

1

Hear Hope

JOSHUA 2; MATTHEW 1:5



GOAL

By hearing the story of Rahab, the two spies, and their hopes for their future, the children begin to associate hope with God's promises and actions rather than with wishes.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

God of our hopes, help us to listen for the good news of your coming realm that we may work with you to bring this hope into reality. Amen.

THIS SESSION

In Hebrew, the word for *hope* and *rope* are the same word: *tikvah*. This session introduces the practice of hope and the metaphor of rope that will be found throughout this unit. We hear hope in the stories of God's actions with God's people and the hope it then gives others.

THE BIBLE STORY

Rahab and the spies may not be as familiar to children as many of the Bible stories, but it uses a rope as both a means of escape for the spies and as a signal of deliverance for Rahab and her family. Both of these are signs of hope to the parties involved. Rahab hears the hope in the Hebrew people's story of their God's deliverance before she even meets the spies, which leads to her hope for a better life. This in turn will put her in the ancestry of Jesus through her marriage to someone among the Hebrew people.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Hope and wishing are often confused, for all of us, but especially for young children. Since Christian hope is grounded in the promises of our faithful God, it is harder to grasp for young children who do not have that perspective. Hope becomes wishing, and wishing is fleeting and uncertain. Help children differentiate between wishing for things or events and hearing the hope found in God's promises.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "Coloring Hope" (p. 6): Cut out ornaments from card-stock copies of Resource Page 1.
- "Hope Is the Rope" (p. 8): Obtain rope long enough that everyone in the group can hold onto it. Save for sessions 2, 3, and 4.

Depending on the options you choose:

- "Finding Hope in the Church" (p. 10): Enlist the help of people in the church to share about the hope found in their ministry, such as music, child care, food/kitchen, mission, teaching, and so forth. Tell them that the children will visit them in the places in the church where these ministries might take place or that you have established as a meeting place.
- "Making Rope" (p. 10): Obtain several skeins of red yarn in different shades and cut 18" lengths, preparing six strands for each child. Make several extras to keep for future sessions for children not present today.
- "Planting Bulbs of Hope" (p. 11): Obtain paperwhite bulbs, one or more for each child.



GETTING STARTED

-
- Card-stock ornaments cut from copies of Resource Page 1
 - Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils
 - Scissors
 - Single-hole punch
 - Clear contact paper (optional)

COLORING HOPE

A

Greet children as they arrive and provide each child with a card-stock ornament cut from copies of Resource Page 1 and crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils. Invite the children to color the ornament. Read the word *Hope* on the ornament. Wonder together what hope means and if there are colors that might go with hope. Have the children put their name on the back of their ornaments.

Cover the ornaments with clear contact paper, if desired. This will keep the paper strong and avoid tearing. If you covered the ornaments with contact paper, cut them out again. Use the single-hole punch in the four spaces provided at the bottom of the ornament and the one hole at the top. Different materials will be hung from the ornament each session as reminders of hope. Set aside ornaments for “Making Rope” (p. 10).

-
- Rope

HOPE IS THE ROPE

AM QC

When everyone has arrived, gather the children and read the following litany that is in each session of this unit, inviting the children to repeat the bolded lines as they come to know it. Invite the children to grab hold of the rope and raise it up as the line “hope is the rope” is spoken.

When we feel lost,
hope is the rope
helping us find our way home.

When things are beyond our control,
hope is the rope
keeping us secure.

In the darkness of the night,
hope is the rope
giving us something to hold on to.

When we feel alone,
hope is the rope,
with strands that bind us together,
helping us comfort and strengthen one another.
Thank God for the gift of hope.

-
- Bowl of water

BAPTISM HOPE

AM

Place a bowl of water in the center of the group. Tell the children that, when people are baptized, whether they are young or old, that is a sign of hope in God’s promises. Together, have people dip their fingers in the water and make a cross mark on the back of their other hand. Say to the group, “Through the waters of baptism, God claims you as God’s own beloved child. This is God’s promise.”



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

HOPES OR WISHES

G

Talk together about the difference between *hopes* and *wishes*. Help the children begin to understand that Christian hope is about God's promises, how God wants us to live, and how God wants the world to be. Wonder what this might be like, for example, God is always with us, Jesus loves us, the church is God's family, people are cared for, and so forth. Suggest that wishes are things we would like to happen, but we can't do anything about. Give some examples of these two ways of thinking from your own life.

Play a game to help identify hopes and wishes. Have the children stand on one side of the room and display two pieces of colored construction paper with the word *Hopes* on one and *Wishes* on the other. Place the cards cut from Resource Page 2 face down in a pile in front of the children and the two pads of sticky notes on either side of the cards. Tell the children that they will take turns drawing a card from the pile and handing it to you to read aloud. Then they need to decide if it is a hope or a wish and place the corresponding color sticky note on the construction paper that matches *Hopes* or *Wishes*.

Once all the cards have been read, review the cards and see where the children placed their sticky notes. Help with understanding, if necessary. Save the cards for "Acting Out Our Hope" (p. 11).

- Cards cut from Resource Page 2 with suggestions of your own added on the blank cards
- Two colors of sticky-note pads
- Two sheets of construction paper (corresponding colors to sticky-note pads)



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

RAHAB AND THE SPIES

C T

Read the adapted Bible story from Joshua 2 and Matthew 1:15 from Resource Page 3. Tell the children that the same Hebrew word for *hope* (*tikvah*) is also the word for *rope*. Ask them where they heard about a rope in this story. Wonder together where hope was in this story. Ask the children if Rahab was hoping or wishing for a new life and if the spies were hoping or wishing to be safe.

Show the YouTube video "God's People: Rahab" (bit.ly/FMRahab, 1:31) to reinforce the story and experience it visually. The video ends by linking Rahab to the genealogy of Jesus, just as the adapted Bible story does. After the video, ask the questions:

- Where did you see the rope?
- Where did you see hope?

- Resource Page 3
- Internet-connected device



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

- Rope
- Volunteers who are involved in various ministries of the church

FINDING HOPE IN THE CHURCH



Tell the children that you are taking them on a visit around the church to find hope. Invite them to hold onto the rope as you walk. As you travel from spot to spot, remind the children to hold onto the rope and think about where they hear hope in the stories of others.

Visit the places and people you have arranged to talk with you about where they find hope in their ministries. This might include a visit with the church musician(s), who might play a song of hope, or with the person who volunteers with the food bank or clothes closet to hear of someone who gained hope from what the church can provide. You might visit with a group that makes banners, prayer shawls, or quilts to hear about that ministry, or with a pastor or teacher who might tell a story about hope. Thank your volunteers for sharing a sense of hope where people are actively working with God's purpose in mind.

- Internet-connected device (optional)
- 18" lengths of six strands in various shades of red yarn for each child, and extra red yarn
- Duct tape (optional)
- Ornaments from "Coloring Hope" (p. 8)
- Single-hole punch

MAKING ROPE



Tell the children that they will make red rope like they heard Rahab use in the Bible story to remind them of Rahab's hope in God. Give each child six strands of yarn. Show the YouTube video "How to Make Yarn Rope—Creative Basics Episode 7" (bit.ly/FMMakingRope, 3:06) or have the children follow these directions. Assist as needed.

- Tie the strands together at one end. Secure that end to a doorknob, chair, or table leg, or tape it to a table.
- Begin twisting all six strands together very tightly. Start with the end that is secured and work outward.
- When the twisting has reached the end, hold it tight and have another person hook a finger in the middle of the twisted strands. Bring the end to the secured end, holding each tight, and have the person with their finger hooked in the middle let go. The two sides will twist together to form a rope.
- Knot the loose end.

Give the children their HOPE ornaments from "Coloring Hope" (p. 8). Help the children thread their rope through one of the holes at the bottom of the ornament. You may need to use the single-hole punch to widen the hole a bit so the rope fits through or tie several of the loose ends of the rope through the hole to hang the rope. Tie a piece of yarn in the top hole of the ornament so it may be hung. Invite the children to retell the story of Rahab and the spies, using their rope yarn as a symbol of hope in the story.

Tell the children you will keep their ornaments with you for each of the four sessions about *Hope* because they will be adding something each session to their ornaments. Save the ornaments for session 2, or if your space allows it, hang the ornaments in the room.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

ACTING OUT OUR HOPE

D AM

Gather the cards from “Hopes or Wishes” (p. 9) and put aside the *wishes* cards. Form pairs or triads and give each group one of the *hopes* cards. Read the cards for each group. Tell the children they can make up a skit about their card and how they would bring hope to that situation. For example, they might act out a scene of a child who would like a friend and they would bring hope to this child by sharing a toy or playing a game together. All children will do this at the same time, so that none feel awkward.

Invite groups who would like to share their skits with the rest of the children to do so and encourage others to share their ideas for bringing hope.

- Cards from “Hopes or Wishes”

PLANTING BULBS OF HOPE

NS M T X

Since this is the first of four sessions on *Hope*, it would be a good time to plant bulbs that may continue to grow over the time on this topic. Tell the children that planting seeds and bulbs is an exercise in hope. Explain that we know that this is the way God’s creation works: we plant, tend, and wait with expectation and hope for the growth.

Paperwhite bulbs are a good choice as they can be grown in a shallow pan, held in place by pebbles or marbles. Show the children the paperwhite bulbs and invite them to help you plant the bulbs. Have the children place the bulb, roots facing down, in the shallow pan, and then add pebbles or marbles to hold each bulb steady. Water should cover only the bottom quarter to third of the bulbs. Set the pan away from direct sunlight in a cool, dark place. Add water when the water level drops more than an inch below the stones.

Show the YouTube video “In the Bulb There Is a Flower, sing-along hymn with DisciplesNet Singers” (bit.ly/FMBulb, 3:10), playing the first verse to :48.

Tell the children that for the next three sessions they will watch the growth of these bulbs.

- Paperwhite bulbs, one or more for each child
- Pebbles or marbles
- Shallow pan
- Water
- Internet-connected device



FOLLOWING JESUS

Remind the children that Rahab’s hope led eventually to the birth of Jesus. Comment that, sometimes, we don’t know where our actions in hope will lead.

Invite the children to repeat after you and follow your motions as you pray:

God of hope, /
help us to hear the hope. (*cup hand by right ear*) /
May we hear others (*cup hand by left ear*) /
who need to hear hope this week. (*cup hand by right ear*) /
Amen. /



to help a child
who wants a friend

to have a purple
unicorn for a pet

to feed someone
who is hungry

to have all the
chocolate in the world

to help an older person
clear many leaves in
their yard

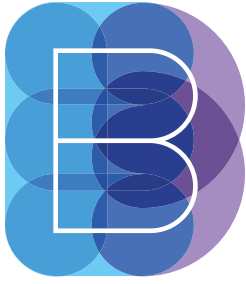
to meet a person from
TV or the movies

to share with a child
who has no toys

to fly like a bird

to know Jesus loves me

to eat cake and ice cream
for breakfast



BIBLE STORY

BASED ON JOSHUA 2 AND MATTHEW 1:15

Long ago, there was a woman named Rahab. She lived in Jericho.

One evening, Rahab heard a knock on her door. When she opened it, two men she didn't know were standing there. She could tell by how they were dressed that they weren't from the city.

"You must be the Hebrew people that we've heard so much about," she said. "We've heard how God parted the sea for you and has been with you in many battles."

"Please hide us," the men said. "Our leader, Joshua, sent us to the city to see if we would be welcome in Jericho, but the king heard and now he is after us."

Rahab thought about what she had heard about the Hebrew people. Her life was hard in Jericho. Perhaps it would be better with these people of God. She decided to help these spies. She took them up to the roof and hid them under the grain she was drying there.

Just then, there was a booming knock on the door. A group of soldiers, sent from the king, were standing on her doorstep. They said to her, "Bring out the men who have come. They have come to spy on us and learn how to beat us in battle."

Rahab decided to protect the spies with hope for a better life for herself and her family. She said, "True, the men came to me, but they ran away before the gate closed. I don't know where they went, but if you hurry, you may be able to catch them."

The soldiers left. After they were gone, Rahab went to the men and helped them escape over the wall of the city by using a red rope. Before they left, she made them promise that they would save her and all of her family when they came back.

The men agreed and told her to hang the same red rope in her window so that they would remember the promise they made to her.

Did they keep their promise? Did Rahab begin living with the Hebrew people? Our answer is in the beginning of Jesus' story. In the first chapter of Matthew, there is a long list of Jesus' ancestors, and Rahab's name is there in verse 15! Rahab's hope became part of Jesus' family. And Jesus is the hope of the whole world.

