

Today's Suggested Schedule—May 2022, Week 5

Today's Bible Story: Keep Holding On (Keep Looking to Jesus) • *Hebrews 12:1-3*

Today's Bottom Line: Keep going because of what Jesus did for you.

Monthly Memory Verse: *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.* Isaiah 40:31 (NIRV)

Monthly Life App: Resilience—Getting back up when something gets you down

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

SLIDE: Theme Loop (*playing when kids coming in*)

Video (Media Package): Countdown (30- or 60-second version)

SLIDE: Theme Background

OPENER

LEADER: “Hey, everyone! I’m SO glad that we’re all here at [your environment’s name] because, WOW, do we have some truly exciting stuff going down today! We’ve been working on our resilience this month.

Video (Media Package): Theme Transition to Life App

“Resilience is getting back up when something gets you down.

Video (Media Package): Life App Transition to Theme

“That’s not always easy. But God can help us push through the tough times so we can get back up again.

“We’ve been testing our ability to ‘bounce back’ and keep going through a series of challenges. And today, we’re putting them all together in one mega-awesome obstacle course! (*Reference the course.*) As you can see, each challenge we’ve

done this month is represented here. But in case you missed a week, I'll go over how this will work.

“You'll start out together with the human knot game. Everyone will hold two other people's hands. You'll hold someone else's left hand with your left hand and another person's right hand with your right hand. Then, you'll work to untangle your hands **WITHOUT** letting go. As soon as everyone is untangled, sanitize your hands. Then you can move on to the next challenge!

Note: If you have limited time, you may want to put a time limit on this particular challenge since it can take a fair amount of time. You could say, “You have one minute to untangle as a team, but if you can't do it before time is up, just move along to the next challenge.”

“Next is the pool noodle relay. You'll dig through this bin to find a [pre-chosen color OR your team color] piece. Then you'll take it and hold it in your neck like this.

Demonstrate holding the piece in your neck.

“At this point, you should not use your hands again unless you drop the piece. In which case, you can pick it up and put it back in your neck. But you can't hold it there or otherwise touch the pool noodle with your hands after you've got it in place. Then you'll drop to your knees and crawl through the tunnel, continuing to hold the pool noodle under your chin. When you emerge, lean over [the container OR your team's container] and drop the pool noodle in. Then shout, 'GO!' At that point, your next teammate can start. So keep that in mind. You can't get dig for your pool noodle until the person in front of you has successfully dropped theirs in the bin and shouted, 'Go.'

“Way to go, everyone! That was so much fun! And you showed amazing resilience to make it through those challenges. Now, let's all [stay on our feet/ head inside] so we can lift our voices and worship God together.”

WORSHIP

LEADER: “We have a lot to celebrate today. We’ve come so far in learning what it means to be resilient. We know that when we trust God, God can give us the strength we need to bounce back!

“That reminds me of our memory verse for this month, Isaiah 40:31.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

“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. (Isaiah 40:31, NIV)”

“It’s true: God is ALWAYS there for us. Let’s sing this together.

Video: “Love Like You”

SLIDE: Theme Background

“Before we continue in worship, let’s watch this.

Video (Media Package): Live Loud Video from Get Reel

SLIDE: Theme Background

“It’s so great to know that whatever we might have to face in life, we **[Basic Truth] can trust God no matter what**. I love this line in the song we’re about to sing: Jesus showed me how, Jesus showed me how, how to follow You. When we’re not sure how to keep going, we can look to Jesus! We can see how HE showed resilience during difficult times. Sing this with me.

Video (Media Package): “Never Gonna Give Up” Dance Moves Music Video

SLIDE: Theme Background

“That’s right! We’ll never give up, because God never gives up on us. You can all have a seat.”

BIBLE STORY

SETTING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “As I look around this room, I see how each person here is unique and special. Each of you has a different personality . . . different gifts and talents . . . and a different story. Everyone has been through different things. We’ve had times when things seemed to be going our way, and we’ve had to face some tough challenges, too.

“That was certainly true in the stories we’ve looked at this month. (*Hold up Bible.*) Peter, John, and the rest of Jesus’ disciples; Paul and Silas; Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and more—each of them played an important role in God’s story. But their stories were so different! Each of them had to go through some different ups and downs along the way.

“Everyone faces different challenges. But there’s one thing we all have in common. No matter what we face in life, we can find resilience when we think of JESUS and think about the way HE kept going.

“Listen to what the writer of Hebrews had to say about this.

Open the Bible to Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIV) and read.

“Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith. And he is the one who completes the journey of faith. He paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He suffered there because of the joy he was looking forward to. Then he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. He made it through these attacks by sinners. So think about him. Then you won’t get tired. You won’t lose hope.”

TOUGH STUFF

LEADER: “I know that was a lot, so let’s break it down. First, let’s take a minute to think about some of the tough situations we might face in our lives. These might be things you’re actually facing right now, things that someone you know might be going through, or just tough things that you know some people might have to face.

“For example, it can be really tough for someone if they have to move to a whole new town.

