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| **Strands** | The Bible and Christian Belief; Christian Ethics and Ethical Theory; Faith in Action, Actions Leading to Faith | | | |
| **Stage of Development** | Early Childhood (Years 1-2) | **Created** May 2021 | | **Review** 2025 |
| **Aim** | Students explore heroes of the Old Testament and learn what a courageous life looks like and where the heroes’ courage comes from. This unit is best suited to older grades within the Early Childhood stage as the worksheets require some writing. | | | |
| **Content Descriptions** | **Knowledge and Understanding**   * Students learn about key Old Testament figures and how God cared for them. * Students learn about God’s promises to his people in the Old Testament. * Students explore the meaning of the virtue of courage. * Students explore what it means to live with courage in light of God’s promises. | | **Religious Studies Skills**   * Critical thinking | |
| **Additional Resources** | The Jesus Story Book Bible  by Sally Lloyd-Jones | | This Bible has beautiful illustrations and builds each story so the students can easily grasp the meaning of each story. | | |
|  | Bible Gateway [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) | | This website allows you to look up Bible passages. It has different translations. You can change the translation to find translations that are more appropriate for Children and easier to understand e.g. New Living Translation. | | |
|  | Face emotions | | Included with this unit are pictures of faces demonstrating different emotions. Use these when reading the stories to ask students how different characters in the stories are feeling. | | |

This unit looks at a different Old Testament story each week. The stories seek to include young and old, male and female. You might also find other examples yourself. You may already have many of your own literacy and reading strategies that you can apply to the Biblical texts, but some additional suggestions are included below. Make sure you find appropriate translations or versions of the Biblical stories to suit your audience.

Source: Understanding Christianity Teachers Handbook edited by Stephen Pett p. 48-49

1. Sound effects

Identify some sound effects beforehand and get

groups of pupils ready to make the sounds at the

right time in the story: ‘when the slave-driver cracks

his whip ... when the locusts come ...’ Prepare sound

effects for each character, so pupils indicate when

the character appears. Get them to whisper when

whispering is needed or rock backwards and forward

when the sea is rough for Jonah or the disciples.

This kind of stuff looks silly if you’re outside it, but

is engaging and memorable, fun and team-like when

you’re part of it.

2. Sketch a story

Choose your story and divide it into scenes. Tell pupils

that the story/narrative is in four/six/eight scenes.

Give them some paper with the correct number of

boxes, or get them to divide the paper themselves. Tell

the story, pausing at the end of each brief scene — you

can tell a simplified version for young children, but use

full texts for older pupils. Ask pupils to draw a quick

sketch to show the part of the story they have just

listened to. No prizes for beautiful artwork, here, just a

way for them to listen carefully and process what they

hear. Ask them to retell the story to a partner, using

their drawings; ask them to interpret the story — what

do they think it means?

3. Story maps

Tell your chosen story to pupils and discuss the

characters, their feelings and the message of the

story/text. Ask pupils to draw a timeline of the story

(or give them one) — a line with key words or pictures

in order; you might like to use their pictures from

Sketch a story if that was used. Tell them this is the story map.

Ask them to mark on the story map where a character

feels happy, or sad; where a big decision had to be

taken; where something good or bad had happened;

the most important part of the story. This could also

be used to outline the setting, plot points, problems,

and their resolution. They could use their story map

to retell the story to another pupil, perhaps someone

who has not heard the story before.

4. Props bag

Place a bag of props related to the story in the middle

of the group of pupils. Ask them to decide how

the story connects with the props. Some should be

obvious, some more obscure. Ask them to select the

four that connect best or could represent the meaning

of the story.

5. Bubbling speech, bubbling thoughts

Provide an image of the characters in the story (or get

pupils to do a simple outline — don’t spend much time

on the drawing). Draw blank speech bubbles next to

the characters. Ask pupils to imagine what they might

be saying and write in the bubbles. Next, add some

blank thought bubbles. We don’t always say what

we are thinking, so ask pupils to reflect on what the

characters might be thinking. Then why not add one

or two more so that pupils can express what they are

thinking too?

