

Faith

Ask for a Volunteer

Ask your volunteer, 'Do you BELIEVE that I have the strength to catch you if you fell backwards from the wall?'

If the volunteer answers with a 'Yes' (and encourage this response) then follow with this second question, 'Would you TRUST me to catch you if you fell?'

After encouraging a positive response, ask your volunteer to fall back, keeping completely straight (stiff) as they fall. Ask the group to count slowly to seven, telling your volunteer to fall on the count of seven. Naturally you must be ready to catch them, but do not do this until they are at least 45 degrees from the vertical.

By then most young people will have started to bend their knees and put out their hands to cushion their fall, rather than keeping straight as you requested. Call in the other person and repeat the activity.

Faith has three ingredients:

Belief - this is based on examining the evidence i.e. Does (Susan) look strong enough to catch me if I fall backwards?

Trust - this is based on personal confidence in the person of your belief i.e. can I trust (Susan) to catch me, or will she laugh as I hit the floor?

Action - this takes personal involvement. In this illustration that means falling back into the arms of your youth leader.

Explain that faith in God is also made up of these same three ingredients - Belief, Trust and Action. Use the illustration of 'The Tightrope Walker' to show that 'belief' needs to be acted upon before it becomes 'faith'.

The Tightrope Walker

Jean Francois Gravelet-Blondin was one of the world's greatest tight-rope walkers, acrobats and circus performers. On 15th September 1860, he

performed one of the most amazing stunts the world had ever seen. Blondin, before a great crowd, walked a tightrope stretched across Niagara Falls in Canada.

The tightrope, made of strong steel cable, was over 50 meters above the falls and it stretched for 350 meters across the falls. One slip and he would have plunged to his death. After he had walked across he shouted to the crowd if they believed he could carry a person back across the falls. They all shouted 'Yes!' and cheered because they all believed he could do it! So then he asked for a volunteer - but no one spoke up. Everyone was silent. Not one person was prepared to trust Blondin and put what they said they believed into practice.

Eventually one person did agree to go. His name was Henry Colcord, Blondin's manager. He alone had real confidence and trust in Blondin's skill as a tightrope walker.

Many people say that they believe in God, but the Bible also talks about having faith in God. Being a Christian is more than just believing in God, it is trusting him with the whole of your life.

Read Matthew 14:25-32

- **The disciples saw the calm rescuing eyes of Jesus when they were sinking in the storm. The account in Matthew 14:22-33 is one of the most precious and insightful portions of God's Word, dealing with His tender love and care for us as His children.**
- **Jesus made His disciples get into the boat. When their lives were in danger, it was out of obedience to Him. If they had not obeyed Jesus, they would not have learned what He wanted to teach them. The Lesson: Obey Jesus!**
- **Jesus left them all night. He waited until 3:00 AM - when the disciples were at the extremity of their trial. Remember Mary, Martha, and Lazarus? Jesus did not hurry to them. He let Lazarus get sicker and sicker and actually die (John 11). Jesus does not run to us to prevent the trial. In this instance, His purpose was to demonstrate to His disciples, in an**

unforgettable way, that He would do whatever was necessary to rescue them. He wants to do the same for us as well. The Lesson: Trust Jesus!

- **Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. Jesus’ pathway was the very object that was testing their faith. He knew exactly where they were the whole time. They were never out of His sight. They might have forgotten all His promises, but Jesus did not forget. We will never find ourselves anywhere the Lord cannot find us. That is comforting! There are no storms in life that Jesus cannot subdue in His time. There is never a valid reason to fear, nor to be anxious. We are to trust in the One who will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5b). So through the storm, on the pathway, and in whatever it is that is giving you a hard time, know that He is coming to your aid. The Lesson: Keep looking for Jesus!**
- **Jesus brought calm in their boat. When we are obedient to the Lord, we are in the safest place in the universe. No matter how frightening the circumstances may be around us, Jesus is there; He will calm the seas of trouble in His time. The most secure place to be is in God’s will. Peter sank because he did not understand that the lesson was to love the Lord Jesus enough to trust Him. Peter did love Him: did anyone else say, “Command me to come to You on the water; I will obey whatever You say; Your Word is my command!”? We should not think badly of Peter for sinking; we should love Jesus as he did, and do whatever He says. The Lesson: Love Jesus! When you invite Jesus into the boat of your stormy life, your life will become calm. (Anything that is “out of control” has not been fully surrendered to God.) Even though you may be tossed all about, if the Lord is in your boat, all is well!**

Discussion Questions:

- What happened when Peter became afraid and took his eyes off Jesus?
- What are some things that have caused your faith to waiver?
- What are ways to get back on track with renewing your faith in God?