

# RAIN OR SHINE

Trusting God in Every Season



PRETEEN

JANUARY 2025

## FOR LEADERS ONLY

### **GOD VIEW:** THE CONNECTION BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

With every season comes new and different challenges but also the chance to experience incredible joy. Through sunshine or rain, storms, and blue skies, seasons and weather are important to growth, but not just for flowers and trees. How we respond to each season of life helps us grow in maturity and can spur us to a deeper faith in God. This is especially true when it comes to our emotions.

Just as seasons come and go, so do our emotions. And how we choose to handle those emotions can shape us and teach us a lot about how God cares for us. No matter what emotion we may be feeling or what we may face, because of Jesus, we can learn to trust that God knows how we feel. Jesus showed us how to face life with resilience, and because of it, we can trust God no matter what.

### **CORE INSIGHT:** The theological foundation for RESILIENCE

**Transformation** by the power of God's Spirit

God's Spirit is transforming my unique and imperfect life into the character of Jesus.

God is faithful and present, always working in our lives. We might get knocked down from time to time, but when we put our trust in God, we find the strength we need to get back up again.

### **RESILIENCE is getting back up when something gets you down**

### **HEADS UP:** IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT RESILIENCE WITH KIDS

This month, kids will be learning about different emotions such as sadness, worry, anger, and joy, to name a few. As you talk about resilience and emotions with kids, please be aware that some kids may be experiencing something difficult or traumatic in their lives. Everyone experiences emotions, but not everyone experiences emotions in the same way. Don't try to discredit the way someone feels about something or determine how long it should take them to get over something. Instead, acknowledge that how they may be feeling is valid and that you're there to listen. Don't try to fix their problems, but let them know that you are there for them and that they are not alone! Always be sure to bring the correct people into any conversation that involves the safety of a child.

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### WEEK 1

Key Question: **Who can you talk to when you're sad?**

Sometimes, our problems can feel so big that it's difficult to talk about them with others because we think they don't understand. However, God has created us for relationships, and we don't have to do life alone. We hope this question not only invites preteens to find people in their lives they can trust, but also know that God is there for them no matter what.

We start the month in **John 11:1-45** with a peek into Jesus' personal life. After the death of one of His friends, Jesus wept — even though He knew what would happen next. Jesus trusted that God would be with Him in His sadness and wept anyway, showing us He is there with us in our sadness too.

Bottom Line: **When you're sad, remember you're not alone.** There will be times in our lives when we will experience grief and hardships because that's just the nature of life. However, when troubles come, we can remember that because Jesus experienced the things we experience, He knows how we feel and is with us as we work through our emotions.

### WEEK 2

Key Question: **What kinds of things do you worry about?**

Are there moments in your life where you find yourself overthinking something or where you worry about something more than others? Worry, however, doesn't help to change the circumstances; it just makes us spiral. We hope this question helps preteens discover patterns in their lives where they're prone to worry so they can be quick to combat worry with trust.

In week 2, we head to **Matthew 6:25-34** for Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In it, Jesus reminded everyone not to worry about tomorrow because "Tomorrow will worry about itself." Every day will have its own set of troubles, but God will provide for us, just like the birds and the flowers.

Bottom Line: **When you're worried, trust God.** Have you ever seen a flower bloom or a bird find food? Just like God cares for nature, and the birds and flowers have what they need in life, God cares for us so much more! When we let worry consume our thoughts, it can cause us to forget to notice the ways God is already working in our situations. We can trust God with anything, whether we know the outcome or not.

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### WEEK 3

Key Question: **What do you do when you feel angry?**

Think back to the last time you felt really angry. Did you pitch a fit or ice someone out? When we let anger fester, it can cause us to act outside of our character or be different people than who we typically are. We hope this question helps preteens begin to think through good ways they can respond to anger without taking it out on others and hurting them in the process.

In week 3, we turn to **James 1:19** where James writes about how we should respond when situations begin to get a little out of hand. When we're quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry, we allow ourselves to respond well so we don't sin in our anger.

Bottom Line: **When you're angry, talk to God.** Have you ever gotten so angry that you said the first thing that came to your mind and instantly regretted it? Anger doesn't have to get the best of us. When we're angry we need to be cautious of how we respond and go to God with our feelings.

### WEEK 4

Key Question: **What brings you joy?** What's your favorite thing about nature? Is it the sunrise, waterfalls, or maybe the fresh smell of grass? As much as those things may make you happy, there is true joy to be found. As preteens begin to think through this question, we hope they start thinking through the differences in happiness and joy and look to the One who gives true joy.

We close out the month in **Acts 16:16-40**. While Paul and Silas were preaching the message of Jesus, they were arrested and thrown into prison! All seemed hopeless, but instead of complaining and giving up, they sang songs and worshipped God.

Bottom Line: **God can help you choose joy.** Life can sometimes feel like a rollercoaster. There are ups and downs, highs and lows. But even in the midst of a difficult situation, we can have hope and trust that we are not alone. God can give us the strength we need to choose joy – even when it's hard.