



**Helping Communities Heal:**

# Refugees

*A Crisis Response Curriculum*

# **Helping Refugee Children and Youth**

In this booklet:

**Our Questions and God's Responses**

**Six Trauma-Informed Lessons**

**Resource Articles to guide and equip Christian teachers, volunteers  
and parents**

# Helping Communities Heal: Refugees

A Crisis Response Children's Curriculum

Christ-centered, age-appropriate lessons  
for children

(ages 8-13)

Who can teach this course?

Christian volunteers who work with refugee children and young teens

Christian parents helping their own children in a refugee situation

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Dedicated to the brave refugees  
around the world who have  
left their homes because of  
war, persecution, a natural  
disaster, or economic crisis.  
May God strengthen and  
strongly support you.

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David C Cook  
Global Mission  
4050 Lee Vance View  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918 U.S.A.

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# About These Resources

## Our Questions and God's Response

When the unimaginable happens, we cry out to God for answers and explanations. We can find help for our questions and our children's questions in God's Word. Even though we may not know the answers to the "Why?" questions, we can know for certain that God is in control. This section contains questions that people who go through devastating situations often ask. In many cases, God does not give us complete answers, but His Word does provide help and comfort. Read this section several times and be prepared to respond in your own words if these questions come up.

## Six Trauma-Informed Lessons

These lessons were developed to help children and young teens who have become refugees begin to heal. Many are emotionally vulnerable right now. They may have lost homes and possessions, friends, and all that is familiar. They may have friends or family members who have been left behind or died. They may wonder if they will have enough food and water in the weeks to come. They need to know that God has not forsaken them.

Children who need these lessons most may not have access to school supplies like paper, pencils and crayons, so these lessons do not use these things. Instead they will use only supplies that are commonly available and free, such as leaves, sticks, small pebbles, or a piece of cloth.

These lessons are written for a Christian volunteer or teacher to use with a group of children. The lessons are easy to follow and teach. Christian parents can also teach these lessons to their children by following the special instructions with any group activities.

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## Resource Articles

These articles are written by experts in their field who work with children who have experienced tragedy and trauma. The articles represent the best practices in these fields, but the articles are not scholarly or difficult to understand. They are written to help equip a volunteer, teacher, or a parent handle difficult issues that children may be experiencing. The articles might also be helpful to adults who are struggling with loss, fear, and death.

**There are easy-to-follow clues for teaching these lessons.**

### Clue One

At the beginning of the first 5 lessons, you will see an outline of the lesson as a short conversation between God and a child. The sixth lesson is a prayer walk and will follow a different pattern.

### Clue Two

Information just for the teacher or parents will have regular type that looks like what you see here. Directions in this type will give you information to help you guide the children through the lessons. Do not read this to your children. You will sometimes be asked to put this information into your own words.

### Clue Three

**Information for you to read directly to the children will be bold like this. You can read this directly to your children, or you can put the information into your own words.**

### Clue Four

- **Questions for you to ask the children will have a dot in front of it and be slightly indented, like you see here. The questions will be in bold type.**

Sometimes you will be given a suggested answer following the question. It will look like this. Do not share this answer unless your children are unable to answer the question. The answer is there to guide you.

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## **Clue Five**

These lessons often suggest active ways to involve your children in the lesson. Do not skip these activities! Children learn best through activity and personal involvement. When you use the activities, your children will be more likely to put what they have learned into practice.

If you are using the lessons with just 1 child in a family setting, the lesson will give you tips on how you and your child can do the activities together.

A prayer for teachers and parents who will use this guide:

*Holy Spirit, fill these teachers and parents so that in all they say and do, they will bring Jesus into the lives of hurting and questioning children and young teens. May the words of their mouths and the meditation of their hearts be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, their strong Rock and their Redeemer. Amen.*





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# Our Questions and God's Responses

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*In this world you will have trouble.  
But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

John 16:33b

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This section provides guidance to Christian teachers and parents as you help those children who are refugees. Those you help will have experienced varying degrees of personal loss. They may be fearful or hopeless about what the future holds. This section will help you with the hard questions that come from hurting people, questions for which there are no simple answers. These questions and responses may help by providing some biblical principles.

This is not an exhaustive list of questions or of Scriptures. It will, however, provide a starting point for comfort and answers as you care for the refugee children and young teens around you. May the Holy Spirit use these to speak to you! You can add other scriptures that come to mind in the space provided.

People in crisis often ask questions that will fall into 3 main categories:

## **1. Who is God?**

These questions ask things like: If God loves us, why did I have to leave my home? How can I believe God has not forsaken me?

## **2. Why did this happen?**

These questions might sound like these: Why did so many people have to flee? Why didn't God stop the war or persecution? Why did a natural disaster happen? Is God punishing us for something?

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### 3. How can I go on living?

Some of these questions may be: Why did God spare me? How can I go on living? What happened to my family members who died? What happens to children when they die?

You may be struggling with these questions, too. God encourages us to share our true feelings, questions, and doubts with Him. There is so much that we cannot understand, but we can trust that He is good and loving, and He can comfort you and the children you teach.

God's people around the world are praying for you, and refugees everywhere. God has a special place in His heart for oppressed and displaced people. The Bible is clear that He loves them and expects His people to help care for them in their time of need.

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# 1. Who Is God?

Times of crisis can cause us to ask: Can we depend upon the trustworthiness of God? Can we trust that what He says about Himself in the Bible is true?

The verses in this section all relate to the character of God and to His faithfulness. As the following verses illustrate—God is totally trustworthy and good.

## **If God loves us, how could He allow this to happen?**

Bad things like suffering, war, disease, and death happen in our world. God created the world to be perfect. But when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, it allowed evil and sin into the world. The world experiences the results of sin and some of that can be seen in wars, persecution, hardships, and disasters. God is so great and good, however, that He can bring good even out of terrible things. The following verses show us who God is, and how He loves us.

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*For great is his love toward us,  
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.  
Praise the LORD.  
Psalm 117:2*

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*Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.  
Psalm 62:8*

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*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.  
His love endures forever.*  
Psalm 136:1

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*He who did not spare his own Son,  
but gave him up for us all—  
how will he not also, along with him,  
graciously give us all things?  
For I am convinced that neither death nor life,  
neither angels nor demons,  
neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,  
neither height nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God that is  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.*  
Romans 8:32, 38–39

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Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

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## How can I believe God has not forsaken me?

It is not uncommon to feel alone or wonder if God has deserted you when going through a crisis, especially when you have been forced to leave your home or country. But regardless of how you feel, you can trust what God says in His word.

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*God has said, "Never will I leave you;  
never will I forsake you."  
Hebrews 13:5b*

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*"For I know the plans I have for you,"  
declares the LORD,  
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future."  
Jeremiah 29:11*

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*For God so loved the world that  
he gave his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish  
but have eternal life.  
John 3:16*

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*Know therefore that the LORD your God is God;  
he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love  
to a thousand generations of those who love him  
and keep his commandments.  
Deuteronomy 7:9*

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*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*  
Isaiah 41:10

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Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

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## 2. Why Did This Happen?

**Why did this happen? How do I pray?**

“Why?” questions are very difficult to answer. Because we are mortal beings and God is infinite, we are not fully capable of understanding the “big picture.” Some people say it is like looking at the back of a piece of embroidered cloth or tapestry. The pattern and beauty of the front is not visible on the back. The back looks more like a mess of knots and threads than a picture. While God sees the completed beautiful picture, all we can see is the knotted, messy parts. It is a matter of perspective. We can remember that while we do not understand, we can still trust and praise God because He is good, loving, merciful, and at work.

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Although some believers think that God does not welcome such questions, there are many psalms that include questions about why certain things are happening. When praying seems difficult or impossible, you can read or recite the psalms as prayers. Many emotions are in the psalms, from the most joyful elation to the darkest pit of depression and fear. Here are some verses that may help you begin to pray:

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*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.  
We do not know what we ought to pray for,  
but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans  
that words cannot express.*

*Romans 8:26*

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*Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God.  
Give me relief from my distress;  
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.*

*Psalm 4:1*

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*Why, Lord, do you stand far off?  
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?  
But you, O God, do see trouble and grief;  
you consider it to take it in hand.  
The victim commits himself to you;  
you are the helper of the fatherless.  
You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted;  
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry.*

*Psalm 10:1, 14, 17*



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*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from the words of my groaning?  
O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, and am not silent.  
Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the praise of Israel.  
In you our fathers put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.  
They cried to you they and were saved; in you they  
trusted and were not disappointed*  
*Psalm 22:1–5*

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Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

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### **Why did so many people die? I hate death!**

If you left your country because of war or a natural disaster, you may have witnessed a lot of death. There is no easy answer as to why people are killed or injured. But the spiritual answer is that death, brought into the world by Adam and Eve's sin, is the cause. Death did not happen before sin came into our world. It is okay to hate death—it not the way things were originally created to be! God cares greatly when one of followers faces death. Death seems to be in control, but death will not have the last say. God will overcome death.

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*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.  
Psalm 116:15*

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*[God] will swallow up death forever.  
The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all  
faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people  
from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.  
Isaiah 25:8*

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*Our natural bodies don't last forever. They must be dressed  
with what does last forever. What dies must be dressed  
with what does not die. In fact, that is going to happen.  
What does not last will be dressed with what lasts forever.  
What dies will be dressed with what does not die.  
Then what is written will come true.  
It says, "Death has been swallowed up. It has lost the battle."  
"Death, where is the victory you thought you had?  
Death, where is your sting?"  
1 Corinthians 15:53–55, NIRV*

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Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

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## Why didn't God intervene?

See notes under: "Who is God?" Whether you had to leave your country because of war, persecution, economic crisis, political unrest, or a natural disaster, you may wonder why God did not intervene in the situation. Since the fall of man back in the Garden of Eden, creation—and the people who are part of that creation—reflect the consequences of sin on earth. Sin affects people and nature. God gave man freedom to choose to live according to His Word or to choose to live in ways that cause pain to themselves and others so that man's relationship with God would be real. He created a world in which choices—both good and evil—have real consequences. Sin is the cause of natural disasters, war, persecution, sickness, suffering, and death. One day everyone will face God to account for their actions. Thankfully, through Jesus, God has made a way for each person to be set free from sin.

