

On Track Map

Topical Lesson: When Tragedy Happens

Runners

Know Right:	God is our help in times of trouble.
Think Right:	"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 (Top 12)
Do Right:	I will go to God in times of trouble.
Feel Right:	I can feel comforted when I go to God.

Tragedy and loss are heartbreaking and confusing. We don't understand why horrible things take place in our world, and we want God to make things right. When our world is dark and fills us with grief, we can find comfort knowing that God is near. Psalm 46:1 reminds us that, at all times, we can count on God as our refuge, strength, and help. This week we will be sharing this hope with our children. As you prepare, pray for God's perfect peace to fill you and your children. Ask Him to work in each of you through His Word. We know that our world is broken by sin; that means our hearts will continue to be broken by tragedy. During those times, may we find comfort in our God who is always with us.

Coming In Time

Joyfully greet children as they enter your class. Make sure they feel safe, special, and loved the moment they see your smiling face. Immediately engage them with toys or activities. Fun praise music is always encouraged in classrooms during playtime. Music options are in the appendix of the current curriculum.

Clean Up

Clean up together while listening to a song such as "Let's Clean Up."

Large Group Opening Time

Worship Time: *All volunteers should assist children to the designated learning area for worship. Choose 2-3 worship songs to sing with the children. Options are in the appendix of the current curriculum.*

Bible Basics: *As children sit in the designated learning area, remind and reinforce basic sitting guidelines (refer to the "Five Steps to Learning" poster).*

Hold up the Bible. What is this? (The Bible)

Let's make a Bible with our hands. *Have children make a Bible with their two hands.*

Is everything in the Bible true? (Yes, everything in the Bible is true!)

When we pray, we talk to God. *Have children fold their hands to pray.*

When we read the Bible, this is how God talks to us. I have a special marker in my Bible marking a very important verse. *Show your fun, bright bookmark and point to the correct verse.*

Think Right Verse: *Have children listen carefully as you read the verse from your Bible. We want them to know that the verse comes directly from the Bible, God's Word!*

Note: For this Get on Track Lesson, we recommend reviewing and emphasizing Joshua 1:9 rather than the current Think Right verse.

This verse teaches us God will be with us wherever we go. Let's stand up and say our verse with hand motions:

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong (show right muscle) **and courageous** (show left muscle). **Do not be terrified** (shake right pointer finger); **do not be discouraged** (shake left pointer finger), **for the Lord** (point up) **your God** (other pointer finger up) **will be with you wherever you go** (open hands start near ears and move downward out in front of you to make a path)." **Joshua 1:9**

Repeat several times. At pickup time, remind parents to help children practice their verse at home. When a child can say the verse with little or no help, celebrate and allow them to pick a prize from the basket.

Preparation for the Classroom

Pray: Pray that God will give you a clear understanding of Scripture and that the children in your class will feel the depth of God's love for them this week, knowing that He is our help in times of trouble.

Read: Psalm 46

Know Right: God is our help in times of trouble

Teacher's Note: This is a difficult lesson for two-year-olds. Due to the family-based curriculum (all age groups learn the same lesson), we will introduce a few basic concepts during this lesson and focus on going to God for help and comfort.

Creative Teaching Supplies:

- Feel Right poster (see appendix)
- Pictures of the following: a thunderstorm, a dark bedroom, and cracks in a road to represent an earthquake (see appendix)

Special Note for Directors and Teachers: With this lesson, we recommend including a letter to send home to parents. Explain what was covered in this lesson, include Scripture references and book suggestions, and encourage parents to keep this letter somewhere safe so they can bring it out if their family or community ever encounters a tragedy. We've provided an example in the appendix. The example is geared toward older children, but may be of help to parents of younger children as well, as they learn how to navigate hard situations with their children both now and in the years to come.

Bible Lesson

Do you ever feel sad or scared? *Use the Feel Right poster to show children examples of scared and sad faces.* Did you know that God promises to always be with us, no matter what?

The Bible teaches us in the Old Testament (*point to Bible*) that God is always with us. God is our help, even when we experience something scary or sad. He loves us, and we can ask Him for help if we are ever sad or afraid. How do we ask God for help? (By praying and talking to Him)

Hold up picture of thunderstorm. A thunderstorm is sometimes scary. That's when there's a big storm outside with rain, lightning, and thunder. What does a thunderstorm sound like? *Coach children to make clapping sounds with their hands to mimic the sound of thunder.*

Is God still with us if there's a thunderstorm outside? (Yes!) If we ever feel afraid, we can go to God and ask for help.

