

**FAITH REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**CURRICULUM PROJECT ©**

**\*\* Grades 3-4, Year II \*\***

**Robert C. Walton, Editor**

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# **HEBREWS 11**

**by Laura Sweet**

**Grades 3-4  
Year 2  
Quarter 1**



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# **INTRODUCTION -**

## **HEBREWS 11**

This quarter we will walk through the Bible's "Hall of Fame" of Old Testament heroes of the faith - Hebrews 11. As we examine the lives of people such as Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and Joshua, we will also learn something about the nature of faith - what it is, how it changes our lives, and how it is rewarded by God. We hope your students will begin to learn to see life's challenges through the eyes of faith. We also hope to show them the importance of walking by faith during the course of their daily lives.

### **"Hall of Faith"**

This quarter we will be creating our own "Hall of Faith" in our classroom through the lesson worksheets. Choose a wall, bulletin board or area in your classroom where you can post a "gallery" of the heroes you'll be studying. Post the words "Hall of Faith" above the area where you'll be displaying the worksheets. Every lesson has a worksheet that should be photocopied for each student in your class. Each week, starting with lesson 2, choose one student's worksheet to post in your "Hall of Faith." It's important that everyone in the class have something on the wall by the end of the quarter. Knowing this, you may choose to display art work alphabetically; or, if you have a student whose attendance is sporadic, you might get his artwork the first Sunday he is present. By the end of the quarter you will have your Hall of Faith filled with reminders of the heroes of Hebrews 11.

### **Related Music**

In addition to the lesson material and worksheets, these lessons also contain suggested hymns and popular choruses that will reinforce the lesson themes. While these are listed at the end of the lesson, you may wish to use them at the beginning of your lesson time if that is when you usually sing.



# **WHAT IS FAITH?**

## **Hebrews 11:1-3**

### **Lesson Aim**

To give students an understanding of the term “faith” and to introduce them to Hebrews 11.

### **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:1** - “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.”

### **Lesson Background**

In today’s world, faith is sometimes seen as an illogical response to the circumstances around us. For example, we are told by many modern philosophers to make a “leap of faith” even when faith seems impossible; after all, they reason, it’s not important what you believe as long as you believe it strongly.

But Christian faith is the exact opposite of this kind of illogical, “hope so” reaction to our world. The Christian faith is strong and certain; it perseveres in the midst of adverse circumstances because it is rooted and grounded in a God who never fails. A.W. Pink, in his *Exposition of Hebrews*, writes:

“Faith” is far more than a bare assent to anything revealed and declared by God: it is a firm persuasion of that which is hoped for, because it assures its possessor not only that there are such things, but that through the power and faithfulness of God he shall yet possess them. . . . The Word of God is the objective foundation on which my hopes rest, but faith provides a subjective foundation, for it convinces me of the certainty of them. Faith and confidence

are inseparable: just so far as I am counting upon the ability and fidelity of the Promiser, shall I be confident of receiving the things promised and which I am expecting.

In other words, we have faith in the promises of God because we know the Promiser is faithful! This week we want to discuss the word “faith,” what it means in a Christian context, and give the children a working definition of faith (Hebrews 11:1), which they can use throughout this quarter.

## **Lesson Procedure**

Introduce this lesson by asking each of your students to imagine that he or she is the child of wealthy parents. “Your father has made millions of dollars in the oil business and you are the only child. One day, right after you graduate from high school, your father calls you into his big office and says to you, ‘Child, you are now an adult, and I want you to know that I have built up this oil company only so I can pass it on to you someday. After I die, all of this will be yours. I have every confidence that you will prepare well to take over this company and will do your best to run it wisely.’” Then ask your students the following questions:

- Would you believe what your father is telling you? (Of course you would; after all, he loves you, and he has the power and the ability to give you the whole company. Even if he didn’t show you his will or any other legal document, you would accept his word.)
- What would you do to get ready to take over this business? (Lead the students to see that this important job would require hard work and study. The rich man’s child could not spend all of his time playing and “partying” and still expect to do a good job running an oil company. He would have to learn about business, and study the oil business in particular. He might have to go to school for many years.)

“As a rich man’s child, you would trust that what your father told you was true. You would have faith in his promise. And your faith in his promise would affect your behavior - you would do whatever needed to be done so you could be the right person to lead the business. But guess what - if you are a Christian, then you, too, have a rich Father! And you, too, can have faith in what He promises, because He loves you and He has the power to give you everything He has promised. If you know that, really believe it, and let that belief affect the way you live, then you have ‘faith.’ Today we’re going to talk about faith - what it is, what it isn’t, and how it works in our lives.”

### **1. What Faith Is and Isn’t**

Have your students read Hebrews 11:1-3 aloud, and then repeat Hebrews 11:1. Emphasize the words “sure” and “certain” from this verse. “Faith isn’t just a feeling. It isn’t just a hope or a wish or a dream. Faith is confidence, sureness, certainty. It’s a conviction that what God says is true and that it will come to pass. It’s a strong, solid assurance that we can build our lives upon.”

Reread Hebrews 11:3. This verse reminds us that faith isn’t based upon our senses or our own wisdom; it’s based upon God’s Word. Many people struggle with the idea that God created the world because they can’t “prove” it with physical evidence. Therefore, they twist evidence to prove



that the world came into existence another way - evolving from one pre-existing state to another. But we accept by faith what God's Word tells us - that the world did not merely evolve, but that it was created at God's command.

Remind your students that, if they were to ask a number of people on the street whether they were going to heaven or not, many people would say, "I hope so," or "I think so." But a born-again Christian can have confidence that he or she will go to heaven. A Christian can say, "Yes, I will go to heaven when I die because Jesus paid the penalty of sin for me. He's forgiven my sins and He's promised me that I will be with him someday." This is true faith; it's a "matter of fact" for the Christian - something he depends upon and of which he is certain.

Have your students look up Ephesians 2:8-9. "This verse reminds us that we are saved by the grace of God through faith. Unless we have faith, we cannot be saved. But we don't get this faith by trying hard to believe, do we? No, even our faith is a gift from God. That means we need to be thankful to Him for giving us the faith to believe. And when we have a hard time believing, we can ask Him to increase our faith. He can make the faith we have grow even stronger if we are His children."

## **2. How Faith Works in Our Lives**

Have the students turn back to Hebrews 11 and have them "skim" the chapter, looking for familiar names from the Old Testament. When a student recognizes a name, have him raise his hand, and give you the name, and the verse where it is found. They will be excited to see the names of so many Old Testament heroes.

"This quarter we are going to be studying this chapter, which is kind of a 'Hall of Fame' for men and women of faith. Each of the people in this chapter is here because he or she had faith and because that faith led each of them to do something. Sometimes they did hard things, sometimes they did painful things, sometimes they did miraculous things, but they all acted on their faith. They all believed the promises of God and did what God had called them to do."

Remind your students that faith works that way in our lives as well. If we truly believe in God and in His Word, we will obey Him. We won't just live our lives like everyone else; we will live as Christians, even when it's difficult or painful or scary. As we'll see in the weeks ahead, faith always involves action that's based upon the Word and promises of God.

### **Activity - The "Vanishing Verse" Game**

Write Hebrews 11:1 on a chalk board or erasable marker board and have the class read it aloud together. Then have a student choose a word to be erased from the verse. (In some cases, such as with the words "what" or "we," the word will be erased in more than one place.) After the word is erased, have that student attempt to say the verse, remembering the missing word and where it belongs. Continue this activity, erasing more and more words, until the entire verse is erased. Usually, by this time, the whole class can say the verse by memory. This helps the class learn their memory verse, and, in this instance, gives them a working definition of the term "faith."

## **Worksheet**

Have students complete the worksheet. (The answers to Part I are: *from, all, isn't, true, hope.*)

## **Related Music**

“I Know Whom I Have Believed” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #705).

**I. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below. The missing word will begin with the letter found at the front of the sentence.**

**F** Faith is a gift \_\_\_\_\_ God.

**A** \_\_\_\_\_ people must come to God in faith to be saved.

**I** Faith \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ just a “hope so” feeling.

**T** We can have faith because God’s Word is \_\_\_\_\_.

**H** Faith is being sure of what we \_\_\_\_\_ for.

**II. Circle the words in the memory verse below that describe faith to you.**

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.” Hebrews 11:1



# **ABEL - FAITH THAT WORSHIPED**

**Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4:1-15**

## **Lesson Aim**

To show students that true faith brings with it the desire to worship and praise God.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:3** - "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."

## **Lesson Background**

The story of Cain and Abel is not merely an account of sibling rivalry taken to the extreme. Rather, it illustrates to us that, since Adam's sin, there are only two kinds of people on the earth: the righteous and the wicked. Jesus Himself refers to Abel as "righteous Abel" (Matthew 23:35), while John reminds us, "Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one, and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil, and his brother's were righteous" (I John 3:12). The difference in these two brothers was not in their upbringing, their environment, or even their temperament; the difference was in the electing grace of God, through which Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain "by faith." It is Abel's faith that speaks to us this day - a faith that sought to please and honor and worship God through his sacrifice, and ultimately through the sacrifice of his own life.

As we begin this tour through the Bible's "Hall of Fame," have your students examine their own faith in light of Abel's. Do they enjoy worshipping God? Do they want to honor Him with their lives? Are they willing to do their best and be their best and give their best for God? Challenge your students this week to think of themselves as "living sacrifices" and to live in a way that gives glory to God.

## **Lesson Procedure**

Begin this week's lesson by reciting last week's memory verse as a class and discussing it as a definition of faith. Remind your students that faith isn't just a "hope so" feeling, but a strong, solid assurance that what God says is true. It is based on the certainty of God's Word. Also remind your students that faith, while it begins in the heart and the mind, always leads to action. People who believe in God and in His Word will try to live in a way that pleases Him. They will put Christ first and live as Christians even when it is difficult or painful or scary. The people we are going to study this quarter from Hebrews 11 were all people of faith, and they were all people of action.

### **1. Abel - An Example of Faith**

Read Hebrews 11:4 aloud in class. Then turn to Genesis 4 and read verses 1-15, which tell the story of Cain and Abel. This is a familiar account to most of your students. Explain to your students that God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice because he brought the best he had to offer in obedience to and worship of God. He also gave it in faith, believing that the sacrifice would be pleasing to the Lord. Then ask the following questions:

- Why was Cain jealous of his brother Abel? (Because God accepted Abel's sacrifice and He didn't accept Cain's.)
- What did God advise Cain to do? (God told Cain to repent and do right so his sacrifice would also be accepted.)
- What did Cain do instead? (Murdered his brother.)
- How was Cain punished? (He was put under a curse; the earth would not yield its crops to him and he would be a restless wanderer on the earth.)

