

“Life Lab” - LESSON 2

“Suffering”

Main Focus:

God’s people must learn that this world is full of suffering.



Power Verse:

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

- John 16:33



Whatchagaddaknow:

“No Matter What Happens, Jesus Gives Me Peace!”

LEADER’S INFO

Too many people have the idea that once you become a Christian, everything is going to go smoothly and you will never have a tough time in life. But that is not what Jesus taught us.

In John 16:33, we learn that life is full of troubles and difficulties. Each day, we will be in a fight against our enemy, the devil. But Jesus has already defeated the devil, so we do not have to be afraid or worried.

Suffering isn’t only a “possibility” - Jesus said it is a guarantee. Bad things will happen to us even as we follow Him. Suffering is part of the deal.

In this lesson, the children will learn that, although life is full of “many trials and sorrows,” we can have peace in our hearts and minds because Jesus has “overcome the world.” If we trust in Him and never give up, we will win the victory!



“The Spark” Intro Video

“Born To Suffer”



“Whatchagaddaknow” Video

Cali from the Valley teaches “Whatchagaddaknow”



Character Skit

“Beaker”



Offering Time



Game Time!

“Cup Stack”



Bible Story

“Stephen Is Martyred”



Power Verse Video

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”
- John 16:33



Call To Action

“Suffering”



Rewind!

Review Game



Small Group Experience

Main Focus:

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Power Verse:

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Whatchagaddaknow:

“No Matter What Happens, Jesus Gives Me Peace!”

Lesson 2 Materials Needed:

“The Spark” Intro Video

- “Lesson 2 - The Spark” Intro Video

“Whatchagaddaknow” Video

- “Whatchagaddaknow - Lesson 2 - Teaching” Video
- “Whatchagaddaknow - Lesson 2 - Trigger” Video

Character Skit

- “Beaker” Theme Graphic/Music

Offering Time

- “Offering Time” Bumper Video

Game Time!

- “Game Time!” Bumper Video
- “Cup Stack” Graphic
- Six Large Styrofoam Cups
- A Table
- A Stopwatch

Bible Story

- “Lesson 2 - Bible Story” Graphics

Power Verse Video

- “Lesson 2 - Power Verse” Video

Call To Action

- “Lesson 2 - Call To Action” Graphics
- A Lawn Chair
- A Glass Of Lemonade
- A Pair Of Sunglasses
- One Empty Plastic Water Bottle
- One-Two Tbs. Of Baking Soda
- 1/2 Cup Of Vinegar
- One Latex Balloon
- A Black Magic Marker
- One Small Plastic Funnel
- Safety Glasses

Rewind!

- “REWIND!” Bumper Video
- “REWIND!” Lesson 2 Graphics

Small Group Experience

- Bible Story Print Piece
- Crayons, Pencils, Or Markers
- Power Verse Print Piece
- Large Envelopes

“The Spark” Intro Video

“Born To Suffer”

“Whatchagaddaknow” Video

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“Cup Stack”

Bible Story

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Call To Action

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Review Game

Small Group Experience



Introduction to “The Spark” Intro Video

Leader: Hey, kids! Today, we are continuing our series called “Life Lab,” We are learning the Essential Elements of a Healthy Christian Life.

Okay, I need to know - has this ever happened to you? You’re playing your favorite video game, you’re about to win, and BAM! the power goes out (or the battery dies). Or maybe you’ve been working hard on a LEGO masterpiece... and your little brother comes running in, not paying attention, and accidentally smashes it to pieces. *(Allow responses)*

It’s a horrible feeling when something bad happens and you just want to yell, “WHY?!” In life, we all face moments like that - things that hurt, things that go wrong, things we wish would just stop.

In today’s LIFE LAB lesson, we’re going to discover how moments like that can actually help us grow stronger in our faith. I know it sounds crazy...but to see more of what I am talking about, check this video out...

(play “The Spark - Intro Video Lesson 2”)

Leader: Suffering is not easy. But in today’s LIFE LAB lesson, we’re going to discover that even when bad things happen, God can give us peace. Not just “calm down” peace, but deep peace that comes from knowing He’s still in control. We’ll see how trusting Him is like having a protective shield around our hearts, even in the middle of the storm.

God can take the worst situations and somehow turn them into something good, something that helps us grow stronger and know Him better. So grab your goggles, keep your hearts open, and let’s see what God’s Word has to teach us about how SUFFERING can actually help us!

But, before we do that, we need to find out “Whatchagaddaknow.”

(play “Whatchagaddaknow” Teaching Video)



CHARACTER SKIT

Character: “Beaker” (His full name is Eugene Buttonsworth III; He is the “Custodial Engineer” at Life Lab, dresses like a janitor, wears rubber gloves, and pushes a mop bucket around which he refers to as “Professor Sloshton”)

Beaker: (Cheerfully) Well, slap me with a spatula! What’s going on in here today?

Leader: Beaker! We have a very important lesson today about the peace of God.

Beaker: (Confused) Piece? Which piece? The piece that brings joy, or the piece that brought down Sodom and Gamora? Or do you mean the pieces of God, like the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Leader: (Chuckles) Oh, Beaker! Not quite. It’s more like a calm heart, even when things around us are messy or tough. That kind of peace only comes from God.

Beaker: Ooooh! Like when I got trapped in a cabinet while cleaning? (Pauses) That was a bit of a sticky situation.

Leader: That does sound tough! We all face difficulties, but when we trust God, He can bring good out of those situations.

Beaker: Like how I thought I’d never clean up the glitter explosion last week. But then we had a sparkly dance party! I think I still have some glitter in my hair, though. (Shaking his head to get the glitter out)

Leader: (Laughs) Yes! That mess became something good! That’s how God works—He can use our troubles for His glory.

Beaker: So, when bad stuff happens, I don’t have to worry or be afraid of what might happen, because those bad times will end and something good will come after, right?

Leader: That’s exactly right! Hard times are a part of life, but we can learn to be patient and trust God.

Beaker: So, how do we find peace when things go kablooney?

Leader: (Encouragingly) We pray and keep our eyes on Jesus. He promises peace that surpasses all understanding!

Beaker: (Eyes wide) So I should take my eyes out and throw them to heaven to receive His peace?

Leader: No, no, no! Praying helps us focus on Jesus and not our problems. Even in tough times, we have to remember God is with us. When we do, He’ll help us see the good.

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CHARACTER SKIT

(Continued)

Beaker: *(Relieved)* Oh, phew! That sounds a lot easier than eye surgery!

Leader: *(Smiling)* Definitely! Please keep your eyeballs in their places!

Beaker: *(Enthusiastically)* I will do my best! But you never know what can happen when you work at Life Lab!
(Motioning to the mop bucket) Just look at Professor Sloshton - his eyes are long gone!

Leader: *(Confused)* Right... but that's because he's a mop.

Beaker: *(Glancing at his mop bucket)* Hmm... maybe you have a point there. Either way, I will be sure to keep my focus on Jesus and my physical eyes in my head!

Leader: That's a good idea, Beaker. As long as you keep Jesus at the center of your attention, you will have the peace that only He can give to you!

Beaker: And I want that peace! Well, I guess I'm on a hunt to find Professor Sloshton here some googly eyes. See y'all later! My name is Beaker! Remember, you don't need a clean floor to hear from God—but it sure helps!

(EXITS WHILE THEME MUSIC PLAYS)



GAME TIME

“Cup Stack”

Items Needed For Game:

Six large styrofoam cups; A table; A stopwatch

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Preparation:

Place the table in the center of the stage. Choose one boy and one girl to play.

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How To Play:

Choose which player will go first. When you say, “Go!” the player must try to stack the cups (*alternating the direction - the first one will sit upright like normal, the next one will sit lip to lip with the first one, and then the next cup will sit bottom to bottom with the one below it, alternating directions each time so that they will stack up high*).

Time how long it takes for the first contestant to accomplish this task. The next player must try to complete the task faster. Whoever has the fastest time is declared the winner!



Bible Story

“Stephen Is Martyred”

Materials Needed:

The graphic slides for Lesson 2; begin with the slide that says “Bible Story”; follow the instructions below, changing the slides to follow along with the story (*as shown*)

Preparation:

Familiarize yourself with the story in Acts 6:8-7:60; have your open Bible in your hands as you tell the story

The Story:

Today’s Bible Story is found in the book of Acts, chapters 6-7. It’s a story about the events that took place just a little while after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven. The apostles began preaching and teaching about Jesus throughout the land. Many leaders rose up among those who became Christians.



One of those leaders was a man by the name of Stephen. (*show pic*) Stephen preached about Jesus and prayed for others to become Christians. This did not sit well with some of the other religious leaders. They were afraid that if Stephen continued to preach about Jesus then they would lose some of their power over the people.



(*show pic*) So, these religious leaders made a plan to trap Stephen. They convinced some people to lie about Stephen and say that he said some things that he didn’t say. That’s not very fair, is it? Stephen’s reputation suffered as a result of these lies. But that is not the only suffering that Stephen went through. Stephen was put on trial before the Sanhedrin (a council of religious leaders). The high priest asked Stephen if the things he was being accused of were true. Stephen answered him by talking all about Jesus and told them THEY were some of the people who were responsible for Jesus’ death. When the religious leaders heard Stephen tell them they were guilty of murdering Jesus, they didn’t respond in a positive way.



These were very angry, stubborn people who were still rejecting the Good News about Jesus. They rushed toward Stephen, grabbed him, and dragged him out of the city. (*show pic*) They were so angry with Stephen and God’s message, they all gathered large rocks in order to stone Stephen. Even as Stephen was suffering as a result of sharing God’s truth, listen to the last words he said. (*show pic*) He looked up to Heaven and said, “Lord, do not hold this sin against these people.” Wow! What an incredible attitude in the midst of suffering. Sadly, the people threw the stones at Stephen, and he died.

This story seems to have a sad ending, but it doesn’t. Stephen was stoned to death, but he was not alone as he suffered. He saw Jesus in Heaven waiting for him. Stephen left his life on this earth and went to Heaven to spend eternity with his Savior, Jesus. Not only that, but the story of Stephen was told throughout the land, and many people became Christians as a result. In your lesson today, you’re going to learn that suffering is a part of a healthy Christian life and that God can use your suffering to accomplish great things!



Call To Action “Suffering”

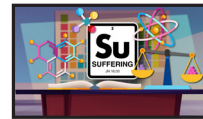
Materials Needed:

The “Lesson 2 - Call To Action” graphics; a lawn chair; a glass of lemonade; a pair of sunglasses; 1 empty plastic water bottle; 1–2 tablespoons of baking soda; 1/2 cup of vinegar; 1 latex balloon; black magic marker; 1 small plastic funnel; safety glasses

Preparation:

Begin with the slide titled “Lesson 2 - Call to Action Title Slide”; Blow up the balloon enough to write the word “PEACE” largely on it with the magix marker; Pour the vinegar into the empty plastic bottle. Set it aside.; Place the funnel in the neck of the balloon. Pour 1–2 tablespoons of baking soda into the balloon through the funnel.

The Message: *(title slide)*



Today, we are going to learn a very important lesson about living for Jesus. Many people have a BIG misunderstanding about what it means to live for Jesus. Too often, people ask Jesus to forgive them of their sins and be the Lord of their lives, but then expect life to be one big easy vacation. They are ready to live “The Good Life.”

(pull out the lawn chair and set it up) They think that because they are a Christian life will be easy. *(sit down in the chair, put on the sunglasses, and start sipping the lemonade)* They sit back and think “Well, now life is going to be easy. Everything is going to just fall right into place. I’m going to be able to sit back and relax now that I am a Christian.” *(stand up and take off the sunglasses)*

That is NOT how Jesus described what life would be like if we choose to follow Him. He never promised life would be easy with no difficulties or rough spots. Instead, our Power Verse tells us what Jesus actually told His disciples. He said, “Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.” Whoa! You know what that means? It means that even though we are living our lives for God...

Bad Things Happen *(slide)*



When Jesus said, “In this world you will have many trials and sorrows...” He was saying, “This isn’t going to be easy. It is going to be a fight against the devil every single day.” He didn’t say we “might” have trouble. He said we “WILL” have many trials and sorrows. We WILL suffer. It’s part of life. It’s one of the essential elements of a healthy Christian life as well.

Too many people go to church and serve God as long as everything is going their way. Then, when it starts becoming tough and a real “fight,” they quit coming to church, quit praying, and decide to give up. That’s because they had an idea that life would always be easy as a Christian. They didn’t think suffering was a part of the deal.

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Call To Action (Continued)

Jesus said it is the opposite. He said, “Life as my follower means you will be doing battle with the enemy every day. It’s going to be tough. It’s going to be a fight!” But He didn’t stop there. If He did, that would be depressing. He didn’t just say, “In this world you will have many trials and sorrows...” He went on to say, “...but take heart...” What does that mean? That means...



When Bad Things Happen, Trust God. (slide)

Jesus said, although this world will bring us lots of trouble, suffering, and many fights with the enemy, we don’t have to worry or be afraid. He said, “Take heart!” Too many kids are afraid of the devil, worried that he will try to hurt them or ruin their lives. Jesus said, “In this world you will have many trials and sorrows, but TAKE HEART...” That means you can trust God! Why? Jesus said, “I have overcome the world!” He’s already won the fight! Trust God!

Let me demonstrate this a different way. (*hold up the water bottle*) This water bottle is going to represent you. The liquid in the bottle is vinegar, and that is going to represent your faith. (*hold up the balloon - without revealing the writing on it*) Inside this balloon is baking soda. That’s going to represent hard times and suffering. Now, you wouldn’t think anything good could come from suffering, right? I mean, suffering hurts. It’s painful.

(*Carefully stretch the mouth of the balloon over the opening of the bottle, but don’t let any baking soda fall into the bottle yet! Be sure the word “PEACE” is facing the audience.*) But something very interesting happens when you allow your faith to be put into action, trusting God in the midst of suffering. When hard times come (*lift the balloon, allowing the baking soda to fall into the vinegar; this sets off a chemical reaction that causes the balloon to fill, revealing the word “PEACE”*) Isn’t that amazing? When you trust God in the midst of suffering, He fills you with His peace. Not only that, but...



God Can Use The Bad For Good (slide)

Even though you may suffer, God can use the bad circumstances, the pain, and the suffering to accomplish His will. Remember Stephen? He was stoned to death. It seemed like he lost the fight. But God used Stephen’s death to inspire many people to become Christians. God used the suffering that Stephen went through to accomplish some amazing things! God will do the same thing for you. Suffering is never easy, but in the end - it is WORTH IT!

Altar Response: (*play soft music*)

Pray for kids that are going through suffering and hard times. Pray that God will help them have the right attitude toward the suffering they are going through. Pray that God will give them peace through their suffering and use their testimony to inspire others.



Materials Needed:

“REWIND!” Lesson 2 Graphics; “REWIND!” Bumper Video

Preparation:

Play the “REWIND!” Bumper Video; Begin with the slide titled “REWIND!”; there is a slide for each question

1. Whatchagaddaknow today?

Answer: “No Matter What Happens, Jesus Gives Me Peace!”

2. Who was the man in our Bible Story?

Answer: Stephen

3. Did the religious leaders appreciate Stephen?

Answer: No

4. What did the religious leaders convince others to do?

Answer: Lie About Stephen

5. What did the people throw at Stephen?

Answer: Stones

6. According to our lesson today, “_____ Things Happen.”

Answer: Bad

7. According to our lesson today, “When Bad Things Happen, _____ God.”

Answer: Trust

8. According to our lesson today, “God Can Use The Bad For _____.”

Answer: Good

9. True or False: Suffering has no purpose in our lives.

Answer: False

10. Where was our Power Verse found?

Answer: John 16:33