



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Hard Way Forward

[10 min]

Take Steps Forward for True Statements

Say: **Today's Bible story shows us that Jesus does hard things. Even when he didn't really *want* to do the hard thing that was coming, Jesus did it anyway. Let's play a game about stepping forward and doing something hard.**

- Have everyone line up along one wall of the room.
- The goal is to *not* get to the wall on the opposite side of the room. If kids get to the opposite side of the room, they'll lose. You'll call out a statement about a hard thing, and anyone who's ever done that hard thing will take a big step forward.
- If a person has never done the hard thing you call out, he or she can stay in place.
- Call out statements until everyone has moved to the opposite wall or you finish the list.
- Call out the following statements, pausing after each one to allow steps forward.
 - You had more homework than you thought you could possibly get done.
 - You apologized for hurting someone.
 - You kept practicing a sport you didn't feel very good at.
 - You read a *really* long book filled only with words and no pictures.
 - You switched schools.
 - You had a best friend move away.
 - You faced a bully.
 - You had a surgery.
 - You helped take care of younger kids.
 - You baked something or made a meal all on your own.
 - You had to clean up a giant mess in your room or house.
 - You had to turn off the TV in the middle of a show or movie because your screen time for the day was over.
 - You obeyed rules you didn't want to obey.
 - You had to talk to a friend about something he or she did that hurt you.
 - You had to throw away something you love because it was broken or worn out.
 - You had to talk in front of a bunch of people.
 - You practiced until you learned to play an instrument.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What made it hard to step forward when I called out something that was true for you?**

• **Tell about one of the things you stepped forward for. Why was it hard?**

Say: **Doing hard things is, well, hard! But we can be willing to do hard things because Jesus does hard things, and we can always ask Jesus for help. We don't have to do the hard things alone because our friend Jesus is always with us.**

**TALK-ABOUT VIDEO****Hard Things**

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Hard Things” teaching video

Discuss and Watch “Hard Things”

Say: **We’re learning that Jesus does hard things, so we’re willing to do hard things.**

Ask: • **What’s something you have to do, but you don’t really want to?**

Say: **Let’s watch a video where some kids talk about doing hard things...and why it’s good! Pay attention to which of the things you’ve done, too!**

Watch “Hard Things.”

Ask: • **Which of the things in the video have you done, too?**

• **How have you seen good come out of doing those hard things?**

Say: **Doing hard things isn’t fun while you do it. But in the end, God often brings good things out of our hard work! This video showed how a lot of hard things paid off in the long run. Next time you have to do something hard, ask God to help you see what good he wants to bring out of it. And remember, Jesus does hard things, so we’re willing to do hard things. He did the hardest thing ever when he died on the cross, but the good thing that came out of it is that we can be his friends!**



DEEPER BIBLE Why Can't We Just Skip Hard Times?

[15 min]

Supplies

- Bibles
- bubble gum (2 individually wrapped pieces per child) (see Tip)

Tips

- The harder the bubble gum, the better the experience will go. We found that inexpensive brands like Dubble Bubble and Super Bubble worked well. Bazooka was another good choice. If you use a softer bubble gum like Bubble Yum, you can harden it by refrigerating it prior to the experience.
- If you have some kids with braces, they may not be able to chew gum. You can still have them put the gum in their mouths and try to blow a bubble without chewing the gum at all.

Chew Gum

Say: **We're learning that Jesus does hard things, so we're willing to do hard things. But nobody wants to do hard things! Even Jesus didn't want to—he was just willing to do it because he loves us so much.**

So if God is good, why can't we just skip hard times? What if we could have only good stuff happen to us? Let's dig in to that.

Give each child a piece of bubble gum, and tell kids to unwrap the gum but not put it in their mouths yet.

Say: **On the count of three, you can put your gum in your mouth, and we're going to see who can be first to blow a bubble. Ready?**

One...two...three...go!

