Session Nine

Session 9 - Leap of Faith

Objective

Children will learn about trusting God's purpose for His people in order to grow closer to Him in faith.

Preparation

We will focus on our gift, talents and dream and why we get discouraged when things don't work out they way we thought. We will learn that we must not focus on the prize as much as our faith. If we are patient, God will reveal to us the direction that we should go and we will be blessed.

One section of this session will focus on the Leap of Faith of Indiana Jones in Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Make sure that you have notified parents that the movie is PG-13 and there is some grossness and violence.

Let the participants know ahead of time that they should wear pants or shorts to the meeting and closed toed shoes.

James 1:2-8 "If any of you lacks wisdom"
Matthew 6:33 "Seek ye first…"

Materials Needed

Stories and pictures or icons of :
Joseph with his multicolored coat
Joseph at the Nativity of Christ
Saint John the Baptist
The Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John
or John the Theologian writing in his cave on Patmos
The Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary
Mary of Egypt
DVD of Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade and DVD Player/TV
Copies of Stamp pattern cut out for each person
Value Pack of Darice Foamie Sticky Back Foam Sheets
Darice Foamies Extra Firm Super Think Sheets 9 x 12 (6 projects per sheet)
Tacky glue (enough for each person)
Scissors (1 per person)
Multi-colored paints or stamp pads
Paper plates to pour paint in
Blank Stationary and Envelopes (2 sets or more per person)

Session 9

Leap of Faith

Opening Prayer *Trisagion (Thrice Holy)*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You our God, glory to You!

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us and purify us from every stain and of Your goodness, save our souls O gracious Lord.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever to the ages of ages. Amen.

All Holy Trinity have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for the glory of your name.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Ice Breaker – Leap Frog of Faith

When you hear the word leap, frogs, lizards, hopscotch, and long jump come to mind. Sometimes the leap is actually what saves the life of a frog! Have any of you ever seen a frog walk? It seems unnatural, but frogs will actually scoot around without leaping to keep from being noticed and survive a dangerous situation. We will form two teams. Each team is a family of frogs. You will leap from the starting line to the finish line looking for safety. One person will be a snake. You will not be able to stand or kneel. You can lie on your stomach or sit on your behind. You will also be blindfolded. You will try to stop the leaping frogs by tagging them. If a frog gets tagged, it can walk back to the starting line and start leaping again. The team that gets all of their frogs across the finish line first will win. *(Make sure to leave plenty of space between the starting line and the finish line and between the teams. If the game goes quickly, play again, but this time switch snakes, and add a second snake, or take off the snakes blindfold)*

Session 9

Leap of Faith

Discuss

Was it hard to leap to the other side when you didn't know if you would make it?
If the snake got you, did you learn anything that helped you get across on the second time?
Who knows the meaning of the phrase, *a leap of faith? (To do something in faith when you don't know what will happen)*
Taking a leap of faith sounds good to some people, while it sounds scary to others. Why is this? *(Accept any answers, leading them toward…It's hard to know if the leap will help you, or hurt you!)*

State

God asks each of us to move closer to Him all the time. Sometimes He even asks us, the People of Faith to take a **Leap of Faith**. Remember our friends, the frogs? A leap can save their life, or maybe lose it. What happens after the leap of faith depends on what we know, believe, and **trust**. Fortunately, we Christians know, believe, and trust in something that helps us, our Faith in God.

We often have a curiosity to do or try something that would be a great opportunity, but don't try because we can't guarantee the outcome. What if you tried out for the soccer team and fell flat on your face? What if you tried out for the school play and forgot your lines? Taking a leap of faith means not just having confidence in yourself, but faith in God that no matter what happens, He is leading you to the right activity or decision that suits your gifts and talents. God knows us better than we know ourselves.

Discuss

Who has a goal of something that they would like to be when they grow up or something that you would like to do?
Tell us about a time that you took a leap of faith to accomplish something. What happened?
If it didn't work out, what did you do?
Did you try again?
Why or why not? What stopped you?

State *(read or paraphrase in your own words)*

Each time we take a leap of faith, we do so not for our own glory, but for the Glory of God. When we make a decision, or try out for a sports team, or even for a beauty contest, we do so to honor God by using the gifts and talents He has given us. I am going to tell you a story about a person who at about your age, decided to take a leap of faith to follow a dream.

Session 9

Leap of Faith

Raise your hand if you watch the Winter Olympics on TV. I am going to tell you about an Olympic Athlete who took a leap of faith herself. Vonetta Flowers wanted to be an Olympic Athlete since she was nine years old. She was very focused on athletics when she was growing up and not very much on Christ. She was determined to win an Olympic Gold Medal in track. In college, her faith in Christ began to grow. As she got older, she became a better track star, but she kept getting injured. She was forced to leave track before she could get to the Summer Olympics.