Now focus back on Abel's faith. Point out that Abel's sacrifice was a way of worshipping God. Abel gave the best from his flock to honor God. Both his sacrifice and his heart-attitude were pleasing to God. He gave a generous, excellent offering from a heart of faith as an act of worship. But Abel's sacrifice didn't stop with the "fat portions of the firstborn of his flock." In the end he sacrificed his life as well, for it was his faith in God that angered Cain and caused him to kill Abel. Abel was the first person ever killed; he was also the first person ever to die for his faith. He was faithful even to death and, as the writer to Hebrews reminds us, still speaks to us today about what it means to be true to the Lord.

## 2. True Faith Causes Us to Want to Worship God

Abel's faith was demonstrated in his worship of God. This should also be true of us. If we really believe in God's Word and realize all that He has done for us by creating us, caring for us, and saving us, then the only response we can have is to worship Him for His grace and goodness. There are many forms that this worship can take, but we'll look at three passages that speak of our worship as a "sacrifice" to God.

- Hebrews 13:15 - We worship God by offering a "sacrifice of praise." When we talk to others about Jesus and what He means to us, when we sing His praises in church, or when we praise Him in our prayers, we are worshiping Him.
- Psalm 54:6 - When you love someone, it is natural to want to give something to that person to show that you care. We worship God by giving to Him - giving Him gifts of money, gifts of time, and the gift of ourselves.
- I Samuel 15:22 - We worship God by obeying Him! This is even more important than giving or praising. If we say we love and worship God but live in disobedience to His Word, we may be deceiving ourselves.

"How about you? Do you enjoy worshiping the Lord? Or are church and Sunday School just "boring" to you? Do you find yourself praising Him? Do you try to obey His commandments? If worshiping God is not a part of your life, then maybe you don't have true faith. Maybe you've never experienced forgiveness of your sins. If you're not sure and would like to discuss this with me, I'll be available after class." Children this age often confuse "being saved" with walking an aisle, praying a prayer, or being baptized. Be certain to explain to them that being saved is a matter of faith. It's knowing that you are a sinner and coming to Christ for forgiveness of sins. It's experiencing the grace of God that assures us that "if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

### Worksheet

This week we begin work on our Hebrews 11 "Hall of Faith." Have each child work on his or her own worksheet, drawing a picture of something that reminds them of Abel, describing what they admire most about him, and thinking how they might like to be like him. Suggestions for pictures: your students might draw an altar, or a sheep, or perhaps they might like to attempt a portrait of Abel. Choose one picture to display on your "Hall of Faith," remembering that it needn't be the best worksheet to be chosen. Children differ in their artistic ability and in their ability to express themselves. What's important is that everyone in class has something on the wall by the end of the quarter. Knowing this, you may choose to display artwork alphabetically, or, if you have a student whose attendance is sporadic, you might want to get his artwork the first Sunday he is present.

## **Related Music**

There is no end of songs with which we can praise the Lord! Here are just a few examples: “Be Exalted, O God”; “Father, I Adore You”; “His Name is Wonderful”; “Praise Him! Praise Him!” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #173).



# STUDENT WORKSHEET

# ABEL

Draw a picture below of something that reminds you of Abel.

What I admire most about Abel is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be more like Abel in this way: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 11:3** - "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."



# **ENOCH - A WALK OF FAITH**

**Hebrews 11:5; Genesis 5:21-24**

## **Lesson Aim**

To acquaint students with Enoch and to communicate what it means to “walk by faith.”

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:6** - “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”

## **Lesson Background**

Like several other people mentioned in the book of Genesis, Enoch is a shadowy, mysterious character of whom little is known. We know from Jude 14-15 that Enoch was a prophet who spoke of the Lord’s coming and His judgment of the wicked. We know that He pleased God because he “walked with God,” and we know he was one of only two people (the other being Elijah) who never experienced death because God translated him into heaven.

Despite the lack of details about Enoch and his life, however, he still lays before us an enormous challenge to live our faith in our everyday lives - to “walk with God” through the big and little occurrences

of our daily experience. Let's encourage our students this week to remember that God is always with them and to seek to please Him in all that they do. Let's also examine our own walk and try to be imitators of Enoch, who walked with God.

## **Lesson Procedure**

To introduce this week's lesson, have your students imagine that they are camping out with friends in an unfamiliar wooded area. The night is dark and cloudy with little moonlight shining through, and everyone is huddled around the campfire. "But the pile of firewood is getting low, and someone asks you to get more kindling from the woods. The only problem is that you've forgotten your flashlight. Do you think you'd want to go into those woods by yourself in the dark?"

Discuss the dangers present in a dark woods - how easily one could trip over fallen logs, or fall into a ditch filled with water, or run into wild animals! Perhaps some of your students will have some stories to share about this. "But now suppose one of your friends volunteers to go with you, and he has a camping lantern! Not only that, but he's been camping at this site many times and knows the area well. Perhaps he says, 'I know just where to go for more wood.' Would you feel better going with him than you would alone? Of course! And you would be very foolish to insist on going alone instead."

Tell your students that there are many times when it is better to go with a friend than to try to make it on your own - when you're in unfamiliar territory or when you're in a potentially dangerous situation, like camping or hiking or swimming. "Today's lesson is about a man who understood that idea, and his name was Enoch."

### **1. Who was Enoch?**

Have your students turn to Hebrews 11:5 and read the verse aloud in class. Then read the account of Enoch in Genesis 5:21-24. Tell your students that Enoch was a man who lived before Noah and the Flood. Although the world was still very young, there was already great wickedness in the earth (as we see when we read about the descendants of Cain in Genesis 4). But Enoch did not go the way of the ungodly; instead, we are told that after the birth of his son Methuselah, Enoch "walked with God" (Genesis 5:22) for 300 years! (Remind your students that in the early days of the creation people lived much longer than they do now.) Enoch sought the Lord and became so close to the Lord that he never died. Instead, one day the Lord simply took Enoch home to be in His presence forever. This was a tremendous privilege, granted to only one other man in all of history - the prophet Elijah (see II Kings 2).

"We really don't know very much about Enoch; we know he was a godly man, we know from the book of Jude that he was a prophet, and we know he never experienced death. We know the name of his son, Methuselah. But other than that, we don't know the details of his life - what he did for a living, whom he married, what kind of dangers he faced, or what the world was like when he was alive. But we know he was a very special man because he was so close to God that he was said to 'walk with God.' God was his friend, his companion, and his guide. Hebrews 11:5 says that Enoch's faith pleased God. He must have been a very remarkable man if God spared him from death. Other great men and women in the Bible died, didn't they? Moses, Samuel, John the Baptist,

Mary, Paul - these all died one day. But Enoch was given the special privilege of being taken into God's presence without death."

## 2. What Does It Mean to "Walk with God"?

Like Enoch, we too can walk with God. Explain to your students that "walk" is often used in the Bible to describe a person's daily life. For example, John writes in I John 1:7 that we should "walk in the light." If we obeyed that literally, we might think it means we shouldn't go out after dark! But no, of course John means we should have a lifestyle that is marked by godliness and truth. In the same way, when we read that "Enoch walked with God," we need to understand that this is a description of his life. He lived a life that was known for its godliness. He lived every day in the presence of God, knowing that God was always with him and always watching the things he did. And he tried to do everything in a way that was pleasing to God.

"We know that Enoch wasn't a perfect man; the Bible says, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But Enoch did worship the Lord and lived his life in faith, seeking to glorify God. And that is a challenge to us as well! Do we remember God throughout our day - as we go to school, or play with friends, or watch television? Do we ask ourselves, 'Is what I'm doing right now pleasing to the Lord?' Or do we conveniently forget about God whenever we're not in church or Sunday School?"

Have your students look up I Corinthians 10:31. Point out that we need to do everything - even ordinary things like eating and drinking - to the glory of God. We need to remember that, if we are Christians, we are to live for Him. And living for the Lord means "walking" with Him and having Him walk with us. "When we walk with God, we find out that He's there to guide us, to help us and to bless us, even in our everyday lives. If you have a problem with another person at school, take that problem to the Lord. He can give you wisdom to deal with that person. If you have a hard time getting along with your brother at home, the Lord can give you the love and patience you need to deal with him. The wonderful thing about walking with the Lord is discovering that He really is there - and He is walking with you!"

"But what if you don't know the Lord Jesus as your Savior? What if you aren't a Christian? Well, then you're like the person in our camping story, aren't you? You're wandering blindly in the darkness - in a dangerous darkness - when you could have a Friend with the light of truth and love." Encourage your students to seek forgiveness for their sins and to give themselves to Christ. Remind them that believers do not need to fear eternal death, but will someday be where Enoch is - in the presence of God! Invite any student who wishes to discuss this with you to stay afterwards in class.

## Worksheet

Have your students use the "picture space" on their worksheet to draw a situation when they need to remember to walk with God. It may be a situation when they are afraid, when they need extra help, or when it is difficult for them to live the way a Christian should. Then have the students fill out the rest of the worksheet. Remember to choose one for your "Hall of Faith."

## **Related Music**

“Trust and Obey” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #672).

**STUDENT WORKSHEET**

**ENOCH**

Draw a picture below of a time when you need to remember to “walk with God.”

I think the most interesting thing about Enoch was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be more like Enoch when I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**MEMORY VERSE**

**Hebrews 11:6** - “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”





# **NOAH - FAITH IN A FAITHLESS WORLD**

**Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6**

## **Lesson Aim**

To show students that, like Noah, we must live lives of faith despite what the people around us think or do.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:32** - “And what more can I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets . . .”

## **Lesson Background**

The story of Noah and the Ark is as familiar to most children as Mother Goose nursery rhymes or some other story they have heard since they were toddlers. This is especially true of children raised in the church. This tale of a “floating zoo” just naturally appeals to children and lends itself easily to retelling in picture books and songs, video and movies, in video. What we want to do this week is get beyond the details that your students know so well and show how Noah can be an example to us in the world we live in today. The “comparison” exercise we’ll do this week will help your students see the similarities between our world and Noah’s world. Hopefully, Noah will become less like the character in an ancient story and be seen as a person like you and me.

If you have a class made up of basically unchurched children or if you feel there are some misunderstandings and misconceptions about the story of Noah and the Ark among your students, you may wish to spend more time on the actual details of the account in Genesis 6. If you know that all or most of your students are very familiar with the story, you will want to spend more time on the application. Try to tailor the lesson to meet the needs of your own situation.

## **Lesson Procedure**

To introduce your lesson, begin by discussing the expression “a fish out of water.” “Sometimes people say they feel like a ‘fish out of water’; what do you think is meant by that expression?” Get ideas from students, and then clarify by saying that it means to feel out of your element or away from surroundings and situations that are familiar to you. “Being a ‘fish out of water’ means you feel different from the other people around you; maybe you feel like you stick out like a sore thumb. Have you ever had an experience where, say, you were invited to a party and when you got there everybody knew everybody else and you only knew one person? Or maybe you’ve traveled to a different country where everyone spoke a different language except you.” Get experiences from your students - perhaps you have one to share yourself - of times when they felt like “a fish out of water.”

