

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.



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.

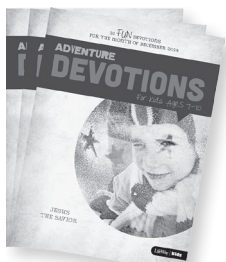
Abraham's wife Sarah had faith. She trusted God to give her a family even though she was too old to have children. Sarah was 90 and Abraham was 100 when they had their son Isaac. Abraham and Sarah went on to have many descendants. God gave them a family as numerous as the stars in the sky.

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
ADVENTURE!**

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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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. As kids arrive, discuss what makes a person a hero.

SAY • Often, when we think about a hero, we think about super powers. Heroes don't need to have special powers or a colorful costume though. Today we will learn about a group of people the Bible identifies as heroes. Who do you think they might be?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Create a Hero” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Create a Hero” activity page by drawing a picture of their idea of a hero. Encourage kids to be creative and to draw their heroes in action.

SAY • We have a lot of ideas about what makes a person heroic. We often think of bravery, sacrifice, strength, or kindness when we imagine how a hero should behave. Today we will talk about a kind of hero that the Bible called a hero of faith. What do you think makes a person a hero of faith?

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Hero brainstorm

Help the kids brainstorm ideas of traits and abilities that might mark a person as a hero or heroine. List the ideas that the kids come up with. After a few minutes, or when ideas start to run out, go through the list and circle ideas that are true of the heroes listed in Hebrews 11. Add ideas as needed.

SAY • Today we will learn about what it takes to be a hero of faith. There are a lot of qualities that a hero of faith will share with other kinds of heroes, and some qualities that mark them as different from other kinds of heroes. What traits do you think a hero of faith might have that no other heroes would have?

OPTION 2: Costume time

Allow the kids to play with dress-up clothes to imagine what kind of costume they might want if they were a superhero in a comic book or movie. Let the kids take turns explaining their powers or other heroic attributes.

SAY • We see superheroes in movies, TV shows, and comic books. Today we will learn about the kinds of heroes the Bible talks about. What do you think makes them different from superheroes? In what ways do you think they might be the same as superheroes?



- dry erase board or chalkboard
- markers or chalk

- dress-up clothes and props

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
• flashlight
• spoon
• duct tape

[Leader enters wearing coveralls and a tool belt. He or she is wearing safety goggles and carrying a flashlight with a spoon taped to the illuminated end.]

LEADER • Hello, everyone! I am so glad each of you has returned to my workshop this week. This might be the last chance I get to be with you, as I'm headed out of town for a gathering of inventors called the Invention Convention. I'm going to be presenting this, my Slurp-n-Glow! I made it to be able to eat soup or cereal even when it's dark. It's especially good for camping.

We've been talking a lot over the last few weeks about different transformations. I have shown you a number of my favorite inventions, where I turned old items into something new and different. Another kind of change is change God creates in a believer!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • This is our last week with our current big picture question and answer. I'm wondering if anyone can tell me the question. [*Take responses.*] That's it! ***Who changes us?*** And who can tell me the answer? [*Take responses.*] Way to go! ***The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.*** We have talked in the past about the instant change when you believe in Jesus. That change is called *justification*, and it means that God says believers are righteous. They are no longer seen as guilty. The change we have been focusing closely on these past few weeks is called *sanctification*. That's the process by which God changes believers over time to think and behave more like Jesus each day.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

LEADER • Let's take some time to review the stories we have learned so far. I'll say a story, and you try to tell me the main point.

- “Children of God”: **When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.**
- “A Transformed Mind”: **God wants us to show friendship and love to one another.**
- “The Fruit of the Spirit”: **The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and act to be more like Jesus.**
- “The Armor of God”: **God gives us what we need to stand strong against evil.**
- “A Cheerful Giver”: **God is generous to us, so we can be generous to others.**

Good work! This week our story is called “Heroes of Faith.”

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

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

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 • I just love this story. You probably recognized a lot of the heroes listed in today’s story. Throughout the Old Testament, God used men and women to work out His plan to send Jesus to rescue us from sin. Each person mentioned in this list lived by faith. What does it mean to live by faith?

The Bible teaches us that faith is being confident that what you hope for will actually happen. To live by faith means obeying God even in difficult times. A person who lives by faith won’t just say she trusts God, she will show it with her actions too! We have faith because we know that God is all-powerful and will accomplish His wonderful plans no matter what.

The Bible tells us about people who lived by faith.

Noah had faith that God would really send a flood, and obeyed God to build an ark. Abraham had faith that God would grow his family to bless the whole world. Sarah had faith too, even though she seemed too old to have a baby.

Rahab hid the spies in Jericho because she had faith that God would give the city to His people. She also had faith that He would save her family. Having faith isn’t always easy, but it is possible because we know that God keeps His promises. When we have faith, we show it with our actions.

Christ connection

LEADER • 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.

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 • When we believe in Jesus, we walk by faith. Our faith changes the way we live. ***Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.***

Lead boys and girls in singing "New Creation."

- Key Passage Poster
- "New Creation" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Do you like learning about people from long ago? Why or why not? Think about that as we watch this video.

Show the "Unit 33, Session 6" discussion starter video. Discuss with the kids why the cupcakes enjoyed learning about cupcakes from the past. What can we learn by studying people from the past? What kinds of examples do people from the past provide?

LEADER • Studying about people from the past is a great way to see examples of what our lives should and should not look like. **The Bible tells us about people who lived by faith.** We can learn from their examples what faith looks like. These people were

- "Unit 33, Session 6" discussion starter video

not perfect, but they chose to obey God in specific ways even when it was hard and others did not understand why. The heroes of faith knew that God would keep His promises, and their actions showed they trusted Him.

• “Our God Who
Changes Us” song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • Let’s praise God for changing us each day 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 the Bible and for the examples of faithful people who lived before us. Change our hearts and help us faithfully serve You more each day. Let us give You 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
- craft sticks
- markers

Allow volunteers to say the verse from memory for the class. Encourage kids and thank them for their efforts.

Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate craft stick. Place all the sticks in a pile and allow the kids to work together to arrange the sticks in the correct order. For large groups, you may wish to make multiple sets of key passage sticks.

SAY • Our key passage was written by Paul, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Paul was another man who lived by faith in God. Paul trusted that Jesus died for his sin, and he experienced firsthand the amazing changes the Holy Spirit could work in people's lives. This key passage reminds us that when we believe in Jesus, our old sinful lives die and our new lives of faith begin! If you haven't memorized it yet, keep working on it. It's never too late to add another verse to your memory!

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- red cards, 1 per kid
- green cards, 1 per kid

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Give each kid a small red card and a small green card.

Instruct the kids to hold up the red card each time you read

a statement that is false. Kids will hold up their green card if the statement is true. After each false statement, choose a kid to explain what was wrong with the statement.

Statements:

1. Faith is hoping for something you know can never happen. (*False, it is being certain of something you hope will happen; Heb. 11:1*)
2. God is pleased when people live by faith. (*true, Heb. 11:2*)
3. Noah built the ark because of his faith in God. (*true, Heb. 11:7*)
4. Sarah had a son because she had faith in God. (*true, Heb. 11:11*)
5. Rahab welcomed the spies into Jericho even though she had no faith. (*False, she had faith; Heb 11:31*)
6. Faith always made life easier for people. (*False, many people suffered for their faith; Heb. 11:36-37*)
7. Jesus is the source of our faith, and our faith is made perfect in Him (*true, Heb. 12:2*)

SAY • The Bible tells us about people who lived by faith.

Having faith doesn't mean you believe something without any evidence. Faith means that you are confident of something because you trust the person who promised it.

We know that God always keeps His promises, so when we read His Word, we can have faith that He will accomplish everything He said He will. God has already sent Jesus, just as He promised. Jesus will return someday too, just as He promised! In the meantime, believers live new lives by faith. ***Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.***

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



- index cards
- pens

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Hero lineup

Write the names of various Bible people on separate index cards. For a large group, you may want to make multiple sets. Form groups of three or four kids and challenge them to put the names in order based on the chronology of when those people would have lived.

Suggested Bible people:

- Adam
- Eve
- Moses
- Deborah
- David
- Esther
- Zerubbabel
- Mary
- Jesus

SAY • The Bible tells us about people who lived by faith.

Not all of those people were mentioned in our Bible story today, but all of them are people we have learned about. Except for Jesus, none of them was perfect, but they all lived a life of faith. Faith is more than just saying you believe something, it's living in a way that shows you believe it. Jesus gives us faith and makes it stronger each day as we follow Him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

OPTION 2: Bible people guess who

Write the names of various Bible people on separate index cards. Allow the kids to come, one at a time, to draw a card and act out the person they draw. You may choose to provide Bible times clothing for them to dress up. If this

- index cards
- pen
- Bible times clothing (optional)

proves too difficult for your group, consider describing each person and seeing if the kids can guess who you are describing. You may use the suggested Bible people from the Option 1 activity.

SAY • The Bible tells us about people who lived by faith.

Living by faith means more than just saying you believe something. A person who lives by faith will make choices that show what he believes. Just as the heroes of the faith we talked about today made choices to show they trusted God, we can make choices that show we trust God. Jesus gives us faith and sends us the Holy Spirit to grow our faith. ***Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.***

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring 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.