

# HOPE

LIVING WITH CONFIDENT EXPECTATION

## WEEK 1:

## HOPE WHEN THINGS DON'T GO MY WAY

## MAIN POINT:

I can have hope even when things  
don't go my way

**BIBLE STORY: NEHEMIAH 1:1-11**

If you have ever faced an overwhelming task or felt inadequate to meet a challenge, you will be able to identify with Nehemiah. He struggled with issues still with us today: motivation, fatigue, criticism. But Nehemiah offers us hope! He shows us how to tackle difficult assignments. Nehemiah knew that Jerusalem and its people needed help and he felt the call from God, when he was praying, to go help. He was not someone who knew how to build walls or even equipped to help, but he had hope that he could help because he knew God was with him!

**MEMORY VERSE: ROMANS 15:13**

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace."

**ACTIVITY: EARLY CHILDHOOD****1. MAKE A JOY JAR:**

- Get a pretty jar or vase that you can set out.
- Using two different colors of paper, cut the paper in strips
- Every day, during dinner or at the end of the day write down one thing on each strip of paper that brought you joy or made you feel hopeful that day on one color paper and on the other color paper write down the things that you did to bring joy or hope to someone else
- As you put the papers in the jar, pray for everyone who helped bring you joy and hope and everyone you brought joy or hope to – giving thanks for the people in your life, the places and things that bring you joy and the blessing of being able to help others

**2. BIBLE WORDS**

- Each day have someone come up with a word – it can be any word at all
- Go to a Bible search website and search for your word. If you find it, read one or two verses that have the daily word in them. If the word doesn't come up in your search, talk about how that word fits into your faith. (For example: if the word is cookies, it doesn't show up in the Bible searches – trust me, I looked – you could talk about how Jesus fed people, or that cookies can be shared with others to show we love them, or that cookies bring us joy.)
- This is a great way to get your family focused on the idea that everything in our life can somehow be tied to our faith. And it's just silly enough to get everyone engaged.



## **ACTIVITY: ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES:**

### **1. IMPOSSIBLE TASKS**

#### **SUPPLIES: Chair**

Have each child attempt the following “impossible tasks.” Let them try as many times as they would like. Make sure they follow the rules clearly. When they are done trying, tell them the trick.

#### **1. Lift your foot**

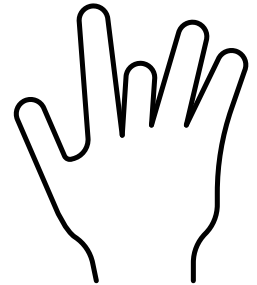
- **CHALLENGE:** Stand next to a wall with one side of your body touching it. Place your ankle, knee, hip, shoulder, and head against the wall. Now try to lift your other foot off the ground without moving away from the wall. Your ankle, hip, head and shoulder must be touching the wall.
- **TRICK -** Grab a partner and have them push your other shoulder towards the wall (holding you up) as you lift your foot. It works with a little help from a friend!

#### **2. Stand up**

- **CHALLENGE:** Sit in a chair with your feet in front of you, your back touching the back of the chair. Now try to stand up without using your hands and while keeping your back against the chair.
- **TRICK:** Separate your legs so that one foot is on either side of the chair. Keeping your back on the chair, now try standing up!

#### **3. The Paralyzed Finger Trick**

- **CHALLENGE:** Bend your middle finger like the picture to the right shows and put your hand on the table. Then lift your thumb, index finger, and pinkie. No problem, right? Now try the ring finger.
- **TRICK:** Use your other hand or ask a friend to lift your ring finger off the table!



**TALKING POINTS:** How did you feel when you were struggling to do the task? Sometimes when things don't go our way, it's easy to get frustrated and even give up. That's when we need to turn to God, take a deep breath, pray, and even ask for help. Even when things don't go your way or a task seems impossible, you can trust that God is still with you. You can have hope when things don't go your way.

### **2. CUP RACE – MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY**

**SUPPLIES: 31 cups (disposable or stacking tumblers), marker or pen, tape, paper**

**SET UP:** If using reusable cups, cut up your paper into strips that are small enough to tape to your cups. Write the memory verse on the separate pieces of paper, one word per piece. Tape one word on each cup. If using disposable cups, use a permanent marker to write one word from the memory verse on each cup.

- **Memory Verse Elementary – Romans 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. NIV
- **Memory Verse Early Childhood - Romans 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace.

**ACTIVITY:** Mix up the cups and put them all throughout the room. Have each child take turns running around the room to grab the cups and try to stack them in order. You can even time each player and see who can get it done the fastest OR have them work together and try it multiple times to see if they can beat their own time! KEEP THESE CUPS FOR ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE SERIES.

**TALKING POINTS:** At the beginning of this game, the cups were all over the room and it was a big mess! How do you feel when you see a big mess? Sometimes I get overwhelmed and frustrated. How do you deal with the big mess? In our activity, you found a way to put the mess back into order! Next week we will learn how Nehemiah came up with a plan to fix his big mess: the walls!



## FAMILY ACTIVITY

### PRAYER TOWER

Use blocks, books, DVD's anything you have that can be stacked easily. Take turns adding a block to your family tower using one of these prayer prompts

- God, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_
- God, please help \_\_\_\_\_
- God, I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_
- God, help me \_\_\_\_\_ or, God, help me be kind to \_\_\_\_\_
- God, I love you because \_\_\_\_\_

### FIVE FINGER PRAYER

1. Prayer for how much you love God
2. Prayer for something you are thankful for or hopeful about
3. Prayer for someone who is in need or who may feel hopeless
4. Prayer for something you need help with or need help feeling hope about
5. Prayer for God's big world and that every person might feel hope

### FAMILY DANCE PARTY

Turn on some music and worship God as a family. Feel free to use streamers, towels, stuffed animals to add to the fun. Take turns letting each family member teach everyone else a fun dance move and everyone else imitates that action.

Some playlist ideas :

- All Good Orange music - <https://open.spotify.com/album/1vVS1HB8nkk0jn2rcyfHdS?si=mQDpsx5XRumhLchCarwVEA&fbclid=IwAR2XzAu0gs8YTFcaa0eQE1G7A7J8TunK3x26-em9vr5giwOOOp6LyMYP9nM>
- Variety First Look music - <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3b975x4hpgzFh0iCEDOXCo>
- Yancy Holy week playlist - <https://sc.Ink.to/YLPha-s>



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *What are some of the ways that your family worships together? Do the adults worship differently than the teenagers and children?*
2. *In what ways could your whole family worship together during the week, alongside of attending worship in church on the weekends?*
3. *When you are feeling hopeless, how could you talk with your family about that feeling? How could your family pray about it together? (Parents—use this time to tell your children how you pray in general and how you pray when you're feeling hopeless.)*
4. *Does your family have consistent prayer time or routine? What are some of the prayers you pray regularly? Is there a certain time you pray each day such as at meals or at bedtime?*
5. *Prayer allows us to open our hearts to hear God... What are some ways you hear God?*

**PARENT TIP:** Use this example with your child or children because children often don't know what all it can mean to "hear God." Say something like, "You know when you see someone sad and you feel sad for them, or when someone drops all their things and you feel like you need to go help them pick them up, that feeling is God talking to you. God talks to us through the feelings on our heart and opens our eyes to ways we can help others."



## FAMILY CHALLENGE:

- Pick a time each day when you pray to God or worship God for about 10 minutes. You can pray or worship using the activities above or come up with your own prayers and ways to worship! God loves any time that we choose to worship!