

IDENTITY & SELF ACCEPTANCE | WEEK 16

LEADERS GOAL

Help students recognize God's loyal, steadfast love and encourage them to trust Him with the hopes they are holding onto.

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 17:1-19

ACTIVITIES

Gold star constellation cards

PRAY

SUPPLIES

- Black construction paper, for Gold Star Constellation Cards
- Gold and silver star stickers, for Gold Star Constellation Cards
- Gold and silver Sharpie Markers, for Gold Star Constellation Cards
- Bible open to Genesis 17:1-19

BOTTOM LINE

We can trust God with our hopes, even when it's hard.

AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

As students come in, ask, "Have you ever wished for something and then it happened? What did you wish for? How did it feel when you got what you wished for?"

STORY CONNECTION

Today we are talking about having hope in the midst of pain and waiting.

Under Scar's reign, the Pride Lands are nearly destroyed. Nala and the Pride hoped for their bad situation to improve. They didn't know how or when Scar would be overthrown, but they didn't lose hope, and didn't give up despite their circumstances.

Eventually, Nala decided to leave and seek help. She was happy to find Simba and convinced him to return and fight for the Pride Lands.

OUR STORIES

- What are you wishing and hoping for now?
- When you're waiting for something good to happen, what's the hardest part?
- Have there been times when things didn't go your way and you didn't get what you wanted, but it turned out OK or better in the end?
- How do you keep going when you don't know how things will work out?
- How is hope different from just wishing?

TRUTH & TREASURE

Having hopes and expectations is a normal part of life. Sometimes we receive answers right away and other times it's tough and disappointing to wait for our hopes to come true.

Instead of getting discouraged, we can trust in God's goodness and love.

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him. Romans 8:28 NIV

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

Waiting doesn't mean God has forgotten. Sometimes waiting is part of how hope grows.

Abraham and Sarah Trusted God for a Family - Genesis 17:1-19

Abraham and Sarah hoped for children. It seemed impossible especially since they were getting older. God promised Abraham that he would have a family, and his children would be as many as there are stars in the sky. He even told Abraham to count the stars. Have you ever tried to count the stars?

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation, and all the families of the earth would be blessed through him.

Well, Sarah was hurt and laughed at God's news because she was 89 years old, but Abraham believed. He did not give up hope. When Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90, they had a baby boy. They named him Isaac, which means "he laughs."

They celebrated God who is loyal. Remember our word *khesed*, which means loyal love.

God's character is loyal. He keeps His promises.

- Ask students to close their eyes and imagine looking up at a night sky full of stars.
- Invite them to think quietly about one hope they are holding onto right now.

Then ask:

- Does this hope feel close or far away?
- Does it feel easy to believe, or hard?

Students don't have to share aloud—this is a personal moment.

Just like Abraham couldn't actually count all the stars, he couldn't fully see how God's promise would work out. But he trusted God anyway.

DISCOVERY

CRAFT | Gold Star Constellation Cards

Supplies:

- Black construction paper
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Gold and silver Sharpie markers
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Instructions

1. Give each student a piece of black construction paper.
2. Students use the gold and silver star stickers to create their own constellation. There is no right or wrong design.
3. Students may connect the stars with lines, add extra details, or give their constellation a name.

After finishing their constellation, every student chooses ONE of the following prompts and writes it clearly on their paper (front or back) using a gold or silver marker:

1. "I will keep hoping, even when things are hard."
2. "I don't know how this will turn out, but I won't give up hope."
3. "I am choosing hope, even while I wait."
4. "Hope means trusting that good is still possible."
5. "Even in the dark, I can hold on to hope."

After writing their chosen prompt, students decide:

- Option A: Card for Someone Else
- If they know a friend or family member who is hoping for something, they can turn their constellation into a card and add one short encouraging line (e.g., "I'm cheering for you," "Don't give up," "You're not alone").
- Option B: Reminder for Themselves
- Students can keep their constellation and add one word or phrase that represents what they are hoping for (e.g., peace, courage, healing, confidence).

Hope doesn't mean we know what will happen next. Hope means choosing to believe and keep going, even when the answers aren't clear yet.

PRAYER

Thank you, God, that we can have hope in you and your promises even when things are hard or we have to wait. We trust you because you have good plans for us and you are loyal. When we feel tired of waiting or hoping, we will remember Abraham and Sarah. Amen.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pray together with students for the things they are hoping or wishing for. Encourage them to pray for each other through the week.