



LESSON SNAPSHOT

BOTTOM LINE:

We do not need to be afraid if Jesus is with us.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn to take their fears to God.

KEY PASSAGE:

Acts 7:44-8:3, The Stoning of Stephen

MEMORY VERSE:

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

- Philippians 4:12-13

SUMMARY:

The Spooky Mansion may be filled with ghosts and ghouls and things that go bump in the night, but when the lights come on, we see that there's really nothing there to be afraid of. Stephen walked with Jesus in the adventure of life. He knew that no matter what he faced, that Jesus was with him. Even when his very life was being taken from him, Stephen knew that he did not need to be afraid.

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Please be with us when we are scared, and take away our fears.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen*



MEMORY VERSE

*"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength." - Philip-
pians 4:12-13 (NIV)*

*"I know what it's like not to have what I need. I also know what it's like to have more than I need. I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength. - Phi-
lippians 4:12-13 (NirV)*

LARGE GROUP:

Choose three kids from the audience. Have each one "sing" the memory verse in a different musical style - country, hip hop, oldies, opera, etc.

SMALL GROUP:

Put each word of the memory verse on a card. Have the kids rearrange the cards and put the words in order.



SKIT

SPOOK HOUSE

ITEMS NEEDED:

Monster costumes
Strobe light

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN: 3M

CHARACTERS:

Jerry- A "vampire"
Todd- A "werewolf"
Harry- A critic

As the scene begins, Jerry and Todd are at center. The strobe light is in front of them, and the lights are out. Jerry and Todd make spooky monster sounds. Optional: have a girl off stage screaming during these segments. After about 15 seconds, Jerry stops the monster act.

JERRY: And we're clear!

The lights come on.

JERRY: Boy slow night for a Thursday, huh?

TODD: It's the first week of October. Of course it's slow.

JERRY: We better be good tonight. You know that critic from the paper is coming.

TODD: Big deal.

SKIT

JERRY: Yes, big deal! If he gives us a bad review, we're toast. You remember what happened when the Corn Maze of Death got one star two years ago? They had to shut down!

TODD: I know, I know.

JERRY: Something the matter with you tonight, Todd?

TODD: Look out, here they come. Lights!

The lights go out. The strobe turns on. Monster sounds and screaming resume. After ten seconds, bring the lights back up.

JERRY: Come on, Todd, what's the matter?

TODD: Just a little afraid, I guess.

JERRY: Afraid? You? The guy who never saw a scary movie that actually scared him?

TODD: I'm not talking about monsters and spook houses. I'm talking about grades.

JERRY: I thought you were a good student.

TODD: I am. But I have to give a speech about something I believe in next week.

JERRY: What are you worried about? You're great at speeches. You—

Jerry looks off. The lights go out. The strobe turns on. Monster sounds and screaming resume. After ten seconds, bring the lights back up.

JERRY: Todd, I've never known you to get stage fright. What's the big deal?

TODD: The big deal, Jerry, is I'm speaking about my faith and my teacher is an atheist!

JERRY: She doesn't believe in God?

TODD: And she really hates when people start talking about Jesus in her class.

JERRY: You're still giving the speech, right?

TODD: Of course I am. But I'm afraid I'll get a bad grade.

SKIT

JERRY: So what? You still share what you believe, and everyone in that class will see you really believe it, including the teacher.

TODD: You think so?

JERRY: You know she's an atheist. You know she'll give you a bad grade, and you still give the speech. That's putting actions to your words, bro. That's showing her that you really, truly believe.

TODD: Hang on, got another group.

The lights go out. The strobe turns on. Monster sounds and screaming resume. After ten seconds, bring the lights back up.

TODD: I guess I shouldn't be afraid, should I?

JERRY: God will be with you, Todd. He'll never leave us, remember?

TODD: And if we have God, there's nothing to be afraid of. If you weren't so scary, I'd hug you right now.

JERRY: Come on, bring it in here, pal!

Todd hugs Jerry. Harry walks in. He pulls out a tiny notepad.

HARRY: All lights are on. Werewolves hugging vampire. Worst spook house ever.

Harry exits.

JERRY: Well, now we have one more thing not to be afraid of.

TODD: The critic?

JERRY: No, getting fired!

End.



OBJECT LESSON OR KIDS SERMON

ITEMS NEEDED:

Flashlights

Turn the lights out, and have the kids turn on the lights.

