

Heroes of Faith

BIBLE PASSAGE: Hebrews 11:1–12:2

MAIN POINT: The Bible tells us about people who lived by faith.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

It is common to think of faith as something that is just within us—trust and confidence in God. While that is surely part of it, faith doesn't stop there. Faith starts inside of us and always leads to action.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews wanted to explain the fullness of faith to the early Jewish Christians. One of the best ways he could do this was to walk through examples of how men and women in the Old Testament had proven to be faithful. The result is Hebrews 11, often known as the Hall of Faith.

Abel had faith when he gave an offering to God, and God

accepted his offering. Noah had faith. He believed God when God told him to build an ark to rescue his family.

Abraham had faith when God called him to leave his home. Abraham's wife Sarah had faith when she trusted God to give her a family even though she was too old to have children. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses had faith too. Rahab had faith when she hid the Israelite spies in Jericho.

All of these people trusted God, and so did many others. Having faith was not easy. Many suffered, and they died before God's greatest promise—the arrival of Jesus—came true, but they believed that God had a wonderful plan. God was pleased with them because they trusted Him.

This week, share the examples of these heroes of faith to help your kids understand faith in action. We can and should learn from these examples; that is why God gave them to us in Hebrews 11. However, emphasize that every person in this list was a sinner in need of salvation. Each of these heroes needed a greater hero. Point your kids to the perfect hero who rescues us from sin: Jesus.



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The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

• **Change positions:**

For each person you talk about, stand in a different area of the room or change the direction you face.

• **Write names:** Write on a chalkboard or dry erase board names of people who lived by faith as you describe them in the story.

Heroes of Faith

Hebrews 11:1–12:2

In the Book of Hebrews, we find a list of people who lived by faith. What is faith? **Faith is being sure that what we hope for will actually happen. Faith is obeying God because we trust Him.** By faith, we believe that God created everything from nothing, just by speaking!

Many people in the Bible had faith, and this pleased God. Abel had faith when he gave an offering to God, and God accepted his offering. We must have faith in order to please God because by faith we believe that He exists and that He rewards those who trust in Him.

Noah had faith too. He obeyed God by building an ark to rescue his family. Noah warned other people too because he trusted that God was telling the truth when He said a flood was coming. God was pleased with Noah.

Abraham had faith when God called him to leave his home. Abraham did not know where he was going, but he obeyed God. God made promises to Abraham, and Abraham believed that God was going to keep His promises.

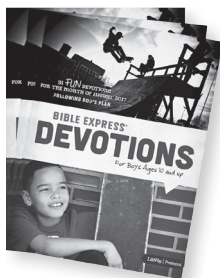
Abraham's wife Sarah had faith. She trusted God to give her a family even though she was too old to have children. Sarah was 90 and Abraham was 100 when they had their son Isaac. Abraham and Sarah went on to have many descendants. **God gave them a family as numerous as the stars in the sky.**

Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses had faith. Rahab had faith when she hid the Israelite spies in Jericho. King David had faith too. All of these people trusted God, and so did many others.

Having faith was not easy. Many of these faithful people suffered, and they all died before God's greatest promise—the arrival of Jesus—came true, but they believed that God had a wonderful plan. God was pleased with them because they trusted Him.

We know today that God has a great plan. He kept His promise to send the Messiah—His own Son, Jesus—to rescue people from sin. Jesus gives us faith. We can look to Him because in Him, all of God's promises will come true.

Christ Connection: The Bible gives examples of people who had faith, but the true hero of the Bible is Jesus. Jesus looked forward to the joy that would come because of the cross. Because of Jesus, the things the faithful people in the Bible looked forward to will come true. We know that Jesus will come back one day because God always keeps His promises.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce the STORY

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KEY PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to think about what they want to be remembered for. Allow kids to share their thoughts.

SAY • Those are some interesting ideas. Imagine kids 50 or 100 or 500 years from now hearing about your life. What might history books say about you? Today we are going to get a peek into the lives of some people who lived long ago. Their stories are still remembered, and they bring glory to God.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Seek and Find Word Search” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Seek and Find Word Search” on the activity page. Kids should find and circle the names of people mentioned in today’s Bible story. Challenge them to unscramble the letters in dark boxes that they did not circle to reveal a special name. (*Jesus*)

SAY • All of the names you found in the word search comes from stories in the Old Testament. Did you know that these people are also mentioned in the New

Testament Book of Hebrews? The special name you unscrambled—*Jesus*—also fits into their stories. Today we will find out why.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Draw heroes

Provide paper and crayons or colored pencils. Invite kids to draw a picture of a person from the Bible whom they consider to be a hero. Allow kids to use Bibles for reference. Prompt kids to discuss what makes a person a hero. Volunteers may share their drawings with the group.

