



PRETEEN

APRIL 2024

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PATIENCE AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

Waiting is a part of life. Thankfully, we don't have to wait on our own. Through the Holy Spirit, God can help us experience the patience we need to wait well. After all, God is patient with us. God is in control and knows what's best for us. Even though God's people had been waiting for years for the promised Savior, at just the right time, God sent Jesus. Because we're created in God's image, we can reflect God's patience in our lives. We can be patient when we remember what God has done. We can lean on God's Holy Spirit to give us the strength we need to trust God and show patience with the difficult circumstances in our lives.

CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for PATIENCE

Transformation by the power of God's Spirit. God's Spirit is transforming my unique and imperfect life into the character of Jesus.

It can be difficult to find patience while you're waiting for something important—or even something that's not important. At its core, patience is about trust: trusting people to follow through . . . trusting that a process will run smoothly . . . and most of all, trusting that God has our best in mind and that God's timing is better than our own. Thankfully, as we follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit is helping us grow and transform to become more like Jesus. This transformation includes growing in our ability to trust that God will be with us while we wait. As we follow Jesus and trust God, we will grow in patience.

PATIENCE is waiting until later for what you want now.

HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT PATIENCE WITH KIDS

First, areas where people struggle to show patience are subjective. For some, it could be extremely difficult to wait for something that another person might have no problem with at all. It's good for people working with kids not to belittle their experience with patience. We're all on a continuum of growth in this area. Show empathy and lead with love as kids share about their experience with showing patience while they wait. Some kids might even share some very difficult situations where they are waiting for resolution—such as their parents' divorce, unemployment, or illness. Be sure to have a plan for when kids share these sorts of situations. Take time outside of Small Group to have a follow-up conversation, and determine who else needs to know about the situation and how you'll follow up with them.

Patience can also be dependent upon where kids are developmentally. Preteens that are 10 or 11 years old might be able to wait longer because they've had more practice. Kindergarteners can only wait so long before they get distracted, start complaining, or rush to complete whatever they're waiting for. Have . . . patience with kids as they learn patience at their phase of development.

One last thing to keep in mind when it comes to patience: you may have kids in your environment that experience ADHD and struggle with impulse control. You may have other kids with a neurodivergence for whom waiting and demonstrating patience is extremely difficult—or perhaps even impossible. The way you talk about patience and what it means to show patience should be filled with grace for kids in situations where this will be a lifelong struggle. Don't equate a lack of faith as the reason they have difficulty waiting. This is not a faith issue, but rather a neuro-physiological issue over which they have little control.



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

GETTING READY

HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET READY FOR THIS WEEK

WEEK 1

Key Question: **When is it hard to have patience?** As we start our month talking about patience, we help preteens think about the times when it's most difficult for them to wait. When we're able to anticipate the moments when patience might be tricky, we can prepare and be ready to wait. We pray that kids will learn to trust God with the situations where they have to wait.

We kick off the month with a patience proverb found in **Proverbs 14:29**: "Anyone who is patient has great understanding. But anyone who gets angry quickly shows how foolish they are." When it comes to waiting, we have a choice. We can either lose our patience and get upset, or we can choose to keep our cool and think about what we can learn through our waiting. We can trust that God will help us wait well.

Bottom Line: **Waiting can make you wise.** There are lots of times in life when we have to wait. Kids have to wait in lines, for school to let out, or to take their turn on the playground. In some situations, it can be more difficult to wait than in others. We pray that kids will remember that the times when we have to wait can become opportunities for us to trust God and grow in wisdom.

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

When is it hard to have patience?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Waiting can make you wise.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"Wait for the Lord. Be strong
and don't lose hope. Wait
for the Lord."

Psalm 27:14, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Patience—Waiting until later
for what you want now

BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

The Waiting
A Patience Proverb Proverbs 14:29

STORY: COMMUNICATING GOD'S TRUTH IN ENGAGING WAYS (25 MINUTES)

1. WELCOME/OPENER

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- 8 kid volunteers
- Picnic tablecloth
- 50+ clothespins
- 1 pool noodle
- 1 blindfold
- Carpet tape or cones

3. COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Communicator
- Bible
- 2 large boxes
- 1 sheet cake decorated with icing
- 1 shirt box decorated to look like a sheet cake
- 1 table
- 1 knife or object to cut the cake
- 6 skewers with prepared images
- Story Character Images printed from the LG Assets PDF and cut out



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PRELUDE **SOCIAL** **STORY** **WORSHIP** **GROUPS** **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

The Waiting
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MONTHLY VIRTUE

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BASIC TRUTH

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LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

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 (The Masters Tournament), April Fool's Day, Easter Holiday, National Ferret Day, movie opening (The Ark and the Aardvark), 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: "What's up, everybody! Welcome to one of my favorite places in all the world, [Name of Environment]. There are so many reasons to love our space [list some things you love, such as the following] —we can stay dry during thunderstorms, and the indoor heating is a nice touch—but my favorite thing about this room is the lack of bugs!

"So thankful for routine spraying by exterminators, that's all I'm saying.

Sit on a stool center stage, dim the lights, and turn on a spotlight, if possible. Think, "Let's bring the room down a moment while I share."

(In a mock-serious tone) "Friends. I . . . I have a confession. I need to take a moment to talk about my true feelings.

Pause, comically gathering yourself to press on through this deep confession.



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25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

"I hate bugs. (pause) There. I said it. There is not an insect on this planet I like. Maybe butterflies. Maybe. Honeybees are kind of fine but from really far away. Roaches are the stuff of nightmares. Stink bugs reek like hot garbage. (shudder)

"But the worst bugs in the world? The ones that take the top spot? Ants. Some of them bite. Some of them fly! Forget Marvel and, 'Oh, ants are all cute because of Antman,' no!! Not only are they creepy and thorax-y and gross, but all of them love to eat my food! Anytime I have a cookout, all the ants want to do is congregate *right on my plate*.

"There is no peaceful picnic if there are ants. There is no peace if there are ants, period. Ants are the worst.

Bring the lights back up, if dimmed.

"So, today I'd like a few volunteers to enter into what I am calling 'Necessary Training for Life Survival.' In other words, we're smashing ants.

SLIDE: "NECESSARY TRAINING FOR LIFE SURVIVAL"

Choose eight volunteers to join you on the stage then divide them up into two teams of four.

A Small Group Leader wearing a picnic blanket or tablecloth like a poncho covered in clothespins enters. Hand a blindfold to the Small Group Leader and then continue.

"Say hello to [Name of Small Group Leader volunteer]. They're at a relaxing picnic on a sunny day. Oh look! (take a clothespin off) A crumb! This is a delicacy to those disgustingly crunchy ants.

(look over the blanket) "Wow, there are lots of crumbs.

Clip the clothespin back on the poncho and have the Small Group Leader put the blindfold on. Position one team on the Leader's left, and the other on his right.

"All eight of the players—two teams—are now ants. Huge, kid-sized ants. Blech. [Name of Small Group Leader] simply wants to enjoy their pimento and cheese sandwich without a spindly, hairy, bug-eyed infestation! However . . . you ants can't resist the crumbs.

"One at a time, sneak up to him and try to steal one off. If successful, return the clothespin to your team's bucket. Then the next person in line goes, and so on, and the team with the most clothespins after 90 seconds wins!

Hand the Small Group Leader a pool noodle.

"If you get swatted, you go back to your team with no crumb. Each team sends one kid at a time. If you get hit while holding a crumb, you have to clip it back on and go back to your team. Make sense? You all ready? Let's go!

AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN TIMER SET TO 90-SECONDS

Play the game. If the game is moving too slowly, send more than one kid from each team at a time. At the end of the timer, count the number of clothespins for each group to determine a winner.



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25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

“See? I told you smashing ants was fun! Let’s give them a huge applause for their effort and victory!

Lead the Large Group in applause for all volunteers.

“Now let’s all stand up and get ready to worship our amazing God as we sing together!”

Host exits as Worship Leader enters.



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PRELUDE **SOCIAL** **STORY** **WORSHIP** **GROUPS** **HOME**

10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "It's so good to see all of you. I am ready to worship and I hope you are too. I love this time of year. Spring is full of new things growing and coming to life. When I look around, I see so many reasons to praise God. Let's give God our very best worship as we sing 'Thank You God.' Here we go!"

AUDIO: "THANK YOU GOD" / TRACK 1 FROM EVERYTHING TO ME
OPTIONAL VIDEO: "THANK YOU GOD" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Yes! God really is everything we need. Before we continue in worship, let's watch this."

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): LIVE LOUD VIDEO FROM GET REEL

"We have a new song to sing today. It's called 'Keep On Waiting.' It can be really hard to wait . . . but God's Spirit can help us wait with patience. I want to choose to wait on God, no matter what! Sing along with me as you catch on."

AUDIO: "KEEP ON WAITING" / TRACK 4 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU
OPTIONAL VIDEO: "KEEP ON WAITING" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Isaiah 40:31 is a popular verse about waiting on God. Here it is: '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.' (NirV) I'm so thankful for the strength God gives us every day. As we sing this next song, let's choose to focus our hearts on being grateful to God. Let's sing and give God our worship now."

AUDIO: "I'M SO GRATEFUL" / TRACK 3 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU
OPTIONAL VIDEO: "I'M SO GRATEFUL" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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25 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Welcome, everyone, to my favorite time of the week! It's awesome to be with you all again, and to kick things off, does anyone have a favorite food? Something you could eat pretty much every day?"

Take a few responses then move over to the table with two boxes on it.

"My favorite is actually under these boxes. It's the greatest food of all time. Anyone want to hazard a guess what it might be?"

Take a few guesses from the audience.

"Hmm. You were close, but . . . the correct answer is cake! The items under both boxes will *look* delicious, but only one is a real cake. The other was made to look real. In a moment, I will briefly raise both boxes in the air at the same time. You'll need to pay close attention and decide, is it cake? Watch carefully! You'll only have a second! Are you ready?"

Lift both boxes for approximately two seconds then set them back down.

"Hmm. Both look delicious, but only one is edible.

Stand behind one box but don't lift the lid.

"How many of you think this was the real cake? *(Allow response)* Very interesting!"

Stand behind the second box but don't lift the lid.

"Same question—is this one cake? Show of hands! *(Allow response)* Hmm. Thank you for guessing, but only one group is correct!"

Lift both boxes. Attempt to cut into the fake cake first, then pick up the real cake and take a big bite.

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: *(with a mouthful of cake)* "Oh my goodness, that's amazing.

"Now, I know, it was a bit unfair. I didn't give you a lot of time to see things clearly. You were forced to make a quick, impulsive decision without a lot of information. I'm guessing more of you would have answered my question correctly if you had extra time to study the cakes, maybe get a little closer look at things. If given that chance, many of you would have noticed the difference in the two choices and would have made a wiser choice.

"If you are anything like me, I don't always have the patience needed to make an educated decision. Instead of waiting, I tend to make an impulsive choice.



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

"I've got to believe I'm not the only one who has trouble waiting. Chances are you'd agree that waiting can be hard. All of us want summer break now! We want snacks now! We want that game to load now!

"Consider this, though: Even if it feels difficult, could waiting . . . actually be a good thing?

"Maybe even the best of things? Odd question, I know. How can waiting be good? Won't you miss out? Won't opportunity pass you by? Won't other people get the good stuff and you're just left with what's leftover?

"One of the wisest people who ever lived once shared something specifically about patience. Let's see what someone smarter than all of us said about it."

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "In the Old Testament, there is a book called Proverbs. It's so good, chock full of sayings and nuggets of wisdom that you can take and apply to your life, right here, right now. Most of the book of Proverbs contains wise sayings from one of the wisest men to ever walk the face of the earth—a king named Solomon.

Pull out a skewer with a King Solomon cutout attached and place it upright in the cake.

"When Solomon's reign began, he was fairly young. The Bible doesn't say exactly, but after doing some math, Solomon couldn't have been more than 20-25 years old when he started his reign as king!

"He was unsure of how to carry out his responsibilities. Like, he was unsure how to be king. One thing Solomon did know, though, was that he wanted to follow God.

"In a dream, God told Solomon that he could ask for anything he wanted. Anything. Imagine that! What would you ask for? (*Allow a few responses*) I might ask for more cake.

"Instead of wealth or immortality or a lifetime supply of cake, Solomon asked for wisdom. Wisdom to help lead the nation of Israel. God obliged and made Solomon super-wise. Of course, Solomon didn't always get it right, and in some cases got it really wrong. But God still gave Solomon wisdom he could share with the world.

"Early in his rule, Solomon took time to have some of the wisdom God gave him written down—and part of that ended up in the book of Proverbs that we find in the part of the Bible we call the Old Testament. In one verse, Solomon shared something particularly relevant today about patience.

Open the Bible to Proverbs 14:29 (NIV) and read.

*"Anyone who is patient has great understanding.
But anyone who gets angry quickly shows how foolish they are.*

"Pretty straightforward, right?

"When you pause before making an impulsive decision, you better understand the situation and respond with wisdom. In fact, one could grow in wisdom by simply demonstrating patience. The flip side? Quick anger means quick mistakes. When you hear 'foolish,' it doesn't mean you aren't smart. Rather, it simply means you're making bad choices. Over time, God can help you develop patience. And often it starts with relaxing instead of reacting.



