

## 'Big Story' letters



### Bible verses:

Hebrews 11:1-4,7-10,13-16

Faith



### Aim:

To think about what faith means to you



### Today's fruit:

Faithfulness



This New Testament letter describes the faithfulness of God's people in the Old Testament.

**In today's session we will discover more about the letters that play an important part in God's 'Big Story'.**

We're focusing on a mysterious letter addressed 'to the Hebrews'. Its recipients were struggling to stay faithful to God and the author reminds them of all the faithful people who had gone before.

### Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore It ideas* handout

### You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: *Faithfulness* (or re-use the poster from Session One)
- A Bible



## Start it

Divide the children into pairs and give each pair a pencil and piece of paper. Ask each pair to think of an animated character they know well, but make sure they don't share it with the rest of the group.

Explain that they are going to write a short letter to the *Explore It* group from this character. When they have finished, they can read their letter to the rest of the group who will need to guess the cartoon character. They need to put in enough clues to help everyone to guess, but not make it too obvious. An example is given below.

*Dear Explore It group,*

*I really can't make this a long letter as I'm in a bit of a rush. You know me, always racing around! I've been out on the tracks today and Luigi has just set me up with a shiny new set of tyres. Anyway, must rush and I'll see you at the Piston Cup on Saturday.*

*From*

*Lightning McQueen*

**Ask:**

Have you ever written a letter? Who did you write it to?

**Say:**

Letters play a huge part in the Bible, and we'll be discovering more about that today.



## Sing it

**Say:**

Our song for this week reminds us of the books in the Bible. We heard it in our first session and hopefully it will help you remember some more parts of God's Big Story.

**'Books of the Bible' song and lyrics** by Mary Rice Hopkins (0:16-4:02)



## Tell it

**Say:**

Throughout this month we are exploring God's Big Story. Around seven per cent of The Big Story is helped along by people who wrote letters. One of the most famous letter writers of the New Testament was a man called Paul. He wrote many letters supporting new churches and providing guidance as they faced difficult circumstances.

**Ask:**

Do you know which letters (books) in the Bible were written by Paul?

*The following letters are attributed directly to Paul: Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus and Philemon. It is unsure if he wrote or had help with: Ephesians, Colossians and Second Thessalonians.*

**Say:**

Our letter for today is a bit more of a mystery. We don't know who it was written by, and we don't know which church it was specifically sent to. Our letter for today is called Hebrews and is found in the New Testament of the Bible.

Show the children the section of the Bible that contains the letters. Point out some of Paul's letters from the previous discussion and then show them where to find the letter to Hebrews in the Bible.

**Say:**

Although we don't know the name of the church which received the letter, we can pick up clues about the people who lived there from the contents. Throughout the letter the author talks about many stories from the Old Testament, especially the first five books of the Bible. They assume that the people reading the letter will know all these stories.

**Ask:**

If the author thinks that the people reading the letter will know all the stories from the Old Testament, what does that tell us about those people?

**Say:**

The people reading the letter were probably Jews who believed in Jesus and lived as Christians. They were facing challenging times as they were persecuted by those who did not believe in Jesus. In order to keep following Jesus they needed to demonstrate great faith.

**Ask:**

What do you think it means when we say a Christian has great faith?

**Say:**

Our Bible reading for today describes what faith is.

**Read:**

**'Faith means being sure of the things we hope for. And faith means knowing that something is real even if we do not see it.'**

(Hebrews 11:1 *ICB*)

**Ask:**

In what way does this Bible verse help you to understand what faith is?

**Say:**

The letter goes on to talk about the people of faith who have gone before. Watch the clip to find out more.

## Video

***The faithful hall of fame (Hebrews 11)*** by Saddleback Kids (2:25)

Discuss with the children some of the names mentioned in the clip. Which ones do they know and what do they remember about their stories? *Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham (and Sarah), Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab and Joshua.*

**Ask:**

- Think about the people you know who believe in Jesus. Who would you add to the Faithful Hall of Fame and for what reason?
- How does the faith of others inspire you to stay close to Jesus?

## Say:

There were those in the Hebrew church that were struggling to stay strong in their faith. They faced persecution because they believed in Jesus. This letter to the Hebrews teaches us that no one compares to Jesus, and if we're going to put our faith in anyone, then he is the person to choose.

## Action it

Display the *Faithfulness* sign.

