

Waiting Faithfully

Quarter 6 | Lesson 13 | Christmas

1. **Connecting:** Do an activity and discuss 3 types of waiting.
2. **Teaching:** Learn about 2 people who waited faithfully for God to fulfil His promise (Hebrews 11:1; Isaiah 7:14; 40:31; Luke 2:25–32, 36–38).
3. **Responding:** Celebrate Jesus' birth.

SUPPLIES

- Bibles
- Box or bag with an interesting item inside
- Optional Supplies:*
 - Pencils
 - Memory Verse Poster
 - *The Action Bible*, image of Simeon and Anna
 - Student Page
 - Small treats and music for a party

The box or bag will be used for the Connecting activity. The purpose of the activity is for the students to wait to see what is inside the box or bag, so be sure the students cannot see the item or easily guess what it is. If possible, put small treats for the students in the box. Make sure there are enough for each student to have one.

Teacher Devotion

The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.
Lamentations 3:25

When you are waiting for something you want, the waiting can seem never-ending. And when you are waiting for something horrible to end, it can seem that it never will. No one likes to wait. But the Bible tells us that God is good to those who wait for Him. When your soul seeks Him, His presence can give you patience and hope as you wait. And, as you wait, your faith will grow stronger.

What are you waiting for? Is it something wonderful? Or is it something awful you want to end as quickly as possible? Whatever you are waiting for, trust God with it. God has not forgotten you or what you are waiting for. His timing will be perfect, even if you cannot see it yet. Wait for Him and He will meet you.

Lesson Time

1. Connecting: Do an activity and discuss 3 types of waiting.

As your teens arrive today, greet them with a Christmas greeting. Place the box in a place where all the students can see it when they enter. If they ask what is inside, do not tell them and do not give them clues. Just smile and tell them they will need to wait.

When you are ready to start class, show the students the box.

I have something very special inside this box.

- **What do you think is inside the box?**

Build up excitement about the box by allowing the students to guess. Do not correct them or give them clues. When they offer their ideas, say things such as "I hope that is what is in the box!" and "That is a great thing to wait for!"

I will show you what is in the box later during class.

Put the box down somewhere the students can still see it and go on with the lesson. Allow 2–3 teens to share their answers to the following questions.

- **Is there something you really want but do not have yet? What is it?**
- **Is there something you really want to do but have not done yet? What is it?**
- **Do you think waiting is difficult or easy? Why do you think that?**

We all have to wait for things. Sometimes we wait a long time, and sometimes we just have to wait a few minutes. Sometimes what we wait for happens, and sometimes it never does.

Most of us are very impatient while we wait. We may wonder when the thing we are waiting for will happen. We may be disappointed or anxious because we have to wait.

For some people waiting does not bother them. It is as if they do not allow themselves to hope for or expect anything. When something they are waiting for happens, they are pleased, but they do not expect that it will.

Pick up the box again and show it to the students. If possible, peek inside and smile about what is inside the box. Try to build the excitement with the students, but do not show them what is inside. Then set the box aside again and go on with the lesson.

- **What are some things you have waited for impatiently?**
- **Have you ever waited patiently without being anxious? What did you wait for?**
- **Why do you think you were able to wait this way?**

Waiting impatiently can affect your health and make you unhappy. Impatience causes stress and can damage your relationships. It can even cause you to lose confidence in yourself and faith in God and others. But God gives us a better way to wait.

2. Teaching: Learn about 2 people who waited faithfully for God to fulfill His promise (Hebrews 11:1; Isaiah 7:14; 40:31; Luke 2:25–32, 36–38).

God shows us that we can wait patiently, hopefully, and faithfully. Listen to what the Bible says about this type of waiting.

Have a student ready Hebrews 11:1 aloud from the Bible. If that is not possible, the verse is printed here for you.

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for
and assurance about what we do not see.*

Hebrews 11:1

- **According to this verse, what is faith?**
- **How does faith relate to waiting?**

Guide the students to understand that in order to wait hopefully and faithfully for Jesus, the Jewish people had to believe in God and trust in His promises. The same is still true for Christians who are waiting for God to fulfil His promises in their lives.

Today we are celebrating Christmas, the birth of Jesus. Jesus is the one whom God promised to send to save His people. He is often called Christ or Messiah, which mean “the anointed one,” the one chosen to be the king. In the book of Isaiah, God told us that His chosen one would be named Immanuel, which means “God with us.”

Have a student read Isaiah 7:14 aloud from the Bible.

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give
birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

Isaiah 7:14

God made this promise many years before Jesus was born. God’s people waited a long time for Jesus to arrive—more than 4,000 years! Then, finally, in His perfect time, God fulfilled His promise by sending Jesus, who was born to save His people from their sins. Let’s learn about 2 people who waited patiently, faithfully, and hopefully for Jesus’ arrival.

Optional: If possible, share the image from *The Action Bible*.

Simeon was someone who was waiting for Immanuel. Listen to what the Bible says about him.

Have a student read Luke 2:25–26 aloud from the Bible.

*Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout.
He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.
It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before
he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.*

Luke 2:25–26

- **What do you think it means that Simeon was “righteous and devout?”**

If it is helpful, explain to your students that “devout” means being committed to your beliefs. You can also explain that “consolation” means comfort. God was comforting Israel by sending His Son.

- **God promised that Simeon would not die before he saw the Christ. How do you think Simeon waited? Why?**

Allow the students to discuss this question for 2–3 minutes. If necessary, guide them to understand that Simeon was devout, so he believed in God and trusted in His promises. It is likely that he waited patiently, hopefully, and faithfully.

After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph brought Him to the temple. It was a Jewish custom to take an offering to the temple after a first son was born. When Simeon, who was now an old man, saw Jesus, he took the child into his arms. Listen to what Simeon said.

Ask another student to read Luke 2:29–32.

*Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all
nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.*

Luke 2:29–32

- **What did Simeon realize about the child he was holding?**

Allow 2–3 students to share. Guide them to understand that Simeon knew that the child was the Lord’s Messiah. The child was God’s promise for the salvation of His people, the Jews, and the rest of the world, the Gentiles.

- **How do you think Simeon knew that Jesus was the Messiah?**

Allow 2–3 students to share. Guide them to understand that the Holy Spirit showed Simeon that the child Jesus was the Messiah.

Simeon had seen Jesus, the Messiah, just as God had promised. Because Simeon was old, he would not live to see Jesus save God’s people.

- **How do you think Simeon felt when he saw the child Jesus, knowing that God had fulfilled His promise?**
- **How do you think he felt about having to wait even longer for God to fulfil His promise to save His people?**

Guide the students to understand that Simeon says in the verses that he will depart in peace, which probably means that even though he would not live to see the fulfilment, he was content because he had seen God answer this part of what he had been waiting for.

- **What can we learn about waiting from Simeon?**

Simeon teaches us to wait patiently and hopefully even when the thing we are waiting for may not happen in our lifetime. Being patient is not easy, especially when we are waiting for something we want very much or when we are waiting for something difficult or painful to end. Being hopeful when it seems like the thing you are waiting for may not happen is especially difficult. But the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit can help us to be patient and hopeful as we wait.

Have a student read Romans 8:24–25 aloud from the Bible.

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Romans 8:24–25

There was someone else at the temple that day who had been waiting, too. Listen to her story.

Have a student read Luke 2:36–38 aloud from the Bible.

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 2:36–38

These 3 verses are the only time Anna is mentioned in the Bible, but they say a lot about her. They tell us that she was old. They also tell us that she was a prophet, which means that God revealed truths to her to share with others.

- **What did Anna do after she saw the child Jesus?**

She gave thanks to God, and she shared the news with others.

- **What do you think Anna was thanking God for?**
- **What news did she share?**
- **How do you think Anna felt when she saw that God's promise had been fulfilled?**

The Bible does not tell us that Anna was waiting for the Messiah, but it is very likely that she was. Her presence at the temple and her prayer, fasting, and worship are all signs that she had faith in God. Faithful followers of God would have known about His promise to send a Saviour, and they would have been waiting and praying for Him to come.

- **What can we learn about waiting from Anna?**

Guide the students to see that being faithful and focusing on God's faithfulness helps us to be patient when we need to wait.

One thing we can learn is that waiting strengthens our faith.

*But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;*

they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40:31

Anna fasted, worshipped, and prayed for many years before she saw Christ, the Saviour who would save those who believe in Him. By spending so much time with God, she must have developed a very strong relationship with Him—one that allowed her to know that the child Simeon was holding was the Messiah, the anointed one whom God had chosen to be the king.

- **How did Simeon and Anna react when they saw Jesus?**

Guide the students to understand that they were grateful and praised God.

Both Simeon and Anna were thankful. They praised God and were thankful that God had allowed them to see Jesus. They were thankful for how God would one day use Him to bring redemption and restoration to the world.

- **How do we see God's faithful fulfilment of His promises in these 2 stories?**

Help the teens see that God faithfully fulfilled His promise to send the Messiah. He also faithfully fulfilled His promise that Simeon would not die until he had seen the Christ.

3. Responding: Celebrate Jesus' birth.

Bring out the box again and show it to the students. Build up excitement by looking inside of the box again and smiling about what is inside. Then select 2 students to look inside. Try to choose students who will be enthusiastic and excited about what is in the box. Allow them to see, but tell them not to tell the others yet, and do not show the contents to the whole group yet.

You have been waiting for the whole class time to find out what is in my box.

- **Was it difficult to be patient about waiting to find out what was inside? Why?**

Some students will likely say that it was difficult to wait to see what was in the box and that they were impatient to find out what was inside.

Let's look to see what is inside.

Show the teens what is inside the box. As you are sharing the next part of the lesson, pass the box around so they can all look carefully at what is inside. If there are small treats or little gifts inside, allow each student to take 1 out of the box as it is passed around.

If it was difficult to wait to find out what was in my box, it is probably even more difficult to wait for the things in your life that are more important to you.

Think of something you are waiting for right now. It can be something small, something important, or even something that may seem impossible.

Give the students 1 minute to think.

- **Do you think you can wait patiently, hopefully, and faithfully for this thing to happen? Why or why not?**
- **What have we learned in this lesson that can help you as you wait?**
- **How might waiting help you to be more thankful for what you are waiting for?**

Listen to what the Bible says about how God cares for those who are waiting.

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students. Have a student read Lamentations 3:25 aloud from the Bible.

The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.
Lamentations 3:25

This verse tells us that God is good to those who wait for Him. If you would like to ask God for help as you wait, you can say a prayer to Him now. If you are not ready to talk to Him about the thing you are waiting for, think about how waiting patiently and hopefully and being thankful might help you to wait.

Optional: If you are using Student Page, give the students time to complete it.

After Anna and Simeon saw Jesus, they both praised God and celebrated His birth and the fulfilment of God's promise. Let's take time to celebrate Jesus' birth now!

If you are able, have a small celebration of Jesus' birth with your class. Sing songs, dance, and give the students small treats or little gifts. Lead the students in singing this quarter's song, if possible. "What a Beautiful Name" by Hillsong Worship: <https://youtu.be/r5L6QIAH3L4>

Close the class with this blessing based on Lamentations 3:25.

Blessing: May you know that God is with you as you wait. As you seek His will and His timing, may you know His goodness always.

Family Connection: Encourage your students to ask a family member to share about a time they waited for something for a long time. The teens can then share that God is faithful and can help them learn to wait patiently, hopefully, and faithfully.