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

“Throughout the Bible, you can read all sorts of examples and stories about patience. Some stories involve those who were impatient, while others learned patience through a tough time of waiting.

Place a skewer with a King David cutout attached in the cake next to the one with King Solomon on it.

“Take King David, Solomon’s dad. Another young king. He was 30 years old when he began his reign, but he had to wait more than a decade before he became king! He was anointed by the prophet Samuel. That meant that he’d be the next king . . . but he was anointed when he was just a young man—years before he’d become king. During the time before he became king, David was on the run from the current king, Saul, who was insanely jealous of this kid who was going to reign on his throne. David was patient for more than a decade!

Place a skewer with a Joseph cutout attached in the cake.

“And then you have Joseph. Remember him? Dreamer with the big family and a colorful coat? He was his father Jacob’s favorite son. Joseph had dreams of wealth and prosperity. However, his older brothers sold him to a band of travelers. After enduring years enslaved in Potiphar’s house, Joseph spent even more time in prison after being falsely accused of a crime. Eventually, Joseph was released and became the second most powerful man in Egypt behind Pharaoh!

“Later, Joseph had an encounter with his brothers where he pointed out that although they intended to harm him, God intended it for good. Joseph waited for years and years before experiencing freedom and the fulfillment of God’s promise.

Place a skewer with a cross cutout attached in the cake, in front of the others.

“And of course, the most famously patient Person of all time, think about Jesus. Long after Joseph and David, Jesus was born to simple parents in a small town. Although He looked like other men of His day, Jesus lived very differently. Jesus came to help sinners and never sinned Himself. The sick were healed by Him. He taught Scripture and lessons with authority.

“This was because Jesus is the Son of God. Even though Jesus knew this, He chose to be patient at all times. Think about it—if you knew you were the Son of God, and you could literally do anything, at any time . . . wouldn’t you abuse it just once? Maybe perform a cake-multiplying miracle?

“But He didn’t. He was patient. He was patient with people who didn’t understand what He was teaching at the time. He was patient with His captors. He was patient with those who would ask dozens of questions, want Him to pray, or want Him to teach. While friends and family misunderstood Him, Jesus’ enemies constantly tried to trick Him. Throughout His life and all circumstances, Jesus was a perfect example of patience.”

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “Solomon, Joseph, David, and Jesus all demonstrated great patience. Each made a choice to wait before responding to various situations. In doing so, they made the wise choice. For each of us to do the same, it’s important to remember the wisdom King Solomon shared thousands of years ago. Let’s read Proverbs 14:29 one more time.

Open the Bible to Proverbs 14:29 (NirV) and read.

*“Anyone who is patient has great understanding.
But anyone who gets angry quickly shows how foolish they are.*



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"The wisdom of Solomon isn't only true for a select few found in the Bible. *All* of us will face difficult situations. However, each of us can choose to take a deep breath. Instead of reacting in frustration, we can respond thoughtfully. It's way easier to react impulsively, but it takes a great deal of patience to think before reacting.

Place the skewer with a car cutout attached in the cake.

"Next time your family takes a long road trip with your kid sister bugging you, pause before you lash out with some well-thought-out insults. There are other options than screaming mean words at her. Giving her a little bit of attention might mean she takes a nap later and the car has peace. This could be worth the wait.

"This car might represent something different for the adults in the room, myself included. Maybe a bit more patience while driving is the key to, you know, not having accidents.

Place the skewer with a broom cutout attached in the cake.

"If your parents ask for your help and you're doing the usual five-hour-video-game session or trying to get the angle right for the Tik-Tok dance challenge, take a moment to catch your breath instead of complaining. Although you might be annoyed about the extra work, especially when you're so busy, remember it could be the best way to help your parents after a long, hard day of work. Your video games and your dancing will still be there after you patiently help out.

"I'll be honest, learning to wait is no easy task. It's hard. Sometimes it's just a few minutes, sometimes several hours, and other times, we may have to wait many weeks or even years. Waiting gives us the chance to gain understanding and show others Jesus through our actions."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Patience is a skill you'll continue to learn throughout your life! There will be seasons it's easier to show patience. Sometimes you'll have a hard time waiting for others, and at times, you'll have a hard time having patience with yourself. But you'll always have the choice to demonstrate it in your life.

"As we prepare to head to Small Groups, I want you to think about this one question:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"When is it hard to have patience? What are the situations and circumstances in your life when it's difficult to wait patiently? Is it at home? At school? Is it while doing your homework? Definitely with family? Before we discuss your answers with your Small Group Leaders, let's pray together. I want us to ask God to help all of us to have great understanding, just like Solomon did!"

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP