

# Perseverance: Being Resilient

Quarter 4 | Lesson 5 | Character Development

1. **Connecting:** Play a game to understand different responses to difficulties.
2. **Teaching:** Learn about Joseph's perseverance and respond with frozen pictures (Genesis 37; 39—46).
3. **Responding:** Consider how to persevere in difficult situations.

## SUPPLIES

- Bibles
- Cards from end of lesson, cut or torn apart

*Optional Supplies:*

- Memory Verse poster
- *The Action Bible*, images of Joseph
- Pencils
- Student Pages

## Teacher Devotion

*Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

Romans 5:3–5

Have you ever swum across a lake or river? As you leave the shore, you may be excited. But as you begin to tire, it is more difficult to keep your head above the water. You may feel impatient or frightened. Suffering is similar. When we struggle through challenges, at first we may be full of energy and hope. But as we tire, despair and disappointment may take over. Our challenges may threaten to overwhelm us.

Think of a time you felt like you were drowning in despair or difficulty. What helped you to keep going? Such struggle calls for perseverance and hope. These verses tell us that suffering will produce endurance, which produces character, which produces hope—a hope that does not disappoint. The Bible does not promise we will never experience difficulty. But it does promise that God will give us the strength to get through it. As we go through the deep waters of suffering, we can rejoice in the hope that there is One who will always be with us. Jesus will use our suffering to produce hope. Spend a few minutes praying about any suffering you are going through. Then pray for the suffering you may be aware of that your students are facing. Pray for God's hope to be birthed in your hearts.

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# Lesson Time

## 1. Connecting: Play a game to understand different responses to difficulties.

Before class cut or tear apart the cards at the end of the lesson. If you have more students than cards, you can make copies so that each student has a copy. If you cannot make copies, have several students share the same response card.

Welcome your students to class, and tell them that they will do an activity about how to respond to difficult circumstances. Hand out a response card to each student. Explain that they will keep the same response cards for the entire game. Designate 2 sides of your meeting space as helpful or not helpful. Tell the students that you will read a situation, and they will move to the side of the room that they think fits their response for that situation: helpful or not helpful. Explain that some of the responses may not seem to fit the situation at all. If this is the case, the students holding these responses should move to the area for unhelpful responses.

Use the following situations, or think of some that would better fit your students.

**You forgot to do your homework, and now you are getting a poor grade.**

**Your mother is an alcoholic.**

**You have to go live with your grandparents while your parents look for work in a new city.**

**Your home burned down due to an accident.**

**Your friend lied to you.**

After the activity, clap for the students and ask them to take a seat.

**All these situations had some level of difficulty to face. As we saw in our activity, some ways we respond can be helpful. Other responses can actually be harmful. When we encounter difficulties in life, we can choose how to respond. If we persevere with healthy choices, we can overcome the situation or grow stronger and continue to have hope. It is important that we do not let the difficulties we encounter in life overwhelm us. With God's help we can keep going. We can persevere. Listen to what God tells us about perseverance in the Bible.**

Have a student read James 1:2–4 aloud from the Bible.

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*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

James 1:2–4

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**Teacher Tip:** If you feel it is helpful, explain to your students that “steadfast” means to be firm and steady in your purpose, as you are when you are persevering.

- What does this verse tell us about perseverance?
- How does this verse say that perseverance changes a person?

A trial is a difficulty in life. The Bible tells us a lot about perseverance in times of trial. There were many people in the Bible who were persecuted and mistreated. Some of them did not do what they should have done. Some gave up completely or compromised their values. But others faced their problems with resilience, practiced patience, held on to hope, and stood firm in their values. Today we will talk about a person in the Bible who did all of these things, which helped him to persevere with resilience in the face of great difficulty and discouragement.

## 2. Teaching: Learn about Joseph's perseverance and respond with frozen pictures (Genesis 37; 39—46).

Assign students to the roles below. The groups of the brothers, traders, and Pharaoh's magicians can be comprised of as many teens as you like. Encourage actors to sit in the audience when they are not participating. The names of the actors are in capital letters the first time they appear in the scene, so that you can say the names loudly to alert the actors to play their roles. Here are the actors you will need:

Father (Joseph's father)	Joseph	Joseph's brothers
Traders	Potiphar	Potiphar's wife
Pharaoh	Pharaoh's magicians	Benjamin
2 prisoners		

Explain that you will read scenes from Joseph's life. The actors will create a frozen picture of each scene when you finish reading it. They should show the actions or emotions of their character and freeze in those positions for about 30 seconds. The actors will be silent, but Joseph will repeat 1 line at the end of each scene: "I will persevere."

Show the images of Joseph from *The Action Bible* at the appropriate parts of the story.

**You may remember some of Joseph's story. We have talked about him before, but now we will learn more. He lived a life of perseverance and faith in God. As we act out the Joseph's story, look for ways that he showed resilience. Remember that "resilience" means adapting to or bouncing back from difficulties such as health problems, trauma, accidents, or other painful experiences. It is overcoming instead of letting those difficulties defeat you. Let's see what happens.**

**Scene 1: JOSEPH is his FATHER's favourite son. JOSEPH'S BROTHERS are jealous and unkind to him all the time. Joseph has 2 dreams about how he will someday have authority over his brothers, and he tells his brothers about the dreams. This makes his brothers angry!**

**A while later, Joseph visits his brothers out in the sheep pasture. When he arrives, his brothers throw him into a deep pit. Though Joseph is abandoned and betrayed by his brothers, he says ...**

Point to Joseph to say, "I will persevere." Pause for the actors to create a frozen picture of the scene for 30 seconds. Then the actors can sit down. Discuss together:

- **If a person was treated as an outcast as Joseph was, how might she respond if she gave up?**  
Students may say that she might isolate herself from others, believe their harsh words, or run away.
- **How could she respond if she practiced perseverance?**  
Students may answer that she could continue to pursue relationships with others, live a good life in spite of the unkindness of others, or try to resolve things with others.

**Scene 2: The brothers sell Joseph into slavery to some TRADERS. The traders sell Joseph to an Egyptian official named POTIPHAR. Joseph impresses Potiphar with his good work and gains Potiphar's favour. But POTIPHAR'S WIFE lies to Potiphar about Joseph. Joseph tells the truth in spite of the consequences, and even though he is put in prison, he says ...**

Point to Joseph to say, "I will persevere." Pause for the actors to create a frozen picture of the scene for 30 seconds. Then the actors can sit down. Discuss together:

- **If a person was treated harshly in a way that he did not deserve, as Joseph was, what might he do if he gave up?**

Students may answer that he might become bitter, withdraw emotionally, believe the worst of everyone, or believe he deserves the harsh situation.

- **What might that same person do to practice perseverance?**

Students may answer that he might continue to speak the truth, look for positive opportunities, and remember how God sees him.

**Scene 3: The Lord gives Joseph favour with the prison warden, who puts Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Two of the PRISONERS have dreams. Joseph explains what God has shown him about their dreams. One of the prisoners goes to work for PHARAOH after serving his prison sentence. Joseph asks the man to remember him when he is released. After the prisoner is released, two years go by. Joseph continues to live with integrity. Though Joseph still thinks that he has been forgotten, he says ...**

Point to Joseph to say, "I will persevere." Pause for the actors to create a frozen picture of the scene for 30 seconds. Then the actors can sit down. Discuss together:

- **If a person had been in a hard situation for a long time, as Joseph was, what might she do if she gave up?**

Students may answer that she might forget her gifts or her hope for the future. She might get depressed or decide not to try to live well.

- **What would she do if she was practicing perseverance?**

Students may say that she might continue to do her best and focus on staying positive each day.

**Scene 4: Pharaoh has 2 troubling dreams. He calls for his MAGICIANS and wise men. Pharaoh tells them about his dreams, but none of them understand. The former prisoner tells Pharaoh about Joseph. Joseph is taken to Pharaoh, and he tells Pharaoh the meaning that God has shown him. The dreams are a warning of a famine that would devastate Egypt. Pharaoh puts Joseph in charge of preparing for the famine. Joseph is now the second most powerful person in Egypt. Joseph says ...**

Point to Joseph to say, "I will persevere." Pause for the actors to create a frozen picture of the scene for 30 seconds. Then the actors can sit down. Discuss together:

- **For many years Joseph did not know that someday his life would become better. What would have happened if Joseph had given up?**

If Joseph had given up, Egypt would not have benefited from Joseph's wisdom and God-given gifts. Many may have died during the famine.

- **If you were in Joseph's situation, what would you have done?**
- **How did Joseph's resilience help him to succeed in his difficult situations?**

**Scene 5: The famine has struck Joseph's home country, too. JOSEPH'S BROTHERS travel to Egypt to purchase food. They do not know that Joseph is the man they ask for help. They bow before him with their faces to the ground. Joseph could choose to be cruel to his brothers, but Joseph says ...**

Point to Joseph to say, "I will persevere." Pause for the actors to create a frozen picture of the scene for 30 seconds. Then the actors can sit down. Discuss together:

- **If a person who has been mistreated was given an opportunity for revenge, as Joseph was, what might he do if he gave up?**

Students may answer that he might compromise his values to seek revenge or power. He might want to mistreat those who had once mistreated him.

- **How could that person practice perseverance?**

Students may answer that he could choose to not compromise his values. He could do what was right, even when it was hard.

**Perseverance does not just mean continuing to work hard. It also means continuing to be true to who you are, even when it is difficult. Giving up your values when facing difficulties or in order to reach your goals will hurt you in the end. True perseverance means working hard to reach your goals by using resilience to overcome failure and difficulty without compromising your values. Now listen to the last scene we will hear today.**

**Scene 6: Joseph wants to see if his brothers have changed. So he tests them by accusing his brothers of being spies and sending 1 of them to jail. Joseph says he will release the brother if the others go and bring back their youngest brother. The brothers bring BENJAMIN back to Egypt with them. When Joseph sees that they did not abandon the brother who was in jail, he knows they have changed.**

**Joseph reveals his true identity. He invites his family to live with him in Egypt. All of this happened because Joseph lived with perseverance and resiliency.**

### **3. Responding: Consider how to persevere in difficult situations.**

Review the main points of Joseph's perseverance with the teens.

**Even when he was an outcast of his family, Joseph remembered his value and persevered in his trials. Even when his bad situation continued for years, Joseph did not give up on his own life. Even when he had an opportunity to get revenge on those who had mistreated him, Joseph did not compromise his beliefs. Joseph faced his problems with resilience, practiced patience, remained hopeful, and stood firm in his values.**

**Persevering is about taking little steps every day. It is about making progress—even if it is small. It is about being resilient to help you to endure and remain hopeful even during a difficult situation.**

- **How was Joseph resilient throughout his life?**

Students may answer that he was able to gain favour with Potiphar and the prison warden, he was able to use his dream-interpretation skills to become Pharaoh's second-in-command, and he did not compromise his values.

**Remember the verse we read about perseverance earlier? Let's read it again.**

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*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

James 1:2–4

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- **What does this verse tell us about perseverance?**

The students may answer that perseverance has benefits or that we can grow and learn from persevering through difficult situations.

Show the Memory Verse poster, if you are using it.

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*Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.*

James 1:12

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- **What additional advice does this verse give us about perseverance?**

Students may answer that those who are steadfast will receive the crown of life, which has been promised to those who love God.

- **What do you think it means to receive the crown of life?**

Guide students to understand that the crown of life is like a wreath given to athletes who win their competitions. The crown does not promise glory or honour on earth. Instead, it promises the reward of eternal life with God.

Invite all the teens to stand.

**As we remember the scenes Joseph's story, we will consider some of the difficulties he faced. Think of similar situations in your own life—and consider how you can persevere and be resilient.**

**Maybe you feel you are an outcast in some area of life. You may be disrespected or hated, or you may feel lonely or misunderstood. But God loves you and is with you. Think about how you can face your problems and persevere with resilience in this situation. Then quietly say to yourself, "I will persevere."**

**Maybe something bad has happened to you, such as an injury or illness. Maybe you are homeless. Maybe someone has betrayed you. Remember there is someone you can always trust—God. He will never leave you to face your difficulties alone. Think about how you can practice resilience and persevere in this situation. Then quietly say to yourself, "I will persevere."**

**Maybe you have been in a difficult situation for a long time—even years. Perhaps you are abused or live in poverty and are hungry. You might feel forgotten or overlooked. But you are not alone or forgotten—God has a wonderful plan for your life. Think about how you can hold on to hope and persevere in this situation. Then quietly say to yourself, "I will persevere."**

Maybe you face a moral dilemma, or you are wishing for revenge. Maybe you have thought about doing something illegal to make your situation better. Perhaps you are struggling against a bad habit in your life. You do not have to give up. God will give you strength to face your temptations and struggles. Think about how you can stay true to your values and persevere in this situation. Then quietly say to yourself, "I will persevere."

When you persevere with resilience, you continue to move forward even if your progress is slight. As you encounter challenges in life, you can choose to face your problems with resilience, practice patience, hold on to hope, and stand firm in your values. Trust in God for strength. With His help, you can persevere through even the most difficult times.

*Optional:* If you are using the Student Pages, the teens can write their thoughts on these pages.

Close with a blessing over your students based on 2 Timothy 1:7.

**Blessing:** As you persevere through trials, may God give you a spirit not of timidity but of power, love, and self-control. May you see His goodness even in the times of greatest difficulty. And may you feel His love and peace as you persevere.

**Family Connection:** Encourage the students to ask their family members to share about times they had to persevere through a difficulty. The students can then share how God helps us in times of trouble.

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

"Reckless Love" by Cory Asbury: <https://youtu.be/Sc6SSHuZvQE>





**Worry**

**Pretend to be  
sick**

**Relax with  
music**

**Go to bed**

**Read my Bible**

**Make a plan**

**Pray**

**Think  
positively**

**Tell a friend**

**Fight**

**Talk with a  
trusted adult**

**Blame others**

**Run away**

**Ignore it**

**Isolate myself**