## Say:

One of the fruits of the Spirit is faithfulness and it grows as we get to know Jesus more. Our session today has helped us to discover more about characters in the Bible who were faithful to God. As Christians today we can grow the fruit of faithfulness in our own lives. Let's watch the clip to discover more about this fruit of the Spirit.

## Video

**God's story: fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness** by Crossroads Kids' Club (stop at 2:31)

## Ask:

What did you learn from the clip about faithfulness?

## Say:

Stepping out in faith can often feel like a scary thing to do. The Hebrews knew that God needed them to be brave, even when they faced opposition. They needed to stand firm in God, even when it was tempting to do their own thing instead.

## Ask:

What could you do this week to put your faith into action?

## Discuss

This part of the session will be led by your local situation and the children's discussions. Encourage the children to think of a way that they can take practical action and step out in faith. This could be by getting involved with a project or showing kindness to someone at school. Whatever they decide, it needs to be something specific with a clear goal.

There are two events this week where the children might want to stand up in their faith and get involved:

- Thursday 20 June 2024: World Refugee Day
- Friday 21 June 2024: Show Your Stripes Day



## Pray it

### Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us that we can learn from every page of our Bible. Let's share it together.

### Memory verse

**'All Scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching us how to live correctly.'**

(2 Timothy 3:16 ICB)

### Say:

In our Bible story today the author of the letter to Hebrews was trying to encourage a group of struggling Christians to stay faithful to Jesus.

### Ask:

- In what ways do you find it challenging to stay faithful to Jesus and follow him every day of your life?
- What help do you need from God in order to do that?

### Say:

To help us to think more about the idea of faith, we're going to sing a song together. Focus on the words of the song to help you understand how we can grow in our faith.

### Song

**'Faith' Everest VBS music video** by Jay Stocker (3:09)

Ask the group to share how they need help from God to grow in their faith. Spend time praying for each child in the group as you bring the session to a close.

## Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



## 'Big Story' letters

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



### Bible verses:

Hebrews 11:1-4,7-10,13-16  
Faith



### Aim:

To think about what faith means to you



### Today's fruit:

Faithfulness



## Explore

In our Bible reading today many heroes of faith were mentioned. Choose one from the list and discover more about them. Share it with your group at the next *Explore It* session.

Heroes of Faith: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab and Joshua.



## Share

In today's session we discovered more about what it means to grow in our faithfulness to God. Share with the people at home what you learned.

Watch the clip and discuss the questions together.

***The Definition of Faithfulness (fruit of the Spirit devotional kids)*** by Minno – Bible Stories for Kids



## Song for the week

'Books of the Bible' song and lyrics by Mary Rice Hopkins



## Memory verse

'All Scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live correctly.'

(2 Timothy 3:16 ICB)

**LIVING  
OUT FAITH**

*Kids Alive!* Online – [salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive](http://salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive)

*Kids Alive!* The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Children  
& Youth

# 'Big Story' letters



## Bible verses:

Hebrews 11:1-4,7-10,13-16  
Faith



## Aim:

To know that people  
wrote letters about God



## Today's fruit:

Faithfulness



## Memory verse

**'All Scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live correctly.'**

(2 Timothy 3:16 *ICB*)



## Start it

How do we get in touch with friends and family who live far away? People a long time ago could only write letters to share their news. Today we're going to hear a about special letter that was written a very, very long time ago.



## Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Hebrews 11:1-4,7-10,13-16.

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- Has anyone received a card or letter? How did you feel?
- Would you ever send a letter to someone?
- Does anyone believe in anything you cannot see? (eg the wind which dries

clothes or keeps birds in the sky; an echo; music; wishes ...)

- What does the word 'faith' mean?
- How could a letter help you to feel good?



## Sing It

**'Great big God!'** Vineyard Kids, Vineyard Worship UK and Ireland (2:51)

**'Jesus Song'** by Saddleback Kids (2:45)  
This song tells us about the amazing thing Jesus did.



## Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Have envelopes with numbers inside and try to open them in the correct order simply by guessing – can you do it?
- Draw a kind picture and place it in an envelope for somebody you love, deliver it to them and watch them open it.
- Have an envelope with 'God' written on the front. Ask the group what we would like to say to him and imagine our thoughts are going inside before sealing it closed – this could be a good way to pray today.