

IDOP 2024

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR
THE PERSECUTED CHURCH**



COURAGEOUS FAITH

3RD AND 10TH NOVEMBER 2024

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESOURCE

IDOP 2024

Sunday School Resource

Introduction:

This special Sunday School session focuses on building awareness among children about Christian persecution around the world. The resource particularly aims to educate and engage children about the challenges faced by persecuted Christians. Through fun and interactive activities, the sessions will seek to encourage empathy, prayer, and a sense of unity among children.

Teachers are encouraged to go through the material and prepare for its delivery beforehand, taking into consideration any time limitation and age groups of the children.

Theme: Understanding and Praying for Persecuted Christians

Objective:

To help children understand the challenges faced by persecuted Christians around the world and encourage them to pray for and support their brothers and sisters in Christ.

SESSION ONE

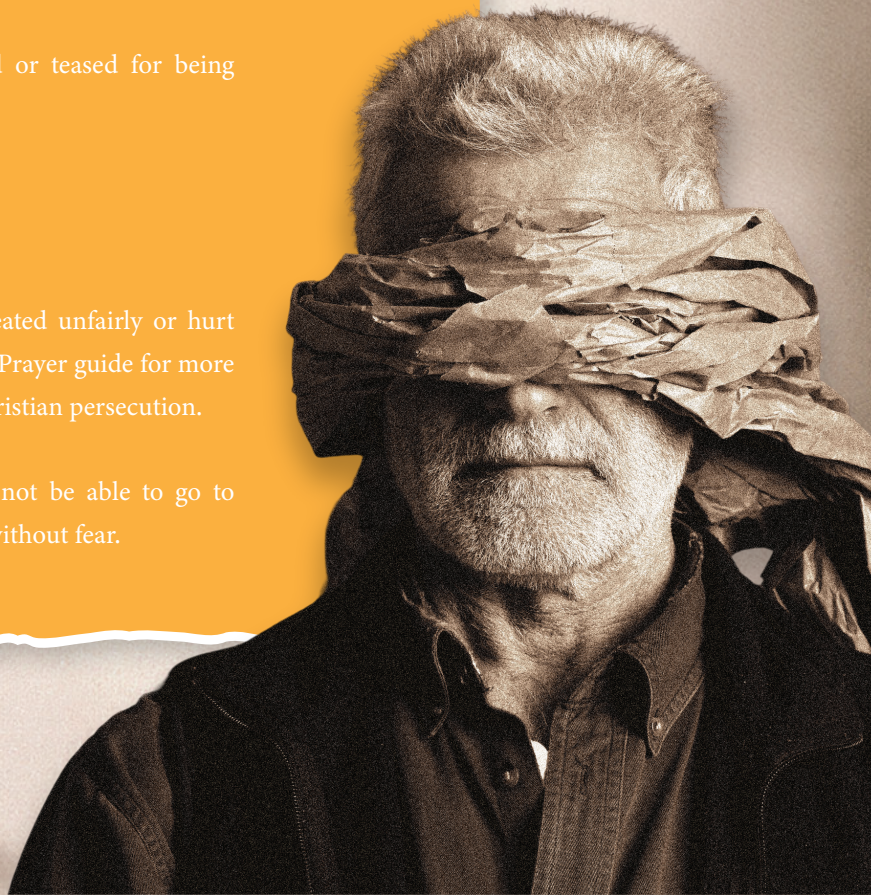
INTRODUCTION TO PERSECUTION (10 MINUTES)

Activity: “What is Persecution?”

- ★ Begin by explaining what persecution means in a child-friendly way.
- ★ Use simple examples, such as being excluded or teased for being different, to help children relate.

Discussion:

- ★ Explain that in some countries, people are treated unfairly or hurt because they believe in Jesus. Refer IDOP 2024 Prayer guide for more information on countries with high levels of Christian persecution.
- ★ Share that Christians in these countries may not be able to go to church freely, pray openly, or read their Bibles without fear.





STORY TIME (15 MINUTES)

Story: “Standing Strong for Jesus”

Miriam's Unshakable Trust in God

In Pakistan, there lived a brave woman named Miriam. She was a Christian, and she loved her son, Joseph, very much. They lived in a close-knit community where everyone knew each other.

One day, Joseph was talking and laughing with his cousin, Adiv, about who would win in a pretend fight. They mentioned the name of a famous boxer, Muhammad Ali, while joking around. But unfortunately, a police officer nearby misunderstood their words and thought they were disrespecting a very important person (Prophet Muhammad).

The police officer got very angry and punished Joseph and Adiv, even though they didn't mean any harm. When Miriam heard what happened, she decided to talk to the police officer to explain the misunderstanding. But as she was on her way, she saw police cars heading towards her house.

Miriam rushed back home, worried for Joseph's safety. She quickly hid her son, hoping to keep him safe from whatever was happening outside. But things took a turn for the worse when a group of people gathered in front of her house, demanding that she give them Joseph to be punished even more severely.

"I begged the police officer and the crowd for hours to spare my little boy, but they wouldn't listen," said Miriam, tears streaming down her face.

Finally, the police arrested Joseph and Adiv, and they were taken away from their homes. The case against them was about breaking a law called blasphemy, which means showing disrespect to something considered sacred by some people.

Miriam was heartbroken, but she didn't lose hope. She believed in the power of God, and she trusted that God would bring justice to their situation.

"I have put my hope and trust in the Lord," she said, remembering a special verse from the Bible that gave her strength. "The Bible says, 'But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him.'"



Learning:

Despite the difficult times and the uncertainty, Miriam held on to her unshakable trust in God. She knew that God was always with them, protecting and guiding them through the darkest moments. Let's remember Miriam, Joseph, and Adiv in our prayers. May we stand with them and all persecuted Christians around the world, asking God to give them strength, comfort, and justice. And just like Miriam, let's trust in God's love and goodness, knowing that He is always by our side, no matter what challenges we face.

Discussion:

- ★ Ask the children how they would feel if they were in the same situation.
- ★ Discuss how we can respond to any unjust treatment because of our faith in Jesus.

CRAFT ACTIVITY: "PRAYER CHAIN" (20 MINUTES)

Materials Needed:

- ★ Construction paper (various colors)
- ★ Scissors
- ★ Markers/crayons
- ★ Tape or glue



Instructions:

- ★ Have each child cut strips of paper and write or draw a prayer point for persecuted Christians on each strip (see prayer points below).
- ★ Connect the strips to form a chain, symbolizing how prayer connects us with our brothers and sisters around the world.
- ★ Hang the prayer chain in the classroom as a reminder to pray for persecuted Christians.



Prayer Points:

- ★ Pray for the safety and protection of Christians facing persecution.
- ★ Pray for strength and courage for those who are suffering.
- ★ Pray for governments and leaders to protect religious freedom.
- ★ Pray for children around the world to know Jesus' love and care.
- ★ Pray for those who hurt Christians to have a change of heart and find Jesus.





BIBLE VERSE & MEMORY TIME (10 MINUTES)

Verse:

“Remember those in prison as if you were together with them, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” — Hebrews 13:3 (NIV)

Activity:

- ★ Practice saying the verse together.
- ★ Discuss what this verse means and how we can apply it by praying for those who are persecuted.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Group Prayer:

- ★ Gather the children and pray together using the prayer points from the craft activity.
- ★ Encourage each child to lead a short prayer for one of the points.

SESSION TWO

OBJECTIVE:

To help children understand the importance of standing up for their faith in Jesus, even when it's difficult, and to encourage them to support persecuted Christians through prayer and awareness.

OPENING ACTIVITY: "STAND STRONG FOR JESUS!" (10 MINUTES)

Activity: "Simon Says - Stand Strong"

Instructions:

- ★ Gather the children in a circle or a line.
- ★ Explain the rules of "Simon Says" but with a twist: instead of various commands, the only command is "Stand Strong for Jesus!"
- ★ When you say, "Simon says, 'Stand strong for Jesus!'" the children should stand tall and firm, pretending they are standing strong against the wind or any challenges.
- ★ Occasionally, give a command without saying "Simon says." If any child follows the command without hearing "Simon says," they are out for that round.

