

# GOD OFFERS HOPE INSTEAD OF HOPELESSNESS

STORY: NEW CREATION / YEAR: VALUE

## BIG TRUTH: GOD OFFERS HOPE INSTEAD OF HOPELESSNESS

Romans 5:1-5; 8:18-23; 15:13; Colossians 1:21-23; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 6:17-20

## BIBLE VERSE: 1 PETER 1:3

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”*

## BIG IDEAS

- Our sin makes us hopeless because it causes us to place our hope in empty things.
- Through Jesus we can be born to a hope that is alive.
- The hope that we can have in God is greater than our circumstances, hardships, and losses.
- Our hope compels us to live today in light of the day when Jesus comes again.

## BIBLE STORY: ACTS 4-5.

The disciples suffered many things after Jesus died and ascended to heaven. They were arrested multiple times, beaten, threatened with death, yet they found joy in being so mistreated. They knew that their suffering was because of their faithfulness to Christ. Even in the midst of their suffering, they found hope because they trusted in Jesus.

## STORY: NEW CREATION

Part of the beauty of the gospel is that God does not just rescue us from the power of sin, but He is also making everything new. God offers new creation to those who place their faith in Jesus. This newness comes in two ways. The first is that by breaking the power of sin, Jesus is making men and women into brand new people with new identities. Second, God is not only making people new, but He is also going to make a new heaven and a new earth for us to live on and worship Him in.

## BIG AIMS



### Every child should know that:

- God offers us new life (new desires, purpose) through Jesus



### Every child should feel:

- The need to live differently because of Jesus



### Every child should:

- See life in light of God's promises to those who are in Jesus



### Every child should want:

- To be freed and rescued from their sin and given new life in Jesus

## FAMILY DEVOTION: HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS

Peter, John, and the other disciples faced great trials because they refused to stop proclaiming the truth of the gospel. Though they faced great suffering, they never lost hope because their hope was in Jesus. Jesus gives hope to the hopeless.

# GOD OFFERS HOPE INSTEAD OF HOPELESSNESS

## BIBLE VERSE: 1 PETER 1:3

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”*

### We can have hope because Jesus paid our sin debt.

- In our sin, we have no hope.
- Our sin leaves us dead and without any hope of a peaceful future.
- We reject God and are separated from Him in our sin.
- Because God sent Jesus to pay our sin debt, we can have hope.
- Jesus died for our sin and now we have hope of being forgiven through Him.
- This hope is true and eternal.

### Jesus’ death and resurrection give us true hope.

- God made a way for our sins to be forgiven when He sent Jesus to live a perfect life.
- Jesus took on our sin and paid our debt. Because He paid our debt, we can have our sin forgiven.
- This forgiveness gives us hope now as we live for Christ.
- Jesus’ resurrection gives us hope for the future.
- Because Jesus rose from the dead, we know that we, too, will rise from the dead to new life.
- Because of Jesus, we have hope now and in the future.

### We can have true, eternal hope in Jesus.

- The only true hope is found in Jesus.
- Any other thing or person we hope in is not true hope because those things or people are not eternal.
- Our hope in Jesus is secure and everlasting.
- We can truly hope in Him because He is everlasting and His love for us is everlasting.
- We can hope in Him because His Word is always true.
- He will always take care of us and watch over us.
- Hope in Jesus is true hope.

## BIBLE STORY: ACTS 4-5

### Opening Illustration:

Divide the children into small groups. Give each group construction paper and pencils. Have each group trace one another’s hands. After they finish, have the children write their names on the hands and then write something that God offers to us, such as His hope and friendship. Help the children glue or tape their hands to a paper plate to make a wreath around the edge of the paper plate. Talk with the children about how God offers us many things. He offers us hope and friendship. He offers us new life. All of these things are offered to us through Jesus.

# GOD OFFERS HOPE INSTEAD OF HOPELESSNESS

## BIG IDEA: OUR SIN MAKES US HOPELESS BECAUSE IT CAUSES US TO PLACE OUR HOPE IN EMPTY THINGS.

### Sin is the root of our hopelessness.

- In the beginning, God's creation was perfect. There was no sin. There was no disease, sorrow, or death.
- When man sinned, death entered the world and sin entered the heart of man.
- The sin in man's heart causes hopelessness.
- It is the root of sorrow and pain in this life.
- Because our hearts are captive to our sin, we experience hopelessness.

### Sin causes us to reject God and hope in false gods.

- Our sin blinds us to the truth.<sup>1</sup>
- It causes us to reject the true God and turn to other gods.
- We make other things gods in our hearts. We worship false gods and idols instead of worshiping the one true God.
- We love other things more than we should and experience sorrow when those things fade away.
- Sin causes us to hope in the false gods and idols that we create.
- We hope that they will bring us joy and happiness, but they cannot.

### Sin causes us to hope in empty things.

- Our hearts cause us to place value on things that do not last.
- We seek after things that have no eternal value. We seek things that are worldly and materialistic.
- When these things inevitably go away, we feel great sorrow because we placed our hope in them.
- When we hope in anything other than Jesus, we are placing our hope in an empty thing.
- Only Jesus is eternal and everlasting. Only He can bring us true hope.

What causes us to hope in empty things? (Our sin causes us to hope in empty things.)



Give every child a balloon. Have the children name ways that Jesus gives us hope. Every time a child names something, have the children blow into their balloons. Once the balloons are blown up, have the children name the empty things we hope in. Every time an empty thing is named, have the children release some of the air in their balloon. Remind them that our sin causes us to hope in empty things.

1. 2 Corinthians 4:4: The prince of this world blinds us to the truth and gives us false hope.

# GOD OFFERS HOPE INSTEAD OF HOPELESSNESS

## BIG IDEA: THROUGH JESUS WE CAN BE BORN TO A HOPE THAT IS ALIVE.<sup>2</sup>

### Jesus' resurrection brings us great hope.

- Jesus' death on the cross brings us hope of forgiveness and reconciliation with God.
- His resurrection brings us hope of life eternally.
- When our hope rests in Jesus, we can have hope that is everlasting.
- Without believing and trusting in Jesus, we have no hope.
- Because Jesus rose to life again, those who believe in Him have the hope of being raised to life again, too.



Divide the children into small groups and have them make a list of things that bring them hope. Let them share their list with the class and then remind them that hope in Jesus is a hope that is alive.

### Jesus is the way in which we receive true joy and hope.

- Apart from Jesus, there is no true joy or hope.
- Only through Jesus can we truly feel joy.
- Only through faith and trust in Jesus can we truly feel hope.
- Jesus' disciples felt hope and joy even though Jesus was no longer physically with them.
- Their faith and hope were not in worldly things, but in the eternal hope of life with Jesus.
- They could be joyful in all things because of their hope in Jesus.

*Through whom do we find hope? (We find hope in Jesus because He rose to life again.)*

2. Psalm 147:11: Hope in God is eternal and everlasting hope.

# GOD OFFERS HOPE INSTEAD OF HOPELESSNESS

## BIG IDEA: THE HOPE THAT WE CAN HAVE IN GOD IS GREATER THAN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, HARDSHIPS, AND LOSSES.<sup>3</sup>

### God is greater than our circumstances.

- God is the mighty Creator of everything.
- He is more powerful than anything.
- He is mightier than any difficulty we may face.
- When our situation is not like we want it to be, we can trust in God to care for us because He is greater than any difficult thing.
- When our circumstances are not as good as we'd like or they are very difficult, we can trust that God is bigger and mightier than they are.
- God is not overcome by our circumstances. He is not surprised by our circumstances.
- The disciples faced many circumstances. In many situations, they were threatened with death, beaten, or thrown into jail.
- In all of their circumstances, they continued to hope in God and they found joy in all circumstances.



On one side of the board write “God is greater than...” Help the children name the many things in our lives that God is greater than. List those things on the board and remind the children that our hope in God is greater because God is greater.

### God is greater than our hardships.

- We will all face hardships in our lives.
- We will face sickness, sorrow, broken relationships, and even death.
- God is greater than any hardship we will face.
- Our hope in Him will prove to be faithful and steadfast because He overcomes all things.
- The disciples faced many hardships, but their hope was in Jesus and they remained faithful and true to sharing the gospel because of their hope.

### God is greater than our losses.

- Even when we lose something dear to us, we can still hope in God.
- Even when death comes to someone close to us, we can still hope in God.
- Jesus rose to life again after paying our sin debt on the cross.
- His resurrection gives us eternal hope that we will live again.
- We can trust even when it feels as if we've lost everything.

What is God greater than? (God is greater than our circumstances, hardships and losses.)

3. 1 Thessalonians 5:18: We can give thanks in all circumstances and find joy in any situation because our hope is in God.

# GOD OFFERS HOPE INSTEAD OF HOPELESSNESS

## BIG IDEA: OUR HOPE COMPELS US TO LIVE TODAY IN LIGHT OF THE DAY WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN.<sup>4</sup>

### When Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised to return again to reunite with His followers.

- We have great hope in knowing that Jesus will return again one day.
- Even when life here on earth becomes difficult and hard, we can look to His future return and find great hope.
- Jesus is true to His Word and we can trust that He will come again and right all of the wrongs in the world.
- This promise gives us great hope to continue to live for Jesus today.

### Because Jesus is coming again, we can live today with that hope.

- Hope in Jesus is not futile. It is not pointless and it will not disappoint.
- We can hope in Jesus and know that He will do what He says He will do.
- His Word is true and His promises are always fulfilled.
- Jesus has promised to return and we can trust in that promise.
- The disciples could rejoice in their persecution because they knew that Jesus would return.
- They lived their daily lives in the hope that one day Jesus would return and make all things new again.
- We can live today in the hope that Jesus is returning. His promised return can give us hope to continue living joyfully for Him in all circumstances.



Divide the children into small groups and assign each group a set of verses concerning Jesus' second coming to look up. Once they've looked the verses up, have them describe what the second coming of Jesus will be like. Talk with them about how we can have hope today because Jesus is coming again.

*Why does the promise of Jesus' return give us hope? (We can know that He will return and make all things new.)*

4. Titus 2:13: *The second coming of Christ is our blessed hope. It is the reason we can have joy every day regardless of our circumstances.*

# GOD OFFERS HOPE INSTEAD OF HOPELESSNESS

## HOOKS



### Bold Hope

Give each child a piece of construction paper. Help them use the construction paper to make a megaphone. (A quick Google search will yield instructions on how to create a megaphone.) Once the children have created their megaphones, have them take turns using their megaphone to boldly proclaim why we can have hope in Jesus. Talk with them about how Jesus gives us true hope because His promises are true.



- The world offers us false hope. When we hope in the things the world offers, we hope in empty things.
- Jesus offers us true hope that is always fulfilled.
- We can have hope in Jesus because His promises are true.



### Empty Hope

Play a game of musical chairs with the children. When a child loses a chair, have that child name one thing that brings empty hope, such as money. Once every child has a chance to name something that brings empty hope, lead the children in a discussion about how Jesus offers true hope.

- The things of the world do not bring us true hope.
- When we hope in things that don't last, our hope is empty.
- When we hope in Jesus, our hope is true and everlasting.
- Jesus always keeps His promises and we can trust in Him to always do what He says He's going to do.