

TRUSTING IN GOD

No Matter What



Goal:
God is Faithful!

Scripture Verses:

**Job 1:1-3, 13-19,
20-22; 42:7-17
Romans 8:28, 31-39**

Kids ask tough questions sometimes, huh? Sometimes things aren't black and white but exists in some levels of gray. Some of life seems unfair, cruel, and unexplainable. Why would a loving God allow such bad things to happen?

Kids need help to deal with the disappointment and hurt they feel when life hits them in the face. God loves them and carries them through these times, but it's hard to see that when the going gets rough. Help kids understand that the pimples, pits, and lemons of life can help make us stronger people with deeper faith.

Choose Your Opening

Option 1: Perfect Life

(For this activity, use a small suitcase or duffel bag, a large sheet of newsprint, a pair of scissors, and a marker. Have a stack of magazines and tape available.)

Say: Today we're taking an imaginary trip through the Land of the Perfect Life. But before we leave, we'll need to pack. Flip through your pile of magazines, and cut out words and pictures that symbolize what's essential for a perfect life. For example, you might cut out a picture of a car. Then pack your perfect-life pictures into your suitcase.

When the suitcases are packed, have the child with that particular suitcase, explain the contents of its perfect-life suitcase. List the "essentials" on newsprint, and tape the newsprint to a wall.

Then Say: Your perfect life has now changed drastically. Your house is on fire, and you're able to save just five of life's essentials in your suitcase. Choose 5 things you'd want to keep in your perfect life.

Have the kids share about their choices.

Option 2: I've Always Wanted to Know

(For this activity, you'll need tape, markers, a sheet of newsprint, and several index cards for every child)

Say: Today we're focusing on tough faith questions, those hard questions that never seem to get answered, questions such as "Why is Sally smarter than I am?" "Why did God allow that tornado?" "Why do cheaters always seem to win?" and lots of others.

Give each child a sheet of newsprint, tape, a marker, and several index cards.

Say: On your newsprint, draw a big, fat question mark. On each index card, write one tough question you'd like answered. Begin your questions with "I wonder why..." Put a piece of rolled tape on the back of each card, and tape the cards to the question mark. Your group will end up with several questions.



Pimples in Your Life

(For this activity, provide paper, a pencil, and a Bible. You'll also need newsprint, a marker, and tape.)

Give each child some paper, a pencil, and a Bible.

Say: Life is rough. Bad things sometimes happen to good kids. We want everything to be perfect in life, and when it's not, we sometimes blame God or think He's forgotten about us. Ask someone to read aloud Job 1:1-3 and 13-19.

Ask: *If you were Job, would you be angry at God? Why or why not?

*Did God still love Job? Why or why not?

Read aloud Job 1:20-22 and 42:7-17

Ask: *What are reasons God allows bad things to happen to good people?

Say: List 3 reasons on paper. Some examples might be "Bad times make us stronger" or "We learn to depend on God more."

Give a few minutes then ask each child to report their reasons.

Ask: *How did God show His love to Jesus?

*Did God love Jesus when he was dying on the cross? Why or why not?

Take a minute and have your child/children verbally list things they fear. Read aloud Romans 8:35-39

Say: When bad things happen to us—when there are pimples in our lives—God still loves us. He wants us to trust him even when we're afraid. Sometimes His love is the only support we have in tough times, but it's enough.



REFLECTION

Life's Dilemmas

(For this activity, copy and cut apart the "Tough Dilemmas" handout in this study. You'll also need a Bible.)

Sit on the floor facing one another and place the tough dilemmas face-down in the center.

Say: Many situations in life are hard to understand. They cause strong feelings in us, and we want God to answer our questions about them. Now we'll have a chance to respond to situations that could easily happen. Someone will pick a tough dilemma from this stack and read it aloud. Then we'll respond.

Ask a volunteer to make the first choice, and allow responses to flow without judgment.

When everyone has had a chance to speak on the subjects, **Say:** We can know that, even in the toughest dilemmas, God's love is constant and unconditional. He will always be there for us.

Read 8:35-39

Choose Your Closing

Option 1: God's Answer

(Note: Use this option only if you've used the "I've Always Wanted to Know" opening option. For this activity, you'll need a marker for each person.)

Have the kids go stand by the question mark sheet they taped to the wall during the opening. Give each a marker. Have kids circle any questions on the sheets that were discussed during "Life's Tough Dilemmas." Have them make an X by questions they didn't talk about.

Ask: Is it possible to get answers to all our questions? Why or why not?

Say: We may become angry with God when we can't find answers to our questions about bad things that happen to us, to our families, or to our friends. But bad things happen because people have rebelled against God and have made our world a less-than-perfect place. Sometimes no answers seem to fit our questions. However, God will give us strength to handle anything that comes our way if we choose to trust and follow Him.

Close in prayer

Option 2: When Life Gives You Lemons

(For this activity, cut some lemons into bite-sized pieces. Make sure you have a piece for each child. You'll also need a basket of whole lemons, a pitcher of lemonade, and some paper cups.)

Hold up a basket of lemons and **Say:** I have a treat that looks great, and I want each of you to try it.

Have each child taste a piece of lemon.

Ask: *How do you like the treat? Explain

*How is this treat like or unlike life? Explain

Say: Sometimes things that look and smell really great leave a bitter taste in our mouths. We sometimes go after things that look good on the outside without trusting God to give us the very best in his time.

Pour a cup of lemonade for each child. When they finish, **Ask:**

*How is this treat like what we can do with life choices? Explain

Say: When life gives you lemons, allow God to make them into lemonade. He is faithful! In His time and in His way, all things will work together for good.

TOUGH DILEMMAS

Photocopy this handout, cut apart the situations, and place them in the center of the room.

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• Your best friend is killed in an auto accident caused by a drunk driver. The person who caused the accident walks away without a scrape.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• You're eating lunch with a person who other kids think is a dweeb. A couple of people walk by and make fun of you.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• Your parents tell you they're getting a divorce. Your dad is moving out of the house tomorrow morning.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• The person sitting next to you in history cheats on a test and gets an A. You studied hard, but you get a C.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• Your dad is phased out of his job so a younger person in the company can be promoted.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• You have a terrible fight with your parents. They ground you for a month.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• You're walking with a group of friends, and you pass a person in a wheelchair. She doesn't have any legs.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• You have a broken relationship with a friend. You keep praying for God to fix it. Nothing happens.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• You look in the mirror and see yourself as ugly.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• Your grandmother is gravely ill with cancer. You keep praying for God to work a miracle and make her well. She dies.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• A friend says she believes people who listen to rock music are condemned by God.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• The TV news shows thousands of people dying of starvation in a Third World country.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?

• You discover that someone at school has started a vicious lie about you. A friend asks you if it's true.
What are your feelings? What do you want to ask God?