

KIDS *of*
INTEGRITY

Courage



Fear is like fire – if we feed it, it quickly grows out of control. Here’s a grab bag full of fun suggestions to help your children find freedom from fear by focusing on God, who is always with them.

Positive anticipated outcomes for your kids include:

- noticeably calmer and less anxious
- increased self-assurance based on confidence in God
- less likely to compromise beliefs when pressured by others.

In addition, this lesson helps address bullying and discouragement.

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Parents’ prayer

Although we can try to develop character in our children through various methods and programs, only God can bring about permanent change in a child’s heart. Before you begin leading your children through this study on courage, spend time alone with God interceding for His help.

Use the sample prayer below to guide you, or build your own prayer using the verses from “Scripture-guided prayer.”

Sample prayer

Lord, You are the Lord who does whatever pleases You, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths (Psalm 135:6). It is with Your great might that You calm the wind and the waves and instill confidence in fearful hearts (Matthew 8:26-27). I place my complete trust in You, proclaiming, “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns!” because You promise to go before me, to be with me, and that You will never leave me or forsake me (Revelation 19:6, Deuteronomy 31:8).

In the battles of daily life, may my children see in me an unwavering faith and confidence in You Lord. I ask that they wouldn’t see me relying on my own strength, but Yours. When I am weak, (and I’ve been feeling pretty weak these days) may my cry be, “**O my Strength, I sing praise to You; You, O God, are my fortress, my loving God**” (Psalm 59:17). Your Word tells us that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). Please remind me to put on the full “armour of God” – the helmet of salvation, the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness. I need to carry the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith so I can extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. Please fit my feet with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace and guide me to pray in Your Spirit, so I can pray wisely for our family (Ephesians 6:13-18).

As the challenges of life rock the very foundations on which _____ and _____ stand, I ask that they would have an unshakeable trust in You. During times of trial, please help them to remember and quote Psalm 118:6-7, “The Lord is with me, I

will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The Lord is with me; He is my helper.” As Satan tempts _____ and _____ to trust in themselves or others, rather than in You, God, I ask that they will be reminded that, “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man” (Psalm 118:8). My prayer is that _____ and _____ will stand firm in their faith and be people of courage. I pray that they will be strong and do everything in love (1 Corinthians 16:13-14). I ponder the depth of courage it took for Your Son Jesus to die on the cross. I pray that You will develop in my children a faith that they are willing to stand up for, a faith they are compelled to share, and a faith that they will not renounce, despite consequences. Please keep them strong to the end, so that they will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, please give _____ and _____ the assurance that You, who have called them into fellowship with Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, are faithful (1 Corinthians 1:8-9).

Please help our family to remember that we can be strong and courageous, knowing that You are with us to help us fight our battles (2 Chronicles 32:7-8). Thank you for the assurance of Your faithfulness, that You keep Your covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love You and keep Your commands (Deuteronomy 7:9). When You call us to do something that requires courage, we ask that Your Spirit fill us with an unwavering faith in who You are and what You can do, so we can do it confidently. Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for parents

Read and pray through one or more of the selected Scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.

Character focus

Begin by thanking God for being a God of faithfulness, power and love.

Deuteronomy 7:9 | 2 Samuel 22:31-37 |
2 Chronicles 32:6-8 | Psalm 59:16-17 |
1 Corinthians 1:8-9

Heart search

Acknowledge when, where and why you lack courage.
Psalm 49:12-13 | Psalm 78:19-22 | Proverbs 28:26 |
Isaiah 31:1 | Jeremiah 17:5-6

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have seen courage demonstrated in your family.

Family requests

Ask God to help you and your children live courageously, with your confidence being found in Him.

Psalm 86:2 | Psalm 143:8 | Isaiah 26:3-4 |
1 Corinthians 16:13-14 | 2 Thessalonians 3:3

Kids talk with God

Use this section to help your children learn to reach out to God in all things. The sample prayers all begin with “Dear God,” however, you may use any other names for God your children are comfortable with. If your children are ready to formulate their own original prayers, use the Bible verses under “Scripture-guided prayer for children” for inspiration.

Sample prayers

Dear God, I know that You will help me to be strong and courageous, even when I’m scared. Amen.

Dear God, thank you that You promise to go before me and always be with me and that You will never leave me or forsake me (Deuteronomy 31:8). Amen.

Dear God, it’s hard to be brave, especially right now. Please help me to remember that You will take care of me and help me to have courage. Amen.

Dear God, when I am afraid, please help me to put my trust in You, instead of myself. Amen.

Dear God, please give me the courage to shout as Nehemiah did, “Our God will fight for us!” (Nehemiah 4:20) Amen.

Dear God, when I am afraid, please help me to remember that You are great and awesome and that You will fight for me (Nehemiah 4:14). Amen.

Dear God, please help me to remember that with Your help, little guys can do big things too! Amen.

Dear God, I would rather not _____ (name the situation that causes your child to be fearful, i.e. go to the basement). Please come with me and give me courage. Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for children

Read through one of the selected Scriptures under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.

Character focus

Begin by thanking God for being a God of faithfulness, power and love.

Deuteronomy 7:9 | 2 Samuel 22:31-34 | Psalm 59:16

Heart search

Acknowledge when and why you lack courage.

Psalm 78:19-22 | Proverbs 28:26 | 1 Peter 5:7

Gratitude

Thank God ways you have seen courage demonstrated in your family.

Personal requests

Ask God to help you trust Him and be courageous.

Jeremiah 17:7 | 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 |
2 Thessalonians 3:3

Speak a blessing

Your affirmation will give tremendous encouragement to your children as they strive to be more courageous. Use this section as a reminder to “speak a blessing” when you see evidence of this godly characteristic.

- _____ is a courageous boy/girl.
- _____, you are showing courage/bravery.
- _____, how brave you are!
- You are courageous!

- I’m glad you’re trusting God right now, _____.
- I’m glad you’re trusting God through this challenge, _____.
- God is pleased when we stand up for what we believe in, _____.
- Awesome, _____! You remembered to find (or take) courage in God!

Memory verses

Memorizing Scripture with your children helps God’s Spirit bring about lasting change. Choose a verse your children can learn in a pre-determined period of time and aim to review the verse at least once every day.

Deuteronomy 7:9 “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 31:8 “The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

2 Samuel 22:30 “With Your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.”

2 Samuel 22:31 “As for God, His way is perfect; the Lord’s word is flawless; He shields all who take refuge in Him.”

2 Samuel 22:32-33 “For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure.”

2 Samuel 22:34 “He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; He causes me to stand on the heights.”

Daniel 2:22 “He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with Him.”

Nahum 1:7 “The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him.”

Psalm 18:2 “The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

Psalm 18:31 “For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God?”

Psalm 18:46 “The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!”

Psalm 20:7 “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.”

Psalm 25:1 “In You, Lord my God, I put my trust.”

Psalm 31:14 “But I trust in You, Lord; I say, ‘You are my God.’ ”

Psalm 56:3 “When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.”

Psalm 56:4 “In God, whose word I praise – in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

Psalm 56:11 “In God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?”

Psalm 59:16-17 “But I will sing of Your strength, in the morning I will sing of Your love; for You are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. You are my strength, I sing praise to You; You, God, are my fortress, my God on whom I can rely.”

Psalm 84:12 “Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in You.”

Psalm 91:2 “I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’ ”

Psalm 118:6-7 “The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? The Lord is with me; He is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies.”

Psalm 118:8 “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

1 Corinthians 16:13-14 “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.”

1 Corinthians 1:8-9 “He will keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with His son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

2 Thessalonians 1:4 “Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you’re enduring.”

Hebrews 13:6 “So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?’ ”

Kick-off craft

For this kick-off craft, you’ll help your children each make a shepherd’s rod and discuss how a shepherd uses his rod to care for his sheep. If you prefer not to use a sapling or length of dowel for each child, you could instead unscrew a broom handle and decorate it with temporary decorations.

Shepherd’s rod

Directions

You will need the following supplies:

- a stick (a freshly-cut sapling or a length of dowel 50-60 cm [20-24”] long and 1.5-2 cm [$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ ”] in diameter)
- an old kitchen knife or dull blade

- a small handsaw
- sandpaper
- felt-tipped markers
- ribbon or leather cording.

- 1** If you are using a lengths of dowel, help your children sand each end of their rod until smooth and free of splinters. If you are using saplings, remove the bark by scraping it off with a dull blade. Try not to mar the clean, white surface underneath.
- 2** Allow each peeled stick to dry overnight before sanding it or decorating it.
- 3** Once each “rod” is dry, help your children sand the rough sections. Write your preferred Bible memory verse on each rod, and decorate them with felt-tipped markers or paint.
- 4** Cut a notch near one end of each rod using a saw. Wrap the end with ribbon or leather cording, winding it through the notch to help keep it in place. Leaving some trailing ends to make a tassel. Use a low-temperature glue gun to secure the ribbon in place, if you wish.

While each child is decorating their rod, tell them how a real shepherd used their rod and staff in Bible times. Here’s some suggested dialogue to help start your discussion:

When shepherds took their sheep out to graze, it was like being on a very long hike. The shepherds did not want to carry a heavy load, so they took only what they needed. One of the most important items they carried was a rod or a staff. The shepherds used the rod to protect their sheep from harm. If a fierce wild animal came to drag a sheep away, the shepherd could use the rod to protect their sheep. In Bible times, there were no fences to keep the sheep in one place; the shepherd and his sheep ranged all over the countryside. The shepherds used their staff to discipline sheep that were wandering away from the flock.

Have each child use their rod to care for and “herd” their stuffed animals. Choose one stuffed animal to be a bear or wolf that is preying on the other animals. Let your children “protect” their sheep by gently using their rod. Whenever a child plays with their rod, use the opportunity to review the “inscribed” memory verse with them.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 23:4b “I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

Psalm 91:14 “‘Because he loves Me,’ says the Lord, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges My name.’”

Isaiah 40:11 “He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young.”

Bible stories

This section provides Bible stories with the theme of courage, along with questions that can be used as a guide for family discussions. Choose one story that is appropriate for your children. Before reading aloud, take a few minutes to review the story. If the Bible passage is too complex for your children, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.”

Trusting in man or trusting in God?

Read 2 Chronicles 16 and Psalm 146:3-6.

Questions for discussion

1. Is it easier to trust something that you can see or something that you cannot see?
2. Who is stronger, a man or God?
3. Is a huge army of soldiers stronger than God?
4. Is anything or anyone stronger than God?
5. Why would anyone trust in man instead of God?
6. Can you think of any reason for Asa to trust in an army instead of God?

7. Why do you think Asa didn't ask God for help when he got so sick?
8. Read Psalm 40:4 and Psalm 146:3-6.
9. Who does the Bible say we should trust?
10. When are you tempted to trust people, instead of trusting God?

Key concepts

Asa was king of Judah and Baasha was King of Israel. They were fighting with each other. Ben Hadad, the king of Aram, was helping the Israelites. Asa talked with Ben Hadad and offered him money to "change teams" and start helping Judah instead of Israel. Ben Hadad agreed to do so. Once Ben Hadad started helping Judah take over Israelite towns, the Israelites gave up working on their building project. (We can guess they needed to quit building and start protecting their towns.)

At this time a seer named Hanani ("seer" is another name for a prophet) came and talked to King Asa and told him that he had done a foolish thing, trusting in armies instead of trusting in God. Hanani pointed out that God had helped Asa fight against two other mighty armies called the Cushites and the Libyans. The seer said, "Yet when you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war" (2 Chronicles 16:8-9). Asa became very ill, but stubbornly, he refused to go to God for help – he only went to doctors. Two years later, Asa died.

It is easy to be tempted to trust in people (who we can see) rather than in God who we cannot see, but the Bible makes it clear that those who trust God will be blessed.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 40:4 "Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods."

Psalm 146:3-6 "Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit

departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God. He is Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them – He remains faithful forever."

Little guy, big God

Read 1 Samuel 17.

This is a familiar story, so if your children have heard it many times, retell it in modern circumstances. For example, Goliath could be a bully who shows up at the park every day and frightens the other children by saying unkind things. David could be a child who has the courage to approach the child's mother and let her know what is going on.

Questions for discussion

1. Who was Goliath?
2. How did Goliath challenge the Israelites every day?
3. Why was everyone afraid to fight him?
4. Who was David?
5. Why did David think he could take on the giant, when none of the Israelite soldiers were brave enough to fight him?
6. What did David mean when he said "the armies of the living God"?
7. What did Saul say to David when David offered to fight the giant?
8. What was David's reply?
9. Was David's confidence in his own abilities, or in God?
10. What did David say when Goliath mocked him?
11. Who won the battle?
12. What kind of battles do you fight each day?

13. Can you fight these battles with your own strength?
14. Who is strong enough to help you win the war against sin?

Key concepts

Israel was at war with their enemies, the Philistines. Instead of both armies fighting, the Philistines suggested the battle be won or lost based on the outcome of one Israelite soldier fighting Goliath. Goliath was a massive Philistine soldier. Day after day the Philistine army sent Goliath out to taunt the Israelites, asking if anyone was willing to fight him. But all of the Israelites were afraid to fight him.

Then one day a younger brother of some of the Israelite soldiers came to the battleground to bring food for his big brothers. When this shepherd boy named David heard Goliath mocking the Israelite army, he began asking questions about what was going on. David was then brought to see the Israelite king, Saul. David told Saul that he was willing to fight Goliath. Saul questioned whether or not David could fight Goliath, but David explained that he had fought and killed a bear and a lion while he worked as a shepherd. "If God took care of me while I fought the wild animals, He can help me fight Goliath" (1 Samuel 17:37).

Saul offered David his armour (which did not fit) so David took just his slingshot and some stones and headed out to fight the giant. As David approached Goliath the big soldier mocked David. David replied, "You come against me with a sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the Lord will help me defeat you" (1 Samuel 17:45-46). David put a stone in his sling and fired it at Goliath, striking him in the forehead. The mighty giant fell to the ground. When the Philistines saw their hero was dead, they all ran away. David trusted in God and God gave him victory.

Every day we have our own battles to fight against temptation. Examples of ways that children can be tempted include disobeying their parents, whining when they don't get their own way, refusing to share or teasing a sibling. Just as Goliath was the enemy

of the Israelite army, Satan is our enemy. The Bible says that Satan is like a lion on the prowl, looking for someone to defeat. If we ask God to help us say, "No!" to temptation, He can give us the same kind of victory He gave David. But if we trust in our own strength, it will be much harder to have the courage to do right instead of wrong.

Relevant Scripture

1 Peter 5:8 "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Better than water wings

Read Matthew 14:22-33.

Questions for discussion

1. Why were the disciples afraid?
2. What did Jesus say?
3. What did Peter do and say?
4. Was he able to walk on the water?
5. When did he start to sink?
6. When are you tempted to trust in yourself instead of God?

Key concepts

Jesus' disciples were out in a boat during the night when a storm came up. The big waves were hitting the boat and the strong winds were pushing it farther from shore. The disciples were scared because of the dreadful storm, but then something scared them even more: they saw someone coming to them, walking on the water. They did not know who or what it was so they cried out in fear.

Jesus called back, "Take courage. It is I. Don't be afraid" (Matthew 14:27). Peter then called out to Jesus, "Lord, if it's You, tell me to come to You on the water" (Matthew 14:28). Jesus told him to come. At first Peter could walk on the water, but then he looked around and saw the wild wind and the waves and got scared and started to sink.

Jesus didn't let Peter drown; instead He reached out and caught Peter. Then Jesus looked at Peter and asked him why he had doubted. When Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat together, the wind and the waves died down and the disciples worshipped Jesus saying, "You are the Son of God" (Matthew 14:32).

Peter was able to walk on water until he stopped trusting Jesus and became afraid. In our own lives there are times when we are tempted to do the same thing. When we forget that God is always with us and we become frightened by the situation we are in (dark rooms, unknown situations) or something we see (dogs or bees), we are like Peter. When we see or hear things that scare us, we need to remember to pray and to trust God.

A rocking sailboat

Read Acts 27:13-26.

Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever been out in a boat when there was a storm?
2. Can you imagine what it would be like? How would you describe it?
3. What might you be thinking?
4. Can you think of something that is as scary as a storm?
5. In the story, how bad was the storm?
6. How did God encourage Paul?
7. What did Paul tell the others on the ship to encourage them?
8. How can we discourage others when they are frightened?
9. What can we do or say to help others keep up their courage?
10. Your parents keep you safe, but who else watches over you?

Key concepts

Paul was being held prisoner because he was telling people about Jesus. It was decided that Paul would take a journey on a ship, from Caesarea to Rome where he was to be put on trial. Paul was to take the trip on a big ship, along with other prisoners and the sailors. After they had gone a short distance, the weather did not seem good for travelling and Paul advised the ship's crew to spend the winter in a town called Crete. They did not listen to Paul, but sailed on.

A storm the strength of a hurricane came along. The wind was so powerful that the sailors passed ropes around the ship to keep it from breaking apart. The raging water and winds continued for so long that many men on the ship gave up hope of ever being rescued or surviving. Despite the fact that the storm kept up, Paul told the people on the ship to keep up their courage and have faith that God would rescue them. Paul said this because an angel had visited Paul during the night and told him that he would stand trial in Rome. On the fourteenth night of the storm, (two weeks after it began!), the sailors finally sensed the ship was approaching land. They had come upon an island. Although the ship was wrecked, all the people remained safe. God had rescued them, just as the angel had foretold.

The word courage is part of the word "encourage." The word courage is also part of the word "discourage." We can encourage others by telling them that God cares for us. We can get discouraged ourselves when we stop trusting God and think about how frightening the situation we are in seems. We can discourage others by talking about the things they fear or teasing them, instead of encouraging them to trust God and reminding them of His love for us. The Bible tells us that we can be confident that God cares for us.

Relevant Scripture

Psalms 121:1-8 "I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip – He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you – the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the

sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm – He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

The Big Guy’s on our side

Read 2 Chronicles 32:1-22.

Questions for discussion

1. How did Hezekiah encourage the people who were about to go into battle?
2. Did it work?
3. What else did Hezekiah do?
4. What did God do for them?
5. What kind of battles do you fight each day?
6. If you fight these battles in your own strength, will you win?
7. Whose strength do you need in order to win the war against sin?
8. How do we ask God to come and help us fight?

Key concepts

Hezekiah was a king of Judah who was faithful to God because he did what was right and did his best to obey God. God gave him much success and life was going well for Hezekiah, until another king named Sennacherib decided to make war against Hezekiah and his people. Hezekiah encouraged his people by saying, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles” (2 Chronicles 32:7-8).

The Bible says that the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah said (2 Chronicles 32:8). The king of Assyria did not give up. He tried to discourage Hezekiah and his people by saying that he had defeated other nations. Sennacherib also made fun of God by saying, “Just as the gods of the peoples of the other lands did not rescue their people from

my hand, so the god of Hezekiah will not rescue His people from my hand” (2 Chronicles 32:17).

Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah cried out to God in prayer, asking for help. God sent an angel to destroy the Assyrian army. The Bible tells us that God cared for them on every side (2 Chronicles 32:22). Instead of giving up, Hezekiah trusted God and God came to his rescue.

In our own lives we fight a different kind of battle. It’s a battle against evil and temptation to do wrong. Examples include being tempted to disobey parents, to be unkind to friends or siblings, or to be selfish, wanting things our own way. If we try to “win” against sin without God’s help, it will be much harder to resist sin. We can fight effectively against sin when we pray like Hezekiah did and ask God to give us victory.

Courage in confronting wrong

Read 2 Chronicles 26:1-6,16-21.

Questions for discussion

1. What did King Uzziah do that was wrong?
2. Who was courageous enough to tell the king that he was sinning?
3. Did God support them when they confronted the king for doing wrong?
4. When might you have to confront someone who is doing something wrong?
5. What is the best way to confront wrongdoing?

Key concepts

Uzziah was king of Judah. This meant that he was the big boss of the entire country! The king made all the rules and everyone had to obey him. At first Uzziah followed God and did what was right, but after he became powerful, Uzziah became proud. He decided that he didn’t have to obey God’s rules and chose to go into God’s holy temple to burn incense. (This was a job God had given to the priests and only priests were to do it.)

Azariah the priest, along with 80 other priests, went to tell King Uzziah that what he was doing was wrong. It took courage for them to do this because the king had the power to order anyone who angered him to be put to death. King Uzziah did get very angry. As he was raging at the priest, leprosy (a horrible skin disease) broke out on his skin. God had sent the leprosy. King Uzziah had to live alone for the rest of his life because he had leprosy; he could no longer be around other people or go into any part of the temple to worship God.

It's important to remember that it is God's job to judge (Romans 14:9-11, 1 Corinthians 4:5), while it is our job to encourage others to do right (1 Thessalonians 5:10-15). Galatians 6:1 explains that when we correct another person, we are to do it in a gentle way. This means that if we are confronting wrongdoing, we need to speak quietly and politely. For example, if your friend suggests that you not allow your little brother to play with you, you could say, "Let's remember to be kind. The Bible says we are to treat others as we want to be treated ourselves." That would be much better than yelling, "You're being mean!"

Confronting wrong can also be easier if we support each other in standing up for what is right, like the priests did. If another child points out that someone is doing something wrong, you can support them by simply saying, "I agree with you; it's important to follow God's rules."

At times, there may be other children who make fun of you for choosing to follow Jesus and doing what is right. These are the times that you can remember that Jesus had people hurt Him too. He helps us feel joyful when things are hard by giving us His Holy Spirit.

Relevant Scripture

Romans 14:10 "You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."

1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

1 Thessalonians 5:15 "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to do what is good for each other and for everyone else."

Galatians 6:1 "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."

God is our protector

Read Psalm 91 and Romans 8:28.

As you read Psalm 91, have your children raise a hand each time they hear how God protects His people. Challenge them to count the ways.

Questions for discussion

1. How many ways does the Psalm say that God protects us?
2. In verse fourteen, why does God say He will protect us?
3. When do we need God's protection?
4. Can you think of any ways that God has protected you from harm?
5. If we were to write a Psalm like this for our own lives, what things would we list?
6. God led Paul through some tough times and scary situations. In Romans 8:28, what did he urge all believers to remember?

Key concepts

We need to make sure that we are not foolish, and that we never put ourselves in a dangerous situation. Even when we are careful, however, there are some things that are outside our control. In Psalm 91 we find more than six things God protects us from. Today we don't have wild animals roaming the streets, but there are other ways we can be harmed. We can thank God that He will care for us on icy roads, during storms and when we are sick. When we love God and ask Him to be our Protector, He promises that He will always be with us. God also promises that, no matter how bad things may seem to us, He

is always working “behind the scenes” to bring good out of every situation.

Creative discipline

Here are some suggestions to help you develop a confident, courageous spirit in your children.

For problems with a fearful attitude

Biblical basis

Deuteronomy 31:8 and Joshua 1:9.

Suggested disciplinary action

When a child is lacking in courage or bravery they do not need punishment; rather, they need encouragement. Refer to any of the **memory verses** and/or complete a related **hands-on option** or **Bible story** from this lesson.

Affirmation

Read Psalm 118:6-8 and Psalm 56:3 together. After reading either or both of these verses, take the time to pray with your fearful child and encourage them to have confidence in God.

Psalm 118:6-8 “The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? The Lord is with me; He is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans.”

Psalm 56:3 “When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.”

Hands-on options

Often we are consumed by the busyness of day-to-day living and we forget to look for opportunities to teach our children God-honouring character traits. These ideas require very little preparation, making it easy for you to share some simple but memorable lessons with your kids. Read over the suggestions at the beginning of your week and choose one or two that will fit your schedule.

God is my air bag

drive time

While driving in a vehicle, discuss motor vehicle safety devices like car seats, seat belts and air bags. Explain that seat belts are used to protect passengers

from injuries if the vehicle has to stop quickly or is in a collision. Liken this to a parent holding a child’s hand while crossing the street, or walking up or down stairs, or on rough terrain. Seat belts are protection that you can see and feel.

Next, tell your children about vehicles equipped with air bags. Explain that air bags are devices that you cannot see or feel, yet they are always there, offering protection if there is a sudden impact. This is the way God is – He is always with us, even though we can’t see Him. He is ready to help or protect us any time we need His help.

Questions for discussion

- Why do we wear seat belts?
- What is an air bag?
- Where is the air bag?
- How is a parent like a seat belt?
- How is God like an air bag?

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 13:5-6 “But I trust in Your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in Your salvation. I will sing the Lord’s praise, for He has been good to me.”

Psalm 121:7-8 “The Lord will keep you from all harm – He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

I wanna hold the hand that holds the world

physical activity

An outdoor walk with your children is a great opportunity to discuss fear and nature. Many people fear natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes or thunderstorms. To help a child who fears nature’s power, remind them that God made the world and is in control of all that happens in nature. As you walk along, hold hands and explain that when we love and follow God, it is like we are holding His hand all the time. A fun song to sing as you walk along is *He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands*.

