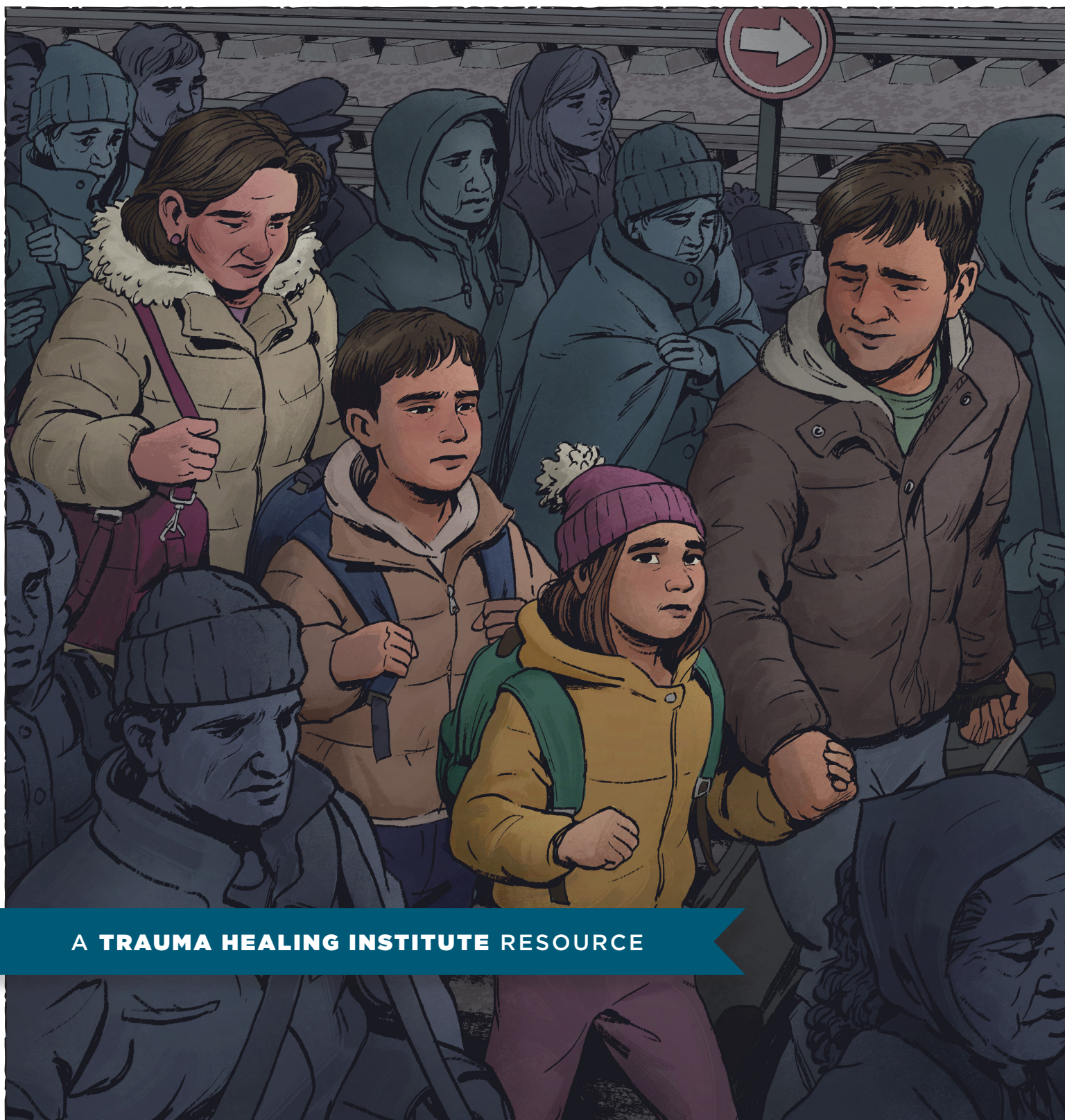


God Is With Me

A Family Guide to Living in Hard Times



A **TRAUMA HEALING INSTITUTE** RESOURCE

God Is With Me: A Family Guide to Living in Hard Times

By Margi McCombs PhD

With thanks to contributors Lorraine Foute MA and Harriet Hill PhD

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This is a Bible-based resource to help parents and children cope in times of uncertainty, especially after a disaster or displacement. It is informed by best practices in mental health as well as two decades of experience using trauma healing materials worldwide with Christian churches from every tradition. *God Is With Me* is designed for families with children ages 8–12 but can be adapted for other ages.

This resource may be used on its own or paired with material in ***Beyond Disaster: A Survivor's Guide for Spiritual First Aid*** (ISBN 978-1-58516-292-5; ABS item 124851).

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Edited by Peter Edman

Illustrations by Ian Dale

Design by Robert Giorgio and Shannon VanderWeide

Visit **BeyondDisaster.Bible** for resources on disaster recovery in several languages.

If you have questions, contact **info@traumahealinginstitute.org**.

To purchase this resource and other Trauma Healing Institute resources, please visit us at **bibles.com**.



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Resource provided by:



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

101 North Independence Mall East
Philadelphia PA 19106

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A Family Guide to Living in Hard Times



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Note to Parents & Caregivers

This booklet is intended to help you help the children you love to feel safe during this time of uncertainty and change. You are likely trying to cope with your own feelings of fear and anxiety, while being a source of comfort for your children.

We invite you to use this guide in any way that fits into your circumstances right now. There are four lessons that you can schedule in a way that seems best for you. It is designed to be self-guided and to be used by parents and caregivers without any specific training.

Our *“Tips for Parents and Caregivers”* on page 49 may be helpful as you work with your children, offering insight and suggestions that will promote a sense of safety and healing of the heart wounds caused by trauma.

We pray that you know God’s comfort even in the midst of this crisis.

The Trauma Healing Institute





What Just Happened?

Now!

The noise was so loud! Suddenly eight-year-old Valeryi was awake. She thought it was a nightmare, but as she opened her eyes, she realized it was real. Her mom was shaking her shoulder.

“Wake up! We have to go,” her mom was saying. “We’ll talk later. Now we must go quickly.” Mom was gathering things and putting them in a suitcase. “We only have room for the most important things. Find your toothbrush and your warmest clothes. We need to leave. Now.”

Valeryi sat up. “Go where?” she asked.

“To the train station,” said Mom. “Lots of people are leaving the city. Hopefully, we’ll be able to get on the train to take us west to my sister’s house ... it will be safer than here.”

“But Mom, what’s going on?” asked Valeryi fearfully.

This was unbelievable. Just yesterday everything seemed normal. Her parents were there, food was on the table, her cozy bed was ready for her. Now Mom had a scared look on her face, and loud, scary noises were coming from just outside her window. What was happening?

“Just get your things and put them in your backpack. Get warm socks on and your warm sweater and your puffy jacket. We need to leave now.”

“But why?” Valeryi began to cry.

“Because our world has changed,” said Mom. “People are invading our country and we are in great danger. We can’t stay here.”

“But what about Alexi?” asked Valeryi. Her eleven-year-old brother was usually the last person out of bed.

“He’s up and getting his things together, too. We’ll all have to hurry to the train station. Dad will go with us to make sure we’re on the train, but he’ll have to stay here.”

“Nooo! How can we leave without Dad?”

“We will be okay. We will go to a safe place, but Dad has to stay to help fight the invaders. He has been training, and he knows what he’s doing.”

Valeryi climbed out of bed and grabbed her backpack. There was a huge blast on the street outside. It was so loud! Her heart began to pound. Quickly, she stuffed in her small pillow, her tablet and charger, her toothbrush and toothpaste, and an extra sweater. What else should she take? Everything was happening so fast.

“Let’s go,” said Mom, lifting a heavy bag of food and water to her shoulder. “The train station is close, but we’ll have to move quickly.”

Alexi and Dad joined them with the suitcase, and they hurried out of their flat, closing the door with a bang and pounding down the stairs. Outside in the cold night air, they joined a big group of people running down the street toward the train station.



Let's Talk About It

1. Why was Valeryi surprised that they had to leave their home?
2. How do you think Valeryi and Alexi were feeling when they were packing their bags?
3. How do you think they were feeling on the way to the train station?
4. Can you tell about a time that you were surprised by something terrible happening around you? How did that make you feel?



Activity

Our Most Important Things

When big, scary things happen, everything around us begins to change very quickly. You might even need to leave your house like Valeryi and Alexi did.

Questions to discuss:

- If you had a few minutes to gather your most important things to take with you, what would they be?
- If you have had to evacuate your home, what did you take with you, or what did you wish you had taken with you?
- How did it feel to have to decide quickly what things were the most important for you to take?
- Did someone help you during that time?

Option 1: Play a memory game!

1. Have everyone sit in a circle.
2. Take a few minutes to think about your most important things.
3. Someone starts by saying, “I am [name] . If we had to leave our house, I would take [thing] .” Fill in the blank with one of your most important things.
4. The next person in the circle says, “I am [name] . If we had to leave our house, [name] would take [thing] and I would take [thing] .” Fill in the first blanks from the person who just took their turn, and add one of your own most important things.

5. Every person around the circle must remember what each person's most important things are and then add their own.
6. Each person should add a new item. Try not to repeat items that have already been said.
7. Try adding hand motions as you go! For example, pretend to brush your teeth when you say, "my toothbrush." See if everyone can remember both the name of the item and the hand motion that goes with it.

Option 2: Write a list of your family members and each one's most important things. You could also use a separate piece of paper to draw this activity in pictures.

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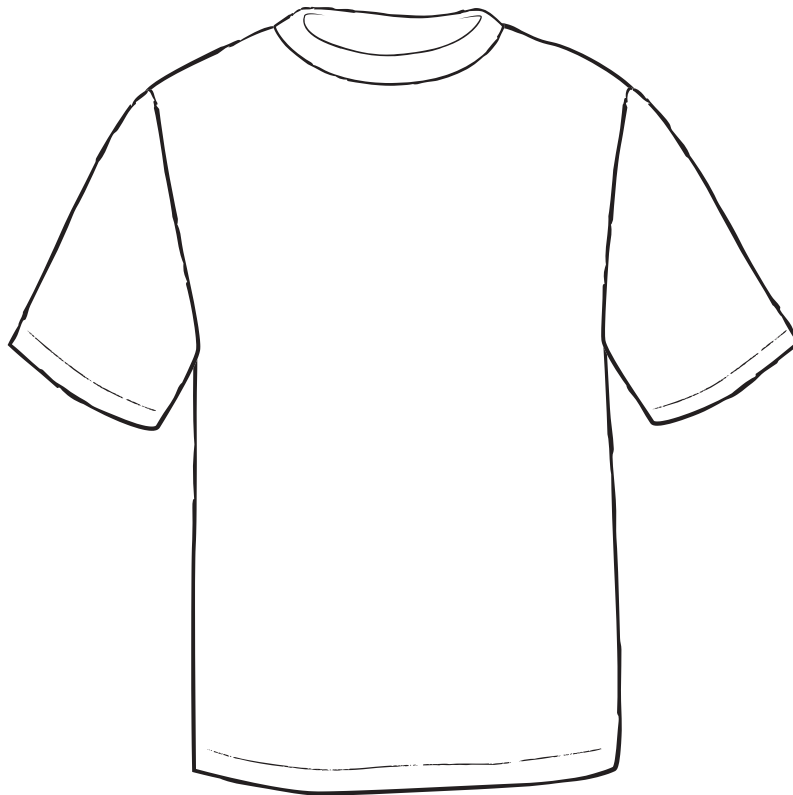


Activity

'God Is With Me' T-Shirt

Stop to think about how you have survived all that has happened to you. You have come through a lot of changes and probably through some difficult and even scary situations. All along, God has always been with you, even when it hasn't felt like it. Can you remember things that happened and people who were with you that helped you know that God was with you?

Design a t-shirt that lets people know that God is with you! Use crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor paints to create your design on the t-shirt below, or use the larger one on page 53, or use a separate piece of paper.





God's Promises God Sees Me

Have you ever made a promise to someone? Has anyone ever made a promise to you? We try very hard to keep our promises! Did you know that God *a/ways* keeps his promises? That's because God is perfect, full of truth and love.

In the Bible we can find more than eight thousand of God's promises to us! In each of our lessons in *God Is With Me*, we will learn one of God's important promises.

It is normal to feel afraid when scary things are happening. God knows when you are afraid. **He sees you!** The Bible says, "*The LORD watches over all who honor him and trust his kindness*" (Psalm 33:18). That's a promise!

Hagar was a personal maid that served the wife of a rich man named Abraham who lived thousands of years ago. Hagar made the man's wife very angry and so Hagar was afraid and ran away into the desert all alone. But the Bible tells us that the angel of God found her and comforted her. Then Hagar said, "You are the God who sees. I have seen him who looks after me!" (You can find the story in the Bible in Genesis 16:7-13.)

**When you are afraid, remember that God is always with you.
He sees you and he is watching over you.**



Let's Talk to God

"Thank you, God, for seeing me and watching over me.
When I am afraid, I will trust in your loving kindness.
Please help me to trust you more. Amen."





Why Am I Feeling This Way?

Feeling Scared

The train station was very crowded. Parents and children and strollers and suitcases, everyone bundled up against the cold, everyone waiting for the next train with worried faces. Many looked scared. Some had tears in their eyes.

“How will the train be able to carry so many people?” asked Alexi. “There’s no way we can all fit in!” A loud blast shook the ground.

“Alexi, stay close to your sister,” said Dad. “It would be easy to get separated. The train should be here very soon, but before it does, everyone come close. I would like to say a prayer for all of us before you go. This is very hard for our family, but always remember that God sees and hears us and will never leave us, no matter what happens. Remember also that I love you and will carry you in my heart every moment until we are together again.”

Valeryi began to cry as she hugged Dad. Alexi felt Dad’s arms reach around his shoulders and he decided to do his best to be brave.

Moments later, the sound of an approaching train caused people to start moving. As the train came to a stop and the doors opened, everyone began pressing forward. Mom grabbed Valeryi’s hand and Valeryi could feel Alexi’s hand on her shoulder. They stumbled up

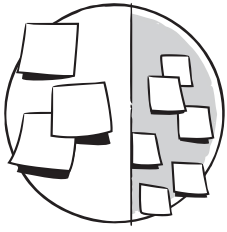
the steps to the train and quickly found two bench seats facing each other with their suitcase on the floor between them.

They looked out the window. Dad was there, standing tall and strong in his big black coat. Alexi was proud of him. Mom put her hand against the window and Valeryi saw the tears in her eyes. As the train began to move, they waved to Dad for as long as they could still see him.



Let's Talk About It

1. What are some of the reasons that made people in the train station feel scared and worried?
2. What did Dad do and say to help his family feel less scared?
3. Can you tell about a time when you were really scared? What did you do to calm your fear?



Activity

Don't Have, Do Have

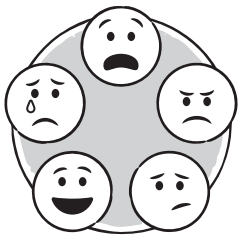
How is your life different now than it used to be before these hard times? Change can be hard, and many changes all at the same time can be very hard. It is normal to feel sad, worried, angry, or afraid when a lot of things change, and especially when they change for the worse.

Maybe these changes have made us lose things, relationships, or freedoms we were used to having before the crisis. It is good to talk about what we have lost and how we feel about that.

If you are unable to get sticky notes, or paper and tape, start this activity at number 6.

1. Give each member of the family a small stack of sticky notes (or small pieces of paper and tape).
2. On each sticky note, write one thing you like to do, something you enjoy having, or a person you love to be with (young children can draw pictures).
3. Find a window or a place on a wall that you can stick these notes to.
4. When everybody is finished, have each person share what they wrote on their sticky notes.
5. Now look at your notes and find any things you no longer have, can no longer do, and people you can no longer physically be with because of your current situation. Put those notes in a separate group on the window or wall. These are the things you have lost for now.

6. Give each person a chance to share the things they have lost. As you name each loss, share with your family how it makes you feel.
7. Finally, everyone should take a turn naming the things that they still have, the things they can still do, and people they love that they can still be with.



Activity

Naming Your Feelings

It is good to talk about how you felt when scary things were happening to you and your family, and how you feel now when you think about that time. Did you know there are no wrong feelings? God created everyone with the ability to feel different things at different times. Let's see how many of those feelings you can name.

1. Write these words that describe feelings on a large piece of paper: Angry, Disappointed, Sad, Frustrated, Worried, Lonely, Hopeful, Confused, Afraid, Happy, and Guilty. Leave space at the bottom for additional words.
2. Tape the paper on the wall or put it on a hard surface like a table or the floor.
3. Give each person a different colored marker, crayon, or colored pencil.
4. Make sure everyone knows what each of these feeling words means.

5. Each person should take a turn to go to the paper and draw a circle around the feeling word or words that best describes how they felt when big scary things were happening to them, or how they feel now when they remember what happened.
6. Write in additional feeling words as needed for anyone who names a feeling that is not already on the paper.

Questions to discuss:

- Did anyone name the same feelings as other members of your family?
- What were the most common feelings your family named?
- What are feelings that are normal for people going through hard times?
- Why do you think it helps to talk about your feelings?



Activity

Fight, Flight, or Freeze

Did you know that God made you with instincts? Your body is ready to respond quickly and automatically when stressful things happen to you, just like you pull your hand back fast when you touch something hot.

The strongest of these instincts is called the “Fight, Flight, or Freeze” response. As soon as our brain senses any danger that might threaten our survival, it tells our body to respond in one of these three ways.

Sometimes these reactions help us escape real danger, but sometimes our automatic reactions are too strong or don’t fit the situation. Also, when we’re using only our survival instinct, it can be hard to think well or make good decisions.

It can help to know how you respond to stress so you can recognize when it is happening and choose a better or more healthy response.

Here are some ways you can identify these three responses to stress:

FIGHT

- Raising your voice
- Arguing
- Kicking or screaming
- Tightening muscles
- Clenching fist

FLIGHT

- Running away
- Being restless
- Breathing rapidly
- Doing anything to get away
- Feeling trapped
- Pounding heart

FREEZE

- Holding your breath
- Feeling disconnected from feelings
- Unable to talk or make decisions
- Feeling like you can't move
- Daydreaming
- Feeling numb

Act it out!

1. Choose a body stance for each of these survival responses. For example, for “Fight,” stand with your fists in front of your face and clenched as though you’re ready to fight, and make an angry face. For “Flight,” stand with your fists clenched but in a running stance and make an afraid face. For “Freeze,” put both hands in front of you with palms out and make a shocked face.
2. Form a circle.
3. Practice the body responses to “Fight,” “Flight,” and “Freeze” by someone calling out these words and everyone performing the right body stance.

4. Have someone read the following short scenes that describe someone's response to a dangerous or uncomfortable situation they faced.
5. After each scene, each person should perform the "Fight," "Flight," or "Freeze" body stance that shows how the person in the story responded to danger, based on the description of the person's behavior.

Situation Stories

1. Mary must leave school early, but gets up from her desk too fast and her books fall all over the floor. The other children begin to laugh. She crouches down to pick them up, quickly stuffs them in her backpack and runs out the classroom door.
2. John is riding his bike down the street when a car comes from behind him and drives by close enough that he loses his balance and falls. He is not hurt, but he jumps up and screams at the driver.
3. Paul is walking home from school when he sees a group of bullies coming his way. He knows they will give him trouble, but he stops in his tracks and just stares at them, unable to move.
4. Jennifer is at the fair with her family but becomes separated from them. She sees a group of mean girls from school coming toward her. She quickly changes her direction and hides until they are gone.
5. The teacher calls on Peter to come to the board in front of the class to solve a math problem. He tries but is unable to do it. Instead of sitting down quietly, he says in a loud voice, "I don't care. I hate math anyway!"

Questions to discuss:

- Which of these three survival responses do you use when you're stressed? Which ones can you see in other people?
- Can you tell about a time when you felt in danger and you responded in one of these three ways?
- Why is it important for family members to know how each other usually responds to danger?
- What can we do to help each other calm down?



God's Promises God Hears Me

Did you know you can talk to God anytime, anywhere? He hears you!

In our story, what did Dad have the family do before the train arrived? Another word for talking to God is prayer. The Bible tells us that God says, *"When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond"* (Isaiah 58:9a). That's a promise!

The Bible has many stories about people praying to God for help and God helps them! Jesus is God's Son and came to earth as God in human form. When he was on earth, he lived in Israel. One day, a blind man named Bartimaeus heard he was coming to his village. As Jesus was passing by, Bartimaeus called out to Jesus, asking for him to restore his sight. Jesus healed him! (Read the whole story in Mark 10:46-52.)

Just like blind Bartimaeus, you can ask God for all that you need.

When you are afraid, remember that God is with you. He hears you and answers your prayers.



Let's Talk to God

"Thank you, God, for hearing me when I pray. Help me to remember to call on you when I am afraid. Amen."

Draw a picture of a time you felt in danger.
When you are finished, can you tell the story to someone you trust?

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed border, intended for a drawing. It occupies the central portion of the page.





What Can I Do to Feel Better?

What's Next?

The train rumbled along, picking up speed as it moved west. Soon Valeryi and Alexi began to feel very tired, and even though they were thinking about so many things they finally fell asleep.

It seemed only a short time later when Mom was patting their knees saying, “Wake up, you two. We’re almost there. We need to eat something before we get off the train. I don’t know how long it will be before we get to Aunt Olya’s house.”

Valeryi and Alexi rubbed their eyes and sat up straight, surprised that they had fallen asleep. Mom was holding out two small sandwiches and a bottle of water. “We’ll have to share the water,” she said.

Soon the train came to a stop. They grabbed their backpacks and the suitcase and the food bag and made their way down the steps onto the platform. It was noisy and crowded—tired babies crying, adults pushing and pulling their children and belongings.

“Come, children,” said Mom. “We will need to walk to Aunt Olya’s house.”

The street was crowded too. As they came out of the train station, they noticed a mom with two small children struggling to push a stroller and pull a suitcase behind her.

“May we help you?” asked Mom.

The lady looked surprised but nodded her head. “Oh, thank you so much!”

Alexi took the lady’s suitcase handle while Mom grabbed the small hand of one of the children and Valeryi held onto the hand of the other. It felt good to help them.

As they walked down the street, Mom discovered that the lady was going to a shelter not far away. They could see people standing in long lines waiting to enter the building. “We’ll stay with you until you’re inside and settled,” said Mom to the tired lady.

The lady lifted her fussy baby out of the stroller. “I do not know how I would have managed if you had not come along to help,” she said gratefully.