Watch kids and see who's the first to blow a bubble. Continue letting kids chew until everyone can blow a bubble.

Ask: • **What would happen if you tried to blow a bubble before you chewed your gum at all?**

- **Did anyone try to blow a bubble too soon? What happened?**

Say: **You can't blow a bubble with hard bubble gum. You need to chew it to soften it so it's ready for the bubble.**

Think of chewing gum as going through hard times. Sometimes going through the hard times is what gets us ready for the good times! We're learning things through the hard times that we'll need to know in the good times. We can't just skip straight to the good or we won't be ready. It would be like trying to blow a bubble before the gum is ready.

So what can hard times do for us? Let's see what the Bible says.

Dig Deeper

Say: **First, let's think about today's Bible story. Jesus had to do something hard—die on the cross. He didn't want to, but he did it.**

Ask: • **What good came out of Jesus' dying on the cross?**

Say: **If Jesus had just skipped that hard thing, we'd be separated from God forever because of our sins. Jesus had to go through the hard times to bring us hope and eternal life. And going through our own hard times helps grow us, too.**

Read Romans 5:3-4 and James 1:2-4.

Say: **We don't naturally consider troubles an opportunity for joy. That's a big shift in our thinking! But when we think about all the good the hard times do for our hearts, we can rejoice.**

Our next verse talks about how hard things are a way of training us.

Read Hebrews 12:11.

Ask: • **What's something you've trained to do or practiced doing?**

Examples would include sports or playing instruments.

Say: **Just like you wouldn't be a great soccer player without training, you won't grow good character without the training that comes from hard times.**

Ask: • **Tell about a time you experienced something good that you would've missed if you hadn't first experienced something bad.** Share your own story first.

Say: **Let's look at one more verse. Before I read it, let me explain the process for purifying gold. You don't find smooth, pretty, flawless gold jewelry in nature. Gold has to go through the fire to be purified, to remove all the dirt and gunk. But in the end, it comes out beautiful! These verses talk about how trials are purifying us like gold.**

Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.

Say: **Jesus does hard things, so we're willing to do hard things. And we can find joy in doing hard things because we know that God is softening us up to blow incredible bubbles!**

Have everyone blow a bubble.

Give kids each an extra piece of gum so they can go home and show their families how trials help us grow.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Sweating & Praying

[5 min]

Supplies

- warm water
- paper towels (1 per child)

Sweat and Pray

Say: **Jesus does hard things, so we're willing to do hard things. One thing that happened while Jesus prayed in the garden was that he was sweating a whole lot. His sweat was like blood! Let's imagine how he felt as we pray about the hard things we have to do.**

- Have kids each dip a paper towel in warm water and then close their eyes.
- Have kids hold the warm paper towels against their foreheads as they talk to God about hard things they have coming up in their lives.

Wrap Up

Pray: **Jesus, thank you that you were willing to do the hardest thing ever so that we could be your friends. Help us do hard things for you, too. In your name, amen.**



ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT A Hard Choice

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Jesus Commits to God’s Will” Activity Page (1 per reader)
- pencils
- crayons
- flower stickers (optional)

Older Kids: Do an Activity Page

Say: **Jesus does hard things**. Let’s see what kind of choices *you* make when all the options are hard things.

Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Kids will make their choices among three tough options.

Ask: • **Which choice was the hardest to make? How did you decide what to do?**

• **These were just silly choices. What’s a hard thing God might really ask you to do?**

Say: You’d never really *have* to do any of the things on our activity page. But Jesus knew he had to die in order to save us. Jesus didn’t want to die on the cross. But **Jesus does hard things**. He died for us because he loves us! And when he asks us to do hard things for him, we can be just as willing.

Younger Kids: Color a Coloring Page

Distribute the coloring pages and crayons. Say: **Jesus does hard things**. **When he prayed in the garden, he promised God he would do something hard. Let’s color Jesus praying in the garden.**

Allow time for kids to color. If you have flower stickers, kids can add them around the garden.