

SECTION
3.4

Sin and Suffering



Introduction Activity (5 Minutes)

Option 1: Sin and Suffering Skit

What You'll Need: Dishware object that can be broken (like a cheap mug or cup from a thrift store), hammer

ACTIVITY PREP: Clear an area to break the object and put down something underneath if necessary.

STEP 1: Show the kids the object, and explain that God had created a perfect world, and operated in perfect relationship with mankind, until the fall, when it was broken. Adam and Eve's sin still affects all people and the world today.

STEP 2: Take out the object, and place in in the spot where you can safely break it, and smash it with the hammer. Explain that just how the object is not the same after it's been broken, neither was mankind.

STEP 3: Transition into the main lesson by opening in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you and your kids understand why there is sin and suffering in the world.

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Introduction Activity (5 Minutes)

Option 2: In the News

What You'll Need: Newspaper, smartphone, tablet with Internet or computer and printer

PREP: Before club, locate two or three current events stories that have to do with suffering, sickness, or the effects of sin. (Make sure they are appropriate for your age group.) Print them out if they are on the computer.

STEP 1: Summarize the three articles to your students, and then discuss the following questions:

- How do you feel when something is wrong and you are helpless to do anything about it?
- Why does it hurt to think of others who are suffering?
- Why is it hard to find joy in the midst of suffering?

STEP 2: Discuss key concepts:

- God created a perfect earth.
- Sin and suffering came after Adam and Eve chose to sin.
- Their sin and suffering affects the world and everyone in it to this day.

STEP 3: Transition into the main lesson by opening in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you and your kids understand why there is sin and suffering in the world.

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Main Lesson Activity (10 Minutes)

Option 1: Kid Problems

What You'll Need: Balloons (10 or more), large garbage bag

PREP: Blow up the balloons and put them in the garbage bag so that they are contained and don't pop.

STEP 1: Ask for a volunteer to stand in the front of your space. Explain that today you will be talking about sin and suffering, and how as kids they have to deal with those things too. Point to the kid in the middle and say, "This volunteer is going to be an example of what it can feel like when we face difficult things."

STEP 2: Brainstorm about situations or circumstances where kids their age might face suffering or struggles, and as they come up with ideas, throw (gently) one balloon at the kid in the middle for every idea suggested. The amount of balloons should seem overwhelming.

STEP 3: Share these key concepts:

- Sometimes wrong things happen and you can feel helpless to do anything about it.
- Sometimes it hurts to think of others who are suffering.
- Sometimes it is hard to find joy in the middle of suffering.
- One of the greatest consequences for Adam and Eve was a broken relationship with God. They would no longer have a perfect connection with Him in the garden (Genesis 3:22-24). The second consequence was death. Their bodies would grow old and they would eventually die (Genesis 3:19).
- Their sin affects us still. We are all born sinners (Romans 5:12), and we face sickness, hunger, and pain. But we are not alone. We can have hope in our struggles, knowing that if we trust in Jesus as our Savior, we can know God will make things right (Romans 4:3-5, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

STEP 4: Share that even though there are times we will suffer because of sin. We can have hope. Read the following verses and ask this question after each verse is read: "Based on this verse, how can we have hope even when we see sin and suffering?" As the kids answer, take a balloon and let your volunteer smack it away (aim so no one is hit).

Verses to read:

- Romans 8:18
- James 1:2-3
- 1 Peter 5:10

STEP 5: Share key concepts:

- God is with us if we have trusted Him as our Savior. He promises to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).
- God will one day make all things right (Revelation 21:1-4).

Close in prayer, thanking God that even though there is sin and suffering in the world, He is always with us.

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Main Lesson Activity (10 Minutes)

Option 2: Hope in Troubled Times

What You'll Need: Bibles, Hope in Troubled Times Handout, string, scissors, tape

PREP: Print and cut apart the handout. Cut six long pieces of string, and tape a slip of paper onto each of the strings. Hide the slips under things or off to the side of your space, so that the strings are visible.

STEP 1: Explain that you need six volunteers to each come up to the front and think of a scenario where someone their age might have struggles or suffer (e.g., sick friend or family member, bullying, parents who fight, parent losing a job). Once they each come up with something, have them pick the end of a string and hold onto it.

STEP 2: Once all six have shared a scenario, have them follow their string to find the verse reference that could give them hope in troubled times. When they find it, they need to look it up in their Bible and share it with the group. They can share how this verse could give them hope, or you could ask the group to come up with ways it could.

Verses on the paper slips:

- James 1:2-3
- 2 Corinthians 4:17-18
- 1 Peter 5:10
- Romans 4:3-5
- Romans 8:18
- John 16:33

STEP 3: Share the concepts from the Main Lesson Teaching Outline in the Large Group Guide, and follow up with the Lesson Application questions and Sum It Up statements.

Notes:



Hope In Troubled Times Handout

James 1:2-3

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

1 Peter 5:10

Romans 4:3-5

Romans 8:18

John 16:33