Hold up picture of dark bedroom. Sometimes we don't like to be in the dark. It might feel scary. Can you close your eyes with me? When you close your eyes, it is very dark! We can't see anything!

Is God still with us when it is dark? (Yes!) If we ever feel alone, we can go to God and ask for help.

Hold up picture of cracks in the road. Have you ever felt an earthquake? It is when the ground shakes. Let's see if we can make the ground in our room sound like an earthquake. *Coach children to stomp on the ground loudly.*

Is God still with us if there's an earthquake shaking the ground? (Yes!) Even during an earthquake, we can go to God and ask for help.

We can go to God anytime to ask for help. He is very strong, and He promises that He is always with us! That makes me feel comforted.

Verse Review Time: Let's stand up and practice our verse, Joshua 1:9, with hand motions.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong (show right muscle) **and courageous** (show left muscle). **Do not be terrified** (shake right pointer finger); **do not be discouraged** (shake left pointer finger), **for the Lord** (point up) **your God** (other pointer finger up) **will be with you wherever you go** (open hands start near ears and move downward out in front of you to make a path)." **Joshua 1:9**

Tracker Time

Note: Tracker should have the voice of a 4-year-old boy.

Teacher: Boys and girls, let's see if Tracker is here today. Can you help me call him? 1, 2, 3, Tracker!

Silence for a few moments. Then Tracker should sniffle, but remain hidden.

Teacher: Did you hear that? That sounded like Tracker... Is he crying? Tracker, do you want to talk about something?

Tracker should slowly come up.

Tracker: (Sniffles) Hi, _____. I'm just kinda sad...and I feel all alone!

WL: Oh, Tracker! I'm so sorry to hear that you're feeling sad and alone. But did you know that you're never really alone? God promises that He is always with us. He is our help, which means we can always go to Him.

T: Wow, _____! That is reeeeeeeally good news.

WL: You're right, it is good news! Whenever we go through hard times, or we feel scared, or we feel sad, we can remember to call out to God and know that He is with us, and He will help us. Do you know what it's called when we call out to God?

T: Yeah, that's called prayin'! I already learned that I can talk to God any time, anywhere. He always hears me.

WL: You're right, Tracker! God hears us when we pray, and He is with us all the time. How does that make you feel, Tracker?

T: It makes me feel a lot better. I feel comforted, and I know God loves me.

WL: God loves you very much, Tracker! See you next week!

T: Bye, friends! See ya next week!

Craft or Activity

Supplies:

- Activity sheet with "I can feel comforted when I go to God" and a simple smiley face (see appendix)
- Crayons

Instructions:

1. Say: God is our help! That means we can go to God any time. How can you feel when you go to God? Show me with your faces. (Happy, comforted, content)
2. Say: We can feel comforted when we go to God. Let's color a picture that helps us remember that we can go to God and feel comforted.
3. Have children color the smiley face.

Snack and Lesson Review

Verse Activity: Our Bible verse can be found in Joshua, chapter 1, verse 9. Let's all clap one time when I say, "Joshua 1:9", and then put our hands in our lap. Joshua 1:9! *Children clap one time and then put their hands in their laps. After hands are in laps, say Joshua 1:9.*

Pray: *Thank God for the snack and for being our help in times of trouble. Encourage children to fold their hands, bow their heads, and close their eyes. Remind them that praying is talking to God. Open prayer with, "Dear Heavenly Father" and close with, "...in Jesus' name, Amen."*

Review questions to ask during snack:

1. Who can we go to for help and comfort when sad or scary things happen? (God)
2. Is God always with me? (Yes)
3. Is God with me if I feel scared? (Yes)
4. Is God with me if I feel sad? (Yes)
5. Is God with me if I feel alone? (Yes)
6. How do I ask God for help? (By praying and talking to Him)
7. Who is our help? (God)

Review Activities

Supplies:

- Ball

Instructions:

1. Have children sit in a circle.
2. One at a time, you (the leader) will say, "_____ will go to God" (*insert the name of the child*), and then roll the ball to that child. Have the child roll the ball back to you.
3. Repeat this activity with each child.