

Keep Holding On

Bible Story: Keep Holding On (Stephen) • Acts 6:1–7:60

Bottom Line: Keep going because God knows the end of the story.

Memory Verse: *Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up.* Galatians 6:9 (NIRV)

Life App: Determination—Deciding it's worth it to finish what you started

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (Small Groups, 15 minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Thank God that when life is scary and hard, He is there to help us through. Pray that this truth would be comforting for kids who are in difficult or uncertain circumstances. Pray for wisdom as you guide today's conversation, that you would be able to speak words of truth and encouragement.

1. Early Arriver

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Offering container, children's books or coloring books, crayons (if using coloring books)

What You Do:

- While your few arrive, encourage them to choose a book to read or choose a page in a coloring book to work on.
- While kids are reading/coloring ask:
 - What's your all-time favorite book?
 - What's your all-time favorite movie?
 - What's your favorite part of the story in those books and movies?

2. In The Know

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Timer or stopwatch

What You Do:

- Divide your group into two teams to play charades.
- Choose one team to go first.
- The first team will choose a teammate to act out the secret word. (Remind kids that there's no talking and no sound effects in charades!)
- Whisper a charades word into the first kid's ear and start the timer for 60 seconds.

- That player’s team will attempt to guess what their teammate is acting out. If they don’t get it right in 60 seconds, the other team gets a chance to guess!
- Regardless of which team wins the round, it’s the next team’s turn to choose someone to act out a clue while they guess.
- Rotate actors so that everyone has a chance to act out a clue.

Sample charades words: (feel free to come up with some of your own)

1. Dog
2. Fireman
3. Surfer
4. Football coach
5. Soccer player
6. Teacher
7. Fish
8. Shark
9. Figure skater
10. Mail carrier

What You Say:

“I love a good game of charades! You all did a great job of telling a story with no words so your friends could figure out what you were. What do you think was the easiest to guess? (*Allow time for responses.*) What do you think was the hardest to guess? (*Allow time for responses.*) **[Transition]**

Today in Large Group, we’re going to learn about someone who knew a lot of different stories. I guess that means He would be a really great charades contestant!”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (Small Groups, 25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

* 1. Determined to Review

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Ball of yarn or streamers

What You Do:

- Instruct kids to sit together in a circle.
- Number the kids from 1-10.
 - If you have more than 10 kids in your group, divide your kids into two groups.
 - If you have fewer than 10 kids, you can stop at whatever number of kids you have and assign a few kids two numbers.
 - Help kids practice and remember their numbers by calling out a few random numbers and instructing the kid with that number to raise their hand.
- As you read them a story, they should listen carefully for their number.

- When their number is called, they should raise their hand and the person who has the yarn ball will toss it to the person who raises their hand.
- As kids toss the yarn, they should make sure to hold onto a section of it and let it unwind as it makes its way to the next person, essentially “connecting” the person who tossed it with the person who received it.
- For example:
 - The first two sentences of the story say, “It happened on a Tuesday. Okay, maybe it wasn’t a Tuesday, but it was definitely **ONE** of the **SEVEN** days of the week.”
 - When kid **ONE** hears his number, he raises his hand, and you toss him the ball.
 - When kid **SEVEN** hears her number, she raises her hand, and kid **ONE** holds onto the yarn and then tosses her the ball.
 - There should now be a line of yarn between kids **ONE** and **SEVEN**.
- Read the entire story below, emphasizing the numbers whenever they come up and pausing for kids to toss the ball of yarn.
- At the end, you should end up with a web of yarn connecting all of your kids.
- When the story is finished and your group has created their knot, encourage them to let go of the yarn and try to untangle it!
 - This will be very challenging! Encourage kids to stick with it and show determination, but make sure they have fun with it and work together, too.

What You Say:

“It happened on a Tuesday. Okay, maybe it wasn’t a Tuesday, but it was definitely **ONE** of the **SEVEN** days of the week. Our main man, Steven, and **SIX** other men were chosen to help care for the new believers. See, the church was growing **TWO** quickly, so they needed a little help from some friends. People could tell right away that Steven was different and that he was filled with gr**EIGHT** power and kindness. Unfortunately, there were at least **THREE** or more bullies who were stirring up the crowd. You would think everyone would be giving Steven a high **FIVE** for the way he loved God and loved others so well. But, in the end, **NINE**ty percent of what the haters were saying about Steven were not the amazing things he did but lies that drew people to be so angry they wanted him gone forever. Despite the lack of truth and stubbornness of those surrounding him, Steven **TEN**aciously stood up **FOUR** his faith. He knew God was with him to the very end and realized that he could keep going because God knows the end of the story. *(Allow time for kids to drop the yarn and try to untangle it.)*”

“Great job making that knot of yarn and trying to untangle it! What a fun way to talk about the story. Steven’s story got a bit twisted as well, didn’t it? What were your favorite parts of the story? *(Allow time for responses.)* I love how if anyone had a reason to give up and not be determined, it was Stephen. But Stephen knew he could **[Bottom Line] keep going because God knows the end of the story.** And because he kept going, Jesus’ message of hope spread throughout the entire world, ending up with us talking about it today! That’s a pretty amazing ending to Stephen’s story of determination!”

2. And Then!

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: “And Then!” Activity Page, paper, markers

What You Do:

- Divide kids into four teams (or teams of three kids each).
- Give each team a story starter from the Activity page, some paper, and markers.
- Instruct kids to read their story starter together as a group and to dream up a super cool ending.
- They can use the paper and markers to write or draw out their ideas.
- Encourage them to make sure everyone gets to participate by trying to incorporate everyone’s ideas into their ending.
- After a few minutes of working together, give each team a couple minutes to present their stories to the rest of the group.

What You Say:

“Wow! We have some seriously creative friends in our group. It was great to hear how the characters in your story showed determination in spite of the obstacles in their way. You know, there are days when all we see are the obstacles to our story. We can’t imagine how a particular situation will ever get better. When we’re struggling at school, or the grownups at home aren’t getting along, it’s hard to think of how that might end well. But we can **[Bottom Line] keep going because God knows the end of the story.**”

[Make It Personal] (Share a time when you were overwhelmed by an obstacle or challenge and you decided to trust God because you knew He had a plan. If you have a story about how things didn’t get better immediately, but you knew God was with you, share that one!)

3. Verse Unwrapped

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Winter gloves, candy

What You Do:

- Review Galatians 6:9 aloud together.
- Instruct your few to sit in a circle.
- Give each of them a piece of candy, but tell them to not eat it yet!
- Kids will take turns going around the circle attempting to open the candy while wearing the gloves.
- As the first kid tries to open the candy, the rest of the group should slowly say the verse.
- If they unwrap their candy successfully, they can eat it.
- If they can’t unwrap the candy before the entire verse gets said, they have to wait until the end of the game!

- Continue taking turns passing around the gloves and reciting the memory verse as kids attempt to open their candy.
- Kids will most likely not be able to open the candy while wearing the gloves, so the goal is to show determination and to have the group say the verse several times together.
- Once you are finished with the game, allow kids to enjoy their candy!

What You Say:

“Nothing helps me stay determined like my favorite candy! Watching you work THAT hard to get to that candy was impressive. You didn’t know if or when you’d actually be able to get to your candy, but you did a great job showing determination. After all the times we said our verse just now, you should definitely have it memorized at this point!

“A lot of times, we don’t know what’s going to happen. Someone in our family is sick, we’re struggling with math at school, or we’re just having a hard time getting along with our family. We can always **[Bottom Line] keep going because God knows the end of the story.** We can trust Him to help us stay determined because He knows what’s going to happen.”

Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Help kids get into pairs.
- Ask them to think about something they need prayer for, like determination to finish the school year strong or prayer for a family member who’s sick.
- Give kids a couple minutes to share their prayer requests with their partner.
- Then close out by praying over your group.

What You Say:

“God, even though we don’t have the full picture of every life event, we are grateful to serve a God who always has a plan. No matter what is happening, we can be comforted knowing that You have a plan and You know the end of the story. When we’re scared or frustrated, remind us that we can **[Bottom Line] keep going because God knows the end of the story.**”

As adults arrive to pick up, ask your kids to share a bit of the story ending they created today! Prompt them to share that although we don’t always know what the end of the story is going to look like, we can **[Bottom Line] keep going because God knows the end of the story!**