“These days we all need each other more than ever before,” said Mom. “I have some energy bars and another bottle of water in my bag that I’m happy to share with you.”

When they finally left the shelter and the lady behind, they set off toward Aunt Olya’s building. “I wonder what Dad’s doing right now,” Alexi said softly. “I hope he’s okay.”

“Every time you think of Dad, turn your thoughts into prayers for his safety and good health,” said Mom. “Turning my worries into prayers always helps me feel better.”



Let's Talk About It

1. Why were Alexi and Valeryi surprised that they feel asleep on the train?
2. What were some of their worries when they got off the train?
3. Why did it feel good to help the lady with the children?
4. Can you tell about a time when your family comforted each other during a hard situation?



Activity

Telling My Story

A good way to help you feel better is to tell your own story about what happened to you. Telling your story to someone or a group of people you trust will help you heal from pain inside you that might still be there because of what you have been through.

Sometimes it is hard to talk about those things because you may have big feelings about them, or it is a complicated story with lots of details. One way to make your story easier to tell is by dividing it into three parts. We can do this by answering three important questions:

1. What happened?
2. How did it make you feel?
3. What was the hardest part?

Use the three spaces on the next page (or use the space on page 25 or on a separate piece of paper) to answer these questions. You can write your story in words or draw it in pictures. When you are finished, you may want to talk about it with someone you trust.

Every member of the family should write or draw their own story. You might be surprised to see that even though you all went through the same scary thing, you have very different memories and feelings about it. Do not force anyone to share their story; instead, gently invite them to do so if they want to.

It helps to hear each other's story.

What happened?

How did it make you feel?

What was the hardest part?



Activity

The Worry Box

Most people feel anxious about things they can't control and things they are afraid may happen in the future. It helps to talk about our worries with each other.

1. Find a box or large jar.
2. Family members should sit around a table if possible.
3. Each member of the family should say one or more things they feel worried about.
4. Put a stack of small pieces of paper or notecards in the middle of the table.
5. Everyone should write one thing that they are worried about on each piece of paper (young children can draw a picture) and put papers in the box (or jar).
6. Set the box aside. Assure children that you will do something with these worries in the next lesson.
7. Remind everyone that they can always add more worries to the box anytime they feel like it. Put paper and a pencil next to the box wherever you decide to place it.



Activity

How Can I Help?

It helps us feel better when we find ways to help someone else. There is always something you can do for a friend, family member, or neighbor that will encourage them and help them feel less alone. What can you do?

Here are some ideas. What other ideas can you add?

- Offer to play with your neighbor's younger children
- Offer to walk or play with your neighbor's dog
- Read a book to someone
- Sing a song to someone
- Teach someone something new
- Help distribute food and water if you can
- Offer to help with your family's chores
- Write an encouraging note, draw a picture, or record a video message for someone
- If you have siblings or friends, perform a play for others, or write a poem or story
- Sit with someone who is not feeling well and keep them company
- Lead your family and friends in doing exercises

Decide which of these ideas—or other ideas of your own—that you can do. Write each of them on a piece of paper and put the papers in a box, basket, or jar. Do one right now! Then, challenge each other to pull a paper once a week to see how many acts of kindness your family can contribute to others!



God's Promises God Knows Me

Did you know that God knows everything about you? He even knew you before you were born! King David wrote a song about this in the Bible—Psalm 139. Here is some of his song:

You have looked deep into my heart, LORD,
and you know all about me.

You know when I am resting or when I am working,
and from heaven you discover my thoughts.

You notice everything I do
and everywhere I go.

Before I even speak a word, you know what I will say, and
with your powerful arm you protect me from every side.

The Bible says, “*The person who loves God is known by him*”
(1 Corinthians 8:3 GNT). That’s a promise!

Because God is so good, we can trust him to know us and love us completely, no matter what! He knows we are not perfect; he forgives us when we do wrong, he is happy when good things happen to us, and he is sad when we are hurt. The Bible tells us all these things and much more about God.

When you are afraid, remember that God knows you and is with you and understands how you are feeling.



Let's Talk to God

“Thank you, dear God, for knowing and loving me completely. Help me to trust you with my whole life. Be near me, I pray. Amen.”





Is God Still With Us?

So Many Changes

Soon they were at Aunt Olya's building. They climbed the stairs to the third floor, pulling the suitcase slowly behind them. Her door was easy to find because she had painted it with brightly colored flowers and ferns, making the drab hallway more cheerful.

"Come in, come in!" exclaimed Aunt Olya as she opened the door. "I am so glad to see you! I know you must be exhausted and hungry. That is quite a walk from the train station." The flat smelled of fresh bread and delicious stew.

Soon they were seated around Aunt Olya's small kitchen table. "Thank you, dear sister, for taking us in," said Mom. "We were not expecting such terrible things to happen to our country, but here we are. And we do not know what the future holds."

Valeryi looked around the small flat. Where would she sleep? It was a safe place to be, and Aunt Olya was such a kind person, but Valeryi did not feel at peace. Everything had changed! She wished this nightmare was over and she was back in her own bed.

They sat at the table talking for a long time. Aunt Olya wanted to know all about their lives before the horrible explosions started in their city. As they answered her questions, both Valeryi and Alexi felt

like they were talking about things that happened a long time ago, not just last week! Everything was so different now.

As she listened to Mom talk about the invaders and Dad needing to stay at home to fight for his country, a tear slipped out of Valeryi's eye and slid down her cheek. She put her head down on her arms.

She missed Dad so much already and it had only been one day. How long would it be until she saw him again? How were they going to live in this new place? Would she be able to go to school? Would she find any friends here?

