

HOPE

LIVING WITH CONFIDENT EXPECTATION

WEEK 4:

WE CAN OFFER HOPE

SERIES DESCRIPTION:

We are people of hope! As Christians we know Jesus walks with us through our joys and sorrows, our times of contentment and our times of pain. Easter is here—and with it the new life we find in Jesus!

BIG IDEA:

When we have hope, we can offer it to others.



SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: HEBREWS 13:16, CEB

Don't forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices.



SECONDARY SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-7, 10-11, CEB

What I mean is this: the one who sows a small number of seeds will also reap a small crop, and the one who sows a generous amount of seeds will also reap a generous crop. Everyone should give whatever they have decided in their heart. They shouldn't give with hesitation or because of pressure. God loves a cheerful giver.

The one who supplies seed for planting and bread for eating will supply and multiply your seed and will increase your crop, which is righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous in every way. Such generosity produces thanksgiving to God through us.



ACTIVITY: MADE-UP WORDS

This game is a variation on the popular party game Balderdash.

As the leader, you will give the group a **Made-Up Word** (see list below). Then, students will have one minute to write down their definition for what they think this word should mean. Each student will write down a definition on a slip of paper, fold it up and give to you (*or privately share in the chat feature if meeting in an online small group*).

One at a time, read aloud the submitted definitions for the **Made-Up Word**. Do not reveal which student turned in the suggested meaning you are reading. The group will vote on which definition they think is the best or most funny. The person with the most votes is the winner for that round. Play as many rounds as you want or have time to play.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MADE-UP WORDS (*or make up your own!*)

- Blobbershy
- Sneerbait
- Farbulotious
- Corkle
- Litflee
- Flicketyflum

DEBRIEF OF ACTIVITY: In the message video, the speaker described how the first person who felt and experienced hope did so before having the right word to express it. Sometimes our own words fall short of describing what we are going through—whether that is the amazing feeling of hope, or the profound loss of hopelessness. While we may not be able to make up new words to describe how we feel, one way that *can* help is by sharing our feelings with others – offering hope to those around us or seeking out someone who can bring hope into our own lives when we need it the most.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *In the message video, the speaker references the poem “The Hope Spot” to talk about the feeling of hope (poem included below). Poems are art, as are illustrations of poems! Art can be a powerful tool to help us connect with feelings of hope, and even to connect with God. How does creativity or art give you hope? Is there a certain piece of art (like a song, poem, painting, book, movie, etc.) that brings you hope?*
- *What other feelings or emotions do we associate with hope? What feelings or emotions often go along with hopelessness?*
- *When is a time that someone offered you hope through their words or actions?*
- *Do you think it’s possible to offer something to another person when you haven’t experienced it for yourself? In other words, can you offer someone else hope if you are feeling hopeless?*
- *Read together our Main Scripture from **Hebrews 13:16**. What could it look like for you to share hope with someone this week?*
- *Read together our Secondary Scripture from **2 Corinthians 9:6, 10-11**. How does hope multiply or increase when we offer it to others?*
- *According to these two verses, how does God feel when we offer what we have to others?*



CHALLENGE:

- Who is someone that has offered you hope in the past? Reach out to them this week and thank them for bringing you hope. Write them a note or send them a text message. Or better yet, call them on the phone or over FaceTime! Let them know how grateful you are that they offered you hope when you needed it.
- Then, think about someone you can offer hope to this week. Because someone offered hope to you in the past, you can now offer that same hope to someone else. Pass along the hope! Send them a note of encouragement or a text message to let them know you are thinking about them and praying for them.



LEADER TIP:

The feeling of hope can sometimes seem like an abstract concept, especially for younger students who may not know how to articulate what it means for them to experience hope. If this is the case for your group, try to talk about “offering hope” through more tangible actions: We can offer hope by blessing others through our **talents** of music, art, dance, athletics, writing, etc. We can offer hope by sharing our **resources** with others, whether that be **financial** resources, the resource of spending our **time** with others, or the resource of other physical

items or **gifts** we might have. Or, we can offer hope by using our **skills** to help others such as volunteering at church, tutoring another student or creating “how to” videos to share online. With some creativity, there are so many ways we can offer hope to others!

Poem Included in the Message Video:

“THE HOPE SPOT” BY REV. CHELSEY D. HILLYER

We are built for hope.
Tucked somewhere inside us all
Is a space, dark and warm, where hope can grow.
No doctor has found it yet,
But I’m pretty sure that it’s just above our hearts,
Cradled within our ribs,
Safe and listening to our lives from the inside –
To the whooshing blood,
To the gurgling stomach,
To the unique rhythms of our inspiration.
There it sits:
The Hope Spot.

When things are going well,
When needs are met and we feel sure of things,
The Hope Spot is full
And thrumming,
Sending every joyful and beautiful thought and feeling
Out all the way to our skin
Until it feels like we could glow in the dark.

But just as hunger sets our stomachs growling,
When our Hope Spot is empty,
It feels like something in us is broken.
And if our Hope Spot is empty for long enough,
We begin to believe that we, ourselves, are broken.

The truth is that I’ve had my share of hopeless days –
Heavy and slow, with a sense of something missing.
And no matter what emotional acrobatics I perform,
I’m not able to conjure it.

These are the wilderness days,
When all I feel is wanting,
But I cannot name what it is that I want.

I don’t have a magic prescription for making hope appear
Its mystery is too deep,
And I’m only human.

But if I listen.
If I get really still.
If I’m able to set aside all the things
I think ought to fill the Hope Spot –
A new car or home or job,
A better body, a better spouse,
Perfect health, enough money,

A really good piece of chocolate cake –
If I'm able to sit on my hands and stop reaching
For hope like it's something so far outside of myself
That I have to be good enough or fast enough or smart enough
To grasp it—
If I can quiet myself long enough
To remember that the Hope Spot has been right there,
In my chest all along,
Listening to my life from the inside,
It helps.

And if I let the Hope Spot lead,
I find myself reaching for things
I didn't even know to hope for,
Little miracles I could never have imagined –
The hem of a cloak that heals,
The conversation that banishes loneliness,
The garden that nourishes the soul and body.

We can't control our Hope Spot
Any more than we can tell our spleens to do whatever it is that spleens do.

But to remember it is there,
And to trust its wild urges above our own,
Foolish as they are,
Ridiculous as they are,
Awkward as they are?
Well, that's our sacred work.