



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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FOUR
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LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

GETTING READY

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

WEEK 4

Key Question: **What are you waiting for right now?** As we finish our month talking about patience, we want to help preteens consider the current areas of life where they need patience. 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 each situation where they have to wait.

We finish the month with a story found in **Luke 2:25-35**. God's people had been waiting for hundreds of years for the Savior. God promised Simeon that he'd get to see the Messiah before he died. We believe that Simeon waited a long time. But finally, when Mary and Joseph came to the temple with Baby Jesus, Simeon finally saw what he'd been waiting for.

Bottom Line: **God is with you while you wait.** We might have to wait for something small, like in a line at the ice cream stand . . . or we might have to wait for something big, like for a parent to get a new job. While it's true that patience is harder in some situations than others, we pray that kids will remember that they don't have to wait on their own. They can trust that God is with them while they wait.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

I'm with You
Simeon Waits for the Messiah
Luke 2:25-35

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What are you waiting
for right now?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

God is with you while you wait.

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 can trust God no matter what.

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

1. WELCOME/OPENER

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- 4 Kid volunteers
- 4 Adult volunteers
- 4 Chairs
- 4 Blindfolds
- 4 Poles (yard sticks, long dowels, yard tool handles, etc.)
- Twine or fishing string
- 4 of the same snacks (ex: donuts, hotdogs/buns, pigs-in-a-blanket)
- Table

3. COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Communicator
- Bible
- Metronome (See What You Do)
- Table



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

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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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 event (London Marathon, NFL Draft), National Picnic Day, movie opening, 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: "Hello again, and welcome to [Name of Environment]! Of all the places you could be this morning, you chose to be here—and I couldn't be more grateful!

"In today's world, compared to any other time in history, you could literally sit, all day, and have everything brought to you. It's amazing, honestly. Whole days can go by without you ever leaving the house.

"Entire cookouts can happen without you or your parents lifting a finger. Delivery can bring anything you want. Need a picnic basket by tomorrow? Boom, done. Want a waterproof blanket to sit on outside? It can be brought to your doorstep!

"Outdoor furniture, grills, food, groceries, drinks, all of it can be ordered and brought to you on the same day. It's like we're all going to turn into those oversized people in floating chairs in Pixar's Wall-E. Indeed, we live in an amazing world.



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

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

"I am disappointed, though, by one service not provided anywhere. There isn't a company that exists to bring food straight to my mouth. Of all the places I've visited, never has anyone offered to feed me since I outgrew my diaper. But, today I want to change that! On this day, I want to demo a new service in the form of a game I like to call 'Lazy Lunch.' Who's ready?"

SLIDE: "LAZY LUNCH"

Select four kids from different small groups and have the kids and their Small Group Leaders come to the stage. The Small Group Leaders should sit in chairs across the front of the stage. Kids will stand behind their leaders.

"'Lazy Lunch!' To play, our Small Group Leaders will put on blindfolds, and each of our kids will stand behind their Small Group Leaders holding a pole. On each pole is a string, and on that string is food. Without using their hands, the Small Group Leaders have to eat what's in front of them—and the first one done wins! Ready? Set? Let's go!"

AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

Play the game. All Small Group Leaders should be given the same snack, which could include donuts, hotdogs/buns, pigs-in-a-blanket, etc.

The first leader to eat their food wins.

"I think I'm onto something here. Imagine having your food dangled in front of you, and you don't even have to move to eat it!"

"Might be hard with spaghetti, though. Let's give it up for our winner! (Allow response) Incredible job!"

Lead applause for all volunteers and then send them back to their seats.

"Speaking of incredible, our God is the MOST incredible and amazing God! Let's all stand to our feet to prepare to worship God with everything we've got!"

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: ""Yes, we want to give God everything . . . all that we are . . . every part of us. Worship helps us give our whole heart to God. That's what this song is about. It says, 'I'll give my all to You, whatever You choose for me to do.' Let's lift this one up and sing. Come on, everybody!

AUDIO: "ALL TO YOU" / TRACK 1 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "ALL TO YOU" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Yeah, that song is a party! I love it so much. I want to follow God with everything I've got. So good. Before we continue in worship, check this out.

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

"We've been singing this song 'Keep On Waiting' this month. Patience is something we all need in our lives, no matter how old we are. God's Spirit can help us grow in patience so we can wait until later for the things we want now. I'm so thankful for the way God helps us. We can trust that God's timing is perfect! Let's sing about that now.

AUDIO: "KEEP ON WAITING" / TRACK 4 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "KEEP ON WAITING" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"That's right! I believe that we can all 'keep on waiting' with God's help. There is nothing like God's love for us. Listen to David's words from Psalm 36:5-9: 'Lord, your love is as high as the heavens. Your faithful love reaches up to the skies. Your holiness is as great as the height of the highest mountains. You are as honest as the oceans are deep. . . . We are filled with light because you give us light.' (NIRV) Let's lift our voices now and thank God for loving us."

