

Courage from Jesus

Bible Story • Paul's Courageous Nephew • Acts 23:12-35



God's Word

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith;
be men of courage; be strong."

1 Corinthians 16:13

For Younger Children:

"Have courage to do what is right."

God's Word & Me

When it's hard to do what is right,
Jesus gives me courage.

Missions Focus

What might a missionary need courage to do?

Who might Jesus give to help a
missionary have courage?

What promise of Jesus would help
a missionary have courage?

Teacher's Devotional

It's hard enough to be a kid, but being a kid and doing what is right—especially when friends are not—is even tougher. We all have succumbed to peer pressure at some time; it takes courage to do what is right when others are going their own way! That's one reason it is satisfying to see a child do right, especially when it's not easy or has no tangible payoff.

God had put Paul's nephew in the right place at the right time to find out about the plot against Paul. More than that, Paul's nephew did the right thing with what he heard. He thoughtfully brought the information to Paul and then to those in authority. He didn't expect anything in return (except his uncle's safety), but God protected Paul's life in an unusual way through his nephew's right action.

The courage which right action requires is more likely to be "caught than taught." When parents, grandparents, teachers and mentors consistently model that kind of courageous attitude, our children see it! Our actions can often encourage them to do right more powerfully than words alone ever could. We need to make sure our actions—in church and out—reveal what we believe. Action and example do far more than any words we speak to help give our children courage to do what is right!

Planning Page



Choose which centers you will provide and the order in which children will participate in them (see pp. 14-18 for schedule tips and pp. 24-25 for guidelines in combining older and younger children). Also plan who will lead each center (for staffing tips see pp. 19-21). Use the reproducible planning sheet (p. 238) to record your plans.

Bible Story Center

Bible Story • Paul's Courageous Nephew • Acts 23: 12-35

Camping Fun (Younger Child) • Build a fort to illustrate the Bible story

Camping Fun (Older Child) • Show climbing ropes and carabiner to illustrate the Daily Truth "Courage from Jesus"

Art Center

Younger Child Option • Make musical door hangers as a reminder that Jesus gives us courage to do what's right

Materials • Bible, 16-ounce (480-ml) plastic cups, hole punch, scissors, permanent markers, yarn, jingle bells

Older Child Option • Make Courage Necklaces as a reminder that Jesus gives us courage to do what is right

Materials • Bible, plastic cord or lanyard, scissors, shell beads or pony beads; for each child—enough alphabet beads to spell out "courage"

Game Center

Younger Child Option • Search for hidden acorns to discover the Bible verse

Materials • Bible, *Rock-Solid Followers* CD-ROM and CD player, acorns or paper acorn-shaped cutouts, index cards, permanent marker

Older Child Option • Play a game like "Horse," substituting the word "Courage" to talk about the Bible verse

Materials • Bible, chair, one hula hoop, masking tape, two bottles of bubbles

Coloring/Puzzle Center

Younger Child Option • Review the Bible verse while completing coloring page

Materials • Lesson 9 Coloring Page (p. 169) for each child, crayons

Older Child Option • Review ways of having courage while completing puzzle page

Materials • Lesson 9 Puzzle Page (p. 170) for each child, pencils

Worship Center

For the Younger and Older Child • Participate in large-group activities to review Bible verse and to worship God together

Materials • Bibles, *Rock-Solid Followers* CD-ROM and CD player, song charts (pp. 246, 253)

Bonus Theme Ideas

Bonus Theme Ideas can be used at any time during this session: as an additional activity center, to extend the session for a longer time, or for added theme excitement.

How Many Acorns Do You See?

Display a large jar filled with acorns, pebbles or beads. As children arrive, invite them to guess how many acorns are in the jar. Children write their name and estimate on a piece of paper and place it in a basket beside the jar. At the end of class, tell the actual number. Whoever had the closest guess receives a special prize.

Acorn DoughNUTS

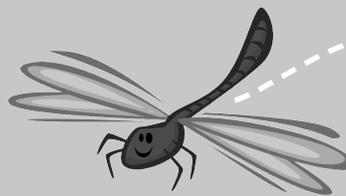
Place chocolate frosting in several shallow bowls; lay out several plastic knives. Crumble toffee or graham crackers and place crumbles on small paper plates. Set out a bowl of pretzel sticks. Give each child a doughnut hole. Instruct children to spread chocolate icing on about $\frac{1}{2}$ of doughnut hole and then roll the frosted top in crumbles. Child sticks short piece of pretzel into doughnut for the stem. Like squirrels, children will want to gather these acorn doughnuts as quickly as possible—but not for the upcoming winter!

Post a note alerting parents to the use of food. Also, check registration forms for possible food allergies.



Prayer Globe

Sit with children in a circle. Throw an inflatable globe to a child. Ask the child to hold up the globe and identify the country his or her thumb landed closest to. Then pray as a class for that country. Child throws the globe to another child. Again, pray for the country nearest to the child's thumb. Continue playing until everyone has had a turn.



Bible Story Center for younger children • Acts 23:12-35



Collect

Four chairs; optional—picture of your aunt or uncle.

Introduction

Raise your hand if you have an aunt or uncle. (Optional: Show a picture of your aunt or uncle.) **This is a picture of my [aunt or uncle]. Today we are going to hear a true story from this book, THE BIBLE!** Show Bible. **We are going to hear about a boy and his uncle. Let’s listen to find out what happened!**

Tell the Story

(Open Bible. Include children in actions when appropriate.) Paul was in BIG trouble, not for doing anything BAD, but for doing something VERY GOOD. Paul had been telling people the good news about Jesus. But some people who did not love Jesus heard Paul talking about Jesus. They became very angry. (Show angry face.) And Paul was put in jail AGAIN! This jail was like a big fort. Let’s build a fort right now. (Line up four chairs in a square and drape a blanket over it.)

While Paul was locked up inside the big fort, there were 40 people that were still VERY angry. Can you count to 40? Let’s count to 40 together. (Quickly count to forty.) These 40 angry people made a terrible plan. They made a plan to hurt Paul! These men promised each other that

they wouldn’t eat any food (*hold up box of crackers*) or even drink any water (*hold up water bottle*) until they had hurt Paul! They were certain that the plan would work. Is that a very kind thing to do? NO! (*Shake head, no.*)

What these men didn’t know was that JESUS had a plan, too! Paul’s nephew heard their plan to hurt Paul. Instead of being afraid, he was VERY brave. Paul’s nephew went straight to his Uncle Paul! He told his Uncle Paul what he had heard.

Paul called one of the guards. “Take this young man to the commander,” Paul said. “He has something to tell him.”

Paul’s nephew went to the commander. The commander took him by the hand. He brought him to a quiet place and asked, “What is it you wanted to tell me?”

Paul’s nephew might have been a *little* scared to talk to the commander (*make a frightened face*), but he was brave. He told the commander everything he had heard. He said, “The angry men want to hurt my uncle, Paul!”

The commander told Paul’s nephew, “Don’t tell anyone what you told me.” Then he called for 200 soldiers, 70 men on horses and 200 men with spears. That’s a lot of people! We won’t try to count THAT high!

Then the commander wrote a letter to the governor. He gave the letter to his helper. And that same night, all 470 men and their horses started walking out of the city. What a parade! (*Stand up and walk in place.*) Men with swords and spears, men on horses—all left the city in the moonlight. And somewhere in the middle of all those soldiers was Paul! The 40 men waiting to hurt Paul NEVER even saw him leave. Paul had escaped! HOORAY!

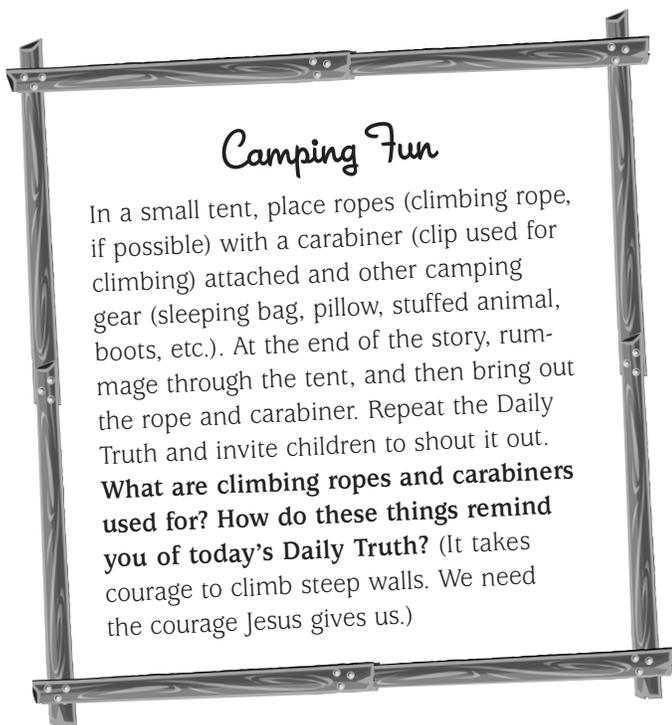
(*Sit down.*) The next day Paul came to the governor’s palace. The governor gave Paul a room in the palace. But guards stayed with him to keep him safe. Even though angry people had tried to stop Paul from telling people about Jesus, Paul was kept safe! Now he had even MORE people he could tell about JESUS!

God’s Word & Me

Paul must have been very glad his nephew had courage to do what was right. His nephew’s brave action saved Paul’s life! We can be brave and do good things, too. Pray. Dear Jesus, please help us to be brave and do good things. Help us to tell others about Your love. Amen.

Bible Story Center

for older children • Acts 23:12-35



Collect

Bible, paper, envelope, pen.

Introduction

Tell a brief story of when you needed courage to do the right thing. **When have you or someone you know needed courage to do what is right?** Invite children to respond. **Today we are going to learn about a young man who needed courage. Let's find out what happened.**

Tell the Story

Paul was in the Roman prison in Jerusalem, and he may have felt like it was the safest place he could be! The leaders in Jerusalem had stirred up a lot of trouble for Paul. In fact, he had almost been killed by an angry crowd that rioted outside the Temple. The Roman commander had ordered his soldiers to rescue Paul from the crowd and keep him in prison.

But Jesus had plans for Paul that didn't include Paul staying a prisoner forever. Jesus came to Paul and gave him a special message. He said, "Take courage! As you told about Me in Jerusalem, you will also tell about Me

in Rome." This was amazing news for Paul! He had hoped and prayed for the chance to preach the good news about Jesus in the most powerful city of the world—Rome. Now he knew his prayer was going to be answered! And Jesus was going to give him courage!

But the next morning, more than 40 men gathered together in a secret meeting. (*Whisper.*) They decided on a way to get rid of Paul once and for all! The men quickly hurried off to ask the leaders of Jerusalem for their help.

And guess what those men told the leaders! They said that they had made a solemn promise not to eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul!

"You'd better have a good plan or you'll be hungry and thirsty for a long time!" the leaders said. "Just how are you going to kill Paul?"

"It's important we get rid of Paul NOW," the men explained to the leaders. "But we will need your help. Tell the Roman commander who is holding Paul prisoner that you want to have Paul brought to meet with you," the men said. "Say that you have some questions to ask him. We will kill Paul when he is brought here to see you."

"Are you sure this plan of yours will work?" the leaders asked.

"We are SO sure," the men answered "that we will not break our promise not to eat or drink until Paul is killed!"

It probably didn't take the leaders long to agree to help the men. After all, they also wanted to put a stop to Paul's preaching. Surely nothing would go wrong with this plan.

But something DID go wrong! The son of Paul's sister—Paul's nephew—heard of the men's plot to kill Paul. This young man didn't waste any time when he heard the frightening news. He could have kept the news a secret, but he bravely hurried off to tell his Uncle Paul. When Uncle Paul heard the news, he quickly sent his nephew to the commander.

"What is it you have to tell me?" the commander asked. Paul's nephew was probably nervous talking with the commander of hundreds of Roman soldiers. It took courage to tell the commander what he had found out. But, his uncle's life depended on it! So what did this young man tell the commander? He told him EVERYTHING he had heard about the plot to kill Paul.

The commander was very disturbed by this news. By now the commander knew that Paul deserved protection because he was a Roman citizen. *I must get Paul out of Jerusalem quickly before these men have a chance to carry out their plan*, thought the commander.

Immediately he called two officers. He commanded them to get 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen to help Paul get safely to Governor Felix in Caesarea. While everyone was busy getting the soldiers and horsemen ready to leave, the commander wrote a letter to Governor.

(Pretend to write a letter on paper.) “Dear Governor Felix,” the commander wrote. “This man, Paul, was seized by the Jews here in Jerusalem. The Jews even tried to kill him. I rescued him because I discovered he was a Roman citizen.” At the end of the letter, the commander said he was ordering the Jews to bring their case against Paul to the governor himself. *(Fold letter, place in envelope and seal it.)*

That night, the gates of the army headquarters swung open and Paul—surrounded by 470 Roman soldiers—rode an army horse down the dark street and right out of Jerusalem’s city gates!

The next day, 70 horsemen rode on with Paul until he arrived safely in Caesarea. Governor Felix read the letter from the commander in Jerusalem. He said, “I will hear your case when your accusers get here.”

So Paul was still under arrest. But because Paul’s nephew had the courage to do what was right, Paul could safely continue telling the good news about Jesus! But we never do find out if those 40 men broke their vow and started eating and drinking again! They must have been REALLY hungry and thirsty! What do you think?

God’s Word & Me

Most of us probably won’t need the courage to save someone’s life like Paul’s nephew did. But there are times when it takes courage to choose between right and wrong. It can be really tough sometimes. But just like Jesus gave Paul and Paul’s nephew courage, He will give us courage, too. We only need to ask Him!

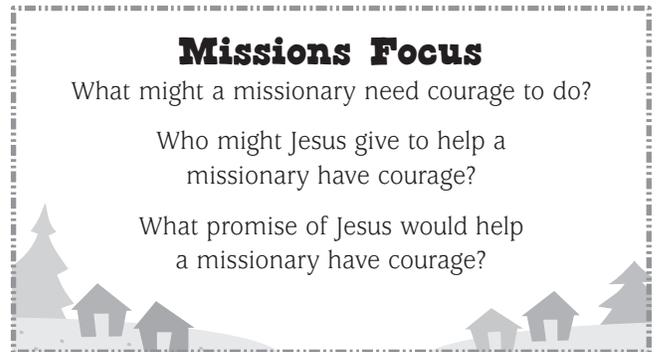
- What would have happened if Paul’s nephew had kept what he heard about the plot to kill Paul to himself? (Paul might have died.) **Paul’s nephew had courage. He did the right thing, even when it might have been hard to do.**
- What are some situations in which you or a friend might need courage to do the right thing?
- Listen to these words Paul wrote. Read or ask a child to read 1 Corinthians 6:13. **This verse tells us to have courage. When we’re scared by what we see or hear, we can ask Jesus to give us courage to do what is right in that situation.** Pray with children, asking Jesus to help them have courage to do what is right.

Missions Focus

What might a missionary need courage to do?

Who might Jesus give to help a missionary have courage?

What promise of Jesus would help a missionary have courage?



Game Center



for younger children • Acts 23:12-35

Collect

Bible, *Rock-Solid Followers* CD-ROM and CD player, acorns or paper acorn-shaped cutouts, index cards, permanent marker.

Prepare

Number each acorn, one to eight, repeating numbers as needed to make an acorn for each child. Write one word from the Bible verse on a separate index card, making a card for each child. Number back of cards from one to eight in verse order. Lay cards on the ground with numbers facing up. Hide acorns around the room.

Do

1. As “The Trail of Life” plays, children look for hidden acorns—one per child. Once they have found them, they bring them back to the group.
2. Children sit in a circle around the index cards. Children with acorns numbered “1” find the “1” index card and flip it over. Children with the acorn numbered “2” take a turn and so on until all cards are turned over and words of the verse are in order. Read the verse aloud, pointing to each word as you do so. Repeat the verse with children.



God's Word

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.”

1 Corinthians 16:13

For Younger Children:

“Have courage to do what is right.”

God's Word & Me

When it's hard to do what is right,
Jesus gives me courage.

Talk About

- The Bible tells us, “Have courage to do what is right.” This verse means that we can be brave to do what is right.
- When are times you need to be brave to do what is right? (Tell the truth. Play fair.)
- Sometimes it can be hard to do what is right. When we need help to do the right thing, we can pray. We can ask Jesus to make us brave to do what is right. Jesus gives us grownups who can help us, too.
- Let's talk to Jesus right now and ask Him to make us brave to do what's right. Pray briefly, Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us. Please help us be brave when it is hard to do what is right. Amen.

For Older Children

Instead of writing the Bible verse on the index cards, write sentence starters. Here are some examples: “I don't feel brave when . . .,” “It's important to do the right thing when . . .,” “My friends are making fun of a new kid at school and I . . .,” “What is a way you can be brave and do what is right this week?” “Who can help you be brave?” After turning over cards, children complete sentences.

Game Center



for older children • Acts 23:12-35

Collect

Bible, chair, hula hoop, masking tape, two bottles of bubbles.

Prepare

Use masking tape to attach hula hoop to the back of a chair. Tape a starting line two feet (0.6 m) away from chair. Place bottles of bubbles at starting line. (Note: For a large group, prepare a game setup for each group of 8 to 10 children.)

Do

1. Play a game like “Horse,” but substitute the word “Courage.” Children take turns to stand at the starting line and blow a bubble, attempting to get it through the hoop.



2. If the bubble goes through the hoop, the child earns one letter from the word “Courage.” When team gets all seven letters, team answers a Talk About question.

Talk About

- Read or ask a child to read 1 Corinthians 6:13. **What do you think it means to be on your guard? What does it mean to stand firm in the faith? What does it mean to be “men of courage; be strong?”**
- **What are some situations in which you or a friend needs courage to do right?** (Tempted to cheat on a test. Stand up for a kid at school being bullied. Tempted to steal. People say there is no God.)
- **What can you do when you are in hard situations like these?** (Pray. Ask a friend or parent for help. Walk away.)
- **No one said following Jesus is easy. There are tough situations we might face, but the Bible says Jesus will give us courage. We can pray and ask Jesus for His help to do what is right when it’s hard to do.** Lead children in prayer, asking Jesus to give them courage when they are in tough situations.

God’s Word

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Missions Focus

What might a missionary need courage to do?

Who might Jesus give to help a missionary have courage?

What promise of Jesus would help a missionary have courage?

For Younger Children

Photocopy Lesson 9 Pattern Page (p. 168) and cut it apart. Set Situation Cards 10 feet (3 m) away from starting line. Form children into two teams. Leader sits at the front of each team with a bottle of bubbles. One at a time, children blow a bubble, run to the Situation Cards and then pick one. The child tells what the situation is on the card. Lead all children to call out the Bible verse, “Have courage to do what is right.” The child runs back to his or her team and the next child takes a turn.

Art Center



for younger children • Acts 23:12-35

Collect

Bible, permanent markers, scissors, hole punch; for each child—16-ounce (480-ml) plastic cup, four lengths of 8- to 10-inch (20.5- to 25.5-cm) yarn, six jingle bells.

Prepare

For each child, turn a cup upside down and write, “Be Brave” on each one. Punch two holes in bottom of cup, using scissors. Using a hole punch, punch three equally spaced holes around the top edge of cup, just below the lip.

Do

1. Give each child four lengths of yarn. Help each child thread one length of yarn through each hole in bottom of cup, knotting ends to make a loop for hanging.
2. Child threads one length of yarn through several jingle bells, tying each one to keep bells spaced on the yarn. Child repeats for other pieces of yarn.
3. Child threads and ties yarn with bells through holes near lip of cup.



God's Word

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith;
be men of courage; be strong.”
1 Corinthians 16:13

For Younger Children:
“Have courage to do what is right.”

God's Word & Me

When it's hard to do what is right,
Jesus gives me courage.

Talk About

- Our door hangers say, “Be Brave.” When we open a door and hear the bells jingle, we can remember Jesus will help us to be brave.
- When are times we don't feel brave?
- Our Bible tells us, “Have courage to do what is right.” That means the same thing as “Be brave to do what is right.”
- What is a way you can be brave and do what is right this week? Pray briefly, Dear Jesus, please help us to be brave. Help us to do what is right. We love You. Amen.

For Older Children

Older children punch holes themselves and letter a phrase from 1 Corinthians 16:13 on their door hangers.

Art Center



for older children • Acts 23:12-35

Collect

Bible, plastic cord or lanyard, scissors, shell beads or pony beads; for each child—enough alphabet beads to spell out “courage.”

Prepare

Cut cord or lanyard into 24-inch (61-cm) lengths.

Do

1. Child selects alphabet beads to spell out the word “courage,” laying beads out in word order.
2. Child knots the cord or lanyard around one blank bead so that beads won’t slip off. Child strings blank beads in a pattern and then adds alphabet beads to form the word “courage” in the center of necklace. Child continues to string blank beads to finish necklace.
3. Child ties the end of the cord or lanyard securely to the first bead.

4. Child wears necklace as a reminder that Jesus gives us courage to do what is right.



Talk About

- What are reasons you or a friend might be afraid to do something? (Don’t know how. Others might laugh. Not sure what to do.)
- What would you tell a friend to do if your friend said it is too hard to do what is right? What does God say He will do? (Give courage. Give strength.)
- God promises to give us the courage to do what is right. Let’s take a moment to think about a tough situation we might face this week. Silently ask God for the courage you need while I pray aloud. Pray, asking God to help kids remember He will give them courage if they will ask Him.

God’s Word

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Missions Focus

What might a missionary need courage to do?

Who might Jesus give to help a missionary have courage?

What promise of Jesus would help a missionary have courage?

For Younger Children

With adult help, child ties on first bead and then strings beads as desired. Adult may add alphabet beads as time and interest allow.

Worship Center



Acts 23:12-35

Collect

Bibles, *Rock-Solid Followers* CD-ROM and CD player, song charts (pp. 246, 253), blindfold.

Prepare

Choose and print one or more missionary stories from CD-ROM.

Team Game

A person who explores a cave is called a spelunker. Spelunkers have to be very courageous because they never know what they might run into. Choose one player to be the Bear and another to be the Spelunker. Remaining children stand in a circle around the Bear and Spelunker. Blindfold the Bear and the Spelunker. On “go” the Bear tries to tag the Spelunker as they both walk around in the middle of the circle. When the Bear gets close to the Spelunker, the children standing clap their hands to warn the Spelunker that the Bear is near. When Bear tags Spelunker, choose a new Bear and a new Spelunker.

Bible Verse Game

Repeat 1 Corinthians 16:13 aloud with children. Form children into three teams. Call out a phrase of 1 Corinthians 16:13 as you point to first team to echo the phrase loudly. Point to second team to echo the phrase with normal voices. Point to the third team to echo the phrase in a whisper. Continue with other phrases of the verse with the same echo effects. Repeat verse several times, increasing the speed of echoing the verse in each round, and periodically changing each team’s assignment.

Song

You, or another leader, lead children in singing “The Trail of Life,” adding motions and/or clapping if desired.

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For Younger Children:

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God’s Word & Me

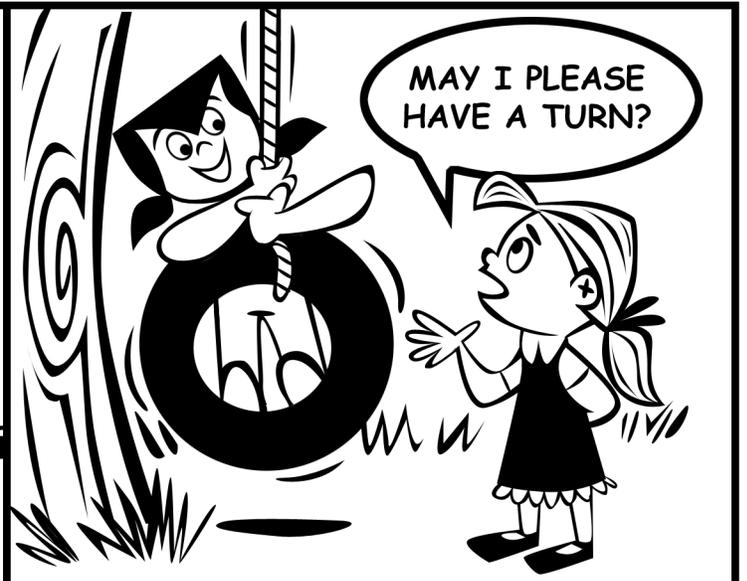
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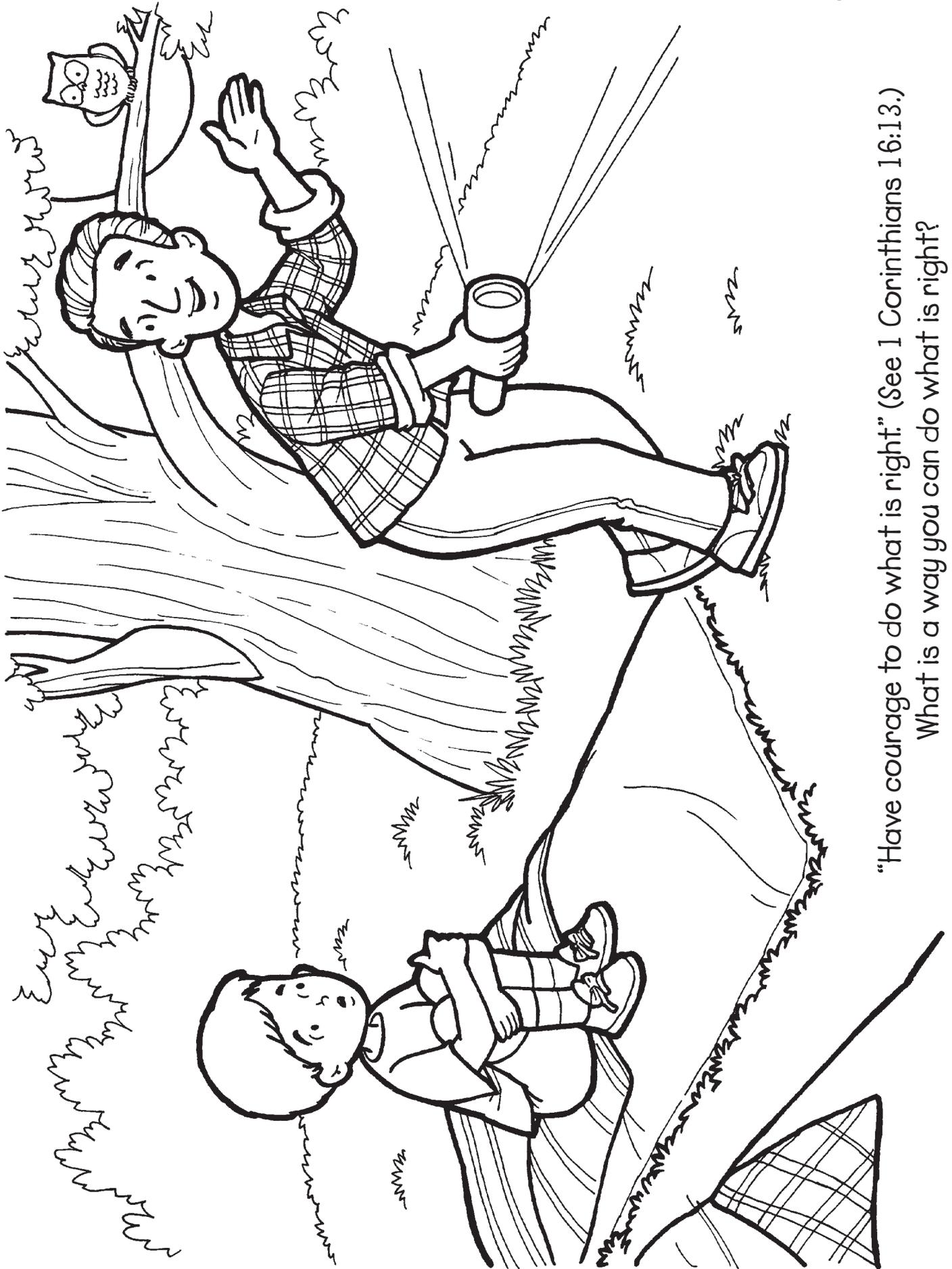
Worldwide Prayer

Read aloud one or more brief stories of courageous missionaries. Talk briefly about what the missionary did that showed courage to do what is right. Lead children in prayer asking Jesus to help missionaries all over the world have courage and stand firm in their special job—telling others the good news about Jesus.

Song

You, or another leader, lead children in singing “I’m Keepin’ My Eyes on Jesus,” adding motions and/or clapping if desired.





“Have courage to do what is right.” (See 1 Corinthians 16:13.)
What is a way you can do what is right?

Bugs in the Berries!

Do bugs “bug” you? If you’re going to pick berries, you’ll have to find out what these bugs are telling you! Use the bug shapes and the berry patterns to decipher each word. Get close—be brave!

KEY:

- A 
- E 
- G 
- H 
- I 
- O 
- S 
- T 



What will you ask Jesus to help you do this week?

What is one thing you need courage to do?