Teach your children to repeat the phrase, “I’m trusting God to keep me safe. I’m holding the hand that holds the world.” Read your choice of the verses listed below where God speaks of His power and control over nature. Balance your discussion by reminding your child that God doesn’t want us to be foolish, and we should never knowingly put ourselves in harm’s way. He wants us to be wise and to prepare for emergencies, so we can not only keep ourselves safe, but also be ready to help others.

Relevant Scripture

Isaiah 41:10 “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 41:13 “For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.”

John 10:27-29 “My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”

Job 38:34-35 “Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water? Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, ‘Here we are?’”

Job 38:37-38 “Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens when the dust becomes hard and the clods of earth stick together?”

Job 38:39-41 “Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?”

Job 39:26-28 “Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread its wings toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command and build its nest on high? It dwells on a cliff and stays there at night; a rocky crag is its stronghold.”

The gracious hand of God

drive time or any time

While driving in your vehicle or at another quiet time, have your children list some things they are afraid of. After they have listed some fears, let them know you are going to tell them a story about a man named Ezra who had to take a scary trip. Your story can include all or part of the summary provided below (taken from Ezra, chapters 7-8).

Once upon a time, a man named Ezra had to go on a lengthy journey through places where robbers and bandits lurked. Just how did Ezra get himself into such a scary situation? It all started a long, long time ago.

Ezra lived at a time when the people of Israel had been taken captive and were living in a foreign land. In this other country, they were forced to serve the king of the land. After the Israelites had lived for many years in this foreign land, God decided to allow the Israelites to return to Jerusalem, their special city where they had lived before being taken captive. The Israelites wanted to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem so they could worship God there again.

A man named Artaxerxes was king at that time and the Bible says that “The king had granted him [Ezra] everything he asked, for the hand of the Lord his God was on him.” King Artaxerxes gave permission for Ezra and anyone else to return to Jerusalem. He also sent gold and silver along with Ezra and instructed him to buy rams and bulls to offer to His God as a sacrifice in Jerusalem. Artaxerxes also sent a letter with Ezra telling the governors of the areas where Ezra was going to give Ezra more money, wheat and oil and salt if he needed it. The king also told Ezra that it was his job to teach all of the other Israelites to follow God’s laws as he did.

Ezra knew this was a big job and that the journey to Jerusalem would be dangerous. Ezra and the men going with him were also taking their wives and children and all that they owned. They did not travel in cars, but in wagons and on foot. The journey would take a long, long time and along the roads there could be thieves waiting to steal their possessions or enemies waiting to hurt them.

Even though the journey would be scary, Ezra praised God anyway and thanked Him for the honour of serving Him. Ezra also said, "Because the hand of the Lord my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me" (Ezra 7:28).

Ezra was tempted to ask the king for soldiers to protect them on their journey, but he was ashamed to do so, because he had told the king that God would take care of them (Ezra 8:22). Instead of asking for soldiers, they fasted and prayed and asked God to protect them on their journey. And God did! The Bible tells us that Ezra and his men and their families did arrive safely in Jerusalem. Ezra said, "The hand of our God was on us, and He protected us from enemies and bandits along the way."

Questions for discussion

- What do kids do when they feel afraid?
- Do you feel safer when you are alone, or when you are with your parents?
- Have you ever been in a scary place?
- Has God ever given you a job to do?

Read Matthew 28:18-20 (see below).

- What important job did Jesus give His disciples?
- Does Jesus expect us to do this job too?

Key concepts

Often when children are frightened, it makes them feel better to hold their mom or dad's hand. This is similar to what Ezra did. Ezra often said, "The gracious hand of God is on us." Just as kids feel safer with an adult they trust, Ezra knew he was safe when he was following God. God did keep Ezra and His people safe. He will take care of us when we ask Him to as well.

Just before Jesus left to go back to heaven, He gave his disciples a job very similar to Ezra's job. Jesus told His disciples that they were to go and tell everyone how to obey everything Jesus had taught them. Then

He reminded them that He would be with them forever! The job and the promise Jesus gave to His disciples is for all Christians. We can be confident, even when we are afraid, because we know that God will always be with us.

Return to the list of things your children said they were afraid of. List each one and then have your children say this rhyme with you:

*I'm not afraid!
I've got it made!
With Jesus by my side,
I say to fear, "Bye! Bye!"*

Use the rhyme to encourage your children to trust God when they are afraid. In the future, when your children are fearful, you can affirm them by telling them that the "gracious hand of God" is on them, just like it was on Ezra.

Relevant Scripture

Matthew 28:18-20 ". . . All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Letter from God

any time

Read this pretend "letter from God" to your children. Much of it is based on the story of Hezekiah, which is found in 2 Chronicles 32. The "P.S." portion of the letter refers to some specific fears. Use the P.S. to address each child's greatest fear. When you are finished, you can use the additional Bible verses provided below to pray God's protection over your children.

Dear _____, and _____,

There are scary things in this world and I understand when you are scared. It is okay to be scared, but when you are scared, I want you to tell Me about it. Jesus was a little boy once too. When He was scared He had His dad on earth to comfort Him, but He also had a bigger Dad in heaven

watching over Him. I am your Father in heaven and I watch over you just as I did Jesus. I am the God of the universe and I promise to go before you, to be with you wherever you go. I will never leave you or forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:8).

I want to tell you a little story: Once upon a time, there was a man named Hezekiah who was the leader of My people, the people of Israel. There was a huge army coming against them and it seemed there was no way they could win the battle. But Hezekiah trusted Me and he encouraged his people with these words, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles” (2 Chronicles 32:7-8). Be confident My children, because when you fight battles with Me on your side, there is no way you can lose.

Oh yeah, I bet you want to hear the end of the story about Hezekiah and the Israelites. Well Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, started mocking the Israelites saying, “Blah, blah, blah . . . Don’t believe Hezekiah when he tells you God will take care of you. Look at all the other nations we have conquered. No god was able to beat my army and me. We’re the big guns and not even your god is gonna beat us!”

Hezekiah and the people were scared, but instead of surrendering they prayed and asked Me for help. Sennacherib kept mocking Me, and all the Israelites too. I sent an angel who destroyed all of Sennacherib’s soldiers, leaders and officials. So Sennacherib went home defeated and left the Israelites alone. Pretty cool story, don’t you think?

The Israelites felt extremely small, weak and helpless when they saw that big army coming against them. My children, when you feel small, weak or scared, remember to praise Me because feeling weak can remind you that I will be your strength and your fortress (Psalm 59:17). I am your loving Father in heaven.

Here is a verse to remember when you are scared. Psalm 118:6-7 says, “The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? The Lord is with me; He is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies.” Promise Me that when you are afraid, you will trust in Me!

My children, I did not give you a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7). Any time you need My Spirit, just ask and I will be there for you. I am telling you the same thing I told Joshua, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

Love forever,
God

P.S. I AM bigger than the boogeyman or anything else that might be lurking in your closet.

[Alternative P.S.] And about the dying thing: Many grownups are afraid of dying too. It’s normal to be scared of dying because it means going somewhere you haven’t been before. But you don’t have to worry about dying. Imagine that you had never been to _____ (name a favourite family vacation spot) before. When your mom and dad said, “We are going to a wonderful place where there will be lots of cool things to do,” you might not have wanted to go somewhere different, and even a bit scary. But remember how when you got to _____ (that favourite family vacation spot), you were so glad you made the trip. Heaven is going to be a lot like _____ (that beloved family holiday location), except there will be no crying or pain, and I will wipe away every tear from your eyes (Revelation 21:4).

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 29:25 “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.”

Psalm 46:1-3 “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.”

John 10:27-29 “My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”

Psalms 46:10 “He says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’”

God is my flashlight

drama / role play

A very common fear among children and adults is fear of the dark. Being careful in the dark is wise, as a person can trip or bump into hidden obstacles. However, being cautious in the dark is different from being fearful of darkness. When a person is afraid of the dark, they are usually letting their imagination get carried away. If a person continues to dwell on those thoughts, the fear only gets worse.

Offering an alternative focus can help your children overcome their fear of the dark. One helpful alternative is the three-part “fear stopper” handshake.

- 1 Begin by having your child hold your hand as you would hold hands if you were walking side by side.
- 2 As you swing hands, have your child say, “God is with me.”
- 3 Then face each other and hold your hands up to your eyes, pretending your hands are binoculars you are looking through. Look at each other and say, “God knows what hides in darkness!”
- 4 Finish by saying “God will protect me!” as you make a fist with one hand and gently “pound it” by punching your fist against the other person’s fist, “hammer-style.”

Complete this activity by reviewing these “fear stoppers” found in the Bible:

Relevant Scripture

Deuteronomy 31:8 “The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Daniel 2:22 “He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with Him.”

2 Samuel 22:29 “You, Lord, are my lamp; the Lord turns my darkness into light.”

Psalms 121:7-8 “The Lord will keep you from all harm – He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

Snuff out fear

science with a twist

Light a candle and talk about how scary fires can be. Have your children put their hands close enough to the flame to feel the heat. Remind your children to be careful around fire.

Explain that when fire gets too much fuel, it can get out of control. Fear is like fire; if we feed it, it can get out of control too. The good news is that God is stronger than fire and He is also stronger than fear.

Take a candle snuff or paper cup and put the candle out. As you demonstrate how a candle snuff puts the fire out, explain that God is more powerful than any fire. Even when our fear is out of control, God can put a stop to it if we ask Him.

*Note: You may wish to combine this activity with a review of basic fire safety rules. See the lesson on **righteousness** for a “firefighting” **hands-on option** that provides a list of fire safety rules, along with a spiritual application.*

Relevant Scripture

Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Matthew 14:25-27 “Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake, they were terrified. ‘It’s

a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' ”

Courageous critters

getting into nature

Some small animals are known for being particularly courageous, especially mammals in the Mustelidae, the weasel family. The wolverine, the grison and the badger are particularly courageous when they are threatened, facing their enemies with fearlessness. They simply won't back down, even when threatened by a much larger animal! Despite their reputation for being fierce, these animals would not go out of their way to harm a person. Like most wild animals, they choose to avoid people. People are a much larger threat to these animals than these creatures are to humans.

Study any of the courageous creatures listed below in depth, or simply share a few facts with your kids to encourage them to be similarly tenacious in adverse circumstances. As you study these courageous animals, use their approach to problems as an object lesson on dealing with Satan. Other animals you may wish to study include the polecat, sable, fisher, marten, weasel, ferret, mink and stoat.

Grison

There are common sayings in Chilean (the native language spoken where grisons live) that refer to this animal's ferocity and tenacity. One expression used to describe an aggressive or fierce person is "estar como quique" (meaning "to be like a grison"). Another expression is "malo como kike" (to be as mean as a grison), and yet another is "se puso como un kike" (referring to how a person "became like a grison"). Although these animals are very fierce, they can be tamed easily when they are young.

Wolverine

The wolverine has been described as a fearless, aggressive fighter that will drive bears away from their kills. Despite myths to the contrary, the wolverine not a vengeful killer. It is a scavenger by nature, feeding primarily on carrion and by preying on smaller animals like the ground squirrel (gopher). Although it will courageously defend its den and its food, the wolverine is not a trouble maker, nor does

it fight for "sport." This animal is not a significant threat to humans.

Badger

The badger is known for being an animal that won't back down in the face of danger. On their website at Natureconservancy.ca, the Nature Conservancy of Canada describes the badger's aggressive defence tactics. "Its muscular neck and thick, loose fur protect it when an animal predator strikes. These defence mechanisms give it time to turn on the predator and bite or claw it. When a badger is attacked, it also uses vocalizations. It hisses, growls, squeals and snarls. It also releases an unpleasant musk that may drive a predator away." Like its cousins, the grison and the wolverine, the badger's fierceness makes it an unappealing target for predators.

Key concepts

If confronted by an enemy, the wolverine, the grison and the badger face it head on! That is our best approach when dealing with Satan too. The Bible says that in order to make the devil flee, we are to take a firm stand against him and submit ourselves to God instead. Imagine the wolverine or the badger up against an enemy. They make an aggressive growling sound, hiss and snarl and show their sharp teeth. They are telling their enemies, "Don't mess with me!" When Satan prowls around, tempting you to sin, you can react like the animals of the Mustelidae family and let him know that you are not someone to be messed with, because you have God on your side. God does not want us to fear the devil; rather, He wants us to live free from fear, trusting in Him for strength.

After you have investigated your animals of interest and read some of the related Bible verses, pray with your children and ask God to help them to be as feisty as a _____ (the animal they enjoyed reading about) when Satan tempts them to be fearful or to sin.

Relevant Scripture

Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Matthew 10:29-31 “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

1 Corinthians 15:56-58 “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

James 4:7 “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Priceless poppies

creative crafts

Kids are fascinated by the velvet poppies that are available in late October and early November. Prior to taking your kids out to give a donation for a poppy, review with them the historical significance of the poppy.

You will want to explain that it takes great courage to risk your own life in order to protect other people’s lives and their freedom. An ideal way to do this is through reading a children’s book.

As your children put their “poppy money” in the collection jar, point out that poppies are available by donation only. Explain that, just as there is no set cost for the poppy, you cannot put a price tag on the lives of the soldiers that have been lost. If there are no poppies available in your area, have your children draw or colour a picture of one.

Another way to highlight the poppy symbol in your home is to make a bouquet of red “coffee filter poppies” as a reminder to pray for the men and women serving courageously in the Canadian military.

Directions for making paper poppies

To make your poppies, gather together the following supplies:

- “basket-style” coffee filters

- red, water-based poster paint

- paintbrushes

- a pencil

- washable plates

- wax paper

- scissors

- green pipe cleaners

- black buttons for flower centres

(As an alternative to buttons, use small, circular discs cut from plastic containers and coloured with black permanent marker. You will need to pierce two small holes in the centre of each disc).

- 1** Start by covering your table with newspaper. Cover another countertop with wax paper so you have a place to leave the painted coffee filters to dry.
- 2** To contain the paint, give each of your young painters a washable dinner plate. Put a small spot of paint on each plate and have your children “paint” the plate. *(If you prefer to skip this somewhat messy step, use red tissue paper instead. Cut multiple layers of tissue using a plate or lid with a 20 cm (8”) diameter as your circle template.)*
- 3** Next, lay a coffee filter on the painted plate and ask your kids to paint the top side of the filter. Once the filters are completely covered in paint on both sides, set them on a sheet of wax paper to dry. (You will need two coffee filters and two pipe cleaners for each poppy.)
- 4** The filters will need about four hours to dry. If you wish, you can use a blowdryer to speed up the process.
- 5** Once the filters have dried completely, place two filters together and fold them in half. Fold them in half again so you end up with a cone-

shaped quarter circle. Do not unfold it. Next, while holding the point of your quarter circle, use your scissors to round off both corners, trimming it to look like a snow cone.

- 6** When you open the filters up, each one should look like a red four-leaf clover. Place one filter directly on top of the other. (The two filters are used to create fullness and stiffness, while still making a poppy with four petals.)
- 7** Use a sharp pencil to poke two holes side by side at the centre of the layered filters.
- 8** Hold the filters and have one child push the pipe cleaner up through one of the holes. About 5 cm (2") of the pipe cleaner "stem" should stick up through the first hole.
- 9** Next, have a child thread a button on the stem. Fold the pipe cleaner in half and then thread it back down the remaining hole in the button.
- 10** To finish making the flower, hold the filters firmly at the centre, gathering them into a cup shape while crushing the filters at the centre just enough to allow you to wrap the pipe cleaner around the crushed underside of the flower's centre. Wind the pipe cleaner around three to four times, wrapping it tight enough to secure it permanently.
- 11** To reinforce the stem, wrap a second pipe cleaner around the first, twisting it all the way from the top to the bottom.
- 12** Finally, spread the petals open slightly and gently shape the flower.

Take time to remember

drive time

As you are driving, have your children watch for the honorary veteran's licence plates (most have a red poppy on them). These licence plates are issued in all provinces, with the exception of Nunavut.

A gentle way to introduce the idea of military conflict – if you choose to discuss it – is to explain that, just as the police force protects your

community, the military protects the country you live in. Police officers risk their lives for the safety of the communities they serve and soldiers risk their lives serving in our country's armed forces.

Explain that these men and women are following Jesus' example, because they are willing to "lay down their lives" in order to preserve someone else's life. Each time you find a veteran's license plate, take a minute to thank God for their willingness to serve our country and ask that God protect and give strength and courage to all of our police officers and military personnel.

Traditionally, we take time to honour war veterans on Remembrance Day each year, but you can talk to your children about the bravery and courage of soldiers at any time. To discover ways your family can honour war veterans, visit the Veterans Affairs Canada website at Veterans.gc.ca.

Questions for discussion

- What do you admire most about the men and women who protect our community and our country?
- When might you need to have courage like a soldier's?
- What does it mean to "stand up for what is right"?
- Have you ever needed to do this?
- Can you think of any other ways that God would want you to share His love with others?

Key concepts

Police officers, soldiers and other military personnel risk their lives to protect Canada's citizens. We may never have to put our lives in danger, but we can stand up for what we believe is right in different ways. A child can stand up for what is right by speaking up when others are being unkind to other people, or to animals. For example, if someone you are playing with suggests that you exclude another child from your play group, you can say, "Let's remember to be kind, and let him/her play too." If you see another child hurting an animal or insect, simply say, "You are

so much bigger and stronger than _____ (the animal or insect); it isn't fair to hurt it."

Another way we can "lay down our lives" in a smaller but significant way is through giving up personal comforts and treats in order to have extra money to give to those who are in need.

Just as God helps those who protect our country to be brave, He can help us have courage to stand up for what is right as well.

Note: It can be challenging to teach your children to intervene in a bullying situation because children often fear that they will become the bully's next target if they speak up. As a parent, you can encourage a timid child to intervene by enlisting a friend to take a stand with them. When peers speak up to defend a child being bullied, it does make a difference! When peers intervene, most bullying incidents dissipate very rapidly. Let your kids know that although it can be hard to defend another child, the end result makes everyone safer in the long term.

Relevant Scripture

Matthew 10:32-33 "Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before others, I will disown before My Father in heaven."

John 15:12-13 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

1 John 3:16-18 "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

Rocks and roses

science with a twist

For this hands-on option, you will need a vase, small rocks, sand and flowers. You'll also need to introduce the activity by telling your children a story about another child who is afraid of water. You could make

up your own story, or check out your local library for a suitable children's book.

1 Fill the vase with water (right to the top). Explain that the water represents fear. Then ask your children how someone who is afraid of water could overcome their fear. To prompt ideas, read Philippians 4:6-7 and Psalm 5:11-12.

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Psalm 5:11-12 "But let all who take refuge in You be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread Your protection over them, that those who love Your name may rejoice in You. Surely, Lord, You bless the righteous; You surround them with Your favor as with a shield."

2 Explain to your children that thankfulness chases fear away. In other words, when we praise God, it helps get rid of fear! Allow your children to place one flower in the vase every time they suggest something to thank or praise God for. Wipe up the water and show your children that the water (which represents fear) is going away each time they thank and praise God.

3 As you read your choice of the following verses, have your children fill the vase with rocks.

2 Samuel 22:32-33 "For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure."

Psalm 18:2 "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

Psalm 18:31 "For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God?"

Psalm 18:46 "The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!"

Psalm 56:3 “When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.”

- 4 Ask how God is like a rock. As you wipe up the water, remind your children that when we trust God to be our “rock” and to provide us with strength and courage, He helps us overcome our fears.
- 5 Your children may point out that there is still water remaining in the vase. Last of all, have them pour the sand in the vase. When the vase is full of sand, it will appear that all the water has gone. Read Jeremiah 5:21-22.

Jeremiah 5:21-22 “Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear: Should you not fear Me?’ declares the Lord. ‘Should you not tremble in My presence? I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it.’”

- 6 Explain that God made the sand, and that He designed it to keep the sea where it belongs. He made the whole world and is in charge of it all. Truly, the only thing anyone should really “fear” (or be in respectful awe of) is God Himself.
- 7 Close by thanking God for His greatness and power. Acknowledge that He is the Lord of the universe, who created us and is in control of everything. Thank Him for chasing our fears away when we praise Him and trust in Him.

Note: To ensure the flowers last, you may wish to dispose of the sand, fill the vase with fresh water and arrange the flowers in the vase, using the rocks as filler. Throughout the days to come, as you enjoy looking at the bouquet of flowers, review the meaning of the flowers, the rocks and the sand.

Blind courage

any time

For this activity, you will need to prepare beforehand by doing some research at your library or online to find some resources on guide dogs for the blind.

- 1 Begin by asking your children your choice of the following questions:

Questions for discussion

- Would you jump into a swimming pool with your eyes closed?
- How would you feel if I asked you to jump into a lake, but you couldn’t see the bottom?
- Would it make it easier for you to jump into the lake if I were in the water to catch you?
- How do you feel when you walk into a dark room?
- Is it easier to enter a dark room if someone you trust goes into the room first?
- Imagine you are camping in a tent in the woods. How would you feel after it gets dark? What would you think about while you are trying to go to sleep in your tent?
- Would you feel better if a parent was in the tent with you?
- All of these situations have something in common. Do you know what it is?

- 2 Explain that in each of the scenarios described above, there is a temptation to be afraid because you cannot see the bottom of the lake, or into a dark room, or what is in the bushes near your tent. This is often called “the fear of the unknown.” When we cannot see our surroundings well enough to be sure we are safe, it is easy to become afraid.

- 3 Ask your children to close their eyes and imagine what it would be like if they were unable to see at all. While their eyes are still closed, explain that some people live their whole lives not able to see, because they are blind. They were either born without the ability to see, or became blind later in life.

- 4 Take time to read a book or watch a video or DVD on guide dogs for the blind.

5 Now link the experiences you discussed earlier to a blind person's life experience. Explain that because a blind person trusts their guide dog, they can find the courage to go for a walk, cross the street or go shopping. Any of these everyday activities would be frightening for a blind person to do alone, but with their dog to guide them, they are safer.

6 Read your choice of the verses provided below and summarize by reviewing the key points. Once again, ask your children what they are afraid of and then close by praying that God would give them the courage to trust Him even when they are afraid.

Key concepts

Wherever we go and whatever we do, we can take comfort in knowing God is with us. God knows what is under the water at the lake, and what might lurk in the darkness. We can find the courage to face frightening situations, because the God who controls the whole the universe is watching over us and caring for us. Just as the guide dog "sees" for the blind person, God can see what we cannot see and He will watch over us. We need to learn to trust God, as the blind person trusts their guide dog. Whenever we are afraid, we can ask God to remind us that He is always with us, guiding and looking out for us.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 121:7-8 "The Lord will keep you from all harm – He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

John 14:1 [Jesus said,] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me."

Proverbs 15:3 "The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good."

Mashed-potato mountains

fun with food

Serve mashed potatoes and allow your children to make "mountains" with the potato. If you prefer, you can also use play dough on a cookie sheet. Sand or dirt makes a good outdoor alternative.

As your children are making their mountains, read your choice of the verses listed below. Encourage each child to act out the verses that you are reading, demonstrating God's power by squishing the mountains and making "streams flow." (Streams can be created using melted butter, gravy or water.)

Use the discussion questions to talk about the magnitude of God's power and His unlimited ability to answer prayer.

Questions for discussion

- Have you ever seen an ocean?
- Have you ever swum in big ocean waves?
- Who decides where the shore of the ocean is?
- Who can calm the ocean's wild waves?
- Have you ever been to a desert?
- Why do so few plants grow in the desert?
- What do you think it would be like to go for a long walk in the desert?
- Who can cause streams to flow and plants to grow in the desert?
- Who is in charge of everything that happens in nature?
- If God gives orders to the ocean, flattens mountains and make rivers in the desert, is there anything He can't do?
- Read Mark 11:22-24 (see below). What did Jesus tell His disciples about prayer?

Key concepts

When we think of the way God uses His power to control all of nature, we are reminded that His mighty strength has no limits. We can take courage or be encouraged, knowing that when we pray, there is nothing God cannot do.

Close by thanking God for His love, power and constancy. For example, you could pray, “Dear God, it is a comfort to know that although the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, Your love for us will not be shaken. Amen” (Isaiah 54:10).

Relevant Scripture

Job 38:8-11 “Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?’”

Psalms 46:1-3,7 “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.”

Isaiah 41:17-20 “The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set junipers in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.”

Isaiah 54:10 “‘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.”

Amos 9:5-6 “The Lord, the Lord Almighty – He touches the earth and it melts, and all who live in it mourn; the whole land rises like the Nile, then sinks like the river of Egypt; He who builds His lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth; He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land – the Lord is His name.”

Mark 11:22-24 “‘Have faith in God,’ Jesus answered. ‘Truly, I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.’”

Recommended resources

For a list of children’s stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the **courage** lesson at KidsOfIntegrity.com.

Planning card for courage

point form

God's way

I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I trust God
- I stand up for what is right
- I am confident because I know that God is with me

My way

When I am tempted to:

- trust in myself instead of God
- be fearful of standing up for what is right
- follow the crowd instead of choosing to do right

And God is pleased!

I know that I need to go to God for help.

This week, we will focus on learning about courage by:

Date complete:

Daily reminders: PRAY! | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse:

Planning card for courage

calendar form

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This week, we will focus on learning about courage by:

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | | |

Daily reminders: PRAY! | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse: