

Middle School

Echoes™

**SAMPLE LESSON**

Includes links to related resources

# Teacher's Commentary

Escaping Egypt | God Delivers Us | Following God with Courage



# ECHOES

## MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER'S COMMENTARY

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ECHOES  
Middle School Teacher's  
Commentary

A self-contained teaching  
program for use with  
*Middle School Creative  
Teaching Aids and  
The Rock.*

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**Echoes**  
BY DAVID C COOK

## Introduction to the Quarter

# The Strength of a Story

“Once upon a time...” and the story begins. We enter a land primarily in our imaginations. Characters look how we think they look and feel how we think they feel. A story becomes a combination of the world we know and the story itself. People tend to relate differently to a story than they do to real life. It is easier to see the big picture in a story; the fatal flaw of the main or even minor characters might be a blazing light to us. In real life, however, the big picture is sometimes hard to find, and many times people can be blind to their own fatal flaws. Through a story we can learn without directly suffering the consequences. What a grand opportunity.

This quarter you will open up Bible stories to some of your students for the first time. You will also replay stories for other students like a good movie in which you see something new every time you watch it. Through these stories students can embrace the big picture of God’s love. Hopefully your students will feel a little dust on their feet as they relate to the struggles of some of God’s followers.

Help students this quarter become a part of the Bible stories they study. Be creative with roleplays and any props you might have available to help students identify with these Bible characters. It really isn’t a long stretch from the Old Testament to today when it comes to stories of disobedience, faith, and courage. Have fun!

### **Unit 13** **Escaping Egypt**

In this unit your students will study different aspects of Moses’ life. Lessons will go over Moses’ struggle with God, Pharaoh, and the Israelites themselves. You will also spend one lesson studying the significance of Passover and Communion.

### **Unit 14** **God Delivers Us**

This unit will help your students learn aspects of God’s character by reviewing stories where God’s people were delivered. Lessons will cover the Israelites’ first attempt to enter the promised land, an overview of the Israelites’ time wandering in the wilderness, Rahab’s contribution to God’s plan, and the story of Achan’s disobedience.

### **Unit 15** **Following God with Courage**

In this unit students will cover stories that show God’s people following God. Students study the time after the Israelites settled into the promised land. Here students can get a real feel for how God related to particular individuals by studying stories of Joshua, the Israelites as a nation, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, and Ruth.

# Open God's Resounding Word to Young Teens



The step-by-step format ensures that students learn Bible truths and how to apply them to their lives. With extra information for teachers, and detailed activities and lessons, students will leave class with a deeper understanding of God's Word.

## Teacher Pages

Each lesson begins with extra information to help you, the teacher, understand the Bible lesson and the unique needs of your students. Through reading each lesson's introduction, you'll be fully prepared to lead your students in the day's Bible story.



## STEP 1 Life Need

Step 1 will include a brief activity or demonstration, followed by small group discussion where students will share their own ideas, opinions, and experiences. This step motivates and gets the students thinking about the Bible Truth.

## STEP 2 Bible Learning

In Step 2 your teens hear and study what God has to say about the Bible Truth. You will check briefly for basic understanding.

## STEP 3 Bible Application

Step 3 gives your students an opportunity to interact with the concepts they're learning.

## STEP 4 Life Response

In Step 4 your students will create a personal

response to what they've learned. This is the "so what?" step, where teens decide how they will allow this new information to affect their lives. Your role as the teacher is to act as a resource and encourager.



# Supply List

## Needed for Every Lesson

- Middle School Teacher Commentary*
- The Rock*
- Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*
- Bibles

## Standard Classroom Supplies

- Pens or pencils
- Index cards
- Masking tape
- Markers
- Paper
- Poster board
- Whiteboard and markers

## Lesson 1

- Occupation cards

## Lesson 2

- No additional materials

## Lesson 3

- Package of bacon or ham
- Eye patch or toy ship
- Several small balls

## Lesson 4

- “No Whining” sign
- Prizes for small group or class
- Purple yarn or ribbon

## Lesson 5

- No additional materials

## Lesson 6

- No additional materials

## Lesson 7

- No additional materials

## Lesson 8

- Dominoes
- Basket, bag, or box
- Yellow, quarter-sized paper circles

## Lesson 9

- Optional
- Smooth stones, colored construction paper
- Glue

## Lesson 10

- No additional materials

## Lesson 11

- Small pebbles

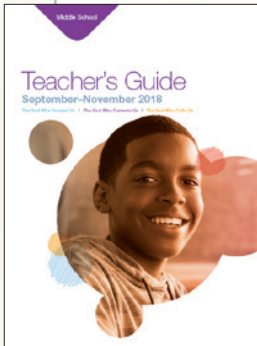
## Lesson 12

- Newspapers
- Scissors
- Highlighters or pens

## Lesson 13

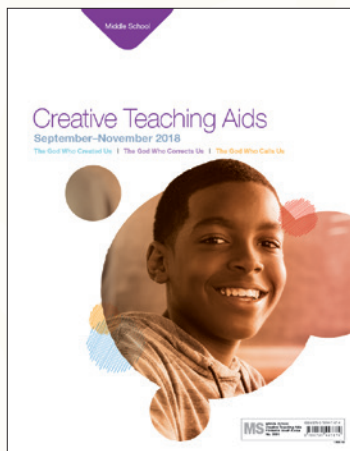
- Respected, older church members
- Church directories and phone books
- Basket, box, or bag
- Postcard stamps

# Materials for Your Middle School Class



## Middle School Teacher Commentary

The teacher's commentary is designed to work interactively with other middle school products and is filled with creative ideas and suggestions for instructing and challenging your students as they learn more about the Bible. One per class.



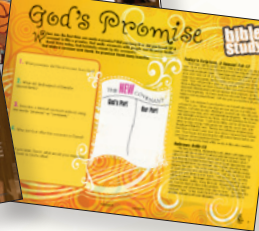
## Middle School Creative Teaching Aids

Posters, cutout pieces, worksheets, games, and other aids increase middle school students' interest and make Sunday school lessons come alive. The high-impact visual displays help make Bible study even more exciting and memorable for your students. One per class.



## Rock

*The Rock* has a Bible study in each issue that you and your students study together in Sunday school. There also are fiction and nonfiction stories, as well as fact sheets which reinforce the Bible study both in class and at home. One per student.



## Free! [Downloadable Options for Steps 1 and 4](#)

- This week's movies.
- News that just happened.
- Relevant subjects from today's world that are rarely talked about in Sunday school!

[RealLifeDownloaded.com](http://RealLifeDownloaded.com)



Online Teacher Training! **To learn more about teaching and using the resources in a lesson, visit [EchoesCurriculum.com](http://EchoesCurriculum.com)**

# Dr. Herbert C. Smitherman

## The Jackie Robinson of P&G

by Victoria McAfee



© The Family of Dr. Herbert C. Smitherman

**G**eorge Washington Carver began each day praying that God would reveal secrets to him about plants and vegetables. God responded, “Little man, you’re not big enough to know the secrets of My universe, but I’ll show you the secret

of the peanut.” The outcome of this conversation with God resulted in Carver spending a lifetime discovering hundreds of products from the seemingly insignificant peanut. Many African-American scientists and inventors have followed in Carver’s footsteps. Add to the list Dr. Herbert C. Smitherman.

Dr. Herbert C. Smitherman was born March 23, 1937, to Rev. Otis C. Smitherman and his wife Alberta. An only child, he grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. Opposers burned down his father’s church twice during the voting registration and rights movement.

Regardless of the obstacles, the Smithermans encouraged their son to get as much education as possible. Smitherman recalled a time his father took him out to a construction site and showed him a worker with a jackhammer breaking up concrete. Rev. Smitherman said to his son, “If you don’t get an education this is where you will end up.” Herbert jokingly replied, “I’ve been reading books since that day.”

Although the family was poor, Smitherman went on to fulfill his parents’ dreams. He attended Tuskegee Institute obtaining both his B.S. and M.S. in chemistry. He taught at Southern University of Texas. He then served in the army for two years as a commissioned officer. After his military service, he completed his doctoral degree at Howard University in 1966.

Dr. Smitherman became the first African American with a Ph.D. to be hired by Proctor and Gamble (P&G) as a physical organic chemist. Dr. Smitherman worked at P&G

for the next 29 years. He was part of development teams that improved several products. His name is associated with Crest toothpaste, Business stain remover, Folgers coffee, Bounce fabric softener, Safeguard soap, Crush soda and many others. Smitherman’s new formulations and inventions led the company to increased profits and fame.

One of Dr. Smitherman’s sons nicknamed him the “Jackie Robinson of P&G” because he used his position to open the door for so many other African Americans. Smitherman saw himself as a bridge builder, assisting other minorities to make progress in this field. While employed by P&G, he pioneered a recruiting program for minority undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in science, chemistry, and chemical engineering. He founded the Black Technical Ph.D. Group and The National Organization for Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCHE). These organizations allowed black scientists and engineers to receive a paycheck for their work along with promotions, awards, and scholarships.

After retiring from P&G, he joined the staff of a historically black college, Wilberforce University, serving as assistant vice president of academic affairs and as a professor of chemistry. After Wilberforce, Dr. Smitherman desired to influence young people in math and science. He started a high school, Western Hills Design Technology, and was the principal there for nine years. He also developed a weekend program for inner city middle schoolers. Scientists and mathematicians in the local area volunteered to tutor the students.

Dr. Smitherman and his wife Barbara were married 51 years. From this union, God blessed them with six children. Despite his busy career, Dr. Smitherman found the time to actively be involved with his children. He served as a Boy Scout leader, a Little League baseball coach, an officer of the Walnut Hills High School Parent Board, and as a member of the North Avondale Neighborhood Association (NANA) and Stepping Stones. In addition, he tutored at several schools. He completed OSHA requirement training to become a safety manager to assist his son who owns a construction company.

Dr. Smitherman and his family were members of Bellarmine Chapel in Cincinnati from 1968 to 2010. His funeral services were held there after his passing on October 9, 2010.

*But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.*  
—Daniel 2:28

## Hang in There

### STEP 1 **Life Need** (5–10 minutes)

- Discuss times students have felt frustration and impatience.
  - Paper and pencils or pens
  - Masking tape
  - Markers

### STEP 2 **Bible Learning** (15–20 minutes)

- Review last week’s lesson using a teaching aid.
- Analyze the motives and feelings of the people in today’s text.
  - Bibles
  - [The Rock](#)
  - Paper and pencils or pens
  - “[Wandering in the Wilderness](#)” poster from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*

### STEP 3 **Bible Application** (5–10 minutes)

- Discuss frustrations of middle-school students today.
- Read a middle-school student’s feature in [The Rock](#).
- Apply the memory verse to students’ frustrations.
  - Bibles
  - [The Rock](#)
  - Whiteboard and markers

### STEP 4 **Life Response** (about 5 minutes)

- Have students think about problems they have.
- Pray for each other for patience and strength.
  - Bibles
  - [The Rock](#)
  - Paper and pencils or pens

### Memory Verse

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

—Psalm 27:14

### Bible Basis:

Exodus 5:1-2, 22–6:6

### Bible Truth:

God doesn’t always act as fast as His people would like.

### Lesson Aim:

That your students will pray for patience to wait for God to act in specific situations.

## Understanding the Bible

Today’s lesson looks at the first round in the negotiations between Moses and Pharaoh over releasing the Hebrews.

Upon God’s order, Moses returned to Egypt from his self-exile in Midian (Ex. 4:18-31). Then Moses and his brother, Aaron, approached the new pharaoh and asked him to allow the Hebrews to travel into the desert for a religious festival (5:1). Pharaoh must have been familiar with such festivals. But in this case he refused to permit the Hebrews to leave, saying this would set them back in their work on his construction projects (vss. 2, 4). Moreover, Pharaoh—interpreting Moses’ request as a sign of rebellion—put new restrictions on the Hebrews, making their lot worse (vss. 5-19). The Hebrews blamed Moses for this (vss. 20-21).

Moses complained to the Lord in verses 22 and 23. Sympathetic to Moses’ feelings, God declared His firm intention of fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant by settling the Hebrews in Canaan (6:1-8). In short, the setback was not as serious as it seemed to Moses.

Of special interest in this week’s passages is the emphasis on God’s names. During the interview at the burning bush back in chapter 3 (vs. 14), God identified

—continued on next page

indicates items you will need to prepare before class



## Understanding the Bible —cont'd

Himself as “I AM”—a phrase from which we get the name Yahweh. In English Bibles, this name is usually printed as “LORD.” It is the name Moses used before Pharaoh and the name Pharaoh did not recognize (5:1-2). Possibly Moses was the first to understand this name for God. Exodus 6:3 suggests the patriarchs had not fully grasped the name Yahweh, but only El-Shaddai (“God Almighty”) and similar forms. If so, the revelation of the special name Yahweh was one way God indicated His intention to rescue His people and give them a future.

## Tips

### Classroom

In today's lesson, try to make connections between Moses' feelings of frustration and impatience and your students' own feelings. Be ready to share examples from your own life—personal experiences God used to teach you patience.

Remember, God didn't teach you patience in an instant, and He won't teach your students all they need to know about patience in one Sunday school lesson! But through your patient teaching, counseling, and prayer, your students can change little by little.

## Understanding Your Students

“Instant,” “quick and easy,” “convenient,” and “automatic” have become attractive qualities to look for in material things and maybe even in spiritual things! Your middle-school students are confronted with this mind-set every day at school, at home, and in the media.

However, many of the questions your students are asking don't have instant answers: Why don't others like me? Does God really care about this? Whom can I trust?

Your students also face strong obstacles that won't go away. These might include making it to and from school alive, coping with all of the changes that are happening to them physically and psychologically—the list goes on.



## PRESESSION ACTIVITY



### Common Goal

**Objective:** To help students relate with each other through a common goal.

Instruct students to pick a superhero they are familiar with and one which they can relate to. Have them get into groups according to the hero they chose.

Next they need to choose one line they could use to promote their superhero. Questions they could use in determining this might be as follows: What is appealing about this superhero? What does this superhero stand for?

Bring the groups together to discuss their ideas and how they developed them.

# STEP 1

Life Need  
5–10 minutes

## Lesson Aim:

That your students will pray for patience to wait for God to act in specific situations.

**OBJECTIVE:** That your students experience a little frustration in class so they can better discuss patience.

### Materials:





- Paper and pencils or pens
- Masking tape
- Markers

Try this game or a similar one so your students will experience a little frustration and impatience just before the Bible study about patience.

Assign students to pairs. Bind together one student's left wrist and his partner's right wrist with masking tape. Distribute paper and markers, and challenge each pair of students to draw a picture of Moses, who is the focus of today's Bible study. Tell students that they have only one minute to create their drawings.

Most likely it will be difficult for partners to decide together how to draw Moses. Added to that frustration will be the hassle of drawing with bound wrists. If you think your students can handle even more frustration, tell them to toss their drawings in the trash can without showing them to anyone.

Let them grumble for a minute; then follow up with these questions.

-  **How did this activity make you feel?** (*Encourage students to describe how they felt.*)
-  **Unless you're a superhuman individual, you probably felt frustrated and impatient by this activity. Think back over this past week. Did you feel impatient at any time? What made you impatient?**
-  **What other kinds of things make you impatient? Why do you think those things bother you so much?**
-  **Do you know of anyone who waited so long for help that they almost thought God forgot them?** (*Youth might mention Bible characters like Sarah or people they've read about or met. If someone mentions the Israelites in Egypt during their years of captivity, good—the transition to Bible Learning will be that much easier.*)

Many of the things we feel impatient about aren't important at all. So why do we get so worked up about them?

Sometimes we even get impatient with God. Today's Bible study deals with some people who thought God wasn't moving fast enough. Let's see what we can learn from them.

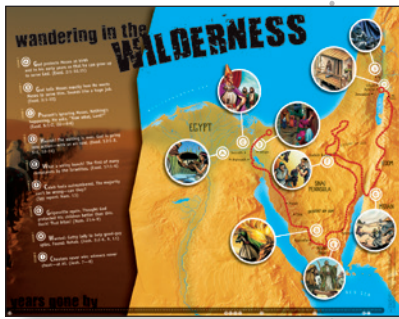
# STEP 2

Bible Learning

15–20 minutes

## Bible Basis:

Exodus 5:1-2, 22–6:6



**OBJECTIVE:** That your students analyze the motives and feelings of several people mentioned in Exodus 5 and 6.

### Materials:

- Bibles
- The Rock*
- Paper and pencils or pens
- “Wandering in the Wilderness” poster from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*

Last week we learned that Moses spent the first 40 years of his life in Pharaoh’s palace. He spent the second 40 in the desert.

Display the “Wandering in the Wilderness” poster from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*. Review points 1 and 2. Point 3 corresponds to today’s lesson.

Finally, Moses was back in Egypt—ready to do what God had spent 80 years preparing him for. Moses must have been excited, even if he was a little afraid. But things didn’t work out quite the way he expected.

Distribute paper, pencils or pens, and copies of today’s issue of *The Rock*. Have students turn to “Live from Egypt with Moses,” the Bible study on pages 4 and 5. Work through the study together.



### ■ From *THE ROCK*—Live from Egypt with Moses

There are rumors of trouble among the Israelite slaves in Egypt. News services have sent their best reporters to investigate.

Based on Exodus chapter 5, how would these people answer these questions?

Have everyone read today’s text. Then have students think of themselves as the people being interviewed in the cartoons. They should give answers they think those people would give.



- ▶ **Mr. Moses**, there are reports that you told Pharaoh that you want to lead the Israelites into the wilderness. How did Pharaoh respond to your statement? (*He got nasty. And real stern. He said no way; that he hasn't ever heard of my God.*)
- ▶ Why do you think he reacted that way? (*Maybe Pharaoh thinks of himself as a god and that no other god is going to push him around. Or maybe he doesn't intend to let the Israelites push him around.*)
- ▶ **Mr. Pharaoh**, sir, I understand you just had a visit from the Israelite leader, Moses. What do you plan to do about the Israelites? (*They're really going to get it now. I'm going to make life so miserable for them that they'll never ask me for a favor again.*)
- ▶ **Hey Israelites**, how do you think Moses handled the meeting with Pharaoh? (*We can't stand Moses now. He better never represent us again. All he did was get us in more trouble than we're already in.*)

To help students answer the next question, make sure they read Exodus 5:10-14 from their Bibles because it's not printed in *The Rock*.

## TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Exodus 5:1-2, 22-23

<sup>1</sup>Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.'"

<sup>2</sup>Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

<sup>22</sup>Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Why, LORD, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? <sup>23</sup>Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."

Exodus 6:1-6

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country."

<sup>2</sup>God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. <sup>3</sup>I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them. <sup>4</sup>I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners.

<sup>5</sup>Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.

<sup>6</sup>"Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.'"

- ▶ What happened to your lives since Moses talked with Pharaoh? (*Now we have to gather our own straw and still make the same number of bricks for Pharaoh as we did when the straw was provided for us.*)
- ▶ What do you think of Moses as a leader? (*What a crummy leader! He doesn't know how to do anything right. He just knows how to get us in trouble.*)
- ▶ **Mr. Slave Driver**, sir, how has your life changed since Pharaoh and Moses talked? (*The pressure is on us, too. We have to be more cruel to the people to get more work out of them. When we don't, we're beaten.*)
- ▶ How do you feel about this situation? (*It's terrible and frightening. We'd like to get our hands on the guy who got us in trouble with Pharaoh.*)

### ▶ How do you think God felt about Moses' question in verse 22?

Point out that God didn't scold Moses for being impatient. He let Moses express his feelings freely.

### ▶ How did God show kindness to Moses and to the other Israelites? (*When Moses complained to God, God could have zapped him, but He didn't. Instead, God answered Moses' question. God showed kindness to the Israelites by repeating His promise to rescue them instead of condemning them for complaining.*)

### ▶ What obstacle do you think gave Moses the most trouble—Pharaoh's stubbornness, the Israelites' anger toward Moses, the Israelites' suffering, or something else?

Make sure students explain why they chose their answers.

### ▶ Why is it sometimes hard for us to wait for God to act?

Students may have all kinds of answers, one of which may be that it's hard to wait when things get worse than they were before, or it's difficult when you're hurting.

# STEP 3

## Bible Application

(5–10 minutes)

**OBJECTIVE:** That your students identify some common middle-school frustrations.

**Materials:**

- Bibles
- [The Rock](#)
- Whiteboard and markers

Today we would say that Moses was frustrated. He had a goal that was blocked, a problem that was unsolved, a need that was unfulfilled. Therefore, he felt discouraged and disappointed. And people are in the same situation today.

 **What are some of the frustrations people your age face?**

Make a list on the board. Students may mention conflicts with parents, not being accepted by other youth, or continual harassment by neighborhood bullies.



If students' ideas come slowly, write these categories on the board:

- goals that may be blocked
- unsolved problems
- unmet needs

Have students read “Waiting for God’s Answer,” the feature in *The Rock*. It focuses on Christian youth who have dealt with frustrating circumstances. Follow up by discussing the questions printed at the end of the story.




■ **From THE ROCK—Waiting for God’s Answer**

-  Have you ever been upset about how God was dealing with you and your problems? When did you discover that He knew best?
-  What kinds of things do you pray about? Have you ever given up because you thought God didn’t hear you or wasn’t responding the way you thought He should?

Encourage students to be specific when they answer these questions. Point them to today’s memory verse, Psalm 27:14, in the Bible or on page 8 in *The Rock*.

 **What does it mean to “wait for the Lord”?**

Again, make a list on the board so students can refer to it later. Some students may say it means to wait without complaining or to ask God to be part of the solution instead of trying to solve it all alone.

 **Don’t answer this question aloud. On a scale of 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor), how good have you been at waiting for the Lord to help you with your problems?**

Now that you have students thinking in terms of applying this Scripture to their own lives, move on to the personalized activity in the Life Response section of this lesson.

# STEP 4

Life Response  
(5–10 minutes)

## Bible Truth:

God doesn't always act as fast as His people would like.

**OBJECTIVE:** That your students pray for those among them who are feeling impatient about frustrating circumstances.

### Materials:

- Bibles
- [The Rock](#)
- Paper and pencils or pens

Distribute more paper if needed, and have students write down their answers to the following questions. Tell them that no one has to see their answers.

- ▶ **What problems are you having right now in your life? What problems are making you feel frustrated?**
- ▶ **How would you like God to help you with these problems during the coming week? Be specific.**
- ▶ **What will you do if God doesn't help you in the way you want and when you want?**

After students have written down their answers, summarize today's lesson aim.

My prayer for you is that you will get into the habit of praying for patience to wait for God to act in specific circumstances—especially when God doesn't help you in the way you want and when you want.

Take a moment now to pray about one of the problems from your list. Promise yourself that you will keep praying about the problem, asking for the patience to wait for God to act.

Give students enough time to pray. Then, if your class is a close-knit group, some of your students might want to respond out loud to some of these questions. If they want to, that is fine, but don't force anyone to share. You might want to simply ask those students who are feeling frustrated in their Christian lives to raise their hands so that you can pray for them. If students are open to the idea of prayer partners, you could match them up. The partners should contact each other during the week to remind each other that they are praying for the specific need. They might even ask each other how they are progressing.

Ask several students to pray for the others. Then close in prayer, asking God to give your students the strength to keep on trusting God no matter what.

Call students' attention to the last page of *The Rock*. Encourage them to follow up on today's lesson by following the instructions for Everyday Devos. These devotionals will give them more insight into today's memory verse about waiting on the Lord.