Discussion:

- ★ After a few rounds, gather the children and discuss how it might be hard to stand strong when others are doing different things or pressuring them to do otherwise.
- ★ Ask the children to share times when they had to stand up for what was right, even if it was difficult.
- ★ Talk about how Christians in some countries have to be very brave to stand strong for Jesus because they can face serious challenges like bullying, being left out, or even more serious dangers.



BIBLE STORY: "DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN" (15 MINUTES)

Story:

Read or tell the story of Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6), focusing on how Daniel stood firm in his faith despite the threat of punishment.

Discussion:

- ★ Ask the children what they think Daniel was feeling when he knew he could be thrown into the lion's den.
- ★ Discuss how God protected Daniel and how this story encourages us to be brave in our faith.

WORKSHEET ACTIVITY: "FAITH HEROES" (20 MINUTES)

Materials Needed:

- ★ Printed worksheet (see below)
- ★ Pencils, crayons, or markers

Worksheet Activity: "My Faith Hero"

- ★ Provide each child with a worksheet that includes:
- ★ A picture of Daniel in the lion's den to color.
- ★ A space for them to draw or write about someone they think is brave for Jesus today (this could be a real person or themselves).
- ★ A section to write a prayer for persecuted Christians who need courage.

Discussion:

- ★ After completing the worksheet, allow the children to share their drawings or prayers with the group.
- ★ Discuss how they can be like Daniel and stand strong in their faith, even when it's hard.

GROUP ACTIVITY: "BUILDING FAITH TOGETHER" (15 MINUTES)

Activity: "Faith Tower"

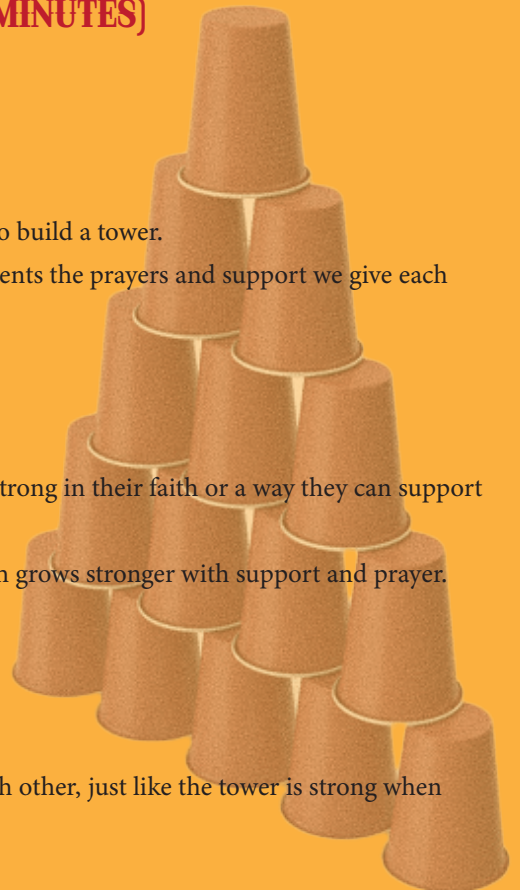
- ★ Divide the children into small groups and give each group blocks or cups to build a tower.
- ★ Explain that the tower represents their faith in Jesus, and each block represents the prayers and support we give each other.

Instructions:

- ★ Each child adds a block/cup while saying something they can do to stand strong in their faith or a way they can support others.
- ★ Watch as the tower grows stronger with each added block, just like our faith grows stronger with support and prayer.

Discussion:

Reflect on how our faith can be strong when we stand together and support each other, just like the tower is strong when built together.





MEMORY VERSE & PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Verse:

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” — Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

Activity:

- ★ Practice the verse with hand motions to help the children remember it.
- ★ Discuss how God’s presence gave Daniel and many others courage, and how He can give us courage too.

Closing Prayer:

Pray together, asking God to help Christians around the world be strong and courageous in their faith.



Draw or write about someone you think is brave for Jesus today:

Write a prayer for persecuted Christians who need courage:

Organised by the World Evangelical Alliance,
the IDOP is an annual, global event that unites
Christians in prayer for the persecuted Church.

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