



# THE FORGOTTEN

## Leader's Guide

### STUDY ONE: The Forgotten & The Unnamed

**Objective:** To understand and introduce the background of the concepts behind what we'll learn from Hebrews 11 to set us up for three weeks of study of Hebrews 11 and set students up to individually dive deeper and dig into their own lives and personal application of the concepts we'll and this chapter of God's Holy Word.

**To prepare:** Read Genesis 1-2, 5, 28, and Hebrews 11.

**Supplies Needed:** 2 oven mitts, 2 spatulas or wooden spoons, aluminum foil, something to write on that is large enough for the group to see, Bibles

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#### Opening Game: Kitchen Hockey

##### Supplies

- 2 oven mitts
- 2 spatulas (or long wooden spoons)
- 1 ball of aluminum foil
- 2 large pots

Divide your group into two "hockey" teams, each trying to get their puck (aluminum foil ball) into their goal (kitchen pot) past a goalie wearing an oven mitt defending their goal with a spatula or wooden spoon

Winning team is applauded by leader(s) and opposing team, as the opposing team cheers individually for each "winner" by name (depending on size of group)

##### Discussion

- What team won? What does winning feel like?
- In real life, what does it feel like to be applauded by name for your efforts or achievements?
- In real life, what does losing feel like? What does it feel like at the school award ceremony when your name is one of the names not called?
- Tell a neighbor, the group, or a small group about a time you were called out by name as a "winner."
- When have you felt left out?
- When have you felt forgotten, unseen, misunderstood or passed over?

#### Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank you for the gift of saving faith in Jesus. Assure us of our eternal hope in Him as we study together tonight, and in our day to day lives of endurance and witness, struggle and joy. Convince us daily of your presence, power and might. In Jesus' name, Amen.



## Bible Study

- What is the common definition of faith?

*Come up with a definition of the word "faith" that makes sense to most people the age of the group participants. Write it down somewhere (chalkboard, whiteboard, slide show on screen, giant sticky paper) with enough room for a second sentence/definition or description.*

Have all students turn to Hebrews chapter 11. Have a volunteer read Hebrews 11:1 out loud.

- How does the Bible define or describe faith?

*Write Hebrews 11:1 on the same board or paper.*

- What is similar about these definitions or understandings of faith? What is different?

*Circle the similarities and underline the differences.*

Have a student read Hebrews 11:1-3 together.

- What does verse 3 tell us about our understanding of the creation of the universe?

*The whole universe was created by the Word of God. This can only be known and understood by faith since no one was there to observe creation. Likewise, the Holy Spirit gave the gift of faith through water included in God's command and combined with God's Word in their baptism.*

- Without having anyone to witness creation, what do we trust in to know God created everything?

*We trust God's Word to us in scripture.*

*Say: Verse 2 says that "the people of old" received commendation by faith. Even if they did not understand exactly how God was working, they trusted that He would be true to His promises. We talked about our commendations before we prayed. We also talked about what it's like to feel invisible.*

Have the participants back up a couple of pages to Hebrews 6:11-12 and have a volunteer read it out loud.

- What are the names of some people who we look to as following God and His promises by faith?

*Have students list of Old Testament and New Testament names of people we know who, even though they sinned, followed God by faith.*

*Say: Let's think about some of these saints we can imitate, as we have full assurance of faithful hope in Christ.*

Have students read Genesis 5 to themselves, on their own, in their heads. Read it yourself, looking up often. When you are done, watch the youth. You'll know they're done when they look up and make eye contact, indicating that they are ready.

*Say: There are a lot of names here. Other words that jump out, in addition to all these names, are the past tense verb "fathered," and the phrase "other sons and daughters," both mentioned multiple times each.*

- Can these men, the only ones mentioned, father these children alone?

*Remind youth this is normal. The purpose of recorded genealogies is tracing inheritance: genealogies were never meant to be a comprehensive list. We don't know the names of any of these mothers but we know they were there.*



*Say: Some sons are mentioned by name. All of these "other sons and daughters" aren't named. But to these fathers, those children were probably just as significant and loved. While we might know many people who walked by faith by name or even be able to read a list like the one of people in a genealogy, there are many faithful followers whose names we don't know. There are many people not listed in the Bible who listed to God's Word and followed Him faithfully whose names and stories are lost to time. But they were still made by God and loved by Him.*

Have students turn to Matthew 1 and skim verses 1-17 on their own. Then have a student read verse 17 out loud.

*Say: There are 42 men mentioned and five women. Matthew's genealogy starts with Abraham. The genealogy we looked at in Genesis ended with the generation after Noah. Matthew doesn't mention those names, but Abraham would never have been born without Adam and Eve, without Noah and his sons and their wives. Matthew specifically mentions five women whose names are particularly important and significant, not because of their good works or deeds, but for important other reasons.*

- Can you find those five names and what do you know about them?
  - *Tamar is the first woman named. The Lutheran Study Bible tells us she was not a typical Judean woman, which is a sign of grace to all of God's people. Matthew tells us the name of two sons of Tamar, but only one of them (Perez) is in Jesus' genealogy.*
  - *Matthew never tells us why he throws Zerah's name in the list. Zerah is the only one named whose story we don't know. They were twins.*
  - *Rahab was a Gentile prostitute, also mentioned in Hebrews 11 (we'll get to her later.) An outsider, not a Jew, not one who would inherit the promise of the coming Messiah. Her daughter-in-law Ruth was also an outsider, who moved to Judah from Moab where she was redeemed, into life and into the faith.*
  - *Uriah's wife who had Solomon with David isn't even named, just known as the wife of two men, in this genealogy, though we do know she is Bathsheba from the Old Testament itself.*

*Say: These named sinner saints aren't included in God's Word in order that we may imitate their behavior (Hebrews 6:11-12.) Their actions show they lived out their faith and still fell to sin and brokenness. Just like us, they were sinners in need of saving. While we know some about them, in many cases they were forgotten, outsiders, or not necessarily people the community would embrace. Maybe you know that feeling too. God created and valued and worked through and included each of them. They are signs of grace, whether their actions or faith were heroic or less than admirable.*

- Do you ever worry that you may be forgotten by others? By God?
- What might the fear of being forgotten lead us to do that we shouldn't?
- What does God's love and promises to us remind us of when we fear that forgetfulness?

Have a student read Ephesians 2:8-10.

*Say: God worked through all the people listed and unnamed. In the same way, He has given you vocations, too. We may not know their names, but God never forgot them. God used them for His will. God will work through you just as He worked through every person named, included, unnamed, or forgotten by history, leading up to Jesus' life in the Bible, those of us who believe because of Jesus' apostles sharing their faith, and throughout history!*



Turn to 1 Samuel 16. Have a student read verse 7.

*Say: The world doesn't necessarily value the same things that God values. In life, we may be misunderstood, we may feel undervalued, unseen, or even invisible. But our lives aren't unimportant.*

*Jesus sees you as worthy, created in God's image, deeply loved, valued, and treasured by His Heavenly Father, someone He was willing to die to be with forever. We only need to look at Jesus' death on the cross to know we are valued and seen.*

**Closing Prayer:**

Jesus, perfect high priest, you understand our weaknesses, and our feelings. Though you are without sin, you understand every temptation. Give us confidence to speak with you honestly, sharing our needs, our feelings, our sin. Grant us your grace and mercy. In your precious name, Amen.





# THE FORGOTTEN

## Leader's Guide

### STUDY TWO: Barak & Jephthah

**Objective:** Discover the stories of Barak and Jephthah and figure out why Paul included them in his list of the cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11.

**To prepare:** For personal preparation read Judges 10:6-12:7.

**Class preparation:**

Create a chart with five columns and four rows. On the second column, write "Judges 6:11; Judges 13:24; 1 Samuel 16:1 (Kings, Psalms); 1 Samuel 1:20" down your cells.

If there are any refreshers on Gideon, Samson, David or Samuel that would be helpful for you to prepare, begin reading to prepare for study in the above verses and keep reading as needed.

Read through this study. There is more offered than will take a full hour if there is a thoughtful discussion. Pick and choose as fits your leadership style and your group.

Supplies Needed: one copy of "Animal Personality Tool" per participant, pens, Bibles, large wall sticky or chart paper, marker.

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**Opening Game:** Depending on the size of your group, have everyone stand in a circle. The first person shares their name, and an animal that starts with the same letter as their first name (for example, "Cassie Cobra" or "Adam Anteater.") The second person shares the first person's name & animal, then their own. Go around the circle until the last person shares every name & animal.

**Transitional Activity:** Hand out the "Animal Personality Tool." Play "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" by The Tokens in the background while students take the personality quiz. When they are done, have them discuss it with a neighbor.

**Opening Discussion:**

- Which personality type do you most respect and why?

**Prayer:**

Jesus, thank you for giving me the gift of faith in You in my Baptism. Thank you for surrounding me with a cloud of living witnesses whose lives I can imitate. Help me to learn from those witnesses that have come before me how good, gracious, merciful, and mighty to save You are. Amen.



## Animal Personality Tool

*Circle the words that sound most like you in each category*

### L

Takes charge  
Determined  
Assertive  
Firm  
Enterprising  
Competitive  
Enjoys challenges  
Bold  
Purposeful  
Decision maker  
Leader  
Goal-driven  
Self-reliant  
Adventurous  
"Let's do it now!"

number circled \_\_\_\_\_

### O

Takes risks  
Visionary  
Motivator  
Energetic  
Very verbal  
Promoter  
Avoids details  
Fun-loving  
Likes variety  
Enjoys change  
Creative  
Group-oriented  
Mixes easily  
Optimistic  
"Trust me! It'll work out!"

number circled \_\_\_\_\_

### G

Loyal  
Not demanding  
Even keel  
Avoids conflict  
Enjoys routine  
Dislikes change  
Deep relationships  
Adaptable  
Sympathetic  
Thoughtful  
Nurturing  
Patient  
Tolerant  
Good listener  
"Let's keep things the way they are."

number circled \_\_\_\_\_

### B

Deliberate  
Controlled  
Reserved  
Predictable  
Practical  
Orderly  
Factual  
Discerning  
Detailed  
Analytical  
Inquisitive  
Precise  
Persistent  
Scheduled  
"How was it done in the past?"

Number circled \_\_\_\_\_



Write your numbers next to each of these based on your scores on the opposite page.

L:

O:

G:

B:

Circle the word that goes with your letter.

I'm a....

Lion

Otter

Golden Retriever

Beaver

Read the strengths of your "animal personality."

Tell a neighbor: Do you agree or disagree with this assessment? Why or why not?

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## LION

Those who scored highest on the Lion scale have personality strengths that motivate them to naturally take charge and be assertive. They love taking the lead and generally know which way they want to go.

That natural ability and confidence to move toward a goal or objective is a great strength for Lions. They're naturally competitive and often self-starters. They don't mind challenges. At work, they often end up as the boss or in a position that lets them jump in and be actively involved in directing activity around them. Lions want to do things "now!" and hate to waste time when they could be getting something else done. This means they generally want to make decisions *quickly*, with or without all the facts. Or they want to solve a problem "now" — even if it's 11 o'clock at night!

Lions are fast-paced, competitive and goal-driven. That often means they look at questions from others (particularly from Beavers, who *love* to ask clarifying questions) as slowing them down, not aiding or helping them. And in everyday conversation, they most often don't want to hear every detail of someone's day — just the high points.

These are all strengths, but as you'll see with Lions, Otters, Golden Retrievers and Beavers, each person's core personality strengths, *if pushed to an extreme*, can become their biggest weaknesses in relationships (at home or at work).

Lions, particularly under pressure, can be so decisive that they struggle with slowing down to listen to or seek input from others before making a decision. They're often so driven to push forward and get something done, they can communicate by their actions or nonverbal communication that a task is more important than people, or others' feelings. Again, under pressure, if they feel their time is being wasted or a decision is being blocked, they can be impatient, argumentative or even pushy.

Lions are great people and great spouses. They can accomplish much for the Lord and their families and raise great kids. So, if almighty God has given you a Lion to do life with, look forward to accomplishing great things together.

When a Lion gains the wisdom to *slow down* and seek to include others — proactively asking for their input and valuing their questions and insights — he or she will become a great leader as well. A wise Lion will take the time to really "see" the strengths of the people God has placed in his or her life.





## OTTERS

Otters are fun-loving, enthusiastic, playful and encouraging. They love people and *love* to talk. That's one reason why they know hundreds of people *but don't know anyone's name!* Otters — purebred Otters, in particular — don't focus on details, like names. But they're so naturally friendly and engaging, they can form friendship bonds quickly with others and often end up being the center of attention.

They're creative and full of energy, enthusiasm and life. For example, Otters love *starting* things. Sometimes that means they don't finish everything they start but not finishing something doesn't bother them the way it does other personalities (like Beavers). Otters have a great time getting things launched.

Overall, Otters are optimistic and can see the potential in ideas they take to heart. But often they don't see the risks associated with those ideas — which means they don't always take time to read instructions (or a prospectus before investing!). Otters lead with their hearts and are excitable. They often use lots of words, energy and gestures when communicating.

Take all those great characteristics and push them to an extreme, and Otters can come across as unorganized or too fun-loving. Others may believe they're not serious enough when it comes to important discussions or challenges, or that they're insensitive about not meeting deadlines that affect others.

Otters love people, but again, if their strengths are pushed to an extreme, then under pressure an Otter can become a people pleaser in a way that can put a real strain on a marriage or important relationships. Otters under pressure may say yes to everyone in order to be liked but not realize the impact their people-pleasing may have on their loved ones, particularly when there's no time or energy left for their spouse or family after working so hard to please others.

All in all, Otters are great to have on a team or in a marriage or family, with all their creativity, optimism, energy and life. But wise Otters know how crucial it is to value people around them who are great at following through, being sensitive and setting a clear path (like Lions, Beavers or Golden Retrievers).

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## GOLDEN RETRIEVERS

Golden Retrievers are considerate, good-natured and strong team players. They're naturally kindhearted and love helping, serving and looking for ways to come alongside others, particularly if they're around people who are hurting. For example, at work, the Lion often organizes the Christmas party (but doesn't actually go), while the Otter loves the idea of a party and tries to talk to everyone there. But the Golden Retriever will sit with *one* person at the party — either someone the Golden Retriever already knows or someone he or she wants to get to know even better or deeper. Golden Retrievers may also sit with someone who is hurting or struggling and seek to encourage and help that person.

Purebred Golden Retrievers in grade school will actually send themselves to timeout if they do something wrong (as opposed to Lion kids who send their *parents* to timeout).

Retrievers, like each of the other core personalities, are tremendous people to be married to. But if their strengths are pushed to an extreme, they, too, face issues. For example, Retrievers often tend to avoid problems (or downplay issues) at all costs, saying things like "Let's talk about that tomorrow." or "Let's deal with that later."





Again, circling lots of words in the G box means you have a great many positive strengths! Golden Retrievers rock! For example, they're world-class at seeking peace and harmony with others and in wanting to see closeness and caring in a home, marriage or workplace. But there are times when problems need to be faced and dealt with *today* — not six months from now.

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## BEAVER

Beaver personalities are God's little architects and engineers. They're organized, precise and detailed. They catch the spelling mistakes that everyone else misses. And if they're purebred Beavers, they actually *like* to balance the checkbook! They sleep better knowing exactly, not approximately, how much money they have in the bank. In short, they're great at follow-through and completing detailed tasks.

If we were hosting a party, The Lions would organize the party, the Otters would come to the party wanting to talk to everyone there, and the sensitive Golden Retrievers will sit with one person who needed encouragement. But the Beavers were the only ones who remember to bring the food! That's because "Bring food" was on their list. Beavers *love* to check things off lists!

Like every other core personality type we've looked at, when a Beaver's strengths are pushed to an extreme, Beavers can take other people apart by being critical. Perhaps not verbally or in a loud way, like a Lion who "roars" at others. But if you offend a Beaver (or a Golden Retriever, for that matter), that person can hold on to a grudge for a long time, clearly remembering the offense — and what you were wearing when you offended him or her! That's opposed to Lions and Otters who tend to get over things and move on more quickly in many cases.

One more thing. While Beavers can be critical, most often they're really good at taking themselves apart, which means they can be extremely hard on themselves, particularly if they feel they've fallen short of a goal, made a mistake or done something wrong. Thoughts race through their minds, such as *Why did I say that?* or *What did she mean by that?* or *If only I had ...*

It's the Beavers' attention to detail and desire to do things in a quality and correct way that makes them so incredibly beneficial in a marriage, in the workplace and in other relationships. They can spot problems early on, even when an idea is being shared initially — which is one reason it's a good idea to invite a Beaver into a conversation. They can help others limit risk and identify challenges that can block or keep something from being successful. Beavers are also great at wanting issues to be dealt with when they're small, instead of waiting for small problems to turn into crises. For example, they don't like driving for long distances with the warning light on in the car without getting the car checked or fixed! Beavers finish tasks and close loops and plan today for a positive future — strengths that Lions and Otters often lack and need so much.

(Descriptions taken from John Trent.)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> To read more about this test, go to <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/4-animals-personality-test/>



## Bible Study:

Have a student read Hebrews 11:32 out loud while everyone else reads it together silently from their Bibles.

- Who remembers Gideon?  
If youth are having trouble remembering Gideon's story, have them turn to Judges 6 for a refresher.
- What do we know about Gideon's story?
- Where do we see God working in Gideon that we can imitate?
- What about Gideon is encouraging?
- How did Gideon endure?

Start a chart as described in the preparation at the start of the study with your Bible references written on it by adding Gideon's name to the first row and column. Fill in a good answer that can be a helpful takeaway for students in each "cell."

- What do you remember about Samson?  
If youth are having trouble remembering Samson's story, have them turn to Judges 13 for a refresher.
- Where do we see God working in Samson that we can imitate?
- What is encouraging about Samson's story?
- How did Samson endure?

Continue to fill in the chart.

- What was David's job?  
If youth are having trouble remembering David's story, have them turn to 1 Samuel 16 for a refresher.
- What's one story that immediately jumps to mind about David?
- Where do we see God working in David that we can imitate?
- What is encouraging in the story of David's life?
- How did David endure?

Continue to fill in the chart.

- What do you remember about Samuel?  
If youth are having trouble remembering Samuel's story, have them turn to 1 Samuel 3 for a refresher.
- Where do we see God working in Samuel that we can imitate?
- What is encouraging about Samuel's story?
- How did Samuel endure?

Finish your chart.



- What do we know about Jephthah? What about Barak?  
Participants might not know these names so it's okay if no one responds. We will look at them further.

**Say:** Let's find out what God did in their lives. Open your Bibles to Judges 4. God's people asked Him for a king. Instead, at this time, God gifted His people with judges. Shamgar was the third judge. We learn in Judges 3:31 that God "saved Israel" through Shamgar.

Have a youth read Judges 4:1 – 2. Remember the names may be tricky and unfamiliar to read out loud.

- What was the name of the commander of King Jabin's army?
- How long did the Israelites suffer oppression under the Canaanites in verse 3?

**Say:** Have another volunteer read Judges 4:4. Here's what we know about Deborah: she was a prophetess and a judge. As judge, she commanded Barak to fulfill God's call to battle Sisera and his army, assuring him that God commanded this action and would give Sisera into Barak's hand.

Read Barak's response to Deborah in Judges 4:8-9. The battle is described in verses 10-16. For today, read verse 16b out loud, and continue reading verses 17-24.

**Say:** Judges 5 follows with a song of praise, praising God for His deliverance from the Canaanites, telling the story of how God used His servants Deborah, Barak and Jael.

Read Judges 5:31b out loud to bookend how God's people lived following His salvation.

- How did Barak obey God's commands?
- Who is normally remembered as the hero of this story?
- Where did God work through Deborah, Barak, and Jael that we might imitate them?
- Why do you think Barak is listed in Hebrews 11?

Remember that this chapter leads up to Hebrews 12, which tells us that a purpose of Hebrews 11 is knowing a cloud of witnesses to God's acts who have come before us, who can encourage us to lay aside weight and sin in order to run that race of faith with endurance.

**Say:** What do you think is going to happen in Jephthah's story? Let's find out in Judges 11. After God's people endured peacefully for forty years, again God's people sinned and did what was evil, and God allowed His people to be overpowered by a different nation, Midian. When God's people cried out to the Lord for help, He sent Gideon to be the next judge to deliver Israel. This pattern continued.

Have a mature student read Judges 11:1-5 out loud.

- Why was Jephthah living in Tob?
- Why did the Israelite elders of Gilead want to make Jephthah their leader?



He was a mighty warrior.

Have a student read Judges 11:6-11.

**Say:** "Jephthah spoke his words before the Lord." This turns out to be a combination of faith and foolishness on Jephthah's part." Notice that God did not raise up this judge: the people asked Jephthah to be their leader.

Read Judges 11:29-32.

**Say:** Now, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Jephthah. Jephthah bargains with God but misunderstands the concept of giving your best back to God as a tithe or offering. Again, this is both faith and foolishness. But God did give the Ammonites into his hand.

Have an adult read verses 34-35.

**Say:** Though God does not ask for this offering, Jephthah does fulfill his vow. This obedience goes beyond foolishness. Fulfilling this vow is a sin. God forbids child sacrifice and does not ask for us to fulfill vows that end in sin. In a continuation of Jephthah's lack of understanding of God, His Word, works and ways, Jephthah chooses to act in what he appears to think of faithfulness, making this tragic sacrifice.

- Each of these stories is different. Why does God tell us about so many different people of faith?
- What did each of these people have in common?

They were all sinners but God used them anyway for His purpose. God gave us His Word about them so we can learn about His faithfulness and how God has worked through people in the past.

If God can lead the writer of the book of Hebrews to raise up Jephthah's tragic show of faith and thanksgiving to God as an example of faith, think of how God can use anyone who has faith and sinful but forgiven lives to serve Him.

- Have you ever felt like you couldn't share the Gospel or do what God asked because of your sin?
- What do all these stories remind us of?

No matter who we are or what we have done, as Baptized and forgiven people of faith God can use us.

### Prayer:

Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief. Forgive my sin and use me to point others back to you as so many people did in the Old Testament. In Jesus' name, Amen. (Mark 9:24)





# THE FORGOTTEN

## Leader's Guide

### STUDY THREE: The Shortest Stories

**Objective:** To help youth to be reminded of their Baptism and the gift of faith they received. To help youth to understand that God is at work in them even if the story of faith is simple.

**Class preparation:**

Invite two adults from your church of any age group to share their story of faith. Invite one person who was baptized as an infant, and one person who has memories of their Baptism and how God worked in their lives to give them the gift of faith to join the youth for the study. It would be helpful to give them the devotions and this study to read ahead of time.

**Supplies Needed:** a sheet of paper or notecard for each student to write on privately

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**Opening Game:** Ask the youth for the following types of words to complete this short fairy tale:

Once upon a time, there was a \_\_\_\_\_ in a land far, far away. The princess had  
(noun)  
very \_\_\_\_\_. Her \_\_\_\_\_ locked her up in a \_\_\_\_\_.  
(adjective) (noun) (relative) (noun)  
A \_\_\_\_\_ came to the \_\_\_\_\_ and said, \_\_\_\_\_, let  
(noun) (re-write noun) (girl's name) (repeat)  
down your \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ let down her \_\_\_\_\_, and the  
(second noun written) (first noun) (second noun)  
\_\_\_\_\_ up it to her. They lived \_\_\_\_\_ ever after. The End.  
(noun) (past tense verb) (adverb)

- What's your favorite fairy tale? Why?
- Does the length of a fairy tale equal its quality? Why or why not?

### Opening Prayer

### Bible Study:

Open the study by sharing a story of something that you lost and went to great trouble to find. For example, my son lost his lovely blanket when he was two years old. We went to GREAT pains to



find it. When I was a child, my brother left his Winne the Pooh bear stuffed animal in a hotel. We would not have turned around and gone back to the hotel for just any lost or overlooked item, but we turned around upon discovery and drove many extra hours to retrieve Winnie the Pooh. Likewise, I bought a birthday gift for my mother and forgot to give it to her. Her feelings were deeply hurt when I did not give her a gift. I couldn't find where I had placed the gift in my house. I searched the house and could not find it. I asked friends to pray that I would find it. As soon as I ordered another gift, I found the original gift.

Read Luke 15:3-7.

- Who in this story is the shepherd? The sheep?
- What does this tell us about the character of God?

**Say:** Jesus tells in a short story just how important each of us is to Him. You are deeply loved by God in His Son Jesus, so much so that no matter what our sins, God wants us to be with Him in eternity. Jesus would have come down to earth, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross just for one person. God wants everyone to believe and have saving faith in Him.

It can be helpful to look each teenager in the eye as you tell them this to bring home the point that Jesus died for each of them, even if they were the only one He had to die for, so great is His love for every one of His children.

Have the adults who are joining you share their story of how God gifted them faith. Perhaps encourage them to share how the gift of faith has impacted their lives. It's okay if the story is not dramatic. In fact, it is welcome. For many of your youth, they may have been Baptized as infants and been raised to be regularly in worship and in God's Word. Let youth ask questions if they have any.

Read Luke 15:8-10.

- Ask "For whom did the angels throw a bigger party for?"  
*The angels in heaven rejoice equally regardless of how dramatic our conversion/faith stories sound. It's all God's work.*
- How does hearing stories of faith and how God has sought us out help remind us of God's promises?
- We've studied some of the judges who led Israel before the Jewish people had kings. Whose story is your favorite so far?

Read Judges 10:1-5.

**Say:** All we know about Tola is where he was from, where he lived, who his father and grandfather were, how long he judged/ruled, and where he was buried. All we know about Jair is how long he judged, that he also (like Jephthah) was a Gileadite, how many sons he had, how many donkeys they rode, that they each had a city, and where he was buried.

- Were God's actions on the behalf of His people less important through Tola and Jair than Deborah, Samson, Ehud or Gideon?  
*No!*



- Is there a temptation to doubt your faith because it hasn't been tested or because you have had the gift of faith for as long as you can remember?
- Why do Lutherans believe in infant baptism? How can that be different than other denominations?

**Say:** These short stories are no less significant than the longer stories, much like infant baptism is not less miraculous than a dramatic sounding story. The angels rejoice in heaven over your salvation, even if you can't remember it. Giving the gift of faith is God's Work, and God has gifted you with people around you to support you as you more deeply understand your Baptismal faith.

### Closing Activity

Form groups of three. Have each person in the group "introduce" another person to the third person (so that each person in the triad is the introducer, the introduced, and the listener.) If the people in the group don't know each other well, give them a chance to ask and answer some questions about themselves.

Then ask them to repeat the exercise introducing the same person as you think Jesus would introduce him or her.

Bring the group back together and ask

- How is our introduction of people the same or different than how we think Jesus who introduce us?
- How does how God describes us in God's Word different than how we often think of ourselves.

Give students a notecard and a few minutes to answer the question "How does God see me?"

Have a student read Psalm 58:8 out loud.

**Say:** God watches, cares, sees and remembers: He watches you, not to "catch" you in anything, but because You matter to Him.

Read Galatians 5:6.

- What do people think "counts" to "measure" Christianity today?
- What does Paul say God counts?

### Closing Prayer:

I am amazed, Lord Jesus, that you consider me precious in your sight. I am grateful to be your found, once lost treasure. Thank you for loving us so much that you gave up all to find us. In your name, Amen.







## STUDY FOUR: The Salvation Story

**Objective:** Grasp the stories in Hebrews 11:33-38 in context. See that God uses even the unnamed in his salvation story.

**Supplies Needed:** slips of paper for names for the game, a couch or bench that seats four, the following verses need to be on a sheet for everyone to see or each on its own card:

- Judges 14:5-6
- I Samuel 17:34-37
- Daniel 6:22-23
- Daniel 3:14-28
- 1 Samuel 17:14-51
- 1 Kings 19:1-10
- 1 Kings 17:17-24
- 2 Kings 4:18-37
- 1 Kings 22:26-27
- Jeremiah 20:2
- 2 Chronicles 24:20-21
- I Kings 19:10, 14

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### Opening Prayer

Jesus, you love all of us: the named, the unnamed, the remembered, the highly thought of, and the forgotten. In your name, Amen.

### Opening Game: Four on the Couch

Designate one four-seater couch (or bench or set of chairs) as "the Couch." The point of the game is to have all four seats on the Couch occupied by your team members.

Count off students into two equal teams. Hand out the slips of paper and pens and have everyone write their first name down. Redistribute the name papers so that each player will get someone else's name.

Begin the game with participants sitting in a circle shape so that everyone can see each other, with one empty seat. The person to the right of the empty seat says the name of a person in the group:



the person ASSIGNED that name moves into the empty seat, freeing another seat. Continue this pattern until one team has four people from their team on the couch.

### Opening Discussion

- Has there ever been a time that someone hasn't been able to remember your name, or has mistakenly called you by the wrong name, not realizing they were wrong?

If you can, share a story of a time when you or someone you know was forgotten or felt unseen. This doesn't have to be a deep story, but it can help youth to begin to relate to this feeling of not being seen or remembered.

- How does it feel to be forgotten?
- How does it feel to be ignored? How does it feel to be unseen?

