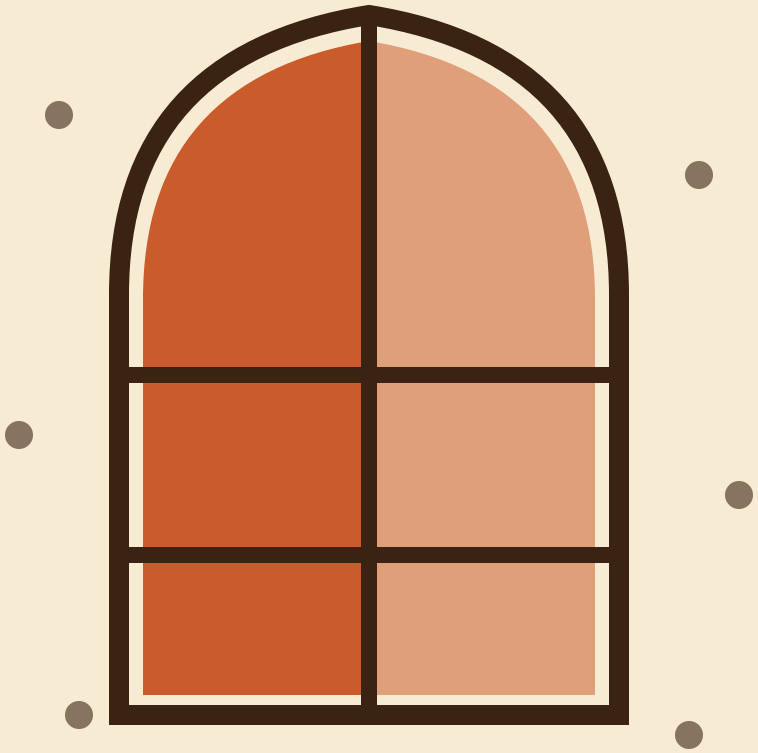
YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM · AGES 11–18

ALL SAINTS · FAITH HEROES



WEEK 1 OF 3

A Great Cloud

Theme: The faithful who ran before us · Main text: Hebrews 12:1–3

SAINTS & HEROES.

The ones who ran before us.

Inside: 45 / 60 / 75-minute plans · word-for-word scripts · 4 game options · response activity · Joys & Concerns · 3 student pages

DAHAM
NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY TOGETHER

WEEK 1 · LEADER GUIDE

A Great Cloud

Theme: The faithful who ran before us · Main text: Hebrews 12:1–3 · Memory verse: Hebrews 12:1

THE BIG IDEA

We run our race surrounded by a great cloud of people who trusted God before us, and we keep our eyes on Jesus.

The question to carry all night

"Who showed me faith, and who will I show?"

By the end, students will…

- Meet a few of the imperfect, faithful people in Hebrews 11
- See their life as a race run with a crowd cheering and Jesus ahead
- Start their My Cloud of Witnesses card with one Bible hero

NIGHT AT A GLANCE · PICK YOUR LENGTH

SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	45 MIN	60 MIN	75 MIN
Welcome	Greet new students by name and grade; your announcements	—	—	5
Game 1	Pick from the Activity Menu (next page)	8	10	10
Game 2	A second game from the menu (optional)	—	—	10
Hook + Message	"The PACER Test" · Hebrews 11 · Hebrews 12:1–3	10	12	12
Response Activity	Start Your Cloud + My One Step	10	12	12
Small Group Talk	Pick 3–4 questions	—	8	10
Joys & Concerns	"I lift up ___ to God." / "Lord, hear our prayer."	10	10	10
Pastoral Prayer	Leader prays over what was shared + send-off	5	5	5

Supplies

- Cloud cards: copy the card on student page 2 onto cardstock
- Pens, markers, scissors
- Game extras: bulky "weights" (coats, boots, oven mitts, costume pieces), poster paper, a paper towel tube (see menu)
- Student pages (last 3 pages) · Bibles · phone timer

Before students arrive

- Choose your games using the Activity Menu
- Read Hebrews 11:1–12:3 in one sitting
- Practice the "PACER Test" hook out loud once
- Think of one person whose faith helped you keep going as a teenager
- Pray for each student by name, especially anyone grieving this season

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CHOOSE WHAT FITS YOUR GROUP

Activity Menu

Every group is different. Some nights you have fifteen students bouncing off the walls (especially near Halloween); some nights you have four quiet ones and a visitor. Pick one or two games, then finish with the response activity. Every game ends with a debrief that points back to tonight's question.

ACTIVITY	ENERGY	PREP	BEST WHEN…	MIN
A. Lay It Aside Relay Runners start loaded with silly "weights" and talk their way out of them	High	Bulky clothes, open space	Students need to move; you want the strongest link to Hebrews 12:1	10
B. Hall of Faith Clue Race Pairs guess Hebrews 11 heroes clue by clue, then swap stories	Medium	None	Lots of new students; zero prep time; sets up the message	8–10
C. Marathon Sign Studio Trios make funny cheer signs for everyday "races"	Medium	Poster paper, markers	Creative groups; you want laughs and real "what keeps me going" talk	10–12
D. Who's in Your Stands? Pass a baton; tell who cheers you on, and who you could cheer	Low	A paper towel tube	Small or quiet group; a mix of older and younger students	8–10
E. Start Your Cloud Response activity (after message)	Reflective	Cloud cards, pens	Every night: this is the heart of the week and starts the Cloud card	12

SUGGESTED COMBINATIONS

Big, high-energy group (10–15)

A. Lay It Aside Relay → B. Hall of Faith Clue Race → Message → E. Start Your Cloud

Small group (4–6)

D. Who's in Your Stands? (whole group) → Message → E. Start Your Cloud in a circle

Lots of first-time visitors

B. Hall of Faith Clue Race → C. Marathon Sign Studio → Message → E. Start Your Cloud (low-pressure option)

Short on time (45 min)

A. Lay It Aside Relay → Message → E. Start Your Cloud → Joys & Concerns

GROUND RULES FOR EVERY GAME *Nobody is forced to share. Nobody is the punchline. New students get paired with a regular. Costumes and candy are welcome; scary stuff stays out of the games. If a game ever starts to single someone out, change the round and keep moving.*

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A. Lay It Aside Relay

10 min · High energy

Purpose: A goofy relay straight out of Hebrews 12:1, "lay aside every weight." Each runner starts wearing a pile of bulky, ridiculous "weights" (a giant coat, rain boots, oven mitts, a backpack full of books, costume pieces). They can only drop a weight by answering a quick question from their team. Students run, laugh, and hear real answers from teammates, and the message has a picture everyone remembers.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Make teams of 3–5. Each team gets a "weight pile" with the same number of items (4–5 each): coat, boots, oven mitts, a stuffed backpack, a hat, a scarf.
2. The first runner puts on **every** item. The team stands at one end; a chair sits at the other end as the turn-around point.
3. Before the runner can take off one item, a teammate draws a **Drop It Question** and the runner answers in one sentence. Then they drop that item and ask a teammate the same question back.
4. When the runner is down to just their own clothes, they race to the chair and back. The next runner suits up. **Fast walking only** if your space is tight.
5. First team with every runner finished wins. Play 1–2 rounds, then do the debrief.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "This is the Lay It Aside Relay. Your first runner puts on everything in your pile. Yes, everything. Coat, boots, mitts, the backpack, all of it. Now try running in that. You can't. So before you run, you have to get rid of it, one piece at a time. To drop one item, your team asks you a Drop It Question. You answer, you ask somebody back, and you can take that item off. When you're down to just you, run to the chair and back. Ready? Suit up!"

DROP IT QUESTIONS (WRITE EACH ON A CARD)

- Best costume you've ever worn (or seen)?
- Favorite fall thing: leaves, apple cider, or football?
- What's the heaviest thing in your backpack right now?
- Best candy to get, and worst candy to get?
- Something you're carrying this week (light answer is fine)?
- What's a sport or race you've actually finished?
- Who's the loudest cheerer in your family?
- Fastest you've ever run, and why were you running?
- One thing that slows you down in the morning?
- A hero (real or movie) you looked up to as a kid?

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** One team races the clock. Each runner tries to beat the last runner's time, and the whole group asks the Drop It Questions.
- **Costume edition:** If students wore costumes, let them keep the costume and use the weight pile on top. If not, no problem, the pile is the costume.
- **Limited space:** Skip the run. Students race to get the weights *on* and back *off* while answering questions.

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LEADER NOTE *Check items for anything sharp or slippery, and keep boots oversized so nobody trips. If a student doesn't want to wear the pile, they can be the team's "question master" and read every card.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "How fast could you run with all that on? Not very. You had to drop it first. There's a verse tonight that says exactly this: 'Lay aside every weight… and run.' We're starting a series called Saints & Heroes, about the people who ran this race before us. And the question for all three weeks is: **who showed me faith, and who will I show?**"

B. Hall of Faith Clue Race

8–10 min · Medium energy

Purpose: Zero prep, lots of talking. Hebrews 11 is like the Bible's Hall of Fame for faith. The leader reads clues about one hero at a time, and pairs race to guess who it is. After every hero, partners answer a talk question that connects that hero's story to their own life. New students don't need to know the Bible; the clues are funny and the talk questions are for everybody.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Students pair up (or trios). New students pair with a regular.
2. The leader reads the first clue. Pairs whisper and decide on a guess. If they think they know, they both stand up.
3. Points: right after clue 1 = 3 points, clue 2 = 2 points, clue 3 = 1 point. A wrong guess sits down and waits for the next clue.
4. After the reveal, every pair answers the **talk question** for that hero (about 45 seconds).
5. Play 8–10 heroes. Always end with the Bridge round.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "There's a chapter in the Bible, Hebrews 11, that's basically the Hall of Fame for faith. I'm going to describe somebody in it, one clue at a time. With your partner, figure out who it is. When you both think you know, stand up. If you've never read the Bible, that's fine. Guess anyway. Some of these clues are pretty obvious. Clue one…"

HEROES

HERO	CLUES (READ ONE AT A TIME)	TALK QUESTION
Noah	Built something huge · It hadn't rained yet · Lots of animals, two by two	"What's something you started that people thought was weird?"
Abraham	Moved away at 75 · No map, no address · Became a dad of nations	"Have you ever moved? What was hardest?"

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Sarah	Laughed at God's promise · Had a baby at about 90 · Her son's name means "laughter"	"What's the funniest thing that made you laugh this week?"
Moses	Floated in a basket · Talked to a burning bush · The sea opened up	"What's a job you'd feel totally unqualified for?"
Rahab	Lived in a city wall · Hid two spies on her roof · A red cord in the window	"Have you ever helped someone when it was risky?"
Gideon	Hid from enemies in a winepress · Asked God for a sign with a wet fleece · Won with just 300 people	"When have you felt like the least likely person for something?"
Joseph	Had a famous coat · Sold by his brothers · Ran Egypt's food supply	"Oldest, middle, youngest, or only child? Best part?"
David	A shepherd kid · Five smooth stones · Became king	"What's a 'giant' kids your age face?"
Samson	Super strong · Never cut his hair · Made some really bad choices	"Would you rather be super strong or super smart?"
Bridge: You	Not perfect · Still in the race · Someone is cheering for you	"Who's someone who showed you what faith looks like?"

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Everyone plays as one team against the clock. Then go around the circle for the talk question.
- **Student clue-givers:** After a few rounds, let pairs write three clues for any Bible hero they know and read them to the group.
- **Costume clues:** If students are in costume, add a round where the group gives three clues for each other's costumes.

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Did you notice something? Almost every person on that list messed up. Sarah laughed at God. Moses ran away. Gideon was hiding. Samson made terrible choices. And they're still in the Hall of Fame. Tonight we'll see why they're in there, and why that matters for you. Keep this question in your head: **who showed me faith, and who will I show?**"

C. Marathon Sign Studio

10–12 min · Medium energy

Purpose: If you've ever watched a marathon, the best part is the signs: "Run like there's free pizza at the finish!" Trios make cheer signs for the everyday "races" students run, and every line on the sign has to come from what actually keeps one of *them* going. Students laugh, make something together, and learn what motivates each other. It sets up the picture of the crowd in Hebrews 12.

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HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into trios. Mix it up: "Find two people you haven't talked to yet tonight." Each trio gets poster paper and markers.
2. Each trio draws one **Race Card** (see the list below). That's the race their sign is for.
3. Each person tells the trio one real thing that keeps them going when something is long or hard (music, snacks, a friend, a nap, a goal).
4. The trio turns those into one funny, encouraging sign. Every person's answer has to show up on it somewhere. Four minutes.
5. Trios hold up their signs and "cheer" the race. The group votes on Funniest, Most Encouraging, and Most Likely to Actually Help.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Have you ever seen the signs people hold at a marathon? 'Smile, you paid for this.' 'Worst parade ever.' Tonight you're making signs like that, but for the races you actually run. Each trio draws a Race Card. First, everybody tells the group one real thing that keeps you going when something is long and hard. Then you make a sign using all of it. Four minutes. Go!"

RACE CARDS

- The PACER test in gym
- The last week before winter break
- A three-hour band or choir rehearsal
- Finishing a group project alone
- A long car ride with siblings
- Cleaning your room before your mom gets home
- Two-a-day practices
- Studying for finals
- Your first week at a new school
- Waiting for Christmas

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Make one giant sign together for "Our Youth Group Running Through the School Year." Hang it on the wall for the rest of the series.
- **No poster paper:** Write signs on printer paper or a whiteboard, or just "perform" the sign as a cheer.
- **Cheer tunnel finish:** Everyone holds their sign and lines up while each person walks through once to cheers.

LEADER NOTE *Keep the signs kind: no inside jokes about people in the room, no teacher names. If a sign gets a little roasty, ask, "Would this help the runner or just make them laugh at themselves?"*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Signs don't run the race for you. But they help, right? Knowing someone is standing there, cheering, because they've run it before. Tonight we'll read about a whole stadium of people cheering you on. So here's our question: **who showed me faith, and who will I show?**"

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D. Who's in Your Stands?

8–10 min · Low energy

Purpose: A calm, story-based game for small or quiet groups. A baton (a paper towel tube works fine) passes around the circle. Whoever holds it answers a Stands Card about the people who cheer them on. Students find out who is in each other's stands, which is exactly the picture in Hebrews 12:1: a crowd of people who ran first, cheering us on.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Sit in a circle. The leader holds the baton and reads a **Stands Card**.
2. The leader answers first, then passes the baton to the left. Whoever holds the baton answers, then passes it on.
3. Anyone can say "Pass the baton" and skip. No explanation needed.
4. After 3–4 people answer, the leader reads a new card.
5. Final card is always the Bridge card.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "This is a relay baton. Okay, it's a paper towel tube, but tonight it's a baton. When you're holding it, you answer the card. Then you hand it off. I'll go first: 'Who's someone who always shows up to cheer you on?' My answer: ___. Now hand it off. If you don't want to answer, just say 'pass the baton' and hand it on."

STANDS CARDS

- Who's someone who always shows up to cheer you on?
- What's the best encouraging thing anyone has said to you?
- Who's your go-to person after a bad day?
- Who's a coach or teacher who believed in you?
- What's something you finished only because someone pushed you?
- Who's someone a few years older you look up to?
- What's the loudest crowd you've ever been part of?
- Who would you want in the front row at your big moment?
- Who showed you what trusting God looks like?
- **Bridge:** Who could you cheer on this week?

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Everyone answers every card. Go two full rounds.
- **Relay version:** For more energy, stand in two lines and run the baton between them; whoever receives it answers the card.
- **Paper stadium:** Students write one "front row" name on a sticky note and add it to a big paper stadium on the wall.

LEADER NOTE *Questions about who cheers us on often bring up grandparents or family members who have died. That's okay, especially this time of year. If a student mentions someone who died, simply say, "Thanks for telling us about them. It sounds like they gave you a lot." Then keep going.*

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DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "Look at all the people we just named. Coaches, grandmas, friends, a teacher who believed in you. Nobody runs alone. Hebrews says there's a whole crowd in the stands: people who ran before us and trusted God. That's tonight's question: **who showed me faith, and who will I show?**"

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Hook: "The PACER Test"

2 min

SAY

"Quick show of hands. Who has done the PACER test in gym?" (*Expect groans.*) "Yeah. The beep. You run, it beeps, you run back, it beeps faster. And at some point your legs say, 'We're done.'"

"So here's my question. What keeps you going? When you're about to drop out, what makes you run one more lap?" (*Let a few students answer: friends running with them, people cheering, not wanting to be first out, a coach yelling.*)

"Almost nobody says, 'I just really love running back and forth.' It's the people. Somebody next to you. Somebody cheering. Somebody who did it last year and said, 'You can do this.' For the next three weeks we're doing a series called Saints & Heroes. It's about the people who ran before us. And the question is: **who showed me faith, and who will I show?**"

Message: Run With the Crowd, Look at Jesus

10 min

1. Faith has a Hall of Fame, and it's full of imperfect people

SAY

"There's a chapter in the Bible that's like a Hall of Fame for faith. It's Hebrews 11. It starts like this:"

> [1] *Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, proof of things not seen.* [2] *For by this, the elders obtained approval.*
>
> HEBREWS 11:1–2 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Then it goes name by name. By faith Noah built a boat before there was any rain. By faith Abraham left home without a map. By faith Moses led people out of slavery. By faith Rahab hid two spies. Gideon, David, Samuel, and more. And here's the part I love: it says some of them 'from weakness were made strong.'"

"These were not perfect people. Abraham lied about his wife. Sarah laughed at God. Moses had a temper. Gideon was hiding when God found him. They're in the Hall of Fame not because they were amazing, but because they trusted God when it was hard."

2. Look up: the stands are full

SAY

"Right after that whole list, the writer turns to us. Listen to the first word: 'Therefore.' Because of all those people…"

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[1] *Therefore let's also, seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with perseverance the race that is set before us,* [2] *looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* [3] *For consider him who has endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, that you don't grow weary, fainting in your souls.*

HEBREWS 12:1–3 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

> "'A great cloud of witnesses.' Picture a stadium. You're on the track. And the stands are packed with every person who ever trusted God: Noah, Sarah, Moses, Rahab. Plus people from your own life who believed before you. A witness is someone whose life says, 'God was faithful to me. Keep going.' They're not there to judge your time. They're there because they've run it, and they know you can too."

LEADER NOTE *If you have a short, honest story about one person whose faith helped you keep going as a teenager (a coach, a teacher, a neighbor, a relative), tell it here. Thirty seconds is plenty. Keep it simple and true. Students trust leaders who go first.*

3. Drop what slows you down, and run your race

> **SAY**
>
> "Then it says, 'lay aside every weight.' Remember running in that giant coat and those boots?" (*If you played Game A.*) "You can't run like that. Some weights are sin, the stuff that trips us up. Some are just heavy: worry, pretending to be fine, trying to do it all alone. God says you can put those down."
>
> "And notice: 'the race that is set before *us*.' Not someone else's race. Yours. And it says 'with perseverance.' This isn't a sprint. It's a long race. Slow is fine. Walking sometimes is fine. Just keep going."

4. The crowd cheers, but you look at Jesus

> **SAY**
>
> "Here's the most important line. We run 'looking to Jesus.' The crowd is amazing, but you don't run looking at the stands. You'd crash. You look at the finish line, and Jesus is standing there. He's the 'author and perfecter of faith.' He started your faith and he'll finish it. He ran the hardest race ever, all the way to the cross, and he finished it."
>
> "And verse 3 says when you feel tired, 'consider him… that you don't grow weary.' When you feel like dropping out, look at Jesus. He didn't quit on you."
>
> "Some of you have a whole family of people who believe. Some of you are the first person in your family to come to church. Hear this: if that's you, the people in this room can be part of your cloud. And one day, you'll be in the stands for someone else. So here's the question again, and I want you to really think about it: **who showed me faith, and who will I show?**"

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E. Response Activity: Start Your Cloud

12 min

Purpose: Help students find a Bible hero whose faith they actually want, name one weight they'd like to put down, and pray for each other to keep running. Tonight they also start the **My Cloud of Witnesses** card: every week of the series, students add a new line. Week 1 is "A Bible hero whose faith I want." By Week 3, the card holds a whole cloud.

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Hold up a Cloud card. Explain: one new line each week. Keep it in a Bible, a wallet, or a phone case.
2. **Hall of Faith Lookup:** On student page 1, students look up 2–3 heroes in Hebrews 11 (alone or in pairs) and fill in what each one did by faith.
3. **Pick Your Hero:** Students choose one hero whose faith they want and write why in the "My Cloud · Week 1" box on page 2.
4. **My Weight:** Privately, students write one weight they'd like to lay aside this week. Nobody shares it.
5. **Keep Running Prayers:** In pairs, each partner shares their hero (only that). The other prays one sentence: "God, give ___ faith like ___." Then switch.
6. **My One Step:** Students copy Line 1 onto their Cloud card and fill in "My One Step This Week."

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY (CLOUD CARD)**
>
> "This is your My Cloud of Witnesses card. Every week we'll add one line. Tonight is Line 1: a Bible hero whose faith you want. By the end of the series, this little card is going to be your own cloud of people cheering you on."
>
> **SAY (LOOKUP + PICK YOUR HERO)**
>
> "On your first page, find the Hall of Faith Lookup. Grab a Bible or a partner and look up two or three of these. What did they do by faith? Then pick one person whose faith you'd love to have. Maybe it's Noah, who kept building when people thought he was weird. Maybe Rahab, who was brave when it was risky. Write why on page 2."
>
> **SAY (MY WEIGHT)**
>
> "Now, privately. What's one weight slowing you down right now? Worry, a habit, a grudge, trying to look perfect? Write it in the 'My Weight' box. This is just between you and God. Nobody is going to see it."
>
> **SAY (PRAYERS + ONE STEP)**
>
> "Find a partner. Tell them your hero, just the hero. Then pray one sentence for them: 'God, give Jordan faith like Gideon's.' It might feel awkward. Do it anyway. Then copy Line 1 onto your card, and write one small step on your page. Keep it tiny. Like: 'Every morning I'll read Hebrews 12:1 before I check my phone.'"

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Heroes to choose from (read aloud if stuck)

- Noah: kept going when it looked weird
- Abraham: went without a map
- Sarah: trusted after laughing
- Moses: led even when scared
- Rahab: brave and kind
- Gideon: strong from weakness
- Joseph: forgave his family
- David: faced a giant

"Keep running" step ideas

- Read Hebrews 12:1 every morning before my phone
- Read one hero's story from Hebrews 11 each day
- Pray one sentence when I feel like quitting
- Put down my "weight" by telling God about it at bedtime
- Thank one person who's been part of my cloud

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. Each person names their hero, and the person on their right prays one sentence for them, all the way around.
- **Low-pressure option:** Skip the pairs. Students write their hero on their card, and the leader prays one prayer over everyone: "God, give each of us the faith we just wrote down."
- **No cardstock yet?** Students fill in the card on their student page and cut it out at home. Bring cardstock copies next week.

LEADER NOTE *Never collect or look at student pages, and don't ask anyone to share their weight. Bring extra Cloud cards for students who show up later in the series; they can start with that week's line. If a student seems stuck on something heavy, check in quietly afterward (see the Care Note).*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "Look at that card. Right now it has one line, one hero. But you're not running alone. There's a whole cloud behind that name, and Jesus at the finish line. Over the next weeks, your cloud gets bigger. **Who showed me faith, and who will I show?** Tonight you started answering that."

Small Group Talk

8–10 min · Optional

Groups of 3–5, with one adult or student leader per group if possible. Pick 3–4 questions that fit your group.

WARM UP

1. What's the longest or hardest thing you've ever finished (a race, a game, a book, a project)?
   Follow-up: What kept you going?
2. Who is your favorite hero, from a movie, a book, sports, or real life?
   Keep it light. It's a warm-up.

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GO DEEPER

3. Why do you think God put so many imperfect people in the Hall of Faith?
   Does that make faith feel more possible for you, or less?
4. Hebrews 12:1 says we're surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses." What does it feel like to know people have run this race before you?
   Who's in your stands?
5. What are some "weights" that slow students your age down? (No names, just ideas.)
6. Why do you think the verse says to look at Jesus instead of the crowd?

TAKE IT HOME

7. Who is one person who showed you something about faith, even in a small way?
8. Who's someone younger who might be watching how you run?

LEADER NOTE *Silence is okay. Count to seven in your head before rephrasing. If no one answers, answer it yourself briefly and honestly, then ask again. If a student says no one in their life has faith, gently answer: "Then we get to be part of your cloud."*

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Joys & Concerns

10 min

Purpose: Students practice praying *for each other*, not just hearing about prayer. Tonight it fits the theme: when we pray for each other, we become part of each other's cloud of witnesses, cheering each other on.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Sit in a circle if you can. Explain the response: when someone shares, they end with **"I lift up ___ to God."** Everyone responds together: **"Lord, hear our prayer."**
2. Start with **joys** (things to thank God for), then move to **concerns** (things we're worried about or carrying).
3. The leader goes first to model it, with one joy and one concern.
4. Anyone can share, or pass. "Unspoken" requests are welcome, too.
5. Jot down what's shared (first names only) so you can pray for each one in the Pastoral Prayer.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Tonight we talked about a crowd of people cheering each other on in the race of faith. Right now, we get to be that crowd for each other. What's something good you're thankful for? Or something heavy you're carrying, for you, your family, or a friend? This time of year, a lot of us also remember people we've lost. You can lift them up too."
>
> "When you share, end with 'I lift up ___ to God.' And all of us will say together, 'Lord, hear our prayer.' Let's practice. I lift up this group to God…" (*All: "Lord, hear our prayer."*)
>
> "I'll go first. My joy is ___. I lift up ___ to God. My concern is ___. I lift up ___ to God."

Joy starters (if students are stuck)

- Someone who cheered me on this week
- A game, test, or performance that went well
- Fall break, a fun weekend, or a great costume
- Someone I love got good news

Concern starters

- Something that feels heavy right now
- A grandparent or relative who is sick, or someone I miss
- A friend who's going through something
- "I have an unspoken request."

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Go around the circle so everyone gets a turn, and everyone is allowed to pass.
- **Big group (12+):** "Popcorn" style: anyone shares when ready. Cap it at about 8 minutes.
- **Written version:** Students write joys and concerns on slips of paper. The leader reads them (no names) and the group responds.

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LEADER NOTE *Say once at the start: "What's shared here stays here, unless someone's safety is at risk." If a student shares grief or something serious, thank them, pray, and follow up privately afterward (see the Care Note).*

Pastoral Prayer

3–5 min

Pray this over the group. The **[bracketed]** lines are where you name the joys and concerns students just shared.

Faithful God,

Thank you for every person in this room, especially anyone who walked in for the very first time tonight. Thank you that none of us runs alone.

Thank you for the good things you've given us this week. *[Name the joys shared: "Thank you for Ava's great game, for Marcus's grandma feeling better..."]* Every good gift comes from you.

And we bring you the things we're carrying. *[Name the concerns: "Be with Ethan's family as they miss his grandpa. Give Lily strength for this hard week..."]* And for the things that stayed in our hearts tonight and weren't spoken out loud, you already know them. Hold them too.

Thank you for Noah and Abraham, Sarah and Moses, Rahab and Gideon, ordinary people who trusted you when it was hard. Thank you for the people in our lives who believed before we did, and for the ones we love who have already finished their race. Help us lay aside every weight that slows us down. When we get tired, help us look to Jesus, who started our faith and will finish it.

For anyone here who doesn't have a lot of faith at home, thank you for bringing them to us. Let this room be part of their cloud. And help each of us show someone else what faith looks like this week.

In Jesus' name, amen.

SEND-OFF

"Take your student pages home: a five-day devotional and a tracker for your one step. Keep your Cloud card somewhere you'll see it. Next week you'll add Line 2. Next time we're talking about '**Ordinary Saints**': the people who don't look like heroes at all, but quietly live their faith every day. Every week we'll keep asking: **who showed me faith, and who will I show?** See you then."

Next Week Follow-Up: Open Week 2 by saying, "If you were here last week, look at your One Step tracker. How many days did you keep running? What helped? What got in the way?" Celebrate any progress, even one day. Then: "Who still has their Cloud card? What hero did you pick?" Have extra Cloud cards ready so new students can start with Line 2.

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Care Note for Leaders

All Saints season brings up grief. A student may be missing a grandparent, a parent, a friend, or a pet, and an anniversary can hit hard without warning. Some students have no believing family and may feel left out when others talk about faith at home. Some find Halloween content genuinely frightening.

- **Stay calm and thank them** for telling you. Never pressure anyone to share; a quiet "I'm here" is enough.
- **Don't promise to keep secrets** if someone's safety is at risk.
- **Follow your church's safety policy** and tell your lead pastor the same day.
- **Connect them to trained help:** parents or guardians, a school counselor, or a licensed counselor. In the U.S., anyone can call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) any time.

You're not expected to be a counselor. Your job is to listen well, take it seriously, and make sure they're connected to the right people.

THE FULL SERIES

SAINTS & HEROES · 3 Weeks

Each week stands alone, so new students can jump in any week. Taught in order, the three weeks lead into All Saints' Day: the great cloud of faithful people in Scripture, ordinary saints who live faith in small ways, and the real people who passed faith to us. The question every week: *Who showed me faith, and who will I show?*

#	WEEK	TEXT
1	**A Great Cloud** The faithful who ran before us	Hebrews 12:1–3
2	**Ordinary Saints** Everyday faithfulness	Acts 9:36–42
3	**My Witnesses** The people who passed faith to me	Hebrews 13:7–8

Every week includes

- 45 / 60 / 75-minute schedules
- Activity Menu with 4+ game options
- Word-for-word leader scripts
- Scripture (World English Bible) and one big idea
- Response activity + "One Step" challenge
- A new line for My Cloud of Witnesses every week
- Tiered discussion questions
- Joys & Concerns prayer time
- Pastoral prayer with space for your group
- Student pages and 5-day devotional
- Next-week follow-up

Built for real youth groups

These weeks are written for a real Wednesday night group: 5 to 15 students, often with a new face or two, led by a pastor or volunteer with limited prep time. Games never single anyone out. Every activity has a small-group version. And every leader script can be read word for word when you're short on time.

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Purchasers may photocopy and share the student pages and leader guide for use within their own church or ministry.
Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (public domain).

Name: _____ Date: _____

TONIGHT'S BIG IDEA

I run my race surrounded by a great cloud of people who trusted God before me, and I keep my eyes on Jesus.

THE RACE · HEBREWS 12:1–2

"Seeing we are surrounded by so great a _____ of witnesses,
lay aside every _____ and the sin which so easily entangles us,
and let's run with _____ the race that is set before us,
looking to _____, the author and perfecter of faith."

HALL OF FAITH LOOKUP · HEBREWS 11

Look up two or three. What did they do "by faith"? Then check the last box: were they perfect? (Hint: nope.)

VERSE	HERO	BY FAITH, THEY…	PERFECT?
11:7	Noah		☐ yes ☐ no
11:8	Abraham		☐ yes ☐ no
11:11	Sarah		☐ yes ☐ no
11:24–25	Moses		☐ yes ☐ no
11:31	Rahab		☐ yes ☐ no
11:32–34	Gideon & others		☐ yes ☐ no

EYES ON JESUS · HEBREWS 12:3

"Consider him… that you don't grow _____."

When I feel like quitting, one thing I can remember about Jesus:

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MY ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Every _____ (morning / after school / before practice / bedtime)

I will keep running by _____

Example: "Every morning before I check my phone, I will read Hebrews 12:1 and pray one sentence."

My Cloud · Week 1

A Bible hero whose faith I want:

_____

because _____

Copy it onto your card below.

My Weight (only you see this)

One weight I want to lay aside:

_____

One way I'll look to Jesus instead:

_____

MY WEEK TRACKER

Check each day you did your step.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

MY PRAYER LIST

Write down the joys and concerns people shared tonight (first names only) and keep praying this week.

JOYS: THANK YOU, GOD, FOR…	CONCERNS: PLEASE BE WITH…

MY CLOUD OF WITNESSES CARD

✂ Cut out along the dashed line. Keep it in your Bible, wallet, or phone case. Add one line every week.

SAINTS & HEROES

My Cloud of Witnesses

"Seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

HEBREWS 12:1

1. A Bible hero whose faith I want: _____

2. An ordinary saint I know: _____

3. Someone who passed faith to me: _____

4. Someone I could pass it on to: _____

Signed: _____

MY CLOUD

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5 Days With the Great Cloud

TAKE-HOME DEVOTIONAL · 5 MINUTES A DAY

Each day: read the verse, think about the question, write one honest sentence. That's it.

DAY 1 Hebrews 11:1 · Not seen yet

Faith is being sure of things you can't see yet. What's one thing you're hoping God will do? Tell him about it.

DAY 2 Hebrews 11:7 · Noah keeps building

Noah built a boat before there was any rain. What's one right thing you keep doing even when it looks weird to others?

DAY 3 Hebrews 11:31 · Rahab's brave yes

Rahab had a messy past, and God still put her in the Hall of Faith. What does that tell you about how God sees you?

DAY 4 Hebrews 12:1 · Lay it aside

What's one weight that slowed you down this week? Tell God about it and ask him to help you put it down.

DAY 5 Hebrews 12:2–3 · Eyes on Jesus

Jesus started your faith and he'll finish it. Where do you need to "look to Jesus" instead of quitting this week?

A prayer you can pray this week

God, thank you for the people who trusted you before me, in the Bible and in my own life. Help me put down what's slowing me down. When I'm tired, help me look at Jesus and keep running. And help me show someone else what faith looks like. Amen.

Next week · Week 2: **Ordinary Saints**

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