


HILLSIDE STUDENTS


Trials & Trust


CONNECT

 Set out snacks! Add new students to the groups app! Take Attendance!

 Play **SPUD!** This is a fun game to help students learn each other's names while playing. You'll need a large ball and open space. Players form a circle, and one player is "It." "It" throws the ball in the air and calls someone's name while everyone runs away. The named person becomes "New It," grabs the ball, and shouts "STOP." They pick a "Target" and take four steps (S-P-U-D) toward them, then try to hit the "Target" with the ball (no headshots!). The "Target" can dodge with their feet planted or catch the ball. If hit, the "Target" becomes "It"; if they dodge or catch it, they are safe. Play continues until the last two players compete in a final showdown.

WATCH

 **Set up Discussion:** In life, it isn't "if" you will face trials or hardships, but "when" you will. Whether it's a frustrating moment like failing a quiz or embarrassing yourself or a huge life change like an injury or broken relationship - we all go through difficult things. When trials come, how should we respond?

-  Pre-Video Question: Have your group answer one or both questions below!
- Would you rather only be able to listen to one song for the rest of your life, or only be able to hear each song once and never again?
 - If you were a kitchen utensil, which one would you be and why? (ex: toaster, whisk, Tupperware, etc)

Split up into smaller groups and navigate the discussion below:

- What stood out to you from the video?
- **Read James 1:2-4.** What do you find challenging about this passage?
- As a Christ follower, why do we need to develop perseverance? (Take time to help your group define perseverance!)
- How have you seen trials produce perseverance and mature faith in your life or someone else's life?
- **Read James 1:12-13.** If God doesn't tempt us, what are some ways that we end up in trials? (broken world, personal sin, sin of others, etc)
- **Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.** Whenever we bring trials upon ourselves, how should we respond to God? Then, how should we fix things with others?
- How do habits of gratitude, prayer, and scripture reading help you prepare for a trial? How do those habits help you during a trial?
- **Challenge:** Encourage your students to focus on one of those habits this week! (The following scriptures can be an encouragement to stick to that rhythm. 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 - Gratitude / James 5:13 - Prayer / Hebrews 12:1-3 - Scripture)

READ + DISCUSS

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Jesus tells us this in John 16:33, *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* This verse guarantees that we will face hard things – but it also guarantees us hope in Jesus!

Learning how to endure trials by trusting God is a huge part of spiritual formation. Scripture makes it clear that trials can produce good fruit in our hearts, minds, and souls. Personal experience also makes it clear that trials can cause us to doubt God, spiral into sin, and drift away from the Truth. Here's something great: we get to choose how we respond to difficult seasons!

When we help students think about trials with a new perspective, we point them in the direction of hope and joy in Jesus! This week, be honest with your students about how trials have shaped you. It does not benefit your group to think you have it all together because you are a spiritual leader in their life. Rather, as a spiritual leader, show them where you fall short or where life feels hard, and explain how Jesus helps you consider it pure joy!

Read James 1:2-4 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

Read James 1:12-13 *Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. ¹³When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.*

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 *pray continually, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Read James 5:13 *Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.*

Read Hebrews 12:1-3 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*