Write “MOVE” on the traffic cone.

“Who else has an example of a tough situation?”

Take some answers from the kids. If they get stuck, you can offer suggestions: a family member’s illness, a difficult test, having to change schools, loss of a pet, parent losing a job, not making the play or team, getting hurt, etc. Write key words from the appropriate answers on the cone until it’s mostly covered.

When you’re finished, hold up the cone.

“These situations would be really tough for anyone to have to go through. But even in the middle of these challenges, there’s a way that we can find resilience.

Set the cone on the table and hold up the Bible.

“As we read in the book of Hebrews, we can ‘keep looking to Jesus.’ (*Hebrews 12:2, NIV*) We can think about Jesus and about what HE was willing to do . . . for us.”

JESUS’ RESILIENCE

LEADER: “You see, Jesus came to show us the best way to live. He showed compassion to people who were forgotten. He made wrong things right. He healed people who were sick, and He taught amazing truths that made people think about God in a totally new way.

“But the religious leaders didn’t like Jesus, because they didn’t believe He was really the Son of God. They tried to put a stop to Him and keep other people from putting their faith in Him. So eventually, that meant Jesus was arrested, beaten, and killed on a cross.

Turn on the light-up cross on the table.

“So how did Jesus keep going when all that was happening to Him? Let’s read again from Hebrews, chapter 12.

Open the Bible to Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIRV) and read.

“[Jesus] paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He suffered there because of the joy he was looking forward to. Then he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. He made it through these attacks by sinners.

“Jesus knew that His death on the cross was part of God’s good plan. He knew that, after He died, He would come back to life then return to heaven. And most importantly, Jesus knew the REASON for His death on the cross. He was making a way for us so that we could be forgiven and have a relationship with God that will last forever. Jesus knew what it was all for. That’s why He kept going.”

LOOKING TO JESUS

LEADER: “Let’s not forget the last part of this passage from Hebrews.

Open the Bible to Hebrews 12:3 (NIRV) and read.

“So think about [Jesus]. Then you won’t get tired. You won’t lose hope.

“When we think about Jesus and what He did for us, we can find the strength and encouragement we need to keep going! We can look to Jesus for the most perfect example of resilience.

“But that brings up an important question. What does it mean for us to keep looking to Jesus? HOW, exactly, do we look to Jesus? (*Hold up Bible.*) Well, for one thing, we can read the Bible. We can ask someone to read it for us, or we can pick it up and read it for ourselves.

“If you’ve never really sat down to read the Bible before, it can be tough to know where to begin. But the New Testament is a great place to start. (*Show where the*

New Testament starts in the Bible.) That’s where we can find the stories about Jesus, in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In these pages, we can find out what Jesus did for us. We can see how Jesus kept going, and we can see how much He loves us!

“What are some other ways we can ‘look to Jesus’? We can pray and thank God for what Jesus did. We can talk to other people about what Jesus did. That’s what we’ll get to do in just a minute, in Small Group!

“Here’s one you might not have thought about. We can choose to live each day by showing love. That’s a way we can look to Jesus—serving others and following Jesus’ example.

“And check THIS out.

LIGHTS: Dim, if possible

“Everyone, look at this cross for ten seconds. Really focus on it. I’ll count us down. Ten . . . nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one.

“Now, look at the orange cone. What do you see? Do you see an outline of the cross? It kind of covers up the tough stuff we wrote down on the cone. You can still see those hard things, but you also see the cross. That makes the tough stuff fade, just a bit.

“If you think about it, that’s kind of what it’s like when you put your focus on Jesus. It doesn’t mean your problems will just instantly go away. But it DOES mean you can keep going—THROUGH those tough things—because of what Jesus did for you. You can bounce back, because HE bounced back!”

LIGHTS: Up

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

LEADER: (*Reference the cross.*) “This is the ultimate reason we can find resilience. We can keep going when we remember how JESUS kept going.

“Let’s remember this.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Keep going because of what Jesus did for you.

“Let’s pray and ask God to help us keep our focus on Jesus.”

Video: BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: Theme Background

PRAY

LEADER: “Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior and show us how to keep going. It’s amazing to think that Jesus kept going through so many hard things, but He kept going because He knew it was part of Your plan. Please help each of us look to Jesus so we can get back up again, even when things are hard. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

CLOSER

If possible, reference the obstacle course from the Opener.

LEADER: “Following Jesus is kind of like running a race or, really, an obstacle course. We know what the path is before us, because we know the goal is to love God and love other people. We might have an idea of how we HOPE our lives will go—or at least, how we hope each day will go.

“But the reality is, there are obstacles that can trip us up along the way. And sometimes WE'RE the ones who can mess things up. We might say or do things that don't show love. We might act selfish or unkind. But we can't let our mess-ups stop us from trying again.

“Remember, Jesus already paid the price for all of our sins when He died on the cross. He did that for you, because that's how much He loves you! So whenever you mess up, whenever things get really hard, or whenever you feel like giving up, think of Jesus.

OFFERING

PRAYER REQUESTS