



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Job 1:1, 2:1-13

Romans 8:18-28

Session Theme: Suffering

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: How Long?

When kids arrive, challenge them to try several endurance activities for a minute each. For example, stand on one foot. Then, *with the same foot*, hop for a minute; hop with eyes closed; hop in a tight circle, etc. When kids are finished, ask if their foot got tired. Were they tempted to give up? In daily life, we get to walk on one foot and then the other, which is more comfortable. But in this game, we pushed one foot's endurance to the limit.

In today's story, one man has to endure far more than standing and hopping on one foot. His suffering is great, and it seems to him like it will never end. Yet the man, whose name is Job, never gives up. What is his story? And where did he get his strength to endure? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you are the one who gives us true strength. When we go through hard times, help us to lean on you. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Nearer My God to Thee" (hymn)
- "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Writings

Throughout the Old Testament are books of poetry, proverbs, and songs. Most of these writings are not attached to a particular time or place, but reflect the good and bad times we all experience.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level:

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, and Questions)

Adults: Bible Study (Large or Small Group Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. Use the Bible Rhyme as a short review, or simply ask questions to help the students recall the events of the story.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Job 1:1, 2:1-13

1. Skim through Job 1. What did Satan do to Job in this chapter? What did Satan do in our lesson for today from Chapter 2?

In chapter 1, Satan took all of Job's possessions (sheep, camels, oxen, donkeys) by raising up enemies to steal Job's property and kill his workers, and also by means of fire from heaven. He also caused a wind to collapse the house where Job's children had gathered, killing them all. But still Job remained faithful to God. Later, in Chapter 2, Satan struck Job himself with sickness and gave him sores all over his body.

2. Read Job 1:8 and 2:3. What did God say about Job? Read Job 1:9-11 and 2:4-5. What explanations did Satan give for why Job was faithful to God? Was Satan right or wrong?

God said that Job was "a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil." God knew that Job was a good and faithful man. Satan, however, said that Job was only faithful because God protected Job and blessed him. Satan said that if all this was taken away, Job would turn against God. But Satan was wrong! Job still remained faithful.

3. Do you think Satan is at work in our modern day? What kind of evidence do you see in the world that evil is real?

Unfortunately, the devil is at work among us, trying to turn us away from God. Around the world we see people suffering from evil, war, crime, etc. This is not all by chance or circumstance; much of it is deliberate. People hurt other people, and all of us are tempted to give in to our worst impulses.

But the evil we see in the world is more than just the sum of individual human actions. There is an organization to it and a power behind it.

"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12-13).

4. How do you think Job felt when all this happened to him? Why did he not blame and curse God? Do you think that you would have reacted like Job?

Job felt very bad and had many questions for God — no doubt we all would feel that same way!

Job felt that this was all unfair — and he was right! God himself said that Job did not deserve this. But Job knew that he belonged to God, and God was in charge.

5. Read 1 Peter 5:6-11. What advice does Peter give us for how we should face evil and suffering in our own lives? What is God's promise to us?

Peter says: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9).

In order to be able to fight and resist, we need to know that the enemy exists. Standing firm in faith means keeping our faith in God, no matter what we may face. We also need to remember that we are in this together with other believers who are fighting the same fight.

6. From what you see in the story of Job, does being a faithful person mean that nothing bad will ever happen to you in life? How does knowing that God is with us help us deal with suffering and get us through the difficult times we face?

Everyone has bad things happen to them. Faith does not make us immune to trouble and hardship, nor does it mean that we will never suffer. However, knowing God is with us gives us strength and hope from beyond ourselves. We trust in him because we know he has the final word, and he has promised that nothing can separate us from his love (Romans 8:37-39).

7. Read Romans 8:18-26. How does the whole Creation suffer the effects of evil? Can you give some examples? Will the world always be this way?

Paul says that creation itself groans in pain because of sin and decay and longs to be set free. We can think of examples like pollution, destruction of natural resources, ruining of air and water, and negative changes in weather and climate. In this passage, we have the promise that God will bring about a new creation, not subject to this destruction by entropy.

8. In the midst of his suffering, Job never stopped praying and talking to God. Why is prayer so important? In what way is God's Holy Spirit at work when we pray?

Prayer is our connection to God, the One in whom we hope. There are things in this world (sin, death, and the devil) working against us, we need the help of the One who really has the power — God himself! It is God's own power that through the Holy Spirit gives us hope and faith.

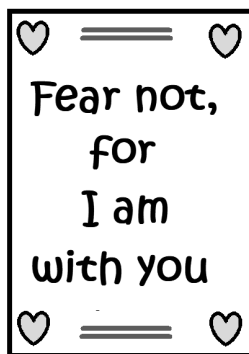
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Comfort Card Craft

Materials Needed:

- Card stock
- Markers
- Pencils
- Large card envelopes
- Glitter glue (optional)
- Stickers (optional)



Instructions:

Invite kids to make sympathy cards for someone who is going through a hard time. Explain that they could send their card to a person they know; or, if as a group they want to use these as part of a larger project, keep the cards in the classroom and the class can sign and send them as needed to people who are suffering or mourning.

Invite kids to fold the card stock in half. Then, have them write a Bible verse on the front and/or inside the card. A few options include:

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

Kids may also choose to write a simple phrase of their own inside the card. Ideas could include, "You are in our prayers," or "May the peace of God comfort you" or something similar.

Job suffered many losses, but he never lost his faith in God. Even when those around him taunted him for not questioning God, he responded, "Shall we receive good from the Lord and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10).

Job understood that "the rain falls on the just and the unjust," and he never blamed God for the things he faced. Nonetheless, it can be hard to make sense of suffering, and most people do struggle with it. A simple card like the ones made today can encourage someone who is going through a painful time, reminding them that they are not alone.

Activity 2: Sit in Silence Tag Game

Materials Needed:

- Masking tape
- Large area to play a game

Instructions:

To play this Biblical version of the classic tag game, choose one person to be Job.

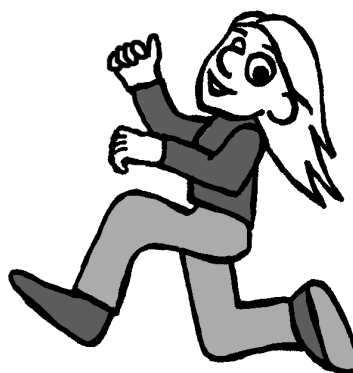
Everyone else will be Job's friends.

When you say, "Go," the player who is Job will try to tag as many people as possible within a certain span of time.

Anyone who gets tagged is out and must sit down on the ground in silence, like Job's friends did.

Play until half the people are tagged; then play a second game of tag with someone else as Job.

In this game, people ran away from Job. Then, when they were tagged, they sat down in silence.



This is not unlike people's reactions to suffering in real life.

We often don't know what to say to someone who is going through a hard time, as Job was. Because of this, we may avoid that person in order to avoid our own discomfort.

But in truth, just being with a suffering person, praying with them, and listening to them with

compassion is often the most helpful thing we can do. We don't have to know exactly what to say — caring presence is a comfort of its own.

Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

Unscrambled Words:

WORRY, ANGER, SADNESS,
PAIN, LOSS, QUESTIONS,
MISERY, TRUST

Job's Confession of Faith:

"I know that my REDEEMER lives!" (Job 19:25)

It's true: Jesus is our Redeemer. He's always with us!

Definition:

To "redeem" means to "buy back."

Jesus is our Redeemer because he paid his own life on the cross to buy us back from the consequences of our sin!

(see below)

From Martin Luther's Small Catechism

The Second Article — Concerning Redemption

I believe that Jesus Christ — true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary — is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, and has freed me from sin, death, and the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with his holy and precious blood and his innocent suffering and death.

He has done all this in order that I might be his own, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead and lives and reigns for all eternity. This is most certainly true!

Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Suffering

feeling great pain or loss

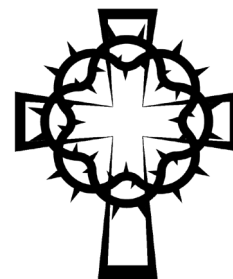
Job trusted God, even when he didn't understand why he was suffering.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Job is one of the most famous men in the Old Testament. He suffered greatly, but despite this, never spoke a word against God. His faithfulness under fire remains a source of inspiration to people even today. Another Jewish man, Holocaust survivor Victor Frankl, also suffered a lot in his life. He learned that the way a person looks at things makes a huge difference. We often get caught up in what we expected of life, he said. But really, life is asking us the questions, moment by moment. How will we face our challenges? With bitterness? Or with faith?

Job faced his unavoidable suffering with faith. He trusted God and God's goodness, even in the darkness and uncertainty. As Christians, with Jesus as our Savior and friend, we can do the same in our own times of trial.

Think about or discuss a time when you suffered. What helped you get through that difficult time? What did you learn from your experience?



The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer asking God for his help in whatever you are currently struggling with the most. Thank God for sticking with you, and listening, even in times when you are sad and dejected.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.