

LESSON 5
PERSEVERANCE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us through Difficult Things

SCRIPTURE: James 1

GOD'S BIG STORY: James, an early church leader, encourages the church to keep going when life is difficult because God will help them persevere.

WORD OF WONDER: The three most important things to have are faith, hope and love. But the greatest of them is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What's the hardest thing you've ever done?
- Curiosity Questions
- Interactive Game: Pterodactyl
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder: 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Responding in Worship: Crown of Life Craft



Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WORD OF WONDER: 1 Corinthians 13:13

Ever been tempted to quit when something got too challenging? What was the source of that temptation? Why is resisting that particular temptation so hard?

Our enemy knows where we're vulnerable. I remember a time in my life when I faced discouragement at every turn, and I felt as though the season of difficult things was never going to end. I wanted to give in and give up. I wanted to quit.

James 1 might be the most famous passage that addresses facing temptations and trials. But it's also famous for reminding us we have the option to choose our mindset when facing those challenges. Take a few moments now to read James 1.

God provides a source of strength and endurance to help us get past the temptations. According to James, that source is joy.

When I've chosen joy, I've gained strength I didn't know I had and the perseverance to keep pushing through and beyond.

What are you facing in your life that feels too hard and the temptation is to give up or take an easier way out? What truths about God's love and power make it possible for you to choose joy right now?

God is ready to meet you, equip you, empower you, and fill you with all wisdom and understanding so you can have the perseverance to stand the tests and trials. He will help you through.

—Tom Bump

Children's Ministry Leader, Author, and Coach
Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

James, the brother of Jesus, is barely mentioned in the Gospels. He doesn't seem to have placed any faith in Jesus until after His resurrection. According to 1 Corinthians 15:7, Christ appeared to James, who afterward became a leader in the early church.

WHAT?

James sounds quite a lot like his brother Jesus, who taught in parables and short sayings. James even uses the same phrasing as the Beatitudes: "Blessed is the person who ..." (James 1:12). His letter is often compared to wisdom literature.

WHERE?

James was based in Jerusalem, where he led Jewish Christians until his martyrdom. James writes to the scattered 12 tribes of Israel (James 1:1). His reference to the scattering, or diaspora, could mean the collective people of God in all places.

WHEN?

James was executed at the direction of the high priest in Jerusalem around the year AD 62. His letter doesn't have a firm date, but it appears to respond in some way to Paul, perhaps in the AD 40s or 50s.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

James reminds followers of Christ to live in a sensible way, making peace with others. He modeled the role of peacemaker when he gave a hand in fellowship with Paul and Barnabas, accepting their ministry to Gentiles, even while he ministered to Jews (Galatians 2:9).

Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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Pre-Service (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: [Coloring Page](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following "I'm curious" questions. Say "I'm curious..." before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

I'm curious ...

- **When was a time you got help from someone else to do something difficult?**
- **When have you helped someone do something hard?**

Small Group Begins: Welcome Question 2–3 min

SUPPLIES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

As kids arrive, invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: "**What's the hardest thing you've ever done?**" Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

Right at your service time, move into Small Group time by sharing your own answers and allowing kids their answers.

"Wow! You've all done some very difficult things! Today we're going to explore a Bible passage written by an early church leader about how God helps us through hard and difficult things. "

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

Tell kids that today's part of God's big story comes directly from the Bible. It's true and useful to us in our everyday lives, and it's found in the book of James in the New Testament. Invite kids to open their Bibles to James 1. Encourage volunteers or older kids to help the younger ones find the passage

Read James 1:2–4, 16–18 aloud as kids follow along.

- **James tells followers of Jesus to think of it as pure what when we face all kinds of trouble? What do you think he means?**
- **When we're tempted to do the wrong thing, what does God do?**
- **After someone has come through hard times, what will they receive, according to James?**
- **What are some troubles, or hard things, you've faced?**
- **How can going through hard things make you stronger in your faith?**
- **What are some "good gifts" God has given you in your life?**
- **What did God's big story today show us about God? What's He like? How can we tell?**

"God knows we'll experience trouble in our lives. And He'll be with us through them all, helping us grow stronger and persevere. Let's take some time to thank God for His gifts and ask for His help in our lives."

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Encourage kids to share some prayers requests with the group. You can begin by sharing a request of your own. Invite a few kids to pray over the other kids in the group. Remind them that God gives good gifts.

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Tell kids that today's part of God's big story comes directly from the Bible. It's true and useful to us in our everyday lives, and it's found in the book of James in the New Testament. Invite kids to open their Bibles to James 1. Encourage volunteers or older kids to help the younger ones find the passage

Give a brief overview of the history and context using the info on page 3 of this guide.

Call on three kids who would like to read the following verses out loud as everyone else follows along: James 1:1–4, 9–13, and 16–18.

- **James tells followers of Jesus to consider it pure what when we face all kinds of trouble? What do you think that means?**
- **When we're tempted to do the wrong thing, what does God do? Where is God when we're tempted?**
 - **What did God's big story today show us about God? What's He like? How can we tell?**
- **What does it mean to receive the crown of life?**
- **What are some troubles, or hard times, you've faced? Do you think these times made your faith stronger? Explain.**
- **What might change if you looked at the next difficult thing that happens in your life as an opportunity to grow in your faith?**
- **What did God's big story today show us about God? What's He like? How can we tell?**

God knows we'll experience trouble in our lives. And He'll be with us through them all, helping us grow stronger and persevere! Let's take some time to thank God for His gifts and ask His help in our lives.

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Encourage kids to share some prayers requests with the group. You can begin by sharing a request of your own. Invite a few kids to pray over the other kids in the group, lifting up each request and asking God to give kids the strength to persevere through hard things.

Older Kids – Notes Page

****Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces. This is an important way for parents to see what their kids are learning each way and have meaningful conversations at home!**

Word of Wonder

"The Word of Wonder for the Walk in Love series is 1 Corinthians 13:13. This verse encourages followers of Jesus to have faith, hope, and love. It says love is the most important thing. God shows His love for us by helping us through difficult things. He doesn't leave us alone when times are hard. Let's read the Word of Wonder together!"

Invite kids to open their Bibles to 1 Corinthians 13:13. Ask kids to get out of their seats and crouch down as they read the Word of Wonder. Every time they get the word love, encourage them to jump up and shout, "Love!" Read the Word of Wonder at least three times.

Leader Tip: For Older Kids. Rather than jump up and shout, "Love!" while saying the Word of Wonder, encourage kids to create their own motion. For example, they might silently act out a way they can show love or use their hands to form the shape of a heart.

Gather kids to talk about these questions:

- **Who's someone you know who has a lot of faith, hope, or love? Tell us about this person.**
- **How can having God's love help us persevere through difficult times?**

Leader Tip: As kids discuss faith, hope, and love, refer to these definitions as needed: "Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1). To have faith is to trust with our hearts; this trust is shown through our actions. Hope is a confident expectation that God will do what He said He will do; it's more than wishful thinking—it's certainty that God will come through. Love is not just a feeling but selfless actions that put others before ourselves. Love is who God is. As Jesus-followers, we can be filled with God's love so that Christlike love becomes what describes us best!

Word of Wonder Activity

SUPPLIES: hardcover books (1 per small group)

Ahead of time, gather one hardcover book for each small group. Textbooks and hymnals work great! **"God shows us He loves us by helping us through difficult things in our lives. Let's practice our Word of Wonder together. To do this, we're going to persevere through something difficult!"**

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. Allow younger kids to pick a buddy so they can hold the book between them.

Invite kids to form a circle. Give one kid the hardcover book. Challenge him to say the Word of Wonder while holding the book with one hand extended in front of him, thumb on top of the book and fingers on the bottom. Kids will take turns saying the Word of Wonder while persevering to hold up the heavy book. It's harder than it sounds!

Whew, that was difficult! I'm so glad God helps us through harder things than holding up books!"

Large Group!

Responding in Worship: Crown of Life Craft

SUPPLIES: jewel stickers, safety scissors (1 per kid), pens, glue, construction paper (in various colors, optional), scissors (prep only)

RESOURCES: [Crown of Life Sheet](#), [Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist](#), [“Never Be Shaken” Lyric Video](#) (optional)

Ahead of time, print the Crown of Life Sheet on white cardstock, one per kid.

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. You might want to precut the crown for your kids. Also, if kids aren't confident in their writing, encourage them to draw a picture to represent a hard time they've gone through instead of writing it down.

"James tells us that followers of Jesus who persevere through difficult things and troubles will receive the crown of life. We learned that the crown symbolizes life itself! During the first century, runners received beautiful crowns made of leaves when they won races.

Today we'll make crowns to help us remember times when God has been with us as we faced different troubles. When we place our hope in God and go through difficult times, we become like winners of a race who receive crowns on our heads—the crown of life!"

Set out craft supplies at tables and invite kids to sit. Give each kid a Crown of Life Sheet and invite them to cut out their crowns. Encourage them to think of three times in their lives when they've gone through something difficult. Instruct them to draw a small symbol or word to represent each of these difficult things. Encourage them to think and reflect quietly rather than share with their neighbors. You can play soft worship music from the [Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as they work.

After a few minutes, invite kids to take three jewel stickers and, one by one, stick them over the written-
in leaves on their papers. As they attach the jewels, encourage kids to say a prayer (out loud or silently) to God, thanking Him for being with them and helping them through that difficult thing.

When kids are finished with their crowns and have cleaned up their tables, invite them to gather together. Encourage them to wear their crowns!

If time allows, lead kids in worship through music. **We can be confident that God is with us whenever we go through difficult things! Let's thank Him through worship now!** Play "Never Be Shaken" from the [Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist](#) or play the [“Never Be Shaken” Lyric Video](#) and invite kids to sing along!