AUDIO: "YES I AM" / TRACK 5 FROM EVERYTHING TO ME

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "YES I AM" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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10 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hey, everyone! It's that time again, and I can't wait to learn with you today. It's my favorite time of the week!

"Let's start with a question. When was the last time you waited for something that you wanted right now? Maybe it was your mom's famous cookies, counting down the days to see family, Christmas morning, or summer vacation—take a minute to share a story with the person sitting next to you.

Take a few moments for kids to share stories. As you have time, ask a couple of kids to share, then continue.

"Thanks for sharing! And I get it, each of those examples would be difficult. Any time I am forced to wait, I have an internal clock that tick-tocks in my head. As the clock ticks and tocks, it feels like time slows down even more.

Start a metronome so the kids can hear a tick-tock sound. After about 10-15 seconds, stop the metronome.

Then share a personal story of a time you needed to wait. Use the following example as a guide.

"I'll never forget this one time I had to wait. One of my favorite places to visit as a young kid was [name of an amusement park]. I'll never forget the first time I entered the park! I was overwhelmed by all the fun! The place had it all, there were rides, food, and live shows with singing and dancing. At this one place, they had the largest hotdog my little eyes had ever seen! A ring toss game was always a fun way to lose a few dollars. But my favorite attractions, by far, were the roller coasters. Some would spin you in a circle, while others carried you up and down rolling hills. But the one roller coaster I wanted to ride more than the others was the really, really big one.

"Y'all would have loved it. The ride was a classic wooden roller coaster known for its switchbacks, high banking turns, and 65 mph top speed. The highlight of the ride was a 200-foot drop at 79 degrees!

"The first time I approached the ride I could feel the excitement pulsing through my veins. I remember jumping up and down with pure elation when my dad said it could be our first stop in the park! But all the feelings left me when I marched to the entrance of the giant roller coaster to see you needed to be 48" tall to ride.

"And . . . I was 45 inches. I couldn't go on.

"To say I was upset would be a gross understatement.

Start the metronome.

OPTIONAL AUDIO: START METRONOME SFX



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25 MINUTES

"I had no other option than to wait. This wait to ride the giant roller coaster, in my mind, would take forever. How long did it take to grow three inches?"

"Turns out it took a whole year."

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "Throughout that year-long wait, there were countless times I thought about it and got frustrated. I started to think it was a stupid rule to be a certain height. How did they know that anyway? Did they keep putting taller and taller kids on it until they didn't fall off anymore?"

"The wait seemed endless."

"Have you felt like that? Have you ever been told that you had to wait for something and you responded with getting angry and calling it stupid in the first place? How are you supposed to react? How do you even find patience in the first place?"

Stop the metronome.

OPTIONAL AUDIO: STOP METRONOME SFX

"All month long, we've discussed and talked about moments when we've had to wait. Sometimes the wait is short—like when we wait for our popcorn in the microwave or when we wait for a video game to load. But there are *plenty* of times the wait is longer, aren't there? We wait for the bus in the rain. We wait for the school day to end. Our birthday never seems to come fast enough."

"When your wait seemed endless, were there moments you wanted to give up? When things got difficult or you thought you figured something out only to find you had more to learn?"

"Maybe math is difficult and doesn't come as easily as you want. Ever feel like throwing in the math towel?"

"Maybe you had an injury while playing a sport. As you sit on the sidelines waiting for things to heal, all your teammates seem to be getting better and better while you sit there and watch. Might make you want to quit, doesn't it?"

"For those who have gone fishing, I'm sure you have felt like giving up before you caught a fish!"

"What are we supposed to do when we want to walk away instead of enduring the wait?"

"Great question. Let's see if we can find an answer in the Bible! Remember, the Bible was written by all sorts of people who experienced God and wrote down what they learned about God so we can get to know God for ourselves. It's the best place to start if you need help trusting God and finding wisdom—and it turns out that finding patience takes a whole lot of both! Let's take a look."

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "Our story comes from the book of Luke. This is one of the four books, or Gospels, in the New Testament of the Bible that tell the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection."



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

25 MINUTES

“Long before Jesus’ arrival, God created a good world. But that good became flawed and broken when Adam and Eve turned away from God and sinned. From that moment on, the world needed a Rescuer to restore us, to restore everything. Eventually, God chose a man named Abraham and promised to bless the world through his family. Not only would Abraham’s family grow to be more numerous than the stars, but God’s Rescuer would come from Abraham’s family line!

“However, as Abraham’s family grew into a nation, the Israelites, they turned away from God over and over again. Still, God never turned away from the Israelites. God showed great patience. Even after they kept turning their backs on God and even after they followed other gods, God didn’t desert the Israelites. God promised, through prophets, to send a Rescuer.

“By the time Jesus was born, the Israelites were ruled by the Romans. Although they were free to worship the one true God, God’s people were still heavily oppressed by the Romans. To make matters worse, it often seemed like God had gone silent. There hadn’t been a recorded word from God in hundreds of years.

“This meant God’s people could only pray for a Rescuer . . . and wait.

Start the metronome. Then sit on the stage floor next to the metronome as if waiting for something.

OPTIONAL AUDIO: START METRONOME SFX

“It’s hard to picture what the Israelites must have felt waiting for such a long time. Under Roman rule, they could be forced to carry the gear of Roman soldiers for up to one mile without notice. They were taxed heavily to pay for the expensive Roman Empire. God’s people wanted relief! They wanted a Rescuer!

Stop the metronome and stand, continuing to teach.

OPTIONAL AUDIO: STOP METRONOME SFX

“In Jerusalem, there was a man named Simeon. Like others, he had heard about God’s promise of a Messiah, a Rescuer, for Israel. In the Bible, Luke wrote about Simeon. Simeon’s story is recorded in the second chapter of the book.

Open the Bible to Luke 2:25 (NirV) and read.

“In Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was a good and godly man. He was waiting for God’s promise to Israel to come true. The Holy Spirit was with him.

Start the metronome.

OPTIONAL AUDIO: START METRONOME SFX

“Wow. The Holy Spirit was with Simeon. Simeon wasn’t waiting alone. God was with him!

Open the Bible to Luke 2:26 (NirV) and read.

“The Spirit had told Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.



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“Pretty amazing promise. This rescuing Messiah was coming, but people didn’t know where or when—but now, with Simeon, he knew he’d see Him before he died.

“The Messiah was coming in his lifetime.

“One day, God guided Simeon to the temple courtyard where he continued to wait. While there, a young mom named Mary and her husband, Joseph, entered with their Baby named Jesus.

“Simeon instantly recognized the Baby to be the promised Rescuer, the Lord’s Messiah. The young couple allowed Simeon to hold the Baby.

“While the man held Jesus, Simeon praised God and said,

Open the Bible to Luke 2:29-32 (NirV) and read.

“Lord, you are the King over all.

Now let me, your servant, go in peace.

That is what you promised.

My eyes have seen your salvation.

You have prepared it in the sight of all nations.

It is a light to be given to the Gentiles.

It will be the glory of your people Israel.

“And just like that . . .

Stop the metronome.

OPTIONAL AUDIO: STOP METRONOME SFX

“The wait was over.

“Both Mary and Joseph were blown away by Simeon’s words. But the man knew that Jesus and His parents would face many difficult things in the years to come. So Simeon continued by giving Mary and Joseph a blessing and then some words about the future.

Open the Bible to Luke 2:34b-35 (NirV) and read.

“This child is going to cause many people in Israel to fall and to rise. God has sent him. But many will speak against him. The thoughts of many hearts will be known. A sword will wound your own soul too.”

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “I love this story because we see the patience of Simeon paying off. He didn’t complain. He didn’t quit.

“He just waited and held fast to God’s promise.

“The Israelites waited for hundreds of years for Jesus’ arrival. When the time came, Simeon was able to hold Jesus in his arms just as God promised. That’s a pretty great reward for being patient!



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

“The Bible does not say how long Simeon waited for the promise to be fulfilled, but we do know it didn’t happen right away. Simeon appears to have waited patiently and with joy, trusting God’s promise to come true.

“He didn’t know how his story would unfold, but I feel confident Simeon would say it was worth the wait. It’s a great example of waiting on God’s promises to come to pass! In the same way the Holy Spirit was with Simeon, God is with us, too. I realize there are plenty of times we want to give up, but we have to remember this story! God is with us while we wait.

Communicator starts the metronome.

OPTIONAL AUDIO: START METRONOME SFX

“Like me with the rollercoaster, like you with sitting out, not understanding algebra yet, or wanting a lead in the musical but the older kids always get them . . . there are lots of times when we have to wait, even after we’re promised something.

“Through it all, God is with you. When you are so excited about high school sports but you’ve got a couple of years to wait, the Holy Spirit can guide you. When you feel like you have no best friend and no prospects in sight, you aren’t alone.

“God has promised that no matter how long we must wait, everything will be made right in the end for those who follow Jesus! So, we can wait with hope and rely on God. You can trust God no matter what! And when you trust God to help you wait, well, God’s Spirit can give you all that you need while you wait . . . including patience.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “And the beauty of waiting patiently? That shows the world what God is like. We can show others a good attitude instead of grumbling. We can show the world calmness instead of anger. Even if the very thing we are waiting to happen never does come true, we can still show others God.

“Each of you are at a great age to practice patience. Not saying that all of you are impatient . . . but . . .

“We realize many of you have upcoming events and milestones that are keeping you awake with anticipation. In [Name of Environment], we want to help you with the hard stuff in life—like showing patience. As we gear up to move into our Small Group time, we want you to think on this one question:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“What are you waiting for right now?”

Stop the metronome.

OPTIONAL AUDIO: STOP METRONOME SFX

“Maybe it is something significant. It could be something you’ve wanted for a long time. Whatever it might be, feel free to share it with your Small Groups in just a moment. But before we dismiss, let’s pray and thank God for being with us throughout the seasons we have to wait.”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND



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

25 MINUTES

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