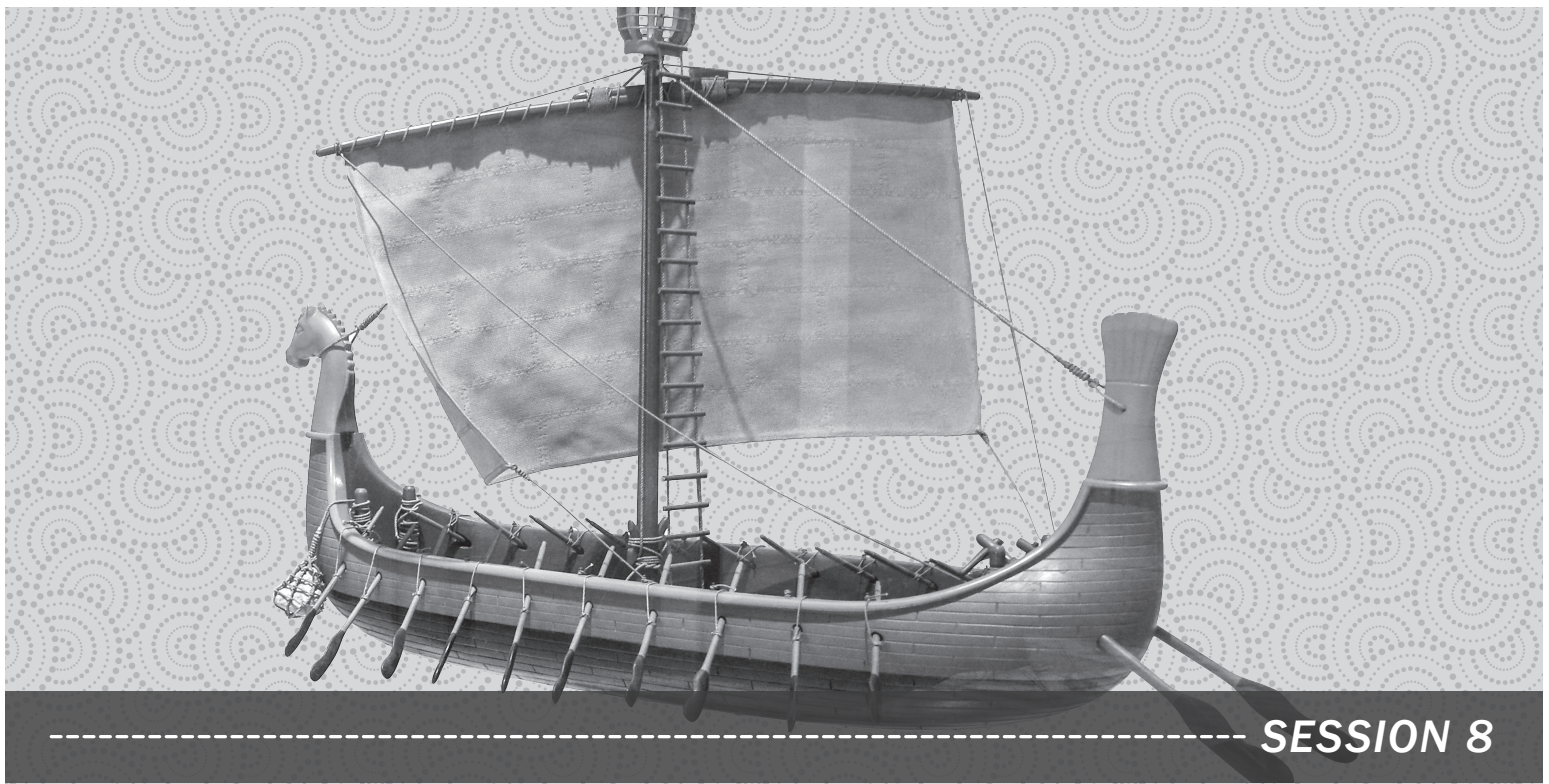




THE BOOK OF JAMES

James 1–5

FOR THE
LEADER

James, the author of this book, was one of Jesus' half brothers. Another book of the Bible, Jude, was also written by another of Jesus' half brothers. James and Jesus' other siblings were not followers of Jesus while Jesus was on earth. It was not until after Jesus' resurrection that these men came to be faithful followers of Christ. James eventually became a prominent leader in the early Jerusalem church and wrote this letter to Jewish followers of Jesus. These believers had fled Jerusalem because of intense persecution from the Roman government. James wrote his letter to help these dispersed believers recognize that their vigilance in following God's commands and following Jesus' example, despite the persecution, would provide opportunities to witness for Christ.

James used the people's current trials as a launching point. Though trials are not fun, the testing of faith produces endurance, which ultimately leads to spiritual maturity. James encouraged the believers to rejoice when they experienced trials because the outcome would make them stronger.

James continued to talk about hallmarks of a God-honoring life. Believers should be quick to listen and slow to speak or get angry. Anger accomplishes nothing! James encouraged daily attention to ridding oneself of unrighteous living. James challenged believers to be students of God's Word, following that study with action. Merely reading God's Word and doing nothing with it is not a faithful witness.

James focused most of his letter on faith in Christ and the benefits of that faith. James said that faith that did not come with good works was a dead faith. James never said that works bring about salvation. However, James did say that those who are saved will have works to back up their salvation. Like reading God's Word and doing nothing with it, faith without works is dead.

James called attention to the tongue and suggested control of the tongue. Earlier, James encouraged believers to be slow to speak, quick to listen, and slow to get angry. The tongue is small, but has great impact. Finally, James encouraged believers to seek God's will above all else. A humble believer, truly seeking God, will be rewarded.

