



Series Theme: Everyday Faith

Series Overview: School is a part of life, but is a part of our faith? Our faith in Jesus is meant to influence every aspect of our life, including school.

Message Title: How to Endure at School

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7

Big Idea: Endure school with gratitude and prayer

Goal: To help students see school as a gift to be grateful for and prayerful about, while providing tools to endure it one day at a time.

Message Props: A partially-inflated balloon, a jar of marbles

Message Intro:

Imagine for moment that your best friend tells you about an amazing new restaurant that you have to check out. The food is incredible. The vibe is on point. And it's not too expensive. It might not be as cheap as Taco Bell, but you won't spend your whole paycheck or all your birthday money on it.

Your friend is pretty trustworthy and you both share a similar culinary appreciation, so you decide to check it out.

When you walk into the restaurant, it's as cool as your friend described it. You like the music. You like the aesthetic. You take a seat and check out the menu.

This is when you start to question your friend's recommendation. You flip the menu over a couple times, you look around at the other tables, and you realize it's not a joke. All they serve is elephant.

And they don't just exclusively serve elephant. You get one *whole* elephant. How did you not catch that when you walked in? Is this a dream?

After you compose yourself, you take a deep breath and order. "I guess I'll have the elephant."

Ten minutes later a steaming elephant shows up on your table. The waitress looks at you like nothing is abnormal about this moment and says, "Is there anything I can get for you?"

You can't take your eyes off the pachyderm on your plate, but you ask before she leaves, "How do you eat an elephant?"

She smiles and says, "One bite at a time."

We're starting a new message series on school today. Some of you love school, some of you hate it. However you feel about it, it's a part of life. If you were to describe school in one word, what would you say?

[TEACHER NOTE: Give students a moment to share the one word they would use to describe school.]

These answers are valid, but they don't make school go away. Whether you go to private school, public school, school online, or homeschool, few things stress us out more than school. School is not just classes, homework, and tests; it is a dynamic realm of pressures, relationships, choices, drama, and unpredictable circumstances.

How do you make it through school without losing your mind, your influence, or your character?

How do we endure it?

The same way you eat an elephant. One day at a time. One class at a time. One assignment at a time. One moment at a time.

Let's face the facts: depending on what grade you're in, school is your life for the next 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 years, and even more if you go to college.

Here are a few of the realities you'll face over the course of your academic career:

- Number 1: School is part of life. The average student spends 6 hours a day in school, and most school years last around 180 days. If you multiply that by 13 years, kindergarten through 12th grade, you will spend over 14,000 hours in school. And that doesn't include homework, travel time, or extracurricular activities.
- Number 2: School will mess with your emotions. As some of you shared a minute ago, school is stressful, overwhelming, annoying, rewarding, and unpredictable. This is true inside and outside the

classroom. When you factor in relationships, family situations, and social media, the chemical combination can be explosive.

- Number 3: School will shape who you are. If you're in high school, you're not exactly the same person you were in middle school. You might be a little taller, your interests may have changed, or you made some new friends. Same goes if you're a senior. You've grown, matured, and learn some things you didn't know or hadn't experienced when you were in ninth grade.

School is a part of life. School will mess with your emotions. School will shape who you are.

The big question we need to ask ourselves is, what place does God have at school? Where does God fit in as we sit in class, walk the hallways, compete on the field, perform on stage, interact with friends, and post on social?

Scripture Teaching Section:

School looked a little different back when the Bible was written. Depending on the social and economic situation of the family, they may have had informal training at home, starting the family trade as early as possible. They may have been able to afford tutors and instructors to teach them.

Within religious circles, their education would consist of studying the scriptures and commentaries of others. Some would even be invited to follow a teacher called a rabbi, who they would spend time with, listen to, and learn from by example.

This is the setting in which a lot of the Bible was written. Jesus was a rabbi who had a group of followers called disciples, which just means learners. Just as a student learns from their teacher, a disciple learns from their rabbi. The main difference is that a rabbi wasn't just interested in sharing information; they wanted to impart application into their disciples' lives, showing them how to put their teaching into practice.

One of Jesus' followers named Paul has some great insight for you as you learn how to endure school, how to take it a day at a time.

Here's what he wrote to some disciples of Jesus in a city called Philippi:



Series Theme: Everyday Faith

Series Overview: School is a part of life, but is a part of our faith? Our faith in Jesus is meant to influence every aspect of our life, including school.

Message Title: How to succeed at school

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-38; Colossians 3:23; Proverbs 25:28

Big Idea: Success in school requires hard work and self-control.

Goal: To help students see the value and importance of hard work, and inspire them to work hard at school and practice self-control to succeed.

Conversation is key. Create a safe space for students to be known and belong. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to rush to finish the guide or answer all the questions. Build trust in your group to strengthen relationships and encourage vulnerability.

Discussion Questions

- What are your plans/dreams for the future?
- How are you pursuing those plans/dreams now?
- What stuck out to you from the message?
- What did you think of that video of Alex Honnold?
- How can school feel like climbing a mountain?
- What does it mean to work at something as if you were working for God?
- What does it mean to practice self-control? What are the benefits of it? What are the risks for ignoring it?
- Think about how you view school. Are you working at it as if you were working for God? Why? Why not?
- What does success look like for you in school? In a future career? In life?

Finish by working on S.M.A.R.T. goals. Have everyone think of a goal they want to set. It might be school related, but it doesn't have to be. Have them say their goal and then reword it using the S.M.A.R.T. goal guide below.

S. Is it specific?

M. Is it measurable?

A. Is it achievable?

R. Is it relevant?

T. Is it time-bound?



What Is This:

This Parent Guide is a tool to enable you to engage the faith of your son or daughter based on the content from our current teaching series at [YOUTH GROUP NAME]. Our desire is to encourage and inspire your son or daughter and your family to grow in their faith.

We're Teaching This:

Few things stress us out more than school. It consumes over half an entire calendar year, and it dominates our thoughts and emotions. School is not just classes, homework, and tests; it is a dynamic realm of pressures, relationships, choices, drama, and unpredictable circumstances. Whether it's stress from within or from without, school is tough and hard to endure. School seems natural for some, annoying for others, and straight up torture for the rest. If you're not overwhelmed by the workload, you will be because of tryouts or interpersonal conflicts or apathy. Where does God fit into it all, and if He does, does He have anything helpful to say? How do we endure? How do we influence? How do we succeed?

Think About This:

Here are a few articles to read about making school and character a priority in your kid's lives.

Article: Our High School Kids: Tired, Stressed, and Bored //

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/10/23/survey-students-tired-stressed-bored/74412782/>

Article: Understanding Your Middle Schooler: 4 Tips for Success //

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/smart-parents/understanding-your-middle_b_7866762.html

Article: What's More Important: GPA or Character //

<https://www.loveandlogic.com/articles-advice/whats-more-important-your-childs-gpa-or-character>

Discuss This:

Week 1 - How to Endure

1. What did they talk about at [YOUTH GROUP NAME] tonight?

2. What is stressing you out at school?
3. How can I pray for you?

Week 2 - How to Influence

1. What did they talk about at [YOUTH GROUP NAME] tonight?
2. Who influences you most at school?
3. What type of influence do you want to be?

Week 3 - How to Succeed

1. What did they talk about at [YOUTH GROUP NAME] tonight?
2. How do you feel about setting goals for yourself?
3. What gets in the way of accomplishing your goals?

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