

LESSON 5
PERSEVERANCE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us through Hard 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 (NirV)

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation and Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Word of Wonder: 1 Corinthians 13:13 (NirV)
- Circle Time: A Mess of Yarn
- Craft: Crowns of Life
- Game: Race of Life
- Responding in Worship: Worshiping through Hard Times
- Prayer and Blessing
- Closing Game: Snake Race





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 (NirV)

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).



LESSON 5 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

SUPPLIES: ball of yarn

Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat.

Leader: Hey, Tac! How are you today?

Tac the Cat: I'm frustrated!

Leader: Uh oh! Why are you frustrated today?

Tac the Cat: I've lost my favorite ball of yarn, and I can't find it anywhere! I asked my mom to buy me a new ball of yarn, but she told me I needed to have some purrrrrrr-severance and keep looking, but I don't know what it means to have purrrrrrr-severance!

Leader: Aw, I'm sorry you lost your favorite ball of yarn! Maybe we can help you find it. It's good to have perseverance when you're trying to do something hard. Having perseverance means to keep trying even though something is hard.

Tac the Cat: Oh, I see! So, I should have some purrrrrrr-severance and keep looking for my ball of yarn even though I'm having a hard time finding it?

Leader: Exactly, Tac! Now, let's see if we can help you find your ball of yarn. When was the last time you remember having it?

Tac the Cat: I had it yesterday. I was actually right here in this room playing with it. I was having so much fun! I love my ball of yarn, but now it's gone forever!

Leader: Tac, remember what your mom said? You just need to have some perseverance and keep looking! And we will help!

Tac the Cat: Oh yeah! I am ready to have some purrrrrrr-severance now!

Leader: Great! OK, so you had it here in this room. It must still be here somewhere then. Let's see if we can find it. Kids, do you think you can help Tac find his yarn? (Allow kids to respond.)

Leader: Awesome! Let's see if we can help Tac. (Kid's name), will you look under the table and see if you see any yarn?

(Call on a few different kids and have them look in different places around the room. For the last kid you call on, have him look where you previously hid the ball of yarn.)

Tac the Cat: My ball of yarn! You found it! Thank you so much!

Leader: You're welcome, Tac! We are always glad to help our friends. What did you learn today?

Tac the Cat: I learned that I should always have purrrrrrr-severance. That means I shouldn't give up when something is hard. I should keep trying to do hard things.

Leader: That's right. And sometimes we need help to do hard things.

Tac the Cat: Like you all helped me find my ball of yarn!

Leader: Exactly! And you know what? There is someone else who can help us go through hard things as well.

Tac the Cat: There is? Who is that?

Leader: Well, that just happens to be what we're learning about today. We're learning that God helps us through hard things.

Tac the Cat: God does? Can you tell me more?

Leader: Why don't you listen in later and you can learn more about how God helps us!

Tac the Cat: OK, sounds good. Thank you again for helping me find my ball of yarn. Well, for now I think I am going to go practice my purrrrrrr-severance and try to untangle my ball of yarn.

Leader: That could definitely take some perseverance! See you later, Tac!
Set the ball of yarn aside to use again in Circle Time.

"Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: Have you ever had to do something that seemed really hard to do? Allow the kids to respond. Did you ever need someone's help to get through a hard time? Allow the kids to respond. We all see and hear things that make us curious. Did you ever stop to think about how God helps us through hard things?"

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD HELPS US THROUGH HARD THINGS**. Today, we'll discover that God helps us through hard things!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DELCARATION

Encourage the kids to say it with you and do the motions.

Let's say these words together.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

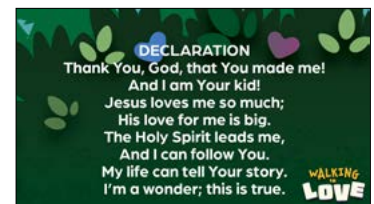
Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.



The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat.)

March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words, with these as a guide if needed: **God, you never promised our lives would always be easy, but You do promise to always be with us whenever our lives get hard. You love us, and You will always be with us! Thank You for helping us when we go through hard things. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

"Today, we'll learn about how God helps us through hard things. Let's sing about God helping us through hard things together!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: BREAKER ROCK BEACH, I LOVE YOU SO MUCH

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of James in the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible and what do I see? (Hands together then opening palms up, like opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

"Let's watch part of God's big story, which comes from the book of James in the Bible."

VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Bible, envelopes (4), painter's tape or cones

RESOURCES: James Letters

Ahead of time, print the four James Letters. Fold them and seal them in envelopes. Number the envelopes with the corresponding letters. Place them in order around the room. You can use cones or painter's tape to create a path along the floor between the letters.



Leader Tip: Preschoolers may not easily decipher what is make-believe and what is real. Take a moment to explain that while James was a very real person, he lived a long time ago. We are just pretending to receive letters from him today. But he did write letters that we can actually read in the Bible!

"A man named James, who was a brother of Jesus, wrote a message that encourages those following Jesus to keep going when life is hard. We have some letters from James that will help us understand that message! Can you help me follow the path and find the first letter? Guide the kids to the start of the path and allow them to follow it to the first envelope. Once you see our first letter, have a seat in front of it. I will open the letter, and we will see what it says. Allow kids to follow the path until they reach the first letter, and then encourage them to sit down.

Open the letter. **Let's pretend we're living in the early church days and see what James has to say to us.** Read the letter out loud to the kids.

Letter 1

Dear Friends,

As people who follow Jesus, you might face all kinds of trouble. But when you do, you should think of it as pure joy! When hard things happen, they help you to be stronger. As followers of Jesus, we might all face trouble and hard times, but these hard things help us to trust God.

Love, James

Continue along the path, reading each letter from James along the way.

Letter 2

Dear Friends,

Sometimes we're tempted to do wrong things, which means we want to do wrong things. But we shouldn't blame God when we are tempted. God never tempts anyone. Instead, God will be with us when we want to do wrong things, and He will give us the courage to do the right thing.

Love, James

Continue along the path, stopping to read the next letter.

Letter 3

Dear Friends,

Blessed (or happy) are the people who keep going even when times are hard. After they have come through hard times, they will receive a crown of life. The Lord has promised it to those who

love Him. Toys and things here on earth will soon go away, but people who love God will have something that will never go away—life with Him forever! When you go through trouble, you become like the winners of a race who receive crowns on their heads from God. He loves you!
Love, James

Continue along the path, stopping to read the next letter.

Letter 4

Dear Friends,

Do you like to receive gifts? I do! Every good and perfect gift is from God! Remember that God made the heavens and the earth. God only gives good gifts. Anything we face that is bad or wrong is not from God. God wants us to share His love with everyone else on earth. That's why we can always remember that God helps us through hard things.

Love, James

Fold up the last letter and say:

So even though we may go through hard times, God still loves us. It's good to remember that God helps us through hard things."

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

"Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD HELPS US THROUGH HARD THINGS**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Jesus Himself went through very hard times. The night before He died on the cross, He was very sad. He told His heavenly Father how He was feeling, and God gave Him strength. We can do the same. During difficult times, we can pray to God, and He will help us through hard things." (See Luke 22:39–44.)

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for helping us through hard times.

God, thank You for always being with us in this race of life. Thank You for loving us always and helping us when times get hard. Thank You for always being with us in everything we face. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive a blessing as you speak it over them. Speak a blessing using your own words, with these as a guide if needed.

Blessing: Even though you may face hard times in your life, may you always remember that God loves you and is with you through anything and everything you may ever face. He loves you and will help you run your race of life. God helps us through hard times.