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*The creation waits in eager expectation  
for the sons of God to be revealed.  
For the creation was subjected to frustration,  
not by its own choice, but by the will of  
the one who subjected it, in hope that  
the creation itself will be liberated from  
its bondage to decay and brought into  
the glorious freedom of the children  
of God. We know that the whole creation has  
been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right  
up to the present time.  
Romans 8:19–22*

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*I have told you these things, so that in me you may  
have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But  
take heart! I have overcome the world.*

*John 16:33*

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*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise,  
as some understand slowness.  
He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish,  
but everyone to come to repentance.  
But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.  
The heavens will disappear with a roar;  
the elements will be destroyed by fire,  
and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*

*2 Peter 3:9–10*

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Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

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## Why did this happen—are we being punished for something?

While God has used exile as judgment against nations in Old Testament times, it does not mean that refugees are being punished. The Bible contains many words of hope and comfort for refugees. He promises to be with them and provide for their needs. Having to leave one's home or country—due to war, persecution, economic crisis, or a natural disaster—reflects the results of sin on creation. Humanity's fall into sin affects the world around us.

We must remember that everyone in every nation is a sinner and is dependent upon God's grace and mercy. There is no difference between refugees and people in the rest of the world. We all deserve God's punishment for our sin, but God sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment for us.

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*As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one."  
Romans 3:10*

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*This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus  
Christ to all who believe.*

*There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short  
of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace  
through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

*Romans 3:22–24*

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*For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone,  
declares the Sovereign LORD.*

*Ezekiel 18:32a*

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*[Your Father in heaven] causes his sun to rise  
on the evil and the good,  
and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

*Matthew 5:45b*

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*For God so loved the world that he gave  
his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him  
shall not perish but have eternal life.  
For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn  
the world,  
but to save the world through him.  
John 3:16–17*

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Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

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## 3. How Can I Go on Living?

### **Why did I have to leave? How do I go on?**

You may wonder if you will ever feel normal again. You may feel that you cannot stop crying. You may be numb and think that you will never feel anything but sadness. You may feel that you cannot even pray. You may feel that there is no hope.

What you feel right now is not how you will feel forever. God can heal your heart and help you to begin to enjoy life again. This is not fast, nor easy, but God is with you and will help you. If you wonder why you had to leave, it is possible that God has work for you to do, lessons for you to learn or share, or joy for you to yet experience.

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*Weeping may remain for a night,  
but rejoicing comes in the morning.  
Psalm 30:5b*

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*And we know that in all things God works for the  
good of those who love him,  
who have been called according to his purpose.  
Romans 8:28*

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*I remember how I suffered and wandered.  
I remember how bitter my life was.  
I remember it very well.  
My spirit is very sad deep down inside me.  
But here is something else I remember.  
And it gives me hope. The LORD loves us very much.  
So we haven't been completely destroyed.  
His loving concern never fails.  
His great love is new every morning.  
LORD, how faithful you are! I say to myself,  
"The LORD is everything I will ever need.  
So I will put my hope in him."  
Lamentations 3:19–24, NIV*

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Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

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## **Where are my family members who died? What happens to children when they die?**

The situation you left in your country may have involved the deaths of loved ones and even children. It is difficult when a loved one dies. As noted in sections above, when sin entered our world, it brought pain and death to everyone. We do know that God loves every person and made a way through Jesus for all who believe to be with Him forever. The Bible says that what happens after death depends on the choices we have made in this life. If we have chosen to accept God's free gift of salvation through Jesus, we go to be with Him. If not, we will be forever separated from God's love. However, God alone knows each heart, and even a last minute cry to Him can be heard. We know that God loves children and Jesus welcomed them and used them as an example of simple faith.

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*He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*

*And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.*

*Mark 10:14b-16*

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*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*

*John 11:25*

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*He will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
There will be no more death or mourning  
or crying or pain, for the old order of  
things has passed away.  
Revelation 21:4*

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*Then [the thief on the cross] said,  
"Jesus, remember me when you  
come into your kingdom."  
Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today  
you will be with me in paradise."  
Luke 23:42-43*

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Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

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# Understanding Refugee Children and Youth

According to the United Nations, a refugee is someone who has been forced to leave his or her country because of fear of persecution, war, or violence due to race, religion, nationality, political opinions, or ethnic or social groups. In 2014, there were over 19 million refugees around the world. About 40% of them, close to 8 million, are children or youth.

Refugee children and youth have both benefits and challenges. The benefits you may see in refugee children and youth include:

- Resiliency in the midst of great change
- Doing well in school and socially
- Good coping skills for stress and unexpected outcomes
- Knowing how to rely on a social group during stressful times
- Feeling more in control when facing trauma than other children

The challenges you may see in refugee children and youth include:

- Loss of childhood, lack of ability to play
- Additional responsibility within the family
- Difficulty forming deep attachments and trust
- More street-smart than their years
- Struggles with communication
- Feelings of hopelessness

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## Signs of Stress

Refugee children and youth experience many different types of stress due to exposure to war and unrest, loss of home, malnutrition, separation from family members and friends, and lack of routine. This may result in a form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and other mental health issues.

Here are some of the symptoms that show a child or youth needs help:

- Anxiety
- Nightmares
- Insomnia
- Withdrawal from interaction with others
- Depression
- Relationship problems
- Behavioral problems
- School difficulties
- Inability to remain focused and attentive

A child or youth who shows these symptoms most likely needs professional help.

## How to Help

- **Create a New Normal:** Help the child or youth find patterns of what is normal in the new culture.
- **Establish Routines:** Having stability and predictability for things such as when and where they eat, going to school, and having playtime, creates a feeling of safety.
- **Help Families Settle:** Aid families in finding and settling into more normal living conditions. As the family settles, it will help the child or youth as well.
- **Create opportunities** in their new environment where they can feel competent

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## **Create opportunities for children and youth to express their culture.**

Children might enjoy games, dancing, music, drawing, painting, telling stories, and singing.

Youth might enjoy group activities such as sports, group discussions, and youth-led projects to help the community.

For more ways to care for refugee children and youth, read the “Teaching Across Cultures” and “Meeting the Needs of Cross-Cultural Kids” Resource Articles.

This article was compiled from information from the following references:

<http://www.brycs.org/>

[http://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/refugee\\_children\\_guidelines\\_on\\_protection\\_and\\_care.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/refugee_children_guidelines_on_protection_and_care.pdf)

Dona M Abbott MA, LLP, Branch Director, Refugee and Immigrant Services

# Teaching Across Cultures

Jesus told Peter in John 21:15 to “Feed My lambs.” Every teacher of God’s Word wants to do that well. But what if your lambs are so different from you that you do not know the best way to feed them? What if they are from a different country or culture? What if their life experiences are nothing like your own?

Often people believe that teachers only need to “teach the Bible” and it will be understood by anyone, no matter their culture. Unfortunately this is not true. Culture is such a deep part of our lives that most people do not realize how much it affects their behavior, thoughts, and feelings. Learning about culture will help you to reach the hearts and minds of your students.

## Defining Culture

Most people think that culture only refers to language, learned customs, and traditions. However, experts agree that culture is much more than these visible signs. Culture refers to the total way of life of a group of people. It is passed from generation to generation.

Culture can be divided into 2 basic categories: seen and unseen. This can be illustrated by comparing culture to an iceberg. The visible part of the iceberg above the water is the part of culture that is seen. The larger part of the iceberg, hidden below the surface, is the part of culture that is unseen. What is above the water points to what is below the water.



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## Teaching Cross-Culturally

Our best model for cross-cultural teaching is Jesus Himself. He lived among us. He taught in ways that helped people understand Him. In the same way, if you teach students from another culture, it is important to learn about their culture. Teach in ways that help your students understand so your love for them and for Christ is seen and felt.

### Tips for Teaching Cross-Culturally

- Spend time with your students and their families outside of class. Learn something about their way of life. Visit their homes and share a meal! Learn their words and expressions and use them as you teach.
- Study the “above the water” part of your students’ culture because it will help you understand the “below the water” part.
- Realize that you will never fully learn the unseen part of your students’ culture, but make an effort!
- Become aware of your own culture—biases, values, language, slang and figures of speech, and examples—and try to avoid them in your teaching.

### Tips for Teaching Multiple Cultures in 1 Class

- Be aware of your students’ different cultures so you can respect their needs and differences as you teach.
- Teach “internationally.” Refer to the different cultures often. Use words that all understand. Focus on what is common. Build understanding and community between the cultures.
- Learn about Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs) and how you can meet their needs. (See Meeting the Needs of Cross-Cultural Kids article.)

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## Cross-Cultural Communication

There will be times when your students do not understand you. There will be times when their behavior confuses or upsets you. You may have a conflict with a student or his parents. When this happens, the unseen parts of the 2 cultures are probably part the problem. You cannot avoid these problems, but your awareness of cultural clashes may ease understanding.

Most people react to these struggles by thinking that their own culture is right or better. This is normal, but it is sinful. Understanding that there are unseen differences can help you approach the problem with patience and love. This will also help you to share truths from Scripture and create a safe environment for heart change.

### Tips for Cross-Cultural Communication

- Remember that the unseen parts of both cultures are always present, even if they are not obvious.
- As you learn about the other culture, be attentive to the unseen parts of your own culture so you can begin to see differences.
- While there are things others can learn from your culture, it is not your place to change their culture.
- Humility is the key; remember that you have as much to learn from them as they do from you!

The Iceberg Diagram is a modified version of Weaver's original Cultural Iceberg Model; quoted in Howard Culbertson; "Iceberg Analogy of Culture," Cultural Anthropology Course Materials; (Southern Nazarene University, 1 Nov 2006); Web; 1 Mar. 2012.

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# Meeting the Needs of Cross-Cultural Kids

Students who live in 2 or more cultures for a large part of their childhood are called Cross-Cultural Kids or CCKs. The types of CCKs include:

- Children of immigrants and refugees
- Multi-cultural or multi-racial children (parents are of 2 cultures or races)
- International adoptees
- Third culture kids (parents are military/missionaries/diplomats/businessmen)
- Educational CCKs (students who cross cultural, social, or economic barriers for school)

Domestic adoptees, foster children, and children of divorced parents can also share some characteristics with CCKs. CCKs are common in today's world. They all share certain rewards and challenges.

## Rewards of being a CCK:

- Child has a global worldview
- Child has ease in cross-cultural communication
- Child has familiarity with multiple cultures and languages

## Challenges of being a CCK:

### Constant Cultural Transitions

Entering another culture is a process where many of a person's original cultural rules do not work. This can cause confusion, fear, and anger. A good transition process should lead to a sense of stability, security, and belonging. (See Resource Article "Teaching Across Cultures.") Understanding the cultural transition process can help the CCK to feel normal. Refugee children, because they have



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fled their countries often under traumatic circumstances, may take more time to adjust to a new culture.

The cultural transition process is like grief because it involves change and loss. There are 4 stages that vary in length, sometimes up to 1–2 years or longer. The CCK may go through these stages more than once.

**Tourist**—the differences are seen as fresh, new, and exciting. Common feelings are happiness, awe, and gratitude.

**Disenchantment**—the differences are seen as threatening. Common feelings are superiority, anger, frustration, and isolation.

**Resolution**—the differences are seen as acceptable. Common feelings are humility, patience, and readiness to learn.

**Adjustment**—the differences are seen as normal. Common feelings are belonging, peace, and understanding. Often a “third culture” is developed between the CCK and her immediate community or family.

CCKs often go through major changes daily. For example, a CCK who is a refugee in a new country is in transition. He experiences the process daily going to school and returning home. The values, expectations, and languages often change for him 2–3 times a day.

Sadly, CCKs can develop unhealthy patterns. For example: she feels that sudden endings are natural and that everything is temporary.

CCKs learn to adapt to the visible parts of their host culture, but they may not understand the unseen parts such as values like honor and shame.

### **Sense of Identity**

Due to cultural transitions, the CCK's sense of identity can be affected in the following ways:

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**Initial Reaction:** CCKs can respond to the new culture in any of 4 ways:

- Try to act and be seen as the same
- Try to act and be seen as completely different
- Try to hide and not interact
- Develop an international identity that is a blend of the 2 cultures and acknowledges their complex lives. This is the best reaction.

**National Identity:** CCKs typically do not have a strong sense of national identity with either their parents nor the new culture.

**Sense of Belonging:** Because CCKs may adapt to cultures, they may believe that they will have no difficulty going back to their parents' home culture in their teen or early adult years. Often they discover that they do not fit into their parents' culture. Questions come up for the such as: "Where do I belong?" "Where am I from?" and "Who am I?"

### **Language Barriers**

CCKs often deal with a language barrier daily which can lead to frustration with simple daily tasks. They are unable to share their thoughts or desires. They cannot express their feelings or respond effectively. They are unable to joke.

While some CCKs may feel confident within their original heart language, the new daily language challenges can harm a student's view of himself. He may feel that his identity is being lost, and a new one is being forced upon him.

If the CCK begins to lose the parent's heart language as she goes to school and makes new friends, it can create division and tension in the family. Language is an important part of culture.

### **Unresolved Grief**

CCKs go through cycles of transition, separation, and loss. Even if the CCK stays in 1 place, others in the community often

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transition in and out, causing the CCK to live constantly changing relationships. With every loss, the stages of grief are felt. This unresolved grief is caused by factors such as:

- Hidden losses—status, lifestyle, possessions, and relationships
- Feeling the lack of permission and time to grieve and process
- Lack of comfort

Grief is a normal part of the life of a CCK. It is good for grief to be expressed and processed in positive ways. Unresolved grief can show up later in unhealthy ways such as anger, depression, and fear of intimacy.

### **10 Tips for Helping CCKs**

1. Be aware of where your students and families are in the cultural transition process.
2. Help CCKs to understand culture and the transition process.
3. Model kindness. Be humble, curious, and begin discussions about cultures.
4. Help students and parents understand rewards and challenges of being a CCK.
5. Be aware of each student's identity struggles. Affirm the child's international identity.
6. Teach students about healthy grief and how to deal with frequent losses. Help them to find words for their feelings about their transitions.
7. Offer comfort that is non-judgmental, real, and meaningful. Listen without trying to solve problems. Allow the CCKs to share their stories and feelings with you.
8. Be aware of the difficulties of multiple languages. Celebrate heart languages, and learning the new language. If possible, teach to all language groups.
9. Encourage students to share their cross-cultural experiences through the arts, storytelling, and discussion. Invite parents to attend, when appropriate.
10. Create opportunities for community and friendship among your students and families.

# I Can Trust God, Even though We Had to Leave Our Home

Lesson 1

Outline for Today

1. *I say to God:* "I am so scared because I had to leave my home!"

2. *God says to me:* "Do not be afraid. I am here."

3. *I say to God:* "I will trust You when I go through life's storms."



## SUPPLIES

- Leaves, grass, or small stones the children will gather during lesson

## 1. I say to God, "I am so scared because I had to leave my home!"

As you do these lessons, it is important that you create an atmosphere of trust with your children. You may not have all the answers to their questions. You may also have fears and questions. It is okay. Together you and your children can learn to trust God through the difficulties you are experiencing.

As you begin this lesson, explain to your children that you will talk today about what has happened. God is a caring God. He knows how terrible it is when people must leave their home or country because of war, political unrest, a natural disaster, or persecution.

He is in control. He is much stronger than anything you face. Let your children know that today you will learn a story about Jesus that shows He is with you, even when something very scary happens. Begin by allowing any children who are interested to tell their own story of what they have experienced.

- **What happened to you and your family as you had to leave?**

Allow the children a few minutes to share their stories, and then share that the Lord will be with them. Read the following verses aloud:

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*Though the mountains be shaken  
and the hills be removed,  
yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken  
nor my covenant of peace be removed,”  
says the LORD, who has compassion on you.  
Isaiah 54:10*

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*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and when you pass through the rivers, they will not  
sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you  
will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.  
Isaiah 43:2*

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*The eternal God is your refuge, and  
underneath are the everlasting arms.  
Deuteronomy 33:27*

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## 2. God says to me, "Do not be afraid. I am here."

Now I will tell you a Bible story from the book of Mark. In this true story, people felt a great deal of fear. The fear was real. The people in the story could have died.

Jesus had been teaching a large crowd of people and the people began to get hungry. So Jesus fed over 5,000 people using 5 loaves and 2 fish. His disciples, or followers, were amazed. Everyone had enough to eat and there were 12 baskets of food left over. The disciples wondered who Jesus was. He was a man, yet a man could not do what Jesus did.

Jesus told His disciples to go across the large lake. The disciples headed across the lake in a boat. Jesus was not with them. He told the disciples good-bye and went up into the hills by Himself to pray.

Late that night the disciples were in the boat in the middle of the lake. They were in serious trouble. They were rowing hard and struggling against the wind and high waves. Even though these were men who were used to being in boats, they may have been afraid because of the waves and the wind. The boat was probably rocking violently. The disciples may have even felt as if they were going to fall out.

Now here comes the amazing part. Right in the middle of the night, Jesus came toward the boat. He was walking on the water! The disciples saw Him, and they were very, very scared. They thought He was a ghost. But Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Take courage. I am here." Jesus climbed into the boat and the wind stopped. Jesus could control the wind!

The disciples still did not understand completely who Jesus was, but they were beginning to see the truth. Only the One True God is the master of nature. Jesus could calm the sea and the wind. He was a man, but He was much more than a man. He is God's Son.

The disciples probably felt afraid when they were fighting the wind on that lake in the middle of the night. We may be afraid because we had to leave our homes and do not know what will happen next. But Jesus can help calm our fears. Jesus is in control. Just like He told the disciples, He is with us.

### 3. I say to God, "I will trust You when I go through life's storms."

Jesus speaks the same words to us when we are afraid because something bad happened and we had to leave our home. He tells us, "Do not be afraid. Take courage. I am here." I am going to ask you a hard question. Think about your answer for a moment before responding.

- **Why does Jesus allow wars, persecution, and natural disasters to happen?**

Allow the children to share their thoughts. When they have finished, add to what they have said by putting the following information into your own words.

**The Bible tells us that we will have troubles in this life but that Jesus is greater than this world.**

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*In this world you will have trouble.  
But take heart! I have overcome the world.  
John 16:33b*

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Back in the beginning when God first created the world, everything was perfect. There were no wars or disease or death. Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, lived in a beautiful and safe place called the Garden of Eden. The Bible tells us that death was brought into the world when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. When they sinned, it changed

everything. They had to leave their beautiful home. The ground began to grow weeds. Animals began to kill people and each other. People had to struggle day after day to make a living. Because sin entered the world, everything eventually dies. On the earth, death seems to be in control. But death will not have the last say. God will overcome death. The Bible says,

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*The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*  
*1 Corinthians 15:26*

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The Bible tells us that everything in our world is waiting to be freed from decay and death (Romans 8:18–25). Christians look forward to the time when God will make the earth perfect again, the way it was at creation before sin changed everything. There will be no more wars or people hurting one another. There will be no more death! And, best of all, everyone who receives Jesus as Lord will have a perfect home with God.

Sometimes with difficult questions like the one below, an answer will be printed following the question. Do not share this answer with your children until they have suggested answers. Then fill in ideas they have missed.

- **The Bible tells us that Jesus is with us in the storms of life. What are some ways we can feel His presence with us in troubled times?**

Bible verses we have memorized come into our minds and give us comfort. Other people surround us with love and care, and we know God is using them to help us. Sometimes when we are quiet, we can hear Jesus' words in our hearts. A pastor's sermon might contain exactly the words we need to hear. Maybe God will use this lesson to calm our fears.



**In our Bible story, Jesus calmed the wind that was like a storm. Not all big storms are at sea. There are different kinds of storms. Storms are hard things like disasters that hit without warning and take away everything we loved. Storms are difficult experiences like having to leave our homes and start new lives in another country. Storms are things in our lives that scare us! When we go through these storms, Jesus will be with us. He tells us, just like He told the disciples, "Do not be afraid. Take courage. I am here."**

Ask the children to think about storms they have had. Give them 2 minutes to walk around outside. For every storm they can think of, ask them to pick up a small stone or leaf. Once they all have an item, tell them to get into groups of 3 and briefly share what storm each stone or leaf represents to them. After they have shared, they should lay the item or items on the ground in the middle of their group. When everyone has finished, ask 1 person in each group to pick everything up. Everyone should walk together to throw the items away. As they throw them away, they should whisper this prayer 3 times, "I will trust You, Jesus, when I go through life's storms."

If you are leading just 1 child through this lesson, do this activity with your child. Spend a couple of minutes sharing together about your storms. End by throwing away your items as you say the prayer together quietly 3 times.

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# Helping Children and Youth Cope with Worry

Worry is sometimes called anxiety or fear. It consists of uncomfortable feelings like being tense, nervous, or panicky. Bodily signs of worry include increased heart rate, an upset stomach, sweaty palms, shaky hands, dizziness, and headaches. Some children develop nervous habits such as nail-biting, hair twirling, knuckle cracking, or fidgety legs.

## Common Worries:

- World events like natural disasters, war, terrorism, and disease
- Performance—how they are doing at school or as part of a team
- Appearance—how they look
- Social problems—making and keeping friends, being bullied, or feeling left out
- Safety for self and loved ones
- Death

## When Worry Is a Problem:

- When worry is age-inappropriate (for example when children or teens fear monsters, the dark, or thunder and lightning)
- When worry is so strong that it is very upsetting to the child or teen
- When worry interferes with relationships and daily activities such as school or play

Re-living a traumatic experience, being easily startled or frightened, or avoiding situations that are reminders of a trauma may be signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This needs professional help.

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## How You Can Help:

Listen with empathy. Your children's worries are very real to them, even if they seem trivial to adults. Before they can tackle their worries, they need to feel supported and understood.

Share the facts. Sometimes children and teens worry because of misinformation or a lack of understanding. When they have questions about big issues such as the future or missing relatives, provide them accurate information and calmly explain what adults are doing to help.

Share the "big picture" perspective. When children and young teens worry about small things, point out that many problems are temporary and solvable, and they will have other opportunities to try again. Teach them to be strong and hopeful.

If your child or young teen does not improve by talking about fears and getting information, it may be necessary to take him or her to a counselor or health care worker. However, most children and teens walk through their grief and their fears by talking about their concerns with a caring adult.

Help them problem solve. Talk through problems and help your children and young teens come up with solutions, but do not solve their problems for them.

Offer comfort and reassurance. Sometimes when children are worried, they need a hug, a talk, or time together doing something fun or positive. The prayer walk in Lesson 6 is an example.

Teach them to relax. Teach young people how to slow their heart rates and relax their bodies by deep breathing, imagining their favorite place or memory, or tensing then relaxing muscles in their arms, legs, neck, and shoulders.

Help them think positive. Teach children and teens how to talk back to their worries. They can tell themselves why their lives are in God's hands. Even having to leave their home can never separate them from His love.

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Help them face fear. This course does not teach children or young teens to ignore the truth about the bad things that happened. Instead, it encourages them to face those fears by putting their confidence in God.

Read the Bible and pray together. This course is filled from beginning to end with prayer and God's promises. Children and teens can give their worries to God.

Be a good role model. Set a good example by your response to what happened. Show your children and young teens that you are confident and trust God to help you.



# God Listens to My Fears

## Lesson 2

### Outline for Today

1. *I say to God:* "I am afraid bad things will keep happening."
2. *God says to me:* "I care about your fears and what you are feeling."
3. *I say to God:* "I will share my feelings with You and listen for Your voice."



#### SUPPLIES

- None

### 1. I say to God, "I am afraid bad things will keep happening."

You may have experienced some terrible things in your country or in the time since you had to leave. War. Unrest. A natural disaster. All of these things can make you frightened that something else bad might happen. There are many people who care for you and want to help you.

- **Maybe relief workers, doctors, or others have helped you or someone you know. Share a story about someone who has helped you.**

After your students have shared, read or tell the following story. This story is compiled from several different refugee stories to protect the refugees.

Ahmed was 12 when he had to leave his country. His younger sister and brother were only 6 and 3. One day, when Ahmed was playing with friends, he heard loud noises a short distance away. His father ran toward the group of boys and yelled at them all to run home.

Some men were going through the town and taking prisoners, and shooting those who resisted. The men were especially targeting Christians like Ahmed's family.

Ahmed and his family stayed hidden within their home. As they huddled together, Ahmed's mother tried to comfort the younger children. His father kept watch through a small crack in the door. Just when all hope seemed lost, the bad men left but everyone knew they would be back.

Over the next day Ahmed's parents made quick plans to leave this place that was no longer safe. They packed a few clothes on their backs and quickly left the home at night so no one could follow them.

After 2 long weeks of walking every day, they arrived at a refugee camp. The camp was crowded with others who had fled too. There was not enough room, so they crowded into a tent with 2 other families who had fled from their town. There was not enough food, so Ahmed was hungry all the time. There was no school.

Eventually, Ahmed's family traveled to another country to live with some cousins. It was crowded there too. It was hard for his father to find enough work to feed the family. So Ahmed began selling small packages of tissues each day at the park. The little money he earned helped feed his family.

Ahmed still misses his home and friends and school. But he and his family are thankful that God provided a way for them to live someplace that was safe. He is learning the new language and has even made a couple of new friends. He has

hope that he will get to go back to school one day and things will get better.

- How do you think Ahmed felt when his father rushed the family into hiding? When he had to leave his home? When he did not know where they would get enough food?
- What are some things God has done to help Ahmed and his family?

Ahmed must have worried that he or someone in his family would be hurt or die. Stop now and have the children pray for those who may be worried.

**I am going to share another story from the Bible about a boy and his mother who had to leave their home and face death. You will hear how God was with them.**

The fighting in the household began soon after Hagar found out she was going to have a baby. Here is the problem. Hagar was not the first wife to Abraham, the father of her baby. She was only a servant in the household, a foreigner. Abraham's first wife was Sarah. But Sarah was not able to have children.

At first, Sarah had thought it would be a great idea for Abraham to have a baby with Hagar. But when it actually happened, it did not seem like such a good idea anymore.

When Hagar's baby was born, she called him Ishmael, a name that means, "God hears." Ishmael enjoyed being the only son of his very old father, Abraham. But one day a miracle happened—even though Sarah was really old, God gave her a baby too. This made Sarah very happy. Because this new son, Isaac, was the son of Abraham's first wife, Ishmael did not like this new baby and he let everyone know it.

You can imagine that neither of the mothers was very happy. Sarah complained to Abraham. She wanted Hagar



and Ishmael to leave. This upset Abraham terribly. He loved Ishmael. But God told him that He would take care of Ishmael. So, Abraham packed some food and water for Hagar and Ishmael, and sent them away.

Into the desert they went. Both of them were sad. They were refugees because they had been forced to leave their home. Although she did not say this to Ishmael, Hagar was sure they would die. When their water ran out, she settled Ishmael under a bush where he could at least have shade. Then she moved away from him a little because she did not want to watch him die.

So there they both were, Ishmael crying under his bush, Hagar sobbing a few meters away from him. And what do you suppose happened next?

Do you remember what Ishmael's name means? It means, "God hears." If you guessed that God heard their cries, you are right!

God heard the boy crying and called to Hagar from heaven. He said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid. I have heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift him up and take him by the hand. I am going to make him into a great nation!"

Then God helped Hagar see what she had not been able to see before—a well of water! She went to it and gave Ishmael a drink. From that day on, even though they lived in the desert, God was with Ishmael. He and Hagar had enough to eat because Ishmael learned to hunt with a bow, and they had enough to drink because God had shown them the well.

God saw them. He heard them. Even before Ishmael was born, God saw him and proved that He cared for him. And He cares about you like that, too!

## 2. God says to me, "I care about your fears and what you are feeling."

Encourage your children to discuss the story:

- **Why do you think I told you this story? How is it similar to what has happened to you?**

Hagar and Ishmael went through something really hard, but God cared about them. God was with them and they were aware of His presence. Those who are refugees also need to know that God is with them and He cares about them.

- **How did God show that He cared about how Hagar and Ishmael were feeling?**
- **Think of times in your past. Can you see ways that God cared about what you were feeling? For example: someone gave you food, was kind to you, or helped you in some way.**

Allow the children to share their thoughts.

- **Today many are worried, wondering if we will live a normal life again. How do you know God knows and cares about these feelings of worry?**

Allow children to share their ideas before adding the following. For one thing, God gives you these lessons. This is a way God is telling you not to be sick with worry. God also sent me as your teacher (or parent). I care about you. God uses the aid workers and others who are helping to show that He cares.

## 3. I say to God, "I will share my feelings with You and listen for Your voice."

Now let's do something special. It is called "Listening Prayer." We know God listens to us, but today we are going to be quiet and listen to Him. I want you to close your eyes and follow my instructions.

Give the following suggestions to your children and pause between each statement so they can think and pray and listen.

**Picture yourself in a room with just you and God. Imagine looking into His face and seeing that He cares for you. He loves you. You imagine Him welcoming you like a father does a beloved child.** Pause.

**God cares about what is worrying you. Silently tell Him your fears about what happened and what may happen next.** Pause.

**Listen for a short time. Is He saying something to you? What is it?** Longer pause. If needed, remind children that whatever God says will agree with the Bible—it might be something like He loves them, or He will take care of them.

**Do you believe He cares about you?** Pause. **How does that make you feel?** Pause.

**God wants you to give your fears to Him, because no matter what happens, He will be with you. Even if you are faced with another scary situation, He will be with you. He wants you to be with Him forever and ever, on earth today and in heaven some day in the future.**

**Tell Him how you feel about Him.** Pause. **Ask Him to help you see how much He loves you.** Longer pause.

Close your time today by asking children to open their eyes. If it would be comfortable for the children, walk around to each child and put your hands on the child's head or shoulders and say, "(Child's name,) God wants to take away your fears."

If you are using this lesson with just 1 child, close in the same way. If appropriate, ask the child to say the words back to you, "God wants to take away your fears."

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# How to Help Children and Youth Grieve

Children and young teens feel grief when someone they know dies or is sick or is injured. They also feel grief when they are abused or when they live through natural disasters, like an earthquake or a flood or have fled their home as refugees. They go through stages of grief. Lesson 3, "Someone I Know Died," explains these stages.

## Short Times of Grief

Children and young teens go through short times when they feel very, very sad. In between the sad times, they may be happy and act as if the terrible thing never happened. You can never tell when they will be very sad or happy and playful. Their emotions are still developing, and they will not respond like adults do. Sometimes in the middle of a happy time, something will happen to remind children of the loss. This can be something someone says, something they remember, or even something they smell, see or hear. You just never know when it is going to happen.

## Most Children and Young Teens in Grief Will Experience These Things:

- They do not want to eat.
- They do not sleep enough, often waking up several times at night.
- They have headaches and stomachaches.
- Nothing pleases them.
- They have difficulty paying attention.
- School grades go down.

## Some Grieving Children and Youth May Experience These Things:

- They will eat too much or vomit what they do eat.
- They will have nightmares.

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- They will be angry and want to fight.
  - They will not make new friends.
  - They worry that more bad things will happen.
  - They will not believe that the bad thing happened.

Children and teens with these symptoms may need to see a doctor or counselor.

## What Grieving Children and Young Teens Need

Grieving children and young teens want you to know that just because they experience grief differently than adults does not mean they are too young to feel pain. They are worried about what is going to happen to them, and they fear being left alone. They want to talk about loss, but they do not know how to start. They feel less upset when someone explains what has happened and what is going to happen. As they grow up, they may experience grief again at important events, such as a school graduation or their own wedding.

Sometimes adults want to make grieving easier for children and young teens, so they do not share the details of what happened. For example, when a friend dies, the child is not invited to say good-bye to the loved one. This does not help a grieving child. Children and young teens are helped when they are told the truth about a death. They are helped when they can be part of the funeral or a church service that honors the death of the person they knew—if they want to be a part of the event, and if they can do so safely. Answer the questions they ask, and answer as honestly as possible.

## What Not to Do

Adults sometimes tell children and young teens to be strong and not to feel sad. Do not do this. They will learn to not trust their feelings. They will learn to hide their feelings. They may even be ashamed of their feelings. This can stop them from healing. Adults sometimes say things that do not mean anything to children. For example, “At least she is not suffering now.” Or, “He

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is in a better place.” This makes children feel like they are wrong to feel pain and sadness.

When our children and young teens experience loss, they want others to know how bad they feel. They want adults to share their sadness, too. This sharing can help them begin to heal.

## **Six Steps to Help a Grieving Child or Youth**

What is the best way to help a child or young teen who has had a terrible loss and is grieving? First, build a friendship with that child.

Second, talk about what happened. Ask questions and listen when he or she answers. The child or young teen may not be ready to talk for some time, so you will need to be patient. Know that this person really does want to talk about what happened.

Third, when the child or young teen is ready to talk, listen. Do not stop your child by asking questions or correcting a wrong detail. Let the child talk. You cannot say anything that will make the pain go away, but listening helps. Let the child or young teen know that her feelings are okay. She may need to tell her story many times.

Fourth, let the child or teen know that she will survive. A child may be frightened and not know what to do with the feelings inside her. Tell her over and over that soon she will begin to feel better, even though she will never completely forget her loss.

Fifth, you might suggest some ways a child or young teen can hurt less. For example, the teen could write a letter to the person who died. Or the child might make a memory book or plant a tree or flowers for a loved one who died. He might build a memorial out of rocks and branches. Every time he sees it, he will remember how wonderful the person was. Tell the child or young teen that there is nothing wrong with having fun and being happy.

Sixth, be ready for the child or young teen to feel guilty and fearful from time to time. Be ready to comfort and reassure him that you are there for him and God is, too.



# Someone I Know Died

## Lesson 3

### Outline for Today

1. *I say to God:* "I am so sad. Someone I love died."
2. *God says to me:* "I will comfort you and help you heal."
3. *I say to God:* "I will tell You about others who are grieving, because I know You will help them, too."



#### SUPPLIES

- None

### 1. I say to God, "I am so sad. Someone I love died."

As you begin this third lesson, talk with your children. See how they are doing. Your expressed care is important to help them heal. Take a few minutes to play a simple game such as a clapping or singing game. Children who have gone through a traumatic experience cannot handle feeling intense emotions all the time. They need time to laugh and play. After playing for a couple of minutes, ask the children to sit in a circle.

**People are adjusting to their new lives as refugees. They may be trying to find work to do or a trying to establish a daily routine.**

- If you know people who are trying to get their lives back to normal after leaving their home or country, share what they are doing.



After several children have talked, share the following with them.

**Today we are going to talk about how to heal after someone you love has died. Maybe you know someone who died. Maybe your friend knows someone who died. People are grieving for those they knew and loved who have died. Some are also grieving the loss of their homes and belongings and friends or family left behind.**

**The Bible does not tell us why one person dies and another person lives. What the Bible does tell us and we know to be true is that God is good. We can remember that He loves us and understands everything that happens to us. The Bible also tells us to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn.**

**Today, we will talk about how to heal from the death of a parent, brother or sister, or good friend. We will always remember the person, but God can help us not hurt so much.**

**People show their emotions in many different ways. It is sometimes hard to understand what they are really feeling. For example, think about anger. People may show that they are angry by changes in their face, tightening their fists, shouting, or getting excited. However some people show anger by being silent or not eating.**

**Grief is even harder to understand than anger. Sometimes we do not even understand our own feelings of grief. Emotions like grief and loss are often confusing.**

**When you lose someone or something important to you, it is natural to grieve. Most of us cry at first, but as time goes on, we sometimes hide our sad emotions. Unfortunately, this does not help them go away. They just get buried deep inside us and this is bad. Others may think we are fine, so they do**

**not try to help. Hiding our grief often ends up hurting us in the process. Why? Because we are not healing so we can be healthy today and in the future.**

Divide your children into groups of 3. Explain that you are going to read statements that someone might say to them. Each has to do with dying and grieving. The groups should talk about what they would say to this person.

After a couple of minutes, ask different groups to share what they decided to say. After they have shared, add the biblical view that follows each statement. The verses after each situation will help you do this. If possible, study these verses before your lesson time.

If you are working with just 1 child, talk together about what you would say. Let the child do most of the talking. Then share how the Bible helps in each situation.

**I got angry with my friend's father and I wished he would die. Then he was killed. I must be responsible for what happened to him.**

Teacher's verses: "A person's days are decided before he is born; [God] you have decided the number of his months and have set limits he cannot live beyond" Job 14:5, paraphrased. Let your children know that God loves us. God alone determines the number of our days. Wishing for something bad to happen does not make it happen.

**My little sister cannot be dead. Children should not die.**

Teacher's verse: "Everyone will die someday," Eccl 7:2, NIV. But it also says in Psalm 34:18 "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted." It is very sad when children die. Every person will die someday, but God cares about your grief and wants to comfort you.

**I am afraid something else bad will happen, and I will die like my friend did.**

Teacher's verse: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" Isaiah 41:10. Whatever you face in life, God is there to help you!

**God, I hate You because You made my dad die.**

Teacher's verse: "Sin entered the world because one man sinned. And death came because of sin. Everyone sinned, so death came to all people" Romans 5:12, NIV. Share that the Bible tells us that death came into the world at the beginning when Adam and Eve sinned. God does not mind if you tell Him how you really feel. After you do, be quiet and listen to what He might bring to your mind. God made a way for people who believe in Jesus to live forever with Him. "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies'" John 11:25.

**I miss my mother, but I know she loved Jesus. She is happy in heaven and nothing in this world can hurt her anymore, but I will always miss her.**

Teacher's verse: "[The God of all comfort] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God" 2 Corinthians 1:4. Share that God comforts us when we are grieving. We can help comfort others when they experience grief because of the comfort we have received.

**2. God says to me, "I will comfort you and help you heal."**

**God made us in wonderful ways. He built into us ways to heal both physically and emotionally. Often we need emotional healing when someone we love or know dies.**

**Listen carefully to this section, even if you do not know anyone who has died. You may be experiencing grief for all that you left behind. Also, God may use you to help someone who is dealing with grief. These are the stages of grief that we go through when we experience loss like when someone we know or love dies.**

Before you talk about the stages of grief, let your children know:

**People do not go through the stages of grief in the same amount of time. Some people take weeks, others months, and sometimes people take years.**

**Not everyone goes through all the stages.**

**People do not always go through the stages in the same order.**

**People may come back to a stage they have gone through and go through it all over again.**

**God built these stages into us emotionally so we would be able to heal.**

**God is with us in every stage, walking beside us and comforting us.**

Now talk with the children about each stage.

### **DENIAL**

**Denial happens when a person is shocked by the loss and cannot believe it is true. The person thinks, "Other people die, but not anyone I know." For example, the statement above that said, "My little sister cannot be dead. Children should not die" shows denial. People often go through denial when they are faced with an unexpected death like someone being killed in war or a natural disaster, or a sickness such as cancer or AIDS.**

**ANGER OR RESENTMENT**

Anger or resentment is usually the second stage of grieving. The statement that said, "God, I hate you because You let my dad die," was in this stage. Grieving people may get angry with those they think are responsible for making the loss happen. They are feeling such emotional pain that sometimes they are angry with rescue workers, or doctors, God, or even the person who died. This is a normal stage of grief. When people are in this stage it is easy to think they have lost their faith in God. This is not true. They need to express their frustration and walk through this part of the grieving process. God understands.

**BARGAINING**

Bargaining is sometimes a part of the grief process. The person tries to talk God into changing the loss by promising to do something for God. "If my uncle whose back was broken gets better, I will become a Christian," is an example of someone who is bargaining.

**DEPRESSION**

Another stage of grieving is depression. This is a hopeless feeling. "I will never find anyone who loved me like my brother did before he died," or "I feel worthless," are examples of someone feeling depression. Depression slows us down and is a paralyzing feeling because it prevents us from doing things we want or need to do. Almost everyone who has experienced loss experiences depression. People who get through this stage of grief go on to the last stage, acceptance.

**ACCEPTANCE**

Remember the statement that said, "I miss my mother, but I know she loved Jesus. She is happy in heaven. Nothing in this world can hurt her anymore, but I will always miss her"? This person is in the acceptance stage. She has accepted the truth that her mother is dead and that she cannot change the loss. She is thankful for her mother's

**life, and now she is ready to go on with her life. This does not mean she forgets her mother or does not miss her, but she is beginning to heal.**

**When we understand the grieving process, we can see that a person who is grieving has not stopped trusting in God. We will realize they are normal and just walking through their sorrow.**

You may or may not want to share 2 other steps that many children experience in their grief—guilt and fear. Children often feel guilty about somehow causing the loss. Because they do not understand the causes behind the losses, they feel responsible for them. Abandonment, or being left alone, is 1 example. “Mother would not have left me if I had been a better person.” Obviously, the child’s reasoning is not correct.

Children may be afraid that what happened to someone else would happen to them as well. What they do not understand, they fear. For example, a child might think, “My uncle died. I am afraid my mother and I will die too.”

Ask the children if they have any questions or comments. Talk with them about the stages again if they want. Above all, be sensitive to show care for whatever the children express.

### **3. I say to God, “I will tell You about others who are grieving, because I know You will help them, too.”**

**I want you to sit quietly for a few minutes. Close your eyes and think of a person you know who is grieving, perhaps because someone they loved has died or is missing. Pray quietly that God will help that person grieve in a healthy way. Use that person’s name when you talk to God. If you know more than 1 person who needs prayer, keep praying until you run out of names.**

After a few minutes, tell the children that you realize that they may be grieving or know children who are. Let them know you are available to talk with them or pray with them if they would like to speak to you alone.

Share with your children that God may give them a chance to comfort their grieving friends. If He does, suggest they share the grieving process and then pray together that God will help the friend through the grieving process.

Finally close your time together by singing a song your children might know about God's love. Try to end your time on a happy note so the children have hope that they can smile and laugh again.

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# Creating Safety for Traumatized Children and Youth

Children and young teens who have had to flee their homes are hurting. They are victims of an event they could not have predicted or avoided. Their world has not been safe, and it may still not be safe. So how do you create safety for a child or teen who believes he or she will never feel safe again?

## Step 1: Understand trauma

Children and young teens who have been through trauma may feel overwhelmed and helpless. They may have an overactive alarm system that is easily triggered. When something happens to make them feel unsafe again, they choose to do 1 of 3 things. They may fight. This may happen when they are in an unsafe personal relationship. They may take flight—run away from the situation, even when that is dangerous. Or, they may freeze and be unable to make any response. They may not be able to think clearly.

Feeling safe is what calms their trauma response.

## Step 2: Understand your children and teens

Work hard at knowing what your children and teens do well and what they struggle with. Identify their strengths and weaknesses. This can help you predict what their response will be when they feel unsafe.

## Step 3: The safe environment—consistency

Be as consistent as possible in your relationship with the child or teen. They thrive with consistent responses from you. Children and young teens feel safe when they know what to expect from the adults they are with—teachers and parents. This includes knowing what the rules for behavior are and how discipline is handled.



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Trauma is triggered by the unknown and unexpected. Consistency creates predictability.

Children and teens feel safe when they can predict what will happen in their day. When things need to change, giving children plenty of information about when and why change will happen will help them deal with it.

Provide transition warnings. Fleeing home and becoming a refugee has changed everything. Let the child or teen know what the new routine will be and why. Traumatized people need to feel a sense of control. Suddenly being pushed from one activity and moved quickly to something else without giving the child or teen time to adjust can trigger explosive behavior.

#### **Step 4: The safe environment—relationships**

Children and teens heal when they have safe and trusting relationships. Be there, be consistent, and know what the children are feeling. Spend time playing and getting to know the child or teen.

If the child or teen resists the relationship you want to build, move slowly, and do not push too hard. Eventually, he or she will see that you are a safe adult. Then the relationship can blossom.

#### **Step 5: Prevention**

All of these steps will help children and teens feel safer after a traumatizing event, but sometimes you need to do more to create safety. If you know what triggers a child or teen, or what activities and transitions are the most challenging, think about what you can do to prevent negative reactions. For example, a child may become triggered (scared or even angry) when it gets dark. This may happen because his family had to flee at night. Sometimes something as simple as having him close to you when it gets dark can work beautifully. Be creative, and you will find that creating safety is a very powerful tool in the lives of children, young teens—and even adults—who have gone through trauma.

# God Can Heal My Emotions

## Lesson 4

### Outline for Today

1. *I say to God:* "I am sad and angry that I had to leave my home. I feel my emotions are out of control."
2. *God says to me:* "I made your emotions—I can heal them."
3. *I say to God:* "Please help me be an emotionally healthy person who is also able to help others."



#### SUPPLIES

- None

### 1. I say to God, "I am sad and angry that I had to leave my home. I feel my emotions are out of control."

Welcome your children and ask them to sit in a circle to play a quick game. The children will guess what emotion you are feeling. Cover your face with your hands and then take your hands away, and show a different expression on your face. Let the children guess what you are feeling. For example, you might smile the first time you uncover your face. The next time you might have a sad or angry look. Do not speak; just show emotion on your face. Do this for a couple of minutes. Some emotions you might show could be happy, sad, angry, scared, frustration, or any others.

God gave emotions to us. Emotions are not right or wrong. They are just a way to tell that we are feeling something deeply. When something horrible happens, we might cry or feel sad. Expressing these emotions helps us heal. Sometimes the terrible things are so big that we just cannot stop emotionally hurting. We feel that we will never be all right again. We cannot get on with our lives. We may become depressed and overwhelmed and even physically sick. If that happens, we need to get emotional help. God wants to help us be emotionally healthy people.

- Does it surprise you that God made your emotions—all of them? Why or why not?
- What emotions do you feel when you remember what has happened to you or your family?

Allow the children to respond. Be sure to offer comfort if appropriate. Encourage children who can express their emotions, but do not force anyone to share.

Let the children know that you will now read a situation out loud to them. This situation is something that could have happened to someone who is a refugee. The children should shout out what emotion they think the person in the situation might feel. There may be more than 1 answer.

**Situation: Hana and her mother live in a shipping container with no furniture or running water. Some of Hana's friends were taken away and she does not know what happened to them. She does not smile like she used to and never laughs anymore.**

**Situation: Wassim lives in a tent settlement where many are sick and injured after a tsunami. Without medicine or medical supplies, Wassim feels like there is nothing he can do to help.**

**Situation: Daniel left his country so he would not have to join a gang. "I almost died in the desert without food or water. Now I live in a shelter with other immigrants. I do not know what my future holds."**

**Situation:** Nidal left his country because there was a war, and his grandmother's house collapsed in an explosion. Nidal just wants the war to stop, so he and his family can return to their country.

**Situation:** During an earthquake a mother and 2 sisters escaped their village and ended up at a refugee camp. One sister had an ear torn off, and suffered a severe head injury. She will live, but she cannot stop crying.

**Situation:** A woman has a severely disabled son. The hospital in her country closed because of the war. Now in a refugee camp, she says, "My heart is breaking for my son. Sometimes I cry, but there is nothing I can do."

Let the children know they did a good job deciding on the emotions.

- **What emotions did you have most often this past week?**

Be sure to offer comfort as children express their emotions. Remind them that there are no right or wrong emotions. Let them know that how they act based on their emotions might be right or wrong, but the feeling itself is not.

- **Why do you think God gave us emotions?**

Today we are going to talk about emotional stress—what we feel when we are in difficult situations, and even long after the situation is over. I will now read some situations. Stand up if the situation would stress you a lot. Stay seated if the situation would not stress you at all. Kneel if the situation would stress you but only a bit.

1. You find out that a relative you love will lose his leg, and because of that injury, he will be unable to work.
2. Your dad tells you he does not want to talk about what happened any more.

3. Your grandmother is cold in the 1-room house you now live in. You only get to borrow a heater for 1 hour a day.
4. Your little brother is hungry and there is not enough food for everyone to eat.
5. Your family's home was destroyed and now you live in a tent.
6. Someone steals a picture of your brother who died. It was the only picture you had of him.
7. Your best friend tells you God has turned His back on your country.
8. Your mother fell while you were leaving your home, but thought she was fine. Now she is having dizzy spells.
9. You have nightmares about some of the things that happened in your country before you left.
10. You have to stay in your tent after dark, because it is too dangerous in the camp after dark.

**You all did a good job showing how these situations would make you feel. Sometimes emotions are too strong for us to deal with alone. Many emotions you experience will be like that. We need someone to comfort us with wise words and thoughtful actions.**

- **If these situations were happening to people you know, what are some ways you think you might be able to help them emotionally?**

Read a few situations to read again. Let the children know that any way they express care is helpful. Children might suggest holding the person's hand and letting him cry. They might read a verse or psalm like Psalm 23 from the Bible. They might encourage the person to talk about what happened, even if they have already heard the story several

times. They might suggest the person talk to your pastor or another Christian adult. They might offer to do small tasks for them.

**Sometimes we are the ones who need emotional help or support. Often when others know we are struggling emotionally, they will automatically help, or at least ask if we would like their help. Other times people may not even be aware that we are having a hard time. They would be willing to help if they knew we needed it. Those are times when we need to ask for help. God has given each of us some special people who are willing to be there when we need comfort. I am one of those people. Think for a moment of people God has placed in your life that might be able to help you with difficult emotions.**

**God provides good comfort too. Here are some ways God begins to heal our sad and angry emotions and bring comfort:**

**Emotions often grow healthier when we read the Bible, especially the psalms. God will help us find comfort in a psalm. Many of the psalms let us know how much God cares.**

**Sometimes we find God's comfort in a song. We might sing the song over and over. We know the words are God's way of sending His comfort.**

**Sometimes we hear a pastor's words or even something you have heard in these classes that speaks something special to you. The person who said it may not know it, but you know it is a special message of emotional comfort from God.**

## 2. God says to me, “I made your emotions— can heal them.”

Many of the books in the New Testament are letters written by the same man—Paul. God comforted him when he faced really difficult situations. I am going to read you a pretend letter that shares many things Paul wrote in his real letters in the Bible. Pretend he is saying these things to you and the Christians you know.

