

What Is Perseverance?

Quarter 10 • Lesson 9

Focus on Life Skills

- 1. Connecting:** Play a game to learn about perseverance.
- 2. Teaching:** Learn about perseverance and practice it (Hebrews 12:1–3; Philippians 4:13).
- 3. Responding:** Think and pray about ways to persevere.

SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Optional Supplies:*
 - Memory Verse Poster
 - Scissors
 - Student Pages

Before class, clear a large space for a race in the Connecting section of the lesson. If possible, do this activity outside.

Teacher Devotion

*And let us keep on running the race marked out for us.
Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started
this journey of faith. And he is the one who completes
the journey of faith. He paid no attention to the shame of the cross.
He suffered there because of the joy he was looking forward to.
Then he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
He made it through these attacks by sinners. So think about him.
Then you won't get tired. You won't lose hope.*

Hebrews 12:1b–3

Sometimes we look forward to the future with excitement and hope. Other times, we see only challenges before us, and we may want to run in the opposite direction. While we would sometimes prefer to avoid difficulties, the Bible teaches us that we can persevere through even the most difficult challenges. We can do this by relying on the strength of Jesus.

Think of the challenges in your life that require you to persevere. Are you frustrated by your own failures? Ask God to help you to see your experiences as opportunities to learn and grow closer to Him. Do you feel exhausted from persevering through a time of suffering?

Put your burdens in the hands of the One who claimed victory over death itself. He will renew your spirit. He will bring peace and joy. He will give you the strength to reach the finish line.

Family Connection: Encourage families to help their children practice perseverance at home by giving them tasks that require continued effort, such as sorting beans, folding clothes, or cleaning up. Children can be congratulated for their effort, even if they struggle to complete a task.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Play a game to learn about perseverance.

Welcome the children warmly as they arrive. Ask them to talk in pairs about the most difficult thing they have ever done. Encourage them to include information about what they did to complete the task or get through the situation.

When you are ready to begin class, have the children line up at one end of the clear area. Then give the following instructions. As you give the instructions, do each step as you say it so the children will understand what to do. Pause after each instruction to allow the children to do what you have asked.

Stand on 1 leg.

Now cross your other leg in front of that leg so you are standing with your legs twisted together.

Now hold your arms out in front of you with your palms facing down. Cross your arms by your wrists.

Now twist your hands so your palms are facing each other and join your fingers together.

Teacher Tip: Some of the children may have difficulty standing like this. That is okay. Just encourage them to continue to try. This teaches them about perseverance!

Now that you are all ready, let's have a race! When I say, "Go!" you will jump all the way to the other side of this space. You must keep your arms and legs wrapped together. Ready? Go!

Teacher Tip: If possible, play this game with the children. This encourages them to participate and to have fun. It also shows them that adults need perseverance, too!

Give the children a few minutes to play. If the children fall or need to unwrap their arms and legs, encourage them to try again. Do not announce a winner. Instead, congratulate all of the children who finish. If you have time, repeat the game. Then have them sit in their normal places, and ask the following questions. Allow 2–3 children to respond to each question:

- **Did you think this game was difficult? Why or why not?**
- **If you thought it was difficult, why did you keep trying?**

This game was fun, but it was also difficult. We needed to focus and work hard to get all the way to the other side without falling or unwrapping our arms and legs. We needed to persevere. When you persevere you try again or do not quit even when something is difficult. It is important to learn to persevere.

2. Teaching: Learn about perseverance and practice it (Hebrews 12:1–3; Philippians 4:13).

- What is the most difficult thing you have ever done?

Allow 2–3 children to share their stories.

- What makes something difficult to do?

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

Difficult situations and tasks are part of everyone's life. Sometimes experiencing difficult things helps us to be thankful for the good things in our lives. Sometimes the good things happen because we persevered through the difficult things. Remember, when you persevere you try again or do not quit even when something is difficult. Listen to what the Bible says about perseverance:

If possible, read this verse directly from your Bible.

*A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us.
So let us throw off everything that stands in our way.
Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly.
Let us keep on running the race marked out for us.*
Hebrews 12:1

Just as a runner perseveres in a race, this verse encourages Christians to persevere in their faith. At the time these verses were written, Christians were often treated badly because they believed in Jesus. But many of them continued to believe in Jesus. They knew their faith would require them to persevere.

Let's think about what happens in a race. Everyone stand up!

Now, let's stand as though we are getting ready for a race. Put 1 leg in front of the other and bend your knees slightly.

Show the children how to do this.

Now bend your arms and lean forward as though you are about to race off the starting line!

Show the children how to do this.

- How do you feel? Are you ready to race?

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

Teacher Tip: Activities that require movement engage the children's brains in ways that help them to process the information they are learning and remember it better. Whenever possible, encourage them to move as they learn. This gets their bodies and their brains working!

Let's pretend we are running a race. But when I say, "Go!" we will run in place. Run in place as fast as you can!

Allow the children to run for 30 seconds. Then have them stop to answer this question.