“Sometimes it is dangerous to be different from everyone around you; for example, if you’re driving the wrong way down a one-way road and all the other cars are driving toward you, then that’s dangerous, right? But wait a minute - suppose all those other cars are headed over a cliff? Then I’d rather be going in the opposite direction, wouldn’t you? Today’s lesson is about a man who knew that everyone else in the whole world was headed for destruction except his family. He knew it because God told him, and he believed it. He’s an example for us today, and we read about him in Hebrews 11.”

### **1. Noah Believes God’s Word**

Have your students look up Hebrews 11:7 and read the verse aloud in class. Then have your students turn to Genesis 6 and read aloud verses 5-14 and 19-22. You might determine just how well your students know the story by quizzing them on the details, such as “How long did it rain?” or “What was the special sign of the promise God made Noah?” If you feel your class needs to go over the specifics of the story, you could also read Genesis 7:14-24; 8:1-2, 13-17 aloud in class.

“Hebrews 11:7 tells us that Noah showed his faith by believing God’s Word. Don’t think this was an easy thing to do; there were lots of reasons why Noah might not have believed.” Noah believed God’s Word:

- Despite the things he saw. Hebrews 11:7 tells us Noah was warned “about things not yet seen.” Not only had Noah never seen a flood in the land, there are many scholars who believe that, up to this time, it had never even rained before (see Genesis 2:5-6). Noah did not rely on his past experience or his own wisdom and observations; instead, he believed God even when it ran contrary to his own wisdom.
- Despite the work involved. Building the ark was a monumental task - it may have taken 100 years for Noah to do this. Hebrews 11:7 tells us that Noah set about building the ark “in holy fear”

because he truly believed that God would destroy mankind with a flood, and the ark would be the only means of salvation for him and his family.

- Despite what others said and did. We are told in II Peter 2:5 that Noah was a “preacher of righteousness.” No doubt many people saw the ark as it was being constructed, and no doubt Noah told them the reason why he was building it and what destruction was coming to the world. And yet no one else turned from their sins to follow God; they all continued in their wickedness. Noah’s faith had to stand against everyone else in the whole world except his family. Because God enabled him to do so, his faith “condemned the world” - that is, the world of his time.

## **2. Noah - An Example for Us**

Ask your students to describe what people were like when God sent the flood; your students will probably describe them as being wicked, sinful and evil. (If not, point out Genesis 6:5, which states that every thought of man’s heart “was only evil all the time”). Remind students that we also live in a violent, evil time - a time when many refuse to believe God’s Word, or even in God Himself. Then turn to Matthew 24:36-41 and read the verse aloud in class. Explain that Jesus is speaking about the last days and the time of His return.

“What does Jesus say the last times will be like?” He compares the last times to the days of Noah. “What kinds of things will people be doing when He returns?” Have the students list the things mentioned in the verse (marrying, eating, etc.) and have them compare this to the things that happen today. Show that Jesus is describing a time when people will live lives without giving a thought to God or His Word. It will be a time of wickedness and unbelief, just like the days of Noah.

“What happened to the people who didn’t listen to Noah?” They were destroyed by the flood. Jesus warns us that “That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man” (verse 39). We may live in a day and age when it isn’t popular to believe the Bible. Others may laugh at us or call us names, or worse. But the consequences of unbelief are as dangerous as they were during Noah’s time. If we don’t believe God’s Word, and don’t know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are in danger of perishing. Even if Jesus does not come during our lifetimes, we still must face God after death. That’s why it’s so very important to believe God the way Noah believed Him.

## **Conclusion**

Encourage your students to see the importance of believing and obeying God even when it’s unpopular to do so - in school situations, at home, etc. It’s important to obey God even in the little things because it’s the little things that get us ready to obey in the big things. Take them back to the introductory illustration of the car headed in the opposite direction from the other cars, but the other cars are going over a cliff! Ask your students which car they are driving. As always, encourage anyone who has a question about his or her own personal salvation to talk to you after class.

## Worksheet

Have your students make rainbows on the top portion of their worksheets. They may use crayons or markers or chalk (a good way to blend the colors together to make it look like a rainbow!). Another good way to make a rainbow is to use different colored strips of yarn and glue them into a rainbow shape. Use materials you have on hand and your imagination. Then have students fill out the bottom part of the worksheet and choose one for your “Hall of Faith.”

## Related Music

“Seek Ye First The Kingdom of God”; “Who is On the Lord’s Side?” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #587); “My Jesus, I Love Thee” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #648).

# STUDENT WORKSHEET

# NOAH

Make a rainbow to remember Noah and God’s promise never to send another flood.

The story of Noah reminds me that I must \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 11:32** - “And what more can I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets . . .”



# **ABRAHAM - FAITH THAT FOLLOWED**

**Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16; Genesis 12**

## **Lesson Aim**

To encourage students to long, as Abraham did, for “the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:33** - “Who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions . . .”

## **Lesson Background**

Abraham was willing to leave the comfortable, prosperous city of Haran and follow his God because of a promise - a promise given by the One who cannot lie. He was willing to give up material blessing for spiritual blessing, and became a stranger and a wanderer in this world because he saw the promise of the world to come. As the father of all the faithful (Galatians 3:29), he gives us an example of how we should follow the Lord. Yet how much of what we do is really based upon conviction, and how much do we do out of convenience and comfort? Do we really picture ourselves as pilgrims, pushing toward the celestial city, or are we much too comfortable with this present world?

Perhaps one of the reasons we lose sight of who we are and where we are heading is because we just don't talk or think or study much about heaven. We need to know more about the place we say we're looking forward so much to seeing! In this week's lesson we are going to spend some time reading about the ultimate reality for the believer - the new Jerusalem, described in Revelation 21 and 22. As you read these passages aloud with your students, encourage them to imagine with their mind's eye what these things look like. May we all come away from this week's lesson with a renewed desire for the "heavenly city" and the "better country."

## **Lesson Procedure**

This week's suggested introduction may take some effort on your part, but it's really worth it if you can make it happen. Locate a camping tent and put it up either outside (if the weather is good) or inside a large, open area in your church. Note: if this is not your tent, make sure you have someone there who can help you get it up in a jiffy. Also, a modern "umbrella" tent with poles is better for this than a tent with spikes, etc., because it will go up quickly. If you cannot locate a tent, or if you have no conceivable place to set one up, think about bringing some sheets and making a "pretend" tent in your classroom, perhaps by stringing clothesline from one end to the other and throwing sheets over the clothesline.

If your class is small and your tent is large, you may decide to have your entire lesson inside the tent. Otherwise, the students can take turns going inside and thinking about what it would be like to live their lives in a tent. While your students are investigating the tent, ask the following questions: "Have you ever gone camping in a tent? For how long? What was the weather like? How would you feel about leaving your home and living inside a tent for the rest of your life?" If some students seem enthusiastic about going to live in a tent, remind them that there is little protection from the rain, the hot sun, or the cold. Remind them that bathing and cooking and using the bathroom must all be done outside of the tent. Lead them to consider what "tent life" would really be like.

"I think most people would say they would rather live in a nice, comfortable, cozy house than a tent, don't you? But our lesson today is about a man who left a comfortable home in a prosperous city to wander for the rest of his life, living in tents. Why would he do such a thing? That's what we're going to find out."

### **1. Abraham's Call**

Have your students read Hebrews 11:8-10. Then turn to Genesis 12 and read aloud verses 1-8. Explain that Abraham was called to leave Haran, the city where he was living, to go to an unknown country. Abraham was a wealthy man and Haran was a comfortable city - a trading center of the old world where all kinds of goods and luxuries could be obtained. Abraham and his family worshiped other gods (see Joshua 24:2), but the Lord chose Abraham to make him the father of the nation of Israel. To do that, Abraham had to leave the pagan city of Haran and follow the Lord's call to the land of Canaan - the land that would someday belong to the Israelites. God promised Abraham that, if he did so, he would make him into a great nation, and would bless him, and all the other peoples of the earth through him (Genesis 12:2-3).



“Abraham had faith in God’s promise, and that faith led him to follow the Lord into a foreign land. It changed his life forever; we will take a look at what Abraham gave up to follow God and what Abraham received.”

## **2. What Abraham Gave Up**

Have your students turn back to Hebrews 11 to look at verses 8-10. Point out that Abraham was giving up a “civilized” lifestyle in a prosperous city. He gave up the security of living in a protected environment with neighbors and friends to surround him. He gave up living in homes with walls! He gave up the convenience of the marketplace, where his family could purchase whatever they needed. Most of all, he gave up his will to live life the way he thought it should be lived. The Hebrews passage shows us that Abraham didn’t even know where he was going, but he obeyed God and followed anyway because he had faith in God’s promise.

“Try to put yourself in Abraham’s shoes. Suppose your father were to come home one night and say, ‘Our family has to move to Alaska. We’re going to live in a log cabin in the mountains, miles away from the nearest neighbor.’ Imagine having to leave your home and your friends and your school and church behind. It wouldn’t be easy, would it?”

## **3. What Abraham Received**

Abraham received the promise that God made to him. God did make Abraham’s descendants into a great nation - the nation of Israel. To do that, He gave Abraham a son (we’ll talk more about that next week!). He blessed Abraham with many material goods and servants. The land where he wandered in a tent became the land of the nation of Israel. And the Messiah, Jesus Christ, was one of Abraham’s descendants, so that through Abraham the entire world really was blessed.

But Abraham received more than just earthly blessings. Abraham also became a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. Genesis 15:6 tells us that “Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.” Because of his faith, Abraham was blessed on earth, and when he died he went to “the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

“What do you think about Abraham? Did he make the right choice by following God? Did he receive more than he lost?” Show your students that Abraham made a good choice for all of eternity when he left Haran and followed the Lord’s leading.

## **4. What We May Receive**

We are also called to follow God, although probably not by leaving our country and living in a tent. Instead, we are called to follow Him by obeying His Word, believing His promises, and seeking to live for Him. “If you have faith in Jesus Christ, then, like Abraham, you too are looking for a better country. What country do you think that is?” The better country is heaven, and it is worth giving up everything and everyone else in the world to obtain it.

Have your students turn to the last two chapters of Revelation and explain to them that you are going to read about the heavenly city that all believers can look forward to seeing. Then have

them follow as you read Revelation 21:9-14; 21:21-22:6. Explain that these descriptions are only word pictures because words cannot really describe the glories of heaven. Encourage each student to imagine in his or her own mind the pictures that the words give us.

“Earth was made for people, but heaven was formed as the dwelling place of God. If the earth is so beautiful, even after Adam’s sin, just think how incredibly beautiful heaven must be!”

