CHARIS YOUTH

Series: Living By Faith

Lesson 1: Following Jesus Takes Faith

About This Lesson

This series challenges the young people to live a life of faith in God. Often, they see people in the church with strong faith, but don't realize that those "faith giants" started out where they are and had to build their faith. Continue to encourage the youth to start now and consistently choose to live a life of faith.

Key Takeaway: Faith starts small. God uses small people, small things, and builds on small faith.

Key Verse: Romans 1:16–17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.* [17] *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

Teaching Outline:

I. TO FOLLOW JESUS, IT ALWAYS TAKES FAITH

Romans 1:16–17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.* [17] *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

A. Don't be ashamed of the good news about Jesus!
   1. The only part of the Gospel that will work for you is the part that you are not ashamed of.

   2. If you're not ashamed of Him, He won't be ashamed of you!

3. We should care more about what Jesus thinks, than what anyone else thinks!

4. When you put your faith in Jesus, you are going to stand out. You might as well embrace it!

B. The Gospel message works for everyone who believes! Believing is what matters! Faith is what matters, not ethnicity, gender, talent, personality, intelligence, age, or your good deeds.

C. In the realm of the spirit, the only thing God sees is faith!
   1. Example: Blind auditions are competitions in which judges cannot see the contestant to avoid bias and only judge on the strength of the competitor's skills.

D. Don't be intimidated by faith giants. If you have a mustard seed of faith, you can move a mountain (Matthew 17:20).

II. DON'T DESPISE SMALL BEGINNINGS

Job 8:7 *Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly.*

A. God loves to use small things to do great things, and He uses young people in powerful ways!
   1. Your age doesn't stop you from being a faith giant.
      1 Timothy 4:12 *Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

B. Faith starts small and grows. Faith is a journey, so enjoy the trip!

C. Always listen to God for direction. He often starts with something small. He will lead you to trust Him and do something small to build your faith.
   1. Give a personal example, such as Pastor Lawson Perdue began his cattle business with just three cows, which eventually expanded to over 3,000. Pastor Aaron started a watch business with one watch and expanded it to thousands, which paid off student debt and provided enough extra funds to buy a house.

D. Learn to treasure the small things.
   1. When it's dedicated and placed in the hands of the Lord—it's no longer small, insignificant, worthless, forgotten, rejected, or lacking—something supernatural begins to occur.
      a) The five loaves and two fish fed 5,000 (Matthew 14:13–21).

   2. Faith causes supernatural, exponential, and abundant increase to occur!
      a) Exponential growth happens from continued multiplication.
      b) Would you rather have $1 million or $2 that is multiplied by $2, every day for a month? ($1 million vs. $2,147,483,648)

E. Your faith will increase as you walk in relationship with Christ and believe the Word of God.

Bottom Line:
The Bible teaches us not to despise small beginnings or despise people who are young. Even if you are young, you are a person of great significance, and God has incredible plans for your life!

Small Group Time:

1. Whether you are a brand new believer in Jesus or have been a Christian for years, you can lead others to have a stronger faith in God by how you live your life of faith as an example to them (1 Timothy 4:12). Even at a young age, you can be a leader! You can be a shining light for Jesus wherever you are: at home, at school, at church, and at extracurricular events.

- What does it mean to be a leader in the word? (what we say, when we say it, how we say it)
- What does it mean to be a leader in conduct? (how we behave and carry ourselves)
- What does it mean to be a leader in love? (showing care, concern, kindness towards others)
- What does it mean to be a leader in spirit? (keeping a good attitude, doing the right thing for the right reasons)
- What does it mean to be a leader in faith? (putting our trust in God and His promises)

2. Often, things in our daily life seem small and insignificant, but God can use them to do something amazing. Think about the disciples who were just going about their daily jobs when Jesus walked up, and their lives changed. God might prompt you to reach out to someone or do something simple that, on the surface, seems to be insignificant. But when you do it in faith, you will see God use you, and you will grow in your application of faith!

- Who is someone you would be willing to reach out to? After everyone shares, pray for God to give opportunities to reach those people with the good news of Jesus.

Declaration:

"I choose to live a life of faith. I will watch God use my mustard seed of faith as I grow to be a faith giant."

Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** How do you feel knowing God looks at you and sees your faith?
- **Pray:** Ask God to use you this week to be a faith leader in some area of your life.
- **Read:** Matthew 9 is full of references to faith. Look at each example of someone who used faith and note Jesus' comments about their faith.
- **Live It:** Choose an area of your life (school, home, church, extracurricular activities) to live out your faith. Write down some ideas of how you can show that you have faith in God and Jesus and believe the Word of God. Each day, select one idea and live out your faith!
- **Create:** Take five pieces of paper and draw a big block letter on each paper to spell FAITH. Cut them out and put them on your wall. Throughout this series on Living By Faith, write things that God is speaking to you, ways you showed faith today, and verses that encourage you.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Icebreaker Question: If you had to work in a store, which would you choose, and why?

Opening Activity Suggestion: Look online for an object lesson about faith. Visuals help the young people grasp the concept and remember it.

Opening Affirmation: "The Word of God is my guidebook to live my life by faith. I will walk by faith as I choose to follow God's plan for my life and watch God use me!"

Giving Time: 1 Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Money isn't bad; it can be used for the kingdom's good. The love of money is the problem, and it can even impact a person's faith. Encourage the young people to love giving their money and watch their experience of faith grow as God provides for their needs.

BEYOND – ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

Challenge: Designate one end of the wall or room as 0 (low) and the opposite end as 10 (high). Have everyone describe their current level of faith by standing along the wall or room to show which number corresponds to their faith level. Challenge everyone to seek God and grow their faith this week.

Biblical Worldview: Young people have faith in lots of things that they don't understand, such as their mobile phones, airplanes, cars, etc. Many people say they can't have faith in God because they can't see Him and don't believe He exists. When the believing youth say they have faith in God, they can base that faith in what the Bible says about God. The more the young people read the Word of God, the more their faith can grow. The Word of God and their faith will help them live their lives and share the Gospel with others.

Outreach/Missions: Mention any of your church missionaries who work in areas where converts aren't free to share their faith openly with their friends and family. Many times, the power of them living their faith causes people to notice a change and ask about it. Pray for the believers in closed countries to live their faith. Also, pray for each young person in your group to have boldness to live their faith each day at school, home, and everywhere they go.