

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: God helps when things are not easy.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles	SPARK RESOURCES: None
SAND POINT GAME: Kids play a hard game and discuss hard times.	SUPPLIES: River rocks	SUPPLIES: Sand Point Game (page 43), aquarium gravel in a variety of colors, pencils, cube-shaped boxes, wrapping paper, clear tape, Hard Times Rock and Roll action cards (page 45), glue stick, scissors
HARD TIMES ROCK AND ROLL: Teams must complete hard actions to reach their goal.		
Upper Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: We can act on God's Word every day.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles
DOUBLE ACTION PUZZLE: Kids decipher a puzzle of a verse from the story.	SUPPLIES: Gel pens	SUPPLIES: Pencils, Double Action Puzzle (page 47), So-Do-It action cards (page 49), chairs, wooden blocks, a playground ball, hula hoop, empty aluminum beverage cans, single jump rope
SO-DO-IT: Kids perform challenging physical actions and skills.		
All Kids		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: We can hear God's Word in many ways.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Spark Song CD	SPARK RESOURCES: None
ROCK, STORM, SAND: Kids play a new version of Rock, Paper, Scissors.	SUPPLIES: CD player	SUPPLIES: None
LISTEN FOR THE WORD: Kids play a game in which they need to listen for "the Word" above distractions.		



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation's story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.

Workshop Focus: God helps when things are not easy.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids, it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksondayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

House on the Rock Storytelling

As kids arrive, greet them with a “hard” action such as shaking hands with your left hand while tapping your head with your right hand. Encourage kids to greet each other with a similar action. **Hello, everyone. Welcome to Bible Skills and Games! Wow, that was really hard greeting you with a backward handshake and a head tap. It would be a lot easier to do things the way we always do them. Today, we will work on our Bible skills and learn about some things that are not easy—but hard—in the story called House on the Rock.**

Invite kids to sit on the floor in a circle or at tables and then open their Spark Story Bibles to page 282. Give five river rocks to each kid. **Let’s see what things are hard in this story.** Read the story, one paragraph at a time, and talk about the hard things that happen in each paragraph. **In this story, or parable, that Jesus told, some hard things happened. Let’s see if we can name the hard things in each paragraph. Each time we decide on a hard thing, put one of your rocks in a pile on the table** (or on the floor). End each paragraph with the words: **I wonder what was really hard in this paragraph.** Emphasize these hard things in each paragraph:

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

River rocks, 5 per kid

Paragraph #1: It was hard to sit on a rocky mountain and listen to Jesus.

Paragraph #2: Building a house is hard work. Listening to a scary storm outside is hard.

Paragraph #3: It's really hard when your house falls down.

Paragraph #4: Building a life for God is hard work.

Paragraph #5: It is hard to learn new ideas.

Wow! That was a lot of hard stuff in one story. Look at our pile of rocks. Ask kids to remember a time when something hard happened in their lives. Kids don't have to share if they aren't comfortable. **Jesus was a wonderful storyteller who helped listeners know how to trust God in hard times.**

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Sand Point Game

Allow kids to choose a partner. Distribute one copy of the Sand Point Game to each pair of kids. Each kid needs a pencil and a small pile of aquarium gravel (partners need different colors).

With a partner, we will play a game called Sand Point. This is a hard game to play, so pay attention. Partners play on the same playing page. They take turns connecting two sand points with a pencil line. When you complete a square by drawing the last line of the square, put your color of pebble in the square.

Assist kids in playing as needed. When pairs finish the game or when game time is up, kids count the colored pebbles on the game page to see which partner completed the most squares.

When the game is complete, discuss the following questions: **Was this a hard game or an easy game? Have you ever played a really hard game or tried something else that was hard? Why was it hard? What else in our lives can be described as "hard"?** (*moving to a new home, pet dying, first day of school*) **All of us have hard times in our lives, but God is with us.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Sand Point Game (page 43), 1 page per pair of kids

Small pile of aquarium gravel (a different color per partner)

Pencil

Hard Times Rock and Roll

Set Up: Make two giant dice: Purchase or find two identical square boxes no more than 24 inches (60 cm) on the sides. Cover each box in a different kind of wrapping paper. Cut apart the Hard Times Rock and Roll action cards. Glue one set to each giant die, one card per side. The dice will be identical except for the color of wrapping paper.

Activity Instructions

Form two teams. Line up both teams in one long line across the middle of the room. Have the members of one team face one wall and the members of the other team face the opposite wall (see diagram, page 34). Team members should be standing together and not intermingled with the other team. The goal is to get the entire team to the wall they are facing by rolling a die and completing the actions.

This game has lots of hard actions. We will get better at doing them as the game goes along. The goal for team 1 is for everyone on the team to get to that wall (point to the wall they are facing). **Team 2 is trying to get to the other wall** (point to the opposite wall). **The inside two people begin the game.** Hand those kids one die each.

1. The inside kid from each team (the kid nearest the middle of the long line) rolls one die and follows the instruction on the side that is displayed on top. Help kids decipher the hard action the first time through. **Okay, now do your hard action.** Kids from each team on this round do their actions simultaneously. Congratulate each person as he or she completes an action.
2. Hand a die to the next kid from each team and have them do the same. Continue down the line. If “doubles” are rolled in any round (that is, the rollers from each team roll the same action in the same round), the two rollers move back to the starting line.
3. Help kids get in a rhythm of rolling, reading, and following the directions. Encourage team cheers for each team member’s accomplishments. As kids are more comfortable with the difficult tasks, they will make more progress forward.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Boxes in the shape of a cube,
2
Wrapping paper, 2 kinds
Clear tape
Hard Times Rock and Roll
action cards (page 45), 2
copies
Glue stick
Scissors

Great job, everyone! Some of those actions were hard at first. Did they get easier? Remember, God helps us with the hard things we need to do in life, and God helps us when hard things happen to us. One way God helps is by sending others to support us. Did you feel supported by your teammates?



Going this way



Roll dice



Going this way



Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

All of us have hard things happen in our lives. It's hard to build something and have it ruined by weather. It's hard to sit still and listen to a stranger. It's hard to walk backward or do a crab walk. Recall some of the things kids named as hard things in their lives. **We need to remember that God helps us in many ways when things are not easy. We can ask God for help.**

Give five river rocks to each kid. **In the time of Jesus, people would repeat prayers and chants, counting with rocks and pebbles each time they repeated the prayer. Today, we will pray individually about a hard thing or a hard time in our lives. You can thank God for helping you.**

Prayer Time

Hold your rocks in your hand. Use the rocks to repeat your prayer silently, one time for each rock. Put the rocks in a pile as you pray. When you are finished, stand up.

When all are standing, say, "Amen" together. **Amen.**

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
River rocks from Open the Bible

Workshop Focus: We can act on God's Word every day.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
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Open the Bible

House on the Rock Storytelling

As kids arrive at the workshop, greet them using a funny action. Examples would be hip bumps, high fives, or elbow taps. **Welcome to Bible Skills and Games! Let's talk about some action. Who can give me examples of action from movies, sports, or games?** (*action heroes, race car driving, karate skills, or others*)

Today's story, House on the Rock, has lots of action words. Action words are also called verbs. We will read aloud and use our gel pens to circle action words. When we are finished, let's see how many action words you have found. Let's turn to Matthew 7:24-28 in the Spark Bible (page 1066). This is a time for an adult to read as kids circle words. Read with lots of energy and enthusiasm.

Who would like to share the action words they found? (*hears, acts, built, fell, came, blew, beat, founded, saying, taught*) **When we hear God's Word, we want to act. We are called to action by listening to the words in the Bible.**

Invite kids to choose a Spark Bible Sticker to place near this story.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Gel pens

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Double Action Puzzle

Set Up: Duplicate the Double Action Puzzle to provide enough copies for single or partner work. Be sure pencils are sharpened. Do the puzzle so you know the answers and the techniques.

Activity Instructions

Now that we know that God’s Word calls us to action, let’s try a Double Action Puzzle. Pass out the puzzles and pencils—kids may do this alone or with a partner. **In this puzzle, you will have two different tasks, or actions, to complete. First, you will unscramble all the words at the top. Then you will put the words into the blanks so that they tell some action God wants us to do. Check your answers by opening the Spark Bible to page 1066 and rereading Matthew 7:24. You may work alone or with a partner.**

As kids finish, help them form two teams for the next large group game, So-Do-It. Assign kids to two areas of the room to wait until all are finished with the puzzle. Aid those who are having a tough time with the Double Action Puzzle or suggest they take it home to finish.

You did a great job with both actions on the page. Congratulations!

So-Do-It

Set Up: Make three copies of the So-Do-It action cards. Cut apart the cards and shuffle them. Read through the cards so you know what players will be asked to do. Line up chairs facing the same direction.

Activity Instructions

This game is like a personal obstacle course of activities. Kids choose cards and say how many times they can perform the skill on the card without knowing what’s on the card. Some of the activities are body actions and some are skills.

