

The Hall of Faith

Hebrews 11:1-40

MEMORY VERSE

HEBREWS 11:1

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A blindfold for every two children in your class.

One “Hall of Faith” template for each child in the class, scissors, crayons or markers, glue sticks, and construction paper.

Small prizes (pencils, erasers, etc.).

ATTENTION GETTER!

Walking by Faith

For this activity you will need a blindfold for every two children. Have the children in your class split into pairs. Place a blindfold on one child in each pair. Next, instruct the other child to be the eyes and ears of the blindfolded child. Have them walk around the room or even outside of the room (but not far) and then return. As an option you can put obstacles in the room that the guide will have to lead them through. Instruct the guide to give direction to the blindfolded child on which way to walk or turn so they don't bump into things. Allow the children to do this activity and then switch roles.

When all the children have had opportunity to be blindfolded have them return to their seats. Ask them what it was like to be the blindfolded person. Did they have to trust their guide to keep them from bumping into things? Were they able to walk by sight or walk by faith? How is this like walking with the Lord? Explain that we are going to be talking about faith in our lesson today and be meeting some really cool people who lived their lives by faith. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

LESSON TIME!

The Bible has much to say about faith. Every child of God throughout history has had to have faith in Him. Hebrews 11 is a very famous chapter in the Bible. Some even call it the hall of faith. It tells of all of the people who, over many years and through many situations, all put their trust in God. It is an encouragement to us to put all of our trust in God. We first have faith when we trust in Jesus and give Him our life. That is how we are saved. Then we begin to live an entire life of faith and daily trust God to keep us, help us and be totally faithful to every promise He has made in our lives.

In the Book of Hebrews, the author is speaking to the Jews that had converted to Christianity, they were experiencing much pressure and persecution from the Jewish religious leaders and many of the new Christians wanted to turn back because of these difficulties.

In chapter eleven the writer is encouraging them to not lose faith. He shares with them the glorious list of people who kept the faith in the midst of difficulty. Just like the new Christians of that day, we too can experience pressure and persecution for being Christians. But if we do not lose hope, even in hard times we will find that God is always faithful. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

HEBREWS 11:1-3

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

The Nature of Faith

We know that the Bible talks a lot about faith, but what does the word “faith” really mean? The dictionary describes faith as: belief and trust in God. It also says “loyalty to a person.” To have belief means to have confidence and to trust means to depend upon. So to have faith means that we believe in God, and not only do we believe in His existence, but we believe every thing He says in His Word. We also trust Him. In other words we base what we do on the fact that He is real and His promises are true.

The first three verses of Hebrews eleven help us to understand faith. We are given three descriptions of what faith looks like. First of all, “faith is the substance of things hoped for.” Substance means something we can sense or touch. It is something real. Faith helps us to know that God is very real, even when we do not see Him. We have confidence in God because we know who He is and that He is faithful to all of His promises. Something very important to understand is that faith is not like some magical spell that gets us whatever we want. Rather the most important thing is who is the object of our faith? In other words, whom do we trust in? God needs to be the focus.

The second part of the definition of faith is “the evidence of things not seen.” The word evidence here means that we have confidence. When we have confidence in a person we are relying upon them. Just like you have confidence in your mom and dad or someone very close to you, you trust them to do what they say they will do. In the same way we can have confidence that God will do everything that He promises.

In verse two it says “For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.” The word “it” is referring to faith. The elders that the writer is referring to are the saints of the Old Testament. Remember, the Hebrew Christians were losing their hope in following Jesus because of the suffering they were encountering, so the writer is reminding them of the saints that did not give up hope and were obedient to God’s will even though they had never seen God or the promised Messiah. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

These Old Testament saints had a good testimony (received God’s approval) because they continued following Him regardless of how hard it became for them. Because the Old Testament saints had faith in God, they were considered faithful, meaning they were loyal to God. It is the same for you and me; if we remain faithful we also will obtain a good testimony, God’s approval. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

The third description of faith in these verses is found in verse three. Because of faith we understand that God created the worlds. The creation we see all around us everyday was made by someone whom we have never seen. In Romans 1:20 it says “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made...” The Bible tells us that God made the world and everything in it (Genesis 1:1). He made all the beauty we see because He wanted to give us a glimpse of His beauty. So, when we say we have faith in God, we are also saying that we believe He created everything in this world and in the universe; this includes creating you and me.

HEBREWS 11:4-6

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Faith That Pleases God

Now we are going to begin to see the people of the Old Testament who had faith in God. In these verses we will begin to see the type of faith that these people had and how that it is the kind of faith that pleases God.

Verse four talks about Abel and Cain. Remember the story about the offering that each of them gave to God? God was pleased with Abel's offering of the first born from his flock because it required a blood sacrifice. Abel knew that a blood sacrifice was the only way for his sins to be forgiven. Of course we no longer have to give a blood sacrifice because that is why Jesus died on the cross. Jesus was the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.** But how do we please God today with our faith if we do not bring a blood sacrifice? Jesus is the perfect example of the sacrifice that pleases God; He was willing to die to please His heavenly Father. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

In verse five the author talks about Enoch. God took Enoch to heaven while he was still alive. The Bible tells us that Enoch loved God so much that he walked with Him everyday. Is that the type of faith that you and I have? Are we living our lives for Jesus everyday, even though we have never seen him? The type of faith that Enoch had is the type of faith that pleases God. Enoch was willing to walk with God each and every day regardless of the circumstances around him, are we willing? **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

In the sixth verse we see that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” In James 1:6 we read “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.” So we know the only way to please God is to have faith in Him. This is important because some people believe that there are many ways that we can come to God and that faith in Jesus is not important. But the Bible says that the only way we can come to Him is through faith and when we look other places in the Bible, like John 3 we find that it can only be faith in Jesus that gives us salvation.

HEBREWS 11:7-12

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

Faith Leads to Obedience

When we have faith in God we will want to do what He asks us to do. We will also believe Him when He says that He is going to do a certain thing. This part of the chapter talks about the men and woman of the Old Testament that did what God asked them to do and believed He would accomplish what He said He would do in their lives.

Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.

Noah built the ark based upon what God told him, not on things that were going on around him. Everyone thought he was crazy to think that there was going to be a flood. But Noah obeyed God because he had faith in what God told him, not in what God showed him. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

Then we see how Abraham obeyed God when he was called to go out to the place where he would receive an inheritance and he didn't even know where he was going. Imagine how crazy Abraham seemed to everyone around him. But again, this was faith in obeying God's voice and not what God was showing him. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

Lastly in verse 11, we see how Sarah believed that God would give her a son even at her old age. This verse also tells us because of Sarah's faith she received strength to have this child. But we also see God's grace and forgiveness in the story of Sarah. If you remember, when Sarah overheard the Angel of Lord talking about this to Abraham she began to laugh. She later believed God. Notice how that God forgets about her mistake and only lists in the Bible her faith. God is so loving, forgiving and kind to us! **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

All three of these Old Testament saints, by their faith in the Lord, were obedient to what God asked them to do. As we see in the scriptures, God was also faithful in doing what He had promised He was going to do in each of their lives. But only after these people stepped out in their faith in God did He complete what He said He would. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

HEBREWS 11:13-16

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Faith is sure of Heaven

All of these people, especially Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had been given the promises of God. But they saw their fulfillment only from afar because God had not completed them yet. The ultimate fulfillment of these promises would come in Jesus Christ coming through the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then through His death on the cross provide eternal life for all who would believe on Him. They had their eyes set on Heaven and doing God's will.

If we are living our lives like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob we will realize that we are strangers and pilgrims in this sinful world. We can return to our old ways at anytime, just like these three men could have. Abraham could have said, "Forget it, I'm going back to where I was born; to all my friends and family." But he would have been in disobedience to God. If we don't turn back like they didn't, we will be truly walking by faith and pleasing the Lord. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

In John 14:2-4 Jesus tells His disciples "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." Jesus promises this to us also. There is a very real eternity and a very real heaven. Our eyes should be focused on eternity. Everything we do and say, all of our decisions, all of our hopes and desires should be in light of the reality of eternity. We should not live our lives for this world, but for the world to come! **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

Hall of Faith Certificate

For a fun craft for the children to take home, have them cut out, color and frame a "Hall of Faith" Certificate. Some people refer to Hebrews 11 as the "Hall of Faith". Kind of like we have a Hall of Fame for famous athletes or musicians, God has His own Hall of Faith. These are men and women who trusted God with all their hearts and lived their lives for the heavenly kingdom. Discuss what it means to truly live a life of faith with your children. Then have them put together this craft.

You will need one template for each child in the class, scissors, crayons or markers, glue sticks, and construction paper. Have the children cut out the certificate. Next, have them choose a color of construction paper for their frame. Have them center the certificate on the sheet of construction paper. Leaving approximately 1" for a border, have the children cut out a square. Their certificate is now in a frame.

Next, have the children decorate and color their certificate. Go around to each child and write in their name and then sign yours. If you have an aide in your class have them sign the certificate as well. When finished discuss with the children what it might be like to have their names written in the Bible along with these great men and women of faith.

HEBREWS 11:17-31

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,”

concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,

choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

God's People Believed God's Promises

In these next 15 verses we read about six Old Testament saints and what their faith in the Lord led them to do. We have seen that **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God**. So we learn about their faith, but it is also teaching us about our faith. We must show our faith by obeying the Word of God. When we believe that God is who He says He is we will want to please and follow Him.

In James 2:17 it says "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James is telling us that if we say we have faith in God but don't do anything then our faith is as good as dead. The six saints that are written about here showed their faith by their works (deeds). A lot of religions today believe that a person can do good things and work their way into heaven; this is not what the Bible is teaching. Actually the Bible teaches quite the opposite. We must first have faith that God is who He says He is and then by having that belief in Him we will want to do things in His name and His power.

Verses 17-19 tell us about Abraham and his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac when the Lord told him to. Abraham could not have been willing to do such a hard thing if he had not had faith in the Lord. He believed in the promise God made regarding the multitudes that would come from this son, Isaac.

Oftentimes, just like with Abraham, the Lord will test our faith so we can know if we truly have faith in Him or not. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God**. In verse 20, Isaac blessed his sons Jacob and Esau about the things that were to come; this showed the faith that Isaac had in the Lord in fulfilling His promises of the future.

Jacob, in verse 21, blessed each of the sons of Joseph when he was dying, meaning that he looked forward to the things to come beyond his death. The Bible says that Jacob was leaning on his staff; this was a symbol of the pilgrim life. Just like these saints, we are to live a pilgrim life here on this earth knowing that this is not our home. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.** Then in verse 22 we see Joseph also looking towards the future and beyond his death. He believed that the Israelites would be in the Promised Land that the Lord spoke of.

Verse 23 tells of the faith that Moses' parents had when they hid him as a baby. They were not afraid to suffer because they knew that God would give the strength to endure it. In verses 24-29, it tells of the faith that Moses had in leading the Israelites out of Egypt. It tells of the choice that Moses had to make whether or not he would serve the treasures and power he could have in Egypt, or serve the true and living God.

It also tells of all the suffering and temptation he endured during this time. We will also suffer and be tempted while following Christ, but when we have faith the Lord will give us His strength to get through it. God gives us a promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." We will be tempted by the devil to give up, but God will always give us a way to keep going. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

Verses 30-31 continue to tell us what happens when we have faith in God to deliver us. The walls of Jericho fell down when the Israelites camped around it as they were told and Rahab did not die because she listened and obeyed the voice of the Lord.

HEBREWS 11:32-40

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

By Faith They Overcame

These last nine verses tell of the incredible faith that other Old Testament saints had and all the different difficulties they endured. God's people in the Old Testament looked forward to the day when their promised Messiah would come, but most never met Jesus face to face. They had to have faith. This is similar to us in that we believe in Jesus, but we have not seen Him face to face yet. We have to place our faith in the Lord, just like all of God's people from the Old Testament.

