



Date: _____

Series: Aliens in a Strange Land
Fall Year 4, Lesson 23

Faith to See God's Leading

Primary Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-40

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 typically are concrete thinkers. What is invisible to them is sometimes hard to grasp. So it is with faith. Faith is believing in what we cannot see. Faith is trusting that God is leading us, even if we don't understand. Above all, faith is knowing that God loves us no matter what our circumstances. God loves us enough to give us his own Son, Jesus. Kids need to have this kind of faith—the assurance of things they cannot see. God's word will encourage them to trust his leading, even if they cannot see him.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: It is by faith alone that we are saved (*Ephesians 2:8*). This faith is based on the finished work of Jesus who gave his life for us on the cross.

Jesus in us: Through the Holy Spirit, the presence of Jesus is promised to us as we trust and follow him. This act of faith helps us to not only follow him, but it also gives us the assurance that he is within us to guide us.

Jesus through us: One of the ways that the truth of Jesus is evident, is in our witness to the world. By our lives, others can be drawn to faith.

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: a dollar bill (to give away) tucked into your pocket

Begin by pretending to search for God by looking behind the curtain, under the keyboard, over the puppet stage, etc. This should pique the kids' curiosity. Say while you are pretending:

Hmmm... I don't see him anywhere. I'm looking for someone. Maybe you can help me. I'm looking for God. Have you seen him?

Go into the audience and look under shoes, in backpacks, or in the leg of a trouser. Make comments about not being able to find him as you go.

Well, he is not here. Have you seen God? I don't see him here, either.

Well, I guess God must not exist. Is that what you think? What? But we cannot see him. How do you know he exists? If you can't see God, how do you know he is there?

Collect a couple of kids' answers.

Faith is how we know God is there. Faith means that we are able to be sure about things existing that we may not see. Has anyone ever asked you how you can believe in God if you can't see him? I have a couple of answers that you can share with people who ask this question.

Do you believe there is air right here in front of my hand? You can't see it, can you? No. But if I blow on my hand (blow on your hand), I can feel it. I can breathe the air. I need that air to live. And if I had a GIANT fan right here and aimed it at you, this air could blow you over. But you still wouldn't see it. Still, sometimes people have a hard time believing.

Let me give you another example. Right now, I have a dollar in my pocket. I will give that dollar to someone who believes me. Oh, I see several of you raising your hands. Okay, everyone put your hands down.

Invite a child forward who had his hand raised and one who didn't. If everyone had their hands raised, bring up a child and say, "Let's pretend that she doesn't believe me."

Now if she doesn't believe that I had a dollar, does that mean that I don't have a dollar in my pocket? No, not at all. But it does mean that this person would not ask me for the dollar if she didn't believe it. So, even though it is true, it doesn't help her. On the other hand, this person did not see the dollar, yet he believed me. So he gets the dollar.

Give him the dollar.

Even when we cannot see God, we can trust him and know that he is real. We can know that he gave his Son Jesus for us. And by his Holy Spirit, God gives us faith to trust in Jesus and believe in him. So when we worship him today, we are showing our trust and love for God and what he has done for us in Jesus, even though we cannot see him. Let's show our trust and love for him now as we worship him.

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.

We cannot see God right now, but we also cannot see some of the wrong things we have done. No one here can look around the room and see what we have done wrong. But does that mean that those things never happened? No way. God knows. He knows all of the ways in which we have failed to show our love to him or others.

Those wrongs could get in the way of our friendship with God. He doesn't want that. He wants us to trust by faith that, through Jesus, he will forgive our sins. He also gives us the power to follow him and become more and more loving like he is. Let's pray for that now.

Dear God, thank you that you help us to have faith. Thank you that we can follow you even if we cannot see you. In some ways, Lord, we have not followed you with our whole hearts. We have not loved others as ourselves. And sometimes we have not even loved you. We have faith in Jesus and ask for forgiveness in his name. We also ask that you would help us to become more and more like Jesus and that you would lead us so that we can better follow you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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.

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

We know we cannot see God, but we know he is real. He is very big. Imagine that God's hands 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.

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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.

S'moresland

Supplies needed: hula hoops, room dividers, and bean bags, a table in the center of the room, blindfolds (enough for each pair of children to have one) or tissues, 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.

In advance, create "S'moresland" in a large room—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.

Blindfolds will be used during the trip through the obstacle course. To save time, blindfolds can be made by giving each child two tissues and having them wad them up loosely. They can place these over their eyes and hold them there. Ask the children to not cheat.

Give them these directions.

Welcome to S'moresland, 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 you will return to your starting place 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 the following:

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

Demonstrate. Then point to a hula hoop.

This looks like a hula hoop, but it is 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 are vaporized and you have to sit on it until the round is over.

Demonstrate.

I bet you are thinking to yourself, “No problem. I can avoid those three obstacles.” There is one more thing about S’moresland you need to know. I said earlier it is an obstacle course about *faith*.

What is the definition of faith? That’s right, faith believes in what we cannot see. What do you suppose that means about this obstacle course? That’s right. You will be blindfolded!

Round One:

Have the kids pair up. Tell them the following:

This is Round One. We will 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, blindfolded partner safely past the obstacles to the S’mores table in the middle of the room. Then he will guide his partner 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 blindfolded partner but walks behind him. You must guide your partner using only your voice. Your blindfolded 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 under the blindfold.**

Distribute blindfolds (or tissues) and have the children wait until you say:

Ready? Put your blindfolds on.

(Explain how to use the tissue blindfolds, if this blindfold method is used. 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.

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.

Round Two:

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

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 kids have retrieved their S'mores ingredients and have 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 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.

Led by Faith

Storytelling: Hebrews 11:1-40

Supplies needed: six large nametags with the names Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses written on them (one name per nametag), blindfolds, masking tape

Invite six boys forward to play the roles of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. Using masking tape, have an adult assistant stick a nametag on each child and whisper special instructions for him to act out. Blindfold the volunteers to demonstrate that they are following God's leading by faith.

The adult assistant will whisper the instructions below to each child before they go forward to act out their part. The acting will be done without props.

After each child acts out his part, ask the audience to guess what each actor was doing.

There were many people in the Bible that demonstrated their faith in God by trusting in him and following him. As each actor comes forward, see if you can guess what they are doing by faith. They are blindfolded to remind us that these people followed God by faith, not by sight.

Instructions to Give Actors:

Ask Noah to pretend that he is pounding nails into the ark with a hammer.

Ask Abraham to pretend that he is reaching up to hold the hand of God and putting the other hand out as if feeling his way around as he walks forward blindly. Then ask Abraham to pretend that he is laying his son, Isaac, on an altar and tying him up. Then he will raise one hand as if to prepare to slay his son with a knife.

Ask Isaac and Jacob to place their hands out in front of them like they are holding the heads of people in front of them to bless them.

Ask Joseph to show a map and point the way down a path.

Ask Moses to raise his hands as if to motion the Red Sea to split and stay, and then have him walk between the walls of the sea.

After the Noah character, say:

God had asked Noah to build an ark on dry land to prepare for the flood. People mocked him for building an ark where there was no water in sight.

After the Abraham character, say:

This demonstrates how Abraham left his own country without knowing where he was going. God had promised that he would design and build a city with permanent foundations for Abraham.

God also asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, but he stopped Abraham before he killed him.

After Isaac and Jacob, say:

Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. Jacob blessed Joseph's sons.

After Joseph, say:

This demonstrates how Joseph spoke to the Israelites about some day leaving Egypt.

After Moses acts, say:

Moses led the Israelites through the Red Sea to safety, and the Egyptians, who were chasing them, drowned in the sea.

The Bible mentions many others that had faith in God and obeyed him. There was Enoch, Gideon, Samson, David and Samuel. Have any of you heard of any of these people? Let's read about them in Hebrews chapter 11 – We'll call these verses the roll call of faith. Who would like to read the Bible verses?

Invite a child forward. Have the child read Hebrews 11:32–40.

These people received something far better than what they could see. They received a Kingdom that we cannot see now – that is living face-to-face with God. If we have faith in Christ, all of us can do that. Having faith means that, no matter what, you believe that God will forgive your sin and live in your life to help you follow him.

How many here have that faith and trust Jesus as your Savior? Raise your hands. We give thanks to God for that, and we encourage every person to believe God's word. He says to you, "I want you to believe in me, even if you can't see me."



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.

Invite someone in to share how God worked in a marvelous way where they needed patience to wait for it.

For example, one man, Jim Miller, and his friends felt God leading them to work in the inner city with families that had no church and some had no homes. They rented a storefront building, collected food and clothing donations, and began to help people. Every Sunday, they offered a worship service. They worked for six months without anyone showing up. But they had faith that they were doing what God wanted. How many people do you think finally came? Within 2 years, 30 kids and 150 adults were attending on Sunday mornings!

Caution the kids that God doesn't say "Yes" to every prayer we pray just because we have faith. He knows better than we do, and sometimes he says "No" or "Wait" because that is what is best for us or for someone else. God also helps people, but he doesn't force people to do what he wants.

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:

- a dollar bill that will be given away

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); a quicker blindfold method is to loosely wad up two tissues per child and place them over the eyes. Tissues will be needed if this blindfold method is used.
- 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.*)

Bible Presentation:

- six large nametags with the names Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses written on them—write one name per nametag
- masking tape to attach the large nametags to the children’s shirts

Witness and Tell:

- invite a person to share a personal story about how God led them by faith