

Self-Control Takes Perseverance

Quarter 3 • Lesson 7

Focus on Character Development

1. *Connecting:* Do a physical activity that introduces the idea of perseverance.
2. *Teaching:* Hear a story about penguins and discuss self-control and perseverance based on Hebrews 12:1.
3. *Responding:* Think of strengths and weaknesses and how to persevere in a hard situation.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- Student Pages
- Pencils

Teacher Devotion

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1

What difficult situations are you facing right now? Maybe you are fighting illness. Maybe you are grieving a loss. Maybe you are feeling disappointed ... in your ministry, your marriage, your job, your relationship with God. Whatever you are facing right now, shift your perspective. Move your focus from the situation to Jesus. Look at Him. Talk with Him. Rest in Him. Jesus might not change your situation (though He may!), but He will change you.

This week you will be teaching the children that self-control takes perseverance. Making the right but difficult choice is not a one-time thing. It is something that we must do over and over, even when we do not feel like it. Persevering in self-control is something that is impossible to do on our own and hard to do with God's help. But it is worth it. So with your eyes fixed on Jesus, be strong. Do not grow weary or lose heart. Jesus endured the cross to be with you. He will help you make it. He wants you to share in His victory!

Family Connection: Share with the family members of your students that this week their children will be learning that self-control takes perseverance. Encourage them to share about a time when they persevered, or did not give up, in a difficult situation.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Do a physical activity that introduces the idea of perseverance.

As the children arrive, ask them how they used self-control in their words last week. Encourage them for the ways they spoke with self-control.

Introduce the idea of perseverance by having the children do push-ups until they begin to get tired. Have the children spread out. Explain that they should get into push-up position by placing their hands on the ground about shoulder-width apart. They should stretch out their bodies until they are parallel with the ground and their hands are directly beneath their shoulders. Their bodies should remain parallel to the ground as they push themselves up and down. If you or another adult is physically able, demonstrate how to do a push-up. Use a different physical activity if push-ups are not appropriate in your setting.

Encourage children to do as many push-ups as they can until they get tired. Once they are done, they can sit quietly while others finish. Some children will be able to do more push-ups than others. Assure them that it is okay. This is not a competition. When all the children are finished, gather them for a discussion.

- **How did you feel when you started?**
- **How did you feel after doing many push-ups?**
- **How do you think your body might feel tomorrow? Why?**

Children may feel sore tomorrow from the physical exercise.

- **If you started doing push-ups every day, what do you think would happen to your body? Why?**

Share the following if the children do not mention it: When we exercise our muscles every day, they become bigger and stronger.

Today we will learn that self-control takes perseverance.

- **Can someone tell me what perseverance is?**

Allow the children to respond.

To persevere, or to have perseverance, is to continue with something even when it is difficult and you do not feel like it. You showed perseverance if you continued to do push-ups even when you felt tired.

- **Can someone share a time in your life when you persevered at something?**

Allow 1–2 children to share. This is also a good time for you to share an example of perseverance from your own life.

- **We learned in earlier lessons that self-control means choosing to say and do what is right, even when it is difficult. How do you think self-control and perseverance are connected?**

Give your children a chance to share their thoughts. This is a difficult question, and they may need your help to understand the connection. Explain that self-control requires perseverance. We must continue making right choices in difficult situations, even when we do not feel like it.

2. Teaching: Hear a story about penguins and discuss self-control and perseverance based on Hebrews 12:1.

Listen as I read you a story about a bird that shows great perseverance. Penguins are large birds that live a hard life on the coldest continent in the world, Antarctica. These birds cannot fly, so they must walk. Listen closely and you will hear how the adults keep their babies safe and fed.

Show your children the photo of the penguins included with this lesson.

Each year, these large penguins walk 50–120 km from the ocean to the place they will lay their eggs. The penguins walk for many days. Why are they taking this difficult journey? They will suffer hunger and cold weather. Why not stay by the water where it is easy to get food? Because penguins know that if they take the long walk inland, their babies will hatch in a safer place away from predators that want to eat them.

The female penguin lays only 1 egg. With great care she gives the egg to her mate. He balances it on his feet, covering it with his warm body. The female returns to the ocean for food. She is very, very hungry by the time she gets there. Most of the females survive the journey, but not all do.

All the male penguins huddle together for warmth for many months because of the wind and the blowing snow. Do the males run away? No! The males stand in the freezing cold and protect the unhatched penguins.

In July the egg finally hatches. The female returns from the ocean with fish. The male and female take turns feeding the chick. Eventually all the penguins, parents and babies, begin the long journey back to their home on the seashore.

- **What are some ways that the penguins persevere?**

Allow 2–3 children to share their thoughts. The penguins do what they must through cold winds, snow, hunger, and even possible death.

The penguins endure cold winds, snow, and hunger. The penguins pay a high price to take care of the eggs. Sometimes the mothers die on their way back to the ocean for food. Sometimes the fathers freeze. Sometimes the eggs freeze, and the baby never hatches. Penguins do this because of instinct.

People use self-control and make right choices for the sake of others not because of instinct, but because they choose to persevere even when situations are difficult.

Let's read a Bible verse about perseverance. I will read it 2 times. As I read, think about how running a race may be similar to showing self-control and persevering.

If possible, read Hebrews 12:1 from your Bible. Read it 2 times.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles,
and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

Hebrews 12:1

Many people gather to watch, or witness, big races like those in the Olympics. Runners experience physical pain and tiredness during long races. Even the best runners want to quit at times. They want to take the easy way out, but they realize that persevering in the race is the best choice. They press on to win the prize.

In many ways, life is like a long race. We also experience painful and difficult situations in life. With God's help, we can turn away from the sins that tangle us up. We can choose not to give up. We can persevere and make right choices even when it is hard. We can use self-control to persevere.

I will read 3 difficult situations. After each, I will ask how you could persevere and use self-control.

Situation 1: When your father died, your mother had to go work in the city. She sent you to live with your aunt and uncle. They treat you like a servant.

- **How can you use self-control and persevere in this situation?**

Give the children a chance to share their ideas. Suggest that they can persevere by responding with self-control in their words as they learned last week. They can also persevere in doing well in school and doing chores. It is possible that their kindness and hard work may change how their relatives treat them.

Situation 2: There is a group of older children who follow you every day as you walk to school. They kick dirt at you and call you names. You ask them to stop, but they do not listen. You really want to fight them.

- **How can you use self-control and persevere in this situation?**

Give the children a chance to share their ideas. Suggest that they continue asking the other children to stop without trying to fight them or call them names. Encourage them also to tell a trusted adult about the situation. They can ask God to help them have self-control. He will help them stay calm and make the right choices.

Situation 3: Math is very difficult for you. You feel frustrated every time your teacher explains a new idea. You did very badly on your last exam. Sometimes you feel like giving up. You wonder if anyone would notice if you stopped going to school.

- **How can you use self-control and persevere in this situation?**

Give the children a chance to share their ideas. Suggest that they ask the teacher, a friend, or a family member for help. Encourage them to keep studying and trying hard, even when it is very difficult. Getting an education will help them in every area of life.

- **Why do you think it can be difficult to persevere and have self-control? Do you think it is worth it? Why or why not?**

Every day you make lots of self-control choices. In time, these choices shape who you become. For example, you might choose to go to school even if no one would know if you quit. You might choose to treat a classmate kindly even when she is mean to you. You might choose to not yell back at someone who yells at you. These things take self-control and perseverance.

Optional: If you are using Student Pages, allow the children to colour the penguin and answer the questions about perseverance and self-control.

3. Responding: Think of strengths and weaknesses and how to persevere in a hard situation.

Earlier in this lesson we read a Bible verse about persevering in life like a runner perseveres in a race. Listen as I read that verse again.

If possible, read Hebrews 12:1 from your Bible.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1

When we face a difficult situation and we focus on the difficulty, we can become very discouraged and overwhelmed. We can feel like giving up.

Have the children quickly and quietly find a partner and sit down.

Think of a strength you have. For example, you are good at making friends. Then think of a weakness you have. For example, while you are good at making friends, sometimes it distracts you from studying. Share these 2 things with your partner.

Give the children a minute or so to do this.

Now think of something that is difficult for you to do. For example, it may be difficult for you to read. Turn to your partner and tell that person what is difficult for you to do.

Give the children about 30 seconds to 1 minute to share with their partners.

Now think together of at least 3 ways you can use self-control to help you persevere to overcome that difficult thing. For example, "I am good at making friends, but it distracts me from studying. My difficulty is reading. I can use the strength I have in making friends to find someone to help me with my reading. I can also choose to persevere in working on improving my reading, instead of playing."

Give the pairs about 2 minutes to do this step. Then ask 3–4 children to share what they discussed.

Maybe you felt sad, frustrated, discouraged, or angry as you thought about the thing that is difficult for you. Many of you face very difficult situations every day. People you love are sick or have died. People you trust have hurt you or made you feel bad. You are tired or hungry all the time. You get angry. You want to yell or hit someone. You never want to trust anyone ever again. Persevering in these situations is very hard. Showing self-control in these situations is very hard.

Listen as I read this verse again. It can encourage us when we are in hard situations. It can help us persevere in using self-control even when we are facing really difficult things. But remember, you are not alone.

Read Hebrews 12:1 again. Show the Memory Verse poster if possible.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles,
and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

Hebrews 12:1

Jesus loves you. He will encourage you. If you are a Christian, He has promised to help you with His Holy Spirit. Your problems may not go away. Life may not feel easier. But God will give you the strength you need to persevere.

Close the lesson with this blessing, based on Hebrews 12:2–3:

Blessing: Fix your eyes on Jesus so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. He will help you persevere. He will help you act with self-control. You will make it. May you know how much He loves you.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song if possible.

"Waymaker" by Sinach: <https://youtu.be/DFGDU3XZmms>

