



WEEK ONE – MAY 2019 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Runnin' Down a Dream* ▪ Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1–2

Key Question: *What makes you want to give up?*

Memory Verse: *“But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.” – Isaiah 40:31 NIV*

Life App: *Perseverance – Refusing to give up when life gets hard*

Basic Truth: *I can trust God no matter what.*

Summary: We start the month in Matthew 28:16–20 and Acts 1–2 as we listen in on the last conversation Jesus had with His disciples before going back to heaven. He gave them a huge mission—to share His message to ends of the earth. He also promised that they wouldn't have to do it alone. He would send the Holy Spirit to help. When the Holy Spirit did come at Pentecost, the Spirit gave the disciples power to accomplish the task Jesus set out for them.

8:50–9:00 | 10:20–10:30 | 11:50–12:00 – EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITIES

1. Get Your Head in the Game

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Ball

What You Do:

- Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up.
- Invite kids to place their offerings in the *For Everyone* box on the wall near the main entrance
- Gather kids in a circle.
- Select one kid to be the “guesser.” The “guesser” stands in the center of the circle.
- Explain that the group is going to play a guessing game.
- To play:
 - Call out a topic.
 - The “guesser” lists as many things as he or she can that are related to the topic.
 - For example, if the topic is candy, the “guesser” might say: chocolate, gum, licorice, Snickers®, Skittles®, etc.
 - Count the number of items the “guesser” lists.
 - Instead of a timer, kids pass an object around the circle. Once the object makes it around the circle, the “guesser” stops talking.
 - Potential topics could include: sports, soft drinks, video games, music, furniture, clothing, jobs, celebrities, YouTube® channels, TV shows, etc.
 - Repeat so everyone gets a chance to be the “guesser.” The kid who lists the most items wins.

What You Say:

*“Some of those topics weren’t easy, and you did a great job sticking with it and thinking of related items. Often there are hard things we have to do or say and giving up just isn’t an option. **[Transition]** Let’s head to Large Group to hear what we need to know to keep going even when it is hard.”*

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

9:10–9:45 | 10:40–11:15 | 12:10–12:45 – LARGE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

Key Question: *What makes you want to give up? When it comes to perseverance, it’s important to*

understand why you would want to give up in the first place. As preteens become more aware of those moments, they can figure out a game plan to trust God for the strength to keep going and finish what they start.

9:45–10:05 | 11:15–11:35 | 12:45–1:05 SMALL GROUP

1. Take A Snapshot

[Application Activity]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Index cards, pencils or markers

What You Do:

- Gather kids in a circle.
- Give kids index cards and pencils.
- Brainstorm a list of activities kids think might be hard to finish or keep doing. Encourage them to use real-life examples.
- If necessary, prompt kids with the following ideas:
 - Completing a school science project
 - Cleaning your room
 - Being nice to your friends
 - Being nice to an annoying kid at school
 - Learning to play a musical instrument
- Instruct kids to write each activity on an index card.
- Discuss the ideas:
 - What activity would you pick as the hardest to complete? Why? (Allow kids an opportunity to debate their answers)
 - Why are some things harder to complete than others?
 - What are some obstacles that could cause you to give up before finishing one of the tasks in the list? For example, what could be some reasons you might give up before finishing cleaning your room? (It's boring, it takes too long, you don't know where to start, it is too big of a job, etc.)
 - Optional: Pass the index cards around and tell kids to write on the card an activity/specific obstacle that might cause someone to give up. Discuss the obstacles as a group.

2. Discussion Questions

[Application Activity]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask:
 - What factors affect your ability to finish something? Does time affect it? How about whether you enjoy doing it or not?
 - What can you do to keep going even when it is hard? Or even when you are overwhelmed and you think something is impossible to start, let alone finish?
 - Encourage kids to share an example of someone they know who didn't give up when things got hard. [Make it Personal] (Do the same yourself. Share a story about someone you know who had perseverance through a really hard time.)
 - In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells His disciples to be His witnesses. How can we be Jesus' witnesses? What would be challenging about being Jesus' witness? What can we do to keep going even when it is hard to tell others about Jesus?

3. Verse to Take With You

[Memory Verse Activity]

Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Instruct kids to rank the following creatures according to strength: ant, elephant, ape, eagle, skunk
- Allow kids time to debate their rankings.
- Ask:
 - What factors did you consider in deciding how to rank the creatures?
 - What determines “strength”? Can it be how big you are? How smart you are? How powerful you are? How much endurance you have?
- Read Isaiah 40:31.
- Ask:
 - What do you think it means, Those who trust in the LORD will receive a new strength (NirV)?
 - Would you say someone who doesn't have perseverance is strong? Why or why not?
 - How does this verse encourage us to not give up when things get hard or frustrating or boring? How does this verse encourage us to keep going even when we are tired or when we don't think we have the strength to do it?
 - How do you think we “receive a new strength”?

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Guide kids to try the “Feats of Strength” listed below:
- Stand Up:
 - Pair kids up.
 - Invite one kid to sit up straight in a chair (one that has a back) with his hands folded in his lap.
 - Ask the other kid to gently press the palm of his hand against the forehead of the seated kid.
 - Challenge the kid that is seated to stand up.
 - Switch roles.
 - Ask: Did it surprise you that you couldn’t stand up? Did it take a lot of strength to prevent your teammate from standing up?
- Take Your Hand Off:
 - Pair kids up with new teammates.
 - Tell one kid to sit down and grasp the top of his head with both hands.
 - Instruct the other kid to grasp his teammate’s arm as close to the elbow as possible and slowly try to lift their hand off of their head.
 - Switch roles.
 - Ask: Did it take a lot of strength to keep your hands on your head?
- Emphasize that no matter how strong you are there are limitations to what we can do with our own strength.
- Ask kids to think about what makes them want to give up.
- Give kids time to reflect. Prompt kids if necessary. For example, when things look impossible do you tend to give up? Or do you start but if things don’t go the way you thought they should do you give up? Or if something takes a lot time, do you get bored and give up finishing it?
- Pray for kids, asking God to give each of them His power and His strength to keep going even when life is hard.

What You Say:

“God, what an amazing story we heard today! A story of how You are always there for us and give us what we need to keep going. When we think of the job set before the disciples it seems so overwhelming—to tell the world about Jesus is definitely not an easy task. But You were with the disciples and gave them power through the Holy Spirit and You promise to be with us, too. We know that You give us strength through the Holy Spirit to keep going even when life is hard. God, help us remember You are always with us. Amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, tell them to ask kids about the spreading marker activity. Also, don’t forget to hand out this month’s content overview to each parent!