*Dear friends at (name of your city or village):*

*Hello. I am glad I can write to you again. So much has happened! I have God to thank for seeing me through some very difficult times. No one can comfort like He does! He has all my problems figured out. You see, when I am feeling very sad or I am in trouble, He knows just what I need. He is available to help me. After He comforts me, He turns around and uses me to comfort someone else who is going through something similar. Our God is really wise.*

*Jesus suffered so He knows how to comfort others who suffer. We have learned a lot because of His life. Whether I am depressed or scared, I know He is with me. When I go through emotionally difficult times, God helps me. He comforts me. Then I can help you go through difficult times. I am hopeful for you because, even though I know you will probably suffer like I have, I also know you will be comforted like I have been, too.*

*You need to know about the hard times my friends and I suffered when we were in Asia. We were under great pressure. I thought we might not make it. I thought we were going to die.*

*But one thing we learned through all this—we can depend on God. We could not do anything to help ourselves! God delivered us from death, and we believe that He will keep on saving us.*

*Thank you for your prayers. They helped. When this difficult time is over, many people will thank God for answering their prayers for us. Keep praying for us.*

*Paul*

Here are 2 things of the hard things that Paul went through. When he was in Asia, a riot nearly broke out (Acts 19:23–41). One of the men, a silversmith, made images of gods and goddesses and sold them for a living. Paul taught that there was only 1 God and He was not made with human hands. The silversmith was angry and told the other idol-makers about what Paul was saying. They were upset that they might lose their customers and began to shout in the streets until the whole city was in an uproar. Paul could have been killed, but God protected him. He went through many other things such as beatings, snakebites, and more! Toward the end of his life, he almost drowned when a ship he was on sank during a storm, but God saved him (Acts 27:27–44).

- What emotions do you think Paul was feeling throughout these troubles?

God comforted Paul. The people in 1 of the cities where he had preached were praying for him. Paul knew they were concerned about him. One time they even sent someone to join him so he would not be alone. Paul experienced God's presence and protection. He believed that God would continue to take care of him.

Then, God used Paul to comfort others. When they saw what Paul was going through, and how God strengthened his faith and courage, they asked him to pray for them.



### **3. I say to God, “Please help me be an emotionally healthy person who is also able to help others.”**

**An emotionally healthy person expresses emotions. He cries when something bad happens. She feels sad when someone she loves is hurt. But emotionally healthy people receive comfort and help. They allow God to comfort and help them. They look for ways each day to get a little better. They may never forget what they felt, but they do not let even a horrible thing like being a refugee ruin the rest of their lives.**

**Emotionally healthy people are willing to ask someone to pray with them. They are willing to share what they are feeling with a trusted person. They remember that God knows what they are going through, and He is with them. He understands their tears and heartache. They trust that He will help them get through this bad time.**

Divide the children into small groups. One person at a time will share with the group something emotionally difficult she has gone through either in her country or since becoming a refugee. If the child does not want to share something personal, she can share something another person might experience. Then the other children should express words of comfort. They might offer to pray with the person. They might share how God helped them in a similar situation. They might suggest the person speak to a parent or you if an adult's help is needed.

If you are going through the course with your own child, do the same activity. You will share first and allow your child to offer comfort. Then your child can share while you comfort. Do this several times. Let your child know that he or she can share difficult emotions with you at any time.

Close the lesson in prayer together.

**Father God, we thank You for Your comfort and presence in our lives, especially when we are under emotional stress. Help us to ask for help when we need it. We choose to receive Your comfort. Please make us aware of people who are hurting, and show us how we can bring comfort into their lives. In Jesus' name we ask, amen.**



# I Know There Is Life After Death

## Lesson 5

### Outline for Today

1. *I say to God:* "Without You, I am scared to die."
2. *God says to me:* "I love all people and want them to live with Me when they die."
3. *I say to God:* "I want You to be my heavenly Father forever, and I will tell others about You."



#### SUPPLIES

- Optional: stick

### 1. I say to God, "Without You, I am scared to die."

As your children come together today, ask each one to name the high point and the low point of their day so far. Give each child a "high five" clap for the good point. Give each one a "low five" for the low point by clapping the child's hand down low. Share your own good point and hard point from your day. Point out that all people can find good things even on hard days, and that there are sometimes hard things even on good days.

Explain to the children that today you will talk together about what happens when a person dies. Let them know that what they learn today is true because it says so in God's Holy Bible.

**When the words “war” or “natural disaster” or “persecution” are mentioned, people often think of death.**

- **If you could ask God a question about life after death, what would it be?**

Allow the children to respond. Do not feel that you have to correct any wrong ideas. This lesson will address them.

**People are often afraid of death because none of us have experienced it. Because dead people cannot come back to tell us about it, people have come up with their own ideas. The ideas that do not come from the Bible are not true. God’s Holy Bible tells what will really happen.**

Here are some ideas of what some people believe. Discuss these ideas with your children if people you know believe them. These ideas are not true. People made them up to help explain death without the help of God’s true answer. What the Bible says is what really happens.

Some people believe there is no life after death. They think that when you die, that is the end of everything. They believe there is only this earthly life. This is not true.

Some people believe in reincarnation. They believe that when people die they come back in a different form or as a different person to live another life all over again. Many of these people believe that how you behaved in this life determines what you will be in your next life. Those who believe this hope that the spirit works its way up to heaven by being better in each lifetime. If you were good, you return higher on the social scale. If you were bad, you return worse and could be an animal or a bug. They think that when the spirit becomes perfect, it returns to live with its god. This is not true.

Some people believe that dead people return as spirits who are found in forests, homes and rivers. They think these creatures

come to torment the people who do not respect them or who do things the spirits do not like. People who believe this often believe that when the spirits are unhappy, they have to give sacrifices and perform spiritual rituals like cleaning tombs and graves, so nothing bad will happen to them. This is not true. Any bad spirits come from Satan and fight against God. The spirits do not come from people who have died. God is more powerful than Satan and his demons.

Ask your children what other beliefs they know about. Then, share the truth from the Bible.

Ask your children what other beliefs they know about. Then, share the truth from the Bible.

**What the Bible teaches is true about what really happens after death to people who have God as their heavenly Father. Those who love God and trust in Him are invited to join Him and live with Him forever. They will be part of His loving family. This is what the Bible teaches. Heaven is God's special home. It is a place of joy where people who trust in Jesus are His friends and live with joy and in peace. There is no sickness or evil or pain or death or tears there.**

**Jesus, God's Son, never sinned (or did wrong things). He came to earth and died to pay for our sins in our place. He conquered sin and death, and rose from the dead. Jesus died, rose from the dead, and is alive with God the Father in heaven.**

**For this reason, we look to Him to understand what happens after death. His body died, His body was raised back to life, and He is still alive right now with God the Father. By His example, Christians know the truth about death. They will spend forever with God, our heavenly Father. Those who love Jesus can be absolutely certain what will happen when they die. They will be alive again and part of God's family forever.**

**When a Christian dies, his or her Christian friends know they will see their friend again. Jesus has promised that Christians will be with Him in heaven. Of course, friends are sad when they cannot see the person who died every day here on earth, but they know that death is not the end.**

Read the following verses 3 times to your children. Then use the questions that follow the verses to talk about this more.

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*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.  
He who believes in me will live,  
even though he dies;  
and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.  
John 11:25–26a*

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*In my Father's house are many rooms;  
if it were not so, I would I have told you. I am going  
there to prepare a place for you.  
And if I go and prepare a place for you,  
I will come back and take you to be with me  
that you also may be where I am.  
John 14:2–3*

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- **Based on what we have talked about so far and these verses, how would you explain to someone younger than you what happens after death?**

Allow several children to respond.

- **In these verses, what does Jesus say happens to those who love Him when their physical bodies die?**

They will go to live with Him.

- **What does Jesus mean when He said, “I am the resurrection”?**

People who believe in Jesus will not die. Their bodies and spirits will be alive with Him in heaven.

- **Many people who died in the conflict or disaster may have been cremated. If their ashes are scattered all over the place, does this mean they cannot go to heaven?**

No! God made their bodies and spirits. He can make them whole again in heaven.

- **In the second verse, what does Jesus say He is doing for us in heaven?**

Read John 14:2-3 again if needed.

- **The Bible does not tell us all of what heaven will be like, so have fun and use your creative imagination. What do you think the home in heaven will look like?**

Have each child use a stick or a finger to draw a picture in the dirt to explain what he or she thinks heaven will be like. You could also have them act out scenes from heaven, such as being reunited with a loved one or seeing Jesus.

**I am going to read you a verse from a psalm 2 times. After you hear the verse tell me what it will be like when we make our home with Jesus.**

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*You make known to me the path of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

*Psalm 16:11*

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Listen as I read 2 times what Jesus says in Revelation.

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*He will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
There will be no more death  
or mourning or crying or pain,  
for the old order of things has passed away.  
Revelation 21:4*

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- **What will not be in heaven?**

Tears, death, mourning, crying, pain.

**Heaven is God's special home. Jesus was taken up to heaven after His resurrection to live with His Father. When we die, if we are Christians, we will go to our heavenly home to be with our heavenly Father.**

Share the following information with your children if they ask, or if you believe they have questions they do not know how to ask.

What happens to people who never asked God, the heavenly Father, to be part of His family? This is a very important question. The answer is that the Bible says that people who have accepted God will be with Him forever. People who have not accepted God and do not love Him will be separated from Him. Only God knows who has accepted Him and who has not. We do not know. Some may believe in Him and accept Him right at the end of their lives like the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39–43). Even though the thief did this shortly before he died, Jesus promised that man that he would be with Him in paradise. Whenever possible, we should share information about God our heavenly Father with those we love. We want them all to be with us and with Him forever.

## 2. God says to me, "I love all people and want them to live with Me when they die."

Ask the children and young teens to think about God's family and how wonderful it is to be part of it. God loves everyone and wants all people to be part of His family. Share John 3:16:

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*For God so loved the world that he gave  
his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish  
but have eternal life.  
John 3:16*

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Tell your class that you want to share with them more about joining God's family. The following information will help you explain what it means to be a Christian.

Children who are ages 8-14 typically can understand the following things about joining God's family.

They can understand that God is a loving, heavenly Father, and He is in charge.

They can understand that Jesus died on the cross for their sin so they would not have to pay for their own sin.

They have the ability to feel sorry about the bad things they have done. Choosing their own way instead of God's way has separated them from Him.

They can say with sincerity that they are sorry.

They can understand that Jesus took the punishment for their sins that they deserved.

They can understand that Jesus died for their sins. He came back to life after He died.

They can understand that Jesus is now in heaven preparing a place for those who love God the heavenly Father and want to live with Him forever.

Encourage your children and teens to ask questions and to express God's plan in their own words. Reassure children that Jesus has a special place in His heart for them.

If one of your children or teens clearly wants to follow Jesus, read the following truths to him, one at a time. (It would be great to do this alone with a child who wants to make this decision, so the child or teen feels no pressure from the group to make the decision.) If the child or teen believes the truth, he or she should say, "I (name) believe this is true." Tell the child or teen to answer honestly. God is listening and wants him to be part of His family. When the child has answered, pray with him.

**God is a loving, heavenly Father. He wants to be my friend. He wants to take my pain and fear.**

**But I have done wrong things and disobeyed Him. I deserve to be punished for what I have done.**

**But God loves me. He loves me so much that He sent His perfect Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for the wrong things I have done. Jesus never did anything wrong.**

**Jesus is wonderful. He loves children, teens, and adults. He loves poor and rich people, and people with power, and without power. He loves people who were injured in the disaster and people who escaped injury.**

**Jesus loves everyone. He loves me so much that He wants me to join Him in God's family. He was willing to die to make this happen.**

**Jesus died as the punishment for the wrong things each person on earth has done. But this is not the end of the story. Jesus came back to life! Jesus is no longer dead. He is alive today.**

**Jesus wants me to love Him and live in ways that please His heavenly Father. This will bring joy to me and to my heavenly Father.**

**When I die I will go to heaven and live with my heavenly Father forever.**

Some children may not be ready to make this decision. That is fine. Pray with them and tell them you would like to talk about this again in the near future. Tell them you will be praying for them. Ask them to think about God who loves them and to ask Him to show them the right thing to do. Pray daily for these children. God hears your prayers and He is able to draw hearts to Himself.

### **3. I say to God, "I want You to be my heavenly Father forever, and I will tell others about You."**

**When you love God and know the truth about what happens when we die, you will want to tell others you love about Him.**

**Close your eyes, and think for a minute now about a person you would like to tell. Pause. Think about what you would like to say to that person. Pause. Think about what you would say if that person said to you, "Yes, I want to love and serve my heavenly Father. How can I do that?" Pause. If that person is not ready to be part of God's family yet, you can pray for that person. God can use your prayers and love to reach that person.**

**Silently pray now and ask God to give you opportunities to tell others about His love.**



# A Prayer Walk

## Lesson 6

### Outline for Today

*This Prayer Walk* lesson does not follow the same pattern used in the previous 5 lessons.



#### SUPPLIES

- Optional: leaves, stones
- Stick

If you can take the Prayer Walk as described below, you do not need to prepare any supplies prior to class. If you do the optional way, you will need leaves (or another natural object) for each child (place 1) and stones (places 2 and 5)

### Prayer Walk

This last lesson is a special one. Today you will pick 5 different places to visit with your children. At each place you will do something different. Tell your children that this will be a "Prayer Walk." At each place, they will have the opportunity to talk with God. If you are teaching this lesson with only 1 child, you can still do the prayer walk.

If it is unsafe for children to go outside, this prayer walk can be done in a house, tent or even in different places in a single room.

#### Place 1

Take your children to a place where there are trees or bushes. Ask them to pick a leaf and look at it closely. Optional: give each child a leaf. (If leaves are not available, use another natural object or just talk about leaves.)

**God made each of these leaves, and each is a work of art. Look at your leaf. What makes it different from other leaves? Can you see the veins, or lines, in it? Why do you think God cared enough to make leaves so special and beautiful when many leaves grow and die without anyone ever looking at them or thinking about their beauty? Do you think God cares for you more than He cares for leaves?**

**God made each one of you and gave you your very own fingerprints. Each fingerprint is a unique work of art. Look closely at 1 of your fingertips. Can you see the lines, ridges, and swirls in it? No one else has your exact fingerprint. It is like a special signature. Why do you think God cared enough to give each person 1-of-a-kind fingerprints? He must care about you very much!**

**You are very important to Him. He knows that some of the things you have experienced were very scary for you. He promises to be with you even in the hard times. He wants you to know that you are much more important to Him than the leaf you are holding.**

Ask the children to put their leaves in a pile and hold hands around the pile. They can pray aloud, asking God to keep them and their families safe. They can pray for any aid workers who may be helping the refugees.

### Place 2

Ask students to find a smooth stone or pebble to hold. Designate to a place where they should all meet after getting a stone. (If it is not safe to go outside, give each child a stone.) When everyone has a stone, say:

**Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Hold your smooth stone in your hand. This is your “worry stone.” What have you been worrying about? Name the stone after that worry. Now offer your worry to God. Let God take care of whatever that worry is.**

**Close your eyes and ask Him to take the worry. Imagine His love pouring over you. God does not want us to worry about things we have no control over. When you start worrying about things, it is like getting a sharp stone stuck in your sandal. It bothers you every step you take. Get rid of your worry and give it to Him.**

Ask children to open their eyes and throw their stones as far away from them as possible. They are throwing away their worries and asking God to take care of them. Be sure they are throwing it away from all other people so no one gets hurt. If they cannot throw the stones, ask them to place them in a pile.

### Place 3

Walk for about a minute in a direction away from where the students threw the stones. If you are doing the prayer walk inside, walk quietly in a circle for about a minute. When you stop, explain that you are going to say some Bible verses together. These come from God's true book, the Bible. Explain that you will say 1 line, and they will repeat it after you. Go through the verses twice. The verses come from Psalm 46.

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*God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.*

*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging  
The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

*Psalm 46:1–3, 7*

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After reading the verses twice, let the children close their eyes and think about what they say. They can pray quietly that God will help them remember this verse when they are scared or worried.

#### Place 4

Ask the students to hold hands and walk quietly with you for a little distance. After about a minute, stop and say to your children:

**In this part of the prayer walk, it does not matter where we are walking. The main thing is who is walking beside us. Imagine yourself with a good friend, with someone who loves you very much, someone who makes the journey better, and the walk easier. This “someone” is Jesus.**

**He is the light of the world. Close your eyes and remember how He calmed the storm, how He promises that we will be with Him forever, how He wants to help you have healthy emotions. He knows you by name. He loved you enough to give His life for you. He is all-powerful God, and He is our friend. This gives us hope for every part of life—today, even starting over in a new place. He is much stronger than any disaster, war, or evil person. Jesus is walking with us.**

Share this poem with your students.

**Jesus is always with me.**

**Jesus loves me.**

**Jesus walks beside me**

**When I am happy, sad, or afraid.**

**Jesus will never leave me.**

**He loves me and wants me to trust Him.**

**Jesus is my friend.**

**He is always here when I am happy, sad, or afraid.**

Now, tell the children and young teens that you are going to read it again. This time they should dance to the words and celebrate all Jesus has promised. If you are working with just 1 child, say the poem twice and then dance together while you read it a second time.

Place 5

Walk for about 2 minutes. As you walk, pick up a small stick. Ask the children to stand in a circle. Tell them you are going to give the stick to 1 of them. That child should hold it and say a 1-sentence prayer to God. For example, he can ask Him to help his family be able to return to their country or have enough food or water. She can tell Him how sad she is because someone she knew died. He can praise Jesus that He is with him always. If a child does not want to pray, she can simply give the stick to another student. A person can pray more than once.

If you are working with just 1 child, hand the stick back and forth, each of you saying several sentence prayers to God. When you are finished, close by praying something like this:

**Dear Heavenly Father,**

**Thank You for loving each of us and promising to be with us always. I pray that you will keep each of us safe and show us how to comfort others. Please take our fears away. I pray for those who lost people they loved. Give them Your peace and comfort. Strengthen those who are injured or hungry or scared. Keep the aid workers safe. We love You. You are our Father and we are Your children. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Spend a few minutes singing songs you know or doing a fun activity together.

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# Email us!

Please email us with the following information at [Global@davidccook.org](mailto:Global@davidccook.org) . In your email, just use the appropriate number, rather than writing out the full question. (For example, for question number 4, you might simply write 4. B.)

1. Your email address:
2. The name of the place where you live: \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many children under age 11 are in your group? \_\_\_\_ How many young teens over age 11 in your group? \_\_\_\_
4. Which of the following statements best describes your experience?  
\_\_\_\_ A. These lessons brought my children and young teens closer to God and His love.  
\_\_\_\_ B. These lessons were very helpful for my children and young teens.  
\_\_\_\_ C. These lessons were somewhat helpful for my children and young teens.  
\_\_\_\_ D. These lessons were not helpful for my children and young teens.
5. Which lesson (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6) was most helpful to your children and young teens? \_\_\_\_
6. Check all that were true for your children and young teens:  
\_\_\_\_ A. My children and teens were less fearful after the lessons.  
\_\_\_\_ B. My children and teens learned to pray more honestly to God in these lessons.  
\_\_\_\_ C. One or more of my children and teens came to love God and be part of His family.  
\_\_\_\_ D. My children and teens shared what they learned with others.  
\_\_\_\_ E. My children and teens are growing in their emotional health after the natural disaster.
7. Share 2–5 sentences about something that happened in your class.

# Notes

# Notes



# Helping Refugee Children and Youth

*In this booklet:*

Our Questions and  
God's Responses

Six Trauma-Informed Lessons

Resource Articles to guide  
and equip Christian teachers,  
volunteers and Parents

David  Cook®  
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4050 Lee Vance View  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918