

KIDS *of*  
INTEGRITY

*Perseverance*



**Watch your favourite sports team at practice, test your focus on a balance beam or go on a unique hike. Review these and lots more ideas that make studying perseverance a blast!**

Select from a whole caboodle of ideas that encourage kids to:

- be self-disciplined “finishers” who see a task through
- deal constructively with discouragement
- stay faithful to God, persist in prayer and resist temptation.

This lesson also helps curb laziness, lack of motivation, and a tendency to quit when faced with challenges.

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## Parents’ prayer

As you prepare to teach your children the importance of determination and tenacity, first commit your efforts to the Lord, trusting Him to be faithful to complete the work that you are beginning today. Use the sample prayer provided below, or formulate your own prayer using the Bible verses provided under “Scripture-guided prayer for parents.”

### Sample prayer

Lord God, Creator and Sustainer of All Things, You are the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. You will not grow tired and weary, and Your understanding no one can fathom. You give strength to the weary and increase the power of the weak (Isaiah 40:28-29). When we are weary and burdened, we can come to You, learn from You and find rest for our souls. The yoke You offer us is easy and the burden light (Matthew 11:29-30). You give us life and breath and everything else, and in You we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:25,28). Thank you for these incredible words of encouragement.

There are many days when my reserves run low and I am near the point of exhaustion. Thank you for sustaining me physically and spiritually. As I crave water and food for physical well being, I long to dwell closely with You so that my spirit may also be fully refreshed. In Your Word I read that without You I can do nothing. My desire is to remain in You and have You remain in me so that I can bear much fruit (John 15:5). Today, I lift up my eyes to the hills asking, “Where does my help come from?” My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. You promise to keep me from harm and to watch over my coming and going, both now and forever more (Psalm 121). Thank you for this assurance of Your constant presence and practical assistance.

My prayer for \_\_\_\_\_ is that he/she would learn early in life that when he/she relies on You, troubles in life are so much less overwhelming. As \_\_\_\_\_ follows You, may he/she persevere, depending on the resources You have given him/her – Your Holy Spirit, Your Word, prayer and other Christians – rather than attempting to succeed in his/her own strength. I pray that faith, goodness, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love may be

developed in \_\_\_\_\_'s life so he/she will be kept from being ineffective and unproductive in serving You (2 Peter 2:5-8).

There will be difficult times ahead in \_\_\_\_\_'s walk with You. Please remind \_\_\_\_\_ to lean into Your loving arms when he/she has trials and suffering, when he/she feels temptation arise or when he/she feels discouraged. I ask that \_\_\_\_\_ would learn to rejoice in his/her sufferings and persevere in times of trouble with confidence, knowing You allow them for his/her own good so that he/she may be mature, not lacking in anything (Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4). May \_\_\_\_\_ accept Your discipline so that a harvest of righteousness and peace may result in his/her life. Help me not to attempt to stop or remove any of the challenges You send to \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of his/her spiritual growth.

Jesus said, "I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do" (John 17:4). My prayer for our family is that we would persist in doing good, finishing the jobs You give us to do (Romans 2:6-7). May we serve You as Daniel did, persevering in following You despite persecution (Daniel 6). Amen.

### **Scripture-guided prayer for parents**

*Read and pray through one or more of the selected scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.*

#### **Character focus**

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate the way He sustains and strengthens you.

Psalm 23 | Isaiah 40:28-31 | Isaiah 46:3-4 | Matthew 11:28-30 | Acts 17:24-28

#### **Heart search**

Acknowledge when and how you lack perseverance. Proverbs 13:4 | 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 | Galatians 6:7-9 | Hebrews 12:1-3 | James 1:2-8

#### **Gratitude**

Thank God for ways you have seen perseverance exhibited in your family.

### **Family requests**

Ask God to help you and your family to persevere during challenging times and in doing His will.

John 15:5-8 | Romans 5:3-4 | Galatians 6:9-10 | Hebrews 4:14-16 | 2 Peter 1:5-8

## **Kids talk with God**

*Help your children begin a habit of sharing their trials and triumphs with the Lord. Choose from the sample prayers below, or encourage older children to compose original prayers based on the verses listed under "Scripture-guided prayer for children."*

### **Sample prayers**

Dear God, I know following You can be hard, like a really long race. Please help me to persevere even when it is hard to obey You. Amen.

Dear God, help me to welcome challenges in my life. Please give me the strength to persevere in them. Amen.

Dear God, thank you that through hard times, You help us grow. Amen.

Dear God, when I am feeling weak, tired or discouraged, please help me to remember to depend on You. Amen.

Dear God, sometimes it seems easier to be lazy than hard-working. When I am tempted to slack off in my work, please help me to remember that You gave me a spirit of self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7). Amen.

### **Scripture-guided prayer for children**

*Read through one of the selected scriptures under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.*

#### **Character focus**

Thank God for sharing His strength with you. Psalm 23:1-3 | Isaiah 40:28-29 | Matthew 11:28

#### **Heart search**

Acknowledge when and how you are tempted to give up. Proverbs 13:4 | Galatians 6:9 | Hebrews 12:1

## Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have persevered.

## Personal requests

Ask God to help you, your siblings and parents to persevere during challenges and in righteousness. Isaiah 40:30-31 | John 15:5 | 2 Timothy 1:7

## Speak a blessing

*Remember how excited you were when you witnessed each of your children take their very first steps on their own? They need you to cheer them on now, too, as they take determined steps toward "walking in righteousness." Encourage your child with some of these comments.*

- Awesome job, \_\_\_\_\_! You are persisting in doing good!
- I know \_\_\_\_\_ perseveres even when things are tough.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is such a determined girl/boy.
- With God's help, you can do it!
- It makes us feel so good to work hard and finish a big job.
- I admire your self-discipline, preserving through \_\_\_\_\_ (name the situation).
- You'll be proud of yourself when you finish \_\_\_\_\_.
- Keep at it, \_\_\_\_\_. I know it is hard, but I know you can do it.
- \_\_\_\_\_, you're as persistent as a Daniel/Noah/Elijah. You just won't give up!

## Memory verses

*Choose one of the memory verses below to learn during your study on perseverance.*

Isaiah 40:28-29 "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator

of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired and weary, and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak."

Proverbs 13:4 "The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied."

Romans 5:3-4 "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

Romans 2:6-7 "God 'will give to each person according to what he has done.' To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, He will give eternal life."

1 Corinthians 13:7 "[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

Galatians 6:9 "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Philippians 4:13 "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

Hebrews 12:1 "... Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Hebrews 12:1 "Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Hebrews 12:3 "Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

James 1:2-4 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so

that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

James 1:12 “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.”

2 Peter 1:5-8 “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## Kick-off craft

*Chart your progress! This activity will help your kids see how much stronger they become when they persevere!*

### Directions

- 1 Begin by making a chart or poster, listing each day of the week. Include a memory verse of your choice on the chart as well.
- 2 Find an appropriate set of weights for your children, such as two soup cans. On the first day, have your children attempt to lift the weights 10-25 times, or as many times as they can without straining their muscles. Have them start with their arms hanging down at their sides while holding a weight in each hand. Then direct them to lift their arms up to shoulder height, forming a “T” shape with their body.

Each day, have them repeat the task and record the results. At the end of the week they should be able to lift the weights more often, and much more easily, than at the beginning of the week.

Combine this “exercise time” with memorizing your selected memory verse. For added motivation, add stickers or stars to your chart for successful completion of the task.

## Other ideas

Instead of lifting weights, select any activity that will lend itself to measurable progression. This could be sit-ups, push-ups, jogging or even learning a skill that is challenging for your children.

## Bible stories

*God’s Word makes it clear that He is pleased when we are determined to obey Him. Choose one or more of these stories about perseverance to share with your children. The accompanying questions will help your child internalize the truths from the passage.*

*If the Bible passage is too complex for your child, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.”*

## Life is a like a long race

Read Hebrews 12:1-11.

### Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever run/biked/swum in a long race? If so, what was it like? How did you feel at the end?
2. Were there spectators?
3. What pushed you to finish, even though you were tired?
4. In Hebrews 12:1-2, what is living the Christian life compared to?
5. What would it be like to run a race wearing a heavy backpack? Or trying to race with your legs tangled in a rope?
6. What could “hinder” us from honouring God with our lives?
7. What do elite athletes do to help them perform their best?
8. What does the Bible suggest that we focus on to help us with our goal of living the Christian life to honour God?

9. Why might God allow difficult things to happen to us in our lives?
  10. What kind of discipline do you receive from your parents?
  11. When we are disciplined by God, what are we to do?
  12. What does God's discipline produce in our lives?
5. Which "weeds" does God want to remove from our lives? *For some ideas, have your children list the opposite of each fruit of the Spirit.*
  6. In order to persevere in "weeding out" sin, what can we do?
  7. *Read Hebrews 10:24-25,36, Romans 2:6-7, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.* What kind of reward does God promise for those who persevere?

