

Give each person a chance to look at the dot through the binoculars. **ASK:**

- **How do you think God views our failures?**

Have a volunteer read Psalm 103:8-12. **ASK:**

- **What do these verses tell us God does with our transgressions, or failures?**
- **Why do you think God views our failures in this way?**

Give a volunteer the binoculars, and have him or her turn them around backward and look through them at the dot. Give each person a chance to look at the dot this way.

**SAY:** Even though we may see our failures magnified, because of Christ's death for us, God sees them as very small. In fact, he removes them from us completely. He does this because he loves us too much to let us be bogged down and overwhelmed by our sins and failures. What a great God!

## TOPIC

## FAITH

## FOR THE LEADER

"Just because you can't see it, that doesn't mean it doesn't exist."

This phrase, or a version of it, is used in many movies (including some of the ones highlighted on pp. 419-420), and it's a great way to explain faith in God. We may never have *seen* the wind, or distant galaxies, or a million dollars, but we know that these things exist.

Faith is a difficult thing to describe, but it's an essential concept to understand in Christianity. Try some of these activities to help your teenagers get a firm grasp on the faith they claim.

## KEY SCRIPTURES

Want to do more research? Study these passages to discover biblical truths related to this topic.

Matthew 17:20

Romans 3:21-28

2 Corinthians 4:13-18

Ephesians 2:8

Hebrews 11:1-12



spiritually mature

## BIBLE STUDY

*Job's Crisis of Faith*

*Students will look at Job's faith journey through devastating circumstances.*

## SUPPLIES:

*a piece of paper, flour, newspaper, Bibles*

**TIME:** *about 45 minutes*

## Before the Study

Draw a circle on a piece of paper.

## Eiffel Tower

Have teenagers form pairs. Show them a circle drawn on a piece of paper. **SAY:** This is an enlarged view of a piece of a larger structure. Please identify the structure and where this piece fits on it. You have 60 seconds. Go.

Ask for guesses. Then **SAY:** For your information, this is the fourth rivet on the sixth secondary support crossbeam, located on the west side of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, 120.32 feet from the ground.

Have teenagers discuss these questions with their partners:

- **Why couldn't you identify the part?**

- How is this exercise like or unlike trying to figure out what God is doing by examining a single action or event?

**SAY:** We don't have God's perspective on life. God sees a big picture we can't see. What doesn't make sense to us or seems unfair or unjust is still part of God's plan. For instance, God sent Jesus to a sinful planet to serve hardhearted people who eventually murdered him. It makes no sense—until we step back and see the larger picture of God's plan to redeem mankind.

**ASK:**

- What are other things about life that are hard to understand or accept?
- How do you reconcile what you can't understand with what you know about God?

## Losing It

Lay newspaper on the floor and have teenagers stand in a circle on it, an arm's length away from each other. Have several volunteers take turns reading aloud Job 1:13-22. Then have them cup their hands in front of them as you place small mounds of flour in their hands. Ask them to close their eyes.

**SAY:** What you hold in your hands is your whole life. You hold your family. Open your fingers a bit and let them slip away. You're holding your possessions. Open your fingers and let them slip away. You hold your best friends. Open your fingers and let them slip away. You hold your health. Open your fingers and let it slip away. You hold your future. Open your fingers and let it slip away. Now open your fingers. You hold nothing. It's all gone.

Have teenagers open their eyes; then **ASK:**

- How would it feel to lose everything that's precious to you?
- What would your attitude be toward God?
- How did Job reconcile the tragedy in his life with his knowledge of God?

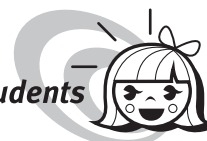
## Faith That Believes

**SAY:** Job didn't understand why God removed his children, wealth, possessions, and health. But when Job didn't understand God's actions, he

talked to God. Honestly. With emotion. And that was the beginning of Job's understanding and healing.

Ask teenagers to pray silently as you lead. Begin with a confession of how you don't understand why God allows some things to happen. Then **SAY:** Give us eyes to see you at work in your world—to have a faith that trusts you no matter what. We believe; help our unbelief. Now hear us as we silently tell you what things we find hard to accept and understand...[pause]...Hear us as we confess our lack of faith...[pause]...hear our praise as we remember you are a loving and just God... [pause] Amen.

for younger students



## DEVOTION

### Objects of Faith

*Help your teenagers understand their faith in God as a concrete thing, not an abstract concept.*

**SUPPLIES:** a lump of clay for each person, Bibles

**TIME:** about 30 minutes

**M**ake sure the clay you get is the kind that dries and hardens by sitting out. (If clay isn't available, use aluminum foil or have teenagers find something in the room that represents their faith.)

If you have a large group, break into small groups of no more than seven. Give each person some clay. **SAY:** You have five minutes to mold your lump of clay into something that represents your faith. It can be anything...abstract or real. For example, a cross could represent Christ dying or a child could represent a childlike faith. Encourage a silent and contemplative atmosphere so each person can concentrate.

After five minutes, go around the circle and have each person share what they've created and how it represents their faith.

Pass out the Bibles and have volunteers read aloud Hebrews 11. Then ask the following questions: