



Go the Distance

Bible Story: Go the Distance (Peter and John Are Taken to the Sanhedrin) • Acts 3:1–4:21

Bottom Line: Keep going even when it gets tough.

Key Question: What keeps you from finishing what you start?

Memory Verse: *Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up.* Galatians 6:9 (NirV)

Life App: Determination—Deciding it's worth it to finish what you started

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

Host enters.

Welcome

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening (Scoob, Artemis Fowl, etc.), a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

Opener

HOST: “Hey, everyone! So good to see you here today! Are you all ready to get UNstuck?! Let’s get started right away with a game. For this game I need . . . EVERYBODY! Some of the stickiest items we use at home or at school are these: STICKY NOTES! I wondered how they might be used not for work, but for fun! I call this game Target, Stick It, Post It!

CG: “Target, Stick It, Post It” Title Slide

“Here’s how it works: Each team will get several stacks of sticky notes of the same color. One team will be on this side of the room, while this team will be on the opposing side. Your goal is to cross the center line with ONE note and run to the back wall of your opponent, placing the sticky note in their target. However, if you get tagged by anyone on the other team, you must run back to the other side and start again. So not only are you trying to get your color sticky note to their target, but you are trying to defend them as well. Once a player posts a note on the target, he or she is free to come back without being tagged. You’ll have three minutes to get as many sticky notes in the target as possible. The group with the most sticky notes wins! Any questions?”

Play the game for several minutes. Have a countdown to the end. Count the number of sticky notes per side and declare a winning side. Play again if time allows.

HOST: “(After) That was wild! Let’s all keep standing, as we head to worship and sing to our amazing God!”

Worship

Worship Leaders exit as Communicator enters.

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT

Communicator enters, carrying a box labeled “Amazing Prizes.”

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “Well, good morning, everyone! SO GOOD to hang out with all of you today. Question: How many of you have seen a motivational posters before? Maybe you’ve seen them at school. Posters with sayings like, ‘The only way to guarantee failure is to never try’ or ‘Teamwork makes the dream work’ or ‘You gotta fight for your right to party’—okay maybe not that last one, but you know what I mean. Some really good motivational sayings are pretty familiar, but others, not so much. Let’s see how well you can figure them out.”

“I’ll give each small group a stack of *green* strips of paper and a stack of *blue* strips of paper. The *green* papers are the first half of a quote that matches up with one of the *blue* papers. It is up to you to decide how they’re supposed to match up. Every quote will have a match. When you think you have them all matched, call me over and I’ll check your answers.”

Hand out stacks to every small group. After the groups begin, the other volunteers in the room will help you create several “unplanned” while the groups are working work – lights go out, music comes on really loud, video turns on the screen, Host comes out and starts performing, etc.

Correct matches for the phrases:

**When the going gets tough | the tough get going*

**Our greatest glory is not in never falling | but in rising every time we fall*

**Promise me you’ll always remember: You’re braver than you believe | and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think*

**Tough times never last | but tough people do*

**When you come to the end of your rope | tie a knot and hang on*

**Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize |how close they were to success when they gave up*

**Let perseverance be your engine | and hope your fuel*

**Though no one can go back and make a brand-new start | anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending.*

“(After) Well, that was quite a challenge! Lots of interruptions that made it difficult, but you kept going. Well done!”

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “And those were some really good quotes, too. ‘When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.’ Now that’s catchy. But let me ask you something: is that all it takes? I mean, sometimes I think we’ll face a situation where a catchy motivational won’t really help us keep going. We might need something more. I mean, what happens when nothing we try to help motivate us to keep going works? What then? I think we’ll all face times when we’ll need something more than a catchy phrase. Thankfully, we all have access to something more than a catchy phrase. Let’s check out a moment found in the New Testament when some of Jesus’ disciples needed some major help to finish what they started.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “For a couple weeks now, we’ve been looking at true stories from the book of Acts. Acts is near the beginning of the New Testament. A doctor named Luke recorded the events of how Jesus’ followers took His message and began to spread it to the ends of the earth. Last week, we saw how God sent His Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised while He was still with His disciples to empower them for the great mission He had for them. As we pick up the story today, the apostles are still in Jerusalem, spreading the message of Jesus, but not everybody is happy about this. Let’s check it out.”

“(Read directly from Acts 3:1-2, NIV) ‘One day Peter and John were going up to the temple. It was three o’clock in the afternoon. It was the time for prayer. A man unable to walk was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful. He had been that way since he was born. Every day someone put him near the gate. There he would beg from people going into the temple courtyards.’”

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 1

“This man probably had a very similar day each day: dropped off at the temple, beg for money, picked back up, repeat the next day. I’m guessing he is also used to people saying no to him or even ignoring him. Not today though.”

“(Read directly from Acts 3:3-5, NIV) ‘He saw that Peter and John were about to enter. So he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, and so did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man watched them closely. He expected to get something from them.’”

"Maybe he thought, 'This is it! I'm getting some money!' But that's not exactly what happened."

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 2

"(Read directly from Acts 3:6, NIV) 'Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold. But I'll give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk.'"

"Just imagine what could have gone through this man's head. Like, 'Really funny. Don't you think I would walk if I could!' But this guy didn't count on the amazing power of God, because after this something amazing happened!"

"(Read directly from Acts 3:7-8, NIV) 'Then Peter took him by the right hand and helped him up. At once the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. He went with Peter and John into the temple courtyards. He walked and jumped and praised God.'"

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 3

"Most days, this man could be found outside of the temple begging. Not today! Today, he went into the temple courts . . . walking, jumping . . . praising God! And this started to make quite a scene."

"(Read directly Acts 3:9-10, NIV) 'All the people saw him walking and praising God. They recognized him as the same man who used to sit and beg at the temple gate called Beautiful. They were filled with wonder. They were amazed at what had happened to him.'"

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 4

"People came running from all over to see this miraculous thing that had happened! And just like at Pentecost, Peter saw an opportunity to share with them what had really happened."

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 5

“Peter began to share with them about how Jesus came but was killed. But even though the religious leaders had killed Jesus, God raised him back to life. Peter and John were standing there as witnesses of that. They had seen Jesus alive again. But then Peter declared, *(Read directly from Acts 3:16, NIV)* ‘This man whom you see and know was made strong because of faith in Jesus’ name. Faith in Jesus has healed him completely. You can see it with your own eyes.’”

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 6

“Peter then went on to share with the crowd that it wasn’t too late. They could still respond to Jesus! They could still turn to Him and be saved. It was a powerful moment. Well, this crowd of people got the attention of the temple authorities. And it wasn’t just the crowd; it was also what the apostles were saying.”

(Read directly from Acts 4:1-2a, NIV) ‘Peter and John were speaking to the people. The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees came up to the apostles. They were very upset by what the apostles were teaching the people.’”

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 7

“Oh, wow, this can’t be good. You don’t want to get on the bad side of these guys. *(Read directly from Acts 4:3, NIV)* ‘So the temple authorities arrested Peter and John. It was already evening, so they put them in prison until the next day.’”

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 8

“Well that looks like the end of that, right? But the temple officials were too late. The message had already made an impact on the crowd. Check out this next verse—it’s wild. *(Read directly from Acts 4:4, NIV)* ‘But many who heard the message believed. The number of men who believed grew to about 5,000.’”

“Because of this event and Peter and John’s explanation of it, MANY more people put their faith in Jesus and joined the early church.”

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 9

“But there is still a problem: Peter and John were still arrested. And now they have to answer to the authorities, some of the same authorities that were responsible for having Jesus sentenced to death. This is serious. The main question they have: how did Peter and John perform this healing? What power and in whose name did they make this happen?”

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 10

“(Read directly from Acts 4:8-10, NIV) ‘Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people! Are you asking us to explain our actions today? Do you want to know why we were kind to a man who couldn’t walk? Are you asking how he was healed? Then listen to this, you and all the people of Israel! You nailed Jesus Christ of Nazareth to the cross. But God raised him from the dead. It is through Jesus’ name that this man stands healed in front of you.””

“Peter then goes on to declare that God gave Jesus as THE way for people to be rescued!”

“Well, the authorities have a problem . . .”

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 11

“They can’t deny the fact that this man has been healed. They could see Peter and John’s boldness in the face of opposition, but they needed this message to stop spreading immediately. *(Read directly from Acts 4:17,*

NirV) 'We have to stop this thing. It must not spread any further among the people. We have to warn these men. They must never speak to anyone in Jesus' name again.'"

"And that is exactly what they said to Peter and John . . ."

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 12

"They threatened them. They commanded them to never speak or teach in Jesus' name. Wow. If this is the case, sharing the message of Jesus was going to be tough."

CG: Graphic Novel Slide 13

"Look at Peter and John's response. *(Read directly from Acts 4:19-20, NirV) 'But Peter and John replied, 'Which is right from God's point of view? Should we listen to you? Or should we listen to God? You be the judges! There's nothing else we can do. We have to speak about the things we've seen and heard.'"*

"The leaders didn't like this and gave them another warning. After that, though, thankfully Peter and John were released from prison more ready than ever to spread the message of Jesus further!"

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "It's pretty amazing to see how bold Peter and John were in front of these powerful authorities. It would have been easy for them to shrink back when the opposition came and just disappear for a little while. But instead, they stood up for what they believed and spoke courageously about the message of Jesus."

"But how did they do it? Did Peter take a peek at the slip in his pocket that said, 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going,' and that motivational phrase was enough to push him through? I don't think so. The key was at the beginning of chapter four, verse eight, as they were speaking to the authorities—'Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.'"

“Peter and John’s boldness came from the power and presence of God in them, working through them to carry out the mission they were on. They had started a mission, and through God’s strength in them, they were going to finish it no matter what!”

“What’s amazing is that we have the same power of the Holy Spirit in us to help us finish what we start. So remember, when things get tough, the easiest thing to do is quit. But God can give us the strength to finish what we started!”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “Today as you go to groups, think about this question:

CG: Key Question Slide

“What keeps you from finishing what you start?” Think about it. You may not face the same sort of thing Peter and John did, but there will certainly be times when you run into opposition that might make you want to quit what you’ve started. Finishing just seems too difficult. Maybe you started a new instrument and it has gotten so difficult that you are frustrated every time you try and practice. Or it could be that you are trying out for the school play but you just can’t seem to get the lines memorized.”

“Whatever you face, think about what’s keeping you from finishing. Once you realize what’s standing in your way, you can ask God or talk to your friends about how you find the strength to keep going. Before you head to groups, let’s pray and ask God to help us finish what we start. Let’s pray.”