

Survivor Man

Bible Story: Survivor Man (Joseph) • *Genesis 30, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42–46*

Bottom Line: I can be brave because I know God is with me.

Memory Verse: “When I’m afraid, I will trust in you.” *Psalm 56:3*

Life App: Courage—being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you’re afraid.

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **COURAGE** and
God’s character, as shown through God’s big story

In the beginning of their relationship with Jesus, the disciples might not have been the most courageous bunch you’ve ever seen. Remember when the storm blew up and even the most seasoned fishermen woke Jesus in a panic (Mark 4)? But Jesus wasn’t scared. He knew the power and reliability of God. Time and again Jesus showed His disciples that God would provide whenever they needed Him. As they learned to trust God, the disciples’ courage grew—to the point that Peter and John boldly testified before the Jewish government (Acts 4) about Jesus’ life and resurrection.

Courage is being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you’re afraid. Peter and John were facing imprisonment—or worse—but they had courage to speak openly about Jesus because they knew God would give them the words they needed. We can also face potentially scary situations because we trust God will take care of us.

Courage is not the absence of fear but how you respond in the face of fear. When we approach situations, we can remember that God is bigger than anything we face. If we’re afraid we’ll be all alone, He will be with us. If we’re afraid we’re not good enough, He’ll provide the gifting we need. And when we can’t understand what’s going to happen, we can remember that God sees everything that’s happening and wants what’s best for us. Then we can move forward courageously.

This month, let’s think about how:

- (1) God desires a relationship with us. Being courageous demonstrates trust and builds that relationship.*
- (2) The Bible challenges us to respond to life with courage even when what we face doesn’t make sense.*
- (3) As we trust God and show courage, we become more like Jesus who was brave enough to say and do what God asked—even when He faced death on the cross.*

This week, we’re discovering:

In this week’s Bible story, Joseph lived a life of courage (**Genesis 30, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42–46**). Joseph could have despaired when faced with several difficult situations, but rather he remained faithful to God, trusting that God must have a bigger story at work.

Our Bottom Line is **I can be brave because I know God is with me.** As kids approach a new school year, sports team, or art class, they can push past their fear because God is with them. When kids are afraid of being alone or being in the dark, they can have courage because God is with them.

The monthly memory verse is: **“When I’m afraid, I will trust in You.” Psalm 56:3, NIV** Our trust in God is the source of our courage. Just like Joseph knew God was working to make things good in his life, we can have the same confidence and move courageously into fearful situations because we know God is with us.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY / REVIEW

MC: “Wow, time after time, Joseph’s life went up and down. It could seem random, and even cruel, except for one BIG thing we know to be true: God was in control. He had a plan for Joseph’s life. That plan not only saved Joseph and his family, but it also saved a whole lot of Egyptians.

“Listen to what Joseph said to his brothers in Genesis 45:7-8 (*read directly from the Bible*), ‘Joseph said to his brothers, “God sent me ahead of you to keep some of you alive on earth. He sent me here to save your lives by an act of mighty power. ... He made me like a father to Pharaoh. He made me master of Pharaoh’s whole house. He made me ruler of the whole land of Egypt.”’ (NirV)

“God did all that. Joseph chose to be brave because he knew that God was with him.

“And you know, the same is true for you and me. **[Impress] I can be brave because I know God is with me.** Sometimes life feels out of our control, but God has a plan. Just as Joseph showed courage throughout his life, we can do the same because we can know that God is with us too.

“... God is with you. He’s with you on the first day of school, on your first plane trip, and (*sigh*) when you have spiders crawling all over your back. So when you’re afraid, talk to God. Ask Him to comfort you and give you courage. After all, God is always with you. And that’s what our Bible verse this month tells us, too. It’s found in Psalm 56:3. **[Impress] “I can be brave because I know God is with me.**

Connecting (25-30 minutes)

Make the connection of how today’s Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Disappearing Verse (*memory verse activity*)

What You Need: White board or mirror, white board marker, eraser, OR paper and pencil with eraser

What You Do:

Finding verses: Guide children to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like. When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Psalms in the list under “Old Testament.” When the kids find Psalms, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Psalms. Help the kids find the page. When they find Psalms, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 56. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 3 in chapter 56. Read it out loud together.

Write the memory verse on the whiteboard or on the piece of paper. Have the kids say the verse together. Then, choose a kid to come erase one word from the verse. Have them all say the whole verse together again. Then, have another kid erase another word and say the verse together. Repeat until all the words are gone.

What You Say:

“We are all going to be afraid at some time or another. The amount we are afraid might change—say, from being afraid to try a new food for the first time to being afraid when you see someone at school arguing—but every time we are afraid, we can remember **[Impress] I can be brave because I know God is with me. [Apply] This week, try to remember things you used to be afraid of, but you aren’t scared of anymore. That can give you hope that you won’t always be afraid of these things.**”

2. Fear Not (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: Large Paper, colored markers, and traditionally shaped pretzels

What You Do:

Hand out the markers so each student has one. Spread out the large paper in the middle of your room, and have students circle it. Ask a volunteer to use the majority of the paper to draw the shape of a robe.

Next, give everyone five minutes to review the Bible story and look for anything Joseph faced that he could have been afraid of. They'll use their markers to write their answers down on the paper robe.

Finally, have the group turn the paper robe over. Challenge your students to each write out a one-sentence prayer Joseph may have prayed to God when he was afraid.

What You Say:

"A traditional understanding of pretzels is that when they're turned upside down they symbolize someone praying. I wanted to give one to you as a reminder that Joseph found courage by praying and trusting God to take care of him, even when faced with difficult situations. Joseph could have freaked out, but instead he remained faithful to God, trusting that God would work things out. **[Apply] When you pray, you're also being brave by courageously placing your worry about something important on God, admitting that you need help. That's not always easy, but you can remind yourself [Impress] I can be brave because I know God is with me.**"

Optional Discussion Questions

If you lead, consider asking these discussion questions:

- When in the past have you chosen to be brave? (*The first day of anything—school, an extracurricular activity, moving to a new neighborhood and making friends; giving a book report in front of your class; being afraid of the dark*)
- God wants a relationship with us. How do you think courage is related or connected to that? (*Courage demonstrates trust, which in turn builds the relationship. We trust God will take care of us even when life seems scary.*)
- What are some things that can happen if we don't put courage into practice? (*We may miss out on being a part of something God wants to do through us; we demonstrate to others that we don't trust God; our faith may not grow.*)
- Who is someone that you think is courageous in some way? Why? (*Perhaps it's someone we personally know or someone famous.*)
- In what ways can we be brave or more courageous as a group? (*We can challenge each other to grow; we can tell new people about Jesus; we can be brave to let others know we're Christians.*)

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Have kids do a five-finger prayer. Tell them to hold their hands together in prayer, using each finger as a guide:

Thumb: Say a prayer for your closest friends.

Pointer: Say a prayer for schoolteachers and Small Group Leaders.

Middle: Say a prayer for your family.

Ring: Say a prayer for the sick or hungry.

Pinky: Say a prayer for yourself.

What You Say:

“It’s important to pray for everyone around us to be brave because we all have things we are afraid of. Even the president or the heroes at the police station or fire station get scared sometimes. We can pray that the people we care about will remember that there is someone more powerful and trustworthy than them. Remember **[Impress]** I can be brave because I know God is with me. **[Apply]** This week, you can use your hands—each finger—as a reminder to pray for important people in your life.”

Give each child a GodTime card and sucker as adults arrive for pick-up.