



Dear Youth Leader,

In this series on the book of Hebrews, we are working in-step with our teaching team as we dive into the *Better Promises* that are found in Jesus, who is better than everything that has come before. While we don't know the author or specific audience of Hebrews, we know that it is written to a people who has been exposed, ridiculed, and persecuted. Youth are entering the phase in their spiritual walk where who they believe in affects the way people around them respond. I hope that this series can be an opportunity to compare what we put our hopes in, realise that Jesus is the best and only option, and stick to our decision to claim that better promise through difficult challenges in life. Please share your own stories and struggles with open hearts and encourage questions. Try to put yourself in their shoes (or ask them about it), because claiming Jesus is not something only taught, it is something we can share from our own witness of a better promise in our own life.

I am praying for you as you prep your time with your youth group, and can't wait to hear how it went. Please reach out if you have any questions, ideas, or stories. I'm here to support you!

Mark Ricalde

Youth Pastor, Crosswalk Redlands

SUGGESTED FORMAT

Belonging | 25 - 30 min

Breakfast / Welcome

Sharing Activity

Experience | 25 - 30 min

Worship

Message / Discussion

Momentum | 5 - 10 min

Challenge / Application

Announcements / Visioning

SERIES OUTLINE

Week 1 | April 26

Hebrews 1-2

Week 2 | May 3

Hebrews 3-4

Week 3 | May 10

Hebrews 5-7

Week 4 | May 17

Hebrews 8-10

Week 5 | May 24

Hebrews 11

Week 6 | May 31

Hebrews 12

Hebrews 1-2

PREPARATION

Read Hebrews 1-2

notice main ideas, points of tension, and any connections for your youth

Listen to the Series

listen to the *Crosswalk Daily Study* podcast and the *Abide Daily* podcast and sit in the texts with our pastors

Reflect on your Experience

think of a story where you experienced something that was better than past experiences.

Activity Idea

- Create slides with pictures or words that give ideas for future “iPhone updates.” Go through them with the kids and ask if it would make the iPhone better or not. Do this with other products the kids buy/use.

Icebreaker Questions

- It’s easy to always look for better. Jesus claims to be better than holding on to old religion. Have you seen people hold to tradition in church in a bad way?

Message Main Points

- We do not know the author of Hebrews, but we do know that it was written to a Christian community with majority Jewish roots. They understood the stories and beliefs stemming from the Torah and Jewish culture. They also were a group that faced hard times and persecution for their faith.
- Hebrews brings new promises, warnings, and encouragements to stick to the better promise that is Jesus (1:1-3). Jesus is the final and better than “radiates God’s own glory.”
- Hebrews 1 compares angels and Jesus. Jesus reigns, is creator, is called “Son,” all these things are greater than angels who are only “servants.” Jewish culture put weight
- Angels were seen as the messengers to Moses and the prophets, so what they delivered became law. How much more should the life and Jesus become a rule of life for us! we are warned to not drift away.
- The end of chapter 2 is a beautiful description of Jesus’ choice to become human, to call us brother and sister, and to take away our sin.

Discussion Questions

- How do we “drift away (2:1) from the truth that only comes through Jesus?”
- Is there a way that we lean on “angels” (truths that are less) over “Jesus” (greater truth)?



Hebrews 3-4

PREPARATION

Read Hebrews 3-4

notice main ideas, points of tension, and any connections for your youth

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Reflect on your Experience

find a story in your life where you really needed rest, and if you found it. Was it temporary or lasting?

Activity Idea

- Make a side by side list from Matthew 5 of Jesus restatement of the law (Moses). ex. "You have heard ___" vs "But I say ___". Go through the list and talk about what makes Jesus' way better (or not?).

Icebreaker Questions

- What is more important, actions or intentions?
- Do we have to work for rest, or is trusting Jesus enough? What does that even mean?

Message Main Points

- Hebrews 3 is a comparison of Moses and Jesus. Moses was the builder of the house, Jesus is creator of all. Moses is servant, Jesus is the son. Moses is an illustration, Jesus is fullness.
- The author quotes Psalm 95:7-11, remind us over and over that "Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts."
- This hails back to the story of the Israelites complaining to God, and God gives them water from the rock. Because of their actions, God decides to not bring the current generation to the promised land "place of rest." And so they wander the wilderness until a whole generation dies.
- Chapter 4 continues this same reference, but now we compare the lesser "rests" with God's rest that we can enter and will be lasting. We compare the Sabbath rest from creation and the rest of Joshua bringing them into the promised land. Both of these were good but temporary.
- We enter the rest by trusting in the God who is alive, powerful, and knows our thoughts and desires. We are open and transparent with God, and now we rest.

Discussion Questions

- What does it look like for us to harden our hearts?
- How can I be more open (exposed) with God?



Hebrews 5-7

PREPARATION

Read Hebrews 5-7

notice main ideas, points of tension, and any connections for your youth

Listen to the Series

listen to the *Crosswalk Daily Study* podcast and the *Abide Daily* podcast and sit in the texts with our pastors

Reflect on your Experience

find a story in your life where you took a step into spiritual maturity

Activity Idea

- Find a video on youtube that touches on priests in the Old Testament. Use it as a conversation starter to ask youth what they know about priests in the Bible. Is it important for us to know today?

Possible Videos

- <https://youtu.be/LBr-blQxlm4?si=wuKCM7qL4EvHzNJR>
- <https://youtu.be/KIZjA-3hiys?si=bHFToW-t0PyKKzcr>

Message Main Points

- Hebrews 5 compares Jesus to priests. Human priests sinned, so they have to offer sacrifices for their own sins. Jesus was the perfect high priest, his sacrifice for us was one and done.
- Verse 2 highlights the second reason why Jesus is the ultimate high priest. Being fully human and fully God means he chose to live in “weakness” like us, and now can understand us and be gentle with us.
- 5:11-14 is a powerful section. Read it together, asking youth if they consider themselves spiritually mature or spiritually babies.
- Chapter 6 has important teaching on turning away from God, the pain and hopelessness that happens when we turn, and an encouragement to strive to better things and salvation (verse 9)
- Chapter 7 discusses Jesus as a great high priest, and as the one who brings the better promise. He is greater than the temporary priesthood led by humans, and greater than Abraham.
- Melchizedek and King of Salem mean “king of peace” and “king of justice.” How can those two words be cornerstones of our faith?



Hebrews 8-10

PREPARATION

Read Hebrews 8-10

notice main ideas, points of tension, and any connections for your youth

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Reflect on your Experience

find a situation where you struggled with letting go of the old and accepting the new

Activity Idea

- Play a game that utilises shadows. It could be the classic hand shadows (guess the animal), or putting up a sheet and a light and having the group guess who is behind it based on the silhouette.

Icebreaker Questions

- Shadows remind us that there is a light source. What shadows (clues) have you seen you that God is active around you?
- What does your life point to?

Message Main Points

- Hebrews 8 quotes Jeremiah 31. It is a promise of a new covenant. The old one was a set of laws and rules that we had to follow to be in good standing with God. The new one is a way (law/rule) of life that is written on our hearts. This only makes sense in light of Jesus.
- How do we approach the Old Testament? Even the Epistles and future writings in the New Testament? We must take the approach of Hebrews, which is to let Jesus be the explanation and lens that helps us understand these passages.
- Does new truth mean we get rid of old truth? (8:13). What becomes obsolete in our life when we choose Jesus?
- Is there something our parents did that is “old system” and we should change as we begin leading the church”? How do we know what is good to keep in the future and what needs to be let go to make space for Jesus’ new direction?
- Chapter 10 end with a call to endurance. This work of claiming the new covenant promise take patience, wisdom, and a commitment to love.



Hebrews 11

PREPARATION

Read Hebrews 11

notice main ideas, points of tension, and any connections for your youth

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listen to the *Crosswalk Daily Study* podcast and the *Abide Daily* podcast and sit in the texts with our pastors

Reflect on your Experience

find a story in your life where someone else's faith story (testimony) gave you strength

Activity Idea

- Today would be a perfect day to play an Old Testament Jeopardy game (just google it, there are a ton online). Have fun with it, make teams where the answerer rotates, and get everyone involved.

Icebreaker Questions

- Hebrews 11 is the “faith chapter” that references famous OT characters we can gain strength from. How important is it to know God stories from the past?

Study Idea

- Option 1: Pick one of the characters from the chapter and read a section from their life in the Old Testament. Do a character study. What were their strengths and weaknesses? Would you consider them a person of strong faith? What can we learn from their story?
- Option 2: Split up your teens into groups, and give each group a character from this story. Write out a chapter or two that they can read together. After some time for each group to study the characters (use same questions from option 1), have each group present to everyone else. They can act out a story, do a poem, do a readers theatre, etc.

Wrap Up

- Jesus is the most important. We must spend time focusing on who he is and what he has done. At the same time, we are lucky that there are people around us who also have a faith experience with Jesus. We can learn from their experiences, and deepen our understanding of Jesus, and strengthen our trust in the promise.
- Who has strong faith around you? How can you make time to hear their story?



Hebrews 12

PREPARATION

Read Hebrews 12

notice main ideas, points of tension, and any connections for your youth

Listen to the Series

listen to the *Crosswalk Daily Study* podcast and the *Abide Daily* podcast and sit in the texts with our pastors

Reflect on your Experience

find a story in your life where someone's love for you affected the effort you put into that relationship

Activity Idea

- If your group likes games, find some games that highlight endurance, discipline, or hard tasks. If they don't like games, have some sharing time of reflecting on times when you are glad you stuck with it and had endurance.

Icebreaker Questions

- Why does love and promise have to come before the call to discipline? Does hard work cheapen the gift of grace?

Message Main Points

- Verse 4 talks about a struggle against sin. How is that something we lean into, having endurance and discipline?
- Have you ever seen a time in your life where discipline was an example of love (v.5-6). How does that change your opinion of God?
- In chapter 4, we saw that Jesus brings the promised rest. Does that fit in with the idea of taking a “new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees?” (v.12). How do we balance the effort towards right living and trusting the promise?
- Verse 14-21 talks about how we can sometimes ask God to stop speaking because of fear. Instead, the author calls us to listen to Jesus, the one who is speaking (v.25). To listen as we work is one of the ways that we receive an unshakable kingdom (v.28).

Discussion Questions

- What is the area of your life that God is calling you to discipline and endurance? Share if you are comfortable with those around you. What are some first steps that you want to take?





A Final Note,

Life gets crazy. Sometimes we walk into a room knowing we haven't prepped enough. A high-schooler might walk in with the weight of a hard week on their minds, and the last place they want to be is youth group. The teenage community you are leading will have cliques, crazy couples, and apathetic kids. All this to say that teaching in this scenario will rarely feel like you did a great job. Don't worry, you don't need to. **Jesus shows up.**

If every week you:

eat together,
pray together,
worship together,
and study the word together,

then you have faithfully structured the youth time for God to work.

Thank you for your effort and compassionate heart.
I'm a leader in the church because of influencers like you!

Mark Ricalde

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