This week, guide kids to hear James' words and show their faith in God through righteous actions. Followers of Jesus should obey God's Word. Encourage kids to do the things that please God.

SESSION FOCUS

BIBLE PASSAGE: James 1–5

MEMORY VERSE: Galatians 5:22-23

BONUS VERSE: James 1:22

TEXT TRUTH: When followers of Jesus obey God’s Word, their actions and words show their faith is true.

BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT: Locate all the books of the Bible in a limited time frame.

BIBLE STUDY

(35 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Jump In:** *Item 13: “Objects: Phoenician Ship Model” (Printables), “James” (Books of the Bible Posters)*
- ☐ **Examine the Text:** *Item 7: “Text Truth 8” (Poster Pack), Bible Timeline for Kids, Bibles*
- ☐ **Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- ☐ **Memory Verse:** *Item 2: “Galatians 5:22-23” (Poster Pack)*
- ☐ **Prayer:** *Family Cards, Item 11: “Christ in Context: James” (Printables)*

APPLY THE TRUTH

(20 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- ☐ **Review:** *Item 19: “Comparison Cards” (Poster Pack), Bibles, scissors*

To order the *Explore the Bible: Books of the Bible Posters* (Print Item No. 005849118, Digital Item No. 005849119) and the *Bible Timeline for Kids* (Item No. 005811866), call Lifeway’s Customer Service at 1.800.458.2772 or order online at www.lifeway.com.

ACTIVITIES

(20 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Bible Skills:** *Item 41: “Bible Graph” (Printables), Item 4: “Allergy Alert” (Printables), Bibles, o-shaped cereal, ziplock bags*
- ☐ **Move:** *Item 42: “Earmarked Verses” (Printables), Bibles, scissors, pencils*
- ☐ **Make:** *craft paper, markers, pencils, worship music*
- ☐ **Explore:** *Item 19: “United States Map” (Printables), timer*

Leaders, grow on the go! Listen to session-by-session training every week on Ministry Grid, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or visit goexplorethebible.com/kids-training.

THE BOOK OF JAMES

James 1–5

James was the half brother of Jesus. Before Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected, James did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. After Jesus was resurrected, He appeared to James and James believed. James became a leader in the early church in Jerusalem, and he wrote a letter to Jewish believers living in and around Israel.

“If anyone needs wisdom,” James wrote, “ask God. He gives with generosity. Ask with faith and do not doubt. Someone who doubts is like a sea when it is tossed by the wind.”

James also wanted the believers to understand that their actions were important. “Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Getting angry does not meet God’s standards of what is right. Get rid of any sin and evil in your life. Do not just listen to God’s Word—obey it. If you hear the Word and do not obey it, you are like a person who looks at his face in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like. The one who hears and obeys the Word is blessed. Control your tongue. Look after the orphans and widows.”

James understood that no one can earn salvation by doing good deeds. He also knew that when someone repents of their sin and trusts Jesus as their Savior and Lord, their actions and words should show that their faith is true. James told the believers, “People should be able to look at your actions and understand that you have faith. Faith without actions is not real faith. It is a dead faith.”

Then James wrote to the believers about the things they say. “A bit in a horse’s mouth controls the horse. A rudder on a ship controls the ship. The tongue is a small part of the body, but it can do a lot of damage. You cannot praise God one minute and say ugly things about people the next.”

James warned the believers about loving the world and the evil things of the world. Loving the things of the world is the opposite of loving God. James said, “Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee. Draw close to God. He will draw close to you. Repent of your sin. Become humble. Do not boast and be arrogant. It is a sin to know the right thing to do and to not do it.”

James wanted the believers to remember that their words and actions were important. Their actions and words helped people see that their hearts were truly changed by Jesus.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The book of James teaches that Jesus fulfilled God’s Law. Jesus’ fulfillment of the Law secures believers’ salvation and provides a pathway for pursuing Christlikeness. The more we know Jesus, the more we are able to obey God’s Word and live like Jesus. Knowing and doing God’s Word shows a person’s faith in Jesus.

TIP:

Check out Item 15: “Inclusion Resources” (Printables) to find a simplified Bible story for kids with short attention spans.

TOOLS:

- Jump In: Item 13: “Objects: Phoenician Ship Model” (Printables), “James” (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Examine the Text: Item 7: “Text Truth 8” (Poster Pack), *Bible Timeline for Kids*, Bibles
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: Item 2: “Galatians 5:22-23” (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: Family Cards, Item 11: “Christ in Context: James” (Printables)

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

Need an Opening Activity? Choose one of the activities in the *Activities* section and adapt it to introduce the session.

JUMP IN

- Welcome boys and girls. Display “Phoenician Ship Model.” Tell kids this is a ship model.
- Ask: “Do you think this is a model of a ship you would see today or an ancient ship?” (*ancient*) Ask kids to explain what makes the ship model ancient. (*powered by oars instead of an engine and so on*)
- Point out the two paddles at the rear of the ship. Ask if anyone in the group knows what these paddles are called. (*rudders*)
- Follow up by asking: “What do you think rudders do for the ship?” (*They steer it.*)
- Say: “Today we are going to explore the book of James. In the book, James compares the rudder on a ship to something we all have! James is going to use this example to teach that **when followers of Jesus obey God’s Word, their actions and words show their faith is true.**”
- Display “James” and discuss the information on the poster.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Guide kids to find James in their Bibles. Ask kids to find the number of chapters in James. (5)
- Tell kids that James is a letter written by Jesus’ half brother to believers living far from Jerusalem. James wanted to encourage them to live out their faith in words and actions.
- Direct kids’ attention to the timeline. Point out that James was written soon after Jesus died and was resurrected.
- Tell kids that you are going to share James’ letter in your own words. Use the Bible story page as a guide. Encourage kids to listen closely for James’ example of a ship’s rudder.
- Open your Bible to James 1. Ask kids to look at chapter 1. Ask a volunteer to read verse 5 aloud.
- Ask: “Who does this verse say we can ask if we want to grow in wisdom?” (*God*)
- Ask a volunteer to read James 1:22 aloud. Point out that God not only wants us to know and hear His Word, but He also wants us to do what it teaches.
- Ask a volunteer to find and read James 3:4-5.
- Ask: “Why did James compare a ship’s rudder to a tongue?” (*They are both small, yet powerful.*) “How are our words powerful? Is that power good or bad?” Let kids share their answers.
- Display “Text Truth 8.” Help kids understand that no one earns salvation by doing good deeds, but **when followers of Jesus obey God’s Word, their actions and words show their faith is true.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Play the Session 8 video.
- Ask: “Where did Joel visit? Who did Joel interview? What did Joel learn about being a cowboy? In what ranch activities did Joel participate? What did Joel learn about real faith?”

MEMORY VERSE

- ☐ **Bible Verse Option:** *The Memory Verse activity each week is focused on the monthly Memory Verse, Galatians 5:22-23. If your kids quickly memorize the Memory Verse, you may opt to challenge them to learn an additional weekly Bonus Verse. This week’s Bonus Verse is James 1:22.*

- ☐ **Display “Galatians 5:22-23.”**

- Read the verse aloud together from the poster a few times. Each time, demonstrate a position for kids to mirror while reading the verse, such as putting both hands in the air or standing on the tips of their toes.
- For the final position, place your hands over your eyes. Challenge kids to say the verse aloud with you from memory.

PRAYER

- Display “Christ in Context: James” and review the statements. Point out that Jesus provides a way to be like Him.
- Ask: “What does *Christlikeness* mean?” (*living like Jesus*)
- Invite kids to remember things Jesus said and did, such as spending time in prayer, loving people that others did not love, sharing the good news of God’s kingdom, and so on.
- Distribute Family Cards. Close in prayer, asking God to give kids a desire to read His Word so they can learn more about Jesus and live like Him.

TIP:

If you have kids with limited mobility, invite the entire group to make funny faces, stick out their tongues, or assume other positions that do not require mobility during the Memory Verse activity.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Review: Item 19: “Comparison Cards” (Poster Pack), Bibles, scissors

APPLY THE TRUTH (20 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help kids locate today’s pages.
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud about today’s object, “Phoenician Ship Model.”
- Encourage kids to examine the animals in “Saddle Up!”
- Guide kids to look at “How Wind Creates Waves.”
- Show kids how to color in “Tiny and Mighty.”
- Invite kids to complete “What’s the Story?”

REVIEW

☐ ***Cut apart “Comparison Cards.”***

- Remind kids that the book of James teaches that **when followers of Jesus obey God’s Word, their actions and words show their faith is true.**
- Ask: “Who remembers what James compared to a ship’s rudder?” (*a person’s tongue*)
- Say: “James said a ship’s rudder and a person’s tongue were similar because both were small, yet powerful.”
- Tell kids that there are several more comparisons in the book of James.
- Lay the five picture cards faceup on a flat surface. Invite kids to predict how James will use them to teach a Bible truth.
- Reveal the reference cards one at a time. Guide kids to find the verses in their Bibles.
- After each verse is read aloud, lead the group to match the reference card to the matching picture card. Discuss how each of the pictures relates to the comparisons made in the verses.
- Conclude by praying that boys and girls would be both hearers and doers of God’s Word.

ACTIVITIES (20 MINUTES)

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

BIBLE BOOK GRAPH



Tools: Item 41: “Bible Graph” (Printables), Item 4: “Allergy Alert” (Printables), Bibles, o-shaped cereal, ziplock bags

- ☐ **Display “Allergy Alert.”** Print one copy of “Bible Graph” per kid. Make one ziplock bag of cereal per kid.
- Provide each kid with one copy of the graph and a ziplock bag of cereal.
- Draw kids’ attention to the names of the Bible books along the bottom of the graph.
- Ask: “How many Bible books are in the New Testament?” (27)
- Tell kids that Matthew and Acts have the most chapters in the New Testament. (28) Share with kids that many New Testament books have six chapters or fewer.
- Invite kids to find the books listed on the graph in their Bibles.
- When kids find a book, challenge them to find the number of chapters it has and then use cereal pieces to indicate the number on their graphs.
- Emphasize that both longer and shorter books in the Bible are equally important because all of the Bible is God’s Word.
- Conclude by inviting kids to eat the extra cereal in their bags.
- Option: Invite kids to color the squares on their graphs instead of using cereal.
- Say: **“When followers of Jesus obey God’s Word, their actions and words show their faith is true.”**

HEAR AND DO



Tools: Item 42: “Earmarked Verses” (Printables), Bibles, scissors, pencils

- ☐ **Print one copy of “Earmarked Verses.”** Cut cards apart.
- Form four groups. Explain that each group will receive a card with a Bible verse reference.
- Show a card and ask: “Why do you think the cards are shaped like an ear?” (*because God wants us to hear and listen to His Word*)
- Ask a volunteer to read James 1:22 aloud. Emphasize that God wants us not only to listen to His Word but also to obey it.
- Say: **“When followers of Jesus obey God’s Word, their actions and words show their faith is true.”**
- Give one card and pencil to each group. Direct groups to look up the verse and read it aloud.
- Ask kids to flip over their cards.
- Challenge groups to write on the backs of their cards specific actions a person might do in response to reading their Bible verse.
- Let each group share their verses and actions.



COMPLIMENT CARDS

Tools: craft paper, markers, pencils, worship music

☐ **Make an example card.**

- Remind boys and girls that the book of James teaches that **when followers of Jesus obey God's Word, their actions and words show their faith is true.**
- Ask: "How can our words show our faith is true?"
- Tell kids that speaking words that honor God or encourage and build others up can show true faith in Jesus.
- Distribute craft paper. Instruct kids to fold the paper in half to create a card. Direct kids to write their names on the front of their cards.
- When everyone is finished writing their names on their cards, kids will pass their cards to the left.
- Say: "Read the name on the card, then write one encouraging word, phrase, or sentence for that specific person. When everyone is finished, I will ask everyone to pass those cards to the left."
- Play worship music as kids write in and pass the cards. Give kids plenty of time for each card.
- Make sure everyone receives the correct card when the activity is finished. Give kids time to read the messages inside their cards.
- Tip: If you have a large number of kids, form small groups for this activity.



ESL CLASS

Tools: Item 19: "United States Map" (Printables), timer

☐ **Print one copy of the map.**

- Show the map. Point to Kansas City.
- Say: "More Baptist churches for Hispanic people are needed in Kansas City. Primera Iglesia Bautista Church, led by Pastor Luis Sanchez, in Independence, Missouri, is partnered with Northland Baptist Church to begin another Hispanic congregation called Northland Baptist en Español."
- Tell kids that these churches offer English as a Second Language (ESL) to teach English and share the good news of Jesus. These churches want to help Hispanic people become citizens of the United States. They hope to train volunteer translators to help parents communicate with their kids' schools.
- Say: "These churches have seen two families trust in Jesus because of teaching they heard at the end of the ESL classes."
- Form groups of two. Tell kids that in ESL classes, teachers ask students to talk about one subject for an entire minute.
- Say: "Talking for one minute about a subject not only helps students practice English, but it helps them build relationships."
- Encourage kids to pick a favorite subject. (*hobbies, pets, sports, travel*) Tell kids that when you say "go," one person in each group will start talking and keep talking as their partner listens. When one minute has passed, tell kids to switch roles and repeat the activity.
- Close in prayer. Thank God for the work of ESL teachers who share Jesus. Pray for more churches to reach Hispanic people in metro Kansas City.