

Transform Your Nature, Using Jesus as Your Example: *Faith*

LESSON AT A GLANCE

Facilitator Notes:

I wonder...

- What is faith?
- Why do we need faith?
- What can strengthen my faith?

I believe...

- Faith is an act of God's grace upon a human being, in other words, a gift. (Catechism Q&A question 10). Faith is granted and reinforced by the Holy Spirit, and comes about through the preaching of the gospel on the foundation of Holy Scripture. (Catechism Q&A question 11)
- Faith leads human beings to recognize God, trust in God, and lead a life in accordance with the will of God. (Catechism Q&A question 10)
- The fear of God and sincere prayer for the correct understanding of Holy Scripture are principles for strengthening faith through the study of the Bible. (Catechism Q&A question 27)

Materials:

- IGNITE Bible
- Catechism Q&A
- Obstacles and blindfold for Faith activity
- Whiteboard/easel
- Dictionary (or phone to look up a definition)
- Something to play a video clip with (computer, TV, tablet, phone, etc.)
- Picture of a mustard seed and mustard tree (or phone to look up pictures)

- Sermon clips can only be found in the [NAC USA mobile app](#) and in the [link to the right](#).

References:

- Bible verses: Matthew 17:14-21, Hebrews 11:1
- Catechism Q&A questions 1-11, 27-28, 33-36, 239-242, 279, 716
- District Apostle sermon clip 5, Faith with a Pure Heart: <http://subsplash.com/nacusa/v/c57bc37>

PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

What do you think of when you hear the word "faith"? Join us for small group _____(time and/or location) to dig deeper into this topic.

POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

Facilitator Notes:

- Please feel free to customize as necessary.

Dear Parents,
 This week the "I Wonder...." questions are about faith, what it is, how we can strengthen it, and why we need it. The students were asked to read Jesus' words about the mustard seed found in Matthew 17 and reflect on their own faith. In the upcoming week, consider sharing an experience with your student that had a positive impact on you and helped you grow in your faith.

<p>As always, if you have questions about the topic, please feel free to contact your Youth Leaders.</p> <p>Your Youth Leaders</p>	
SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon? ➤ What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn? ➤ So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday? ➤ Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?
HOOK (up to 15 minutes)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. Place various obstacles around the room (not in a straight line) using chairs, books, tables, etc. Some examples would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A table to crawl under ○ A chair to step over ○ Books on the ground to weave through. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How are you and how are you feeling today? ➤ Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week? ➤ Choose one student to be the leader and one student to wear the blindfold (make sure they cannot see through the blindfold). The rest of the students will set up the obstacle course. Explain to the student leader that they will need to lead the blindfolded student through the course using <i>only</i> verbal directions. Before the activity begins, explain to the blindfolded student that they will be asked to walk under, over, and around various objects to get to the end of the course. Be sure to remind the students that there is not just one correct way to get through the course. ➤ Before the leader starts to give directions and guidance, have them say the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hi (insert other students' name). I want to lead you through the obstacle course safely. I need you to trust in me and my guidance. Will you trust me? ➤ After the blindfolded student responds with their yes, they may begin the obstacle course, with the leader directing them through it and the rest of the students watching the activity. ➤ After the blindfolded student finishes the obstacle course, ask them to share how they felt while they were going through the course. Write down the blindfolded student's feelings on the board. ➤ <u>Alternate approach to the activity:</u> Instead of just one leader and blindfolded student, you could have 3 leaders direct one blindfolded student through the obstacle course, telling the blindfolded student to choose only one leader to listen to for the entire obstacle. The 3 leaders give their directions at the same time, making it hard for the blindfolded student to hear the one leading them. The 2 leaders not chosen by the blindfolded student could also possibly give wrong directions, trying to misdirect the blindfolded student.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you did the alternate approach to the activity, ask these questions in addition to the ones to the right: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was it hard to hear the directions of the leader who you chose to lead you? Why? Besides God, are there other people or things in our lives that we allow to guide us? Do we sometimes listen to these things more than God? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you follow the directions of your leader? If you didn't, why did you choose your own path? Did you feel your leader had your best interest in mind? Did you trust your partner as you went through the course? Would you trust them with bigger obstacles in your life now, such as choosing a college? (The second question is rhetorical. The answer would be no.) If this person guided you every day, would your trust increase? What made it difficult to follow the directions of your leader? Did you do anything throughout the course that made you feel uncomfortable? As you went through the course, did it become easier or more difficult to follow the directions? Why do you think that is?
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SET THE STAGE (1 minute)

Facilitator Notes:

- Preview the "I wonder" questions with the students.

I wonder...

- What is faith?
- Why do we need faith?
- What can strengthen my faith?

LESSON (up to 25 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- Emphasize to the students that blindfolded student needed to trust in their leader to guide them through the obstacle course.

Student Question #1 How is our life like the obstacle course?

- In life, there are many obstacles that we will need to overcome.
- We need God's guidance to help get us through life's obstacles.
- When we have faith in God, we can recognize the Holy Spirit's voice and put our trust in Him to guide us.
- There are many paths that we can take through life. God is the only one we can have full faith in to help us get through life because He created the plan for our lives and He sees the bigger picture.

Student Question #2 Would the blindfolded student have gotten through the obstacle course without the leader? How would it have been different?

- They might have gotten through, but...
 - It would have taken longer
 - We might have gotten hurt
 - It would have been very frustrating
- They might not have made it through at all.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give students time to think about their situation. Ask students to share their experiences if they are comfortable. 	<p><u>Student Question #3</u> Think of another time in your life where you have felt like you were blindfolded (not literally) and had to follow the guidance or directions of someone else to get through a situation. What happened in that situation?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the students look up the definition on their own before going over the questions together. You may want to discuss the attributes of a mustard seed. It is considered one of the smallest seeds in the Middle East. Sharing a picture of the seed might help visual learners and will give more meaning to the verses. Then, show a picture of the mustard tree after it is fully grown. Be sure to have students elaborate on their answers as they give them so that they stay away from obvious answers. 	<p>Look up the definition of faith in a dictionary or online [and a Bible Dictionary, if available].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How does the Bible define faith? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read, or ask a student to read, Hebrews 11:1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.</i> ○ Ask a student to read the Spotlight: Great Heroes Of The Faith on page 1293 of the IGNITE Bible. ➤ Think of a person in your life who you consider having great faith. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where did their faith come from? ○ What are some characteristics of that person and their faith? ○ Have you ever compared your faith to another person's faith? ○ Does the size of our faith matter to God? <p>Open your Bibles and read the story of the mustard seed (Matthew 17:14-21).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In pairs, the students should discuss the importance of the story. After coming back to the full group, allow students to share their ideas before sharing the following bullet points with them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Even with a small amount of faith, God can make great things happen. ○ A small seed doesn't stay small for long; it can grow to great heights. ○ The size of the seed does not matter, what matters is that we progress in our faith and grow over time. <p><u>Student Question #4</u> Where does our faith come from?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Our faith comes from our Heavenly Father. ➤ Our faith is a precious gift. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do we show people we love a gift they have given us? We put it to use! <p>While it is okay for our faith to start out as the size of the mustard seed, God ultimately wants our faith to grow over time.</p> <p><u>Student Question #5</u> Why is it important for us to have faith and for it to grow and not stay small?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Faith is our way of showing we trust God. ➤ Since faith is a gift from God, exercising our faith is how we can truly show we love Him.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Catechism Q&A questions 33-36 for more information about the early church creeds These, and other spiritual disciplines, will be explored more fully in the "Invest in your spiritual health" semester of discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When we have faith in God, it allows us to recognize, see, and hear Him while we are going through obstacles. ➤ Having faith in God and His promises helps guide us so that we can begin to live our lives according to His will. ➤ We must believe and have faith in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The greater our faith becomes in the Trinity, the closer and stronger our relationship with God becomes. ➤ The Articles of Faith articulate what the New Apostolic Church believes about those core elements of doctrine. The first three Articles of Faith are of particular interest because they are based on early church creeds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Despite the differences between the individual denominations, these professions constitute a binding element among Christians.</i> (Catechism Q&A question 36) <p>We know we don't always recognize God when He is talking to us, but there are many ways we can strengthen and grow our faith. What are some ways we can grow our faith?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reading scripture and trusting that God will fulfill His promises just as He did in the Bible will help us to learn more about Him. ➤ If we pray sincerely, God will reveal Himself to us in ways that we may have never thought possible. ➤ We can earnestly seek Him in divine service, through Word and sacrament. ➤ When we worship God, we open ourselves to understanding and expressing His greatness.
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WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 15 minutes)

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sermon clips can only be found in the NAC USA mobile app and in the link to the right. ➤ Relate the video back to the comments the students made regarding ways they can strengthen their faith. Emphasize the aspect of having faith with a pure heart. 	<p>Wrap up the lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If time allows, watch District Apostle sermon clip 5, Faith with a Pure Heart http://subsplash.com/nacusa/v/c57bc37 <p>Close with the "I Believe..." statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As you review each statement, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions. ➤ Allow the students to state an "I Believe..." statement for each of the "I Wonder..." questions in their own words. ➤ Remind the students that on their Confirmation day, they will or have already promised and committed to remaining faithful. <p>I believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Faith is an act of God's grace upon a human being, in other words, a gift. (Catechism Q&A question 10). Faith is granted and reinforced by the Holy Spirit, and comes about through the preaching of the gospel on the foundation of Holy Scripture. (Catechism Q&A question 11) ➤ Faith leads human beings to recognize God, trust in God, and lead a life in accordance with the will of God. (Catechism Q&A question 10)
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- The fear of God and sincere prayer for the correct understanding of Holy Scripture are principles for strengthening faith through the study of the Bible. (Catechism Q&A question 27)

A Point to Ponder....

- What would our lives truly be like without faith? How would our lives be different? How would they be the same?

A Call to Action...

- This week, create a realistic list of things you want to work on to strengthen your faith going forward. Be ready to share at least one thing from your list next week.

Weekly Reflections

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Point to Ponder.....

Call to Action.....

Transform Your Nature, Using Jesus as Your Example: *Faith*

Have you ever wondered...

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- Why do we need faith?
- What can strengthen my faith?

I believe...

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References: Matthew 17:14-21; Hebrews 11:1; Catechism Q&A questions: 1-11, 27-28, 33-36, 239-242, 279, 716

1. How is our life like the obstacle course?

2. Would the blindfolded student have gotten through the obstacle course without the leader? How would it have been different?

3. Think of another time in your life where you have felt like you were blindfolded (not literally) and had to follow the guidance or directions of someone else to get through a situation. What happened in that situation?

4. Where does our faith come from?

5. Why is it important for us to have faith and for it to grow and not stay small? What are some ways we can grow our faith?

Point to Ponder: What would our lives truly be like without faith? How would our lives be different?

Call to Action: This week create a realistic list of things you want to work on to strengthen your faith going forward. Be ready to share at least one thing from your list next week.