

# CHILDREN'S SERMON, LESSON & ACTIVITIES: HOW DOES IT FEEL WHEN...

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edited by Week of Compassion

Both Children's Sermon/Lessons start with the same script. This one, *How Does It Feel When...*, continues with exercises of empathy, using Week of Compassion illustrations and captions to engage children's imagination and feelings. An additional Sermon/Lesson, *Sowing Seeds of Hope and Care*, includes two related Children's Activities to put the theme of compassion and new life into an active form.

We suggest using this **Children's Lesson** as the primary teaching during Sunday School or other gathering time.

You might also use the Lesson as a Children's Sermon during worship, with the exploration of stories, images, and emotions available as a longer conversation during Sunday School or gathering time, to help make the connection from the message they just received in the worship service.

If your church is using the Week of Compassion **coinboxes** for children to collect money and return for Week of Compassion, be sure to hand them out (we suggest folding and taping/sealing the side and bottom in advance!) so that children have a few weeks to take them home and bring them back.

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

Your materials will vary depending on your use of this Lesson, as a primary teaching during Sunday School or other class time, or as in-worship Children's Sermon, more focused on brief instruction and theme connections.

This Children's Sermon uses images and stories from the Mission Moments included with the 2023 Special Offering online resources, told in short form with child-friendly detail.

- print out pictures of different facial expressions or emojis - happy, sad, angry, scared, loved, excited, confused
- as you tell the stories in through this Lesson, you'll want the children to be able to see these and choose their responses in addition to using their own words

## THEME: LAMENTATIONS 3:21-23

*Yet it is because I remember all this  
that I have hope.  
YHWH's favor is not exhausted,  
nor has God's compassion failed.  
They **RISE UP ANEW** each morning,  
so great is God's faithfulness.*

Week of Compassion is an incredible ministry of our church that allows us to be active parts of God's new mercies, or God's love and care made new each day. Even when there is so much heaviness, when there are so many people and

places in the world that are experiencing pain, suffering and despair, we can hold onto and cling to the promise that God's love and care for the world never ends. God's love and care will **rise up anew** each and every day. God is with us always, and together we can be a part of bringing hope, love, care, compassion and healing to the world.

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

Good morning friends! Hmmm... good morning. Have any of you ever wondered why we say "Good morning" to each other to say hello? Is every morning actually good? I know sometimes when I wake up, things are sometimes just "okay." Or sometimes when I start the day, I'm still feeling tired. My mornings can feel like sleepy mornings or even groggy and slow mornings.

How else can you feel other than good in the morning, or any time of day?

*(Pause for responses)*

What are some of the other ways we feel sometimes?

Allow for children to respond. If they are a little shy, you can offer examples of other feelings and ways we can feel. Grumpy, Sad, Angry, Lonely, Sick, Worried, Happy... etc.

We can feel so many ways for so many reasons. We may be sick and feel discomfort. We might at times feel disappointed. We can feel scared or worried. Sometimes mornings or even entire days aren't good because things and feelings don't always change right away. Have any of

you ever felt like it's hard to focus on the good or on the bright side when for you, things might not be going well, or they don't feel good?

*(Pause briefly)*

I'm going to tell you something. Sometimes days, weeks, even months can feel hard, heavy and like there's not a lot of goodness going on in our lives or around us. And we need to be able to say how we really feel. We need to be able to be honest and not feel pressured to pretend that things are all good when they just aren't. Sharing and expressing how we really feel helps us. Sharing the truth of how hard things can be helps us feel heard and it also allows others around us to understand our experiences. When people share their stories of pain, of struggle and need, it helps us understand each other better and come together. It makes us want to do what we can to help make things a little easier for each other. That is what it means to be community, family, and church. We come together, we listen to each other, and we work to help each other.

There is a book in the Bible, called Lamentations, that is full of poems and writings that express the deep hurts that we can all

feel sometimes for many different reasons. In Lamentations we read of people experiencing great need. Their land has been forcefully taken from them, there has been war, many people have died, others have been taken—there is a lot that has happened that has caused people to lose hope and yet—

There is a verse where the writer states that even though it's hard to not think of all that is happening all around them that seems hopeless, they remember that God's love never ceases. God's mercies never end!

The writer remembers that God's love and care never end, and that every day brings with it new ways to see God's love at work in the world. Every day we can see God's work in the world rise up anew day after day.

But how can we see God at work when sometimes things seem to not change or get any better?

I wonder...

*There are 3 sets of wondering questions and stories, plus some photos to use and respond to. You might use them all, or just one, whatever suits your children best.*

## USING MISSION MOMENT: PARAGUAY

Imagine that you are a farmer, and you're standing outside on a very big field where your family has farmed for generations. What kind of things would you grow? What kind of animals would you have there?

Now imagine that one day, you're working on your farm, growing your crops and looking after your animals, and someone shows up with huge machines and says that they own this land now and that you can't farm here anymore. Maybe they will let you grow one or two things on this little tiny corner of the land over here, but the whole rest of the field now belongs to them.

How would you feel ?

*[You might use print outs of facial expressions or emojis for the kids to choose from here.]*

Now look at these pictures.

These are people in Paraguay, and something sort of like what you just imagined happened to them. And when they had to find a new place to live and to work, Week of Compassion's friends found ways to help them. Now they raise honeybees! and make honey! They can sell the honey at their markets and stores, and keep some for themselves too. They can use the wax to make soap and candles for

themselves and to sell to make money for their families.

I wonder ... How do you think these families feel?

*[Select from expressions or use their own words.]*

I wonder ... What do you think God had to do with this? How did God help the people we see here?



*photos: Church World Service*

## USING MISSION MOMENT: AFGHAN REFUGEE RESPONSE

Has anyone moved recently - maybe you moved here to *(name of your city)* not very long ago, or maybe you moved to a new house or apartment? When you moved, how did you feel?

*[You might use print outs of facial expressions or emojis for the kids to choose from here.]*

What was fun about that? *(having a new room, a fun backyard, etc)*

What was not fun? *(leaving friends, grandparents, favorite place to play, etc.)*

Now I wonder if you can imagine what it would be like if someone came to your house and said you had to move somewhere else, right away? How would you feel?

*[You might use print outs of facial expressions or emojis for the kids to choose from here.]*

What kind of help would you need when you arrived somewhere new? *(a place to live, food, clothes, a new school, places to play)*

That's exactly what some of our friends at other churches, in places like Kansas City, and Colorado, and Kentucky have done. When some families from Afghanistan had to leave



their homes to be safe from a war, some of our church friends worked with Week of Compassion and helped these families from Afghanistan find new places to live here in the United States. And they made sure that when these new friends got to their new homes, they had all of the things you just named.

Look at this picture. What do you think is happening? *(He's taking her to school.)*

I wonder ... How do you think these families feel?

*[Select from expressions or use their own words.]*

I wonder ... How do you think God is part of this? What does God tell us about how we can help here?

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## USING MISSION MOMENT: CAMBODIA

I wonder ...

Is there a grown-up in your family who is good at fixing things? Are you good at it? If one of your favorite toys breaks - if an arm falls off, or a wheel gets lost - isn't it awesome to have someone who can help you? {maybe include your own: My uncle likes to take things apart just to figure out how to put them back together...}

A man named Oy lives in Cambodia, and he has not had much money, or a way to help get the things his family needs. He has been poor for a long time, and then he was hurt in an accident {he lost his leg, and wears a prosthesis in the picture you'll share in a minute} and now it's even harder for him to work. Week of Compassion partners with an organization called Church World Service, and they have an education program in Cambodia where Oy learned to repair motors, and motorcycles. And he has been able to open his own repair shop!

Look at this picture of Oy and his wife Kong. I wonder ... How do you think they feel?

*[Select from expressions or use their own words.]*

I wonder ... How does God feel about this? What did God help this family?



## CONCLUSION

Once everyone has had time to share - and maybe invite those who thought of something about an earlier photo or story to go back if they want to - take a minute to wrap up and close in prayer together.

In *{this/these}* stories and pictures, we've met some really interesting people. Week of Compassion helps us learn about other people, and where they live, and what they need. We have the chance to be part of God's good news when we partner with Week of Compassion by giving our offerings and volunteering to help. Our scripture from Lamentations reminds us that God's goodness is always with us and that even when life is very very hard, God is always at work to bring hope.

Let's pray:

*Gracious and Loving God, thank you for reminding us that you are at work all around the world through the lives of people who choose to love, who choose to help, and who choose to share their gifts and resources with others. Help us to consider how the people around us feel, and how we can help when they are afraid or sad, and how we can celebrate with them when good things happen. Help us find ways to partner with you, through ministries like Week of Compassion, to **RISE UP ANEW** every day to be agents of your love everywhere we go. Amen.*



photo: Farid Ershad, Kabul, Afghanistan

*Yet it is because I remember all this that I have hope.*

*YHWH's favor is not exhausted, nor has God's compassion failed. They **RISE UP ANEW** each morning, so great is God's faithfulness.*



photo: Week of Compassion Special Offering short film 2023