SAY • Today's Bible story is about heroes of the faith. We will hear about several people who had faith in God. We'll also learn about the ultimate hero, Jesus!



LOW PREP

- paper
- crayons or colored pencils
- Bibles

OPTION 2: Picture puzzles

Form groups of two or three kids. Print and cut apart a picture puzzle for each group. Invite kids to work together to complete the puzzles. Then challenge them to share anything they know about the people in the pictures. Share the following information:

- Abel gave an offering that pleased God.
- Abraham trusted God to give him a family.
- Noah obeyed God and built an ark.
- Moses led God's people out of Egypt.
- Rahab hid the Israelite spies in Jericho.
- David was a great king of Israel.

SAY • All of these people lived long ago, in Old Testament times. The Bible tells us their stories. Today we will learn more about what they all had in common.

- "Heroes of Faith Puzzle" printable
- scissors

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• car keys

[Leader enters wearing a canvas work apron and safety glasses. Leader examines some of the materials on display, picks up a set of car keys, and then turns to address the kids.]

LEADER • Hey, everyone! Thank you for coming back to my workshop! I'm Dr. Gutenbird. You probably remember that I am an aspiring inventor and developing theologian. That means I like to make new things, and I like to study my Bible and learn about God.

I want to show you something. *[Hold up the car keys.]* These are my car keys. Now, while none of you are old enough to drive yet, you probably ride in a car or on a bus pretty regularly. Did you know that the gas-powered automobile was invented about 130 years ago? It really changed how people get around!

You know, I'll be the first to admit I do not understand everything about how a car works. But

I trust it to do what it is supposed to do when I get behind the wheel.

Now I am honored to bring to you a true story today from God's holy Word. [*Hold up the Bible.*] Today's story will help us discover why we can trust God to do what He says He will do. That kind of trust is called faith. Every story in the Bible is true! I'm ready; are you?

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • This will be our last week reviewing our big picture question and answer. I'll ask the question, and you say the answer: ***Who changes us?*** [*Allow kids to respond.*] ***The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle. Point to previous stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

LEADER • All of the Bible stories we have been reading lately have come from the New Testament letters and they have shown us some ways that the Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out.

The Holy Spirit changes our mind and heart, making it possible for us to love and serve Jesus and follow the mission He gives us.

Today's Bible story will look back at some people who had faith and will remind us of the true hero of the Bible—Jesus—in whom our faith is secure. Let's hear it.

- Bibles
- “Heroes of Faith” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Hebrews 11:1–12:2. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Heroes of Faith.”

LEADER • This Bible story looks back at some people from the Old Testament. The Bible says that these people lived by faith. Now, what does that mean? What does it mean to live by faith? Well, faith is being sure that what we hope for will actually happen. It means obeying God because we trust Him. So it means not just saying you trust God but showing it by how you live. This pleases God.

Abel had faith when he gave an offering to God. God accepted his offering. Noah had faith. What did Noah do? [*Allow kids to respond.*] That’s right. He trusted God that a flood was coming. The people around Noah probably thought he was crazy! But he obeyed God and built an ark.

Abraham had faith when God called him to leave his home. Do you think Abraham had any doubts or questions for God? God didn’t give Abraham a detailed plan of his future, but Abraham obeyed God because he trusted Him. God is pleased when we have faith.

It was hard for Sarah to believe God when He said she was going to have a baby. At first, she laughed! Sarah was 90 years old! But Sarah had faith, and God grew her family.

The Old Testament tells us about many other people who had faith: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and King David. Having faith isn’t easy, but God always keeps His promises.

Christ connection

LEADER • We can read about and remember these faithful believers who lived long before us. They looked forward and trusted God to keep His promises, but our goal is not to be like them. The true hero of the Bible is Jesus. He looked forward to the joy that would come because of the cross: the rescuing of sinners. Because of Jesus, the things the faithful people in the Bible looked forward to will come true. We know that Jesus will come back one day because God always keeps His promises.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 2 Corinthians 5:17.

LEADER • Praise God for His Word and for this truth.

When we trust in Jesus, we are no longer the same.
We move from death to life, from old to new. Let's sing together!

Lead boys and girls in singing "New Creation."

- Key Passage Poster
- "New Creation" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • When was the last time you thought about people who lived before you? Check out this video.

Show the "Unit 33, Session 6" discussion starter video.

Then lead kids to discuss the following questions:

- What did the cupcakes admire about the cupcakes of the past?
- Why might we look to the examples of people who have lived before us?

LEADER • Faithful believers who lived before us can be good examples of how to live for God. In fact, God calls us

- "Unit 33, Session 6" discussion starter video

to be encouraged by the example of faithful believers before us. We can remember His faithfulness to those in the past and be encouraged to continue to trust Him with our future.

• “Our God Who
Changes Us” song

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 89:8-9.

LEADER • The Bible tells us about people who had faith.

They trusted that God is who He says He is and that we would do what He says He will do.

Because of Jesus, the things the faithful people looked forward to will come true. God is faithful to keep His promises, and He is changing us to be more like Jesus.

Sing together “Our God Who Changes Us.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, thank You for Your Word and for the examples of faithful servants who have gone before us. We pray that You would change our hearts so we may faithfully serve You all of our lives. May You get the glory. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Display the key passage poster. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Form two groups of kids. Call on the first group to say the key passage together. Then call on the second group to say it.

Prompt the first group to say the passage a few phrases at a time, pausing for the second group to echo. When kids finish saying the key passage, lead the second group to begin and the first group to echo.

SAY • Let's answer our big picture question: *Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.* One of the ways we change as a new creation is that God gives us the gift of faith.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Main Point Poster

Make sure each kid has a Bible and instruct them to find the Book of Hebrews. Encourage them to refer to the table of contents if they need help. Point out that Hebrews is in the New Testament.

Explain that we aren't sure who exactly wrote the Book of Hebrews, but we know that all Scripture is inspired by God and is completely true. The writer reminded people

of what is true about Jesus and encouraged them to live by faith.

SAY • Turn to chapter 11 in Hebrews. This chapter is about faith. We heard about it in our Bible story today. **The Bible tells us about people who lived by faith.**

Instruct kids to listen carefully as you read the following clues. Challenge kids to guess the identity of the Old Testament person described.

1. By faith, he led God's people out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. (*Moses, Heb. 11:27,29*)
2. By faith, he built an ark to rescue his family from the flood. (*Noah, Heb. 11:7*)
3. He was tested and, by faith, offered his son as a sacrifice. He believed God is able to raise someone from the dead. (*Abraham, Heb. 11:17,19*)
4. By faith, she welcomed the spies into her home in Jericho. (*Rahab, Heb. 11:31*)
5. By faith, she believed God would give her a family even though she was old and had no children. (*Sarah, Heb. 11:11*)
6. By faith, he offered to God a better sacrifice than his brother. (*Abel, Heb. 11:4*)

SAY • Faith is a gift from God, and it isn't just believing blindly. God has given us plenty of evidence as a foundation for our faith. In the Old Testament, God spoke to people through prophets. Then He sent His Son, Jesus, to speak to people directly.

When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit who helps us and gives us power to live for Him. By faith, we can trust Him to keep His promises.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- chairs or other classroom furniture
- blindfolds (optional)

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

- pony beads
- 15-inch lengths of leather cord or jute twine, 3 lengths per kid
- masking tape
- scissors
- fine-point permanent marker

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Faith obstacle course

Position classroom furniture around the room to form a simple obstacle course. Guide kids to form pairs.

Demonstrate how to move safely through the course. Then instruct one partner to close her eyes and the other partner to take her hand and lead her through the obstacle course.

Send pairs one at a time, allowing several feet of distance between them. When a pair finishes, partners may swap roles and go through the course again.

SAY • Did you have faith in your partner? Did you trust him or her? **The Bible tells us about people who lived by faith.** How can you tell if someone has faith? [*Allow kids to respond.*] We can't just say we have faith in Jesus; we show we have faith by how we live—by obeying and trusting God. Everyone who has faith in Jesus will live with Him forever.

OPTION 2: FAITH bracelets

Give each kid three 15-inch lengths of leather cord or jute twine. Guide kids through the following steps:

1. Knot one end of the strands together. Tape that end to a table.
2. Create about four inches of a basic braid. Hold the three strands and move the right strand over to the center. Then move the left strand over to the center. Continue crossing the strands, alternating left and right.
3. After crossing the right strand to the middle, thread a bead onto the middle string and push it snug against the braid. Then cross the thread from the left, and then from the right. Add another bead to the middle

strand. Cross from the left and the right, and then add another bead. Continue until you add five beads.

4. After adding the beads, finish the strand with a normal braid. Knot the end and trim off any excess cord. Use a permanent marker to write *FAITH* on the beads.

SAY • Nice work. You can wear these as bracelets or tie them to a key chain. When you see them, remember that **the Bible tells us about people who lived by faith**. When you see the letters of the word *FAITH*, think about them as meaning *For All, I Trust Him*.

Option: Use alphabet beads to spell *FAITH*.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, asking that God help kids be faithful in their generation. Pray that kids would put their full trust in Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Hall of Faith" on the activity page. Kids should look up each Bible reference and then draw lines to match the reference with a person mentioned in Hebrews 11.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Hall of Faith" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.