

Youth Book Club

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

90 minute lesson (30 minutes of Additional Activities)

Focus of the Session: In this meeting, the leader should communicate that courage and trust are important qualities to exhibit in both the book The Hunger Games and in a Christian life. Courage and trust can be expressed in small parts of our daily life or in large and life changing ways; therefore, Christians, should be seeking ways to embrace and recognize both courage and trust in our lives.

Objectives: As a result of their participating in this session, participants will be able to....

1. Identify and name characters that show courage and trust in The Hunger Games through discussion and activities.
2. Hear stories of courage and trust from the Bible.
3. Explore ways to be courageous and trustworthy in their own lives.

Supplies:

- Chairs for each participant
- A copy of The Hunger Games for each participant
- A couple of tables
- Bibles
- Name tags
- Markers
- Instructions for nametag activity
- Large paper/butcher paper and tape OR chalk/dry erase board and chalk or dry erase markers
- Costume making supplies (suggestions listed in lesson)
- Instructions for Tribute Costume Designs
- *Timer/Buzzer (optional)
- Poster board (2 pieces)
- Sticky notes in two different colors and one in each color for each participant
- Pens or pencils
- Two pieces of paper (for additional activity)

Welcome Activities:

20 minutes

As the participants come into the room, greet them and welcome them by name. Instruct participants that you will start off this book club meeting by moving around the space to complete the activities. The activities around the room will be: make a nametag, graffiti sheets with questions to answer, and create a tribute costume. The activities can be done in any order.

Activity 1 – Name tags

Supplies: Name tags, markers, and directions for name tags

Have the supplies of name tags, markers, and directions available on a table. The directions should instruct students to write their name, and underneath their name, write the name of a character they relate to from The Hunger Games and why.

Activity 2 - Graffiti Sheets

Supplies: large paper or butcher paper with questions on the top and tape OR a chalkboard or dry erase board with questions on the top and chalk or dry erase markers

Hang paper with questions around the room or write on the board the following questions or open ended statements:

- A time I was really hungry was...
- A person from the Bible that showed courage is
- One true statement about myself is....
- I trust God most when....

Participants will answer these questions as they move around the room to begin thinking about the book and the topic for this book club meeting.

Activity 3 - Tribute Costume Designs

Supplies: costume making supplies (options listed below) and instructions to hang on the wall above the supplies.

At this station, participants will create their own tribute outfits. The leader should set out supplies for participants to create tribute outfits. Supplies can include, but are not limited to: strips of scrap cloth, newspaper, construction paper, party hats, old t-shirts or paint smocks, pipe cleaners, tissue paper, and heavy tape. Above the tribute costume material, post a list of the following instructions for the activity:

- Remember how Katniss and Peeta were given costumes of fire because they were from the district mined coal, the power to make fire
- Create a costume to wear that would represent you as a tribute, like where you are from and your family.
- Somewhere on the costume, write the word courage.
- Think of ways in which this costume would give you courage as a tribute (to be shared later).

Introduce the Topic Discussion

10 minutes

After the welcome activities, have the group form a circle to conduct the tribute interviews. In the book the tributes' interviews were only three minutes, your participants will have only thirty seconds for their interview to introduce themselves to the group. *Extra: For fun, you could have a thirty second timer to challenge the tributes to answer quickly before the buzzer goes off, like in the book.

Tell each participant to answer the following three questions in their thirty-second interview:

1. What is your name?
2. How does your tribute costume represent you and give you courage?
3. What is one graffiti sheet question you answered, and what was the answer?

Discussion on Courage and Trust From the Book

10 minutes

Say:

- *Throughout The Hunger Games, Katniss faces the challenge to be both courageous and trusting. Courage and trust are two qualities that God also seeks from us in our lives. Katniss must place her trust and her life in the hands of other people. She is faced with whether or not to trust her stylist, other tributes, and her mentor. She shows courage in many ways throughout the book too. Sometimes she shows courage in large and grand ways and other times in small and humble ways. Katniss shows trust and courage through her friendships, her teamwork, and her decisions.*

Ask:

- *Toward the beginning of the book (mainly in chapters 1-3), how did Katniss show courage?*
 - Suggested answers or places to look for Katniss' courage at the beginning of the book are as follows:
 - Caring for her mother and sister after her father's death – Page 8
“She must have really loved him to leave her home for the Seam. I try to remember that when all I can see is the woman who sat by, blank and unreachable, while her children turned to skin and bones. I try to forgive her for my father's sake. But to be honest, I'm not the forgiving type.”¹
 - Gale and Katniss care for the kids – Page 9 “‘If we didn't have so many kids,’ he adds quickly. They're not our kids, of course. But they might as well be. Gale's two little brothers and a sister. Prim. And you may as well throw in our mothers, too, because how would they live without us?”²
 - Hunting – punishable by death
 - Volunteering for her sister in the Hunger Games – page 26
“Family devotion only goes so far for most people on reaping day. What I did was the radical thing.”³
- *How did Katniss' courage change later in the book? How did it expand?*
- *What things gave Katniss courage in the book?*
- *Who gave Katniss strength to be courageous?*
- *Where did you see courage from other characters throughout the book?*

Say:

1 Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*, Reprint ed. (New York: Scholastic Press, 2009), 8.

2 Collins, 9.

3 Collins, 26.

- *This courage gave Katniss the strength to expand her trust in people. Her situation and some of the people made it difficult for her to trust people throughout the book.*

Trust Activity - Forced Choices and Discussion

10 minutes

Ask students to stand up. If they agree with the following statements, have them move to the right side of the room. If they disagree with the following statements, have them move to the left side of the room.

1. It is easy to trust others.
2. It is easier to tell a stranger about myself than someone I've known for a while.
3. Trust is an important quality in a friendship.
4. Friends should have something they can give to a friendship.
5. Cliques are always bad.

Say:

- *There are many alliances in the book. It takes trust to have such alliances.*

Ask:

- *What are the different friend alliances that take place during the Hunger Games?*
 - Some suggested answers and alliances in the book are as follows:
 - Peeta and Katniss work together with the stylists and Haymitch for the pre-Hunger Games activities.
 - Peeta teamed up with the Careers.
 - The Careers worked with the boy from District 3 because he was skilled with explosives.
 - Rue warns Katniss of the tracker jacker nest - page 184 "Suddenly, I'm up on one elbow. Those are no possum's eyes...Rue...For a while we hold each other's gaze. Then, without even rustling a leaf, her little hand slides into the open and points to something above my head."⁴
 - In return, Katniss warns Rue before she sends the nest onto the Careers -page 189 "I call Rue's name in a hushed whisper and the eyes appear, wide and alert, at once. She points up to the nest again. I hold up my knife and make a sawing motion. She nods and disappears."⁵
 - Peeta and Katniss work together and protect one another once the rules have changed.
- *Are these examples of alliances made out of trust or alliances made out of need?*

⁴ Collins, 184.

⁵ Collins, 189.

Group Scripture Reading and Discussion

10 minutes

Split the participants into two groups. Group 1 will read Joshua 2 (from The Message) and discuss follow-up questions provided on the topic of Trust. Group 2 will read Daniel 6:1-24 (from The Message) and discuss follow-up questions provided on the topic of Courage. *The scripture and discussion questions are appendages at the end of the lesson on pages 8 and 9.

Create an Advertisement

20 minutes

Supplies: Poster board and markers

Each group will be given 10 minutes to create an advertisement. Group 1 with the story of Rahab will create an advertisement for trust. Group 2 with the story of Daniel will create an advertisement for courage. Students will create an advertisement for their product of courage or trust using their knowledge and examples from the characters of the Hunger Games and the Bible story they just read. Students can either create a television commercial, a radio jingle, or a billboard (using poster board and markers). At the end of ten minutes, each group will share their advertisement.

***Insert Additional Activities Here If Desired**

Closing Prayer Activity

10 minutes

- Supplies: Bibles, sticky notes in two different colors and one in each color for each participant, and pens or pencils

Say:

- *Courage and trust are not easily attainable. We often search for each. It is difficult to have courage without having trust in yourself, others to lean on, and trust that God is with you through everything. Even in the toughest of challenges, we are reminded that Jesus will be with us always. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus asks the disciples to risk everything and to go out to make more disciples. He reminds them that even though this is a tough task, he will be beside them. Listen to Jesus' Word and Message for us:*

Matthew 28:18-20 (The Message)

18-20 Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: "God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as

you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."⁶

Say:

- *And again, Paul reminds us in Romans 8:38-39, that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Listen for God's Words of comfort:*

Romans 8:38-39 (New Revised Standard Version)

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor the future, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁷

Say:

- *We can have courage when we trust in our faith in God. Jesus will be with us "right up to the end of the end of the age" and "nothing can separate us from the love of God." This message from Jesus gives us courage and trust.*

Activity:

Give each student two different colored sticky notes.

Have students think of something in their lives for which they need courage (examples: to talk to a student no one speaks to, to try out for a team or play, to stand up for someone being bullied, to fight against hunger), and have them write it on one sticky note.

On the other sticky note, have students write one issue for which they need to have more trust (examples: God's love, finances, academic ability, friendships).

As you say the following prayer, ask participants to put their sticky notes on the designated prayer wall or on the floor in the center of the circle:

Pray aloud:

God, we come to you with a lot of fear. Give us the strength and courage to stand up when daunting tasks come our way each day, whether it is trying out for a new sport or musical, or talking to a new person. God, give us the courage to trust that you are with us when the big challenges of life are in front of us. It can be overwhelming, God. Remind us of Katniss' courage and trust, and more importantly the trust and courage of our Bible ancestors Rahab and Daniel. Help us to do what is right, even if it means taking a risk. God give us courage to glorify You. Help us to trust in Your love and presence. Let Your grace extend to us and through us so that all of Your children can know Your love. Amen.

⁶ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message Remix: The Bible In Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), Matthew 28: 18-20, page 1474.

⁷ Michael D. Coogan, Marc Brettler, and Carol A. Newsom, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, Augmented Third Edition, New Revised Standard Version, Indexed*, 3 Thumb ed. (Netherlands: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007), Romans 8:38-39, page 255.

Additional Activities

30 minutes

Group Scripture Reading and Discussion

10 minutes

After the group advertisement presentation, have the groups switch and read the other Bible stories and discussion questions.

Create an Acrostic Poem

10 minutes

Supplies: two pieces of paper and pens or pencils

Each group will be given 5 minutes to create an acrostic poem, and 5 minutes to present their poems to the group. Group 1, with the story of Daniel, will create an acrostic poem using the word TRUST. Group 2, with the story of Rahab, will create an acrostic poem using the word COURAGE. To create an acrostic poem, have the participant write the word down the side of the paper vertically. Then they must add a word that is related to and descriptive of the vertical word and begins with each letter of the vertical word. Here is an example for the word GOD:

Good
Over
Dearest

Snack

10 minutes

Have time to share in a snack with the group. Suggested snack items based on the book are berries, cheese, basil, and fresh breads. Over snacks have each participant say one thing that they are thankful for about this meal, the group, or in their life.

Group 1
Joshua 2 (The Message)
Trust

In the Old Testament, there was an unlikely alliance made between a woman, Rahab, and Israelite spies who were coming to destroy her city, Jericho. The spies believed that God had designated this land to the Jews, the chosen people. Listen for God's Word:

¹ Joshua son of Nun secretly sent out from Shittim two men as spies: "Go. Look over the land. Check out Jericho." They left and arrived at the house of a harlot named Rahab and stayed there. ² The king of Jericho was told, "We've just learned that men arrived tonight to spy out the land. They're from the People of Israel." ³ The king of Jericho sent word to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you to stay the night in your house. They're spies; they've come to spy out the whole country." ⁴⁻⁷ The woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, two men did come to me, but I didn't know where they'd come from. At dark, when the gate was about to be shut, the men left. But I have no idea where they went. Hurry up! Chase them—you can still catch them!" (She had actually taken them up on the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax that were spread out for her on the roof.) So the men set chase down the Jordan road toward the fords. As soon as they were gone, the gate was shut. ⁸⁻¹¹ Before the spies were down for the night, the woman came up to them on the roof and said, "I know that GOD has given you the land. We're all afraid. Everyone in the country feels hopeless. We heard how GOD dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt, and what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you put under a holy curse and destroyed. We heard it and our hearts sank. We all had the wind knocked out of us. And all because of you, you and GOD, your God, God of the heavens above and God of the earth below. ¹²⁻¹³ "Now promise me by GOD. I showed you mercy; now show my family mercy. And give me some tangible proof, a guarantee of life for my father and mother, my brothers and sisters—everyone connected with my family. Save our souls from death!" ¹⁴ "Our lives for yours!" said the men. "But don't tell anyone our business. When GOD turns this land over to us, we'll do right by you in loyal mercy." ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ She lowered them down out a window with a rope because her house was on the city wall to the outside. She told them, "Run for the hills so your pursuers won't find you. Hide out for three days and give your pursuers time to return. Then get on your way." ¹⁷⁻²⁰ The men told her, "In order to keep this oath you made us swear, here is what you must do: Hang this red rope out the window through which you let us down and gather your entire family with you in your house—father, mother, brothers, and sisters. Anyone who goes out the doors of your house into the street and is killed, it's his own fault—we aren't responsible. But for everyone within the house we take full responsibility. If anyone lays a hand on one of them, it's our fault. But if you tell anyone of our business here, the oath you made us swear is canceled—we're no longer responsible." ²¹ She said, "If that's what you say, that's the way it is," and sent them off. They left and she hung the red rope out the window. ²² They headed for the hills and stayed there for three days until the pursuers had returned. The pursuers had looked high and low but found nothing. ²³⁻²⁴ The men headed back. They came down out of the hills, crossed the river, and returned to Joshua son of Nun and reported all their experiences. They told Joshua, "Yes! GOD has given the whole country to us. Everybody there is in a state of panic because of us."⁸

Read and discuss the following questions:

- *What risks were taken in the alliance between Rahab and the spies?*
- *How is this similar to the alliance that Rue and Katniss made?*
- *Who had to trust more, Rahab or the spies?*
- *In the alliance between Rue and Katniss, they each bring something to the table. Katniss offers food and medicine for Rue's burns. Rue offers a cure for Katniss' tracker jacker stings. What do Rahab and the spies offer one another?*
- *What would happen if one of the people in the alliance was not trustworthy?*

⁸ Peterson, Joshua 2, 286.

Group 2
Daniel 6:1-24 (The Message)
Courage

In the Old Testament, a person with courage like Katniss is Daniel. We are going to read his story to see how he also had courage. Listen for God's Word:

¹⁻³ Darius reorganized his kingdom. He appointed one hundred twenty governors to administer all the parts of his realm. Over them were three vice-regents, one of whom was Daniel. The governors reported to the vice-regents, who made sure that everything was in order for the king. But Daniel, brimming with spirit and intelligence, so completely outclassed the other vice-regents and governors that the king decided to put him in charge of the whole kingdom. ⁴⁻⁵ The vice-regents and governors got together to find some old scandal or skeleton in Daniel's life that they could use against him, but they couldn't dig up anything. He was totally exemplary and trustworthy. They could find no evidence of negligence or misconduct. So they finally gave up and said, "We're never going to find anything against this Daniel unless we can cook up something religious." ⁶⁻⁷ The vice-regents and governors conspired together and then went to the king and said, "King Darius, live forever! We've convened your vice-regents, governors, and all your leading officials, and have agreed that the king should issue the following decree: For the next thirty days no one is to pray to any god or mortal except you, O king. Anyone who disobeys will be thrown into the lions' den." ⁸ "Issue this decree, O king, and make it unconditional, as if written in stone like all the laws of the Medes and the Persians." ⁹ King Darius signed the decree. ¹⁰ When Daniel learned that the decree had been signed and posted, he continued to pray just as he had always done. His house had windows in the upstairs that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he knelt there in prayer, thanking and praising his God. ¹¹⁻¹² The conspirators came and found him praying, asking God for help. They went straight to the king and reminded him of the royal decree that he had signed. "Did you not," they said, "sign a decree forbidding anyone to pray to any god or man except you for the next thirty days? And anyone caught doing it would be thrown into the lions' den?" "Absolutely," said the king. "Written in stone, like all the laws of the Medes and Persians." ¹³ Then they said, "Daniel, one of the Jewish exiles, ignores you, O king, and defies your decree. Three times a day he prays." ¹⁴ At this, the king was very upset and tried his best to get Daniel out of the fix he'd put him in. He worked at it the whole day long. ¹⁵ But then the conspirators were back: "Remember, O king, it's the law of the Medes and Persians that the king's decree can never be changed." ¹⁶ The king caved in and ordered Daniel brought and thrown into the lions' den. But he said to Daniel, "Your God, to whom you are so loyal, is going to get you out of this." ¹⁷ A stone slab was placed over the opening of the den. The king sealed the cover with his signet ring and the signet rings of all his nobles, fixing Daniel's fate. ¹⁸ The king then went back to his palace. He refused supper. He couldn't sleep. He spent the night fasting. ¹⁹⁻²⁰ At daybreak the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. As he approached the den, he called out anxiously, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve so loyally, saved you from the lions?" ²¹⁻²² "O king, live forever!" said Daniel. "My God sent his angel, who closed the mouths of the lions so that they would not hurt me. I've been found innocent before God and also before you, O king. I've done nothing to harm you." ²³ When the king heard these words, he was happy. He ordered Daniel taken up out of the den. When he was hauled up, there wasn't a scratch on him. He had trusted his God. ⁹

Read and discuss the following questions:

- *How did Daniel show courage?*
- *How did Daniel's courage rub off or spread to others in the story?*
- *What makes his courage similar and different than Katniss' courage?*
- *How are faith and courage connected and related in Daniel's story?*
- *If we knew Katniss was a Christian with a strong faith, how would her courage look different?*

⁹ Peterson, Daniel 6:1-24, 1287-1289.