At the age of 26, when many people start thinking of leaving their sports career, Vonetta traveled down a new path to compete in bobsledding. She was very excited because she was training for the 2002 Olympic Bobsled team. However, a few months before the Games, she was cut from the team. Her faith in Christ kept her from giving up her dream when it seemed like her chances may be over. She said, "Faith pulled me through. I still had a goal and I was going to keep trying. It was though He was telling me, 'your day is coming.'" So, she continued to train as if she was still on the team. Two weeks later, she had two offers to return to the team. She began to realize that God had her in bobsledding for a reason. When one door would close, another one would open. She became at peace in knowing that God had taken care of everything.

During the games, she said that she was "living on faith, not on fear." Vanetta and her teammate won the Gold Medal in the Bobsled competition. Even her husband said that she was too small to push the 450 pound sled and go so quickly. They believe it was the prayer of their church, family and friends that helped her get Gold in the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, UT. She was also the first person of African decent, from any country in the world to win a Gold Medal in the Winter Olympics. She says, "God has blessed my family. I give Him all of the glory and Honor."

Discuss

What was an example of a leap of faith that Vonetta took?
When you have been cut from a sports team, the play, or cheerleading did you keep practicing, or did you give up?
Why do you think that Vonetta did not give up?
What is a lesson that you learned from Vonetta Flowers? (*ex: if a door closes, one will open on the other side, let your faith guide you, don't be afraid)*

Bible Verse - (NKJV) James 1:2-8 (*Distribute bibles and help participants find the verse)*
Please take a bible and read the verse over to yourself while you are waiting for everyone to find the verse. We will read the verse when everyone is ready.

Session 9

Leap of Faith

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man unstable in all his ways."

Discuss

What does this verse say about facing trials and having our faith tested? *(Be happy because you will learn patience in your faith)*

What blessing does patience give us? *(We will lack nothing, God will give us everything we need)*

If you lack wisdom, or don't have the answer to a decision, what should you do? *(Ask God and he will give it without disapproval)*

How should we ask God for things? *(In faith without doubting)*

What happens to people who doubt *(They will go back and forth without getting anywhere)*

What does St. James say about people who assume that God will give them something? *(They are like a man who's mind had divided loyalties between their love of worldly things and their love of God)*

How does this passage connect to Vonetta's leap of faith?

Activity

You will need to put the video of Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade in the DVD Player. Use the scene finder to locate Chapter 33 and 34. Chapter 34 will end when Professor Henry Jones (Sean Connery) regains his health. Warn the kids that have not seen the movie that there will be some gross scenes and some violence. Show the clips and then discuss. If parents are concerned after you notified them, you may skip this section.

Discuss

Give some examples from the clip you saw that showed Indiana Jones taking a leap of faith? *(Going through the blades, chosing the right letters for Jahova, walking out off the cliff, sipping out of the Holy Grail)* What was at Stake?

How did he get to the Holy Grail? (By reading clues and answering them correctly)

Indiana Jones reads a clue that "the penitent man is humble before God," what does this mean?

Another clue was "Precede in the footsteps of the word of God," how can we use this phrase when we take our own leap of faith? (Use scripture and prayer to guide us)

The Grail Knight said, "choose wisely, the true grail will bring you life and the false one will take it from you." How did Indiana Jones choose the correct cup? *(by focus-*

ing on the person of Christ as a carpenter)
What does this tell us about our own faith? (*Have faith in Christ and he will show you the way to his Kingdom)*

Activity

Divide the group in three. Have each group sit in a circle and pass a set of 2 pictures around. Have them talk about what stories are depicted. (You may want to provide their story which can be found at www.goarch.org. Then tell them that they have 5 minutes to prepare to play charades based on their two pictures. They will silently act out their stories for the other groups to guess these people of God. Give each group three chances to guess the stories of Joseph with his multicolored coat and Joseph at the Nativity of Christ; John the Baptist and John the Evangelist with Peter and James at the Transfiguration; The Theotokos and Mary of Egypt.

State

Now lets look at some pictures that tell stories about people who knew, believed, and trusted in God. Even though these two men (hold up the card near the group that depicted the story) are named Joseph, God had very different purposes for each of them. *(Then do the same with John and Mary.)* Each had to know, to believe, and to trust in the Lord our God to do the things they did for God's glory.

Discuss

How was the Life of Joseph the Righteous different than Joseph the Prophet King?
How was the life of John the Baptist different from John the Theologian?
How was the life of The Theotokos different from St. Mary of Egypt?
In what ways did they each take a leap of faith?

No matter who we are, we must try to seek what God wants for us. Put Him first in our life, and all the rest will fall into line. We must "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) See that God awaits us with good things in store for us. He will provide all that we need, and our purpose will become clearer to us.

Craft

Part of taking a leap of faith is setting our eyes on the prize, in this case, it means to always focus on Christ. We will be making a stamp that we can mark on things so that we can be reminded to keep our eyes on Christ and the Kingdom to come. The stamp says ICXC/NIKA which means Jesus Christ is Victorious. You will have to follow directions closely, so that the stamp turns out the right way. Then we will create some note cards so that you can try out what you made.

Session 9

Leap of Faith

State

In our life, things will not always be fun, nor will they be easy. Sometimes it seems that just when things seem to be going great, something difficult comes up, like getting cut from the team before the Olympics.

Life can get discouraging sometimes, especially if we don't stay focused on God's commandments and our trust and faith in Him. When Adam and Eve lost faith in God's will for them they were shut out of Paradise and from the Kingdom. It was a leap that cost them their life in the Kingdom—like a frog springing into a snake's mouth.

We will have a better chance at living in the Kingdom when we stay faithful, are patient in our trials and allow God to work in our lives. Remember, God will help us do it…to take the leap of faith into His Kingdom. Your challenge this week is to try something, with your parents blessing, that you have always wanted to do but were afraid of failing. Or you may want to try something again that didn't work the first time. This is your turn to put aside your fears, have faith in God and do the impossible, take a leap of faith God is leading you to something greater on the other side.

Closing Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On Earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Expanded Ideas

Create a Kingdom Korner in your church's monthly newsletter. Let the JOY group share what they have done to respond to what God hopes for them to do with the talents they have been given. Include a posted want ad for others to join their efforts.

Post pictures on a webpage to feature kids who have made a leap of faith by reaching their goals, either at church, school or scouts.

Create a skit called "Leap of Faith" and set aside an evening on the church calendar when JOY children can perform it before the entire community.
Reserve a block of time for JOY children to enjoy to leaping at a local gymnastics gym with time on a trampoline. There are plenty of relatable variations of using a trampoline that qualified instructors can help children perform.
Send Vonetta Flowers an e-mail from the group asking about her leap of faith at vflowers@vonettaflowers.com

Glossary

Faithful – Church members in full commission and good standing
Kingdom –The real in which God's will is fulfilled
Penitent – Feeling or expressing humble or regretful pain and sorrow for their sin or offences
Christians – People who profess belief in Jesus Christ
Trust – Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something

Special Notes

For next month's session you will need the Orthodox Christian Mission Center's Promotional video. Please order it now so that you have time to receive it. You may contact them at www.ocmc.org. You can also preview the video on line as well.

Arts and Crafts - IXCX NIKA Stamps

Supplies Needed

Copies of Stamp pattern
Value Pack of Darice Foamie Sticky Back Foam Sheets
Darice Foamies Extra Firm Super Think Sheets 9 x 12 (6 projects per sheet)
Tacky glue
Scissors (1 per person)
Multi-colored paints or stamp pads
Paper plates to pour paint in
Blank Stationary and Envelopes (2 sets or more per person)

Directions

Photocopy graphics (1 per person)
Cut thick form in half the long way and into thirds the short way (make 6 pieces per sheet)
Cut thin form sheet in the same shape as the thick pieces
Pull off backing on thin foam sheet and adhere the graphic
Cut letters and cross out with a scissors
Lay down the letters and cross in the same order

Flip letters over so that the paper side is down
Glue graphic on thick sheet of foam with paper side down (This will be a mirror image of the original design so lay out the design before gluing)
Allow for letters to dry
Use paints or stamp pad to make stationary

Family Notes - Leap of Faith

Today your child(ren) learned that People of Faith often take a Leap of Faith. They learned that taking a leap of faith means putting your fears aside and in faith let God lead you on the right path. They heard the story of Olympic Athlete, Vonetta Flowers, leap of faith that lead her to a Gold Medal and they saw the fictional leap of faith by Indiana Jones as he searched for the Holy Grail. To find out more about what they learned, ask the following questions:
What did James 1:2-8 say about the testing of faith?
What was Vonetta Flowers leap of faith?
What can we learn from taking a leap of faith?

Models of a Leap of Faith in May

St. Irene of Thessaloniki (5)
Job the Prophet (6)
Sts. Constantine and Helen (21)
St. Simeon the Stylite (24)

Activities

As a family, write down something that each of you is afraid to do or try. Write them down and take a leap of faith by doing each of them together.
Encourage your family to take a leap of faith by receiving the Sacrament of Confession.
Lots of people have dreams that they just don't know that they will achieve, but you may be able to help. Money, time, or illness sometimes get in the way. Give to a college scholarship fund, donate to the US Olympic team/Para-Olympic team, or volunteer at the Special Olympics. Think outside the box. Your family may be able to help them take that leap of faith.

For Further Information

Read the story which tells of a family who took a leap of faith by hiding their faith for many years when it was illegal to worship in Albania. Many years later, they are able to share their secret with their granddaughter and she becomes a Christian. You may also read The Monks of Mount Athos: A Western Monk's Extraordinary Spiritual Journey on Eastern Holy Ground by M. Basil Pennington. It is the story of a leap of faith taken by a Cistercian monk to Visit the Holy Mountain as its first long term Western Visitor. It is a very respectful and detailed account of Fr. Basil's spiritual journey and of day to day life on the Holy Mountain. It can be purchased

at Border's Books. You may also like to read Vonetta Flowers' book Running on Ice which is available at www.vonettaflowers.com.

Session 9 Prayers

Opening Prayer *Trisagion (Thrice Holy)*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You our God, glory to You!

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us and purify us from every stain and of Your goodness, save our souls O gracious Lord.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever to the ages of ages. Amen.

All Holy Trinity have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for the glory of your name.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Closing Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On Earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen