

A MESSAGE FOR THE CHURCH



Week Four - To Philadelphia

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

The book of Revelation can be a confusing and even scary book to many people. But it doesn't have to be! And it wasn't meant to be. Remember, it begins with "The revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1) and ends with "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" (22:20). It's about the hope we have in Jesus restoring us into the Kingdom of God! Still, there are clear warnings for those who refuse Jesus. Let that be our focus as we lead our kids through these letters to the Church.

- **Big Idea:** Jesus gives us strength to endure

Starter

- **Evidences of Grace**

Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. When a kid shares, encourage everyone to thank God together.

- **Endurance**

Have the kids jog in place or do jumping jacks (if they're able). Ask them how long they can keep it up. Could they run/jump for 1 minute? 5 minutes? 60??

Today's letter encourages people to have endurance — but a different kind.

Sing Together

Story - from Revelation 3:7-13

Jesus had come to John with a message for the church. He wanted John to write down his words and pass the letter on to seven specific churches in cities nearby. Even though it was written to a specific people a long time ago, God has preserved these words for us today because He still wants the church to hear this message.

Jesus told John, “Write to the angel of the church in Philadelphia (that was one of the cities back then):

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What I open no one can shut, and what I shut no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the house of Satan, who claim to be Jews but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and see that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you safe in the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. No one will be able to remove you from it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name.

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The church in Philadelphia was suffering a lot for following after Jesus. They were being taken advantage of by the Jews in their city, and by the Greeks. They didn't have much to their name and they had very little power or authority in their community. Yet, Jesus wanted them to know that he was with them. Jesus, who has all authority and power on earth and in heaven, would one day bring them into his kingdom and they would rule with him forever. This is true for all of us today still who follow after Jesus. He is the true Ruler who has all the power — and yet he gave up that power on the cross. He could have defeated Rome, but he gave his life over so that he could defeat our bigger enemy — sin and death. Now that he has done that, what else do we have to fear?

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- Why do you think it was hard for the church in Philadelphia?
- Jesus didn't have anything against this church, like he has in most of the letters we've read. Why do you think that is?
- How can we have endurance to hold on to faith in Jesus, even in hard times?
- Jesus endured the pain of the cross and death, so that we could enter into life with him. How can we be like Jesus and use our strength to help others who are weak?

Breakout Time

• **Prayer:**

God, thank you for seeing and caring for the vulnerable. Thank you for protecting those who trust in you. Help us to hold on to your promises. In Jesus' name, amen.

• **Craft:**

- Use the attached two pages to make an opening door craft. On the first page, have the kids draw and color what they think the city of God might look like (*help them imagine the world restored as it should be*). On the second page, have them cut out the dotted lines, leaving the solid line on the left uncut. Then glue the sides of the 2nd sheet (*outside of the rectangle*) on top of the 1st page. The 2nd page will be like a door that can be opened to reveal the kingdom. Jesus opens that door for us!

BLESS Activity

For kids to do during the week

Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask Spirit to help us Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak, and Sabbath (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

This week, focus on the **Bless** rhythm. Is there someone you know who has less of something you have? How can you share some of what you have with someone else in need this week?