Now that you did some action on paper, let’s play a game that requires action with your bodies. The story today said that “Jesus taught them as one having authority.” That means that when Jesus spoke and others listened, the listeners needed to do as Jesus said. Jesus could have ended his teaching by saying, “So, do it!”

In our game, group 1 sits in the chairs holding So-Do-It action cards. Distribute cards to group 1 members and tell them not to look at the cards. **Group 2 will line up facing group 1. The first player in group 2 chooses a player in group 1 to select one of the cards he or she is holding without reading it. The player in group 2 also predicts the number of times he or she can perform the action on the selected card. The player might say, “I can perform the action two times,” but he**

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Supplies

Pencils

Double Action Puzzle (page 47), 1 per kid or pair of kids

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

So-Do-It action cards (page 49), 3 copies

Chairs, enough for half of the group

Wooden blocks, 12

Playground ball

Hula hoop

Empty aluminum beverage cans, 10

Single jump rope

or she doesn't know what the action on the card is! After the player from group 2 makes his or her prediction, the person from group 1 holding the card reads it aloud, and the whole group yells, "So, do it!" If the player completes the action, he or she switches places with the cardholder. If the player doesn't complete the action, he or she goes to the end of the line and tries again on his or her next turn. Let's do it!

You will notice that some kids have trouble with physical actions. Be grace-filled and be sure all the other kids are kind as well. Although the actions might turn out funny, if there are unkind words, suggest that the kids be cheerleaders, not judges—we are a part of God's strong foundation when we support each other. Remind kids that this is an individual accomplishment and there are no winning teams.

Play until everyone has had the chance to do an action. Great job, everyone! I saw some fantastic actions going on. We heard in today's story that Jesus wants us to act on God's Word. Now we know that we can all accomplish some hard actions!

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

We've had a great time hearing God's Word and doing some actions with our minds and our bodies. Now let's try to do a word-and-action prayer. I will say the words and pause so that your bodies can illustrate the words. Remember that our actions do not need to be the same. Our prayer time is holy time in conversation with God. Let us pray.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

**God,
Help us hear your words (pause).
Help us to be wise (pause) in all our actions (pause).
Show us how to care for others (pause) and keep us safe (pause).
Amen.**

Workshop Focus: We can hear God's Word in many ways.

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

House on the Rock Storytelling

Set Up: Cue the CD in the CD player. Arrange the gathering area so that the group reading from the Spark Story Bible can face the group reading from the Spark Bible.

Activity Instructions

As kids enter the room, play track 5 on the Spark Song CD. Greet each kid using his or her name and a statement. **Welcome, [name]. God's Word rocks and we're going to hear lots about it today.** As the kids gather, form two groups. Younger kids will need a Spark Story Bible and older kids, a Spark Bible. **Today, we're going to hear God's Word in several different ways. When stories are told, different versions of the same story often develop. The Spark Story Bible and the Spark Bible tell different versions of the same stories. We are going to read House on the Rock from both versions. We will need several readers from each group. Who would like to read from the Spark Story Bible first?** If you don't have strong readers among your Spark Story Bible kids, ask a few older kids to help the younger kids.

Read back and forth between the two groups and the two Bibles in this order:

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers
Spark Song CD

Supplies

CD player

Spark Story Bible, page 282
Spark Bible, Matthew 7:24-25
Spark Story Bible, pages 283-284
Spark Bible, Matthew 7:26-27
Spark Story Bible, page 285, first paragraph
Spark Bible, Matthew 7:28
Spark Story Bible, page 285, second paragraph
Spark Bible Matthew 7:29

Who can tell me something that is the same about the two versions of the story?

(house on rock, house on sand, storm came, house on sand crashed, house on rock stood)

Who can tell me something that is different about the two versions? *(The Spark*

Story Bible tells more about the storm sounds; the Spark Bible tells more about hearing

God's Word than building houses.) **We can hear God's Word in many ways.** Invite

Spark Bible readers to add a sticker near the text.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Rock, Storm, Sand

Hey, have you ever played the game Rock, Paper, Scissors? Let's try it once with partners and be sure everyone knows how to play. Form pairs; it will help if at least one kid in every pair already knows how to play. **We will count 1-2-3 together with our palms and our fists. After the count of three, each person puts out a rock (your fist), paper (a flat hand), or scissors (pointer and middle fingers cutting). Rock crushes scissors, scissors cuts paper, and paper covers rock. Let's try it and see who wins.** Play a few rounds of this version until everyone gets the idea. Groups will have different ability levels.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Great job! Now, just like we had different versions of the Bible story, there are different versions of games. We're going to play Rock, Storm, Sand. Same rules as Rock, Paper, Scissors, but different symbols and winners. Rock is a fist. Storm is wiggling fingers. Sand is rubbing two hands together like sandpaper. Let's try those. Be sure everyone knows the new symbols. **We'll play with these rules: Rock wins over storm, because the house on rock withstands the storm. Storm wins over sand because the storm blows down the house built on sand. And for the purposes of the game, sand will win over rock. (But we know that's not right, because we listened to Jesus' story!) Show your symbol after the count of three: 1-2-3. Who wins?** Play the new version of the game and finish up while kids are still enjoying it.

When the game is over, discuss the following: **Was it hard or easy to learn a new version of the game?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Was it hard or easy to hear different versions of the same story? Did you learn the same things from each version of the story or different things? Does God talk to us the same way all the time?** Affirm all answers.

Listen for the Word

Set Up: You will need a large, open space for this game.

Activity Instructions

As you are giving these directions, move among the kids and touch one on the shoulder. **This is a running game. We need one person in the middle, and everyone else will spread out. The person in the middle is "It." The rest of you will move around, chanting, "Wind, rain, flood, storms." The chants will start quietly and then get louder and louder, just like a storm gets louder. In the storm, we have the Word of God. In this game, we have a "Word Person." The identity of the "Word Person" is secret. He or she is the one I touched on the shoulder a few moments ago. You know who you are. The "Word Person" keeps whispering, "The Word" as he or she moves about. "It" must listen for the "Word Person" as everyone is moving around and the chanting is getting louder and louder. When "It" figures out who the "Word Person" is, "It" can run and catch that person. The "Word Person" will become "It," and we'll play again.**

For subsequent games, bring the chanters (without "It") together in a huddle. Touch one on the shoulder, then continue with a new game.

When kids tire or time is up, bring them together and sit down for a breather.

Fantastic job! Was it easy or hard to figure out who the "Word Person" was with all of the interference from the chanters? Allow time for discussion. **Sometimes, when we listen for God's Word, there is a lot of interference that tries to get our attention. What are some of the things that compete for God's attention?** (*TV, video games, friends who want to take us down other paths*) Accept all answers. **But God's Word is always there, and we can find it in many ways and in many places. What are some ways we can always find it?** (*the Bible, church and Sunday school attendance, prayer, friends who support us*) Affirm all answers.

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

In our stormy lives filled with busy activity, it is often hard to hear the Word of God. Remember that God's Word is always around us, in different ways and many places. We just need to listen carefully.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Let's do an echo prayer. I will say a line and you will be the echo.

God of storms . . . (echo)

God of rocks and sand . . . (echo)

Help us listen to your Word . . . (echo)

And find you in many ways and many places . . . (echo)

Amen . . . (echo)

Sand Point Game



Hard Times Rock and Roll

Take 2 giant steps toward your goal.	Hop on one foot 6 times toward your goal.	Bend over, hold your feet, and take 4 steps forward toward your goal.
Jump backward 5 times away from your goal.	Do 6 crab walks forward toward your goal.	Put your nose on your knees and take 3 steps forward toward your goal.
Take 20 baby steps away from your goal.	Put your pinky fingers on your pinky toes and take 4 steps away from your goal.	Take 1 giant step away from your goal.
Jump forward 4 times toward your goal.	Skip 2 steps away from your goal.	Twirl around 4 times toward your goal.

Double Action Puzzle

1. Unscramble each of the clue words.
2. Copy the words into the blanks.
3. Correct your answers using your Bibles and Matthew 7:24.

how dorsw fo veeyoner hersa einm tacs

iwll tsehe temh sheou how luitb a

swei eb kile nam crko shi no

no hent dan

“ _____

_____”

So-Do-It

<p>Grasp your knees with your hands. Spin around 3 times.</p>	<p>Do 35 jumping jacks.</p>	<p>March around the room 3 times with knees all the way up.</p>
<p>Stand on one foot. Hold the ankle of the foot you are holding up. Hop 10 times.</p>	<p>Build a tower of 12 blocks that doesn't fall down.</p>	<p>Pretend you are swimming around the room twice. You may do the backstroke or the breaststroke.</p>
<p>Throw the ball to everyone in the room once and catch it each time it comes back to you.</p>	<p>Spin the hula hoop around your waist 5 times.</p>	<p>Stack the 10 aluminum cans on top of each other so they do not fall over.</p>
<p>Jump rope 30 times.</p>	<p>Sit on the floor and spin around 22 times.</p>	<p>Skip backward around the room 2 times.</p>

