

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Hebrews: By Faith*

Lesson Objective:

Today we take a different direction with the New Testament epistles and look at the book of Hebrews, specifically chapter 11. The writer of Hebrews is unknown; however, the book and this chapter especially provide a great framework and telling of faith. We see many examples of faith laid out, and what should be stressed to children is found in verses 1 and 6 of Hebrews 11: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... And without faith it is impossible to please him." Faith is essential. For younger children it may prove helpful to describe faith as trust or belief that God will keep His promises, which He absolutely does!

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God has promised to always be with His people. He is with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is growing, but also experiencing persecution. Because of the persecution, followers of Jesus scatter.
- The scattered Church takes the Good News and tells others about Jesus.
- The letter of Hebrews is to Jewish Christians trying to understand the relationship between the Old Testament and Jesus (His work and life).
- Hebrews 11 centers on faith with examples from the Old Testament.
- Each character in Hebrews 11 displayed great faith in God's promises.
- Each character did not fully receive their promise, but they trusted that God would keep His promise.
- God would keep His promises, and those promises came later or will happen in the age to come.
- Faith, or trusting in God, is essential to being a Christian. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Scripture: Hebrews 11

Story: *The Gospel Story Bible*, Pages 306-307

Scripture Memory for March: Acts 17:26-27 (ESV)

God made *(point up for God)*

from one man *(hold up your index finger for the number one)*

every nation of mankind to live on *(sweep both arms out in front of you and to either side like a swimming breaststroke for the motion of every nation)*

all the face of the earth *(put your hand open in front of your face...facing your face and go around in a circle once. That is the motion for on the face of the earth)*

that they should seek *(for seek, put your hands above your eyes and look both left and right like you are searching for something)*

Him *(point up for Him)*

Craft: Step of faith

Supplies: Foam sandal base, paper strap, tape, crayons/markers

Instructions: 1. Decorate paper strip

2. Tape to back of sandal to form a strap

3. Place magnet on back



If child has already done craft first hour, have them work on a coloring sheet

Story

Transition

Boys and girls, today we learn about some characters from the Old Testament. Do you remember stories about Noah, Moses, or Abraham? Well we learn a little more about them in the New Testament in a book called Hebrews. Let's find out more about Hebrews and these characters in our lesson.

The Church Is Growing

The Church was growing. The Bible tells us every day more and more people believed the Good News! They believed that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from our sins and He rose from the dead! This was called the Good News. More and more people believed in Jesus and the Church was growing!

Followers of Jesus went to tell others about the Good News. The Good News was spreading far and wide. Some people, however, did not teach the right things. But the Apostles taught that good works were a result of believing the Good News.

Paul visited many places and wrote many letters to churches, which is what we have in the New Testament. But not every book in the New Testament was written by Paul. Some books were written by other apostles like John and Peter, and one book in particular was written by an unknown author. The book with no author is named Hebrews.

Hebrews was a letter to Jewish people who had become followers of Jesus. These Jewish people who had become Christians had lots of questions. They wanted to know what it meant to be a follower of Jesus and what it meant for those following the Old Testament.

The writer of Hebrews had some important things to say, but perhaps one of the most important things we find in Hebrews is in Chapter 11. In Hebrews 11 we learn about some Old Testament characters that showed us what it means to trust God. These Old Testament characters had faith, or trusted, that God would keep His promises.

By Faith

The chapter starts with faith. Faith is being sure of things we hope for and believing things we do not see (11:1). Another way of saying it is faith is trusting that what we hope for, like a promise, will come true. People in the Old Testament believed that God would keep His promises. A big promise God gave is that He would send a King to come and rescue all people from their sins. And God did that by sending His Son Jesus! Or we know and believe that the whole world was made by God even though we did not see it happen. This is faith – trusting God at His word.

People who lived in the Old Testament and in the New Testament became part of God's family the same way: By their faith. Their faith is what made them famous (11:2).

In Hebrews 11 we have a long list of people who had faith in God. Without faith no one – including you and me – can please God (11:6). It's very important to listen to this: The Bible tells us, "for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (11:7).

Abel, a shepherd, offered a sacrifice that cost him a lot, but Abel did it because He had faith. The Bible tells us that God was pleased with the sacrifice Abel gave and made him righteous. Righteous means we are "right" with God; God accepts us!

It was by faith that Enoch was taken to heaven. Enoch never died. One day God took him to heaven, and when people went looking for Enoch they could not find him because God had taken him away. "Whoosh!" or "Zap!" Enoch was gone because God took him away. The Bible tells us that Enoch was a man who truly pleased God.

Noah was another person who trusted God. Noah believed that God would send rain and it would flood the earth. Even though Noah could not see the clouds or the rain, He believed God. Noah obeyed God and built a large boat to save his family. Everyone made fun of Noah for building a boat and believing God, and everyone was wrong. Noah was made right with God through faith.

The Bible says that it was by faith – trusting God – that Abraham obeyed God. Abraham heard God’s call to leave his home, his family, and his comfort, and go to a far-off land that God promised to give him. Abraham had never seen this promised place, but He trusted that God would keep His promise and give it to him. And God did give it to him! While Abraham lived in the land, he did not have a big house or a lot of protection. The Bible tells Abraham was looking and waiting for a city that only God could build. God promised it would come. Abraham waited and trusted in God.

While Abraham lived in this promised land, God told Abraham he would have more children than there were stars in the sky. That’s a lot of kids! But there was a problem: Abraham and his wife Sarah were really, really old. God made a promise that Abraham would have kids, no matter how old he or Sarah were. In Hebrews 11 it says that Abraham trusted God to do what he had promised. And God kept His promise. Abraham has as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand on the seashore. So many descendants they cannot be counted.

When Abraham finally had a child, Isaac, he was asked to offer him to God. God made a promise to Abraham that he would have a child; God told Abraham he would have more descendants than stars in the sky. But when asked to offer Isaac, Abraham obeyed God. If Isaac died, Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham trusted God would keep His promise.

The writer of Hebrews goes on to tell how Isaac, Joseph, and Moses had faith. By faith Moses chose to suffer with God’s people instead of enjoying the pleasures and comforts of being called the son of the king of Egypt. The writer of Hebrews says, “Moses thought that it was better to suffer for Christ than to have all the treasures of Egypt” (11:24). Imagine giving up all the nice things – nice food, a nice bed, nice clothes, servants tending to all your needs – and going to suffer with God’s people. Moses would have to eat not good food, sleep in a very hard, uncomfortable bed, and watch his family being beaten by the Egyptian soldiers. Moses trusted that God would guide him and help him rescue the Israelites from the angry king of Egypt. And God did keep His promise!

Moses, by faith, did as God instructed; he prepared the Passover meal and spread the blood on the doors. The blood was spread so that the Israelites would be protected. Moses continued to trust and obey God. He led God’s people out of Egypt. By faith the Israelites crossed the Red Seas as if it were dry land. They trusted God would save them and He did!

By faith the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho and they fell. By faith Rahab, the prostitute, hid the spies and was saved when Jericho fell.

The writer of Hebrews then says, “Do I need to give more examples?” The writer did not have enough time to tell us how other Old Testament characters like Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets trusted God. Those who trusted God defeated mighty kings and armies, they did what was right, they shut the mouths of lions, stopped great fires and were saved from being killed with swords. By faith the weak were made strong. By faith women received their dead relatives back to life. By faith some were beaten, hurt, and even died knowing one day God would raise them from the dead to a better life with Him. Those who trusted God were often the poor, the abused; those treated badly. The writer of Hebrews says, “The world was not worthy of them!” All these people are known for their faith, their trust in God. They did not get the things that God promised all the time. Sometimes these people would see God’s promise, like the walls of Jericho falling, and sometimes these Old Testament people never saw the whole promise come true, like Abraham seeing all his descendants.

Faith, trusting God, is something that we do today too. By faith we believe that Jesus is God's son. By faith we believe Jesus died on the cross for our sins. By faith we believe Jesus rose from the dead. By faith we believe that Jesus has gone back to heaven to prepare a place for everyone who trusts Him. And by faith we believe one day Jesus will come back and make all things right.

Questions for Review

Have children answer "yes" or "no."

- The Church is growing – adding more and more people. (Yes)
- The Holy Spirit is growing the Church. (Yes)
- Faith is how people in the Old and New Testament became part of God's family. (Yes)
- We do not know who wrote Hebrews. (Yes)
- Faith is being sure of things we hope for and believing things we do not see. (Yes)
- Abel trusted God by going to bed early. (No! Abel trusted God by giving a better sacrifice than Cain)
- Noah trusted God by building the ark even though he did not see the rain clouds. (Yes)
- Abraham trusted God by offering to God his son Isaac. (Yes)
- Moses trusted God by staying in the king of Egypt's house. (No! Moses went to suffer with the Israelites)
- God's people trusted God by marching around Jericho and it fell. (Yes)
- Rahab trusted God by hiding the Israelite spies in her house. (Yes)
- Many people trusted that God would keep His promises, those people have faith. (Yes)