



WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION RESOURCES

FOR CONGREGATIONAL USE
AFTER A LOCAL DISASTER

With emphasis on
the needs of children,
youth, and families
immediately after a disaster

Prepared and Provided
by



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

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Introduction

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is providing suggested orders of worship and Christian Education curriculum for use in times of natural or human-made disaster situations. The assumption is that, at such a time, pastoral care will take priority. Yet, the following Sunday the community of faith will want to gather at their church—or near the ruins of their church—to be together and seek God’s presence and blessing.

We offer these services humbly, aware of the wide variety of practices and needs among our congregations, as well as the different type of disasters a congregation may encounter. We invite you to use as much of this material as is appropriate for your setting.

Worship Notes

There are two orders for Service of Word and Sacrament, a Taize Service, and a Service for Wholeness.

- The Service of Word and Sacrament I is based on the movements of the Service for the Lord’s Day from *The Book of Common Worship*. The communion liturgy includes the Great Thanksgiving. An alternate Great Thanksgiving is included, as well. The hymns are from standard Presbyterian hymnals.
- The Service of Word and Sacrament II utilizes less-formal liturgy, songs from alternative Presbyterian song books (*Lift up Your Hearts* and *Sing the Faith*) and Taize.
- The Taize service is designed for quiet evening worship in the manner of the Taize community in France. Through the singing, readings, and intentional silence the worshipping community may find comfort and peace.
- The Service for Wholeness is offered in the spirit that the congregation may want to have a tangible service of asking God to heal and comfort in light of the disaster.
- We urge the active participation of children and youth in these services. Sometimes, theirs are the prophetic voices that bring the Word of God in power.

Worship Supplies

- Orders of services of Worship
- Candles and matches
- Bible
- Baptismal bowl
- Plate and Communion cup
- Elements for Communion
- Napkins for bread

Education Notes

The curriculum is titled “God With Us” and includes lesson plans for preschool, elementary, younger youth and older youth. There is also an intergenerational version that could be utilized with families or the entire congregation.

In all of the resources we have provided, we consider the two most important aspects to be

- “Checking-in” with one another and
- Providing a theological framework in which to hold an understanding of the disaster.

Education Supplies:

- Masking tape (name tags)
- Sharpie (name tags)
- Candles and matches
- Bible
- Art materials
 - Modeling clay (to be taken with them)
 - Colored pencils
 - Washable markers
 - Colored Sharpies (for tattoo activity)
 - Paper
 - Magazines (for collage activity)
 - Glue sticks (for collage activity)
 - Scissors (for collage activity)
 - Paper & pencil for leader to write down “Pows and Wows”
- Pictures of disaster helpers, pages 67 & 68 (preschool activity)
- Three ring binder for congregation to begin a storybook of their journey through this disaster (extra activity)
- Stuffed animals (extra activity)
- Music and signing pictures for “Be Still and Know that I am God,” page 62.

NOTE:

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is offering these education and worship resources knowing that, while lives and homes are being rebuilt, our Spirits must be made whole as well.

May the strength, comfort, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be yours.

Service of Word and Sacrament I

GATHERING

Preparation for Worship

Come, O Holy Spirit.

Come as Holy Light and lead us in the darkness,

come as Holy Power and enable our weakness,

come as Holy Life and dwell in us,

until we are set free from the service of ourselves

to be your servants to the world. Amen. [Adapted from *Book of Common Worship*]

Music (prelude or gathering music)

Call to Worship

Leader: Who are you?

Response: **I am a child of God.**

Leader: Who are we?

Response: **We are children of God.**

Leader: What does it mean to be children of God?

Response: **We belong to God who loves us and calls us God's own.
In life and in death we belong to God.**

*Worship leader may pour water into the baptismal font and say,
"Children of God, welcome home."*

Hymn "Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty"

PH 482; Red Hymnbook 1

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, in baptism you have named and claimed us as your own.

We belong to you in life and in death.

In the midst of our trouble, your love comforts and cares for us.

We offer our praise and adoration to you and to our Savior Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. **Amen**

Call to Confession

The proof of God's amazing love is this:

while we were yet sinners,

Christ died for us.

Because we have faith in him,

we dare to approach God with confidence.

In faith and penitence,

Let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Unison Prayer of Confession

We confess, our need for you, O God.

We are afraid and uncertain.

We forget that you are trustworthy and faithful.

We are shaken and broken

and forget that in Christ all things are held together.

**We take so much of our lives for granted, but in the end
we cannot rely on our own strength or that of others.**

We confess, our need for you, O God.

Silent Prayer

Leader: Lord, have mercy;

Response: **Christ, have mercy;**

Leader: Lord, have mercy on us.

Assurance of Pardon

Through Christ, the waters our baptism wash away our fear, uncertainty, and lack of trust. Here we are reminded that Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

Leader: Friends, believe the good news;

Response: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

Congregational Response: (Gloria Patri or other appropriate response)

THE WORD

Prayer of Illumination

Prepare our hearts, O God,
to accept your Word.

Silence in us any voice but your own,
that, hearing, we may also obey your will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading: Isaiah 41:4b-10

I, the LORD, am first, and will be with the last. The coastlands have seen and are afraid, the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and come. Each one helps the other, saying to one another, "Take courage!" The artisan encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smoothes with the hammer encourages the one who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, "It is good"; and they fasten it with nails so that it cannot be moved. But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you

whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, “You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off”; do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Time with the Children (teach the children to sign and sing the Psalm Response, see page 60)

Response: **Be still and know that I am God.**

Psalm 46 [children lead, singing and signing the response]

Response: **Be still and know that I am God.**

Leader: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

Response: **Be still and know that I am God.** [sung and signed]

Leader: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
the Lord speaks and the earth melts.
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Response: **Be still and know that I am God.** [sung and signed]

Leader: Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
The Lord makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
the Lord breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
the Lord burns the shields with fire.

Response: **Be still and know that I am God.** [sung and signed]

Leader: “Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Response: **Be still and know that I am God.** [sung and signed]

Gospel Reading: John 14:1-3, 25-27

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Sermon

Preaching points:

- God’s providence is sure; God is dependable;
- History of Israel demonstrates this
- God’s care for us made clear in Jesus
- Holy Spirit will care for us now—we are not orphaned.

Hymn: “My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”

PH 172, Red Hymnbook 104

Affirmation of Faith

In life and in death we belong to God.

Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.

With believers in every time and place,

we rejoice that nothing in life or in death

can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(from a Brief Statement of Faith)

EUCHARIST

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings [Children present communion elements.]

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty and merciful God,

from whom comes all that is good,

we praise you for your mercies,

for your goodness that has created us,

your grace that has sustained us,

and your love that has redeemed us.

Help us to love you,

by serving you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Invitation to the Table

The Great Thanksgiving [alternative version available see page 14]

Holy God, we praise you.
Let the heavens be joyful,
and the earth be glad.
We bless you for creating the whole world,
for your promises to your people Israel,
and for Jesus Christ in whom your fullness dwells.

Born of Mary, he shares our life.
Eating with sinners, he welcomes us.
Guiding his children, he leads us.
Visiting the sick, he heals us.
Dying on the cross, he saves us.
Risen from the dead, he gives new life.
Living with you, he prays for us.
With thanksgiving we take this bread and this cup
and proclaim the death and resurrection of our Lord.
Receive our sacrifice of praise.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us
that this meal may be
a communion in the body and blood of our Lord.
Make us one with Christ
and with all who share this feast.
Give us courage as we move through these difficult days.
Diminish our sadness and heal our pain.
Give us hope as we face an uncertain future.
We praise you, eternal God,
through Christ your Word made flesh,
in the holy and life-giving Spirit,
now and forever. **Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

Communion of the People

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Response: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us give our thanks to the Lord our God.
Response: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
Leader: We thank you, O God, that in the midst of chaos,
you set a table before us and nourish us for the work ahead.
Response: **Send us into the world as those equipped to serve you
as we rebuild our lives and rekindle our hope.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

SENDING

Hymn: "Great is Thy Faithfulness" PH 276
(or "How Firm a Foundation" PH 361, *Red Hymnbook* 369)

Charge and Benediction

Sources for Worship Notes:

Call to Worship: *Belonging to God: Catechism Resources for Worship* (Louisville, Ky: Geneva Press, 2003); Preparation for Worship, Call to Confession, Prayer for Illumination, Affirmation of Faith, and Great Thanksgiving adapted from *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville, Ky.: WJK, 2003);

Service of Word and Sacrament II

Gathering Music

Familiar gathering songs of praise and thanksgiving

Call to Worship

One: We come seeking comfort.
All: **We come seeking God.**
One: We come with questions.
All: **We come seeking God.**
One: We come to be together.
All: **Together we will worship God.**

Songs of Praise "I Was Glad" *Lift up your Hearts, 6*
 "As We Gather in this Place" LUYH, 1

Song of Prayer "Be Still and Know" LUYH, 82

Litany of Confession

One: Merciful God, we are confused and afraid.
All: **Have mercy on us.**
One: We feel lost and alone.
All: **Have mercy on us.**
One: We ask, why did this happen?
All: **Have mercy on us.**

Silent prayer

Assurance

Thank you, Merciful God.
You come to us when we feel alone in our confusion and fear.
You have come to us in Jesus Christ who makes us whole.
He is our friend and our Savior. Amen.

Time with Children

Prayer Song for Illumination "Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet" LUYH, 85

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7 (NIV)

But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth-- everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Psalm 42 (adapted from *The Message*)

Refrain "As a Deer" (*Sing the Faith*, 2025)

One: A white-tailed deer drinks from the creek;
I want to drink God, drink deeply of God.

