**June 6th, 2021: Elementary Sunday School Lesson
1 PETER Lesson 1: a living hope**

***Through this lesson, children learn that God uses the trials and hardships in our lives to refine our faith and provide opportunities for us to be a witness to others.***

**AS KIDS ARRIVE: LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT (Materials: paper, pencils, ribbons)**

***Children find joy in encouraging others.***

**PREPARATION:** Before class, cut a 10-inch length of ribbon for each child in class. Write the following keywords on the whiteboard: God, Heaven, Faith, Hope, and Rejoice.

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Distribute paper, pencils, and ribbons to the students.

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** The New Testament is full of letters that the apostles wrote to encourage fellow Christians. In fact, these very letters are still in use today to teach and encourage those who read them. In just a few minutes, we will be writing our own letters of encouragement. First, think of a fellow Christian you would like to encourage. Next, read the five keywords on the whiteboard and try to incorporate all of them within your letter. After finishing your letter, roll it up like a scroll, and tie a ribbon around it. Deliver your letters to the intended recipients as soon as possible after class.

**Discussion Questions:**
1. Do you like to be encouraged by other people? *(Allow for discussion.)*
2. Who encourages you the most? *(Allow for discussion.)*
3. Is it important to encourage others? Why? *(Allow for discussion.)*4. What are some ways we can encourage other Christians?*(Allow for discussion.)*

**OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE & MEMORY WORK**

**"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." Romans 8:18 NIV**

**SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION
Introduction:** 1 Peter is a letter from the apostle Peter, written to encourage Christians who were scattered throughout the regions of Asia Minor because of persecution. Peter’s words encourage all believers by informing them that God uses trials to refine their faith and increase their witness.
 **Read 1 Peter 1:3-9 (A Living Hope)

Discussion Questions:**
1. From what do believers receive a living hope? *(Our living hope comes from the new birth given by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)*
2. What will never happen to our spiritual inheritance in Heaven? *(It will never perish, spoil, or fade.)*
3. By what is our faith shielded? *(God's Power.)*
4. How long will children of God suffer grief in all kinds of trials? *(A little while.)*
5. Why does God allow hardships to occur in the lives of believers?*(Hardships refine a believer's faith and prove that it is genuine.)*
6. What is the goal of our faith? *(The salvation of our souls.)*

 **CLASS EXERCISE: WHAT ENCOURAGES YOU? (Materials: printed activity sheet, pencils)**

***Children reflect on things they look forward to while learning that their greatest encouragement comes from Jesus.***

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Distribute activity sheets and pencils. If time permits, students may color the activity page as well.

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** Please take a few minutes to complete the activity "What Encourages You?" You will be asked to list things that you look forward to on a yearly, monthly, and daily basis. Once everyone has completed the activity, I will ask you some questions.

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What are some of the things you look forward to throughout the year? *(Allow for discussion.)*
2. Does having the ability to look forward to something help you make it through the tough parts of your day? Why? *(Knowing that the problem won't last forever gives us hope. For example, the math test may be difficult, but we can look forward to playing with our friends after school.)*
3. From whom should a child of God draw the most hope and encouragement? Why? *(From Jesus Christ. We know that He paid the price for our sins, so that we can be with Him in Heaven for eternity.)*
4. How small do our earthly problems appear knowing that we will spend eternity with Jesus? *(We can find great hope in knowing that our earthly problems will last but a little while, compared to the eternal joy we will have with Jesus in Heaven.)*

**ALTERNATE CLASS EXERCISE: WHY STRUGGLE? OBJECT TALK (Materials: crackers, peanut butter or jelly, knife)**

***Without Jesus, even some of the simplest things in life become quite difficult.***

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Place all of the materials on the table. Select a volunteer from the class to help with the object lesson. You will explain to the volunteer that they are to take a few crackers, open the jar of peanut butter, take the knife, and spread peanut butter neatly on the crackers. However, they must do this with one arm behind their back.

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** Today, we are going to learn how important it is to have Jesus in our life. Our volunteer is going to help us. Are you ready? *(Explain to the volunteer what he or she must do, and then have the class watch as the feat is attempted.)*

Trying to live our lives without Jesus is sort of like trying to make a peanut butter cracker with one hand behind our backs. Without Jesus, everything becomes more difficult, harder to bear. Some things may even seem impossible without the Lord’s help. Especially dealing with difficulties and hardship. However, with Jesus, our burdens are lighter. The Bible says, “Cast your cares on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” Psalm 55: 22.

And in the book of Philippians, the Apostle Paul wrote, "God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19.

When we trust in Jesus, He will always be there to help, no matter what!

**Discussion Questions:**
1. As children, what are some difficulties you face and how can trusting in Jesus help?
2. What things would be difficult for your parents without getting help from Jesus?

**APPLICATION:** Christians will have trials and hardships while on earth. While going through such times is not pleasant, we can gain strength in knowing that God is using these times to perfect our faith. We also find hope in knowing that our faith is shielded by God's Power. As we navigate our way through the tough times, several things happen; our faith is refined and proved genuine, we acquire insight on how to minister to others who are going through similar circumstances, and we provide opportunities for other Christians to use their gifts to minister and encourage us.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**What we learned:** Today, your child learned that God uses the trials and hardships in his or her life to prefect his or her faith and prove that it is genuine. Your child also learned that his or her faith is shielded by God's power and that his or her spiritual inheritance will never perish, spoil or fade. In addition, your child learned that he or she could use the problems that he or she endures to help minister to others. (Scripture used: 1 Peter 1:3-9)

**Memory Verse:** "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." Romans 8:18 NIV Practice this verse several times with your child during the week. This will help your child remember the verse and it will help to reinforce what he or she learned during class.

**Suggested Parent/Child Activity:** Help your child make a list of Christians in his or her life that may need encouragement. Talk about different ways your child can then encourage these people. Some examples include: (1) Write a thank-you note to the pastor or Sunday school teacher; (2) Tell someone in the choir that his or her singing inspires you to worship God; and/or (3) Tell a friend that you admire the way he or she continually looks for ways to introduce others to Jesus.

**Daily Prayer:** Dear Lord, we know that we will have trials and hardships in this life, Thank You for using these things to refine us spiritually and to perfect our faith. Help us to use these tough times to minister to others who are going through similar circumstances. Help us to look for ways to encourage fellow Christians in their spiritual walk. Amen.