

THEME: Don't Be Afraid

LOOKING BACK

- What was the most important thing you did or heard from the last session?

CONNECT

Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

Resources

Bibles, slips of paper, pen, basket of assorted props

Icebreaker Activity - Emotion Charades

Aim: To help us know if peoples' hearts are troubled.

Things to Prepare: Enough slips of paper for each group as follows: prepare slips of paper with emotions and numbers on them. Have one slip of paper for each group member (e.g., #1 Happy, #2 Angry, #3 Excited, #4 Sad, #5 Afraid). You may have more than five papers, depending on the number of people. Make "Afraid" the last numbered slip.

Activity: Have each person choose a slip of paper randomly. (If doing this session online, you can get them to select a random number related to the emotions and send them the emotion via private chat.) Ask them not to share what is on the paper. They will take turns, in number order, to act out the emotion on their paper. They may choose one prop from the prop basket to use in their charade. For example, if they are happy, they could select an object and act out being happy about finding it. Others try to guess what the emotion is.

Discuss

- We will focus on the emotion of fear today. How did you know that he/she (the one in the charade) was afraid? What were the signs that you noticed? Facial expression, body language, sounds they made, their breathing, etc.
- Think of a time that you were afraid. How did it feel? Scary, heart beating fast, worried, panicked, etc.
- Share your memories and thoughts with the group. If you have a larger group, get them to share in one sentence, examples: My mom was sick, the lights went out and all was dark, etc.
- We have practiced noticing when others are troubled. What about yourself? Can you recognize the early signs of being afraid, even before others can notice that you are scared? What will you watch for? Negative thoughts and feelings of worry, unable to think about anything else, etc.
- Do you know what Jesus says about being afraid? We will look at this today.

TRUTH TO KNOW

Faith Focus: We Must Not Allow Our Hearts to Be Troubled

Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth and will do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So we will open the Bible and read the Truth each time we meet. This week's "Truth to know" is found in **John 14**.

Did you know the Bible tells us not to allow our hearts to be troubled?

Background to This Bible Passage

Jesus was with His disciples in Jerusalem. They were in a place called "The Upper Room," and Jesus had celebrated the Passover meal with them there. Jesus had also just told them that he would soon be going away. The disciples were starting to feel troubled.

The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **John 14:1-6**.

Jesus begins by telling His disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Jesus reminds them that it's up to them not to let their hearts be troubled by the circumstances around them.

Jesus' disciples were troubled because He was going away. Jesus explained that He would be going to His Father's house to prepare a place for His disciples. Jesus is there now, in Heaven, doing this.

Jesus told His disciples to believe in Him, just as they also believe in God. Having faith in Jesus and who He is and in His promises is very helpful for not being afraid.

Jesus comforted His disciples by telling them that He is coming back. This is good news. We, too, can be comforted by knowing that Jesus is coming back to the earth one day. He will return as a King and a Warrior! We should be ready for His return. One way we can be ready is to learn how not to let our hearts be troubled.

- Why is it important not to be afraid? Things on the earth will become more difficult as the day of Jesus' return draws near, so we need to learn now how not to be afraid.

We looked at **John 14:1-6**. Let's look at **John 14:27**. Jesus commands His disciples once again not to let their hearts be troubled. He repeats His command from **John 14:1** and adds on something afterward.

- Can you see that Jesus has added something to verse 27 that wasn't there in verse 1? *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you ... Do not be afraid.*
- Notice that Jesus gives them something. What does He give them? *Jesus gives them (and us) His peace.*

This is something very special and powerful: the peace of Christ. We can have and hold onto the peace of Jesus today and every day until He returns. The peace from Jesus anchors us in times of trouble and helps us have hope.

Don't Be Afraid

Before we can anchor ourselves in the peace from Jesus, we need to be able to recognize our feelings of fear, capture our negative thoughts, and bring them to Jesus.

Activity Suggestion - Take Negative Thoughts Captive!

Aim: To practice taking our negative thoughts captive, giving them to God, and asking Him for positive thoughts to focus on.

Things to Prepare: a cross, several thought-bubble papers (these are cloud-shaped papers that represent thought bubbles) – have one ready for each child, Bible verse cards – one for each child (these can include **1 John 4:18, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 41:13, Romans 8:15, John 16:33, Psalms 46:1, Psalms 50:15, Psalms 59:16, John 14:27**).

Activity: I/We will give each of you a thought-bubble paper representing a negative thought that just popped into your head. And it's causing fear! Oh no! Jesus told us not to let our hearts get troubled. The Bible says in **2 Corinthians 10:5** to "take every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ." So, we will practice doing this with these imaginary negative thoughts. We will take our negative thoughts captive! What might that look like? Let's act it out! Capture your thought and bring it to a place in front of the cross. Tell Jesus that you are afraid but are giving that negative thought to Him. Give your thought to Jesus by placing it before the cross. Ask Jesus to help you focus on good thoughts. Then, receive His peace by taking a Promise Card (from the list of cards) back to your seat.

