



A Cloud of Witnesses

(based on Hebrews 11:1–12:2)

Marina's house was usually full of believers. Every day the followers of Jesus gathered. They prayed, sang songs to God, and shared a meal. They also told wonderful stories from the Scriptures.

One day, the believers were excited because a letter arrived from one of the church leaders. The people gathered around to listen. Marina sat quietly listening to her father read the letter aloud.

Dear friends,

We are all on a journey of faith, but we are not alone. We are part of a huge family called the family of God.

Think about all the faith heroes who have gone before us. They walk beside us on our journey. We cannot see them with our eyes, but we find them in the Scriptures.

Their stories fill our hearts with hope and encouragement.

Marina thought about all the stories that her parents had told her.

"What about Noah?" she cried. "God told Noah that a flood was coming. Noah could not see the waves rising, but he trusted God and built a large boat to save his family."

"Noah had faith," agreed her father.

Marina's friend Alexander spoke up. "I love the story of Abraham," he cried. "God told Abraham to leave everything behind and go to a new land. Abraham could not see the new land, but he trusted God and left his home."

Soon everyone remembered the stories from the Scriptures. There were so many wonderful stories about people who believed God and followed God's ways.

The people talked about their stories for hours. When they finished, Marina's father continued reading the letter.

Dear friends, we could talk about our faith heroes for hours and hours. We can learn so much from them. Remember all these amazing people walk beside us.

Do you know what this means? A great crowd of God's people surrounds us. They cheer for us as we learn to follow God's way.

So friends, never give up. Remember our stories. Learn from them and do not lose heart for we are not alone.

Marina's father finished reading the letter and put it away. The letter was passed from one church to another and eventually became part of our Bible. Now God's people will always know that they are part of the great crowd called God's family.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Today's story is about a house church where believers would pray, sing hymns, and share a meal. Does your family do this only at church? Where else might you encounter these activities?
- Talk with your children about what qualities a hero would need in order to step up in the moment.



Responding to God's Grace

- If there are stories of heroism in the news, share those with your children. Even ordinary people are sometimes heroes.
- Search for stories of children who are heroes, and enjoy those with your children.
- Let your children draw a large picture that includes many heroes. The heroes could be from the Bible or modern times. Encourage them to tell the heroes' stories while they draw.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Think of some modern heroes of the faith that your family knows or knew. Remember the stories, and give thanks to God for the difference those heroes have made in the lives of people you know.
- Read Hebrews 11. Help your children think of a symbol to go with each hero of the faith, such as stars in heaven for Abraham, a baby for Sarah, and a burning bush for Moses. There are many more possibilities! Use cardstock to make a matching game. Put each hero's name on a card and a symbol for them on another card. Enjoy matching the cards. Let everyone name their favorite hero.
- Pray:

God, we thank you for giving us heroes who make a difference. Help us to follow their example. Amen.