## **Conclusion**

Remind your students that only believers in Jesus Christ will see the heavenly city. Encourage each one to examine his own heart to be certain that he has really come to Christ in repentance for forgiveness of sins. Also encourage your students to follow Christ, remembering that their final destination will be worth everything they may give up in this world.

## **Worksheet**

Follow directions on the worksheet. Remember to choose one worksheet from the class for your “Hall of Faith.”

## **Related Music**

“How Lovely is Your Dwelling Place”; “He Leadeth Me” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #600).

# STUDENT WORKSHEET

# ABRAHAM

Draw a picture of a tent below to remember that Abraham left Haran and lived in tents in the land of Canaan.

What are some of the things Abraham gave up to follow God? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did Abraham receive? \_\_\_\_\_

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What will we receive if we follow Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

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## MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 11:33** - "Who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions . . ."



# **SARAH - FAITH REWARDED**

**Hebrews 11:11-12; Genesis 17:15-19; 21:1-8**

## **Lesson Aim**

To show students that faith will be rewarded “above all that we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20).

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:34** - “. . . quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle, and routed foreign armies.”

## **Lesson Background**

As you read Hebrews 11:11-12 in the NIV, you may be puzzled as to why we are spotlighting Sarah in this lesson when Abraham seems to be the one of whom the verses are speaking. But if you check your NIV text note, you will see that verse 11 can also read, “By faith even Sarah, who was past age, was enabled to bear children because she considered Him faithful who had made the promise.” Other translations also emphasize Sarah’s faith - including the King James Version and the New American Standard Bible, which reads, “By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.” Certainly, regardless of the exact translation of the verse, Sarah was a woman worthy of commendation (see I Peter 3:5-6) and her faith was rewarded with the birth of her son, Isaac. Faith’s reward will be the emphasis of this week’s lesson, and may it be an encouragement to you and your class.

## Lesson Procedure

Write down the following Bible references, each on a separate slip of paper, and open the class by passing them out to your students. Have your students look up their verses, and when everyone has found his or her passage, have each read the verses in succession.

Matthew 16:27  
Matthew 10:42  
Ephesians 6:8  
Colossians 3:24

Hebrews 11:6  
II John 8  
Revelation 22:12

When all of the verses have been read aloud, ask your students what they think is the common idea or theme in all of them (it is, of course, reward). “The Bible has a lot to say about rewards. It tells us that those who live by faith can look forward to having their faith rewarded, both in this world and in the world to come. The woman we are going to learn about today was someone who was rewarded for her faith in a very special way.”

### 1. Sarah’s Condition - Old and Childless

Have your students turn to Hebrews 11:11-12; be certain to point out the alternative reading of the verse that emphasizes Sarah. Then have your students turn to Genesis 17:15-19 and read these verses aloud. Point out that this promise to Abraham, to give him a son and to make that son into a mighty nation, was very specific in relation to Sarah. Abraham already had a son named Ishmael by Sarah’s servant, but God wanted the promised child to be Abraham and Sarah’s son. He wanted this child to be a “miracle baby,” and it would have to be a miracle since:

- Sarah was barren. In all her years as Abraham’s wife she had never had a child, whereas Abraham had fathered Ishmael. So the physical problem was Sarah’s, but God promised her a son in spite of it.
- Sarah was old. We are told she was ninety years of age, and while people aged slower and lived longer back then (Sarah lived to be 127), it was still past the age of bearing children. Sarah was the age of a grandma, not the age of a mother.

Point out also that being childless wasn’t just a disappointment for Sarah; in Bible times, a barren woman was considered a failure (see Hannah’s story in I Samuel 1). It was a disgrace not to be able to give your husband a child, particularly a son. A son would also be the support of his mother when his father died, so a childless woman was without security for the future. In light of this, we can understand why being childless was a great tragedy for Sarah and how much it would mean for her to have a son.

### 2. Sarah’s Faith and Its Reward

While we do not have the same statements in the Scriptures regarding Sarah’s faith as we do concerning Abraham’s, we do have evidence that she, too, believed the promises of God. While Sarah did not hear God’s voice or God’s promise, she submitted to her husband’s plan to leave the

pagan world behind and live in tents in the land of Canaan. In fact, Sarah is offered as an example of holy submission for Christian wives; see I Peter 3:5-6. We also know that Sarah believed in the promise enough to try to “orchestrate” its fulfillment by urging Abraham to have a child with her servant Hagar. While it was wrong for Sarah to try to solve her own problem of barrenness, this was a common custom at this time in history. But, thankfully for Sarah, God had a different way of fulfilling His promise to Abraham, and His way included her!

Have your students turn to Genesis 21:1-7 and read these verses aloud in class. Point out the phrases, “the Lord was gracious to Sarah, as He said,” and “the Lord did for Sarah what He had promised.” Also point out Sarah’s joy at the birth of Isaac, noted in verses 6-7 - “God has brought me laughter” (Isaac’s name means “he laughs”).

“Sarah’s greatest desire, to give birth to Abraham’s son, was rewarded because of her faith and Abraham’s faith. God did what He had promised them He would do even though what He had promised seemed an impossibility at this time in their lives. But nothing is impossible for God, is it?”

### **3. Our Faith Rewarded**

Remind students of the verses they read at the beginning of class. These verses tell us that God knows our faith and our works and that we will be rewarded for these things.

“Remember the verses we read last week from Revelation about the heavenly city? That is the ultimate reward for those who know Christ.” Have students recount some of the things they remember from the passages read last week in Revelation 21-22, reminding them of any important details they may have forgotten.

“But the Christian’s reward isn’t just for the life to come. Like Sarah, we have certain promises for this life as well. These promises can be found in our Bible. For example, Jesus promised, ‘Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’ (Matthew 28:20). He has also promised to hear and answer prayer (see John 14:13-14). There are many, many other promises in the Bible that are for us as well.”

## **Conclusion**

Encourage your students to spend some time on their own thinking about the reward that God has promised to those who have faith in Him. Remind them also of the importance of getting to know their Bible, since this is the place where the promises of God are found. But remind them also that these things are promised to Christians only; it is another matter altogether for unbelievers. “One of the verses we read at the beginning of class, Matthew 16:27, tells us that when Christ returns He will reward each person according to what he has done. For unbelievers, this means judgment for their unbelief.” Exhort your students to be ready for that day by turning to Christ for their salvation. As always, encourage any student who has questions or concerns about his salvation to remain after class to discuss this with you.

## **Worksheet**

Have your students draw a picture of a baby in the top portion of the worksheet to remind them of Sarah's reward. Then have them complete the bottom portion by answering the questions. Remember to choose one project for your "Hall of Faith."

## **Related Music**

"Seek Ye First"; "God is so Good"; "Great is Thy Faithfulness" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #32).



# STUDENT WORKSHEET

# SARAH

Draw a picture of a baby below to remember how Sarah was rewarded for her faith.

Why did it seem impossible for Sarah to give birth to Abraham's son? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you think is the most important thing we can learn from Sarah's faith?

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## MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 11:34** - “. . . quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle, and routed foreign armies.”



# **ABRAHAM - FAITH TESTED**

**Hebrews 11:17-19; Genesis 22**

## **Lesson Aim**

To help students know that we can always trust in God, even when our faith is tested.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:35** - “Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.”

## **Lesson Background**

In this week’s lesson we see Abraham’s faith tested on many different levels. Certainly, the first thing we realize is how gut-wrenching it must have been for Abraham even to think of killing his “one and only son” - Isaac, the child he loved with all his heart. How could any parent bear to do such a thing to his own child?

But Abraham’s faith was tested even further by the fact that what God had commanded him to do seemed to contradict His promise. God had promised Abraham that he would have many descendants and that these descendants would come through Isaac. But Isaac had not yet fathered any children. Still, Abraham’s faith was strong; he knew that it was impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18), and so he believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. And, in a figurative sense, that’s just what the Lord did!

All Christians go through times of testing - even third and fourth graders - and this lesson reminds us that we can trust God to be faithful and true to His word despite the outward circumstances.

Because we're going to be turning to several different passages in Genesis for comparison with Hebrews 11:17-19, you might wish to have the Hebrews passage written on your class chalkboard. Or you may wish to write the verses out and then photocopy them for each child in your class.

## **Lesson Procedure**

Begin this week's lesson by asking your students what kinds of "tests" they have at school. Find out which tests your students like best - and least. Finally, ask them why they think it's important to be tested in school sometimes; try to show them that testing is important because it shows everyone - including them - how much they have learned. "If your teacher never tested you, she wouldn't know when it was time to move on to new subjects or when she should go over material again because you didn't learn it the first time. And maybe without testing, you wouldn't know what you've learned or what you have problems with, either. Testing helps put into practice all the good things we have learned."

"Sometimes Christians are tested, too, only it's not usually done with pencils and paper! The memory verses we are learning this quarter are about different kinds of 'testing' that believers have had to endure. Can you name some of them?" Recent verses have spoken of facing lions, fire, armies, torture, and even death. "Believers through the ages have always had their faith 'tested' by God, some in big ways and others in small ways. But perhaps no one was tested like Abraham, and that's what our lesson is about today."

### **1. Review of God's Promise to Abraham**

Have your students look back to Genesis 17:15-19 and read again the promise that God made to Abraham concerning Isaac. "God promised Abraham a son through his wife Sarah - Isaac. And He promised to make a nation out of Isaac's descendants, a great and mighty nation that would bless the world. Abraham and Sarah waited many years for this promise to be fulfilled.

### **2. Abraham's Test**

Have your students read Hebrews 11:17-19. Then turn to Genesis 22:1-2. Point out the phrase, "your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love," which shows how precious Isaac was to Abraham. "Why would God want Abraham to offer up his son as a burnt sacrifice? Why would He want Abraham to kill his only son - the son God had promised him and given him? Does that make sense?" Help your students to see that this was a test for Abraham to see how much Abraham loved and trusted the Lord.

### **3. Abraham's Response**

Abraham's heart must have sunk when he heard this command from the Lord. Nevertheless, Hebrews tells us that, as Abraham considered God's command, he realized that God would be able

to bring Isaac back to life again. So we read in Genesis 22:3 that Abraham got ready to obey God's command "early the next morning." He did not hesitate to obey.

Have your students read Genesis 22:3-8. Point out that Abraham told his servants in verse 5, "We will worship and then we will come back to you." Abraham truly believed that both he and Isaac would return from the mountain even though he was supposed to offer Isaac as a sacrifice there.

"Why do you think Abraham was so confident that God would raise Isaac from the dead?" Abraham knew that God had promised that he would become a great nation through Isaac. For that to be possible, Isaac would also have to have children. Abraham knew that it was impossible for God to lie, so his faith in God told him that Isaac would not remain dead.

#### **4. God's Response**

Now read Genesis 22:9-19 aloud in class. As Abraham prepared to take Isaac's life, an angel called out to him and prevented him from killing his son. God Himself provided the sacrifice for the offering - just as Abraham had said in verse 8 - with a ram caught in a thicket. And God again promised to bless Abraham in verses 15-19.

"Did God keep His word? Did He keep His promises to Abraham as Abraham believed He would?" God did keep His promise to Abraham, but not exactly the way Abraham thought he would.

"What did God say that showed He was pleased with Abraham?" We read in verse 12, "Now I know you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

"Can you think of any other story in the Bible where a father had to sacrifice his son?" Hopefully your students will realize that God the Father sacrificed His Son on the cross for sinners so that we could be born again. Point out that, while Abraham was asked to do this, God graciously saved him from having to commit such an act. But God was willing to offer His only Son, Jesus, for Abraham's sake and for our sakes as well.

### **Conclusion**

It's not always easy to live by faith, but we can trust God to keep His promises. Our faith may be tested at times, although in different ways than Abraham's was tested. We may have to stand up for what we believe when others are making fun of us. We may have to trust God through a long illness or accident. We may not always understand what God is doing in our lives, but we know we can trust Him to do what is best. After all, Abraham didn't have to sacrifice his son, but God did deliver His Son to die for sinners. If He loves us enough to do that, He certainly loves us enough to stand by us when our faith is tested.

## **Worksheet**

Have your students draw a picture of a ram in the top portion of the worksheet (you may wish to bring a picture from an encyclopedia or dictionary if you don't think your students are familiar with rams). Then have your students answer the questions on the bottom portion. As usual, choose one worksheet for your "Hall of Faith."

## **Related Music**

"He is Able"; "Oh, How He Loves You and Me"; "Trust and Obey" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #672).

## STUDENT WORKSHEET

## ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Draw a picture of a ram below to remember that God provided the sacrifice in Isaac's place.

Why was this a difficult test for Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Abraham didn't really have to sacrifice his son. But Who did sacrifice His only Son?

\_\_\_\_\_

### MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 11:35** - "Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection."





# **JACOB AND JOSEPH - FAITH THAT LOOKED FORWARD**

**Hebrews 11:21-22; Genesis 48 and 50:22-26**

## **Lesson Aim**

To show students that faith looks forward to future joy, and the fulfillment of all God's promises.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:36** - "Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison."

## **Lesson Background**

If your church uses Faith Reformed Baptist's Sunday School curriculum in your first and second grade departments, then many of your students will already have been introduced to the lives of Jacob and Joseph. In this lesson, we will be looking at these two patriarchs at the end of their lives as they look forward to Israel's return to Canaan and the fulfillment of all God's promises.

Obviously, it is therefore impossible to give your students all the details as to why Jacob and Joseph were in Egypt. We will simply state that Jacob's family had to leave the land promised to Abraham and his children because of a severe famine, and that is why they were in Egypt. The handout on "Abraham's Family Tree" will be helpful in this lesson to demonstrate that Jacob was Abraham's grandson and Joseph was his great-grandson. Make photocopies of the family tree for each student in your class.

## Lesson Procedure

Have your students imagine they are in the following two situations:

It is Monday morning. You're at the dentist's office with a toothache, and the dentist tells you that one of your teeth must be extracted. She makes an appointment with you for Friday afternoon and gives you some pain medication to stop the toothache. But all you can think about is having to come back in four days to get your tooth pulled.

It is the beginning of summer vacation and your dad comes home from work with good news. "I've got tickets for Disney World!" he tells you. "We'll spend two weeks in Florida in August." You're very excited, but realize you're going to have to wait almost two months before you can go on the trip.

"In both of these situations you are waiting for something to happen. In the first situation, it's something unpleasant. In the second situation, it's something wonderful. Do you think the waiting in either case is easy? No, it wouldn't be easy to wait, dreading to have your tooth pulled. And it wouldn't be easy to wait for a fabulous vacation. But I'd rather wait for something good to happen, wouldn't you, even if I had to wait much longer than I wanted to?"

"We've already talked about how 'living by faith' means waiting sometimes; Abraham and Sarah had to wait for Isaac, didn't they? In our lesson today, we're going to talk about two men who knew that the good thing they were waiting for wouldn't happen in their lifetimes. But they still had faith to look forward to the future, even as they were dying."

### 1. **Jacob and Joseph in Egypt**

Pass out copies of "Abraham's Family Tree" to all of your students and explain the familial connection between Abraham and Jacob and Joseph. Then have your students turn to Hebrews 11:21-22 and read these verses in class. Explain that Jacob and Joseph had been living in the land that God had promised to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants. But a terrible famine took place that forced Jacob and all of his sons and his sons' families to leave this promised land in order to survive. God graciously provided for them by sending Joseph to Egypt ahead of them, where he became a famous and important man. When the famine occurred, Jacob and his children were able to go to Egypt where there was plenty of food, and they lived there for many years.

They were comfortable and cared for in Egypt, but Jacob and Joseph both knew that Egypt wasn't the land where God wanted them on a permanent basis. Both knew that the land of Canaan, the land God had promised to Abraham, was the place where their family would eventually return.

"Jacob and Joseph were like 'men without a country.' They were guests in the land of Egypt, but it wasn't like being in their own land, the land that God had promised to give to their family. This land, the land of Canaan, was the place for which both of their hearts truly longed."

## 2. **Jacob's Blessing**

Have your students turn to Genesis 48:8-22 to look at Jacob's blessing, which is mentioned in the Hebrews passage. Explain that this is one of the last scenes of Jacob's life. He knew he was about to die and he wanted to bless Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. These two boys were born in Egypt and did not know about the promised land of Canaan. But Jacob knew that God had a purpose for these two boys and their families; God would make each of them the father of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, and their descendants would one day leave Egypt and return to the land of Canaan. So Jacob looked to the future and the promises of God as he blessed these two boys.

Read Genesis 48:15-22 aloud in class. Ask the following questions:

- What specific blessings did Jacob mention concerning Manasseh and Ephraim? (They would become great; they would increase greatly upon the earth; they would be called by the names of their fathers, Abraham and Isaac.)
- Whom did Jacob put "first," as the one who would receive the greatest blessing? (Jacob put the younger son, Ephraim, first because God revealed to him that he would be the one more greatly blessed.)
- What did Jacob tell Joseph would happen someday after he died? (In verse 21, Jacob tells Joseph that God will bring the family out of Egypt, back to the Promised Land.)

"Jacob had faith to see that God's promises would come true, even if he wasn't on the earth to see it happen. His blessing on Joseph's sons and his words to Joseph show that his faith looked forward to the good things that would one day happen to Manasseh and Ephraim, and to the rest of the family."

## 3. **Joseph's Request**

Jacob died, and his body was buried back in the land of Canaan (Genesis 49:12-14). But his family continued to live in the land of Egypt. Many years passed, and one day Joseph was the old man about to die. Like his father Jacob, Joseph believed that God would bring his family out of Egypt one day, back to the land of Canaan. In Genesis 50:22-26, we read that Joseph made the sons of Israel promise to take his bones out of Egypt, back to the land of Canaan when they returned there someday.

"Joseph's faith also looked forward to the future, just like Jacob's. By requesting that his bones be returned someday to Canaan, he was reminding the children of Israel of God's promises and showing his faith that those promises would come true. The Israelites did return to the land of Canaan, but it wasn't until many, many years later. By that time, the Egyptians had forgotten about Joseph and the good he had done in Egypt. The Israelites were made slaves by the Egyptians, and God raised up Moses to deliver them and bring them back to Canaan. We'll look into that period of Israel's history next week, but this week it's important to know that God did keep His promise to Abraham and his children."

## 4. Our Future Hope

As Christians, we also hope for things that are future. We look for the return of Christ someday - perhaps in our lifetimes. And we look forward to being in heaven with Him.

“Many Christians have looked forward to the return of Christ for many centuries but died before He came. We also may die before the return of Christ. But, like Jacob and Joseph, we can be certain that God’s promises will come true, even if it’s not in our lifetimes. If we know Jesus as our Savior, we can also look forward to something good happening when we die; we will go to be with Him! We know that being away from our bodies means we are present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Remind your students that Jacob and Joseph showed their faith in God’s promises by the things they said and did. We will also show our faith in the future God has promised for us by the things we do and say. We will live as Christians, knowing that this world isn’t the only world that matters. We will look to the future, like Jacob and Joseph, and the good things God has promised to all of His children.

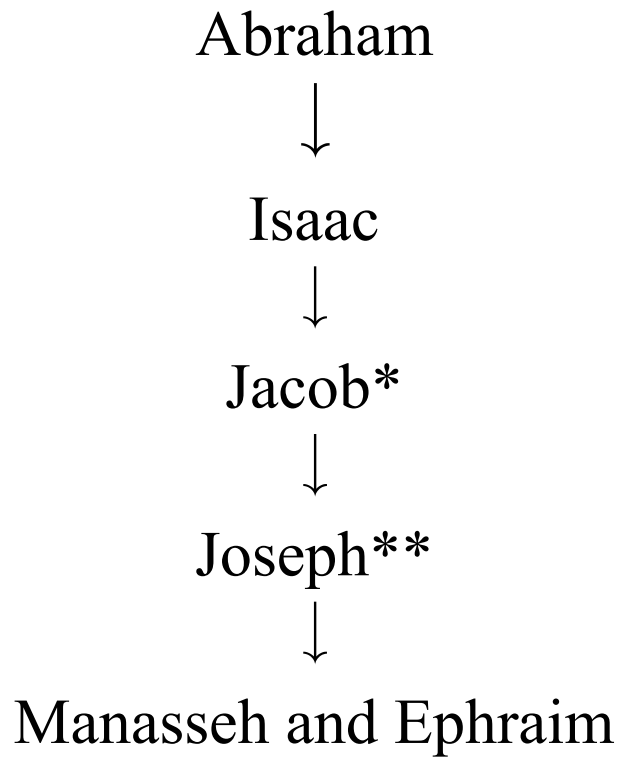
### Worksheet

On the top part of the worksheet, have your students draw a “family tree” showing Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (this can be in the actual shape of a tree if your students desire to do it this way). Then have them answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet and choose one worksheet for your “Hall of Faith.”

### Related Music

“Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #481); “When We All Get To Heaven”; “When the Trumpet of the Lord Shall Sound” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #541).

# Abraham's Family Tree



\* Jacob had a brother, Esau, who did not inherit the promise.

\*\* Joseph had eleven brothers, and together their families made up the twelve tribes of Israel.



## STUDENT WORKSHEET

## JACOB AND JOSEPH

Draw a picture of Abraham's "family tree," including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

What did Jacob and Joseph look forward to? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do Christians have to look forward to? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 11:36** - "Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison."





# **AMRAM AND JOCHEBED - FAITH IN THE FACE OF FEAR**

**Hebrews 11:23; Exodus 1-2**

## **Lesson Aim**

To show students that a truly courageous person stands up for what he or she believes, even when afraid.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:27a** - “They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword . . .”

## **Lesson Background**

We all tend to think of courage as something “extraordinary” that is possessed by only a few rare individuals. But courage usually is demonstrated most clearly by ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. All of us, including your third and fourth graders, will be called upon to do things from time to time that are frightening to us. But we can have faith in the face of fear because we can “do everything through Him who gives [us] strength” (Philippians 4:13).

As you study the Exodus passages, you will discover that Moses’ mother is the active parent in preparing the basket and trusting her son to the river and the providence of God. But the Hebrews passage tells us that both parents were agreed and united in deciding to disobey Pharaoh by hiding their son. One wonders how many other Israelite families attempted to do the same thing in the face of fear and how many

were successful. God had a purpose for Moses' life and spared him through the actions of his faithful parents, who had true courage in the face of fear.

## **Lesson Procedure**

Begin this week's lesson by asking your students to name some of the things they are afraid of. Some may mention animals, like dogs or snakes or spiders, while others may talk about situations - being afraid to swim or being afraid of heights. Point out that many of these fears are good things that help to protect us in dangerous situations if we don't let them get out of hand.

“Suppose you are afraid of dogs. That fear would keep you from coming up to every dog you see and petting it, and that could save you from being bitten by an unfriendly dog. Your fear would make you cautious, and that's good. But suppose you never left your house because you were afraid that some strange dog from out of nowhere might come up and bite you. Then your fear is no longer a good thing, but it keeps you from living your life. Only foolish people have no fears. A wise man or woman or child knows that some situations are dangerous and tries to keep out of those situations. But sometimes you have to get beyond those fears to do what has to be done; that's what courage is. Courage doesn't mean you are totally fearless; it means that you have the strength and boldness to do what's right even when you are afraid. That's the best kind of courage to have, and that's the kind of courage that Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed, showed when he was born.”

### **1. The Situation in Egypt**

Have your students read Hebrews 11:23. Then look up Exodus 1 and read the chapter aloud. Review last week's lesson, reminding your students that the Israelites had come to Egypt hundreds of years earlier to escape a great famine. As the years passed, the original relationship deteriorated until the Egyptians were fearful of the Israelites because of their numbers. This led to the enslavement of the Israelites, and when the nation continued to increase, Pharaoh ordered the murder of all the newborn male children.

“Why do you think Pharaoh ordered only the boy babies to be killed?” Pharaoh and the Egyptians were worried that the Israelites might join Egypt's enemies in a war and work to defeat them. Perhaps by killing the males, Pharaoh thought he was getting rid of potential “soldiers.”

Point out to your students the cowardly and despicable nature of this decree, which was directed against the most helpless and innocent of all victims. How this law must have grieved the hearts of the people of Israel! Yet no doubt many complied with this awful command because they feared Pharaoh and his wrath.

### **2. The Courage of Moses' Parents**

In Exodus 2:1 we are introduced to an Israelite man and his wife. These two people were just an ordinary couple - in fact, they were slaves like the rest of the Israelites. But they did know right from wrong, and when Moses was born they agreed together to disobey Pharaoh's command

and hide the child. As anyone who has lived with a newborn knows, this could not have been easy. Special care would be taken to keep the baby quiet, and the other children in the household (Miriam and Aaron) would also have to keep the baby a secret. But the family was successful in hiding baby Moses for three months.

“Do you think this was a scary time for Moses’ parents? What kinds of things do you think they might have been afraid of?” We don’t know the specific punishment that occurred when people defied Pharaoh’s law, but it most likely had to be severe to cause people to murder their own children. Moses’ parents may have been afraid of being caught and punished; they also no doubt feared for the life of the baby, who would be thrown into the Nile River if he were discovered.

Have your students read Exodus 2:1-10 aloud in class. This part of the lesson will be familiar to most of your students. Point out the fact that the Egyptian princess didn’t “just happen” to be bathing at the Nile, but that God had brought her there to rescue and take in Moses.

“God had a purpose for Moses’ life, and he protected him from Pharaoh and from the Nile and brought him into Pharaoh’s palace! Moses’ parents were right to defy the Pharaoh’s law. And they not only saved their son’s life, but the entire nation of Israel, for the Lord would use Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. Their act of courage showed their faith in God, and He gave them the ability to do what was right even in the face of fear.”

## **Conclusion**

Encourage your students to think of times in their own lives when it may be scary or uncomfortable to do what is right. Perhaps they are afraid to let other kids at school know they are Christians; perhaps they get into trouble when they are with a certain neighbor or friend because they are afraid they won’t be liked if they don’t go along with that friend. Doing what’s right isn’t always easy, but God can give us the power to do what we are afraid to do. Have students look up verses such as Philippians 4:13 and Joshua 1:7,9. These verses remind us that God will help us do what is right, and He will be with us and honor our attempts to be courageous. We don’t need to do this on our own; He has promised to be with us!

## **Worksheet**

Have your students draw a picture of what they think Moses’ “basket boat” may have looked like in the Nile. Then have them answer the questions on the bottom half of the page. As always, choose one worksheet for your “Hall of Faith.”

## **Related Music**

“Where the Spirit of the Lord Is, (There is Peace)”; “Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #571).



**STUDENT WORKSHEET**

**AMRAM AND JOCHEBED**

Draw a picture below of what you think Moses' "basket-boat" looked like in the Nile River.

What impresses you the most about Moses' parents? \_\_\_\_\_

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How do we see God's presence and power in this story? \_\_\_\_\_

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**MEMORY VERSE**

**Hebrews 11:37a** - "They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword."



# **MOSES - FAITH THAT COST**

**Hebrews 11:24-27; Exodus 2:11-21**

## **Lesson Aim**

To show students that it is better to be counted with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:37b-38a** - "They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated - the world was not worthy of them."

## **Lesson Background**

The martyred missionary Jim Elliot once wrote, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." This is a truth that every Christian must eventually face; while one may not be called upon to give up the riches of a kingdom, as Moses was, for the cause of Christ, still we will all be called to make some sacrifice for the Lord. That sacrifice may be monetary, as, for example, one answers a call to missions, or it may be the sacrifice of a lifelong ambition if one is called to serve in ways that are different from what he had imagined. It may mean the loss of a friendship or an opportunity to "get ahead." It may even mean the loss of reputation, as people misunderstand what being a Christian is all about. But throughout the ages God's people have found that the small sacrifices they've made for Jesus are richly repaid in this life and in the life to come.

Perhaps you have a personal story to tell of a time in your life when you made a sacrifice to serve the Lord in some way. Don't hesitate to share the story with your class, provided it's something they are able to understand. This helps to personalize the lesson and bring the point home to your students that these principles apply not only to "Bible people" like Moses, but to you and me as well.

## **Lesson Procedure**

Begin today's lesson by reviewing the material covered last week. Help your students recall the events of Moses' early life by asking the following questions:

- Why did Moses' parents have to hide him after he was born? (Because Pharaoh had decreed that all male babies must be thrown into the Nile.)
- What was the Israelites' condition at this time in history? (They were slaves in Egypt.)
- How was Moses rescued from death? (His mother placed him in a basket in the Nile, and he was discovered and adopted by Pharaoh's own daughter.)

"Moses was not only rescued by Pharaoh's daughter; he was adopted by her. That made him part of the royal family of Egypt! But while Moses had the power and riches of Egypt at his disposal, he was also aware that he wasn't Egyptian; he knew, perhaps from the years when his own mother nursed him, that he was an Israelite, a child of the living God. There came a day when Moses had to choose between Pharaoh's kingdom and God's kingdom, and that's what our lesson is about this week."

### **1. What Moses Had in Egypt**

Have your students look up Hebrews 11:24-28 and read these verses aloud in class. While Exodus 2:11-21 gives the account of Moses' departure from Egypt, the Hebrews passage gives us Moses' motivation, and that's where we will spend most of our time in this lesson (you may wish to go over the Exodus 2 account if you feel this story will be new or unfamiliar to most of your students). In Hebrews 11, we read of a number of privileges that Moses enjoyed in Egypt:

#### **A. He Was Known as the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter (verse 24)**

Moses grew up in the royal palace - the very household of Pharaoh. He had the power and position of being part of the Egyptian royal family. We read in Acts 7:22 that "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action." By being adopted into Pharaoh's family, Moses had the power, position and education of a prince in Egypt.

#### **B. He Had the Treasures of Egypt at His Disposal (verse 26)**

Moses lived during the time of "The Empire" of Egypt, when it was prosperous and powerful and when a great amount of building was being done. We know something of



Egypt's great wealth from some of the excavated tombs of her kings. King Tutankhamun's tomb, for example, contained many priceless treasures, including several thousand pounds of pure gold! Unlike his own people, the Israelites, who were slaves in Egypt, Moses had all the wealth and riches he could possibly imagine.

### **C. He Had the “Pleasures of Sin” in Egypt (verse 25)**

Moses had all the power and all the wealth he needed to do anything he wanted to do. Egypt was a heathen country with many gods, and the Egyptians were not called to the same standards of holiness that the Israelites were. Moses could easily have lived however he wished without being fearful of punishment.

“Imagine having all the power and money of a prince! Imagine having slaves to carry out your orders and the power to crush any enemies. Imagine being able to have every desire fulfilled with the snap of your fingers. That was the kind of life Moses was able to live in Egypt.”

## **2. Why Moses Refused His Privileges in Egypt**

It would be very difficult for most people to turn their backs on all the things that Moses had in Egypt. But by God's grace Moses was able to look beyond the temporary pleasures of Egypt and make choices that would count for all eternity. Moses made a conscious effort to be identified with the Israelites when he went to the defense of the Israelite slave by killing his Egyptian oppressor. While his timing and methodology were wrong, Stephen tells us that he did so because he “thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not” (Acts 7:25). Why would Moses reject his position, powers, and riches in Egypt to be identified with the people of God? Again, the Hebrews passage gives us at least three good answers.

### **A. Moses Saw that Egypt's Pleasures Would One Day Perish**

Hebrews 11:25 states that Moses knew the pleasures of sin would only last “a short time.” Some people never get beyond the here and now, but Moses knew the day would come when his life would be over and he would have to face God in the Judgment.

### **B. Moses Saw that Suffering for Christ Would Bring Him an Eternal Reward (verse 26)**

While Moses' understanding of Christ would be very limited, he no doubt understood that God's Messiah would come through the Jewish people, and he wanted to be a part of that promise. He wanted it so much that he was willing to suffer disgrace to be numbered among God's people. He knew that, unlike the treasures of Egypt, his reward for following the Lord would be eternal.

## C. Moses Had Faith in the Invisible God of Israel

Moses' faith gave him spiritual eyes to see the true God, who was invisible to the authorities of Egypt. Unlike the many idols of Egypt, Moses' God was all-powerful, all-knowing and holy. His faith in the true God enabled Moses to leave Egypt and to return to deliver his people without fearing Pharaoh's wrath.

“Moses' faith cost him the kingdom of Egypt. It must certainly not have been easy for Moses to turn his back on the power and riches he had as Pharaoh's adopted grandson. But what did Moses gain by leaving Egypt and joining the people of God? He became the one God used to deliver Israel from slavery. He became the one who delivered the Law of God to His people. He was even able to see God's glory as he stood in the cleft of the rock and the Lord passed by him! Moses came to know the Lord in a way that few men have known Him. And let's not forget that Moses' faith led to his eternal reward - everlasting life with the Lord in heaven.” You may wish to have your students turn to Deuteronomy 34:10-12, which sums up Moses' life and special standing as a prophet in Israel.

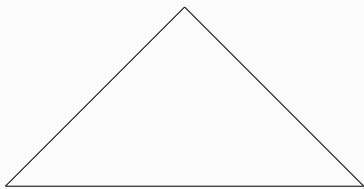
## Conclusion

Remind your students that the Christian life is not always an easy one. Sometimes our stand for Christ may cost us something that's important to us. For example, we may wish to play on the school soccer team, but the practices may fall on Wednesday evenings when we need to be in church. Or maybe our friends might make fun of us for not doing something they want to do but we know is wrong. Whenever we are forced to make hard choices, we need to remember to look not just at the here and now, but also on what's going to be important in the long run. Like Moses, we can be sure that if we make the right choices, we will gain much more than whatever we may lose along the way.

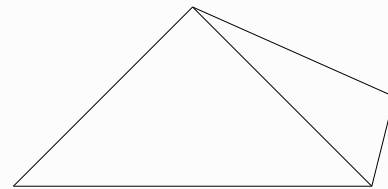
## Worksheet

Have your students draw a pyramid on the top part of the worksheet and then answer the questions at the bottom. Note: Some of your students may not know how to draw a three-dimensional pyramid, and would enjoy learning how it's done. Have them start by drawing a regular triangle, then adding the “side” of the pyramid as shown below.

Step 1:



Step 2:



## **Related Music**

“(Lord, You Are) More Precious Than Silver”; “Stand up, Stand up for Jesus” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #571).



Draw a picture of a pyramid to remember that Moses said “no” to Egypt and “yes” to God.

What were some of the things that Moses “gave up” in Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_

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How did God bless him for his faith? \_\_\_\_\_

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**MEMORY VERSE**

**Hebrews 11:37b-38a** - “They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated - the world was not worthy of them.”



# **ISRAEL - FAITH THAT SEPARATED**

**Hebrews 11:29; Exodus 14**

## **Lesson Aim**

To show students that there are two kinds of people in this world - those who are saved, and those who aren't - and to cause our students to consider if they truly belong to the Lord.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:38b** - "They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground."

## **Lesson Background**

The lesson of Israel at the shore of the Red Sea is a lesson in separation, and not just because God "separated" the sea so His people could walk on dry land! In I Corinthians 10:1-2, we read that "Our forefathers were all under the cloud and they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." As Israel submitted by faith to Moses and followed the Lord's leading through the Red Sea, it became a picture of baptism and obedience. They emerged from the sea, not as a nation of slaves, but as God's redeemed people, free from the enslavement of Egypt.

While this depiction of baptism and separation would be hard for your third and fourth graders to grasp, they will see the difference between Israel's faith, which brought them safely out of the Red Sea, and

Egypt's presumption, which led to their destruction. It is faith that separates the people of God from the rest of the world - a faith in His promises, His protection and His leading. As we discuss the differences between God's people and those who do not know Him, call your students to examine their own hearts to be sure they are really trusting God for their salvation, and not just presuming that they belong to Him because they attend church or try to be good.

## **Lesson Procedure**

Begin your lesson this week with a discussion of the "Fatherhood" of God. As Christians, we have a right to call God our Father, and He delights to have us do so. But many live under the mistaken notion that God is everyone's heavenly Father and that every person on earth is a member of His family.

"Sometimes people just presume that everything is 'okay' between them and God. Oh, they may not know very much about the Bible, and they may not be very religious, but God is their heavenly Father and He would never punish them, right? Wrong! God is not everyone's heavenly Father. He is a Father to His people, but He makes a difference between those who believe in Jesus and those who reject Him. His people believe His Word and obey Him. They follow Him and are blessed forever. But those who don't follow the Lord have nothing to look forward to - only judgment and separation from God."

Have your students look up Matthew 25:31-46. Explain that this is a parable of Jesus describing the difference between God's people and the rest of the earth at the judgment. The "sheep" are the believers and the "goats" are the unbelievers. Christ Himself is the King. Point out the differences between the sheep and the goats. The sheep live their lives differently than the goats; they are commended, while the goats are cursed. And the sheep enter into the King's kingdom with eternal life, while the goats depart for everlasting punishment.

"God has always made a difference between His people and the people of the world. His people live by faith, and He cares for them and blesses them. We see this throughout the Bible, and one of the places we see it is at the Red Sea, when Israel was trapped at the shore by the Egyptian army."

### **1. Israel at the Red Sea**

Have your students look up Hebrews 11:29 and then read the verse aloud in class. Then have them turn to Exodus 14. Give them the following background information (this will be review for many):

"Moses had gone to Pharaoh and demanded that he release the Israelites, but Pharaoh refused. The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart so that He could bring His people out of Egypt in a spectacular way and show them He was their God. He sent ten plagues on Egypt - horrible disasters to show them His power. Finally, Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites go to rid the land of the trouble. But once the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh changed his mind. He sent his army and his chariots to chase Israel, to capture the people and bring them back to Egypt as slaves. The Lord had led the Israelites to the shore of the Red Sea when the Egyptians came into view. There the Israelites were trapped, with the Red Sea before them and the Egyptian army behind them."



Read Exodus 14:10-14 to show the people's reaction to their situation and Moses' exhortation to stand firm and be courageous. Then read verses 19-22 to show how God parted the waters to deliver the people from the Egyptians.

"Imagine how that must have looked - a dry path through the sea with the water piled high on both sides. The water stood back like walls, and the Israelites knew it was the Lord's power that was holding it back. Perhaps some of them were afraid to walk through the sea, fearing the water might not stay put. But they did cross the sea by faith and came safely through to the other side."

Point out that the Israelites, led by Moses, were willing to cross the sea by their faith in God's protection and His love. They were willing to follow His leading. (Note: This does not mean that every single Israelite had faith, but that as a nation they were willing to follow their leaders like Moses and Aaron, who did have faith, and by following their leading they were also following the Lord.)

## 2. Egypt at the Red Sea.

Hebrews 11:29 gives us a contrast between what happened to Israel at the Red Sea and what happened to Egypt. The Israelites "passed through the Red Sea as on dry land," but the Egyptians "were drowned."

"What was different in the way the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and the way the Egyptians did it? Did the Israelites have a different 'technique'? Did they have some magic power of their own that kept the waters back? No, of course not; the Israelites and the Egyptians crossed the Sea in the same way *except* that the Israelites crossed 'by faith.'"

The Israelites knew that God was for them, that He was leading them through the Red Sea and wanted them to follow. They did so by faith. But the Egyptians just presumed that the sea would continue to part for them as well. Think about the arrogance; they have tormented God's people, ignored God's word, and then rushed into the sea in hot pursuit of God's people, thinking that God would continue to hold the water back. Read Exodus 14:23-25 to show that they began to rethink their action once they got into the sea and the Lord began to throw their army into confusion. But by then it was too late; God directed Moses to stretch his hand over the sea so the waters would flow back over the Egyptians, and not one of the Egyptians survived (Exodus 14:28).

## Conclusion

There really are only two kinds of people in the world: God's people and those who don't know the Lord - the "sheep" and the "goats." The "sheep" live by faith, while the "goats" live by their own rules and false assumptions.

Point out that you can't always tell the difference between God's people and others by the things they do. Both Israel and the Egyptians stepped out into the Red Sea and both believed the water would be held back for them. The difference was the faith in their hearts, or the lack thereof. Likewise, many people think that if they just "do" the same things Christians do, they will be right with God - if they just attend church, or try to be honest, or if they are baptized, or take communion, etc. But only faith in Jesus Christ can save

us from the judgment that awaits the goats. We must believe He lived and died for us. We must repent of our sins and ask Him to save us and live our lives for Him. Encourage your students to make certain that they really belong to the Lord by faith; as always, encourage any student with a question or a concern to stay after class to speak with you.

## **Worksheet**

Have students draw some sheep to remember how God refers to His people, and then answer the questions on the bottom half of the worksheet. Note: Cotton balls can be used to make “fluffy” sheep.

## **Related Music**

“His Sheep Am I”; “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #599).

Draw some sheep below to remember that God calls His people His “sheep.”

Who was able to pass through the Red Sea? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was not able to pass? \_\_\_\_\_

Which could be called “goats” - Israel or Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_

Which could be called God’s “sheep”? \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMORY VERSE**

**Hebrews 11:38b** - “They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.”



# **RAHAB - FAITH THAT SAVED**

**Hebrews 11:30-31; Joshua 2**

## **Lesson Aim**

To help students see in Rahab a picture of saving faith and to examine their faith in the light of her example.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:39** - “These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.”

## **Lesson Background**

The inclusion of Rahab in this list of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews may be surprising at first; as a prostitute from a heathen city, she may not fit our ideal image of what a woman of faith should be. But Rahab’s presence here magnifies the grace of God. As Geoffrey Wilson writes in his commentary on Hebrews, “Calvin says that she is only described as ‘the harlot’ in order to magnify the grace of God in reclaiming her from such a disgraceful past, for it is certain that ‘her faith is the evidence of her repentance.’” Rahab, a sinner in a city of sinners, is not only saved from the destruction of Jericho, but God transforms her life so that she is grafted into the nation of Israel and secures an honored place in the genealogy of Christ Himself! If God can work in the life of a woman like Rahab, surely there is hope and grace for us all.

While the fall of Jericho is mentioned first in the Hebrews passage, it makes more sense from a chronological standpoint to deal with Rahab first and then with Joshua at Jericho. It would be difficult for

students in this age group to deal with Jericho's destruction and then come back to talk about Rahab and the spies. So we'll look at both Hebrews 11:30 and 31 this week, and then next week we'll go back to Hebrews 11:30 and finish the story with a look at Joshua's victory at Jericho.

## **Lesson Procedure**

### **1. The Situation at Jericho**

Have your students turn to Hebrews 11:30-31 and read these verses aloud in class. Then give your students the following background information:

“After Moses' death, Joshua became the leader of Israel and God chose him to bring the people into the Promised Land. This land, the land of Canaan, was promised to the Israelites, but it was already inhabited by several groups of extremely wicked people. The Israelites would have to fight for this land before they could settle it. The people who lived in the land of Canaan were so wicked that God said the Israelites would have to destroy them completely; otherwise, they would pollute the Israelites (read Deuteronomy 20:16-18). God gave a sentence of death to everyone who lived in the cities of Canaan. The first city that Joshua and the Israelites came against was the walled city of Jericho. Joshua was ordered not only to take the city of Jericho, but to destroy it totally, along with all the people in it.”

### **2. Rahab's Action**

Turn to Joshua 2 for the story of Rahab and the spies. Read verses 1-7 aloud to your class. Joshua sent two spies to look over the land they were entering and told them to pay special attention to Jericho. Word somehow leaked to the king of Jericho that there were Israelite spies in his city; evidently someone saw them enter Rahab's house, because he went specifically to her to ask for the spies.

Explain to your students that Rahab was a wicked woman living in this wicked city, but she had heard reports of the God of Israel and His power. She believed these reports, and she hid the spies from the king. (Note: If students ask what a “prostitute” is, you might explain that it is a woman who entertains men in return for money. Don't feel the need to go into graphic detail as to the nature of her profession, but do be clear that Rahab is a sinner.) Rahab's lie to her king saved the Israelite spies, but it put her own life at risk as well. If the king were to discover that she had hidden the spies, he would surely have put her to death.

### **3. Rahab's Confession**

Rahab spoke to the men she had hidden, and her words showed her faith in the Lord. Read Joshua 2:8-14 in class. Point out Rahab's fear of God (verses 9-11) and her belief in the Lord's supremacy (verse 11). Rahab was not going to trust in the walls of Jericho or in her heathen gods. She wanted to be promised protection by the Israelites for herself and her family.

The spies agreed to this, promising, “Our lives for your lives!” Then, because her home was built onto the city wall, Rahab lowered the spies by a rope from a window. Now the spies were outside of Jericho and were able to hide from their pursuers in the nearby hills.

In James 2:25, James writes that “even Rahab the prostitute [was] considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them in a different direction.” Rahab herself tells us that there were many in Jericho who feared the Israelites (Joshua 2:11). But Rahab proved her faith by risking her own life to save the Israelite spies. Her actions proved her willingness to trust the God of Israel and to throw her lot in with the people of God.

“It wasn’t enough for Rahab to just be afraid of God, was it? There were many people in Jericho who were afraid of God and His people. It wasn’t even enough for Rahab to believe in Israel’s God. Rahab had to commit her own life into God’s hands. She had to act on what she said she believed and risk her life to save the spies. Otherwise, she and her family would have no hope of surviving. Rahab chose to be on the side of God and His people. She knew this was the only chance she had to be saved.”

#### **4. Rahab’s Salvation**

Read Joshua 2:15-21 to learn about Rahab’s agreement with the spies. A scarlet cord tied in the window would signify her house, and the Israelites agreed to spare the lives of all within her home. If the cord was not in the window, or if family members were outside of her home, the Israelites would not be responsible for their deaths. Rahab agreed to this, and the spies escaped the city.

Joshua also agreed to the arrangement, and we read in Joshua 6:16-17 his instructions to destroy the city except for Rahab and her family. Rahab’s faith and her actions saved her from death, but all the other inhabitants of Jericho were completely destroyed. (Inform your students that we will be looking at the conquest of Jericho more closely next week.) Rahab made her home with the Israelites from that day forward. She became one of God’s people and married an Israelite man. In Matthew 1:5 we read of her as one of Jesus’ ancestors. As one of the few women mentioned in Christ’s genealogy, she is especially honored.

### **Conclusion**

Rahab’s faith in the God of Israel and her willingness to put her life in God’s hands saved her and her family. Without this faith, she would have been destroyed with all the others who lived in Jericho. How does our faith compare with hers? Do we see ourselves as lost apart from God’s forgiveness? Do we act as believers; do our lives show the truth of our faith? Only faith in Jesus Christ - life-changing faith - can save us from the wrath of God. Close the lesson this week with Acts 4:12: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” As always, encourage those with questions or concerns about their salvation to remain after class to speak with you personally.

## **Worksheet**

Have students draw the scarlet cord hanging from Rahab's window to illustrate her saving faith. (Note: A red piece of yarn or string can be glued onto the worksheet to illustrate this as well.) Then have your students answer the questions on the bottom part of the worksheet.

## **Related Music**

“Oh, How I Love Jesus.”



# STUDENT WORKSHEET

# RAHAB

Draw a picture of Rahab's window with the scarlet cord, which was a sign to the Israelites to spare her household, hanging down from it.

How did Rahab show her faith in the true God of Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

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What happened to everyone else who lived in Jericho? \_\_\_\_\_

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What happens to people who don't have saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

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## MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 11:39** - "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised."



# **JOSHUA - FAITH THAT TRIUMPHED**

**Hebrews 11:30; Joshua 6**

## **Lesson Aim**

To demonstrate to students that those who side with the Lord will know victory and triumph.

## **Memory Verse**

**Hebrews 11:40** - "God had planned something better for us, so that only together with us would they be made perfect."

## **Lesson Background**

Some of the Old Testament battles were the strangest war campaigns ever recorded. Joshua defeated Jericho by marching around it for seven days and then shouting as the walls tumbled down. Gideon defeated the Midianites with three hundred men armed with trumpets, empty jars and torches. David defeated the giant Philistine champion with only a stone and a sling. Obviously, the secret to these warriors' successes lay not in their power or strategy. Rather, they were triumphant because they fought God's battles in God's way.

As Christians, we engage in battle with our adversaries - the world, the flesh and the devil. And, like Joshua, our success lies in fighting God's battle in God's way. Paul writes in II Corinthians 10:3-5, "For

though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

The Christian life, like Joshua’s battle at Jericho, is one campaign that God promises will end in victory. “He who overcomes will . . . be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and His angels” (Revelation 3:5). Let’s encourage ourselves and our students that God’s power will help us triumph, not only in the spiritual battles we wage here on earth, but ultimately by bringing us to a blessed eternity with Christ.

## **Lesson Procedure**

Begin your lesson this week by asking your students if they have ever been able to “choose” a team or to choose what team they wanted to be on. “Quite often, we don’t have a choice about which team we play on; sometimes a teacher or coach will choose a team or we’ll count off to see which team gets which players. But everyone wants to be on the winning team. If you’re in a spelling bee, you want to be on the team with the best spellers. If you’re playing baseball, you want the best hitters and runners and catchers on your team. Sometimes it doesn’t even matter if we ourselves are good players or not; if we’re on a team with good players, we can still win.”

“Our lesson today is about a man who was on the Lord’s side. Now imagine that! How can you lose when you’re on the Lord’s side? And the Lord promised victory to Joshua. But that doesn’t mean that Joshua didn’t have to do anything to win the victory. As we’ll see, Joshua had to fight his battle by faith. And he had to do it God’s way to know victory, even though God’s way was very unusual.”

### **1. Joshua Fights the Lord’s Battle**

Review the situation at Jericho, reminding your students that Joshua was the leader God chose to bring the Israelites to the Promised Land. This land was already inhabited by several groups of extremely wicked people. The Israelites would have to fight for this land before they could settle it. Remind your students also that these people were so wicked that God said the Israelites would have to destroy them completely; otherwise, they would pollute the Israelites with their wickedness. You may wish to read Deuteronomy 20:16-18 aloud in class, which gives God’s order to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan and the reasons for doing so.

“Joshua’s job was to lead the Israelites into battle and to conquer the land of Canaan so the Israelites could live there. God told Joshua to ‘Be strong and courageous,’ and He promised to be with Joshua wherever he went if Joshua was careful to obey Him (Joshua 1:7-9). The first city that Joshua and the Israelites had to conquer was Jericho.”

### **2. Joshua Fights the Lord’s Way**

Remind your students that Jericho was a walled city, and in the days of Joshua such a city would be difficult to take. Joshua’s army had no cannons or guns or bombs with which to make a

breach in the wall. Joshua 6:1 tells us that the city was tightly shut up because of the Israelites - obviously, these people weren't going to do Joshua the favor of coming out and engaging the Israelites in battle.

Read Joshua 5:13-6:5 aloud in class; these are the instructions given to Joshua for taking the city of Jericho. For six days Joshua was to take all of the fighting men of Israel and march around the city one time, accompanied by the Ark of the Lord and seven priests blowing ram's horns. The people would be silent while the priests sounded the horns. On the seventh day this procedure would be carried out seven times, and then the people would shout. At this point, God promised Joshua that the walls of Jericho would collapse.

“Does this sound like a strange plan of battle to you? God wanted Joshua to take Jericho, not with power or weapons or fighting men, but by faith. ‘If you obey my commands and do it this way,’ God promised Joshua, ‘I will give you the victory and Jericho will be yours.’ This way there would be no doubt that God and God alone had given the victory to the Israelites.”

### **3. Joshua Sees the Lord's Victory**

Read Joshua 6:8-23 aloud in class for the details of the battle at Jericho and God's miraculous victory. Point out the following as you read:

- Joshua strictly adhered to God's commands, both in how the battle was fought and how the city was to be destroyed.
- Joshua credited the Lord with the victory (verse 16).
- Joshua honored the spies' promise to Rahab and her family (verses 22-23).

There was no way that Joshua or the Israelites could have taken credit for this victory at Jericho; it was clearly the Lord's hand that won the battle. This proved to the Israelites that the Lord was with them and would help them in the conquest of Canaan if they obeyed and trusted Him.

## **Conclusion**

This lesson can be applied on two different levels. First, we can tell our students that if they are Christians, God will help them in the battles they face in this life. Perhaps one might have a struggle with a bad temper or with loving a certain brother or sister. The Lord will give His children the power and strength and wisdom to deal with these battles if they seek this from Him.

Christians are also assured of the final victory when Christ returns and ushers in His kingdom. We will know eternal life in the presence of God and an eternity of serving Him in peace and joy. Encourage your students to look forward to this time; also, remind your students that if any are unsure of their salvation they may stay and speak to you after class.

## **Worksheet**

At the top of the worksheet, have students draw a picture of a “battle” they face - it may be a school situation, a family situation, etc. You might make suggestions, such as, “Do you have a hard time remembering to read your Bible daily or remembering to pray? Is there someone in your life with whom you have a difficult time getting along?” Remind students to ask the Lord’s help with these battles in their daily lives.

## **Related Music**

“Who is on the Lord’s Side” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #587).

Draw a picture below of a time when you need God’s help to win one of your “battles.”

Of all the people we studied this quarter, who is your favorite "hero of the faith," and why?

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**MEMORY VERSE**

**Hebrews 11:40** - “God had planned something better for us, so that only together with us would they be made perfect.”