



Date: _____

Series: Aliens in a Strange Land
Fall, Year 4, Lesson 24

Faith Through the Fire

Primary Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Key Verse: 1 Peter 1:7b, "Your faith is more precious than gold, and by passing the test, it gives praise, glory, and honor to God."

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

Kids, like adults, go through difficulty. They need to see that the purpose of these struggles is to test their faith. Through trials, they can be drawn closer to God and the inheritance he has given them in Christ. Even though kids may not enjoy such struggles, these struggles can be a reason for joy. The basis for this joy is the inheritance in heaven that cannot be destroyed or corrupted and will not fade away.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus endured the struggle and difficulty of the cross. Because of this, we have the assurance of forgiveness in a relationship with him.

Jesus in us: Jesus dwells within us as a guarantee of our inheritance. Because of this, we can endure every trial and difficulty.

Jesus through us: Others can witness the power of Christ, especially as we go through the difficulties or trials of life.

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.

Supplies needed: four 8.5" x 11" cards on which each has a letter grade: A, B, C, and F

Place the cards in order with "A" on the top and "F" on the bottom.

Hold up the stack of cards with the "A" card on top.

Sometimes I have an "A" week. It's excellent! Things just couldn't have been any better!

Place the "A" card at the back of the stack of cards. The "B" card is revealed.

Sometimes I have a "B" week. It is good and is better than most, but it is not an "A" week.

Place the "B" card at the back of the stack of cards. The "C" card is revealed.

And some weeks, I have just a "Ho, Hum" week – nothing special. That might be a "C" week.

Place the "C" card at the back of the stack of cards. The "F" card is revealed.

But then there are times when I have an "F" week. Things go wrong, I have problems and my life seems difficult. This would be an "F" week.

Do you ever have weeks like that? I think we all do. What kind of week did you have this week? Was it an “A”, a “B”, a “C”, or an “F” week? Let’s take a stand-up vote.

Place the “F” card at the back of the stack of cards. The “A” card is revealed.

All of you who had an “A” week, a great, outstanding week, stand up. Thank you, you may sit down.

Place the “A” card at the back of the stack of cards. The “B” card is revealed.

All of you who had a “B” week or a good week but not as great as “A,” stand up. Thank you, you may sit down.

Place the “B” card at the back of the stack of cards. The “C” card is revealed.

All of you who had a “C” week or a “ho-hum” week, stand up. Thank you, you may sit down.

Place the “C” card at the back of the stack of cards. The “F” card is revealed.

All of you who had an “F” week or a bad week, stand up. Oh, I’m sorry. You may sit down.

Now, those of you who had an “A” week, you have a lot to be thankful for. You had a great week! I would hope that you would give an “A” worship back to God.

But those of you who had an “F” week, how much effort do you feel like giving in worship back to God? If you had a bad week, do you think you just don’t have much for which to give thanks to God? What do you think? Would you give him an “F” worth of worship back? How many people say that giving God an “F” worth of worship back is not okay? You are right. It is not okay. As a matter of fact, this is what kind of worship you should give.

Place the “F” card at the back of the stack of cards. The “A” card is revealed.

We should give God our very best worship even when things go rotten. Why is that? The Bible says that you have a place in heaven and it will never pass away. You see, when you trust in Jesus as your Savior, you will live with him forever. No matter how bad things get during a week here, you still have so much to praise him for that you should give him an “A” worth of praise. Let’s do that as we worship now.

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.

Supplies needed: easel or poster, a large black marker

Set up an easel or poster. Have a marker ready to write a math problem.

Boys and girls, how many of you know how to multiply without a calculator? (You can use addition rather than multiplication if you have younger children.)

Invite a child forward who has his hand raised. He'll be called Jacob for ease of illustration.

Would you please step up here, Jacob, since you know multiplication? I will give you two numbers to multiply and I will give you plenty of time to calculate the answer. Ready? Here is the first number.

Write the number 7, pause for a few seconds, and then complete it as $7,563 \times 812$. Draw the line.

Okay, Jacob, would you please multiply 7,563 by 812? I will give you plenty of time. Here we go... ten seconds.

Count down from ten to one.

Okay. And your answer is? Uh, oh. Jacob, you failed the test! What happened? You say it was too hard? It was impossible? How many of you agree? Can anyone here finish this problem in ten seconds? It may be too hard.

You know what grade you get, Jacob?

Hold up the "F" card.

Sorry. But wait a minute, Jacob. Did you know that the Bible says that *all* have sinned and have fallen short of God's glory? This means that by our own power, every person has received an "F" when it comes to earning their way to heaven. We fail many of life's

tests, such as loving and caring for others. No one can receive a perfect score. But how can we get to heaven if we have an “F”?

We need to have someone come take the test for us. Jacob, if you have faith in Jesus, it is just like having him come and take this test for you. It would be like him walking in the room right now and saying, “Stop!” I will take Jacob’s test for him, and I will write the correct answer.

Write the answer: 6,141,156.

That is just like what Jesus did when he lived a perfect life on earth. He lived it in your place because you cannot live a perfect life.

Hold up the “F” card.

Jesus died for all the wrongs you and everyone else have done. Because of that, he gives you this grade.

Cover up the “F” card with the “A” card.

And he gives you forgiveness and a place in heaven that will never pass away. Let’s pray right now.

Dear God, there are things that we have done this week that should receive an “F.” There may have been ways in which we have been mean or disrespectful to parents or teachers. Maybe some of us have said bad things about others or maybe even hit someone. These actions are sins against you. Maybe we have not loved you with our whole hearts, either. We are sorry for our sins, and by faith, we ask Jesus to give us the “A” that he earned for us. Forgive us our sins and see us as completely perfect in your eyes because of what Jesus has done. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

This is the truth. In God’s eyes, we get this.

Hold up the “A” card.

Song of Response:

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

Your choice of music.

Offering:

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

Place the “A” card in the offering plate. Invite the kids to place their offering on it. Explain that this is a way of showing excellent love to God by remembering to give him the first part of our allowance or money.

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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.

Panic Pillow Pass

Supplies: masking tape to mark the floor, bag of large marshmallows, large marshmallow in a sealed envelope, and a bucket to hold about half the marshmallows, a spoon for every child

In advance, make a large square (e.g. 15' x 15') on the floor with masking tape. Place several marshmallows in a bucket in the middle of the square. There will also be a large marshmallow in a sealed envelope in the center. This is a "marshmallow pillow."

Divide kids into groups of five. Give each child a spoon, and give each group a large marshmallow. This marshmallow will be called a "small pillow." Have kids line up single file behind the sides of the square. The first person in each line should be an equal distance from the marshmallows in the center. See the diagram in the appendix.

How to play:

Players pass marshmallows from spoon to spoon to team members in line. The marshmallows get passed through the line five times. (This number matches the number of players in line. So if you increase the number of players, the number of passes will increase accordingly.) At the end of the fifth pass, the last player in line runs to the center with his marshmallow on his spoon and sits on the marshmallow pillow. The team member who sits on the marshmallow pillow first wins marshmallows for his team.

Details:

The game begins with the first player in each line going to the middle to get a "pillow." He will put the marshmallow on his spoon, run back to his line, and pass it to player number two's spoon with his spoon.

These pillows are highly explosive, so if they are dropped, they create a blinding explosion. The player who dropped it must carry it back on his spoon to player number one to start the pillow pass again. After player number five receives the pillow, he will carry it back to the front of the line. The players will take one step back away from the

masking tape line so that the last player can begin the pillow pass again from the front of the line.

The passes repeat until the last person in line, who was player number one during the first pass, receives the pillow. Instead of going back to the beginning of the line, he will run to the center and sit on the marshmallow pillow, which is the marshmallow in a sealed envelope. The marshmallow must still be sitting on his spoon when he sits on the marshmallow pillow. If it is dropped, it must be taken on his spoon to the start of the line and passed down to him once again before returning to the marshmallow pillow.

The first person to sit on the marshmallow pillow wins marshmallows for his team. Have enough marshmallows for several rounds so additional teams can win. At the end of the game, give marshmallows to the losing teams also.

Learning Point:

Attention is given when marshmallows are dropped. Sometimes we have troubles in life—kind of like dropping marshmallows. But in those circumstances, even good can happen. In the game, you tried hard not to drop the marshmallows. With practice, did you get better at it?

Even though it was uncomfortable and you had difficulty, it helped you learn how to be better passers the next time. There was improvement. That is the way it is with our troubles. We can learn through our difficulties and struggles in life. God says that these struggles can teach us how to better trust him.

Bible Presentation:

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.

Refiner's Fire Storytelling

This storytelling event is best illustrated with visual effects that will captivate interest. It would be helpful to have an assistant illustrate the objects while the story is told, or the reader can tell the story while demonstrating actions with the objects. Have the following supplies ready at each section of the story. The dialog below the supply list will provide specific instructions for the visual effects.

Supplies:

Part one:

- *aluminum foil pan with four tablespoons of rubbing alcohol in the bottom*
- *bits of metal that look like gold jewelry (It could be real jewelry or metal scraps and washers that have a golden look.)*

- *match or lighter*
- *pliers or ice tongs*
- *a small metal cup, perhaps a measuring cup*
- *a spoon*
- *a paper towel or newspaper*
- *potholder(s)*

Part two:

- *soccer ball*
- *rubber band*
- *empty wallet*

Part three:

- *aluminum foil pan with about 4 tablespoons of rubbing alcohol in the bottom; additional rubbing alcohol may need to be on hand in case the alcohol in Part one evaporates*
- *match or lighter*

Part four:

- *shiny gold ring*

Part one: Luke's grandpa, a jewelry maker

Place the aluminum pan of alcohol on a potholder or surface that can withstand heat.

Luke loved to visit his grandpa. Grandpa was retired but still had a shop in his garage. He made the most wonderful jewelry and other metal objects in his shop. Luke often joined him on Saturday afternoons and helped him sort through the metal, weigh and measure it, and sometimes polish it. The one thing Luke enjoyed the most, though he never had the chance to do it, was to work in the fire. His grandpa called it the refiner's fire. Luke did not know what that meant. He just knew that it was amazing.

Light the alcohol in the pan.

The refiner's fire burned with a blue flame because it was very hot.

Put the bits of metal in the melting cup and hold it over the fire with the tongs or pliers as the narrator describes these steps below.

Luke's grandpa would carefully collect pieces of metal, put it in his melting cup, hold it over the fire, and gradually the pieces of metal would melt down. Many types of metal were melted, such as bronze or silver. Luke's favorite metal was gold, which was shiny and glistening. After the gold was poured into a mold and polished, it became a shiny new ring or a fancy bracelet.

In order for the gold to melt down so that it could be poured into a new mold, it had to be heated very hot. Sometimes Luke worked the wind bellow that put more air into the fire and made it hotter.

When the fire got so hot that the metal melted, his grandpa would look carefully at the top and often times spot different colored specks.

Look carefully in the melting cup. Using a spoon, pretend to remove specks from the metal and place them on the paper towel as the narrator describes these steps.

Luke's grandpa would dip his spoon into the liquid metal and take small fragments out of the hot, bubbled gold.

"Dross," his grandpa would mutter. "Worthless dross."

"What does that mean?" asked Luke.

"Some of the gold that I melt down is not pure, so the other metals in it begin to separate when it is melted. On the top are the worthless drops of other metal. I call them dross. When the fire gets hot enough, I can melt the gold and pick out the dross."

Part Two: Luke's trials

One Saturday, Luke showed up in the garage and didn't seem his usual self. He sat in the corner and sulked.

"What's wrong?" asked his grandpa. "You look kind of droopy today."

"I feel droopy," said Luke. "As a matter of fact, I feel melted down."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, this week, I finally had a chance to try out for a new competitive soccer team.

Pick up the soccer ball.

Two of my best friends were on it. It's called the Fire, and it's the best nine-year-old soccer team in town. I have been practicing soccer so much and I can shoot as well as anyone my age. But when I tried out, the dumb old coach didn't even take me. I don't understand."

"Well, what happened?" asked Luke's grandpa.

“I don’t know. Usually, I’m real good at shooting. I can juggle the ball with my feet. I can even hit it with my head. But at try-outs, I guess I was nervous and didn’t play very well. Maybe that is what happened.”

“Oh, well. It’s just soccer,” said his grandpa.

“But that’s not all, Grandpa. All week, Rex Cosmicky had it out for me.”

“Who’s Rex?”

“Oh, he’s a boy at school. He always has these rubber bands.”

Pick up the rubber band and pretend like you are getting ready to shoot it.

“And when the teacher is not looking, he shoots them at you just to make fun. If you tell on him, he beats you up on the playground.”

“Wow! You have had a tough week. Is there anything else?”

“Yeah, Grandpa, you know how it is at home since dad left his job two weeks ago.”

“Yeah, I know. Luke, it must be tough.”

“Dad seems kind of sad and quiet. I think he’s worried and I think we may be running out of money. I’d like to help, but look at my wallet.”

Hold up the wallet and show that it is empty.

“I don’t have any money either. What can I do? I’m just a kid.”

Part Three: Luke learns about refining fire

“Well, it sounds to me, Luke, like you are going through the fire.”

“Yeah, I’m having a real melt down,” said Luke.

“But maybe this is a refining fire.”

“A refining fire! Grandpa, what is that?”

“Well look at this fire.

Light the fire if it is not burning.

“You know how we get it real hot, and we put the broken pieces of gold in there so they melt down?”

“Yeah.”

“Do you know why we do that?”

“Sure, Grandpa. So you can pour it into the mold.”

“Well, yes. But there is another reason. This is a refining fire, and that means that we use it to refine the gold.”

“What does that mean, Grandpa?”

“Sometimes there are other worthless bits of metal mixed in with the gold. And when we get the fire very hot and melt it, the worthless metal, that stuff I call the dross, floats to the top. When I pour it into the mold to make a ring, there is a little pool of metal at the top of the mold called a button. This is not part of the ring. This is where the impure metal parts float up. When the ring is finished, I can just break off this part because it’s not pure gold and not fit to be part of a pure gold ring.”

“I see. But what does that have to do with me, Grandpa?”

“Let me show you here in the Bible.”

Read 1 Peter 1:7.

“Sometimes we all go through trials. But God allows those trials because he uses it like a refining fire. What God is making perfect and pure is our faith. And he wants to break off the part that doesn’t trust him, the part that isn’t ‘pure gold.’”

“Well, how does he do that when I go through trials?”

“You have two choices: you can worry and fret and try to solve all your problems on your own, or you can trust God more. You can have faith in him.”

“I suppose I need more faith,” said Luke.

“When you trust God during difficult times, he refines your faith. And like the Bible says, your faith is more precious than gold. God is taking things out of your life that you may be depending on more than him.”

“You mean like soccer?”

“Well, God may have another plan for your soccer.”

“But what about my dad’s job?”

“God might be using that, too, to help you trust him.”

“Well, maybe so. But what about Rex? Surely God doesn’t want Rex to pick on me.”

“Of course he doesn’t, but God can even use that. First, you need to tell God that you need his help and ask him to show you how he can use this trial to help you grow.”

“I don’t know, Grandpa. I don’t like the fire. I don’t like feeling melted down.”

“None of us do, but your faith can be tested through trials. And by passing the test, it gives praise, honor, and glory to God. Can I pray for you, Luke?”

“Sure, Gramps.”

“Dear God, I pray that you would help Luke to trust you. Help him trust you for the right soccer team and with his bully problems. Even help him to trust you with his dad’s job situation. No matter what, we know that you love us, and you gave your Son Jesus so that we would have a place in heaven with you forever. Help Luke remember this especially when he is going through the refiner’s fire. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

“So, Luke, how about giving me a hand?”

“Okay, Gramps.”

Luke finished his afternoon in better spirits.

Part four: Conclusion

The next Saturday, Luke came back in a completely different mood.

“Guess what, Grandpa?”

“What?” he replied.

“I think I got refined.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, remember what you said last week about going through the fire and trusting God? I’ve been trying to do that all week, and I think God is working things out.”

“Tell me about it.”

“Well, I got on a soccer team called Arsenal. At first, I thought it was terrible because guess who was on the team?”

“Oh, no. Don’t tell me it was Rex.”

“It sure was. But things began to change with Rex when he saw how good I was at soccer and how I could even help him.”

“Really!”

“Now I think he is becoming my friend. Maybe he’s not so bad after all.”

“Wow! That’s great! Has anything else happened?”

“Well, nothing happened with dad’s job, as you know. He is still looking, but something has changed.”

“What’s that?”

“When he was quiet and seemed worried, I told him about the refiner’s fire.”

“What did he say?”

“Well, he knew what it felt like to be melted down. But he read that Bible verse, and he seemed to change. I even told him that I was praying for him, and our whole family prayed together that night.”

“What did you pray for?”

“We prayed that God would use this to help us trust him more and help us clean out the junk from our faith.”

“Did it work?”

“I think so, Grandpa, because somehow I just know that God’s going to work this out okay.”

“I’m sure he will. We just have to keep on having faith and trusting him. And by the way, Luke, I have one other thing for you.”

“What’s that?”

“It’s over here.”

Hold up the shiny, gold ring.

“Wow! It’s beautiful, Grandpa!”

“Yeah. It’s a ring. It came from that gold that went through the refiner’s fire. Maybe you can help me polish it. Who knows? Maybe we can sell it and use the money. And we can call it genuine gold from the refiner’s fire.”

“That’s what we’ll call it.”

“Good job, Luke.”



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.

Think of a time when you have gone through a refiner's fire. It may have been a time when you went through a difficult or sad time. Or it may have been a time when something bad happened.

How did God refine your faith through those trials? Did your faith become stronger or did you draw closer to God because of the trial?

Who would like to share a time when you went through a trial and God refined you through that trial?

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.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

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

Song of Sending:

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

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- four 8.5" x 11" cards that each have a letter grade: A, B, C, or F

Power of the Cross:

- easel or poster
- large black marker

Offering:

- the card with the letter "A" from the *Attention Grabber*

Learning Game:

- masking tape to mark the floor
- bag of large marshmallows
- large marshmallow in a sealed envelope
- a bucket to hold about half the marshmallows
- a spoon for every child

Bible Presentation:

Part one:

- pliers or ice tongs to hold a small metal cup, perhaps a measuring cup
- aluminum foil pan with about 4 tablespoons of rubbing alcohol in the bottom
- bits of metal that look like jewelry; it could be real jewelry or random types of washers or metal scraps
- match or lighter
- a metal spoon
- a paper towel or newspaper
- potholder(s)

Part two:

- soccer ball
- rubber band
- empty wallet

Part three:

- aluminum foil pan with about 4 tablespoons of rubbing alcohol in the bottom
- match or lighter
- rubbing alcohol in case the alcohol in Part one evaporates

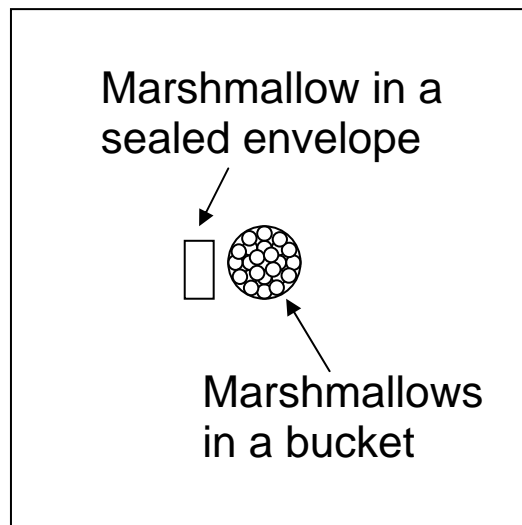
Part four:

- shiny gold ring

Appendix

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Player number one → X X X
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