



*Jesus*

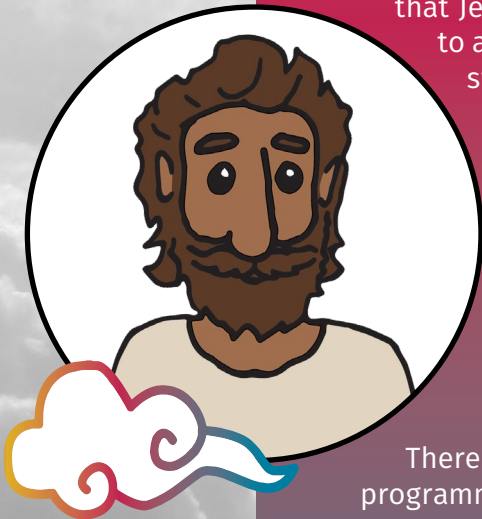
THE PERFECT WITNESS



## PERFECTION DEFINED

What each member of the Cloud of Witnesses was in part, Jesus is in full!

Faith + Zeal + Humility +  
Tenacity + Perseverance  
+ Love + Devotion +  
Loyalty + Dependence  
+ Obedience + So much  
more = Jesus



## KEY VERSE

Let us run with endurance the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

Hebrews 12:2

# Jesus

## The Perfect Witness



## INTRODUCTION

The text of Hebrews 11 and 12 has inspired us to dig deeper into the lives of many faithful men and women of God who have gone before us. Hebrews 11:4, speaking of Abel, says that “through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.” This has motivated us to look at the lives of each of the witnesses we’re going to study over the next year and ask the question: What is it about their life that still speaks to us today? We’ve designed the visuals for this unit to help the kids see that Jesus is the perfect example of each character quality. We want them to associate the color for each unit with the character quality that we are studying. We will wrap up the Cloud of Witnesses at the end of the year by pulling all of the colors together to make a multi-colored cloud that represents the perfection of Christ and his example. What each member of the Cloud of Witnesses was in part, Jesus is in full!



## OVERVIEW

There are three reasons that we’ve decided to start and finish this year’s programming in this way:

- 1. The Focus on Jesus ::** We have made an effort to connect every unit back to Jesus in a very intentional way. The beauty of the Cloud of Witnesses imagery is that it helps us see what makes Jesus so amazing. We see qualities like perseverance, tenacity, loyalty, and humility at work in the lives of specific people, but in Jesus’ life we see ALL of these character qualities (and more!) demonstrated in a holistic and beautiful way. He alone is worthy to be praised!
- 2. The Chance to Be a Part of The Cloud of Witnesses ::** We love the imagery of being “surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1). We don’t want to miss the chance, to point to all of these people and say to the kids: “YOU can be one of those people! YOU can live a life of loyalty. YOU can be man or woman of humility. YOU can live a life of devotion to God.” Scripture invites us to JOIN these people in living a life that counts.
- 3. The Call to Run the Race Set Before Us ::** Although we want our eyes fixed on Jesus throughout this year, Hebrews 12 also challenges each of us to “run the race...that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). We’ll spend the year looking at the “races” of others that went before us (Hebrews 11), but there is also a real sense in which the writer of Hebrews hands us the baton and says: “Your turn; now run!”

# Church Age Witnesses



## LIFE SUMMARY

This year of programming is about men and women from the Old and New Testament and the Church Age who have glorified God with their lives. We will begin by looking at all of the witnesses together to give our kids a sense of just how GREAT this Cloud of Witnesses really is. The imagery of Hebrews 11 and 12 encourages us to feel the collective magnitude of so many powerful legacies of faith. Together, these legacies ultimately magnify the name of Jesus. He is the one who gives us the strength and the endurance that we need to start and finish the race set before us. All along the way, the lives of the biblical witnesses, the lives of believers throughout the centuries, and men and women of God who are alive today encourage us to



## THE CHURCH AGE WITNESSES

This first week of the curriculum lays out the big picture for this year of programming. Hebrews 12:1-2 reminds us how important it is, for the life and vitality of our Christian walk, to study the lives of the men and women of God who have gone before us. In this year's curriculum, we felt it was important not only to study the biblical examples of the men and women outlined in Hebrews 11, but we also wanted to incorporate the lives of people throughout the ages who have endured persecution, setback, and discouragement to advance the kingdom of God throughout the world. Let's really help the kids this week to appreciate the heart of Hebrews 12:1-2 and give them a sense of the magnitude and legacy of the countless men and women of faith who have gone before us as we consider "so great a cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1).