All: **I'm thirsty for God-alive.**
I wonder, "Will I ever make it—
arrive and drink in God's presence?"

One: I'm on a diet of tears—tears for breakfast, tears for supper.

All: **All day long people knock at my door,**
pestering, "Where is this God of yours?" R

One: Sometimes I ask God, my rock-solid God,
"Why did you let me down?"

All: **Why am I walking around in tears, harassed by enemies?"**
They're out for the kill, tormenting day after day,
"Where is this God of yours?" R

One: Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul?
Why are you crying the blues?

All: **Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising again.**
He puts a smile on my face.
He is my God. R

Gospel Reading: Mark 4:35-41 (NIV)

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely

calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell.

The third day He arose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings [Children bring communion elements forward.]

Congregational Song of Praise or Doxology

Prayers of the People

Song of Prayer: "Gentle Shepherd, Come and Lead Us"
[Silent Prayer or Free Prayer]
The Lord's Prayer in unison

LUYH 101

The Lord's Supper

Song: "Come, Share the Lord" LUYH, 126

Words of Institution and Breaking of Bread

The Communion of the People

Songs during Communion familiar to congregation.

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God, you have fed us at this table.

We are ready to go into the world to be bread for others. Amen.

Benediction

Parting Song: “On Eagles Wings”

LUYH, 87

Worship Note: All the songs but one are found in *Lift Up Your Hearts: Songs for Creative Worship* (Geneva Press, 1999); the other is from *Sing the Faith*, (Geneva Press, 2003). Congregations may have other song books; the goal, of course, is for the congregation to sing songs familiar to them and which therefore draw them together.

Children’s Time: A possible approach is this: As the children are gathered around, say to them. “In the Bible God makes promises to us. One of those promises is that God will always be with us, even when there are storms (or disaster, or...). Since we can’t see God, we can know that God is with us by watching for the helpers. So when you see someone helping someone else, you know God is with you.” Then have a short prayer along these lines: “Dear God, thank you for being with us always. Thank you for the people who help others. Amen.”

Great Thanksgiving for Times of Natural Disaster

The following Great Thanksgiving may be used as an alternative to the one included in the Order of Worship.

The Great Thanksgiving for Times of Natural Disaster

Adapted from A Service of Word and Table II

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Response: **And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

Response: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Response: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right,

And a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere give thanks to you,
almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth.

At the beginning of time,
you brought order out of chaos
and light out of darkness.

When your people suffered loss,
you sent prophets to comfort them
with your word of hope and healing.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

All say or sing: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
He stilled the storm and cast out evil.
He healed the sick and fed the hungry.
He raised the dead to life
and delivered your word of deliverance to the suffering.
By the baptism of *his* suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your church,

delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said:
"Drink from this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All say: **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood,
continuing his work of healing, hope, and reconciliation.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world:
those near to us and far from us, those suffering and those rejoicing —
until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

Amen.

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The Great Thanksgiving for Times of Natural Disaster was adapted from A Service of Word and Table II by the Reverend Kristen Richardson-Frick. The Reverend Kristen Richardson-Frick is an ordained elder in the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. She is a 2001 graduate of Duke Divinity School and currently pastors Wagener and Swansea United Methodist Churches in the midlands of South Carolina.

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An Evening Prayer Service in the Manner of Taize In Time of Disaster

This service, adopted from the Christian community at Taize, France, consists of silence, singing, scripture, and prayer. The short, simple songs draw us closer to each other and to God. Silence will provide time for reflection and prayer. The light of the candles reminds us that in a dark world shaken by disaster, Christ is the light, which cannot be overcome.

Music suggestions come from the Taize song book.

Gathering (in silence)

Tolling of the Hour

Songs "Come and Fill" No. 28
"Come and Pray in Us" No. 42

Opening Sentences

One: O God, come to our assistance.

All: O Lord, hasten to help us.

One: Be near in our time of trouble.

All: Do not leave us alone.

One: O God, hear us when we call.

All: Do not ignore our cries.

One: Hear the voice of our prayers.

All: Hear our prayers, Merciful God.

Psalm 42

Refrain: Kyrie Eleison No. 1

One: As the deer longs for the water-brooks,
so longs my soul for you, O God.

**All: My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God;
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?**

One: My tears have been my food day and night,
while all day long they say to me,
"Where now is your God?" **R**

**All: I pour out my soul when I think on these things:
how I went with the multitude and led them into the house of God,**

One: with the voice of praise and thanksgiving,
among those who keep holy-day.

**All: Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul?
and why are you so disquieted within me? R**

One: Put your trust in God;
for I will yet give thanks to the One
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

**All: My soul is heavy within me;
therefore I will remember you from the land of Jordan,
and from the peak of Mizar among the heights of Hermon.**

One: One deep calls to another in the noise of your cataracts;
all your rapids and floods have gone over me.

**All: The Lord grants loving-kindness in the daytime;
in the night season the song of the Lord is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life. R**

One: I will say to the God of my strength,
"Why have you forgotten me?
and why do I go so heavily while the enemy oppresses me?"

**All: While my bones are being broken,
my enemies mock me to my face;
all day long they mock me
and say to me, "Where now is your God?" R**

One: Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul?
and why are you so disquieted within me?

**All: Put your trust in God;
for I will yet give thanks to the One
who is the help of my countenance, and my God. R**

Silence

Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth-- everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Silence

Reading: Luke 24:1-9

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.

Silence

Song "The Lord is my Song"

No. 20

Prayer

Jesus, gentle and humble of heart,
 you visit every human being to reveal the Father's love.
Jesus, goodness without end, you liberate captives, you pardon our sins.
Jesus, our rest and our refuge, your yoke is easy and your burden light.
Jesus, our healer, you mend our broken hearts.
Jesus, sent by the Father, you still our storms.
Jesus, living bread, you nourish our hearts by your words.
Jesus, you show forth your light in the darkness.
Jesus, risen from the dead, you share with us the promise of new life.
Jesus, you are our Brother, our Savior, our Friend.

The Lord's Prayer

The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Songs "Nothing Can Trouble"
 "Within the Darkest Night"

No. 29

No. 37

(After the final song, you may remain for prayer or you may leave.)

Worship Note: The prayer is adapted from the Taize Service. (www.taize.fr)

Service for Wholeness and Healing In Time of Disaster

Welcome (Depending on how familiar the congregation is with this service,
the minister will want to give an introduction.)

Prayer of Approach

In the name of the Glorious Father,
we His children gather in this place,
the Blessing of our Father in Heaven be upon us.

In the name of Jesus Our Savior, Our Healer and Our Lord,
we whom He has called to gather in the place,
the Blessing of Jesus be upon us.

In the Name of the Holy Spirit of the sevenfold gifts,
we, in the unity of Christ, gather in this place,
the blessing of the Holy Spirit our Strength be upon us.

The Blessing of the most Holy Trinity be upon us all. Amen.

Hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy" *PH 138, Red Hymnbook 11*

Prayer of Confession

Reader 1: Hear the Good News – The Gospel of God’s forgiving love:

Reader 2: “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God
over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:10)

Reader 1: Let us therefore bring joy to the courts of Heaven!
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Christ have mercy.**

Reader 2: “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance:
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,
of whom I am the worst,
but for that very reason mercy was shown to me, so that in me
Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience.” (1 Tim. 1:15)

Reader 1: Let us take that assurance to ourselves
and cast ourselves on His unlimited patience.
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Christ have mercy.**

Reader 2: “If we say we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,
but if we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Reader 1: Let us therefore put aside all excuses, drop all pretense,
stop blaming others and face the truth,
assured that in the light of His forgiveness,
we need not rely on half-truths.
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Christ have mercy.**

Reader 2: “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . .
and the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of all.” (Is. 53:4)

Reader 1: Know therefore, that in His Love for you,
He has taken your sins and your hurts on Himself.
Your sins are no longer yours, but His.
Your griefs and sorrows are His.

All: **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon [minister may pour water in the font.]

Friends, we are cleansed in the waters of our baptism by the life, death, and
resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. Thanks be to God.

Hymn “There is a Balm in Gilead” *PH 394*
or “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” *PH 298, Red Hymnbook 110*

Gospel: (Preacher may use one of Jesus’ healing stories)

Sermon: (Note how this story reaches into our lives at this time.)

Song: (Use a Taize song.)

Invitation to Receive Healing or Blessing

(Explain the mechanics of coming forward, receiving the oil, etc.)

Prayer

One: In the name of the Holy Trinity - Father, Son, Holy Spirit -
we lift up all who suffer.

Peace, deep peace, be to those who suffer in their bodies or minds. . .
(names may be said aloud)

Peace be to each one.

All: **The deep peace of Christ the Son of Peace be to you.**

One: Peace, deep peace be to those whose relationships are broken . . .
Peace be to each one.

All: The deep peace of Christ the Son of Peace be to you.

One: Peace, deep peace, be to those who grow old and infirm.
Peace be to each one.

All: The deep peace of Christ the Son of Peace be to you.

One: Peace, deep peace, be to those for whom this disaster has brought misery.
Peace be to each one.

All: The deep peace of Christ the Son of Peace be to you.

(Add extra categories as needed.)

One: May each and all experience the healing grace of Christ, Our Healer,
by the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Anointing with Oil

(As each person has hands laid on and is anointed with oil, the following blessing---or another-- may be said.)

The Spirit of the Living God, present with us now,
enter you—body, mind, and spirit—and heal you of all that harms you.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

(While persons are coming forward for anointing, a Taize song might be sung, such as "Wait for the Lord")

The Lord's Prayer

Song: "Bless the Lord"

Taize No. 9

Benediction

The Peace

Note: This service is adapted from *Prayers and Ideas for Healing Services*, by Ian Cowie, Wildgoose Publishing Co., 1995. Cowie includes commentary on the services. There is a suggested liturgy for a Service for Wholeness for a Congregation in the *Book of Common Worship*. We are reminded that all healing comes from God and that healing was an integral part of Jesus' ministry. "As Jesus acted, so must his church. The Service for Wholeness reaches out and touches those who need healing in body, mind, and spirit." This service affirms for us that in the midst of disaster, hardship, illness, and suffering, our relationship with God in Christ sustains us. See *The Companion to the Book of Common Worship*, Office of Theology and Worship, 2003, especially pp. 260-265.

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Christian Education Notes

Children and youth face a particular dilemma in times of disaster.

- They have not fully developed intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually, yet they experience the same disaster events as adults.
- In their childlike or youthful way of interpreting the world, they are vulnerable to misunderstanding why the disaster happened and the likelihood of it recurring.
- They are not able to fully interpret the nature or meaning of the activities happening around them.
- At a time when the impact of a disaster increases their need for caregiver support, emotional reassurance, and theological interpretation, caregivers face their own set of physical, emotional and spiritual challenges and may not recognize or be able to respond to the needs of the children in their care.
- In this void, the church has an opportunity to provide comfort, reassurance, and respite care.

The resources that are provided include curriculum for an intergenerational class, as well as age-graded curriculum for pre-school, elementary, younger youth and older youth. In all the resources we consider the two most important aspects to be:

- “checking in” with one another and
- providing a theological framework in which to hold an understanding of disaster.

Each lesson plan includes the following:

God with Us – theme

Gathering – names, greeting, “checking-in” with one another, prayer

Scripture – I Kings 19:11-12 (NRSV) and Psalm 46:10 (NRSV)

Story – an age-appropriate interpretive paraphrase of the scripture

Response – activity options

Going Out – empowered to serve

The Hook! – create interest in returning next week

Education Supplies:

- Masking tape (name tags)
- Sharpie (name tags)
- Candles and matches
- Bible
- Art materials
 - Modeling clay (to be taken with them)
 - Colored pencils
 - Washable markers
 - Colored Sharpies (for tattoo activity)
 - Paper
 - Magazines (for collage activity)
 - Glue sticks (for collage activity)
 - Scissors (for collage activity)
 - Paper & pencil for leader to write down “Pows and Wows”
- Pictures of disaster helpers, pages 65 - 66 (preschool activity)
- Three ring binder for congregation to begin a storybook of their journey through this disaster (extra activity)
- Stuffed animals (extra activity)
- Music and signing pictures for “Be Still and Know that I am God,” page 60

Characteristics of Stress by Age Group

The following tables provide helpful information on the characteristics of each of these age levels during times of stress.

Birth to 2 years old

Reactions to Trauma/Grief/Loss	Spiritual Development/Ontological Questions	Appropriate Caregiver Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More irritable, due to the changes in the environment, caregiver, and routine • Cries more often • Wants to be held and cuddled frequently • Change in appetite • Change in sleep patterns • Reacts to the stress of the caregiver • May be very attached to primary caregiver and fear separation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little understanding of God • May repeat words or phrases taught by caregivers • Faith is based upon the child's interactions with caregivers • Trust in parents will later lead to trust in God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish routines as soon as possible (feeding, sleeping) • Provide frequent holding and cuddling • Use a calm, reassuring voice • Repeat familiar phrases or words • Encourage and help toddler express feelings and memories

Pre-school and Kindergarten (3-6 years)

Reactions to Trauma/Grief/Loss	Spiritual Development/Ontological Questions	Appropriate Caregiver Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worries about what will happen to them • Afraid that the event will reoccur, asking "will it happen again?" • Demonstrates angry feelings by hitting, kicking, throwing things • Becomes more active or restless • Afraid to be left alone or afraid to sleep alone; may have bad dreams • Upset at the loss of a favorite items • Symptoms of illness, loss of appetite • Becomes quiet and withdrawn • Cries excessively; whines; clings • Becomes afraid of loud noises, storms and strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks of God as a real person, usually a parental figure • Needs images of God (caring presence, loving) • Sees God as a miracle worker • Learns about God through parents and caregivers • May fear or even be terrified by teachings of God as judgmental or punishing • Develops an understanding of right and wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide frequent reassurance they will be cared for, not left behind • Provide tactical play experiences such as play dough, finger paints, sand play, or a tub of water, to help release tension and soothe the child • Provide dramatic experiences such as play acting, using puppet or dolls, and the telling of stories • Provide activities that involve large muscle movement (exercise, throwing balls, tumbling) • Listen to them talk and how they say it; watch for behaviors that gives clues to stress, fear and anxiety

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels neglected by parents who are busy with other tasks • Repeatedly recreates parts of the disaster in their play • Regressed behavior to earlier age • Shows no outward sign of being upset. Some may never show distress because they do not feel upset. Others may not give evidence of being upset until several weeks or months after the event. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect from the news and media reporting on the disaster
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School aged (7-11 years)

Reactions to Trauma/Grief/Loss	Spiritual Development/Ontological Questions	Appropriate Caregiver Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preoccupation with details of loss and want to talk about it continually • May not be able to concentrate in school and grades may drop • Guilt • Feelings of failure • Anger • Regression into earlier behaviors • Sleep problems • Anxiety and fear expressed through physical complaints • Wants to spend more time with families • May believe they caused the disaster or death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a more personal relationship with God • Enjoys participating in worship experiences • Concrete concept of religion • Begins to name own beliefs • Continues to view God as a person with special powers • Expects adults to live by the values being taught 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play acting • Puppets • Drawing and painting • Sharing their experiences in groups • Reading • Creative writing or discussion • One on one activities with adult – talking while doing something • Group games • Large muscle activities/games • Opportunity to help others in disaster recovery • Protect from most of the news and media reporting on the disaster

Youth (12-18 years)

Reactions to Trauma/Grief/Loss	Spiritual Development/Ontological Questions	Appropriate Caregiver Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling that the world is unsafe • May return to earlier ways of behaving • Intense reactions • Because they survived the disaster, may feel immortal, which may lead to reckless behavior and taking dangerous risks • May refuse to talk and should not be pressured • Constantly waiting for something else to happen • Depression • Changes in sleep, eating, school, and social behaviors • May push to make everything normal again • Guilt over what happened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an image of God as friend, guide, and counselor • Interest in other religions • Wants honest, clear answers • Beginning to understand moral and ethical issues, but may view as right/wrong • Asking important faith questions • Older youth want to experience God, not just talk about God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure that feelings and questions they have are normal • Have activity based discussions – talk and listen while doing something the youth enjoys • Provide a variety of means of expression – discussion, drama, drawing, journaling • Active listening • Model calm and control • Encourage participation in helping others • Temporarily reduce expectations related to school and general performance • Provide ongoing opportunities to talk about worries or concerns • Control exposure to the media replay of the disaster • Be honest and factual

God With Us

Lesson Plan for Intergenerational/All Ages

Main Idea: God is with us at all times and in all situations.

Objectives

1. Identify participants and provide a way to check in with each one.
2. Provide an activity for processing experiences related to current circumstances.
3. Provide appropriate scripture.
4. Respond to scripture.
5. Make a commitment to community.
6. Affirm our faith.

(Note: if the following is not your normal format with your group, please adapt to fit your norm. It is important to keep as familiar a routine as possible with children, youth, and adults.)

Song/Hymn Suggestions: *(Sing when it would be best for your group.)*

“If Anybody Asks You Who I Am”

“Jesus Loves Me”

“Spirit of the Living God”

Gathering

1. Nametags

Greet each person/family; invite each person to make a nametag if you have the resources. It can be as simple as writing on masking tape with a *Sharpie*.

(Note: in times of stress, people sometimes have difficulty accessing even basic memory. Although those gathered may be familiar with one another, having nametags will mean fewer recall tasks.)

2. Greeting and Inviting

Have one teacher/leader greeting and another inviting individuals and families to gather in small groups around the room with a leader. The leader of each group can make sure all are introduced by name.

3. Checking In

The activity is to do a check-in to see how everyone is doing.

- a. “Pow Wow” – thinking of the past week...

 Name a “Pow” – something that “hit” you and you felt it.

 Name a “Wow” – something that surprised or impressed you.

- b. In what ways have you seen God at work in the world this past week?

(Note: It may be helpful for the leader to have pencil and paper to take notes on what is said so that these things that are shared may be used as prayers in the next activity.)

Alternate check-in activity:

Gather everyone in a circle. The activity is to do a quick check-in to see how everyone is doing. Sharing will be done by *Mutual Invitation rather than going in order, one right after the other, in the circle.

**Mutual Invitation: The leader shares first and then calls on someone by name to go next. That person then calls on someone else. This process continues until everyone has shared. Anyone has the option to pass. Those who pass are then re-invited at the end to share.*

Leader says, “On a scale from 1 to 10, rate how you feel. “10” is the very happiest you could be and “1” is the saddest you could be.”

(i.e. Leader says, “I’m feeling like a number 4. Luke, how are you feeling?”)

4. Prayer

(If possible, incorporate the needs, feelings and themes from the checking in activity.)

Encourage each person, at the end of the spoken prayer, to offer something they are thankful for in this difficult time. (It is OK to pass and not say anything. In listening we bear witness to others, which is also very important.)

God of love and mercy,

 our ordered world has been shaken and our thoughts are in disarray.

In gathering together we affirm you as Lord.

You formed us and breathed into us the breath of life.

As we cope with the chaos and aftermath of (name the event)

 help us center our thoughts on you.

Create in us a stillness,

 and in that silence may we hear you speak to us.

I am thankful for:

Conclude with: "Amen."

(All groups may gather together for the scripture and story, or these may be told in small groups if space and acoustics allow.)

Scripture

"He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence." I Kings 19:11-12 (NRSV)

"Be still and know that I am God. In you, O Lord, I put my trust."

Psalm 46:10 (NRSV)

Story

The story is written to be told or read aloud to those gathered.

(Open the Bible to I Kings 19 and leave it open while you tell the story.)

This story is about "Where is God?" This story is about listening for God's voice. It is about a prophet who, when he was discouraged, heard God's voice.

The Bible tells us about a man named Elijah. Elijah was a prophet. A prophet is someone who talks to people for God. Elijah loved God and told a lot of people about God. Elijah told the people God loved them. He told the people they should be kind and respectful to one another. Some of the things Elijah said made the king and queen really angry because they were not always kind and respectful to other people.

When the king and queen were angry at Elijah, he was scared and discouraged. You know how that feels, right? Well, what did Elijah do? He ran to hide! He ran into the wilderness. Tired and hungry, he finally fell asleep.

While Elijah was asleep, an angel tapped him on the shoulder. Elijah woke up and jumped up because he didn't know who it was. The angel had prepared food and water for Elijah. This strengthened him for his journey and he went to Mount Horeb, also known as Mt. Sinai, where God had appeared to Moses. Elijah found a cave and slept there that night. Then a voice said, "Elijah, go to the door of the cave because God is about to pass by." He had to make a decision---risk going out or hide again.

Elijah went to the door of the cave and a very strong wind blew by, so strong that it could break a mountain! But that was not God. Then there was a terrible earthquake and the earth shook! But that was not God. And then there was a fire, but God was not in the fire. After that, there was silence!

What could be that quiet? It was so quiet after the noise of the wind and the earthquake and the fire. And that was God passing by---very quietly in the stillness.

Elijah listened and knew God was there. He knew he didn't need to be afraid. God spoke to him and told him to go back and do what God asked of him. So Elijah went back, even though what he was to do was difficult. His message to the people was to worship God because God loved them. We are like those people. God loves us and is with us.

Let's pray together.

Dear God, teach us to listen and to be willing to hear you. Help us remember that you love us and are with us in difficult times. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Response:

Several activities are suggested. Choose the ones that would be most meaningful for your particular group.

- 1. Sign Language Activity** - Learn Psalm 46:10 through song and sign language.
Materials needed: Pictures indicating how to sign the words (see page 62), sheet music if available
Teach the group to sing and sign the first verse of "Be Still and Know that I am God."
Repeat several times.
Next hum the song---no words, only signs.
Finally, sign the song in silence.
Repeat as often as is appropriate.
- 2. Breath Prayer**
The leader explains,
"Breath prayer is a form of contemplative prayer. We inhale our breath as a form of receiving the grace of life. We hold our breath, receiving redemption as our blood is cleansed. We then exhale our breath as an offering of ourselves to God."

Pray several repetitions of this prayer silently---
(inhaling breath) "Be still and know"
(holding breath) (silence)
(exhaling breath) "that I am God"

3. Rubble Sculpture

This activity is one that will allow individuals to use material from the rubble of the disaster to make something of their own.

(Note: Old Testament scripture reveals that, in ancient times, the people of Israel---after having endured trials and hardships---would take locally-available materials and build on the site an “altar” to the Lord. The “altar” is a way of marking the area as sacred space. This sacred space can be a place where participants come together as God’s children and look for God’s presence in the midst of suffering and fear. It is a rebuilding activity, an activity that allows them to create something new out of something destroyed.)

If you are in an area where there is “rubble”, have participants gather one or two **safe** items to add to the sculpture. If you are in an area where rubble is not readily available, gather other appropriate items with which to create the sculpture. Help participants assemble the pieces, beginning with a strong base or foundation upon which to build. The sculpture does not have to have a particular shape and does not have to be a tall sculpture. The idea is for the participants to work together.

Explain that they are making something that will mark this as a special or sacred place, a place they can come together to read scripture and worship God.

4. Collage of Now

Materials Needed: magazines, pictures, glue sticks, scissors, and construction paper

Ahead of time, draw a large circle, approximately 36” in diameter, on a large piece of heavy paper or cardboard. Draw and cut pie-shaped pieces equal to the number of small groups within the larger group. Number each piece on the reverse side so you know the proper placement when putting them back together.

Suggestion: Have calming music playing in the background.

(Note: This is an especially good activity because it gives participants a sense of mastery and a chance to organize their thoughts and feelings for what may be chaotic and confusing events.)

Invite each group to tear or cut out pictures, shapes, words, and colors that represent or remind them of the past week and this day. Make collages on the pie-shaped pieces.

When all of the collages are completed, bring them together and reassemble the whole. Bring all of the groups together, having each group explain to the whole group what their images/colors represent.

As the larger group processes each collage piece, the adult group leader asks, “Where can we see God with us in this? What is the prayer that rises from our experience here?”

When the group has finished processing all the collage pieces, pray together, incorporating the thoughts and feelings expressed while processing the experience.

Going Out:

Empowered to Serve

Gather back in your circle. Tell everyone you are going to ask them a question and provide response choices. Ask each person to select the choice that most closely reflects how they would respond/react. State clearly there are no “right” answers, only personal preferences. Restate the question. Ask each one to stand up in place and identify their preferred response. Then, pose a follow-up question for the entire group to discuss/brainstorm.

- a. If you were going to help clean up an area, would you rather help at home, in your neighborhood, at your church, or your school?
Follow-up question: How would you help clean up the area you chose?
- b. When you pray, would you pray first for someone in your family, a helper in your community, or a friend?
Follow-up question: Who do you know who especially needs our prayers right now?
- c. When you see someone who needs help, would you tell someone about it or help them yourself?
Follow-up question: Who have you seen that needed help?
Follow-up question: Who do you know who needs help right now?
- d. When someone helps you, would you thank them, hug them, or give them something?
Follow-up question: Who has helped you and what have they done?

Affirmation of Faith

(Choose one of these or whatever suits the group.)

1. Sing and sign

Sign and sing, “Be Still and Know That I Am God,” and sing, “Jesus Loves Me”

Or...

2. Unison Affirmation

Gather everyone around the sculpture (or collage). Tell everyone they are going to speak in unison responses to the opening questions of the *Belonging to God* catechism. You can either pre-teach the answers to each question, or you may print the questions and responses, distributing them for everyone to read.

Leader: Who are you?

All: I am a child of God.

Leader: Who are we?

All: We are children of God.

Leader: What does it mean to be a child of God?

**All: We belong to God who loves us and calls us God's own.
In life and in death we belong to God.**

Dismissal:

The Leader pronounces a benediction.

**Glory be to God who made us
and to Christ who saved us
and to the Holy Spirit who keeps us in faith.
Amen.**

From: (A Wee Worship Book p. 53)

Go now in peace, to love and serve God.

The Hook

Start a "journal" or scrapbook of "Our Story" that is added to each week with writings and pictures.

Ask everyone to come next week with a story of who helped them and/or who they helped.

Ask everyone to come next week and bring something to add to the sculpture.

God With Us

Lesson Plan for Preschool Children

Main Idea: God is with us at all times and in all situations.

Objectives:

1. Identify participants and provide a way to check in with each other.
2. Provide activity for processing experiences related to current circumstances.
3. Provide appropriate scripture.
4. Respond to scripture.
5. Name a way to help.
6. Say what we believe.

(Note: if the following is not your normal format with your children, please adapt it to fit your norm. It is important to keep as familiar a routine as possible with children.)

Scripture:

“God said to Elijah, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.”

I Kings 19:11-12 (NRSV)

“Be still and know that I am God. In you, O Lord, I put my trust.”

Psalm 46:10 (NRSV)

Gathering:

1. Everyone makes a nametag.

It can be as simple as writing on masking tape with a Sharpie.

(Note: in times of stress, people sometimes have difficulty accessing even basic memory. Although those gathered may be familiar with one another, having nametags will mean fewer recall tasks.)

2. Check-in time.

Have one teacher/leader greeting and one sitting on the floor.

Invite each child to find a seat on the floor.
The leader should ask each child their name, even if they know the child.
Repeat with each child that joins the group.

After children are all there, say “Raise your hand if”:

You have brown hair
Your home was hurt
You like the color purple
You are sad (how does someone who is sad look?)
You like to play soccer
You are frightened (how does someone who is frightened look?)
You like to sing
You are happy to be here (how does someone who is happy look?)
You love God

Say, “And God loves you!
We are thankful that God loves us.
For what else are we thankful?”

Encourage each child to name something for which he or she is thankful.
I am thankful for:

Show the children the pictures of people helping in a disaster found on pages 67 & 68 of this document.

Help the children find the helpers.

Tell them when bad things happen, there are always helpers.

Tell the children that we are always thankful for helpers and we can all be helpers too.

3. Prayer.

(Before you pray, light a candle as a reminder of God’s light in the world.)

Dear God, we know you love us. We know you care what happens to us. Please help us and keep us safe. Thank you for the people we love. Thank you for the people who are helping us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

(You may want to include in the prayer one or two things the children have mentioned in the portion of the exercise about thankfulness.)

Story:

(The story is written to be read to the children. Open the Bible to I Kings 19 and leave it open while you tell the story.)

The Bible tells us about a man named Elijah. He was a prophet. Can anyone say that word? A prophet is someone who talks to people for God. Elijah loved God and told a lot of people about God. What do you think Elijah told them? (*get responses from children*) Elijah told the people that God loved them. He told the people that they should be kind to each other. Some of the things he said made the king and queen mad because they were not always kind to other people.

When the king and queen got mad at Elijah, he was really scared. Do you know how it feels to be scared? Well, do you know what Elijah did? He ran away and hid! He ran far away and hid in a cave. He was tired and hungry and he finally fell asleep.

But God wanted Elijah to go back and talk to the people again. While Elijah was asleep, an angel tapped him on the shoulder. Elijah woke up and jumped up because he didn't know who it was. Then a voice said, "Elijah, go to the door of the cave because God is about to pass by."

Wow! What do you think Elijah did? Do you think he was scared? (*let children respond*). Elijah went to the door of the cave and a very strong wind blew by, so strong that it could break a mountain! But that was not God. Then there was a terrible earthquake and the earth shook! But that was not God. And THEN there was a fire, but God was not in the fire.

After that, guess what? There was silence. Let's see how quiet we can get. Put your hand over your mouth and be very, very quiet. That's how quiet it was after the wind and the earthquake and the fire. And that was God passing by---very quietly in the stillness.

Elijah listened and knew God was there. He knew he didn't need to be scared. So he went back to his town and told people that God loved them.

Let's put our hands together and bow our heads to pray. *Dear God, help us to hear you and to remember that you love us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Response:

1. Sign Language Activity

Teach the children to sing and sign "Be still and know that I am God." Help the children form a circle to sing and sign the song one more time. Then, sign in silence. (*Signing instructions are found on page 62.*)

Repeat as often as is appropriate.

2. Breath Prayer

Tell the children they are going to pray using their breath. They are going to say the words “Be still and know that I am God” in their prayer. (*non-verbal children can breathe in and out as you say the words*). Demonstrate to the children how you say, “Be still” as you breathe in and say “know that I am God” as you breathe out. Repeat with the children several times.

3. Elijah Game or Disaster Game

Elijah Game (*This game will be played like Duck, Duck, Goose*)

Help the children get seated in a circle. One child is the king and walks around the back of the circle, tapping each child on the head saying, “Queen, Queen, Queen” and finally “Elijah”. The child that is tapped as Elijah jumps up and chases the first child until the “king” child reaches their space and sits down. Then the Elijah child becomes the king. Be sure all children have a turn being king.

Disaster Game

This game is played the same but use the name of the disaster (earthquake, hurricane, or fire, etc.) and the chosen child would be helper. So the game would have the tapping child say, “Earthquake, earthquake, etc.” and when a child is tapped “helper”, that child chases the first one.

Going Out:

Tell the children you are going to read a statement and they will have several choices to make about the statement. That, when they choose an answer, they will gather with others who chose the same answer and discuss the question you will give them. Line all of the children up, read each statement, and direct each child to one of three different groups. When they have grouped, read the question. Give them a short time (less than a minute) to talk about the question. Then, ask them all to come back to the line for the next question and repeat the process. It will help if an adult can be with each of the groups.

- a. I would rather help clean up an area at home, in my neighborhood, or at my school.

Question: How would you help clean up that area?

- b. When I pray, I would pray first for someone in my family, a helper in my community, or a friend.

Question: Use the Five Finger Prayer handout.

- c. When I see someone who needs help, I would tell someone about it, help them myself, or ask the person what they would like for me to do.

Question: Tell about someone you have seen that needed help

- d. When someone helps me, I would thank them, hug them, or give them something.
Question: Who has helped you and what have they done?

Closing Prayer

Use the Five Finger Prayer on Page 61.

Affirmation of Faith

In closing, gather everyone. Tell the children that they are going to say together something we all believe. Tell them you will ask a question from the Beginners Catechism and they will answer. Go over the answers so children can say them. If the children are readers, the answers can be written for them to see. If the children are non-verbal, ask them to put their hands on their heart when they hear the word "God".

Leader: Who are you?

Children: I am a child of God.

Leader: What does it mean to be a child of God?

Children: That I belong to God, who loves me.

Go now in peace, to love and serve God.

Children: Go now in peace. Amen.

God With Us

Lesson Plan for Elementary Children

Main Idea: God is with us at all times and in all situations.

Objectives:

1. Identify participants and provide a way to check in
2. Provide activities for processing experiences related to the circumstances.
3. Provide appropriate scripture.
4. Respond to scripture.
5. Make a commitment to community.
6. Affirm our faith.

(Note: if the following is not your normal format with your children, please adapt to fit your norm. It is important to keep as familiar a routine as possible with children.)

Song/Hymn Suggestions: *(Sing when it would be best for your group.)*

“If Anybody Asks You Who I Am”

“Jesus Loves Me”

“Spirit of the Living God”

Gathering:

1. Everyone makes a nametag.

It can be as simple as writing on masking tape with a Sharpie.

(Note: in times of stress, people sometimes have difficulty accessing even basic memory data. Although those gathered may be familiar with one another, having nametags will mean fewer recall tasks.)

2. Check-in time.

Have one teacher/leader greeting and one sitting on the floor.

Invite each child to find a seat on the floor.

The leader should ask each child their name if they don't know the child.

Repeat with each child that joins the group.

After the children are all there, say “Raise your hand if”:

You have brown hair
Your home was hurt
You like the color purple
You are sad (how does someone who is sad look?)
You like to play soccer
You are frightened (how does someone who is frightened look?)
You like to sing
You are happy to be here (how does someone who is happy look?)
You love God

Say, "And God loves you! We are thankful God loves us. For what else are we thankful?"

Encourage each child to say something for which he or she is thankful.

I am thankful for:

3. Sharing Time.

Give each child a piece of paper to draw a picture of something that has happened to her or him in the past several days.

- Ask the children to include the people who were helpers in their picture.
- Encourage each child to share their pictures.
- Help them with words to describe what their picture is about.
- Accept all interpretations.
- In each situation, try to find an example of someone who helped.

4. Prayer.

(Before you pray, light a candle as a reminder of God's light in the world.)

Dear God, we know that you love us.

We know that you love this beautiful world that you have created.

Help us now to remember and see the beauty of our world.

Help us to know how to work to make it beautiful again.

Thank you for this place where we can come and worship you.

Thank you for the many helpers.

Help our families and friends.

Help those who are hurt or hungry.

Help us to be loving and caring.

And watch over us, God, and help us to feel safe again.

(Note: You may wish to include some of the needs that were pictured in the children's drawings.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Scripture:

“God said to Elijah, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.” I Kings 19:11-12 (NRSV)

“Be still and know that I am God. In you, O Lord, I put my trust.”
Psalm 46:10 (NRSV)

Story:

(The story is written to be told or read to the children. Open the Bible to I Kings 19 and leave it open as you tell the story.)

The Bible tells us about a man named Elijah. He was a prophet. A prophet is someone who talks to people for God. Elijah loved God and told a lot of people about God. Elijah told the people God loved them. He told the people they should be kind to each other. Some of the things he said made the king and queen mad because they were not always kind to other people.

When the king and queen got mad at Elijah, he was really scared. He was frightened and he was discouraged. Do you know how it feels to be scared? Well, do you know what Elijah did? He ran away and hid! He ran far away and hid in a cave. He was tired and hungry and he finally fell asleep.

But God wanted Elijah to go back and talk to the people again. While Elijah was asleep, an angel tapped him on the shoulder. Elijah woke up and jumped up because he didn't know who it was. Then a voice said, “Elijah, go to the door of the cave because God is about to pass by. What do you think Elijah did? How do you think he felt?

Elijah went to the door of the cave and a very strong wind blew by, so strong that it could break a mountain! But that was not God. Then there was a terrible earthquake and the earth shook! But that was not God. And THEN there was a fire, but God was not in the fire. After that, guess what? There was silence.

Let's see how quiet we can get. That's how quiet it was after the wind and the earthquake and the fire. And that was God passing by---very quietly in the stillness.

Elijah listened and knew that God was there. He knew he didn't need to be scared. So he went back to his town and told that people that God loved them.
We are like those people. We know God loves us. Let's pray together.

Dear God, help us to hear you and to remember that you love us. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Response:

Several activities are suggested. Choose which ones would be most meaningful for your particular group.

1. Sign Language Activity

Teach the children to sing and sign "Be still and know that I am God." Help the children form a circle to sing and sign the song one more time. Then sign in silence.
(Signing instructions are found on page 62.)

Repeat as often as is appropriate.

2. Breath Prayer

Tell the children that you are all going to pray using their breath. When we pray this way we breath God in and breath out the bad. We are going to say the words "Be still and know that I am God" in our prayer. Practice saying the words.

Demonstrate to the children how you pray silently,

 "Be still and know" as you breathe in.

 Then, hold your breath for a moment.

 Then pray silently "that I am God." as you breathe out.

Invite the children to join you in the prayer and repeat several times.

3. Rubble Sculpture

This activity is one which will allow children to use material around them that is the result of the disaster to make something of their own.

(Note: Old Testament scripture reports that, during ancient times, the people of Israel--after having endured trials and hardships---would take locally-available materials and build on the site an "altar" to the Lord. The "altar" is a way of marking the area as sacred space. This sacred space for youth can be a place where they come together as God's children and look for God's presence in the midst of suffering and fear. It is a rebuilding activity, an activity that allows them to create something out of something destroyed.)

If you are in an area where there is “rubble”, have the youth gather one or two **safe** items to add to the sculpture. If you are in an area where rubble is not readily available, gather appropriate items with which to create the sculpture. Help the children assemble the pieces, beginning with a strong base or foundation upon which to build. The sculpture does not have to have a particular shape and does not have to be a tall sculpture. The idea is for them to work together to create something for which they can be proud.

Explain that they are making something that will mark this as a special or sacred place, somewhere they can come together to read Bible stories and worship God.

Going Out:

Tell the children that you are going to read a statement and they will have several choices to make about the statement. When they choose an answer they will gather with others who choose the same answer and discuss the question you will give them. Read the statement and direct each group to a different area according to their answers. When they have grouped, you will read the question.

To begin, help the children line up in a straight line. After you read the statement, designate three areas for those who answer alike to go. Give them a short time (less than a minute) to talk about the question, then ask them to come back to the line. It will help if an adult can be with each of the three groups.

a. I would rather help clean up an area at home, in my neighborhood, at my school.

Question: How would you help clean up that area?

b. When I pray, I would pray first for someone in my family, a helper in my community, or a friend.

Question: Five-finger prayer handout

c. When I see someone who needs help, I would help them myself, tell someone about it, or walk away.

Question: Tell about someone you have seen who needed help.

d. When someone helps me, I would thank them, hug them, or give them something.

Question: Who has helped you and what have they done?

Closing Prayer

Use the Five Finger Prayer on Page 61.

Affirmation of Faith

In closing, gather everyone around the sculpture. Tell the children that they are going to say together something we all believe. Tell them you will ask a question from the Beginners Catechism and they will answer. Go over the answers so children can say them. If the children are readers, the answers can be written for them to see.

Leader: Who are you?

Children: I am a child of God.

Leader: What does it mean to be a child of God?

Children: That I belong to God, who loves me.

Go now in peace, to love and serve God.

The Hook!

Invite children to bring items next week to add to the Rubble Sculpture.

Or, bring a story about whom they helped this week and who helped them.

God With Us

Lesson Plan for Younger Youth

Main Idea: God is with us at all times in all situations.

Objectives:

1. Identify participants and provide a way to check in.
2. Provide activity for processing experiences related to current circumstances.
3. Provide appropriate scripture.
4. Respond to scripture.
5. Make a commitment to community.
6. Affirm our faith.

(Note: if the following is not your normal format with your youth, please adapt to fit your norm. It is important to keep as familiar a routine as possible with youth.)

Song/Hymn Suggestions: *(Sing when it would be best for your group.)*

“If Anybody Asks You Who I Am”

“Jesus Loves Me”

“Spirit of the Living God”

Gathering:

1. Everyone makes a nametag.

It can be as simple as writing on masking tape with a Sharpie.

(Note: in times of stress, people sometimes have difficulty accessing even basic memory data. Although those gathered may be familiar with one another, having nametags will mean fewer recall tasks.)

2. Check-in time.

Have students gather in a circle. The activity is to do a quick check-in to see how everyone is doing. Sharing will be done by *Mutual Invitation rather than going in order one after another in the circle.

**Mutual Invitation: The leader shares first and then calls on someone by name to go next. That person then calls on someone else. This process continues until everyone has shared. Anyone has the option to pass. Those who pass are then re-invited at the end to share.*

Leader says, "On a scale from 1 to 10, rate how you feel. "10" is the very happiest you could be and "1" is the saddest you could be."

(i.e. The leader says, "I'm feeling like a number 4. Zach, how are you feeling?")

☺ **Optional add-in – Modeling Clay**

Give each participant a piece of clay to manipulate during the next activity. Tell the youth that they can create something or just hold on to it--- to squish, poke, or pull. It is theirs to take home.

3. Sharing Time.

Let's have a "Pow-Wow"!! Using *Mutual Invitation, each person will share one "Pow" (something that really hit you in a "not-so-good" way) and a "Wow" (something that was a surprise or something that made you smile).

(Note: It may be helpful for the leader to have pencil and paper to take notes on what is said so that these things that are shared may be used as prayers in the next activity.)

(i.e. The leader says, "My Pow was that one of our cars was smashed by the tree that fell on top of it. My Wow is that it smelled like Christmas outside with all of the pine trees that were trimmed or knocked over by the wind. Jason, will you go next?")

4. Prayer.

The following is an example of a prayer that may be offered. Please feel free to pray in any way you are comfortable. Be sure to include some things that were expressed in the previous sharing activity.

Gracious and Holy God,
We give you thanks for this day and for the gift of life.
We give you thanks for this place that we have to gather.
We give you thanks for one another.
We come before you with many different feelings and so many questions.
We ask that you be our guide.
Please help us in the coming days to listen for your voice,
to look for your light and to seek ways that we might be a light for others.
Hear now our prayers: *(insert pows and wows from previous activity)*
Even when all we have is taken away, still you hold us as your very own.
Blessed are you, Lord God of the universe, now and forever.
Thank you for being with us in all times no matter what.
In Christ's name we pray.
Amen.

Scripture:

“God said to Elijah, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.”

I Kings 19:11-12 (NRSV)

“Be still and know that I am God. In you, O Lord, I put my trust.”

Psalm 46:10 (NRSV)

Story:

(The story is written to be told or read to the youth. Open the Bible to I Kings 19 and leave it open while you tell the story.)

This story is about “Where is God?” This story is about listening for God’s voice. It is about a prophet who---when he was discouraged---heard God’s voice.

The Bible tells us about a man named Elijah. Elijah was a prophet. A prophet is someone who talks to people for God. Elijah loved God and told a lot of people about God. Elijah told the people that God loved them. He told the people that they should be kind and respectful to one another. Some of the things Elijah said made the king and queen really angry because they were not always kind and respectful to other people.

When the king and queen were angry at Elijah, he was scared. He was frightened and discouraged. You know how it feels to be scared? Well, what did Elijah do? He ran to hide! He ran into the wilderness. Tired and hungry, he finally fell asleep.

While Elijah was asleep, an angel tapped him on the shoulder. Elijah woke up and jumped up because he didn’t know who it was. The angel had prepared food and water for Elijah. This strengthened him for his journey and he went to Mount Horeb, known as the mountain of God. Elijah found a cave and slept there that night. Then a voice said, “Elijah, go to the door of the cave because God is about to pass by.” He had to make a decision---risk going out or hide again.

Elijah went to the door of the cave and a very strong wind blew by, so strong that it could break a mountain! But that was not God. Then there was a terrible earthquake and the earth shook! But that was not God. And then there was a fire, but God was not in the fire. After that, there was silence!

What could be that quiet? It was so quiet after the noise of the wind and the earthquake and the fire. And that was God passing by---very quietly in the stillness.

Elijah listened and knew that God was there. He knew that he didn't need to be afraid. God spoke to him and told him to go back and do what God asked of him. So Elijah went back even though what he was to do was difficult. His message to the people was to worship God because God loved them. We are like those people. God loves us and is with us.

Let's pray together.

Dear God, teach us to listen and to be willing to hear you. Help us to remember that you love us and are with us in difficult times. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Response:

Several activities are suggested. Choose which ones would be most meaningful for your particular group.

3. Sign Language Activity

Learn Psalm 46:10 through song and sign language.

Materials needed: Pictures indicating how to sign the words (page 62), sheet music, if available.

Teach the youth to sing and sign the first verse of "Be Still and Know that I am God."

Repeat several times.

Next hum the song---no words, only signs.

Finally, sign the song in silence.

Repeat as often as is appropriate.

4. Breath Prayer

Leader explains,

"A breath prayer is one that can be said in the space of a single inhale and exhale. It's a prayer that you can easily carry with you through your day.

Let's start by simply being quiet and taking a few deep, calming breaths. Imagine Jesus is sitting right there with you. Later, you may want to write this prayer in a journal or on an index card you can carry with you. Or, simply carry it in your heart. Pray it throughout the next several days. Then listen for God's response.

Or, simply enjoy the quiet presence of the Spirit."

(inhaling breath) "Be still and know"

(hold breath)

(exhaling breath) "that I am God"

5. Rubble Sculpture

This activity is one that will allow youth to use material around them that is the result of the disaster to make something of their own.

(Note: Old Testament scripture reports that, during ancient times, the people of Israel--after having endured trials and hardships---would take locally available materials and build on the site an “altar” to the Lord. The “altar” is a way of marking the area as sacred space. This sacred space for youth can be a place where they come together as God’s children and look for God’s presence in the midst of suffering and fear. It is a rebuilding activity, an activity that allows them to create something out of something destroyed.)

If you are in an area where there is “rubble”, have the youth gather one or two **safe** items to add to the sculpture. If you are in an area where rubble is not readily available, gather appropriate items with which to create the sculpture.

Help the youth assemble the pieces, beginning with a strong base or foundation upon which to build. The sculpture does not have to have a particular shape and does not have to be a tall sculpture. The idea is for the youth to work together.

Explain that they are making something that will mark this as a special or sacred place, somewhere they can come together to read scripture and worship God.

6. Sacred Symbol Tattoo

Materials needed: blank paper, writing utensils, permanent or washable markers

Hand out pieces of blank paper. Invite each youth to create a symbol meaningful for this situation. Remind them it will eventually be used as a tattoo, so the size must be appropriate. Next, invite youth to gather in groups of two or three. They must decide which one of their designs they like the best. Then combine two or three of these groups together to narrow the choice. The goal is to come up with one design the entire group likes. Using Sharpies or washable markers (depending on how permanent the outcome is to be!), each youth will tattoo the designated design on himself or herself as a symbol of his/her experience.

7. Collage

Materials Needed: magazines, pictures, glue sticks, scissors, construction paper
Suggestion: Music playing in the background. Suggested music: “El-Shaddai”

(Note: This is a particularly good activity because it gives youth a sense of mastery and a chance to organize their thoughts and feelings for what may be chaotic and confusing events.)

Leader explains:

“Cut or tear out pictures, words, and phrases from the magazines and newspapers that represent images of what you have experienced. Then arrange the pictures on the paper and glue them down. Be sure and write your name, the date and any thoughts or prayers on the back of the paper.”

Take time to have each youth share his/her collage. Ask where the youth sees God in this. What prayers arise from this experience?

The collage may be taken home or kept at the church to be added to a scrapbook to commemorate this event.

Going Out:

(Note: Although group discussions are a good vehicle for validating feelings about the youth’s experiences, it is important to end the session on a positive note by focusing on things that promote a sense of security, mastery, or preparedness. It is also important for them to think about the larger community and what part each of them can play to help make a difference. This may come from students themselves, and teachers can reinforce or elaborate on these points.)

1. Concluding Discussion Time

Gather back in a circle around the Rubble Sculpture, if you created one.
Discuss the following questions either as a group or by *Mutual Invitation.

- How did you help your family during or after the disaster?
- How could you help your family if you were in another disaster?
- Did anything good or positive happen because of the disaster?
- Did you learn anything from what happened to you?

Some positive outcomes might include:

- Feeling closer to family and friends.
- Meeting new friends or caring adults.
- Learning new skills or getting a sense of responsibility, strength, or mastery.
- Having the community pull together to deal with the crisis.
- Seeing that people want to help.

2. **Check-out time.** Do another quick check-in to see how everyone is doing. Sharing will be done by *Mutual Invitation rather than going in order one right after the other in the circle.

Leader says, "On a scale from 1 to 10, rate how you are feeling now. "10" is the very happiest you could be and "1" is the saddest you could be."

(i.e. The Leader says, "I'm feeling like a number 7. It's really helped me to be with you all and realize that God is still with us. Megan, how are you feeling?")

Affirmation of Faith

Sing and sign "Be Still and Know that I am God."

The Leader may then offer the following words as an affirmation and benediction.

Marked with the sign of Jesus Christ in baptism
we accept the freedom and power God gives
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression,
to do good to all people, especially to the least of these---God's children.

Go forth in the freedom and power of the Holy Spirit
to live our prayer in active obedience.
Continue to pray for those who were lost,
for those who grieve,
and for those in positions to help.
Together in this human family, let us find ways to act in love toward them.

Go now in peace, to love and serve God.

The Hook!

Ask the youth to come next week with a story of who helped them and/or who they helped.

Ask the youth to come next week and bring something to add to the sculpture.

God With Us

Lesson Plan for Older Youth

Main Idea: God is with us at all times and in all situations.

Objectives:

1. Identify participants and provide a way to check in with each other.
2. Provide activity for processing experiences related to current circumstances.
3. Provide appropriate scripture.
4. Respond to scripture.
5. Make a commitment to community.
6. Affirm our faith.

(Note: if the following is not your normal format with your youth, please adapt to fit your norm. It is important to keep as familiar a routine as possible.)

Song/Hymn Suggestions *(Sing when it would be best for your group.)*

“If Anybody Asks You Who I Am”

“Jesus Loves Me”

“Spirit of the Living God”

Gathering:

1. Nametags:

Make a nametag if you have the resources. It can be as simple as writing on masking tape with a Sharpie.

(Note: in times of stress, people sometimes have difficulty accessing even basic memory. Although those gathered may be familiar with one another, having nametags will mean fewer recall tasks.)

2. Greeting:

Have one teacher/leader greeting and one standing in the area where youth typically gather. Invite each participant to come to the gathering area. (Ideally, the youth will be gathered in a circle.) As the youth arrive, greet them by name. If the youth is new or unfamiliar, greet her or him by name and make introductions. When everyone has

gathered, if there are any newcomers to the group or visitors, have each person in the group introduce him or herself.

☺ **Optional add-in – Modeling Clay**

Give each participant a piece of clay to manipulate during the next activity. Tell the youth that they can create something or just hold on to it--- to squish, poke, or pull. It is theirs to take home.

3. Checking-in/Sharing Time:

The activity is to do a check-in and see how everyone is doing. Sharing will be done by *Mutual Invitation rather than going in order one after another in the circle.

**Mutual Invitation: The leader shares first and then calls on someone by name to go next. That person then calls on someone else. This process continues until everyone has shared. Anyone has the option to pass. Those who pass are then re-invited at the end to share.*

- a. “Pow Wow”--- thinking of the past week...
Name a “Pow”---something that “hit” you and you felt it.
Name a “Wow”---something that surprised or impressed you
- b. In what ways have you seen God at work in the world this past week?

(Note: It may be helpful for the leader to have pen and paper to take notes on what is said so the things that are shared may be used as prayers in the next activity.)

(Example: The Leader says, “My Pow was that one of our cars was smashed by the tree that fell on top of it. My Wow is that it smelled like Christmas outside with all the pine trees that were trimmed or knocked over by the wind. Jason, will you go next?”)

4. Prayer:

(If possible, incorporate the needs, feelings and themes from the check in activity.)

God of love and mercy,
our ordered world has been shaken and our thoughts are in disarray.
In gathering together we affirm you as Lord.
You formed us and breathed into us the breath of life.
As we cope with the chaos and aftermath of (name the event)
help us center our thoughts on you.

(Insert “pows” and “wows” from the previous activity)

Please help us in the coming days to listen for your voice.
Create in us a stillness,
and in that silence may we hear you speak to us. Amen.

Scripture:

“God said to Elijah, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.”

I Kings 19:11-12 (NRSV)

“Be still and know that I am God. In you, O Lord, I put my trust.”

Psalm 46:10 (NRSV)

Story:

(The story is written to be told or read to the youth. Open the Bible to I Kings 19 and leave it open while you tell the story.)

This story is about “Where is God?” This story is about listening for God’s voice. It is about a prophet who, when he was discouraged, heard God’s voice.

The Bible tells us about a man named Elijah. Elijah was a prophet. A prophet is someone who talks to people for God. Elijah loved God. He told the people of Israel about God and reminded them to follow God’s ways. Elijah told the people that God loved them. He told the people that they should be kind and respectful to one another. Some of the things Elijah said angered the king and queen because they were not always kind and respectful to other people.

When the king and queen were angry at Elijah, he was scared. He was frightened and discouraged. You know how it feels to be scared? Well, what did Elijah do? Because he was afraid, he ran into the wilderness to hide! Tired and hungry, he finally fell asleep.

While Elijah was asleep, an angel tapped him on the shoulder. Elijah woke up and jumped up because he didn’t know who it was. The angel had prepared food and water for Elijah. This strengthened him for his journey and he went to Mount Horeb, also known as Mt. Sinai where God appeared to Moses. Elijah found a cave and slept there that night. Then a voice said, “Elijah, go to the door of the cave because God is about to pass by.” He had to make a decision---risk going out or hide again.

Elijah went to the door of the cave and a very strong wind blew by, so strong that it could break a mountain! But that was not God. Then there was a terrible earthquake and the earth shook! But that was not God. And then there was a fire, but God was not in the fire. After that, there was silence!

What could be that quiet? It was so quiet after the noise of the wind and the earthquake and the fire. And that was God passing by---very quietly in the stillness.

Elijah listened and knew God was there. He knew that he didn't need to be afraid. God spoke to him and told him to go back and do what God asked of him. So Elijah went back even though what he was to do was difficult. His message to the people was to worship God because God loved them. We are like those people. God loves us and is with us.

Let's pray together.

Lord God, teach us to listen and to be willing to hear you. Help us remember that you love us and are with us always, even in difficult times. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Response:

Several activities are suggested. Choose which ones would be most meaningful for your particular group.

1. Sign Language Activity Learn Psalm 46:10 through song and sign language.

Materials needed: Pictures indicating how to sign the words (page 62) & sheet music if available.

Teach the youth to sing and sign the first verse of "Be still and know that I am God."
Repeat several times.

Next, hum the song---no words, only signs.

Finally, sign the song in silence.

Repeat as often as is appropriate.

2. Breath Prayer

Leader explains,

"Breath prayer is a form of contemplative prayer. A breath prayer is one that can be said in the space of a single inhale and exhale. It's a prayer that you can easily carry with you through your day.

Let's start by simply being quiet and taking a few deep, calming breaths. Imagine Jesus is sitting right there with you. Later, you may want to write this prayer in a journal or on an index card that you can carry with you. Or, simply carry it in your heart. Pray it throughout the next several days. Then listen for God's response.

Or simply enjoy the quiet presence of the Spirit."

(inhaling breath) “Be still and know”
(hold breath)
(exhaling breath) “that I am God”

3. Rubble Sculpture

This activity will allow the youth to use material around them that is the result of the disaster to make something of their own.

(Note: Old Testament scripture reveals that, during ancient times, the people of Israel--after having endured trials and hardship---would take locally available materials and build on the site an “altar” to the Lord. The “altar” is a way of marking the area as sacred space. This sacred space for the youth can be a place where they come together as God’s children and look for God’s presence in the midst of suffering and fear. It is a rebuilding activity, an activity that allows them to create something out of something destroyed.)

If you are in an area where there is “rubble”, have the youth gather one or two **safe** items to add to the sculpture. If you are in an area where rubble is not readily available, gather appropriate symbolic items to create the sculpture. Help the youth assemble the pieces, beginning with a strong base or foundation. The sculpture does not have to have a particular shape and does not have to be a tall sculpture. The idea is simply for the youth to work together.

Explain that they are making something that will mark this as a special or sacred place, somewhere they can come together to read scripture and worship God.

4. Collage

Materials Needed: magazines, pictures, glue sticks, scissors, construction paper
Ahead of time, draw a large circle---approximately 36” in diameter---on a large piece of heavy paper or cardboard. Draw and cut pie-shaped pieces equal to a number of small groups within the larger group. Number each piece on the reverse side so you know the proper placement when putting them back together.

Suggestion: Have calming music playing in the background.

(Note: This is a particularly good activity because it gives youth a sense of mastery and a chance to organize their thoughts and feelings for what may be chaotic and confusing events.)

Invite each small group to tear or cut out pictures, shapes, words, and colors that represent or remind them of the past week’s events and today. Make a collage on their pie-shaped pieces.

When all of the pie-shaped pieces are completed, bring them together and reassemble the whole. Bring all of the groups together, having each group explain to the whole group what their images/colors represent.

As the larger group processes each collage piece, the adult group leader asks, “Where can we see God with us in this? What is the prayer that rises from our experience here?”

When the group has finished processing the collage, pray together, incorporating the thoughts and feelings expressed during the exercise.

Going Out:

(Note: Although group discussions are a good vehicle for validating feelings about youth experiences, it is important to end the session on a positive note by focusing on things that promote a sense of security, mastery, or preparedness. It is also important for youth to think about the larger community and what part each of them can play to help make a difference. These themes may come from students themselves and teachers can reinforce or elaborate on these points.)

Concluding Discussion

Gather back in your circle or around the Rubble Sculpture. Discuss the following questions either as a group or by *Mutual Invitation.

- How did your family members help each other during or after the disaster?
- Did anything good or positive happen because of the disaster?
- Did you learn anything from what happened to you?

Some positive outcomes might include:

- Feeling closer to family and friends
- Neighbors getting together to help or cook meals
- Meeting new friends or caring adults
- Learning new skills or gaining a sense of responsibility, strength, or mastery
- Having the community pull together to deal with the crisis
- Seeing that people want to help

Affirmation of Faith

Sing and sign “Be Still and Know that I am God.”

Following is the opening line and closing sentences of *A Brief Statement of Faith*.

The leader may then offer these as an affirmation and benediction. Or, he or she may read each line and have the youth repeat it.

From *A Brief Statement of Faith*:

In life and in death we belong to God.
With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to
the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Go now in peace, to love and serve God.

The Hook!

Start a “journal” or scrapbook of “Our Story” that is added to each week with writings and pictures.

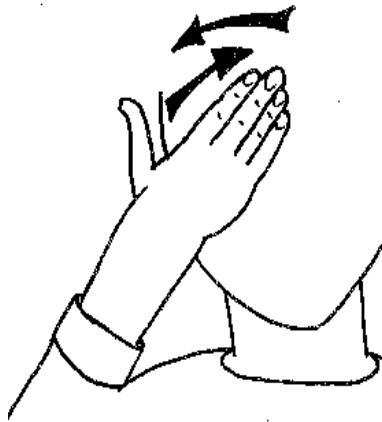
Ask the youth to come next week with a story of who helped them and/or who they helped.

Ask the youth to bring something next week to add to the sculpture.

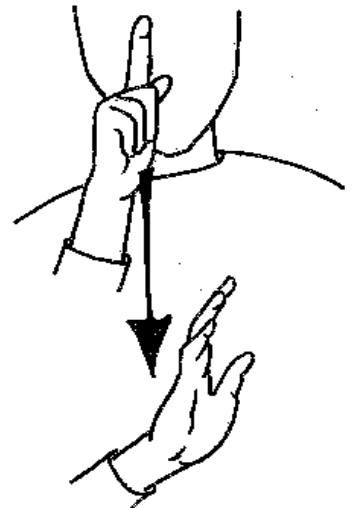
Sign Language Movements for “Be Still and Know”



Be Still



Know



I am God

FIVE FINGER PRAYER

(for young children)

Holding up each finger as you pray...

1. **Thumb** - Begin by praying for your family and friends.
2. **Index Finger** - Pray for teachers and helpers.
3. **Middle Finger** - Pray for leaders who make big decisions.
4. **Ring Finger** - Pray for those who are hurt, angry, or sad.
5. **Little Finger** - Pray for yourself.

FIVE FINGER PRAYER

(expanded version)

First, I want you to put your hands together in front of you as if you are praying. Keep your eyes open so you can see your hands.

1. **Thumb**

You will notice that the closest finger to you is the thumb. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember.

2. **Index Finger**

The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction.

3. **Middle Finger**

The next finger is the tallest finger, which reminds us to pray for our leaders. Pray for the national leaders, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion.

4. **Ring Finger**

The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger; It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble, or in pain.

5. **Little Finger**

Last comes our little finger---the smallest finger of all. Last is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest among you...." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself.

By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective.

God With Us

Extra Activities

(To be used in an expanded session or other times together.)

1. “Rubble Sculpture” – following week(s)

Children who have participated in the “Rubble Sculpture” exercise should be encouraged to bring something next time to add to it.

2. Our Story

Tell the children they are going to start helping with a book that tells their stories during this hard time. This can be an activity for the whole congregation. Photographs can be contributed. Young children are encouraged to draw, write, or scribble about things that have happened in their family, in school, or with their friends. Over the weeks ahead, all ages can contribute and a story of hope can be created. This will serve as a tool for dealing with the loss and destruction and, as lives are rebuilt, a story of hope and victory. Be sure each person’s name is on their contribution. The book should be kept in a safe place but also a place where people have access to it for adding their contribution or seeing what has been contributed.

Ask the children to come next time with a story of who helped them and/or who they helped.

3. Song/Hymn Suggestions

“If Anybody Asks You Who I Am”
“Jesus Loves Me”

4. Prayer Wall

Find an area that will not be disturbed and build a “prayer wall” out of the rubble. A person can put a stone near the wall as a symbol of their prayer. Or, they may want to write a prayer and tuck it into a crack in the wall. The prayers can be represented physically by a symbol or can be silent and reflective. Place a cross or symbol of worship next to the wall area to remind those who pray that this is a worshipful place.

5. Clay or Model Magic

Encourage the children to use the modeling material to create. The action of kneading may be helpful during times of stress. Tell the children they can make anything they want. They can just play with the material if that’s what they prefer to do. They can take their creation

with them and remold it for a while. Remind the children it will eventually dry and become hard.

6. My Friend

Try to provide a stuffed animal for each child. If this is not possible, help the children make a “pet rock” to keep with them. They can draw on it or simply put their name on it. Tell them their “friend” is a reminder that God loves them and is always with them, no matter what.

7. Song Motions

Find a church song such as “Jesus Loves Me” that is a favorite of the children. Working as a group, create motions for the song and sing it. Even non-verbal children can hum and do the motions. Use the motions that were suggested by the children whenever possible.

8. “Disaster” Dance (you may want to name it specifically to your disaster)

This activity should not be used with children who have been seriously traumatized by the disaster. It is yet another means of processing for those who survived the event with their emotional equilibrium intact but---due to their age or lack of verbal skills-- may have difficulty expressing what happened to them.

This is a form of storytelling that actually can be used with persons of all ages. Older youth may particularly enjoy the process of creating the dance, as well. As you create the gestures for the dance, remember there is no “right” way to depict the events, so be creative. Tell youth we are going create a dance that tells the story of what happened to us *in the past week* (substitute the appropriate time period). Explain that many cultures use dances to tell a story of something that happened to them.

Try to keep this dance as simple as possible while at the same time honoring the content the children want to include. You may want to have someone write down the ideas and corresponding gestures to aid recall and sequencing.

Begin with the idea that everything started out ordinary, which could be represented by going to school, waking up in their own bedroom, feeling safe (or whatever is appropriate to the age group). Help create gestures for life being ordinary.

Then, something very unusual happened. Prompt participants to state their physical experiences and emotional reactions to the disaster incorporating questions like, “What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel?” You may get answers such as, “The wind made a loud noise!” Or, “A tree fell and crashed into our house.” Or, “We had to hide in the basement.” Or, “I was scared.”

After hearing what experiences and emotions participants name, help them create movements/gestures to represent them. Some examples include: The wind might be depicted by waving the arms back and forth in front of the body. Being afraid might be represented by a facial gesture with wide eyes or by bending the head downward, hands on head.

Next... Here, state whatever happened next. It could be the storm/flood was over, or we had to leave our house, or we waited for help. Create movements/gestures for this stage of the experience.

And then... Next, include the process of recognizing one's self as a survivor. Example: "And then the storm was over and I saw that I was safe (or still alive)." Be certain in this section to reinforce that others care about them and they are loved. Examples might include: "I gave my sister a big hug." Or, "I got back together with my church family." Or, "I remembered that God is always with me." Or, "My daddy said everything was going to be okay." Create movements/gestures for this stage of the experience.

Now... Here, solicit information about what life is like for them right now. It could include things like "we're living at a shelter" or my home/school needs to be rebuilt, or we need to clean up. Create movements/gestures for this stage of the experience.

But I believe... In this section help participants imagine the future and affirm the power of love and faith. Examples might include: "Other people are there to help us." Or, "God's love is stronger than the wind." Or, "God is with me through everything." Or, "My family loves me."

Once you have created the movements to the Disaster Dance, put them together in a sequential dance. Practice this dance two, three, or more times.

In weeks to come, as situations change, the group (or individuals) can add more movements/gestures to tell the ongoing story.

Helper Pictures





God With Us

Feedback Form

To: Pastors, Educators, Volunteers, and PDA National Response Team (NRT) members,

Please give us your feedback after using the *God With Us* materials and resources.

- What did you use?
- What was useful?
- What needs to be changed and how?

What parts of the resources did you experience as a participant?

- What was useful?
- What needs to be changed and how?
- What else do we need to consider?

Please email feedback to your presenter or to PDA at PDA.Help@pcusa.org.
Thank you for your time and responses as PDA NRT develops this material.

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