Discuss

- How did it feel to take a negative thought captive? *It felt good because I could give it up to Jesus. I didn't have to keep holding on to that thought.*
- Jesus tells us not to let our hearts get troubled. He wants us to take charge of our thoughts, get rid of negative ones, and focus on good ones. Get into a group of 2-3 people and take turns reading your Promise Cards out loud to each other. Discuss these two questions:
 - What does the verse promise?
 - How does this bring peace?
- Reminding ourselves of God's promises to us is a powerful way not to let our hearts be troubled. What were some of the promises you saw on your cards? (Have 2 or 3 kids share their promises with the bigger group.)
- Besides taking thoughts captive and focusing on God's promises, what is another way that we can choose not to be afraid? *We can pray and talk to God about how we are feeling. God wants us to stay close to Him and always tell Him when we are feeling afraid. In fact, we just did this when we took our negative thoughts to the cross. Praying is talking to God.*
- We can also ask someone else to pray for us. Think about who you might ask to pray for you and raise your hand when you have thought of someone to ask. When most hands are up, ask them to put them down.

Singing to God is another powerful way not to be afraid. Worshipping God pushes away our fears and helps us focus on who Jesus is. Did you notice what Jesus said about Himself in our Bible passage today? He said He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Focusing on Jesus is a good way to get rid of fear. Remember that when Jesus returns, He will be a Warrior and King. He will rescue His people from bad things happening to them.

READY TO GO

Thinking about how this affects our lives and our response to the signs we see.

Think about what you can do not to let your heart be troubled.

TIME FOR ACTION



1. **"STOP & THINK" Action Point**

Take two minutes to think about your own life. Is there something that might be causing you to feel afraid right now? What is it, and why do you think it troubles you?



2. **"PAUSE TO PRAY" Action Point**

Have a conversation with God about today's session. If something is troubling you now, talk to God about it and ask Him for His peace. If something is not troubling you now, pray for someone else you think may be troubled.



3. **"GO & DO" Action Point**

Write your name on the top of your Promise Card. Keep it in your Bible, and the next time you feel troubled, take this card out and read the promise out loud, remembering what God promised you.

SPRINGBOARD

Discuss what topic you would like to do together next time. After this session, you may wish to follow up next time with one of the following sessions:

- Don't Believe People Claiming to Bring Peace
- Focus on the Cross
- Stand Firm

FOR DEEPER STUDY

For those who would like to study further the themes raised in this session.

For Study

1. In **Matthew 8:23-27**, a storm suddenly appeared, and the disciples were terrified. What had they forgotten? Sometimes, Jesus will calm the storms in our lives, and sometimes, He will allow them to give us the strength and peace we need to get through them. The main thing is that He is with us and will always be with us. How can you remember this the next time you experience a storm in your life?
2. In **Proverbs 4:23** (NIV), King Solomon writes, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." What do you think it means to guard one's heart? How does being afraid affect our hearts?

For Memorizing

1. **Psalm 119:11** (NIV): "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." The word "hidden" here means to hide away God's words as if they were treasure! How might this help us not to be afraid?
2. **Philippians 4:4-6** (NIV): "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

For Observation

1. Go to visit a prayer house or visit one online (for example, International House of Prayer, <https://www.ihopkc.org/prayerroom/>) and join along with the worship. Notice how your thoughts and emotions change as you worship God. Observe yourself for how worshipping along with others helps us to experience peace & joy.
2. Have a look at this [article](https://www.christianity.com/wiki/god/what-is-the-fear-of-the-lord.html) about "the fear of the Lord." What does it mean to "fear God?" How is this type of fear different from being fearful of circumstances? (<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/god/what-is-the-fear-of-the-lord.html>)

For Action

1. Adults sometimes find strategies to lessen fear, things like not watching the news before bedtime. What is one thing that you could do to guard your heart? Tell someone your plan.

Before the Next IN:Tribe

1. Worship is powerful. Sometimes, when fear comes, it can be helpful to already have a worship song chosen so that you can go to it quickly. Choose your own "go-to" worship song and share it at the next IN: Tribe meeting.
2. Choose one promise from these Bible verses. Shorten it to a few key words or a phrase that you might put on a t-shirt. Design your t-shirt on an A4 or letter-size paper and bring it to the next IN:Tribe meeting to share.
 - a. **1 John 4:18**
 - b. **2 Corinthians 10:5**
 - c. **Isaiah 41:10**
 - d. **John 16:33**
 - e. **Psalm 46:1**
 - f. **Psalm 50:15**
 - g. **Psalm 59:1**