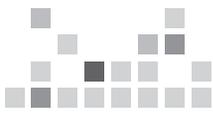
Say: **When we go through hard times and struggles in our faith, Peter promises that they are worth the reward. With your partner, read 1 Peter 1:6-7 and talk about what it means to have faith refined by fire.**

Give kids a minute to read the Bible passage and talk about it. Then give each child a gold star to place in the gift box on their Bible Truth Sleuth page to remind them that faith is greater than gold.

Say: **The message of our Bible passage today is simple: have faith in Jesus, who will see us through anything in life. Faith is a valuable gift! Let's sing a song that's all about faith.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Faith" (Hebrews 11:1) (track 6 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along and do the motions.





Seems like there's so much to hope for, *(raise hands high; then bring both to chest)*

So many dreams, I wish they all could come true. *(hands by head like sleeping on a pillow for "dreams," place pointer fingers by mouth, and then move them forward for "true")*

When I think about your ways, Lord, *(point both hands to head; then move both hands forward like a path)*

It gives me so much faith in all that you do *(praying hands; then palms up)*

Faith to see beyond what I can see. *(praying hands; then hand above eyes)*

Faith to know that you will do great things. *(praying hands; then point to everyone)*

I will trust you, Lord, I'll always believe. *(motion "trust" as if holding on to a rope; then point to head and clasp hands for "believe")*

As I hold on to my faith, *(motion like you're gripping something; then make praying hands)*

Jesus, you are holding on to me. *(big scooping motion into a hug)*

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Faith to see beyond what I can see. *(praying hands; then hand above eyes)*

Faith to know that you will do great things. *(praying hands; then point to everyone)*

I will trust you, Lord, I'll always believe. *(motion "trust" as if holding on to a rope; then point to head and clasp hands for "believe")*

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"Faith" (Hebrews 11:1) by Jay Stocker. © 2008 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Say: **It's easier to face the problems we have when we know we'll receive something great at the end. That's what God promises us through Jesus. He promises us "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade." We can have hope that something great waits at the end of our problems. Let's read more about why we can have hope.**

Have kids open their Bibles to 1 Peter 1:8-9, and ask a willing child to read the verses aloud.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How would you plan to react to problems between now and Christmas, if you knew that at the end you would receive the very best gift imaginable?**
- **How does knowing you'll get something good at the end help you get through problems you have now?**
- **What parts of this passage made you think about faith differently?**





Letter of Hope Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth
pens
scissors

Say: **We can love Jesus without seeing him through our faith and through reading about him in the Bible. Hearing how others loved Jesus and how much Jesus loves us helps us know him and love him. We ► HAVE FAITH IN JESUS. Let's look at how we can share that gift of faith with others going through hard times.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Letter of Hope

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids turn to the "Letter of Hope" in their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Say: **Just as Peter wrote a letter to his friends to encourage them to have hope during hard times, we can write letters, too. Think of a friend who may be going through a hard time right now. Then write this friend a letter, encouraging him or her to have hope. You could explain how through our suffering, God promises us the gift of faith. You might want to look back at 1 Peter 1:3-9 for ideas.**

Distribute pens, and have scissors available for kids to share. Have kids write their "Letters of Hope" and cut them out. Tell them to fill in the name of the person they'll give this card to this week, and encourage kids to give their cards to their friends.

When kids have finished writing, have them form pairs to pray for their friends. Encourage kids to pray for the specific things they're going through, asking God to give their friends strength to make it through the hard times. Then close the prayer time with this prayer:

Pray: **God, thank you for using hard times to strengthen our faith. Sometimes the things we go through are really tough, but you promise great rewards! Thank you! We love you, Lord, and want to encourage others with the hope you give. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's the value of writing letters of encouragement to others?**
- **Tell about some encouragement you've received that helped shape your faith.**
- **What's something about your own faith story that you can use to encourage others?**

Say: **Writing words of encouragement is a great way to share faith and hope in Jesus. Peter and others wrote letters that are in the New Testament that continue**





to inspire us, even though none of us were alive when they were written. When we ► **HAVE FAITH IN JESUS**, we can offer words of hope and encouragement in his name.