How many of you are a little nervous that the lights are off right now? How many of you feel better that we have flashlights? Who would feel better if they had a flashlight in hand?

Darkness can be scary, not because of what's there but because we can't see what's there. In a spook house the darkness can hide monsters and ghosts - who are really just annoying teenagers and actors that like to scare people. Trust me, that's ALL they are!

There are scary moments in life, too, especially when we face people who don't believe in Jesus. But even when we are made fun of or put down for our faith, we can be brave knowing that Jesus is with us.

The world can mock us and call us names. It can do all sorts of bad things. But the world cannot take Jesus from us. When things get scary, look into the light. Look to Jesus, and do not be afraid!



LARGE GROUP GAME

BLINDFOLD BALL TOSS

ITEMS NEEDED:

Blindfold
Bucket
Tennis balls

INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose one player for this game. Blindfold them and have them stand five feet from the bucket. Spin them around three times. The player has 60 seconds to toss two balls into the bucket. They can turn in any direction they like but they cannot take any steps. If they get two balls into the bucket before time runs out, they win a prize. Have adults help by retrieving and handing the balls back to the player.

VARIATION:

Don't spin the little kids around. Keep it easy!

WHAT'S THE POINT?

We do not have to be afraid of the darkness or the unknown. Jesus is always with us.



LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

We do not need to be afraid if Jesus is with us.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn to take their fears to God.

KEY PASSAGE:

Acts 7:44-8:3, The Stoning of Stephen

INTRO

Last week I began this lesson by telling you about two attractions created for Disneyland that were so popular, they were re-created when Walt Disney opened Disney World. These attractions were unique because they didn't have any established Disney characters. The designers created characters and stories that were completely original for these two rides. One was the Pirates of the Caribbean. The other was the Haunted Mansion.

The Haunted Mansion inspired a movie that didn't do near as well as the Pirates movies, but in spite of that, it remains one of Disney's most beloved attractions. The Haunted Mansion draws millions of visitors for the same reason scary movies and other haunted houses do: people like to be scared! Granted compared with most haunted houses, the Haunted Mansion really isn't that scary, but it still fills the need some amusement park visitors have to get a little scare.

Haunted Houses are filled with ghosts and goblins and monsters. There are secret passageways and creaky floors and halls filled with mirrors. They may have real actors inside, dressed as spooky characters, to give you an extra chill. To really sell the experience, haunted houses keep the lights off. The darkness really makes the whole experience because you have no clue where you are, what's going on and what may be standing right BEHIND YOU!!!

LARGE GROUP LESSON

The best part about haunted houses is that they're not real. They're just pretend, and when you leave, the scary part goes away. Unfortunately, that's not always the case in the adventure we call life. Sometimes scary things happen, scary things that do not vanish when the lights go on. Thankfully, we have someone right by our side to help us through those scary times. Today's scripture will show us how one man faced the ultimate scary moment bravely, knowing that Jesus was with him.

READ Acts 7:44-8:3

MAIN POINT

Stephen was the first man to die for his faith in the new church. Stephen was not a murderer or a thief. He was a good man who dedicated his life to helping others. But he was also a believer in Jesus, and that made him guilty in the eyes of his accusers.

Stephen was wrongfully accused, and he had no one to save or defend him. But Stephen was not afraid of the darkness. He looked to Heaven, and he saw the light of Jesus. Nothing could make him be afraid.

DRIVE IT HOME

It's scary to think that any of us might face such a situation as Stephen did, but there are people out there who are truly hostile to those who believe in Jesus. They would rather we clam up and say nothing than let us speak about our faith. If we don't clam up, they'll shame us, call us names, or worse.

God doesn't want us to clam up. He doesn't want us to hide in fear. Jesus loves the whole world, and he died for everyone, even the people who want to silence us. Jesus is counting on us to speak up and speak loud. He wants us to live boldly, and not with fear.

Every day around the world Christians are persecuted. Some are arrested. Some are put in jail. Some are beaten, and some are even killed. But every time a Christian takes a bold stand and faces persecution for Jesus, someone watching that Christian sees that Jesus is for real. They see that nothing can make that Christian be afraid, and they choose to believe in Jesus for themselves.

Don't be afraid of the dark. Don't be afraid of what the world can do to you. Remember that you have Jesus. Jesus will be our light in the dark. He will be by our side no matter what happens. We have nothing to fear because we have Jesus.

Let's ask God to give us the courage to stand tall in the darkness and use us to be his light to the whole world!

LARGE GROUP LESSON

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Please be with us when we are scared, and take away our fears.

In Jesus' name,

Amen



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

ICEBREAKER

Do you like to be scared?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Philippians 4:12-13

Put each word of the memory verse on a card. Have the kids rearrange the cards and put the words in order.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY

Play some monster charades, and see if the kids can guess who the other kids are pretending to be.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 7:44-8:3

Who was Stephen?

Why was Stephen arrested?

What did the men do to Stephen because he refused to give up his faith?

Why wasn't Stephen afraid to die?

Who will be with us when we are afraid?

SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

Make us your light in this dark world, and help us to never be afraid.

In Jesus' name,

Amen



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3-5TH)

ICEBREAKER

Do you like to be scared?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Philippians 4:12-13

Put each word of the memory verse on a card. Have the kids rearrange the cards and put the words in order.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY

Go around the group and make up a scary story, with each person adding a little bit as you go around the circle.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 7:44-8:3

Why was Stephen on trial?

Why did Stephen refuse to give in to fear?

What are some ways that Christians are persecuted today?

Where do you think those Christians get the courage to endure their persecution?

How can we prepare ourselves for scary times when our faith is challenged?

SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

Make us your light in this dark world, and help us to never be afraid.

In Jesus' name,

Amen



POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME

True or False.

The Sanhedrin arrested Stephen to scare him and keep him from telling others about Jesus.

TRUE

Stephen was a murderer and guilty as charged.

FALSE

Stephen was so afraid of dying he begged for his life to be spared.

FALSE

Before he died, Stephen looked up to heaven and saw Jesus.

TRUE

When we are persecuted, Jesus will be with us to give us courage.

TRUE

MAKE IT STICK

5 Simple Ways You Can Make This Lesson Stick With Your Kids

THIS WEEK'S LESSON: SPOOKY MANSION



IN THE CAR:

Ask your child what they learned about this week on the drive home:

Today we talked about spooky mansion attractions and things that scare us. We do not need to be afraid if Jesus is with us. Acts 7:44-8:3 – The Stoning of Stephen



HANGING OUT:

Make this week's lesson real:

Take a moment to talk with your kids about the persecuted church worldwide. Google it, talk about it, and pray for our brothers and sisters who are suffering for Jesus.



AT DINNER:

Here are some great discussion starters:

- Why did the Sanhedrin arrest Stephen?
- Why didn't Stephen become afraid, even when he was killed?
- How can facing persecution and refusing to give in to fear be a witness for Jesus?



AT BEDTIME:

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

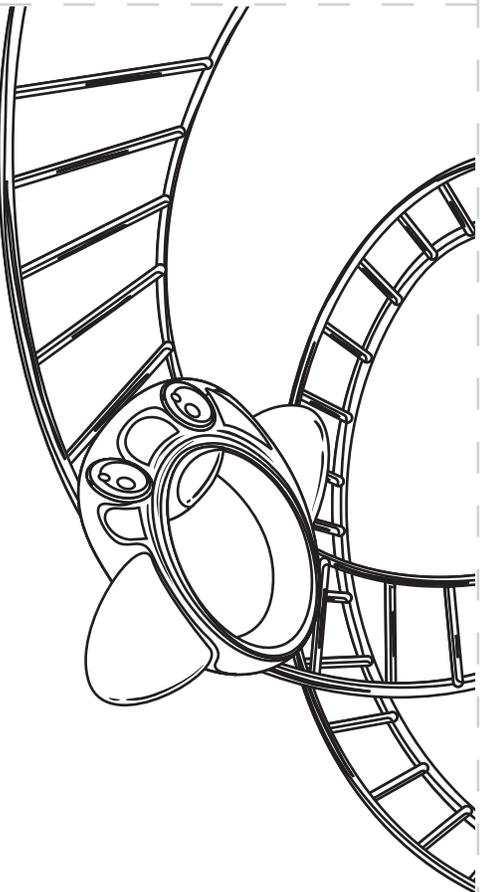
- *Philippians 4:12-13*



PARENT TIME:

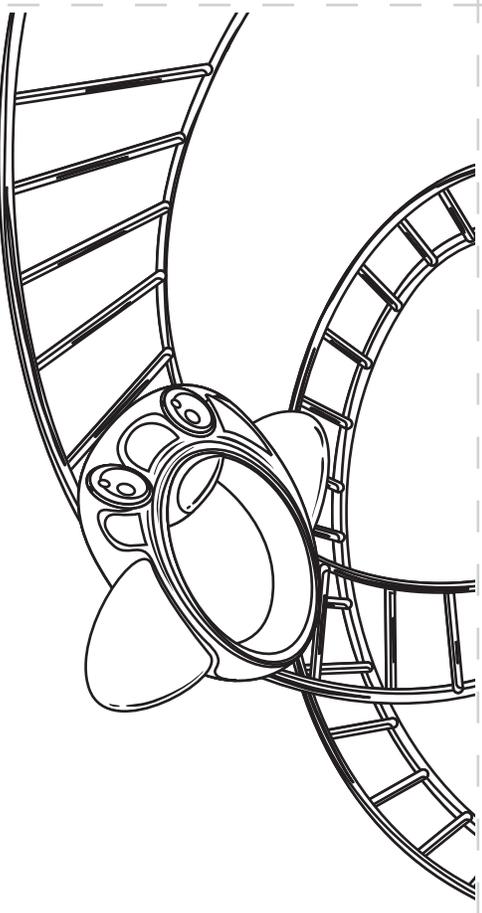
What you need to know:

Our religious liberties are constantly under attack. Who knows what our country will look like when our kids are grown. Pray that they will have a strong faith, and that they will not be afraid to take a stand for Jesus.



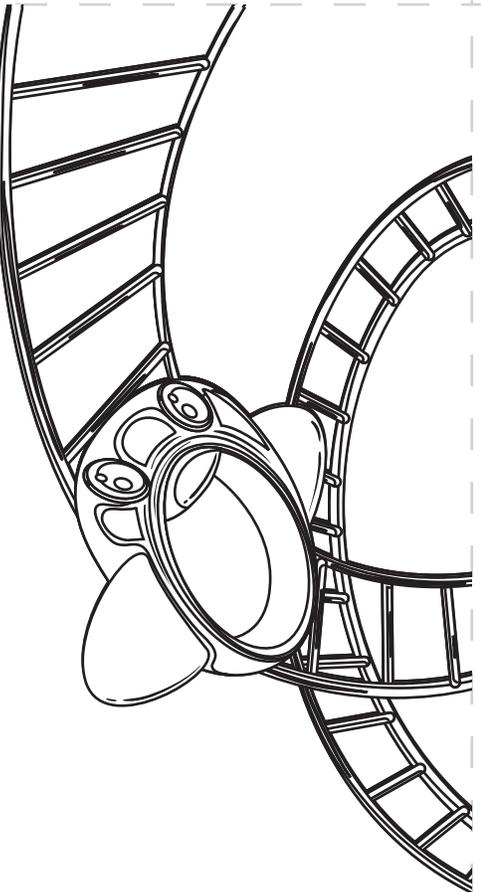
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- Philippians 4:12-13



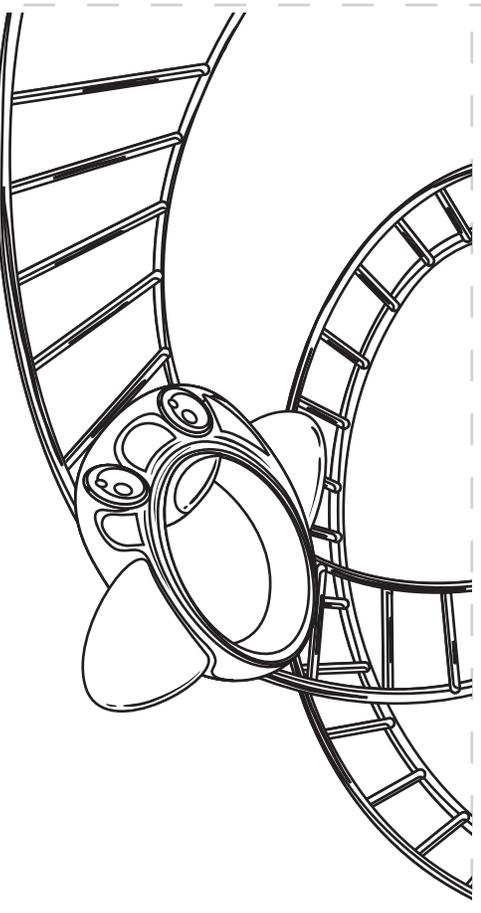
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"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

- Philippians 4:12-13



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Give the kids mini flashlights as they leave, a reminder that Jesus is our light in the darkness.