



PRETEEN

JULY 2023

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW:

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

FAITH IS TRUSTING IN WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU CAN SEE.

Since the beginning, God has always been deeply involved in the world. We see God's handiwork on display in creation. We see God's love on display through Jesus, who came to rescue us. We respond to God in faith, believing in what we can't see because of what we can see. When we focus on what we know to be true about God and the world God created, we can have faith in what we can't see or fully understand. We put that faith into action as we follow Jesus and show His love to the world.

WEEK 1

Key Question: **How do you feel when you get a gift?**

Before we get to God's gift of Jesus, we want preteens to think about the emotions that come from giving and receiving any sort of gift. The best gifts come from a person's love and care for another person. And God loves us more than anyone! That's why God gave us Jesus. As preteens engage with this lesson, we pray that they will understand the importance of experiencing God's gift of salvation for themselves and put their faith in Jesus.

We start off the month with something Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus. In **Ephesians 2:8-9** we read, "God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it." When it comes to faith in God, everything—especially God's gift of grace through Jesus—is a gift of love. All we have to do is accept it.

Bottom Line: **Jesus is a gift for everyone.** This is a simple, yet powerful truth that we pray will sink into the hearts of kids. There's nothing we have to do to earn our salvation. We just have to accept God's amazing gift of grace through Jesus. We pray that this is a decision every kid will make at some point in their life—maybe even this summer!

WEEK 2

Key Question: **What brings you joy?** It's easy to think that joy is the same thing as happiness, especially when you're a preteen. As we think about the things that really bring us joy, we start to realize that joy isn't dependent upon our circumstances. Even when we're feeling down, when we put our faith in God, our perspective can change. Joy is a choice to be content and trust that no matter what is happening, God is with us and is what's best for us.

In week 2, we catch up with Paul in **Acts 16:16-40**. Paul and his traveling companion, Silas, were arrested for causing a commotion while trying to help a person in need. In jail, they could have given up their calling to share Jesus' love with others. However, even in the middle of this difficult situation, they showed the power of faith and ended up showing joy! They sang worship songs to God, right there in prison. After an earthquake, the Holy Spirit gave them the right words at the right time to help the jailer and his family start a relationship with Jesus.

Bottom Line: **God can help you find joy.** We might not ever face a challenge like Paul and Silas experienced, but throughout life we'll understand that things can sometimes get tough. From not making the team to struggling in a class at school, kids of all ages struggle with what it means to have joy during difficult situations. Through this lesson, we pray that kids will start to discover that joy isn't something that they need to figure out on their own. They can trust God to help them choose joy no matter what.

WEEK 3

Key Question: **What helps you remember that God is with you?** It's easy for anyone to only see the bad in a situation. That's why we start our preteen discussions with this question. We pray that they'll see



PRETEEN

JULY 2023

FOR LEADERS ONLY

that, although life may be difficult right now, God is still working. God is still with them, and God can make something good come from this season of life.

In **Acts 27:1–28:10** we find a moment toward the end of Paul's life. Paul was on his way to Rome to stand trial, but he and the entire crew were shipwrecked on the journey. This was a major setback, but Paul knew he could trust God no matter what.

Bottom Line: **When bad things happen, God is with you.** Life will not always be easy. Thankfully, when we have a relationship with God, we don't have to go through difficult things on our own. When we remember that God is with us, that can change the way we see our problems. We can trust God no matter what and have faith that we don't have to face our challenges alone.

WEEK 4

Key Question: **Who has encouraged you?** One of the biggest reasons we should hang out with other followers of Jesus is because they can build us up when we're feeling down. We want preteens to discover the people in their life who will do that for them. When we hang around with people who encourage us, it can change our whole outlook on life. We pray that preteens will be inspired to encourage others and point them to Jesus.

For week 4, we head to **Hebrews 10:23-25** and discover something about the importance of meeting with other followers of Jesus. The writer of this passage wanted to remind the early believers that Jesus is more important than anyone or anything else—EVER. The writer challenged the believers to hold onto their faith in Jesus, to keep meeting together, and to encourage others in the church to do the same.

Bottom Line: **Our faith is stronger together.** God created us for relationships. Whether it's with a mom or dad, a family member, or a friend or two, life is better when we have someone to share it with. This can be especially true when it comes to our faith. When we surround ourselves with others who follow Jesus, our own faith in Jesus can grow stronger. We pray that the kids in your church will find all sorts of great friends that can encourage them as they follow Jesus.

WEEK 5

Key Question: **What do you think heaven will be like?** We have John's description of the new heaven and new earth, and those words spark imagination of what life will be like when God once and for all makes everything new again. We hope that through this lesson, preteens will have renewed hope in their relationship with Jesus.

We finish the month and this series in **Revelation 21:3-5a**, with something John wrote toward the end of his life. John had been exiled to live out his life alone on a remote island for prisoners. While he was there, he had a vision of a future that would be more wonderful than we could ever fully understand. We know that God is making all things new. And because of Jesus, we get to experience life forever with God.

Bottom Line: **God will make everything right in the end.** Because of kids' developmental stage, it's hard for them to imagine life that lasts forever. Our prayer is that through this lesson, they'll catch a glimpse of what life can be like when we follow Jesus. Not only is God with us now, but we'll be with God forever. We may not understand it all, but we can have faith that it will be absolutely amazing as God is making all things new!