Her head was filled with questions and her heart felt heavy. "Valeryi, I can see that you are feeling very sad right now," said Mom quietly, reaching for her hand. "This is a hard time for us, isn't it? Let's always remember the last words Dad said to us when we got on the train. He said, *'This is very hard for our family, but always remember that God sees and hears us and will never leave us, no matter what happens. Remember also that I love you and will carry you in my heart every moment until we are together again.'*"



Let's Talk About It

1. What were some things that Valeryi and Alexi noticed that made them feel welcome at Aunt Olya's home?
2. Why did it feel as though they were talking about a long time ago when they were telling Aunt Olya about their lives just last week?
3. What were some of the sudden changes that had taken place in Alexi and Valeryi's lives?
4. Can you tell about a time that you and your family were overwhelmed with many problems at the same time? What was helpful for you then?



Activity

Peace, Be Still

The Bible tells us that Jesus is God's Son. When he came to live among us, Jesus looked like an ordinary person. Even his closest friends and followers at first thought he was only another man. In this story, they begin to realize he is much more than that. Let's find out what Jesus did in a scary situation when everyone around him was worried and afraid.

Read the story below (and see the coloring sheet on page 48). It is from the Gospel of Mark in the Bible. Just before this story, Jesus had been teaching huge crowds of people all day long, and he was exhausted.

And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Mark 4:36-41 NRSV

Talking Points

- The Bible teaches that Jesus is both man and God. As a man he was tired, but as God he has power over the wind and the waves (Psalm 104:5-7; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).
- Jesus's friends were in awe after the storm because they realized how powerful Jesus is. They didn't understand yet that Jesus was God with them.
- Whenever we're afraid, we can call on Jesus to help us.
- God is with us right now.

Act It Out!

This is a fun story to act out. Using your imagination and your bodies to act out this story can help you understand it in a deeper way.

Get the whole family involved. Don't forget to add sound effects! Find props for the boat and the cushion, and costumes for the friends, the wind, and so forth. Decide who will play these roles:

- Narrator
- Jesus
- Friends of Jesus
- Wind and waves (optional)

Someone could be the director, while someone else can create a video using their phone. Everyone says their own lines and the narrator reads the rest of the story from Mark 4:36-41.



Let's Talk About It

Ask these questions to the people who played each part.

“Friends”: How did you feel ...

1. when the wind blew hard and the waves came breaking into the boat?
2. when you found Jesus asleep in the back of the boat?
3. when Jesus commanded the wind to be quiet?
4. when he asked you why you were afraid?

“Wind”: How did you feel when Jesus rebuked you?

“Waves”: How did you feel when Jesus told you to be still?

“Jesus”: How did you feel ...

1. when the disciples woke you up?
2. when you saw the problem?
3. when the waves calmed?

All: Did you realize anything new about this story when you were acting it out?



Activity

Give Your Worries to God

Set up a small cross in a convenient place where your family can sit around it. Place the Worry Box in front of the cross. Decide which adult or older teen will be the leader of this activity.

Ask, “Why do you think we put our Worry Box by the cross?” When everyone has had a chance to answer, read the following verse.

The Bible says, “*Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*” (1 Peter 5:7 NLT).


Now read the following, or express these ideas in your own words:

“This cross is a symbol of God’s love for us. God sent his Son Jesus into the world to heal us in every way: our bodies, our minds, and our souls. Jesus is in heaven even now, praying for us!”

“We can bring all our worries to God. He has told us not to worry, and yet he knows how hard it is for us. We will keep our Worry Box as long as we need to. You can add your worries to it anytime you want. And we can keep giving them to God, even if it is many times a day. He is always ready to hear us.”

“Just as Jesus was in the boat with his friends during a scary time, Jesus is and will be here with us during these difficult times. These are his words in our situation, too: Peace! Be still!”

“What other things might God be saying to us?” Let family members answer. Then read one or more of these Bible verses:

 Be still, and know that I am God!
Psalm 46:10 NRSV

Don't be afraid ... Take courage! I am here!
Mark 6:50b NLT

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.
John 14:27 NRSV

I will never leave you or forsake you.
Hebrews 13:5b NRSV

“Let's ask God to help us let go of our worries as we give them to him.” Pray a simple prayer with your family as you give your worries to God and ask for his comforting presence with you during this difficult time. (For example, “God, we give you all our worries. Please give us your peace. Amen.”)



God's Promises God Loves Me

Can you think of someone that you love very much? What are some of your feelings about that person?

- You don't want anything bad to happen to them
- You love spending time with them
- You feel happy when you are with them
- You want to do things for them

That is how God feels about you! He created you. God loves his creation and is sad when his creatures are hurt or destroyed. When bad things happen to us, it can be hard to believe that God still loves us. But we can trust that the words of the Bible are true.

The Bible tells us, *"God our Father loves us. He is kind and has given us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope"* (2 Thessalonians 2:16a). In fact, the Bible tells us that *"God IS love"* (1 John 4:16).

When Jesus was on earth he had a special group of friends called his disciples. One day he said to them, *"I love you just as the Father loves me"* (John 15:9a GNT). That's a promise! Jesus says the same thing to you today.

When you are afraid, remember that God loves you and will always be with you.



Let's Talk to God

“Thank you, dear God, for loving and caring for us no matter what happens. Help us to live in your love in such a way that we can love and care for others. Amen.”

GOD'S PROMISES



GOD SEES ME

But the LORD watches over all who honor him and trust his kindness.

PSALM 33:18 CEV

GOD HEARS ME

"When you pray, I will answer you."

