



WEEK 2

HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE

W A I T L I S T E D

THE BIG IDEA

While we're waiting,
God is faithful.

THE BIBLE

Acts 16:6-12, 16-40; Psalm 9:1-2,
9-11 and 46:1-5

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

VIDEO | Cat Jenga

- Welcome to Week 2 of *Waitlisted*, where we're talking about waiting . . . and waiting . . . and waiting. So let's take a look at what must have been the longest game of Jenga ever played? (Don't worry, we won't watch the entire thing.)
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play [this video](#) of what might have been the world's longest game of Jenga.
- The game was meant to showcase the abilities of the Cat machine, and it went on for 28 hours! By the end, there were 13 layers of blocks and it was 20 feet high.

QUESTION | What's the longest game you've ever played?

- I'm guessing you've never played a 28-hour game of Jenga, but **what's the longest game you've ever played? How long did it last?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to share their longest-running board games, sports, or other competitions.
- I don't know about you, but if I'm going to invest that much time into a game, I'd better win at the end. To spend so much time on something and then have it end in disappointment is . . . well, pretty disappointing.

STORY | Talk about a time you were disappointed by something you spent a long time waiting for.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a brief and lighthearted story about a time when you waited a long time

for something you were excited about, but you were disappointed in the end. Maybe you lost a game in double overtime, or went to a concert for your favorite band that turned out to be awful, or ordered something online that was not at all what you expected it to be when it arrived.

QUESTION | Have you ever been disappointed by something you spent a long time waiting for?

- What about you? **Have you ever been disappointed by something you spent a long time waiting for? What was it?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to share with the group.
- Disappointment happens! I'm sure we've all felt it. Sometimes we invest a ton of time anticipating an upcoming experience, gift, or win — but then things don't go the way we'd hoped they'd go.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share.
 - **What's something silly that left you feeling disappointed recently?**
 - **What's an example of a big disappointment someone your age might face?**

VIDEO | The Struggle is Real

- Sometimes the struggle is really real.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** While you teach, show a GIF of someone struggling, like [one of these](#).
- Maybe you know what it's like for life to surprise you with a big loss, turn of events, or disappointment. When those surprises hit, we're often left waiting and wondering . . .
 - "Why did this happen?"
 - "How long will I feel this way?"
 - "How do I fix it?"
 - "Can anyone help me?"
 - Or maybe even, "Where is God?"
- Today, I want to talk about how to survive some of these times of disappointment and crisis, and where God is when we're waiting for things to turn around.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

ACTIVITY | The Wait List (Part 1)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** On a white board or large pad of paper, create three columns. Title the first two columns "When ___" and "I Feel ___." Leave the third column blank for now. In this discussion, challenge students to brainstorm reasons why someone might experience disappointment or be in a crisis. Write those in the first column. In the second column, write words describing how they might feel during that disappointment or crisis. Keep these hypothetical rather than personal so students are more open to sharing. For example . . .

- “When your parents divorce, you might feel uncertain.”
- “When you lose a big game, you might feel ashamed.”
- “When a loved one gets sick, you might feel afraid.”
- “When you make a big mistake, you might feel defeated.”
- In many of these situations we just brainstormed, the disappointment or crisis is followed by a time of waiting. You might be waiting . . .
 - To feel better.
 - To get a second chance.
 - To see if your situation will improve.
 - Or maybe you’re waiting to see if God will help you.
- And while you’re waiting, you might wonder . . .
 - Can God really be trusted?
 - Does God actually care?
 - Can God even see me?
 - If God really loves me, why am I still waiting?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.
 - ☆ **How do you think a big disappointment or crisis could affect someone’s faith in God?**
 - **Have you ever experienced any major disappointments or crises? If you’re comfortable sharing, what happened?**
 - ☆ **When you’ve experienced a disappointment or crisis, how did you feel? What questions did you ask?**