6. Filling in the gaps

Most narratives do not give every single detail of what

happened — otherwise we would be here all day! They

tend to make short leaps from one event to another.

Give pupils in pairs or threes a couple of scenes from

a narrative and ask them to describe, draw or act

out what happens between the scenes. Ask them to

think about what the characters might be thinking,

feeling or doing. Sometimes the gaps may not be

very important, but for the people in the narratives,

they would have been times when they had to think

about what they were doing and what was happening.

You might get pupils to think about why the writer

or editor kept some parts in, and left out others.

Comparing parallel Gospel accounts with older pupils

can open up questions of the particular concerns of

each writer.

7. Double-entry journal

In this activity pupils consider ideas from the text,

and ideas from their mind. Ask pupils to divide a blank

page into two vertically. On the left-hand side, pupils

consider ideas from the text and note down their

ideas. These might include: a passage, interesting

language, a quotation, a key event, a critical fact, a

main idea, a problem, or a conflict. On the right-hand

side pupils consider ideas from their minds. These

might include: a reaction, a theory or hypothesis, a

comparison, a question they have, an explanation, a

discussion of significance, or a discussion of reactions

to the text. This can be done as a whole class or group

with a large piece of flip-chart paper.

8. Pardes: a Jewish approach to texts

Pardes is a strategy developed within Judaism to help

people engage deeply with a story or text, discover

its many layers of meaning, and draw from it some

understanding to apply to their own life. Pardes is

made up of the initial letter of four Hebrew words —

P’shat, Remez, D’rash and S’ad. The acronym PRDS

makes the word Pardes which means paradise, literally

‘an orchard’. To read is to explore paradise or to pick

fruits in a heavenly orchard. Pardes provides a prism

through which stories can be investigated.

Select a text and look for these four layers of meaning:

• P’shat: this means the simple, superficial story, the

one you get if you read it through quickly without

much thought.

• Remez: this means ‘hint’. It’s when you think of a

story or just a word, and it leads you to think about

something else. You might think of something you

have thought about or done in the past, and make a

connection between it and what you have just read.

• D’rash: this means ‘interpreting’. Some of the

lessons in the story might remind you of other

stories or texts you have read, which in turn can

teach you about your life.

• S’ad: this means ‘secret’ or ‘hidden’. It is not ‘secret’

because it cannot be told, but because its meaning

remains mysterious. Perhaps only the mature or very

experienced can understand this ‘secret meaning’.

9. Reciprocal reading roles

Give pupils roles as they read — one role each, or

encourage each pupil to be able to do bits of each

role, to be able to contribute effectively to a group

discussion:

• The summariser identifies key points of the text/

story.

• The questioner asks questions about the text, about

meaning and effect on the reader

• The clarifier focuses on what seems unclear to the

group; for example, using a dictionary or focusing on

puzzling lines, trying to explain the meaning.

• The interpreter uses phrases such as ‘I think this

section is about... I suggest that the writer was

trying to say... I think that today it means...’

10. Putting on spectacles

Everyone approaches a Bible text or story from their

own perspective and for their own purpose — whether

committed believer ‘listening to God’; or an academic

looking to work out what was going on in Roman

society in the early church; or a disinterested agnostic

pupil doing a classroom task. Set up groups of

pupils to read from different perspectives and see how

it affects their readings. For example, the rich young

man comes to Jesus and is told to sell everything

(Matthew 19:16–20). Ask pupils to “put on the

spectacles” of the following readers:

• You are the rich young man himself

• You are one of Jesus’ close disciples

• You are a committed Christian from today

• You are a wealthy, pleasure-seeking celebrity

from today

• You are an agnostic, unsure about God, but

you think old religious stories can teach us

something today

• You are an atheist. You don’t value religious stories

very much. You are quite critical of religion.

