

SECTION

1.4

God Is Our Strength



Introduction Activity (5 Minutes)

Option 1: Strongest Leader Contest

What You'll Need: Chair, books, boxes, tape, small pieces of furniture (optional: weights)

PREP: Acquire a box and place several heavy books inside. Tape the box shut.

Place a chair and other small pieces of furniture in the front of the room, along with the prepared box. (Optional: Place the weights in front of the class.)

Ask two leaders to participate in a "weight lifting" contest. Encourage them to ad lib and engage the kids in the activity.

STEP 1: Explain to the kids that two leaders were chosen to participate in the "Strongest Leader" contest. Encourage the kids to cheer on their leaders. Have the leaders take turns lifting the objects in the front of the classroom. After the leaders have attempted to lift the chosen objects, ask, "Can we really tell which leader was stronger in this activity? Why or Why not?" (Guide kids to see that there was no accurate way to measure their strength.)

STEP 2: Share these key concepts:

- We have to rely on the muscles in our legs and our arms to lift and carry heavy objects. We can train our bodies to become stronger, but no matter how strong we are, there are things that we would never be able to pick up or carry.
- Sometimes things in our life seem too big for us to handle, like when we are hurt by our friends or when we struggle with school or family situations. In these situations, we need to remember God is always with us.
- Our God is stronger than we can ever imagine. He created everything, and He holds the whole universe together. He promises to always be with us, and He will give us strength!

STEP 3: Transition into the main lesson by opening in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you and your kids understand the importance that God is our strength.

Notes:

SECTION

1.4

God Is Our Strength



Introduction Activity (5 Minutes)

Option 2: Which Is Stronger?

What You'll Need: Paper towels, water, plastic container, spray bottle, quarters

PREP: Purchase a roll of high-quality paper towels and a roll of generic, low-quality paper towels. Remove the packaging for both rolls. Gather a handful of quarters and a medium-size container.

Fill the spray bottle with water. Place the container, spray bottle, paper towels, and quarters near the front of the room.

STEP 1: Ask volunteers to test the strength of the two different brands of paper towels. Give one volunteer one section of the low-quality paper towels. Have that person hold the paper towel by its edges over the plastic container. Have the second volunteer spray water on the middle of the paper towel five times. Have the third volunteer add quarters to the middle of the paper towel, two at a time, until the paper towel rips from the weight. Have the class keep track of the number of quarters it took to break the towel.

STEP 2: Repeat the process with the second brand of paper towels.

Ask the following questions:

- Which was the stronger roll of paper towels? Why?
- Was this experiment an accurate way to measure the strength of the paper towels? Why or why not?
- What would have happened if we had tried to place a three pound dumbbell on the damp paper towel instead of the quarters?

STEP 3: Share these key concepts:

- Just like the water and the weight of the quarters tested the strength of the paper towels, we will have times in our lives when we feel weak because of struggles we face or circumstances that we cannot control.

- But we are not alone. God is our refuge and strength. He is always with us and promises to help us in times of trouble.
- An advocate has an opportunity to change someone's opinion of someone or something.
- Jesus Christ is our advocate. He goes before God on our behalf, and through Him, we have an opportunity to be right with God!

STEP 4: Transition into the main lesson by opening in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you and your kids understand the importance that God is our strength.

Notes:

SECTION

1.4

God Is Our Strength



Main Lesson Activity (10 Minutes)

Option 1: God's Strength in My Life

What You'll Need: Bibles, easel, whiteboard or pad of paper, markers, card stock or posters, pens or pencils, markers, colored pencils

PREP: Set up the easel and whiteboard or pad of paper in front of the room. Write the following references on the board or paper:

- Psalm 37:39
- Psalm 28:7
- Habakkuk 3:19
- Psalm 62:7

STEP 1: Read or recite this week's memory verse, Psalm 46:1. Repeat the verse a second time, pausing after each phrase.

- Our creator God is powerful. He controls the winds and the seas (Psalm 89:9). He holds the universe together (Hebrews 1:3). We cannot imagine how strong our God is (Psalm 147:5)!
- Our powerful God is our refuge and strength. When we face struggles or fear, or when we are tempted to sin, we can trust that God will help us and do what is best for us.
- Our loving God is always with us (Joshua 1:9). If we have trusted Jesus as Savior, we will ALWAYS have God's strength and power to help us through any situation we face.

STEP 2: Assign a verse to each pair of kids, and give each pair a sheet of card stock or a poster. Encourage the kids to read their verse together. Give kids three minutes to create a poster that displays how God's strength is described in their verse.

STEP 3: After three minutes, have kids share their posters.

Share these key concepts:

- God is a stronghold or strength in times of trouble (Psalm 37:39, Psalm 46:1). We can trust Him when life seems out of control.

- God is our shield (Psalm 18:1-2, 28:7). When we are tempted to sin, or when other people hurt us, we can turn to Him. He will protect and defend us when we trust in Him.
- God's strength gives us victory. When we trust in God's strength, we can face anything that comes our way. (Habakkuk 3:19, Philippians 4:13).
- God is our rock. When life seems uncertain and we don't know what will happen, we can trust that God is our rock and our salvation. He does not change, and His promises will ALWAYS come true (Psalm 62:7). We can trust that whatever happens is for our good and God's glory.

Step 4: Repeat Psalm 46:1 again, but encourage kids to change the word "our" to "my." Ask, "How can God be your strength this week?" Encourage kids to claim God's promise to help them through that situation.

Step 5: Follow up with the Lesson Application suggestions and Sum It Up statements from the Large Group Guide.

Notes:

SECTION

1.4

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Main Lesson Activity (10 Minutes)

Option 2: God's Strength on Display

What You'll Need: Bibles, paper, pens or pencils, music (optional: CD or CD player or computer or smartphone)

PREP: Write each of the following references on a sheet of paper: Exodus 7:14-19, Exodus 14:21-29, Jeremiah 10:12-13. Choose three leaders, and give each leader one of the papers. Choose a favorite song about God's strength and be prepared to sing it with the class. Optional: Use a CD and CD player to play the song, or download the song and play it through your computer or smartphone.

STEP 1: Tell kids that God's strength was on display throughout the Bible. Encourage them to divide into three groups, and assign one of the leaders to each group. Have the leaders read the verses and discuss with their groups how God's strength is on display in each of those verses.

STEP 2: After three minutes, have the group with the Exodus 7:14-19 passage share their information.

Share these key concepts:

- God called Moses to lead His people, the Israelites, out of slavery.
- Pharaoh did not want to let the Israelites go. God sent 10 plagues to show the Egyptians that He is the one true God.
- God's strength was on display when He turned water into blood and sent frogs, lice, flies, and disease on the animals. He caused painful boils to infect people and animals. He sent hail and locusts to destroy crops and food. He sent darkness and death to the firstborn. These 10 plagues displayed God's amazing strength and proved God's awesome power.

STEP 3: Have the group with the Exodus 14:21-29 passage share their information.

Share these key concepts:

- After God sent the 10 plagues, Pharaoh allowed God's people to leave. However, he soon grew angry and chased after them.
- God's people were stuck. Pharaoh's army was coming after them, but in front of them was the Red Sea!
- God demonstrated His mighty power by parting the Red Sea. His people could walk across on dry land, and God destroyed the Egyptian army who tried to follow after them.

STEP 4: Have the group with the Jeremiah 10:12-13 passage share their information.

Share these key concepts:

- God created the heavens and earth, just by speaking (Genesis 1:1).
- He created the whole universe and knows every part of it.
- The wind and the waves are in His control.
- All of nature shows God's amazing strength on display.

STEP 5: Explain to kids that the all-mighty, awesome God displays His strength in everything we see in creation. Yet this powerful God loves us and chooses to display His strength to us in our lives. Read or recite this week's memory verse, Psalm 46:1. Repeat the verse a second time, pausing after each phrase.

Share these key concepts:

- Our creator God is powerful. He holds the universe together. We cannot imagine how strong our God is!
- Our powerful God is our refuge and strength. When we face struggles, when we are tempted to sin, or when we face danger, we can trust that God will help us and do what is best for us.
- Our loving God is always with us. If we have trusted Jesus as Savior, we will ALWAYS have God's strength and power to help us through any situation we face.

STEP 6: Ask kids to share common troubles that kids their age might face (e.g., bullying, parents fighting, controlling their tempers, etc.). Explain to them that God wants to be THEIR refuge and strength.

Share these key concepts:

- God is our strength when we are weak. We can turn to Him whenever we need help (2 Corinthians 12:9, Proverbs 18:10).
- God promises that He will give us strength to do the right thing (Philippians 4:13).

STEP 7: Tell kids that we can praise God for being our strength. End the lesson by singing together a song about God's strength (e.g., "Blessed Be Your Name," "Blessed Be the Name of the Lord," "You Are My All in All," etc.)

STEP 8: Follow up with the Lesson Application suggestions and Sum It Up statements from the Large Group Guide.