IMAGE | The Apostle Paul

- If you can relate to any of this, you’re not alone. Let me introduce you to someone from Scripture who know a lot about surviving major moments of crisis and disappointment.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show any image you’d like of the apostle Paul, like [this one](#).
- If you’re familiar with the Bible, there’s a good chance you’ve heard of the apostle Paul.
 - Paul spent his whole life following God. As a young Jewish man, he was a high-achieving religious student of his time.
 - But his story took its first major turn during the early years of Christianity, when the message of Jesus was first beginning to spread.
 - As a religious leader in the Jewish faith, Paul did not follow the teachings of Jesus. In fact, he believed the followers of Jesus were enemies of God! This belief drove Paul to defend his faith by imprisoning and even killing Christians.
 - But then something significant happened in Paul’s life. He had a personal encounter with God and surrendered his life to Jesus.

- When Paul met Jesus, he couldn't have predicted what God had in store for him. Paul eventually became one of the greatest Christian influencers of all time. He wrote much of the New Testament of the Bible, was a significant leader of the early church, and was responsible for bringing the message of Jesus into new parts of the world.
- Despite everything good God had in store for Paul, Paul's life after turning toward Jesus held pretty difficult moments too, including some big crises and lots of waiting.
 - One of the major ways Paul was often "waitlisted" during his life was by being sent to prison. (Irony, isn't it? After spending so much time and effort throwing followers of Jesus into prison, that's exactly where Paul ended up!)
 - Even though Paul had changed his beliefs about Jesus, many of the government and religious leaders of the day had not. In their eyes, allowing someone to spread the message of Jesus was a threat to their power, control, and understanding of God, so they tried to imprison (and sometimes kill) influential followers of Jesus.
 - Paul spent about five years of his life in prison for spreading the message of Jesus. While he was there, I wonder if he ever thought, "Um, God, how am I supposed to fulfill your plans for my life if I keep getting thrown in jail? Every time things start going well, I end up behind bars. What are you doing? Why aren't you stopping this? Hello? God?"

SCRIPTURE | Acts 16:6-12, 16-24

- We can read about one of these occasions in the book of Acts. Acts is a book in the Bible that recounts how the good news of Jesus spread around the world, how the early Church began to grow, and what happened to some of the key church leaders of the time (like Paul).
- Acts 16 tells us about one of Paul's journeys to Macedonia and what happened to him there, along with his friend Silas.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read or summarize Acts 16:6-10, 16-24. If you have time, you may want to provide props and costumes and have students act out this story.*
- Did you catch all of that? After a long journey where God finally leads Paul and his crew to Macedonia, they face a major crisis. Paul and Silas are beaten and thrown into jail for preaching the message of Jesus!
- This chapter tells us God "clearly" led Paul and his friends to Macedonia to share the gospel. So if God led them there, why did they end up in prison?
 - Did they make a mistake?
 - Did God make a mistake?
 - Did God put them in prison on purpose?

SCRIPTURE | Acts 16:25-40

- While Scripture doesn't tell us why God allowed Paul and Silas to be thrown into prison, it does make it clear that God didn't want them to stay there.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Acts 16:25-40.*
- Paul and Silas were interrupted by disappointment and crisis. They were waiting for God's rescue, and they got it! But in the meantime . . .

- They still found a reason to worship, even while they waited and wondered what would happen next.
- God showed up in a miraculous way.
- God rescued Paul and Silas from prison, but that's not the only miracle that happened that night. God rescued the jailer, and his entire family too, with the message of Jesus.
- Even when they were waiting for God's rescue, Paul and Silas trusted God hadn't abandoned them. While they waited, they worshiped. And after they were rescued, they got right back to work.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 9:1-2, 9-11

- I don't know which songs Paul and Silas were singing in prison, but I wonder if it was something like this — a passage from the book of Psalms, which is a collection of songs to God.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Psalm 9:1-2, 9-11.
- Even when Paul and Silas were waiting in prison, wondering what God was going to do next, they found a reason to worship.
 - They knew God could be trusted.
 - They trusted God was with them.
 - They believed God would be faithful to them, no matter what happened.
- And they were right. God was faithful to Paul and Silas while they waited in prison and, **while we're waiting, God is faithful to us too.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

ACTIVITY | The Wait List (Part 2)

- "Faithful" means to be loyal, constant, steadfast, and never-failing. That's who Paul and Silas knew God to be. So who's God to us?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** On your white board or large pad of paper, label your third column, "God Is ____." In this discussion, challenge students to brainstorm words that describe God during each of our disappointments or crises. For example . . .
 - "When your **parents divorce**, you might feel **uncertain**, but God is **unchanging**."
 - "When **you lose a big game**, you might feel **ashamed**, but God is **your strength**."
 - "When **a loved one gets sick**, you might feel **afraid**, but God is **your hope**."
 - "When you **make a big mistake**, you might feel **defeated**, but God is **your Savior**."
- It's never easy to experience disappointment and crises like these, but just like Paul and Silas, we can always find a reason to have hope and joy because God is faithful.
- When you're waiting for hope or rescue . . .
 - **God can be trusted.** The Bible is filled with evidence of God's trustworthiness, so if you need more encouragement, go look and see what you can find!
 - **God is with you.** The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us. The Spirit is how God comforts us, speaks to us, leads us, and helps us grow.

- **God is faithful to you, no matter what happens.** Paul and Silas were rescued from prison, but they chose to sing to God even when they weren't sure what their futures held. They understood that God is faithful to us, even when we're waiting, and even when things don't turn out the way we'd hoped.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
 - ☆ **When you heard Paul and Silas' story, what stood out to you or surprised you and why?**
 - ☆ **If God hadn't rescued Paul and Silas from prison, do you think God could still have been considered faithful to them? Why or why not?**

STORY | Talk about a time God was faithful to you.

- I can tell you these things with confidence not just because "the Bible tells me so," but because I've seen them to be true in my own life as well.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Share a personal story (or ask a volunteer or student to share a personal story) about a time with God was faithful to you during a time of disappointment or crisis. As you share your story, be sure to include . . .
 - What you were waiting for God to do.
 - What questions you were asking while you waited.
 - How God was faithful to you while you waited.

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO YOU

- I don't know what disappointments or crises you're facing right now, or that you'll face in the coming months or years. But when you find yourself waiting for God to rescue you, I hope you remember what we talked about today: **while you're waiting, God is faithful to you.**
- God is faithful to you . . .
 - Even when you're not faithful to God.
 - Even when you're losing hope.
 - Even when you're filled with questions.
 - Even when you're tired of waiting.
- So when you're waiting for God's rescue, here's what I hope you'll do.
 - **Trust that God is with you,** like God was with Paul and Silas.
 - **Pray while you wait.** Even if the only thing you can say to God is to ask, "Why?" or say, "Help," that can be enough.
 - **Worship while you wait.** I know it's not easy to find hope or joy when you're discouraged. It's not easy to worship God when you feel abandoned by God. But when you choose to hang onto hope and joy in the midst of darkness, I think you'll see your faith start to grow.

- **Remember God's faithfulness.** How has God been faithful to you in the past? Write down those stories and remember them. How has God been faithful to others in the past? Scripture is filled with those stories! Spend time reading and reflecting on them.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share.
- **Are you, or someone you know, waiting for God's help right now? Tell us about it.**
- **Read Psalm 46:1-5. Now read it again, slowly. Do you think God is trying to say anything to you through this passage today? If so, what is it?**
- **This week, which of these steps will you take, and how?**
 - Trust that God is with you.
 - Pray while you wait.
 - Worship while you wait.
 - Remember God's faithfulness.

MUSIC | "You Keep On Getting Better" (Maverick City Music)

- As we close today, let's see if we can practice all four of those things together. We're going to sing together (like Paul and Silas once did) about God's faithfulness to us. As we do, let's . . .
 - Trust.
 - Pray.
 - Worship.
 - Remember.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Close by singing together — we suggest the song ["You Keep On Getting Better" by Maverick City Music](#).
- God was faithful to Paul and Silas. And **while we're waiting, God is faithful to us too.**