

ALLEY SG – Feb 20th/21st

Bible Story: A Series of Fortunate Events (John the Baptist in jail) • *Luke 7:18-22 (Supporting: Matthew 11; Mark 6:17-20; Luke 3:1-21; 6; 7:1-16)*

Bottom Line: When I hear what Jesus has done, it helps me believe who Jesus is.

Memory Verse: “Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see.” *Hebrews 11:1, NIV*

Life App: Faith—believing in what you can’t see because of what you can see.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Before kids arrive, pray for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Thank God for actively working in our lives. Pray that each kid in your group will hear stories of how God impacts friends and family members. Ask God to allow Himself to be seen consistently working in their lives.

Prison Letters; Dear John ... (application activity / review the Bible)

What You Need: Bibles, paper, markers

What You Do:

Briefly review the sequence of events in today’s story by asking the kids what they remember from the lesson. Refer to Luke 7:18-22 for details or to clarify story content. Ask them to share some reasons why John could have easily felt discouraged, confused, frustrated, or scared.

Remind the kids that when John was in prison, he couldn’t do the things he wanted to do, such as go see the amazing miracles Jesus was doing, listen to Him teach, or simply ask Him a question. John may have also been in chains, which would have made everything even more discouraging and difficult.

Set out paper and markers. Explain that you’d like everyone to imagine that they have an opportunity to send a letter to encourage John the Baptist while he’s in prison. Review today’s Bottom Line: **[Impress] When I hear what Jesus has done, it helps me believe who Jesus is.** Ask them to write a short note or draw a picture that would have helped John believe who Jesus is or what He has done. Make it more challenging by putting the kids in “invisible chains.” Assign each kid a different pose such as being chained with one wrist to their knee, one arm behind their back, right hand holding their left ear, wrist to wrist, or any combination you come up with. Tell everyone to remain in their invisible chains until they complete their letters. Even though the poses will be silly and somewhat challenging, ask kids to make their notes reflect something that would have seriously encouraged John to keep on believing in Jesus.

When finished, let kids briefly share their “Dear John” letters with one another.

What You Say:

“Your ‘invisible chains’ were a pain. They made writing a letter a challenge. Imagine if you had been John and your prison chains were real! It’s hard to put ourselves in John’s place and feel what he must have felt. There he was in prison having done nothing wrong. Discouraged. Confused. In the midst of it all, he was beginning to wonder if he’d gotten his signals crossed about whether Jesus really was the

Messiah. He had a lot of questions running through his head and no way to ask them. Unlike today, he couldn't just open up a Bible and read about Jesus from beginning to end. He had to rely on others and what they had heard Jesus say and what they had seen Him do. The disciples had a huge impact on John's faith. That's because they shared the stories of Jesus' miracles and teaching and it helped John know that Jesus was indeed the Promised One. **[Apply] We have the great privilege of being able to share how God has worked in our lives, too. We can share Jesus with our friends and family. We can talk about Him at church and Small Group. We can grow our own faith by reading the stories of those in the Bible and learning how God showed up for them in the past."**

Race to Recite (memory verse activity)

What You Need: Bible, bandana

What You Do:

Open your Bible to the book of Hebrews. Review that Hebrews is a letter written to new Christians after Jesus lived. Ask your group if anyone can remember in which chapter and verse our memory verse is found this month. Wait for responses, then turn to Hebrews 11:1. Point the verse out to the group and ask them to read it together from the Bible.

Ask for a volunteer to recite the memory verse. But here's the catch: you will throw the bandana in the air and they have to recite the verse (citation and all!) before the floating bandana touches the floor. Continue asking for volunteers until everyone who wants a turn has had a chance to race the bandana.

What You Say:

"Looks like you are really getting the hang of this memory verse. Some of you could have recited the verse two or three times before the bandana hit the ground! Next week will be our last week with this memory verse but let's not forget to practice this verse. **[Apply] It is a great reminder that we don't necessarily have to see or experience something ourselves to believe it. Sometimes all we have to do is hear about it! And [Impress] when I hear what Jesus has done, it helps me believe who Jesus is."**

Baby Steps (review the Bible story)

What You Need: "Baby Steps Movements" (Activity Page), masking tape

What You Do:

Place two pieces of tape on the floor to designate two starting lines. Use the other two pieces to designate two finish lines. (To make the "race" last as long as possible, put the finish lines as far away from the start lines as possible.) Divide your group into two teams. Have each team choose one person to be their "runner." Once the runners are chosen, guide the teams to the starting lines and point out the finish lines. Ask Team 1 a review question. If they get it right, one person from the team gets to draw a piece of paper from the bag and their runner can move forward however much it says on the card. Now it's Team 2's turn. The first team to make it to the finish line wins! (You may need to make sure that each runner moves a fair distance. Don't allow them to take giant bunny hops or really long skips.)

Questions:

1. Fill in the blank: "When I hear what Jesus has done, it helps me _____ who Jesus is." (*Believe*)
2. John the Baptist was Jesus' a) brother b) father c) cousin. (*c. Cousin*)

3. Where was John the Baptist when his friends came to report to him? (*Prison*)
4. True or false: While he was in prison, John the Baptist started wondering if Jesus was really the Son of God. (*True*)
5. What is one thing Jesus did to prove He was the Son of God? (*Gave sight to the blind, gave people the ability to walk, healed the sick, raised the dead, gave people the ability to hear, encouraged the poor, etc.*)
6. True or False: John was able to see Jesus' miracles with his own eyes. (*False—he was in prison.*)
7. Name one thing God has done in your life. (*Answers will vary*)
8. Name one thing you have heard of God doing in someone else's life (*Answers will vary*)
9. Fill in the blanks: "Faith is being sure of what we _____ for. It is being certain of what we do not _____." (*Hope, see*)
10. Fill in the blanks: "_____ is believing in what you _____ see because of what you _____ see." (*Faith, can't, can*)

What You Say:

"Way to go, guys and gals! You really paid attention during Large Group. Just like John the Baptist, we are all going to have hard times. And in those times, it's easy to wonder if Jesus really is who He says He is, if God is really there and in control through it all. **[Apply] But when we hear what God has done, whether it's through Bible stories, someone else's experiences, or your own experience, it helps us to trust in and believe God is who He says He is! [Personalize] (Share an appropriate story from your own life of when God really showed Himself or from the life of a friend or acquaintance.)** It's important to learn what Jesus has done and tell others because **[Impress]** when I hear what Jesus has done, it helps me believe who Jesus is."

Pray

What You Need: No materials needed

What You Do:

Sit in a circle and ask if anyone has had a prayer answered. Ask if they have heard a story from a friend or acquaintance of God answering a prayer. Spend some time sharing stories of God hearing our prayers. Make sure to **[Personalize] share any stories or examples from your own life, or the life of a friend, of God answering a prayer in a memorable way.**

What You Say:

"Maybe you haven't felt like God has answered one of your prayers. Maybe you feel like God has answered every one of your prayers. **[Apply] Either way, it's easier to believe God answers our prayers when we hear from and share with each other. Let's take a minute to ask God for the encouragement we need during tough times.**

"Dear God, thank You for being exactly who You promised to be. Help us to always remember and believe how powerful You are. When we start to doubt or question, please send people our way who can help remind us of all the awesome things You have done. We love You! In Jesus' name, amen."

Give each child a GodTime card.