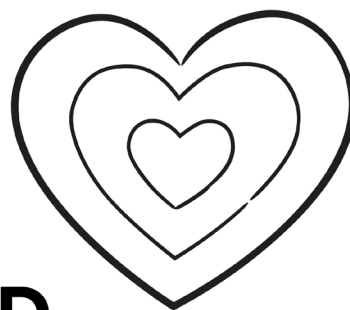
ISAIAH 58:9 GNT



GOD KNOWS ME

The person who loves God is known by him

1 CORINTHIANS 8:3 GNT

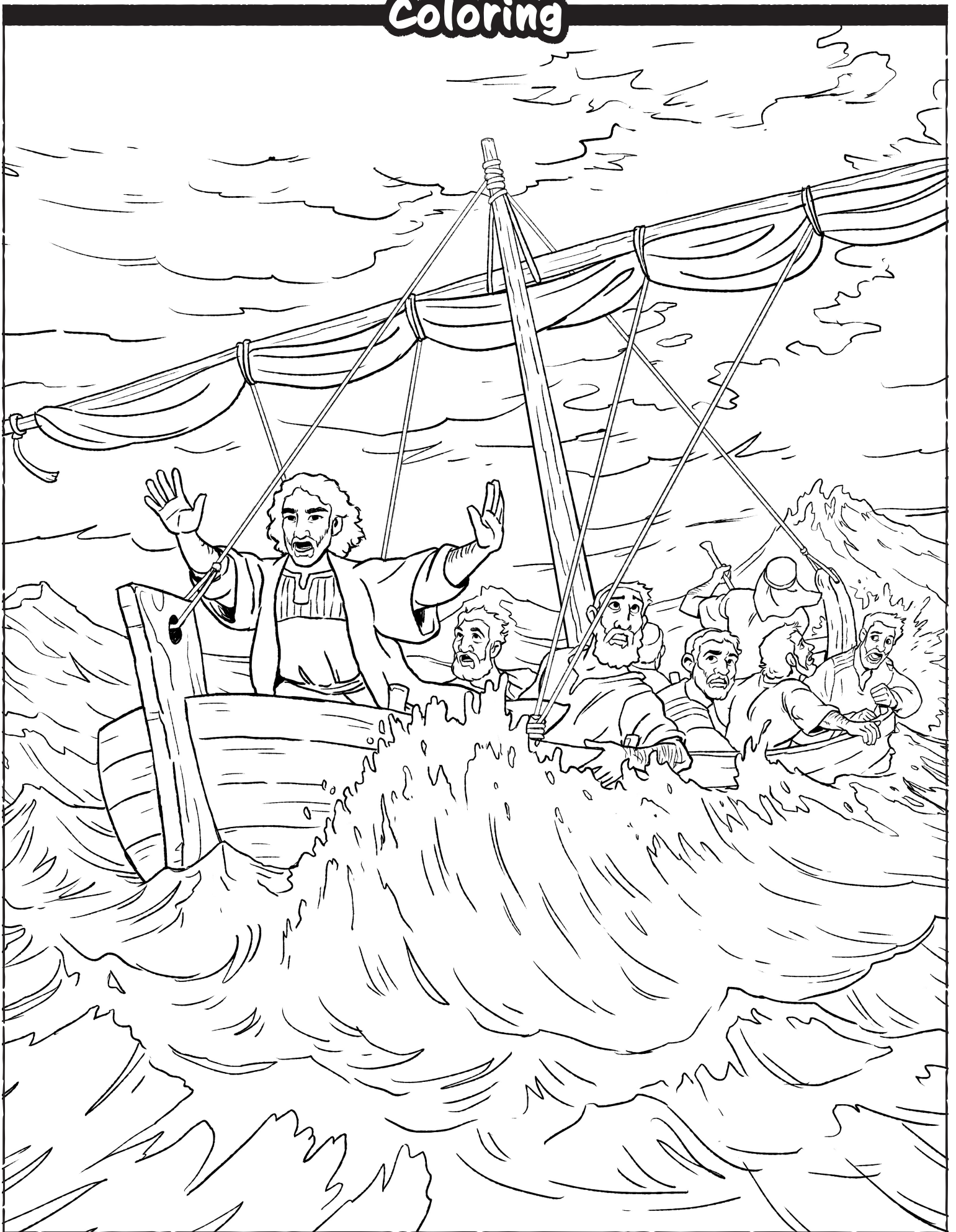


GOD LOVES ME

God our Father loves us. He is kind and has given us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:16a CEV

Coloring



Tips for Parents & Caregivers

Your children have survived a big, scary event, and it is likely that they are experiencing many different emotions because of it. Fear, anxiety, depression, anger, and other feelings combine to create inner insecurity and outward behavior that can be difficult for them and for you.

Here are some insights and suggestions that may be helpful during this troubling time.

- Children are affected by trauma as much as adults, but they may show it differently. Small children may not have words to describe how they feel and may go back to behaviors they grew out of long ago, like bed-wetting or thumb-sucking. They may be fearful and clingy. They need to be comforted.
- Traumatized children often exhibit troublesome behavior that is difficult for caregivers who are also overwhelmed by their own pain. Irritability, aggression, crying, nightmares, and so on are normal and temporary responses to trauma.
- Remember that children take emotional cues from the adults around them. When you take good care of yourself and remain calm and positive, your children will find it easier to do the same.
- Re-establish routines for your children as quickly as possible to reduce the feeling of chaos caused by the disaster.
- Sometimes children mistakenly connect unrelated events to their own behavior and then feel that they caused a bad experience for others. Assure children that the disaster is not their fault.
- Children need to know that they are not alone. Try to maintain connections with friends and family members outside of your household who know and love your children.

- Restore a sense of control and order by finding ways for children to participate in your family's progress toward normal. Give children small responsibilities and tasks that help the entire family.
- Be cautious about the media your children are exposed to. Restrict their exposure to television and radio news that may re-traumatize them and increase their feeling of being unsafe. If they are exposed to troubling media reports, help them interpret what they are seeing or hearing and help them express their feelings about it.
- Structured activities can help children feel safe. Begin or build up family prayer times in the morning and evening; consider a time for Bible reading and reading stories together.
- When you are able to return to more normal family living, create an emergency supply kit and a plan for your family to follow in case you are faced with a disaster in the future. Having these provisions will help to re-establish a feeling of safety and security for your children.

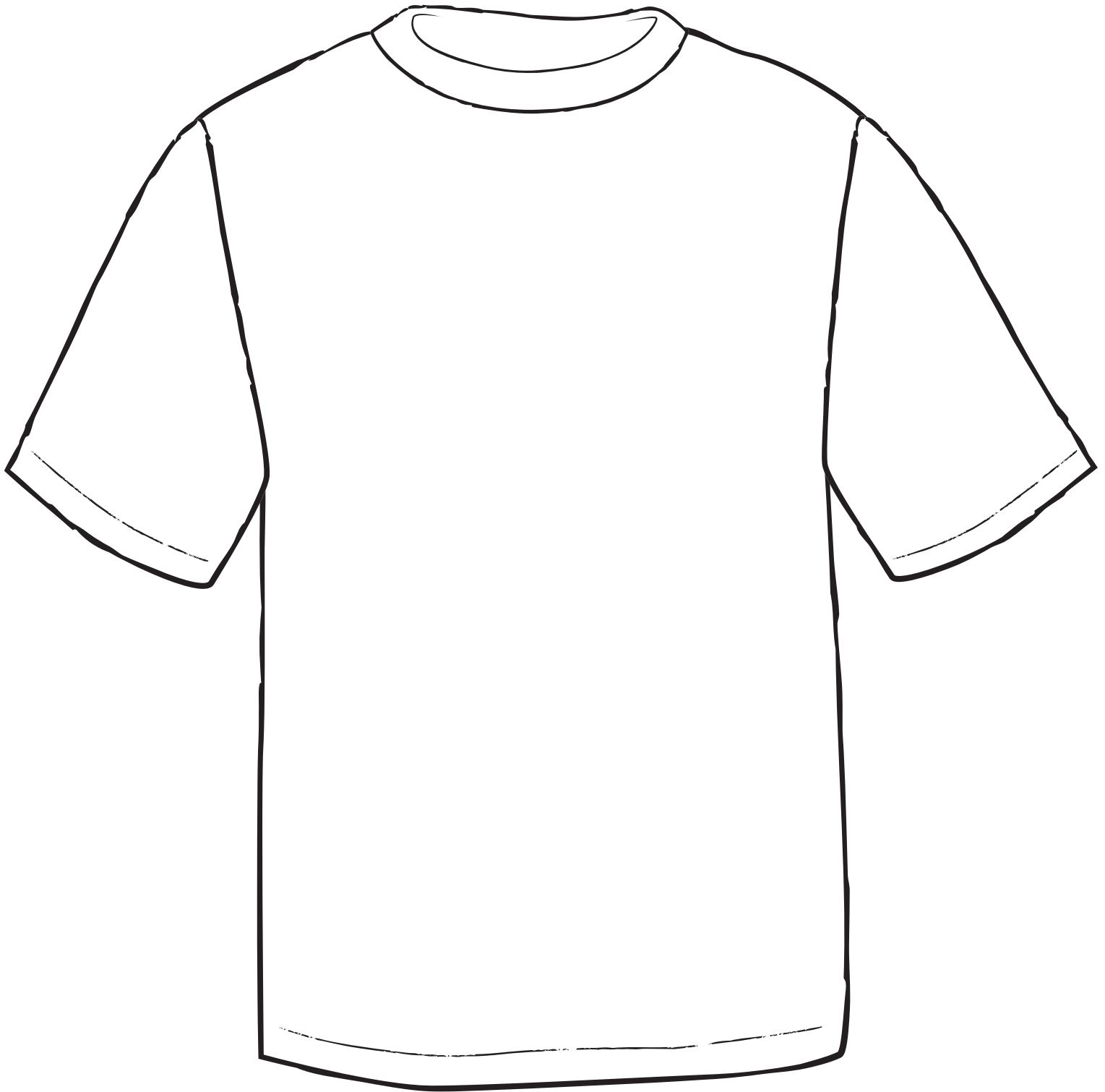
EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Perhaps you had an emergency supplies kit ready to go when you had to leave your home, but many people do not. Here is a list of supplies you might consider gathering now, or once your lives stabilize. Some of these items may not be available now, but even having an idea of things to gather and set aside can give your family some measure of order and security. Check expiration dates on food and medicine and keep those items fresh.

- ☐ Water (1 gallon/4 liters per person per day, for 3 days)
- ☐ Canned food
- ☐ Can opener
- ☐ Basic medicines
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Batteries
- ☐ Matches (place in waterproof container)
- ☐ Whistle (to alert emergency responders)
- ☐ Blankets
- ☐ Extra change of clothes for each person (diapers if you have a baby)
- ☐ Rain protection
- ☐ Toiletries (toilet paper, soap, hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, toothpaste)
- ☐ Basic tools (hammer, screwdrivers, pliers, wrench)
- ☐ Pocket knife
- ☐ Copies of important documents (identification cards, insurance cards, birth certificates)
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers
- ☐ Paper & pen
- ☐ Backpacks to carry everything in (one per family member able to do so)

- If possible, place everything in a waterproof container and store your kit in a cool, dry location.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows where it is.
- You may want to add a few small toys or books to entertain and comfort children.
- Remember to rotate food and water in your emergency kit every six months, check batteries and medication for expiration dates, and change out the children's clothes to accommodate their growth.
- Consider making an evacuation plan. What will you take? Where will you go? How will you find each other if you are separated? Make sure each member of the family is familiar with the plan; practice it together to make sure.

'God Is With Me' T-Shirt





**Trauma Healing
Institute**

God's Word Restoring Lives