- **How do you feel now?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

Allow the children to run for another 30 seconds. Then ask this question. They should continue running as they answer.

- **Are any of you getting tired?**

Encourage the children to nod or respond with “yes” or “no.”

Allow the children to run for another 30 seconds. Then ask them to stop and stand still. You may choose to lead the children in some simple stretches while you ask the next question.

That was tiring—and we did not even run for very long!

- **How would we feel if we ran a long race?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond. They will probably say that they would be very tired.

Have the children sit in their usual places.

You would need to persevere if you ran a long race. To finish a race you must keep running. To do this you must persevere and not quit.

- **If you are in a race and you keep running, what will happen?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

You will finish the race! That takes perseverance! When you persevere, you try again or do not quit even when something is difficult. When you finish a task or get through a situation, it is like finishing a race.

- **How do you think it feels to finish a race?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

You might feel like you did something great. You may be tired and so glad it is over, but you would probably still feel good about what you did. You may also be thankful you continued to run even when you felt like quitting. That is perseverance!

Sometimes difficult things are very difficult. We may wonder if we can keep going. We may want to quit. But we are not alone when we practice perseverance. Listen to something else the Bible tells us about perseverance:

So think about [Jesus]. Then you won't get tired. You won't lose hope.
Hebrews 12:3

When we have something big or something difficult to do or something that may take a long time, we can lose hope. We may think it is too difficult or too big and decide that we should not even start it. We may give up before we finish. But the Bible tells us we can think about Jesus when we are feeling too tired to finish the race. He will run the race with us! He will give us hope!

Sometimes the things we have to persevere through are much more difficult than running a race. It can be very difficult to persevere when our situations are sad or scary and we feel as though they will never change. But even when it seems as if it is too difficult, we can trust Jesus to give us the strength to persevere.

Listen to another verse about how Jesus can give us strength when we feel as though we cannot continue:

*I can do all this by the power of Christ.
He gives me strength.*
Philippians 4:13

When we must persevere through something, Jesus gives us strength!

- How can you ask God for help in difficult situations?

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

Prayer is a great way to ask God for help. You can also read the Bible and remember some of the challenges Jesus persevered through.

It is not always easy to persevere. It takes practice. Here are some ways you can learn and practice perseverance:

1. Try new things. When we try something new, we do not always do it well the first time. We must continue to learn and try in order to do it well. This helps us to grow in perseverance. Remember the game we played at the beginning of class? That was a new game that we had never played and you had to persevere to jump across the space with your arms and legs twisted together.
2. Work hard. Perseverance takes a lot of hard work. When you work hard to do the things you want and need to do, and to do them well, you will grow in perseverance. In our game, you had to work hard to move across the space. When you work hard, you learn to make it through life's challenges.
3. Practice. Some things do not go well the first time you try them. If you had never played an instrument before and you picked it up expecting to play a song, you would be disappointed. Many difficult tasks require practice. So does perseverance.
4. Pray. Remember to ask for strength from God when you practice perseverance. He will be with you as you persevere!

3. Responding: Think and pray about ways to persevere.

Think of something that is very difficult for you to do. It may be something you need to do, such as helping your father to trim down the bushes around your house. It may be something you will have to do for a long time, such as being kind to your brother who is mean to you. Or it may be something you must stay hopeful about, such as continuing to believe that God will provide what your family needs.

Allow about 30 seconds for children to think of something difficult.

Think about this situation. Now think about a way you can practice perseverance in this situation. The ideas we learned are try new things, work hard, practice, and pray. We also learned that we can ask God for strength when we need to practice perseverance.

After you choose 1 idea you can use to persevere in your situation, run in place. Think about how you will persevere in your situation. You can do it! God will give you the strength if you ask Him.

Allow the children to run in place for about 1 minute. Then have them stay where they are to learn the memory verse.

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, give the children scissors if they are available, and cut or tear out the game cards. Help them create groups of 2–4 children. Allow 5 minutes for them to play the game.

Our memory verse today reminds us why we need to persevere in difficult situations.

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

*We want you to be very strong, in keeping with his glorious power.
We want you to be patient. We pray that you will never give up.*
Colossians 1:11

Teacher Tip: You may choose to change any of the motions below. If you do this, be sure to note the new motions for the next 3 lessons.

We want you to be very strong—Stand with your arms straight out to your sides. Curl your arms toward you and flex your muscles.

In keeping with his glorious power—Lift your arms up to the sky to indicate God.

We want you to be patient—Hold your hands together in front of you with your palms facing upward as though you are waiting to receive something.

We pray that you will never give up—Stand as though you are ready to start a race. Then begin to run in place.

Repeat the verse and motion with the children 3 times.

You can trust God to be with you when you practice perseverance. He is with you even when you have to do very difficult things. He will give you the strength to persevere!

End class by saying this blessing, based on Philippians 4:13, over the children.

Blessing: May you trust God to give you the strength to persevere in the difficult things He has called you to do. May you know that He is with you as you practice perseverance.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible. "A Thousand Hallelujahs" by Brooke Ligertwood: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeS49pSXDts>