



Introduction

Many schools follow a programme of key values throughout the school year. These values can be an important framework for helping to define and validate the work of the school 'beyond the curriculum'. Each value can be used as the theme for collective worship, the focus for classroom reflection and the subject matter for main hall or quiet corner displays.

The Bible has so much to offer in this area of positive personal, relational and community values, and its timeless wisdom can help all schools pass on to the next generation the qualities of life that are most valuable and which, as Christians, we believe are not only God-given but also can be God-energised in our lives.

Preparation

What follows is a series of ideas linked to the value of '**Perseverance**'.

It includes: key themes to explore, a key Bible verse to use, key concepts to unpack, ideas for displays and reflective corners, as well as Bible story links with further connections to material on the Barnabas websites.

Development

1. Key themes to explore:

Not giving up

Try, try and try again

Sticking at a task; keep on keeping on

Seeing a job through to the end; exhibiting endurance

'No gain without pain'

Not being distracted or derailed from your ambitions

Success doesn't come easily; being prepared to pay the price; bearing the heat of the day

Keeping your eye on your goal - link **SEAL**: Going for goals

2. Key Bible verses

Christians often describe their spiritual life as a journey. Paul talks about the upward call of God in Christ: 'I run towards the goal, so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven' (Philippians



3:14, CEV). There are many possible diversions and temptations along the journey, which Christians are warned to resist. John Bunyan in his famous book *Pilgrim's Progress* captures this idea in his description of Christian's journey towards the heavenly city, in which he has to persevere through many dangers and trials. **N.B.** There is a fine [children's version of this story by Geraldine McCaughrean](#), which might be good to serialise to support this value.

For Christians there is the promise that Jesus goes before them as the pioneer and perfecter of faith: 'We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete' (Hebrews 12:2). There are many verses that encourage Christians to persevere:

'We must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us' (Hebrews 12:1).

'Keep your mind on Jesus... Then you won't get discouraged and give up' (Hebrews 12:3).

Paul, in his letter to Timothy, uses a series of images to help his readers – that of a soldier, of an athlete and of a farmer (2 Timothy 2:3-7). Each one needs dedication if they are to win the battle, complete the race, or produce a good harvest. Most good things in life only come with time, patience, dedicated effort and perseverance. This is also true in the realm of faith. For example, Jesus advises his followers not to give up in prayer (Luke 18:1-8).

In the Old Testament there are promises for those who persevere:

'The Lord gives strength to those who are weary... Those who trust the Lord will find new strength. They will be strong like eagles, soaring up on wings; they will walk and run without getting tired' (Isaiah 40:29-31).

Key verses:

'You know that many runners enter a race, but the only one of them wins the prize. So run to win!' (1 Corinthians 9:24).

Jesus said: 'Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you'. (Matthew 7:7).

3. Some words on perseverance

Many of the great achievements of the world were accomplished by tired and discouraged people who kept on working.

Age wrinkles the body. Quitting wrinkles the soul.
Douglas MacArthur

Edison failed 10000 times before he made the electric light. Do not be discouraged if you fail a few times.
Napoleon Hill



Energy and persistence conquer all things.
Benjamin Franklin

Stay the course, light a star,
Change the world where'er you are.
Richard Le Gallienne

Victory belongs to the most persevering.
Napoleon Bonaparte

Perseverance is a great element of success. If you only knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, you are sure to wake up somebody.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th.
Julie Andrews

By perseverance the snail reached the ark.
Charles H. Spurgeon

Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never, in nothing, great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense.
Winston Churchill

The only failure is not to try.
George Clooney

Our greatest joy is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.
Confucius

Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained.
Marie Curie

4. **Key concepts to unpack**

For children some applications of this value are most obviously worked out in: taking and preparing for SATS; working on a class project over several weeks; raising money for a good cause; training for sports day success.

To be successful requires the discipline of hard work in most areas of life. This might mean daily exercise and in extra homework time. Link this to a regular exercise routine each morning or the discipline of a diet.



What are the secrets to keeping going? In *Pilgrim's Progress* Christian catches a glimpse of the holy city; also he has friends who encourage him to keep going. How can we keep our eyes on the goal? Maybe the promise of a reward at the end helps? Or perhaps the best encouragement is to have friends alongside us?

Learning from nature can also be a great help in the area of perseverance. Growing some things from seed needs perseverance (regular attention, watering and feeding and so on) so maybe there could be a class project to grow something to accompany this value.

This could be linked to the parable of the Sower (Mark 4; Luke 8; Matthew 13). One version of this gives names for the seeds that underline perseverance, namely Mark (... time); Luke (-warm); Peter (... out) and Percy (-vere)! In particular Jesus talks about the seed among the thorns giving up (and not persevering).

The story of Robert the Bruce watching the spider is also a good one to explore the challenge of 'try, try and try again'

5. Ideas for a hall display or a reflective corner in a classroom

- Include a Bible open at a key verse
- Include an exercise manual; a revision timetable; a diet plan;
- Include a picture from *Pilgrim's Progress*
- Include a seed in a pot; and then a pot with a sprouting plant; and finally a pot with a flowering plant
- Include a sponsorship form
- Japanese symbol of perseverance is the Carp or Koi

Include some reflective questions:

- o *What helps you not to give up?*
- o *Who helps you to keep going?*
- o *How can I encourage others today to keep trying?*
- o *What's the hardest thing about sticking at a task?*

6. An idea for assembly/collective worship

[Every day , a special job to do](#) - linked to Jesus calling the disciples and with classroom follow-up

[Staying on task](#) - linked to the story of Jesus being tempted and with classroom follow-up

The story of the salmon returning to its breeding ground, swimming and leaping up waterfalls is a good one for perseverance



7. Ideas for classroom activities using Bible stories

Here is an outline for the classroom about the life and work of William Tyndale, who showed particular perseverance in producing his version of the Bible in English.

- [Read now](#)

The King James Bible (the AV), published 400 years ago in 2011, used a lot of Tyndale's version.

Here is a [download of the story of the lost sheep](#), in which the shepherd shows great perseverance in searching for what was lost, just as Christians believe God searches for us.