| **Lesson** | | **Key Questions** | **Lesson Activity Ideas** | | **Resources** |
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| **1** | What is courage? | What is courage? | 25min  10min  5min  5min | Activity: Set up an obstacle course or an activity that is likely to require courage from some students. Make sure it’s not dangerous! Ask each of the students to have a go. Alternatively, you could play some trust games with students. Discuss with the students what makes them scared about the situation and for those that had a go what gave them strength to overcome their fears.  Explain that courage is the ability to do something that frightens one or strength in the face of some type of hardship e.g. pain. Explain that for Christians Jesus is the ultimate example of courage. Jesus courage came from God. In each of the Old Testament stories we will be looking at we see different contexts where God’s people demonstrated courage like the courage Jesus demonstrated in his life and death. These heroes trusted God.  Share: Ask the students to share stories of when someone they know has shown courage.  Face emotions: Introduce the pictures of emotions that come with this unit. Ask students to identify the different emotions represented. Explain that during each of the stories in this unit you will ask the students how the different characters might have been feeling. Make sure you keep a copy of the faces, so you make use of them during the unit. | Obstacle course or challenging activity.  Printout: Face emotions. |
| **2** | Noah | Who was Noah?  How did Noah show courage? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: Show the students several toy animals. Hide the animals and ask the students to remember as many as possible. Ask the students what it means to forget things. Explain that the people in today’s story had forgotten about God and they were doing lots of bad things all the time. God had a plan to fix the world through Noah.  Read: the story of Noah’s ark from a Children’s Bible (Genesis 6-9). Discuss the truths that the story teaches us. Discuss how Noah showed courage and where his courage came from.  Worksheet: Noah. Discuss how the students can show courage in situations where it’s hard to do what they know is right. | Toy animals  Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Noah |
| 3 | Abraham & Sarah | Who were Abraham and Sarah?  How did they show courage? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: Play a game of ‘Dare’ with the students e.g. I dare you to stand on one leg and rub your tummy. Alter the dares based on the age of your class. Explain that in the story today God asked Abraham and Sarah to do some scary things.  Read: The story of Abraham and Sarah from a Children’s Bible (Genesis 12-22) Make a list of all the scary things God asks Abraham to do e.g. leave his family, trust that Sarah could have a baby when she was old. Discuss how Abraham or Sarah show courage in these situations.  Worksheet: Abraham. Discuss how the students can show courage when they are asked to complete tasks they find hard. | Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Abraham |
| 4 | Leah | Who was Leah?  How did Leah show courage? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: break the students into groups and get them to play piggy in the middle. Ask the children what it feels like to get stuck as piggy. Explain that in the story today we learn about a lady called Leah who always seemed to be the piggy. Her sister Rachel was more beautiful than her and no one ever really noticed her.  Read the story of Jacob and Leah from a Children’s Bible (Genesis 29-30). Discuss what it would have felt like to be Leah and how Leah showed courage even though it felt like everyone was being mean to her. Discuss where Leah’s courage came from (God’s promise to her that one day her descendent would be a king).  Worksheet Leah. Discuss how the students can show courage even when the people around them don’t treat them well. | Balls, open space  Children’s Bible  Worksheet Leah |
| **5** | Joseph | Who was Joseph?  How did Joseph show courage? | 10min  15min  20min | Watch: A clip from the Lion King that demonstrates how hard Simba’s situation is. Ask the students who have seen the movie, to comment on how Simba shows courage. Or show a clip with a similar situation that is more appropriate for your class. Explain that in today’s story we meet a man who showed courage even though his life was hard.  Read: The story of Joseph from a Children’s Bible (Genesis 37-46). Discuss how Joseph shows courage and where his courage comes from.  Worksheet: Joseph. Discuss how the students can show courage when they face hard situations that they can’t control. | [Sample clip from the Lion King](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPMcn7s8kmo)  Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Joseph |
| **6** | Moses | Who was Moses?  How did Moses show courage? | 10min  15min  20min | Share: Ask the students to share situations when they have been scared. Explain that in today’s story we read about Moses who was scared but still did the right thing.  Read: The story of Moses and the Exodus from a Children’s Bible (Exodus 3-15). Discuss how Moses showed courage and where he got his courage from.  Worksheet: Moses. Discuss how the students can show courage in situations that scare them. | Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Moses |
| **7** | Joshua | Who was Joshua?  How did Joshua show courage? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: Play a game of musical chairs. When the music is playing get the students to march around the chairs. Explain that in today’s story God gave Joshua a battle plan but instead of fighting God told Joshua to get the army to march around the city. Joshua was brave and listened to God even though he did not know the outcome.  Read: The story of the battle of Jericho from a Children’s Bible (Joshua 3-6). Discuss how Joshua showed courage and where his courage came from.  Worksheet: Joshua. Discuss how the students can show courage when they lead others, or when they do not know the outcome. | Chairs, music (it would be great if it had trumpet sounds)  Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Joshua |
| **8** | Deborah | Who was Deborah?  How did Deborah show courage? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: Get the students to draw or take pictures of faces showing different emotions e.g. happy, sad, scared. Discuss what it feels like to feel scared.  Read: The story of Deborah from a Children’s Bible (Judges 4). Contrast Deborah’s courage with Barak’s fear.  Worksheet: Deborah. Discuss how the students can show courage with God’s help. | Paper, pencils  Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Deborah |
| **9** | Samson | Who was Samson?  How did Samson show courage? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: Play a game of Chinese Whispers. Explain that in the story today Samson had a secret. Problem was Samson shared this secret with his enemies. Today’s story is also a good example of how sometimes we can show courage and do what’s right and other times we will do the wrong thing. God always gives us a way back to him and the story ends with God returning Samson’s strength one last time.  Read: The story of Samson from a Children’s Bible (Judges 13-16).  Worksheet: Samson. Explain to the students that God is a forgiving God and even when we don’t show courage, God still loves us. | If you have an older class and have access to the Action Bible (comic form) the students could read this story to themselves.  Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Samson |
| **10** | David | Who was David?  How did David show courage? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: Make crowns out of yellow cardboard. You could decorate them with sequins and other shiny objects. Explain that today’s story is about a brave king. Explain that in today’s story David had courage, even though everyone thought he was too little to defeat Goliath.  Read: The story of David and Goliath from a Children’s Bible (1 Samuel 17). Discuss how David showed courage and where his courage came from. Remind the Children that David was still small and not important in the world’s eyes at this point.  Worksheet: David. Discuss with the students why being little does not prevent them from showing courage. | Yellow cardboard, shiny objects, colours, glue.  Children’s Bible  Worksheet: David |
| **11** | Isaiah | Who was Isaiah?  How did Isaiah show courage? | 10min  15min  20min | Activity: Play some music in the background and try and tell the students a story over the top. Discuss the different things that make it difficult to listen. Talk about what it feels like when nobody is listening to you. Explain that in the story today Isaiah had to have courage to tell God’s people how to live God’s way but they did not want to listen to him.  Read: The story of Isaiah from a Children’s Bible. Discuss how Isaiah showed courage.  Worksheet: Isaiah. Discuss with the students when they might need to be courageous with their words. | Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Isaiah |
| **12** | Daniel | Who was Daniel?  How did Daniel show courage? | 10min  15min  20min | Discuss: prayer. Talk about your school prayer. Ask the children when they pray and how they pray. Explain that in the story today Daniel was told he could not pray to God. Not even in his heart. Discuss how it would make the students feel if they could not pray.  Read: The Story of Daniel from a Children’s Bible (Daniel 6). Discuss how Daniel showed courage and why Daniel showed courage.  Worksheet: Daniel. | Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Daniel |
| **13** | Jonah | Who was Jonah?  How did Jonah show courage? | 15min  10min  20min | Activity: play a game of Simon Says. Explain that in the story today God told Jonah to do something, but Jonah said no. Discuss the things that stop people from showing courage/doing the right thing e.g. fear.  Read: The story of Jonah from a Children’s Bible (Jonah 1-3). Contrast Jonah’s different responses. Discuss if Jonah showed courage.  Worksheet: Jonah | Children’s Bible  Worksheet: Jonah |
| **14** | Summary | How can we have courage like the Heroes of the Old Testament? |  | If you have a copy of the Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd-Jones use this lesson to read the story on pages 12-17.  Worksheet: Courage reflection | The Jesus Storybook Bible p12-17.  Worksheet: reflection |