

A decorative header featuring a row of various gears in shades of gold and brown. One gear prominently displays a cross symbol. Below the gears is a dark brown rectangular banner with a white dashed border containing the text "FAITH WORKS" in a white, serif, all-caps font.

FAITH WORKS

Goal:
Faith shines in our
actions!

Scripture Verses:
James 2:14-19, 26
Matthew 25:31-46

Choose Your Opening

Option 1: Faith to Ride

Say: Raise your hand if you rode around today in some sort of a motor vehicle. Discuss the following questions.

*What kind of faith did you need to have in a vehicle in order to ride in it?

*How could that vehicle disappoint you?

*How did your actions demonstrate the faith you had in that vehicle?

*What could have happened if that vehicle had not lived up to your faith in it?

Say: Before you ride in a car, you need to have faith that it will get you safely where you want to go. Before sitting in a chair, you need to have faith that it will hold you up. Today we're going to be talking about faith and how our actions are affected by our faith.

Option 2: "Dead or Alive" Scavenger Hunt

(For this activity, you'll need plastic bags)

Give each child a plastic bag. Give them 5-10 minutes to go on a scavenger hunt, collecting both live and dead items inside and outside the house. All live items are worth three points each; all dead items are worth two points each. A child may receive points for one type of item (such as a leaf, a blade of grass, or a rock) only once. Encourage creativity!

When kids return, have them briefly display their items and tally their points. Then **Say:** As you've discovered, we live in a world that's full of things that are either dead or alive. Today we'll learn that our faith can be defined the same way. It's either alive or dead. How can you tell whether your faith is alive or dead? Look at what you believe and what you do. That's how you know.

THE BIBLE EXPERIENCE

Faith Without Works?

(For this activity, provide a Bible, paper, and a pencil for every child)

Read aloud the following passage, adapted from James 2:14-19, 26. As you read, have volunteers briefly act out the italicized words. When you read an italicized word, point to a volunteer to act it out. Don't spend a lot of time on this. Simply read, point, and resume reading.

My brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does *nothing*, his faith is worth *nothing*. Can faith like that *save* him? A brother or sister in Christ might need *clothes* or might need *food*. And you say to him: "God be with you! I hope you stay *warm* and get *plenty to eat*." You say this, but you do not give that person the *things he needs*. Unless you *help him*, your words are worth *nothing*. It is the same with faith. If faith is *nothing*, then that faith is dead, because it is *alone*.

Someone might say, "You have *faith*, but I *do things*. Show me your faith! Your faith does *nothing*. I will show you my faith by the *things I do*." You believe there is one God. Good! But the *demons* believe that, too! And they *shake with fear*.

A person's body that does not have a spirit is dead. It is the same with faith. *Faith that does nothing is dead!*

Give each child a Bible. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 25:31-46 and tell kids to listen carefully. Then give each child a sheet of paper and a pencil. Tell groups they each have two minutes to list human needs that fit into the categories mentioned by Jesus in the passage from Matthew. (for example, someone might list a warm home, enough food to eat, and companionship in the midst of loneliness)

After two minutes, have the kids each review their human needs lists, and ask them to pick the three most important needs. For example, a need of hunger might be met by sharing a lunch with a person at school. After three to five minutes, have kids give summary reports to everyone.



Faith House

(For this activity, provide paper, pencils, and a couple of boxes of envelopes)

Give each child paper and a pencil. Tell them they have five minutes to list as many good works as they can think of. Examples might include helping a friend, going to church, and feeding the hungry.

After five minutes, have them add up the total number of good works they have listed. Give each child a new piece of paper, and ask them to write the word "faith" on the paper in large letters. Then give each child one envelope for each good work they listed earlier. (If a child thought of twenty-five works, give them twenty-five envelopes)

Tell the kids they have five minutes to create a house using only the envelopes given to them. Each house must be built upon the kid's "faith" paper. Announce that each house will be judged on its strength. After five minutes, test each house's strength by blowing on it. Determine a winning house then

Ask: *How do you feel about your house? Why?

*What would you do differently if you could start over?

*How is building your faith in Christ like building your house?

*How does your house compare to your faith?

*If God gave you a grade for your "faith house," what grade do you think you'd get? Explain.

Then **say:** Good works are as important to your Christian life as bricks or wood are to a house. A house wouldn't be complete without walls or a roof, and faith is nothing without works to make it solid.

Choose Your Closing

Option 1: Balloon Faith

(For this activity, you'll need one balloon for each person)

Give each child a balloon. Have kids join you in demonstrating how their faith is like a balloon and how their actions as Christians are like the air that inflates the balloon. **Say:** The good things we do demonstrate how real and strong our faith is.

Have kids blow up their balloon. Faith without good actions is dead and useless. Have kids let the air out of their balloons. Then have them blow up their balloons again and tie them off. Ask kids to take the balloons to their room as a reminder of the need to act on their faith in everyday life.

Close in prayer, asking God to give kids the power and opportunity to work on the needs they've recognized.

Option 2: Action!

Have kids tell one thing they want to work on to help their faith grow. When all have shared, **Say:** Now we're going to pray for each other and encourage each other to put our faith into action.

Have kids pray, asking God to help in the one area mentioned. Wrap up your session with prayer. Then conclude by **saying:** Let's encourage each other as we all take action on our faith.