**Say:** Everyone wants to be remembered and seen. God created us to be names, known and loved by Him and by others around us. So, when our name is left off a list, when we are left behind or forgotten, it's natural for us to feel (fill in the feelings your group listed for the questions above).

### Study

Read Hebrews 11:29-40.

**Say:** The Bible would be a much larger book if we had every single story of God at work throughout time. The writer says that God did so many amazing things for and through His people that there simply isn't time to list them all. Today, we are going to go back and remind ourselves of a few of these stories.

Put students in pairs or groups of three and give them a text to look at. When everyone has had a chance to look at their story, bring everyone back together.

- Which stories shared God giving extraordinary strength or circumstances to save them from a lion?  
Samson in Judges 14:5-6; David in 1 Samuel 17:34-37; Daniel in Daniel 6:22-23  
God miraculously allowed these men to prevail against the predator at the top of the food chain.
- In which story did God protect people from fire and persecution?  
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3:14-28
- In which stories did God give them victory in combat?  
David in 1 Samuel 17:14-51
- In which stories did God allow escape and comfort from those who were persecuting God's people?  
Elijah in 1 Kings 19:1-10; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3:14-28
- In which stories did someone receive the gift of resurrection?  
The widow in 1 Kings 17:17-24; the parents in 2 Kings 4:18-37. These two women both received the gift of resurrection of their sons.



- In which stories were people put to the test of mockery and flogging, deprived of freedom in chains and imprisoned for their faithfulness to the God?  
Micaiah in 1 Kings 22:26-27; Jeremiah in Jeremiah 20:2. Despite what it might look like from the outside, God is faithful to His people even in persecution.
- In which story were people put to death because of their faithfulness to God?  
Zechariah was stoned to death by execution in 2 Chronicles 24:20-21; Prophets were executed by the sword in 1 Kings 19:10, 14
- Did everyone in these stories have names we remember?
- Does that make what God did in their lives any less important?
- How does it help us to know that God can work through us even if it doesn't lead in infamy or someone remembering our names?

Have students open up to Hebrews 11 and read together Hebrews 11:1-3

- What does every person listed in Hebrews 11, no matter how much we know about them or their story, have in common?  
What that great cloud of witnesses had in common is that none of them saw the fulfillment of what God promised them. Faith invites us to look beyond the seen to the unseen, and to trust the promises of God even if none of them come to pass in this life.
- God gave them faith, and He gives us faith too. What does God say about faith in these verses?  
Faith clings to the promise of "things unseen." It is by faith that we understand that the seen things were made from the unseen things by the Word. Faith is not based on seeing but hearing. It is trust in a promise yet to be fulfilled.

**Say:** This is what made the heroes of faith - they trusted Christ to their last breath, and as a result they gained a kingdom that cannot be taken away. Faith that trusts in God is clinging to unseen promises, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. (John 20).

Re-read Hebrews 11:29-40.

**Say:** In Hebrews we are reminded that God's people experienced both great joy and extreme difficulty. God defeated the animal predator (lions), the natural predator (fire), the human predator (the sword,) and gave the gift of defeating death itself. We know that we have a God who is able to do anything.

Some of these heroes of faith, unnamed in Hebrews 11, prevailed. Others persevered. Even others were killed for their faith in God. Regardless of their pain, fear, circumstances, danger, threats, or helplessness, God was with them and His presence gave them strength to endure trials of many kinds.

If we look at verses 39-40, we see that none of the people whose names we know or don't know didn't get to see the coming Messiah. But today we know Jesus and forgiveness through Jesus'



death and resurrection. We can trust that God gave us the greatest gift in His Son so that through faith we can be with Him forever.

- How does hearing these stories from scripture help remind us of God's faithfulness to us?
- Read Isaiah 49: 15-16. Is anyone ever forgotten by God? How does it change how we face the future when we know we are seen and loved by God?

**Say:** God also gives us the gift of resurrection through faith in Jesus. Those in our family who are also in our family in Christ who have passed on are also people through whom we will receive the gift of resurrection, when we enter into eternal life with Jesus. Even if we know their names or not, we know we will be surrounded by all the followers who have come before us.

### Closing Prayer

God, you love all of your children. You created everyone in your image. Help me to remember that you care for me. You see me, you know me, and you love me in Your Son Jesus. Forgive me when I doubt your love or imagine that I am invisible to You. Thank you that you are always with me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