### **Key concepts**

Elite athletes are very disciplined in their training, enduring strenuous practice routines, because they are focused on the goal of succeeding in their chosen sport. The Bible compares living the Christian life to running a race.

Just as running a race wearing a heavy backpack would slow a runner down, so sin gets in the way of our ability to live our lives in a way that honours God. Sin consumes our time and energy and takes our focus off God, slowing us down in our life race.

The Bible tells us that God does allow life to get difficult at times so we can be made holy. Even though God's discipline is painful, it produces righteousness and peace. Just as elite athletes push themselves to endure pain during a race by focusing on pre planned thoughts and goals, we are to rely on Jesus for encouragement and strength when we are running our life race.

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### **Persevering in following God**

#### **Questions for discussion**

1. When a gardener is tending his/her garden, what do you see him/her doing?
2. What does a gardener do when they find a weed?
3. Have you ever pulled weeds in a garden? Was it hard or easy? Did you keep working, even when you found it hard to pull the weeds?
4. *Read Galatians 5:22-23 and Hebrews 6:7-12.* What kind of crop do you think God wants to see in our lives?

### **Key concepts**

Just as a gardener works hard to keep their garden free from weeds, God wants us to work hard at weeding the sin out of our lives. The "weeds" God wants to remove from our lives are the negative opposites of the fruit of the Spirit. For example hate (the opposite of love), complaining and dissatisfaction (versus joy), fighting and quarrelling (versus peace), impatience (v. patience), unkindness (v. kindness), unfaithfulness (v. faithfulness), harsh words and actions (v. gentleness), and temper tantrums and losing control of words, actions and emotions (v. self-control).

To get rid of this sin, we need to ask God to clean it out of us by the power of His Holy Spirit. We can also find encouragement through meeting with other Christians and asking God for strength and wisdom (James 1:4-6, Isaiah 40:29).

God promises eternal life with Him in heaven for His followers. God's followers are those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God and believe that through His death and resurrection, they have received forgiveness for their sins.

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### **Persevering in prayer**

Read Luke 18:1-8 and Jeremiah 9:23-24.

#### **Questions for discussion**

1. If you really want something from your parents, what do you do?
2. What did the widow do?
3. What was she asking for?
4. Why did the judge grant her request?

5. Is it okay with God if we ask for the same thing over and over again?
6. Do you think God would answer any prayer just because you asked over and over?
7. What kind of prayers do you think God likes to answer?

### Key concepts

Usually when children really want something from their parents, they keep asking and asking over and over again. Similarly, in this story, a widow went to see a judge every day, asking him to grant her justice against someone who had treated her unfairly.

The judge did not fear God, nor care for men, yet he granted the widow's request because he did not want her coming back day after day. God does care for His people and He will bring about justice for those who ask. God delights in kindness, justice and righteousness.

### A persistent builder

Read Genesis 6:5-22.

### Questions for discussion

1. What is the biggest project that you have built out of Lego®, wooden blocks or something else?
2. How long did it take?
3. How long do you think it took Noah to build an ark that was 450 feet long? *(If you have time, visit a soccer or football field. Walk around the perimeter to give your children an idea just how big the ark was.)*
4. What would have happened if Noah had given up and left the ark half built?
5. Has God ever given you a hard job?

### Key concepts

God gave Noah a pretty big job; God asked him to build a huge boat. Even though he didn't live near a lake or ocean, Noah persevered in finishing the job that God gave him.

Someday, God might give one of us a hard job to do, too. God might ask you to be friends with a kid who everyone else is choosing to ignore. He might ask you to forgive a brother or sister who teases you every day. God was pleased with Noah's perseverance, and God will also be pleased with you when you persevere in doing what is right.

### Persevering despite circumstances

Read Daniel 1:1-7, and Daniel 6:1-28 (omit verse 24 for young or sensitive children).

### Questions for discussion

1. Do you think Daniel was lazy, or a hard worker?
2. When Daniel found out that he would be thrown into a lion's den if he continued to pray, what did he do?
3. Why do you think Daniel continued to kneel down to pray instead of praying quietly in his head so that others could not see that he was praying?
4. How did God reward Daniel's perseverance?

### Key concepts

Daniel was captured, along with many more of God's people, and taken to live in a foreign country. In this country they had different traditions and customs and it was not acceptable to worship God. But Daniel chose to continue serving God. Even though it meant that he was risking death, Daniel knelt down and honoured God by praying three times a day.

When the king discovered that Daniel was breaking the law by praying to God, he had Daniel thrown into a den of hungry lions. God stood by Daniel and rewarded his unwavering commitment to righteousness by protecting him from being eaten by the lions.

### Persevering in serving God

Read Acts 5:12-42.

### Questions for discussion

1. Why were the apostles arrested?

2. What happened to them after they were arrested?
3. What did God do?
4. Why did the apostles start preaching again?
5. How did God protect the men who persevered in preaching?
6. How did Peter and the other apostles respond to the fact that they were punished for preaching the gospel?

### Key concepts

The Pharisees were jealous of all the attention the people were giving to the apostles. They had them arrested and thrown in prison. Despite rather frightening circumstances, the apostles persevered in preaching the good news of God's kingdom. They could have run from the potential trouble and justified leaving town by saying, "I will accomplish more for God by preaching in another town. What good is it if I stay in this town and end up dead?"

The apostles knew the safest thing was to do what God had asked them to do – to stay and preach the good news. Although they were in danger of being killed, the apostles stayed and preached, and God protected them. They rejoiced because they had the opportunity to suffer a whipping for the name of Jesus.

### Persevering in prayer

Read 1 Kings 18:1-2,5,41-45 and James 5:17-18.

### Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever prayed that it would rain? Did God answer?
2. What are some of the other prayers you have prayed that God has answered?
3. What kind of man did the Bible say Elijah was?
4. What was Elijah praying for?
5. How many times did he have to ask?

6. How long had it been since it rained in the land?
7. If you had not seen it rain in your town for a whole summer and there wasn't a cloud in the sky, would you think it could rain?

### Key concepts

The Bible says that Elijah was a man, just like us! When he prayed for fire to fall from heaven to burn up a sacrifice, it did! But when Elijah asked God to send rain, he had to ask seven times before God sent the rain. Sometimes God answers prayers right away and sometimes we have to keep asking.

Other times, God may not answer in the ways we expect. We need to be persistent and patient when we pray, waiting for God's answers and trusting that He knows what is best for us.

### Creative discipline

*Determination to see a task through, no matter how unpleasant, is a very important attribute to build into your child – one that will benefit them in their school years and throughout their working life. Try these ideas, or come up with some of your own, but do be sure to demonstrate perseverance yourself as you nurture this quality in your child through consistent and loving discipline.*

### For a child who invests minimal effort or does not persevere in assigned tasks

**Biblical basis**  
Proverbs 13:4 "The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied."

### Suggested disciplinary action

Withhold the child's allowance or other treats. For some children, "satisfaction" is a visit to the ice cream truck. For other children this discipline could involve reducing time spent playing computer games or watching television.

### Affirmation

Pray with your child, asking God to give them strength and focus to complete the task. Use Isaiah 40:28-29 as a basis for your prayer by incorporating these verses: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the

Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.”

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## **For a child having difficulty persevering in a trial**

### **Biblical basis**

James 1:2-4 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

### **Suggested disciplinary action**

Come alongside your child and encourage him/her to persevere. “Discipline your minds” together and read some of the Scripture verses that talk about God’s help for His people. Examples include Psalm 23, Psalm 27 and Psalm 30. Sing songs of praise together or listen to praise music.

### **Affirmation**

Pray together, thanking God for the trial and how it will help develop character. Read your choice of the following verses:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:13 “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

Hebrews 10:35 “So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.”

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## **Hands-on options**

*Frequent revision is essential to the learning process. These easy-to-implement options will help you reinforce the importance of perseverance at opportune moments throughout the week.*

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### **Body parts working all day, every day**

*science with a twist*

Examine a children’s version of an anatomy and physiology book and talk about how all the parts of the human body work together.

Explain how the respiratory system brings oxygen into our bodies and how the digestive system processes the fuel (food) we eat. The circulatory system then carries this fuel to the rest of the body. The skeleton is like a frame for the body, but it can’t stand up on its own, so the ligaments, tendons and muscles support it. Without messages coming from the brain, the muscles couldn’t move our skeleton, nor could we breathe or eat.

In the Bible, we read that Christians are all part of the “body of Christ,” with Christ serving as the “head” (1 Corinthians 12:27). God planned for us all to have different roles. God has given us different things we are good at and we are to use our abilities to honour Him.

### **Questions for discussion**

- What would happen if your eyes decided to quit working? (Ask the same question concerning other body parts.)
- What has God made you good at?
- How can you honour Him with this gift?