## UNIT OVERVIEW

Week 1

Kick-off!



## NOTABLE QUOTE

"Stories of grace and truth are meant to be remembered for the refinement of faith and the sustaining of hope and the guidance of love."

John Piper



## SERVED IN

The World  
For Eternity





# Jesus

## The Perfect Witness



### KEY CONCEPT

Jesus is THE faithful witness. His example exceeds all of the people we will learn about this year.



### SCRIPTURE

- » **Hebrews 12:1-2** – We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. . .
- » **Revelation 1:5-8** – Jesus is the faithful witness
- » **Hebrews 11** – The Cloud of Witnesses
- » **Hebrews 1:3** – Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory
- » **John 14:9** – He who has seen me has seen God



### Background to Today's Lesson

This week we will begin building the Cloud of Witnesses one person at a time. Each unit has been designed to focus on the lives of one biblical witness and one Church Age witness. In each unit, we will focus on a character quality in their lives that we can pursue in our own walk with God. In this first week, we’re going to look at how each biblical and Church Age witness fits into the wide and varied legacy of faith that we’re a part of when we follow Jesus.



### Today's Lesson

This lesson serves a dual purpose. On one hand, we want to introduce the theme of the new curriculum and help the kids appreciate the vast number of faithful men and women of God that have gone before us. On the other hand, today’s lesson is designed to focus specifically on the life of Jesus as “THE faithful witness” (Revelation 1:5). As great as it will be to study the lives of about twenty men and women of God over the next year, their legacies pale in comparison to Jesus. He is the ultimate example of all of these character qualities! During the coming year we will add many different colors to the Cloud of Witnesses. This lesson is an opportunity to put all of these colors together, point to the beautiful cloud, and say: “That’s Jesus!”



### Programming Notes

The teaching this week is focused on Hebrews 11 and Revelation 1:5-8. Start by talking about being surrounded by “so great a Cloud of Witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1a). The text of Hebrews 11, especially Hebrews 11:32-40, gives us a sense of just how many faithful men and women of God have gone before us. From there, turn to Revelation 1:5a and talk about Jesus as THE faithful witness. Make sure to take some time this week to make the connection clear between the design of the curriculum (character qualities, biblical witnesses, and Church Age witnesses) and the visuals (colors and clouds).

For the younger kids, take some time to look at ALL of the pictures of the people we will be learning about over the next year and talk about how Jesus is the best. He is the perfect example of all of the character qualities that we will study over the next year.



## The Church Age Witnesses

There have been countless witnesses throughout history whose lives have testified to the glory and goodness of God. This year we will be pairing biblical witnesses with Church Age witnesses to see how they demonstrate character qualities like tenacity, perseverance, and love. We want the kids to get a personal look at the Cloud of Witnesses by studying the lives of people like Hudson Taylor, William Tyndale, and Amy Carmichael. These lives are powerful examples for us to follow. We also want the kids to see how the truths of the Bible have been exemplified in the lives of so many men and women of God throughout the ages. Ultimately we want them to see that they, too, can join the Cloud of Witnesses by living lives that honor God and growing in each of these qualities as they become more and more like Jesus.



## For the Workers

Piper's article, "Read Christian Biography," exhorts us to study the lives of Christians throughout history who have run their race well. Their testimony can strengthen our resolve as we run our own races. Consider new ways that God is asking you to learn from these witnesses and follow their example.



## Resources in Action

Before we dive into the study of specific people, we want to give the kids a sense of what this new year of programming is all about. Use the resources this week to help the kids see that it's not just a "good idea" to study the lives of the men and women who have gone before us, but it is essential for our own walk with God. Introduce the kids to the plan to study biblical and church age witnesses and character qualities, and print out pictures of each of the witnesses, their names, and the colored clouds. Give the kids a chance to see how many they can match correctly. This is the kick-off week, so we really want to capture the power of the visual components of the colors and clouds that tie everything together.



# Church Age Witnesses



## KEY CONNECTION

The cloud of witnesses is a beautiful picture of Jesus, the perfect example of all of the character qualities of the witnesses.



## RESOURCES

[Read Christian Biography](#)

[Biblical Witness Picture](#)

[Church Age Witness Summaries](#)