



Date: _____

Series: God is Our Rescuer
Fall Year 2, Lesson 21

Faith Is Believing What You Cannot See—Jesus

Primary Scripture: Hebrews 11:1

Key Verse: Hebrews 11:1, “Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see.”

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids are in the process of forming their view of God, a deity they cannot see. They are trying to understand how Jesus, God’s Son, can be with them every day simply by believing and trusting in him. When they pray for specific details and things don’t happen just the way they pray, they may be confused and might even doubt God’s presence and power. They need to learn that even if they cannot understand the whys of how God answers prayer, they can still trust him. He is still there.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: In Hebrews 10:19, we read how we can have confidence because, through the blood of Jesus, we can draw close to God in faith. Jesus gave his life for us so we can be absolutely certain of God’s love and our salvation.

Jesus in us: Jesus, himself, had faith when he went to the cross. Jesus trusted his Father to raise him from the dead and to even restore him after he took the punishment for all of our sins. As we trust in Jesus, he gives us faith to trust God as he did.

Jesus through us: Because we can be certain of who God is and what he does for us — even if we cannot see him — we demonstrate confidence in our lives. The world then witnesses this confidence.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Props needed: five, free-standing signs — "homework," "fun things," "family time," "problems," and "friends" arranged as an obstacle course. The signs can be mounted on t-poles or can be card tents resting on the floor.

Stand at one end of the obstacle course and say:

Boys and girls, do you know what worship is? Worship is giving your full attention to God. But that's not always easy, is it? One of the reasons it can be hard to give God our full attention is because we can't see God. It is so easy to think about other things that we *can* see.

Have you ever been in worship and your mind wanders? Look at these signs. Instead of worshipping, we might think about the fun things we will get to do after church, about homework, about school problems, or about things we might do with our families.

Before long we might be singing worship songs, but we are not thinking about the Lord at all. We are not telling the Lord how great he is. We might be thinking of something completely different. It is like looking through this obstacle course.

Walk through the obstacle course and pretend to run into or knock over the signs.

Instead of looking past all of these things and only focusing on God, we might bump into these obstacles and never really worship.

Remove the obstacle signs and hide them somewhere out of sight.

We can't see God, but as we call upon his name we know he is there. He is God the Father, who created the whole world and us. He is God the Son, Jesus, who gave his life on the cross for us. He is also God the Holy Spirit who lives right in our heart. Worship is saying, "I love you, God, even if I cannot see you." Let's pray for God to help us give our full attention to him and really worship.

Give prayer of invocation inviting God's presence, and asking him to help us give all of our attention to him and really believe he is here.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Introduce a new sign. This sign has "sin" written on it.

Sin can become a roadblock to our faith and get between God and us. The Bible says in Colossians 1:21, "Once you were separated from God. The evil things you did showed your hostile attitude."

Let's stop now and confess our sins to him so that our sins will not get in the way.

After confessing sins, pronounce forgiveness saying:

Colossians 1:22 says, "But now Christ has brought you back to God by dying in his physical body. He did this so that you could come into God's presence without sin, fault, or blame."

Remove the "sin" sign and replace it with a cross.

The only way to God is through the cross of Jesus.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Have a child come forward to hold the offering plate, and then give the following visual.

We know we cannot see God, but we know he is real. He is very big. Imagine that it is God's hands that are now holding this offering. They are big hands. We know that Jesus has hands because he became a man like us.

Let's imagine that God's huge hands are right here where this offering plate is. We have such a privilege to take our gifts and put them in his hands. Giving our offering to God is a way of saying, "I trust you and believe you. I love you. Please use these gifts to help your kingdom."

For our offering today, I want to invite everyone to come forward, whether you have a money offering or not. When you stand next to the offering plate, put your hands up to your heart and then symbolically place your heart gently in the offering plate. This is a sign that you give God your whole heart and life.

As the kids come forward with their offerings, talk to them about where their mission money is going.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

“Smoresland”

In a large room create “Smoresland,” an obstacle course consisting of hula-hoops, room dividers and bean bags (or any other items you have available). Mark a boundary around the outside of the room with tape. *(If your room is long and narrow, you might want to mark the boundaries at the ends only.)* Place a table in the center of the room.

After Round One is finished, place on the table the ingredients to make “S’mores” – napkins, graham crackers, chocolate candy bars, and marshmallows. *(You might want to have some fruit or other food items ready just in case one or more kids are allergic to the food in the game.)* Then give directions.

Welcome to Smoresland, the world’s best-tasting obstacle course about faith. Your goal is to get to the S’mores Table in the center of the room then return to your starting place, where you’ll be able to make and eat your S’mores.

What ingredients does it take to make S’mores? *(Graham crackers, chocolate bars, and marshmallows.)*

Point to a room divider and say:

These things that look like room dividers are really *graham cracker crunchers*. If you bump into one of these, you’re crunched. You have to lie down where you are and wait there until the round is over. If you bump into any other crunched kids, you’re crunched with them and you have to lie down right next to them.

Demonstrate. Then point to a hula-hoop.

This looks like a hula-hoop, but it's really a *chocolate sinkhole*. If you step in one of these, you have to sit down inside the sinkhole until your round is over.

Demonstrate.

This thing that looks like a beanbag chair is really a *marshmallow vaporizer*. If you bump into one of these, you're vaporized and you have to sit on it until your round is over.

Demonstrate.

I bet you're thinking to yourself, "No problem. I can avoid those three obstacles." There's one more thing about Smoresland you need to know. I said earlier it's an obstacle course about *faith*. What is the definition of faith? That's right, faith believes in what we can't see. What do you suppose that means about this obstacle course? That's right. You'll be blindfolded!

Round One:

Have the kids pair up and tell them:

This is Round One. We'll call the non-blindfolded partner the "guide." The guide for Round One is the younger partner. Find out right now which one of you is younger.

Pause as children make their decisions.

The job of the "guide" in Round One is to direct the older, blind partner safely past the obstacles to the S'mores table in the middle of the room, then guide them back to the starting point. Once you get back, wait at your starting point for Round Two to begin.

There are two basic rules about walking by faith in S'moresland:

- 1. The guide cannot touch the blind partner but walks behind him. You must guide your partner using only your voice. Your blind partner has to have faith that you will keep him safe. And you must prove to him that you care enough about his safety that he can trust you. If I see any guide deliberately leading his partner into an unsafe situation, making him fall down, that guide will not get any S'mores today.**
- 2. The blindfolded partner must tuck his head down so his chin is touching his chest. That way he won't accidentally see if his blindfold isn't on perfectly.**

Distribute blindfolds and have the children wait until you say:

**Ready? Guides, blindfold your partners. (Help them as necessary.)
Ready? Guides, start guiding your partner to the S'mores Table and back, using only your voice.**

At the end of Round One, set free any sunk, crunched, or vaporized kids and send them back to their starting point for Round Two.

Round Two:

Spread napkins, graham crackers, chocolate bars, and marshmallows on the S'mores table. Then say:

This is Round Two. You will now switch roles. The person who was the guide will now be blindfolded.

Notice there are now S'mores ingredients on the S'mores Table. This time, when you get to the S'mores Table, the guides will use their voices to direct their blindfolded partner to grab two napkins, two graham crackers, two pieces of candy bar, and two marshmallows – enough ingredients for both partners to make a S'more. Ready?

Put on your blindfolds and wait for the signal. (Help them as necessary.) Ready? Guides, start guiding your partner to the S'mores Table, get your S'mores ingredients, and return to your starting point using only your voice.

Once they have retrieved their S'mores ingredients and made it back to their starting point, they can put their S'mores together and eat them.

Conclude the activity saying:

Faith is not being able to see, but it is trusting in the voice that leads us through the obstacles and problems of life. That voice for us is God's word. And even if we do hit the sinkholes, bump into crunchers, or stumble into vaporizers, God will help us start over.

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Display again the signs from the opening illustration. Read and briefly discuss Hebrews 11:1, in light of the last game and the obstacle course from the opening illustration. Then say:

We are going to make up a story about a boy named Ralph. Who wants to be Ralph?

Have the volunteer come forward.

Now Ralph had a problem. Who would like to name a problem Ralph may have?

Take a few suggestions from the audience and decide what problem to give Ralph. You might even give him several problems.

Ralph believed in God. He knew God loved him and gave his Son Jesus for him. He knew he should pray and God would hear. So how should Ralph pray?

Let kids share. Then say:

Guess what happened? Ralph did not get the answer he wanted.

Does that mean God was not real? Did that mean God did not hear Ralph's prayer? Of course not. It meant God answered Ralph's prayer in another way. He might have answered it by saying, "Not yet." He might have answered it by saying, "I have something better."

If we worry about our problems and don't trust God to handle it his way, it would be like being on this obstacle course, walking up to one of these signs, and being stuck there.

Have Ralph approach the "problem" sign and put his nose right up against it so all he can see is the problem.

This illustrates what it would be like to see one small detail. Our focus is on the wrong thing. We do not know the future and God's plan for us. We do not know everything that God knows. But God sees all the other details. He sees the whole course. He wants us to look at him and trust him. He will steer us through life and give us the best.

Optional Activity:

Gospel Illusion Illustration: "*When Life Tears You Apart*"

The following script can be used with a paper tear trick called "New Life Thru the Cross." This is on page 15 of "Twelve Gospel Tricks with a Thumb Tip." A thumb tip is also necessary. Both can be inexpensively ordered from www.fishnetmagic.com.

Hold up the 2 x 3-inch paper.

This paper is like your life and my life. Sometimes we have tears in it.

Tear off one side.

Tears are when sad things happen to you, and it feels like you get torn on the inside. Let's say that you have a grandparent that you love very much who gets ill and dies. Has that happened to anyone here?

Another type of tear is when someone hurts you. Has someone ever said mean words to you at school or made fun of you? Yes, that can hurt just like tearing this paper.

Tear other side of paper.

Who can help me think of other examples of when life feels like it gets torn?

Take answers from the audience.

What do you do when life gets torn? Right, you pray and ask God to give you his help. You want to have faith that trusts him to work the best in any situation. But have you ever prayed for something and it didn't work out the way you wanted? Does that mean God doesn't understand how it feels to have a torn life? Does that mean God doesn't care? Does that mean God won't do something to fix that tear?

No. Remember our Bible verse, Hebrews 11:1? *"Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see."* Faith means you can be sure that God knows what we feel. You can be sure that he cares and he helps in a wonderful way, even if you can't see it. And here is the proof.

Unfold the cross.

When you look at the cross remember God's Son Jesus. He knew what it was like to have his life torn. But he showed how much he loved you by dying on the cross to pay for your sins. This is because he wants to be friends with you forever. If he loved you that much, won't he also help you with the times that life tears you? Even if you die or someone close to you does, because Jesus gave his life for you, you will live forever with him.

Application:

You will need a 3-foot long, 2x6-inch board (or a board strong enough to hold a child) and a blindfold.

The goal of this demonstration is to trick a child participant into thinking he is being raised high above the ground when he'll actually only be inches off the ground. You'll

need at least two adult helpers in addition to yourself so no one is hurt. Give instructions to the helpers beforehand.

Pick an older or more confident child as a volunteer. Ask the child to come forward and stand on the board. Place the two adult helpers on each end of the board. Then blindfold the child. Tell him to have faith even if he cannot see. Say:

Even if you are picked up and put high over everyone's head, you can trust that these men will not let you fall. It is hard to trust because you have a blindfold on.

Stand in front of the volunteer and have the child place his hands on your shoulders. Have the helpers raise the board (only an inch or two) while you bend your knees so that your shoulders move down, giving the child the impression he is going up higher and higher.

This can be a very scary feeling, but ask the child to trust. Challenge him to let go of your shoulders. Assure him that you're right there and you'll catch him if he starts to fall. To challenge him even more, have him pick one foot up and balance. Whether the child can do this or not, stand ready to catch the child if he loses his balance.

Finally, have the child remove his blindfold. The promise was kept. He was not allowed to drop from the heights. Ask the child:

How did you feel when you were blindfolded and up high? How did you feel when you took off your blindfold?

Have the volunteer return to his seat and say:

In Hebrews 11:1 it says, "*Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see.*"

Faith means we cannot see something, but we believe it to be true. Even if we cannot see God, we still believe him to be true. Even if we cannot see Jesus, we still believe he gave his life for us. Even if we pray to him about certain things and those prayers are not answered the way we want them to be, we believe he is taking care of it for the best.

Sometimes we might be afraid or nervous when we have a problem and we can't see the outcome. But just like the little stunt we just did, we can remember that God has everything in control!



Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

If you have omitted some of the sections above, you might have time for some children to share ways they have seen God work in their lives.

Kids can complete this thought: **“One time I prayed for something and trusted God. He answered it this way...”**

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Use “Pathway to Powerful Prayer.” These are signs, as if along a road, that give the various topics covered in the Lord’s Prayer. Those topics are: Praying with PRAISE, Praying for PRIORITIES, Praying for PROVISION, Praying for PARDON, and Praying for PROTECTION.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- six T-Poles
- six signs (see attached)
- cross

Learning Event:

- 3-foot section of 2 X 6 - inch board
- blindfold

Learning Game:

- an obstacle course consisting of hula-hoops, room dividers, and bean bags. Place a table in the center of the room.
- blindfolds (enough for each pair of children to have one)
- ingredients to make "S'mores" – napkins, graham crackers, chocolate candy bars, and marshmallows. (*You might want to have some fruit or other food items ready just in case one or more kids are allergic to the food in the game.*)

Optional Activity:

- "New Life Thru the Cross" paper tear trick. This is on page 15 of "Twelve Gospel Tricks with a Thumb Tip." A thumb tip is also necessary. Both can be inexpensively ordered from www.fishnetmagic.com.

HOMEWORK

FUN THINGS

FAMILY TIME

PROBLEMS

FRIENDS

SIN