

Activity: Adversity

By Karen Noal



FAMILY TIME
TRAINING

Teaching Goal: Hard times can make us stronger and give us more faith depending on how we choose to handle the challenge.

Scripture: James 1:2-3 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Genesis 37 and 39-45 Story of Joseph

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Psalms 34:18-19 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.

Materials: Stove
3 saucepans half full with water
2 raw carrots
2 raw eggs
1 tea bag
3 empty bowls or cups

- I. Play theme song
- II. Pray
- III. Review last lesson
- IV. Lesson and discussion

- ✓ Words written in **bold** are when the leader is speaking. Feel free to use your own words.

A. **ACTIVITY: We are going to put 3 different food items in hot water to see how they react. The hot water is going to represent tough times.** Fill three regular size saucepans half full of water. Put the carrot in one pan of water, the egg in another pan and the tea bag in the third pan. Turn each burner on high until the water boils then lower the temperature to maintain a low boil for about 15 minutes. (NOTE: It is possible for the tea bag to break if left boiling too long. To avoid this possibility, make sure that burner is turned down to low heat.)

Have this discussion while the water is boiling. **Do you know what “adversity” means? It means being picked on, hard times, being misunderstood or suffering. Have you ever faced adversity? Has anyone ever treated you unfairly or said things about you that hurt your feelings or weren’t true? Listen.** Allow children to tell you about their own hurts. You may want to mention one of your own to help get them started.

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B. In your own words, tell the story of Joseph from Genesis 37, 39-45. Discuss the times of adversity he faced:

His brothers hated him.

His brothers sold him into slavery.

He was wrongly imprisoned because of Potiphar's wife.

He was forgotten in prison after interpreting the cupbearer's dreams.

Joseph had many reasons to give up. Instead, he trusted God and made the most of each challenge. He spent years and years in situations that were tough, but he remained faithful and never gave up. God had a plan in which He wanted Joseph to be a part. He could have fulfilled His plan through anyone but since Joseph remained faithful, Joseph received the blessings in the end. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 50:20.

If 15 minutes has not yet passed, continue the discussion, using this time to show how God has been faithful to your family through different challenges. After 15 minutes, check the food in each pan of water.

D. Let's check the food to see what's happened to each item after 15 minutes in boiling water. Remember, the boiling water represents hard times...adversity in life. Put the carrot in a bowl, the egg in a separate bowl and spoon out some tea-water into another bowl. **Feel the carrot. How does it feel? *It is now soft.*** Break a fresh carrot to compare the difference. **Peel the shell from the egg and tell me how it has changed since it's been boiled? *It has become hard.*** Break an uncooked egg and compare. **The tea has changed too but in a different way.** Put the tea bag beside the cup of tea-water.

The carrot started out strong but after going through adversity, it became soft, weak and lost its strength. The life of King Solomon is similar to the carrot. At the beginning of his reign he was strong. He asked God for wisdom. He built God's temple. But the challenges of possessions, power and pleasure caused Solomon to become soft. He ended his life building altars to idols and foreign Gods. (See 1 Kings 11:3-5)

The egg had a strong shell protecting its weak fragile insides but after going through adversity, it became hardened. In the story of Moses, Pharaoh had a hard heart. He refused to let the Israelites go which caused his people to suffer death and sickness from 10 different plagues. (See Exodus 10:27 and surrounding)

Look at the tea bag. The tea bag also went through the adversity of being boiled in hot water. Instead of changing from strong to soft like the carrot; or from fragile to hard like the egg; the tea changed the environment...the water. The water has turned into a drink which is a positive change for those who enjoy tea. Queen Esther changed her environment under adversity. She could have been killed for approaching the King, but she did anyway. She asked the King to save the Israelites and he did. (See the Book of Esther) Paul and Silas changed the environment when they were put in prison. Instead of becoming soft or hard...they introduced the prison guard to Jesus. (See Acts 16:29-32)

We want to be like Esther, Paul and Silas when we face adversity...hard times...challenges. Don't become soft and weak like the carrot and Solomon. Don't become hard and defensive like the egg and Pharaoh. Instead, like the tea bag, use the challenges to change the environment, to help others, and respond in such a way that others see we are different...different in a good way because we follow Jesus.

Read James 1:2-3 and Psalm 34:18-19. God promised that He would be there for us even in times of adversity. He even tells us to consider it JOY. Let's remember that God is in the good times and the challenging times. He uses challenging times to make us stronger and to help our faith in him grow.

V. Close in Prayer

VI. Pass It On: Make an extra copy of this lesson and *pass it on* to another family.