The writer of Hebrews is again encouraging the Christians to not lose hope or faith in the midst of the terrible suffering and persecution they were going through. There are many people today in many different parts of the world that suffer greatly for their faith in Jesus Christ. But they continue on because they overcome the difficulties in knowing that this is not their home and they are being obedient in following Jesus even unto death. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

More is said about the wonderful ways that faith in God helped other believers prevail against the evil that was surrounding them. Verses 32-35 give examples of the strength, miracles and promises these people obtained. Some of the lessons we learn of are David and Goliath, Daniel in the lions' den, the three Jewish children in the fiery furnace, Elijah bringing back to life the widow's son and much more. But more important to remember is that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He still

performs miracles and gives strength daily to His people. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

There are times when God does not deliver us from being put to death for our faith. In verses 36-38 we read how many people had to die for their faith. Their enemies promised these people deliverance if they would refuse their belief in God, but they did not give into that temptation and chose to die and be delivered into the kingdom of God. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

In all of these situations these believers overcame the evil around them. The Bible has a lot to say to those who overcome. Revelation 2:7 says "...To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." The tree of life is eternal life. Then in Revelation 21:7 it says, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." Lastly, in Revelation 2:7 Jesus tells us "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." The second death is referring to Hell.

So we learn a lot about overcoming from these great men and women of faith. But the Lord knows that we are unable to overcome anything in our own strength. We need to trust completely in the Lord. We need to put all of our confidence in Him. We need to obey Him when He calls. We need to trust Him even in the difficult times. We need to look to our heavenly home, not this world, and we need to always keep our eyes fixed on Him. **Learning about the faith of others helps us to trust God.**

Be a Character

This is a variation of twenty questions. Choose one child to come up front and sit in a chair. Have them choose one of the Bible characters listed in Hebrews 11. They should be familiar with the character because they will be asked questions about him or her. If they need to, have them look up the Bible story about their character to get more familiar before they begin to answer questions. Split the rest of the class into two teams.

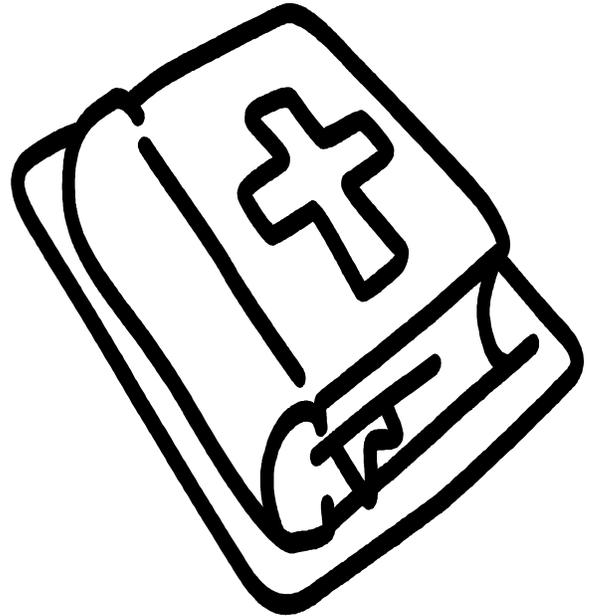
When the character is ready, have each team take turns asking a question. The questions should be things like, "Where did you serve the Lord?" or "Did you work on a boat?" Do not allow the children to ask, "What is your name?" The children can continue to alternate asking questions until a group feels like they have the answer to who the character is. Allow the group to guess. If they are right their team gets a point.

Allow a few more children to have the opportunity to be a character. Continue playing until the children tire of the game or you run out of time. Declare a winner and give out small prizes (pencils, erasers, etc.) to the winning team.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to place their faith in the Lord no matter what and to trust Him for all things and live their lives in the light of the glorious promise of eternity. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

HEBREWS 11 HALL OF FAITH



This certificate is awarded to

For living by faith, and not by sight
according to Hebrews 11

"But without faith it is impossible to
please Him, for he who comes to God
must believe that He is, and that
He is a rewarder of those who
diligently seek Him."

Hebrews 11:6

Teacher Signature

Aide Signature