Exercising Faith

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Open your Bible to Romans 5:3-4, and read the verses aloud: **“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Romans 5:3-4).**

Say: **Our Key Verse comes from another letter in the New Testament, this time from Paul to the Christians in Rome. He wrote about how faith often deepens under stress. We’re going to make something you can take home with you as a reminder of how you can have faith because hardship will make you a stronger person.**

Give each child a piece of black construction paper, two black balloons, and several slips of paper. Set out white crayons to share.

Say: **Exercise is hard work. But exercising makes us stronger. The more we exercise, the stronger we become. Let’s make barbells of faith.**

Have kids write “Faith makes me strong” at the top of their sheets of construction paper in white crayon. Then have kids roll up the paper into a tube and staple the ends, making sure the writing shows. Tape the middle seam.

Say: **Just as when we exercise and become stronger, we’ll become stronger each time we go through a hard time and trust God by putting our faith in him. We ► HAVE FAITH IN JESUS. Hard times help strengthen our faith!**

Distribute pens, and have kids write the hard times they’ve gone through on the slips of paper and place them inside the construction paper tubes.

Finally, have kids blow up the balloons and tie them off. Have them tape one balloon to each end of the tube so that it looks like a barbell.

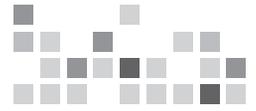
Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Why does exercising become easier the more we do it?**
- **How is growing strong through physical exercise like or unlike growing stronger in faith during hard times?**
- **How can we have joy as a result of exercising our faith in hard times?**

Say: **When you look at this barbell, think about the slips of paper inside that have hard times written on them. Remember that just as exercising makes your body**



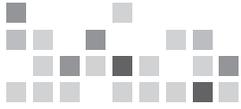
Exercising Faith Supplies

-
- Bible
 - 1 piece of black construction paper and 2 black balloons per child
 - slips of white paper
 - white crayons
 - stapler
 - tape
 - pens

! BALLOON WARNING

To avoid choking hazards, be sure to pick up pieces of any broken balloons promptly. Balloons may contain latex.





Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth
paper clips

stronger, trusting in God through faith can also make your character stronger. As Peter and Paul both point out in their letters, we ► **HAVE FAITH IN JESUS** that grows stronger because of the hard things we go through.

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's think about how we can have faith in Jesus this week.**

Have kids paper clip the letters they wrote in the "Letter of Hope" activity to their Bible Truth Sleuth pages, and instead of choosing a Daily Challenge this week, have kids commit to delivering the letters. This will be a good time for both the giver and the recipient to receive encouragement to have faith in Jesus.

Be sure to write a letter as well, and tell the kids about it. They'll be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: **Today we've learned about what it means to ► HAVE FAITH IN JESUS. Peter encourages us to stay strong in Jesus when problems and worries come our way. Let's show our faith in Jesus this week by following through with our commitments.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the commitment they made and what they learned about having faith in Jesus. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for giving us opportunities to exercise our faith even when we're facing difficulties, and for giving us hope in all things.





“Faith in Hard Times” Questions

1. What special problems do you think Christians face that other people may not face?

2. Has anyone ever been mean to you because you’re a Christian? What happened?

3. Have you ever been made fun of because you’re a Christian? Tell your group about it.

4. Have you ever felt left out of an activity because you’re a Christian? Tell about that time.



Arresting Instructions

Instructions for person coming into the room:

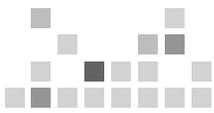
You'll come in and yell at the leader, saying, "You, there! I heard you're a Christian! Give me that book you're holding—you're not allowed to own property anymore!" Then take away the leader's Bible.

Then say, "Come with me—you're going to jail. We don't like Christians around here!"

You'll escort the teacher from the room.

Then say to the kids, "Okay, all of you are going to jail, too, for being in Sunday school!" Lead the kids to a corner of the room and put them in "jail."





Lyrics ■■■■

Faith (Hebrews 11:1)

Seems like there's so much to hope for,
So many dreams, I wish they all could come true.
When I think about your ways, Lord,
It gives me so much faith in all that you do.

Faith to see beyond what I can see.
Faith to know that you will do great things.
I will trust you, Lord, I'll always believe.
As I hold on to my faith,
Jesus, you are holding on to me.

(Repeat from the beginning.)

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