

Lesson 13 / November 29, 2009

Slow and Steady Wins the Race

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 13 Focus:

God calls us to
perseverance.

Lesson 13 Bible Basis:

Genesis 26:1-6, 12-25.

Students will consider the benefits of perseverance in everyday tasks and the consequences of giving up.

Materials:

- a set of building blocks (a Jenga® game could work)
- stopwatch or a clock with a second hand
- tape measure

Ask for two volunteers who would like to compete in a tower-building contest. (If you have a mixed-gender group, pick one male and one female volunteer.)

The first volunteer's job is to build the tallest possible tower in 60 seconds using the blocks. The second volunteer's job is to distract her opponent. She may not actually touch her opponent or the blocks—but other than that, anything goes. She can holler loudly, sing off-key, play the “I’m Not Touching You” game ... or whatever works!

When the first volunteer's time is up, measure the height of his tower. (If the other player's distractions were successful, it may be rather small.) Then have the volunteers switch roles. After measuring the second tower and comparing it to the first, declare a winner!

▶ What strategies worked for our contestants as they tried to build their towers?

▶ What strategies were most effective in distracting the builders?

Obviously, the key to this game wasn't just balancing blocks. It also involved ignoring anything that would keep you away from the task at hand.

Sometimes in real life, we also have difficult tasks to complete—and unfortunately, there are always distractions. Maybe you have a huge project for school, but your video game looks really tempting. Maybe you have a tough chore assigned by your mom, but you'd rather bug your sister. Maybe you're chasing a long-term goal like becoming a professional actor, but some kids make fun of you when you perform. In short, distractions are everywhere. They make perseverance very difficult.

Lesson 13
Memory Verse

Cast your cares on
the LORD and He
will sustain you;
He will never let
the righteous fall.

—Psalm 55:22

- ▶ Can anyone tell us about a time when you had an important task to complete, but you let distractions or setbacks get the best of you?
- ▶ Now, can you think of a time when you persevered in spite of some tough obstacles and accomplished your goal?
- ▶ How did you feel when everything was finally completed? Was there a reward for your perseverance?

We're going to look at some people in the Bible who practiced perseverance, even when everything seemed to be against them. In Genesis 26, Isaac and his servants had a problem with their wells ...

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

Lesson 13 / November 29, 2009

Slow and Steady Wins the Race

for use as

STEP 4

Lesson 13

Focus:

God calls us to perseverance.

Lesson 13


Bible Basis:

Genesis 26:1-6, 12-25.

Materials:

- a computer with Internet access OR a printed copy of Aesop's "The Tortoise and the Hare" (see Internet links below)
- blank paper
- pens or pencils

If possible, show your students a short claymation version of "The Tortoise and the Hare," available at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX58CTA_VQE]. If you don't have Internet access in your classroom, you can read the fable aloud instead. Download the text for the fable from: [<http://www.storyarts.org/library/aesops/stories/tortoise.html>].

-  **According to the Tortoise, the moral of the story is "slow and steady wins the race." How would you state that moral in your own words?**

We live in a society that tells us we can have anything we want, right now! But some things can't be rushed. Imagine what would've happened if your mom had tried to microwave the Thanksgiving turkey this weekend, instead of slowly cooking it in the oven. Imagine what would happen if your doctor skipped a bunch of classes in medical school, then tried to do an operation on you! Imagine how horrible your school's football team would be if no one ever came to practice but just showed up for games.

Living as a Christian also takes dedication. It's a long, slow climb to become like Jesus, and the Devil loves it when we take the easy way out!

Perseverance is required to do anything worthwhile. Calvin Coolidge, president of the United States from 1923-1929, said this:

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated [bums]. Persistence and determination are [all-powerful]."

Hand out a sheet of paper and a writing utensil to each student.

In "The Tortoise and the Hare," the Turtle didn't win because he was faster. He came out on top because he kept moving forward. Real life often works the same way: "slow and steady wins the race."

Lesson 13
Memory Verse

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So I want you to create a mini racetrack on your paper. It can be as simple as drawing a line on the left labeled “Start,” and one on the right that says “Finish.”

Now, think of a goal you want to accomplish. It can be anything from writing your English paper next week to becoming a doctor when you’re older. Write your goal across the top of your paper.

Write “ME” in the middle of your racetrack. That’s where you are right now: somewhere between the starting line and the finish line. On the left, write down three distractions that hold you back from reaching your goal. For example, the Rabbit took a nap halfway through his race. What are the things that slow you down in yours?

On the right, mark down three rewards that you expect if you finish your goal. Tortoise had the pleasure of winning since he got to the finish line first. In our Bible story, Isaac had water for his flocks because he and his servants kept digging wells. Maybe for you, the reward is getting a good grade when you finish that English paper. Or maybe it’s being able to heal people as a doctor someday.

Take your racetrack home this week and stick it on your wall. Every time you look at the drawing, remember your goal! Think about what the consequences might be if you give in to distractions. Think about what the rewards will be if you finish the race.

Let’s ask God to help us persevere as we close in prayer. If time permits, ask students to share their “racetrack,” and pray for their needs individually.

Sources:

Calvin Coolidge quote found at

[<http://www.thevirtues.org/site/07-Perseverance.html>]

“The Tortoise and the Hare” video found at

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX58CTA_VQE]

“The Tortoise and the Hare” story found at

[<http://www.storyarts.org/library/aesops/stories/tortoise.html>]

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