

The God Story - Week 2: Suspension of Disbelief

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

By Jacob Armstrong

Key Verse

The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Me give birth? At my age?’ Is anything too difficult for the LORD? When I return to you about this time next year, Sarah will have a son.”
Genesis 18:13-14

Summary

Most good stories require a Suspension of Disbelief. Our tendency not to believe the impossible must be suspended to truly appreciate and enjoy the story. Likewise there are moments in the Christian life when we must suspend disbelief or have faith to believe things that seem impossible. Abraham’s life shows us that when *God makes a promise it will come true* (Thread #2), no matter how improbable it may seem.

Session Goals

- **Group will discuss how faith in God plays a role in their daily lives,**
- **Group will discuss how logic and reason play a faithful role in the life of the Christian alongside our need to suspend disbelief at times, and**
- **Group will consider what promises God continues to make to God’s people and what this might mean for how we live in community together.**

Discussion Starter

What are some of your favorite movies that require a Suspension of Disbelief?

Read & Discuss

Genesis 12:2-3

Abraham was promised late in life that he would be the father of a great nation. What would be your reaction if you were promised something seemingly impossible? How would your reaction differ from Abraham and Sarah’s? What must it have been like to wait for years for this promise to come to fruition? How can you relate to this waiting?

Hebrews 11:1-3

What is faith? What in your life requires the most faith in God? What are we hoping for that we have yet to see? The Christian life obviously requires faith. What role, though, does logic and reason play in our lives? Is it just to be discarded?

Romans 4:13-22

Abraham is said to be the father of us all. What does that mean to you? We are included in Abraham's heritage of faith. How do you see faith lived out in our faith community? Where do you think our community needs to have more faith?

For more discussion time:

The improbable story of Rudy Ruettiger has captivated people now for decades. Rudy was the third of fourteen children of a lower class family. He had undiagnosed dyslexia. He was 5 feet 6 inches tall. He walked on to the Notre Dame football team.

In the final game of his final season, on the final play his coach sent him into the game and he sacked the quarterback. His teammates put him on their shoulders and marched him around the field. It is an amazing story that requires the Suspension of Disbelief. Who would believe this improbable story?

But there's one important thing to note about Rudy's story: it's true.¹

Keep in mind, as we talk about the fantastic story of God and God's people, that it is true. It will require great faith and certainly the Suspension of Disbelief, but please understand, fantasy does not necessarily mean fiction.

The God Story is amazingly improbable and amazingly true.

There will be times in your true story when you will be forced to have great faith in a God who is calling you to the seemingly impossible. These will be some of the most important moments of your story. You will need to suspend your disbelief so you can be caught up in the amazing, surprising next chapter that God holds for you.

Once there was a man who brought his son to Jesus for healing (Mark 9:14-29). The son was plagued by a spirit that caused him great anguish and distress. The man asked Jesus, "If you can do anything, please help us!"

Jesus responded, "If I can do anything? All things are possible for the one who has faith." The father responds, "I believe, help my unbelief."

You may feel that way. There are parts of me that believe, parts of me that want to believe. But, if I am honest there are parts of me that don't. Our finite minds don't grasp the depth of God's power and majesty. We just don't understand fully.

The father's honest response lead him to suspending his disbelief and opening himself up to the unbelievable things that only God can do.

What are you having trouble believing? Where do you need help with your unbelief?

Closing Prayer

God, I want to fully live into the story you have for my life. Give me faith today to trust in you in the places in my life where I still can't see what you are up to. I believe; help my unbelief. Amen.

¹ Ruettiger's story is portrayed in the 1993 TriStar Pictures film *Rudy*.