### **Relevant Scripture**

1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

Ephesians 4:15-16 “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

Romans 12:4-5 “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

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## **Satisfaction in perseverance**

*any time*

Read or begin telling a long adventure story. Just as your narrative reaches a very exciting part, suddenly quit telling the story. When your kids ask you to read on, tell them that your voice is tired and you want to stop talking.

Your kids are sure to plead with you to start the story once again. Finally agree, replying to their request with the comment, “Okay, I will persevere.” When the story is finished, ask your kids if they are glad that you persevered and completed the story. Talk about the satisfaction that is gained by finishing a long story or job. You may also wish to impress upon your children that their parents work hard every day to provide money, food and clothing for them.

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## **Persevering in practice**

*physical activity*

Pick a sport or another activity that your children enjoy watching or doing. Perhaps theatre or music will have more appeal to your family. Research opportunities and attend a practice session (or rehearsal) in your community. Talk about the athletes/actors/musicians and ask your children how they think the athletes or performers became so skilled. Later, set aside some time to help your children practice a physical activity they enjoy.

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## **Preparing for a challenge**

*physical activity*

Pick a family-oriented event in your community, such as a family fun run, and persevere in training together. After you’ve participated, have a lively celebration!

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## **Warriors for God’s kingdom**

*physical activity*

In 1 Chronicles 12:1-2 we read that David’s warriors had practiced so much that they were ambidextrous – able to shoot arrows or sling stones equally well right-handed or left-handed.

Later in the New Testament, in 2 Corinthians 6:3-7, Paul talks about the hardships he has endured as a missionary. In verse seven he speaks of having “weapons of righteousness” in his right hand and in his left. (See both Scriptures below).

Have your children make their own “weapons of righteousness” that they can use to help perfect their ambidexterity. These could be “swords” representing God’s word, or worship flags.

Make swords by covering cardboard with foil and/or duct tape. Worship flags can be made by stapling fabric or ribbons to a cardboard tube or a wooden dowel.

Select a Scripture-based praise song and help your children create a routine that suits the music. Include motions that involve waving their swords or flags in both their right and left hands. Explain that when we praise and worship God, we are fighting on His team.

Have your children practice their routine. After they have become competent, have them perform it for the family.

## **Other ideas**

For a less complex version of this activity, have your children practice a task with their non-dominant hand until they are as accomplished with their non-dominant hand as they are with their dominant hand.

## **Relevant Scripture**

1 Chronicles 12:1-2 “These were the men who came to David at Ziklag, while he was banished from the presence of Saul son of Kish (they were among the warriors who helped him in battle; they were armed with bows and were able to shoot arrows or to sling stones right-handed or left-handed; they were kinsmen of Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin) . . .”

2 Corinthians 6:7 “. . . in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left . . .”

## **Persevering in tough circumstances**

*servicing others*

Enjoy being industrious as a family. When you are cleaning or working together, talk about how good it feels to work and get a big job done. You can work at your own home or choose to help another family where there is a need.

Emphasize that the reward of hard work is the feeling of satisfaction you get when it is all done. An ice cream cone can sweeten the experience as well and help celebrate the fact that you all persevered.

## **Relevant Scripture**

Ecclesiastes 5:18 “Then I realized that it is good and proper for man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him – for this is his lot.”

## **Visit a farm!**

*servicing others*

Plan to spend some time observing a farmer at work, and help them out if possible! It is a great way to find out about perseverance and hard work. In the spring, you could offer to pick rocks off a farmer’s field. In the summer there are usually plenty of weeds to pull everywhere. Fall is a great time to help with yard cleanup and leaf raking. In an urban setting, wintertime provides opportunities to get out and shovel a neighbour’s sidewalk.

## **Choosing a focal point**

*physical activity*

Have you ever noticed how “focused” gymnasts appear when they perform a routine on a balance beam? They keep their attention fixed on a single point ahead of them.

To help your kids discover the importance of staying focused in order to complete a task, invite them to try walking, like a gymnast, across their own balance beam. (Set up a board in your yard about a foot above the ground, or find a suitable rail in a playground.) Invite your children to try walking

across the “beam” with their attention fixed on a focal point ahead. Next, have them try the same task without a focal point.

## **Questions for discussion**

- What do you think would happen if a gymnast took their eyes off their focal point while they were on the beam?
- When you were walking along your balance beam, was it easier or harder when you focused on a point in the distance?
- Where does the Bible say our focus should be?

## **Key concepts**

When we focus on God, it is much easier to follow Him. Jesus fixed His eyes on God so He was able to endure the pain of dying on the cross for our sins. When we take our eyes off God, it becomes much more difficult to live in a way that pleases and honours Him.

## **Relevant Scripture**

Hebrew 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Proverbs 4:25-27 “Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.”

## **Perseverance walk**

*physical activity*

Go on a long hike that provides a significant physical challenge for your children. The purpose of your adventure is to illustrate that the Christian walk can be hard, but if we use the tools God has given us, we can get through it. The “tools” include prayer, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, fellowship with other Christians and Jesus.

You’ll use different aspects of your hike to show how each of these tools can help your children live a victorious Christian life. You’ll need to bring along snacks, drink, and a map of your route. You may

also wish to print out the following comments and Scripture verses to read at different points during the hike:

- **Prayer** is represented by a rope because prayer connects us to God and His power.

*Give your children the opportunity to discover how much easier it is to climb a steep hill with the help of a rope.*

1 John 5:14 “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

- **The Holy Spirit**, our Counsellor, is represented by a compass or Global Positioning System (GPS). The Holy Spirit is our special helper whom God sends to give us direction. Although we cannot see Him, we can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and hear His direction when we invite Him to be a part of our lives.

*Show your children how a compass points north, helping hikers find the correct route. If you have one, show your children how a GPS provides direction.*

John 16:7 “But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”

Romans 8:26 “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

- **Jesus** is represented by bread and water. While you are eating the snacks you have packed and drinking some of your water, explain that just as food and water sustains our physical bodies, so a relationship with God sustains our spirits. Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life and said that He provides people with “living water.” Tell your children that God made us with a “hunger in our hearts” – the desire to know Him. Without a relationship with God, people’s souls are hungry and thirsty.

John 6:35 “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty.’”

John 6:47-48 “I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life.”

John 4:10 “Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.’”

John 4:13-14 “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

- **The Bible** is represented by a map. While you are hiking, show your children the route on your map and talk about how the map guides you on your hike. Liken this to God giving us the Bible as a guidebook for life.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

- **Christian “brothers and sisters”** are represented by the fact that you are hiking together, rather than alone. Encourage each other as you walk the trail. Discuss how much more fun it is to hike with other people than alone. Also bring up safety issues that would be a concern if someone were to hike by himself/herself.

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

James 5:16 “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

At the end of your hike, thank God for all of the useful “tools” He gives you to help you persevere in life. Thank Him for giving you strength so that you can persevere.

*Note: During summertime, take adequate drinking water and protection from the sun. In wintertime, take precautions based on weather forecasts and carry additional warm, dry clothing. Whenever you hike, regardless of the season, be sure to let someone know where you will be going and what time you plan to return. Be prepared with a first aid kit and take a cellular phone.*

## Winning over weeds

*getting into nature*

Go outside and try to dig up all the dandelions (or other weeds) in your yard, or in a nearby green belt. While you are working, talk about how persistent the weeds are in coming back. Draw a parallel with sins that are “persistent” and seem to keep coming up again and again.

Explain to your children that they need to keep coming back again and again to God, persevering in prayer, asking Him to help them overcome the temptation to \_\_\_\_\_(name a particular sin).

Have your children pray “in Jesus’ name” and assure them that Jesus has already won the victory over any sin Satan might send their way to tempt them.

## Relevant Scripture

1 Corinthians 15:57 “But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 John 5:3-5 “This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

## **Recommended resources**

### **Books**

*Faith Begins at Home*, by Mark Holmen. Gospel Light, 2005.

*FaithLaunch*, by John Trent, PhD, and Jane Vogel. Tyndale, 2008.

*Skid and the Too Tiny Tunnel*, by Jeffery Stoddard. Warner Press, 2009. Ages 4-7.

*The Berenstain Bears and a Job Well Done*, by Jan and Mike Berenstain. Zonderkidz, 2010. Ages 4-7.

### **DVDs / CDs**

*Adventures in Odyssey Life Lessons #6: Perseverance* (CD). Tyndale, 2005. Ages 8-12.

*Adventures in Odyssey Life Lessons #10: Excellence* (CD). Tyndale, 2006. Ages 8-12.

*Adventures in Odyssey #51: Take It From the Top* (CD). Tyndale, 2010. Ages 8 and up.

*Auto B Good: Traits of Faith* (DVD). Rising Star Studios, 2011. Ages 2-6.

*Essentials of Parenting: Raising Kids With a Faith That Lasts* (DVD). Focus on the Family, Tyndale, 2009.