



RISE TO THE TOP

PURPOSE

To illustrate that challenges can lift and strengthen us if we exercise faith and good works.

MATERIALS

- A quart glass jar with a lid
- Dried beans or rice
- A ping pong or golf ball



LESSON

1. Prior to the lesson:
 - a. Fill the jar 2/3 full with beans or rice.
2. Begin by removing the lid from the glass jar and placing the ping pong ball on top of the beans. Put the lid back on. Explain that sometimes everything seems to be going great and we find ourselves on top of the world.
3. Turn the jar upside down, burying the ping pong ball beneath the beans. Explain that life sometimes turns our life on its head and seems to bury us with problems. When this happens we can give up or we can pray for help and begin to be “a shaker and a mover”. Start shaking the bottle back and forth. The ball will rise quickly to the top.
4. Help your listeners understand that the Lord gives us challenges to help and strengthen us.
5. You may wish to share:
 - a. A statement Joseph Smith once made to his cousin, George A. Smith: “Never be discouraged. If I were sunk in the lowest pit of Nova Scotia, with the Rocky Mountains piled on me, I would hang on, exercise faith, and keep up good courage, and I would come out on top” (*Joseph Smith, an American Prophet*, 9).
 - b. Several scriptures:
 - i. Alma 36:3
 - ii. D&C 122:7
 - iii. D&C 58:2-4
 - c. Several instances from the life of Joseph who was sold into Egypt (Genesis 37, 39-41). These chapters wonderfully illustrate that those who exercise faith and go to work will eventually come out on top.
 - d. An experience where challenges have strengthened you.
 - e. The quote, *Opposition*, below.
6. Testify that problems can strengthen us if we exercise our faith and go to work.

OPPOSITION

Cripple him and you have a Sir Walter Scott. Bury him in the snows of Valley Forge, and you have a George Washington. Raise him in abject poverty, and you have an Abraham Lincoln. Subject him to bitter religious prejudice, and you have a Disraeli.

Strike him down with infantile paralysis and he becomes a Franklin D. Roosevelt, the only President of the United States to be elected to four terms. When he is a lad of 8, burn him so severely in a schoolhouse fire that the doctors say he will never walk again, and you have a Glenn Cunningham, who set the world record in 1934 for running a mile in 4 minutes and 6.7 seconds.

Deafen a genius composer who continues to compose some of the world's most beautiful music, and you have a Ludwig van Beethoven. Have him or her born black in a society filled with racial discrimination, and you have a Booker T. Washington, Harriet Tubman, Marian Anderson, George Washington Carver or Martin Luther King, Jr.

Have him born of parents who survived a Nazi concentration camp, paralyze him from the waist down when he is 4, and you have the incomparable concert violinist Itzhak Perlman. Call a slow learner, 'retarded' and write him off as uneducable, and you have an Albert Einstein.

Have a thalidomide child born with a dwarfed, twisted body without arms, and you have a Terry Wiles, who, with the aid of mechanical devices, learned to play the electric organ, steer a motorboat and paint. Amputate the cancer-ridden leg of a handsome young Canadian, and you have a Terry Fox, who vowed to run on one leg across the whole of Canada to raise \$1 million for cancer research. (Terry was forced to quit halfway when cancer invaded his lungs, but raised about \$20 million.)

Blind him and you have a Ray Charles, George Shearing, Stevie Wonder, Tom Sullivan, Alec Templeton or Hal Krents. Label him "too stupid to learn" and you have a Thomas Edison. Make him a "hopeless" alcoholic, and you have a Bill Wilson, founder of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Blind him at age 44, and you have John Milton, who, 16 years later wrote *Paradise Lost*. Call him dull and hopeless and flunk him in the sixth grade, and you have a Winston Churchill. Punish her with poverty and prejudice, and she may survive to become another Golda Meir. Pit her against sexual discrimination, and you have a Madame Curie. Tell a young boy who loved to sketch and draw that he has no talent, and you have a Walt Disney.

Call Him a lowly carpenter from an insignificant city. Spit on Him, humiliate Him, then crucify Him and you have Jesus Christ.