

God Comforts Me

Quarter 4 • Lesson 8

Focus on Character Development

1. *Connecting:* Play a game about different emotions.
2. *Teaching:* Learn about God's comfort and hear about the hard things Paul experienced (Acts 19:23–41; 2 Corinthians 1:1–11).
3. *Responding:* Identify difficult areas in life that God might use to comfort and help others.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- *The Action Bible*, pages 723–726
- Student Pages
- Pencils

Teacher Devotion

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.
He has made everything beautiful in its time.
Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4, 8, 11*

Seasons of tears, seasons of joy. Seasons of worry, seasons of peace. Most of us have experienced times when a season of grief seems as though it will never end. Or perhaps you have known a season with so much joy that you feel as though you could not contain any more. God makes all things beautiful in His time.

Have you considered that He who formed the earth with its seasons has also fashioned seasons in your life? His Word says that there are times and seasons we all walk through in this life. Times we will dance and laugh and times we will weep. Think of the emotions you have experienced in different seasons. Did you go to the Lord with those emotions, especially in the hard times? He is ready to comfort us in all that we walk through. Pray for your students to learn in this lesson that the God of all comfort wants to comfort them!

Family Connection: Families may not know how to comfort a child going through emotional stress. Encourage your children to ask those in their families about a time they experienced a hard thing. They can then ask them to share ways that others may have helped them through it.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Play a game about different emotions.

Welcome the children to class. As they enter, ask them 1 emotion they felt strongly this past week.

Remember that emotions are not good or bad. How we act on them can sometimes be wrong and sometimes be right. But emotions just tell us how we are feeling. God gave us our emotions.

We are going to talk more about emotions today. Everyone line up. I will lead our group on a walking emotion game. As I walk, I will call out an emotion. Whatever emotion I say, you should walk in a way that expresses that emotion. For example, if I say, "Anger," I might stomp while I walk.

Begin leading the game. After you call out a couple of emotions, pick a volunteer to lead for 2–3 emotions. Then pick another volunteer to lead. If the volunteers need help coming up with new emotions, you can suggest some, such as surprise, excitement, sadness, happiness, contentment, fear, boredom, etc. After playing for about 5 minutes, ask the children to quietly sit down.

Throughout our lives we will feel many different emotions. Some emotions are easy and some are hard. When we walk through hard times, God wants to comfort us. He does not always take away the hard emotions, but He always comforts us and walks with us through that hard time.

2. Teaching: Learn about God's comfort and hear about the hard things Paul experienced (Acts 19:23–41; 2 Corinthians 1:1–11).

Today we will talk about emotional stress. Emotional stress is when something affects you very strongly and you do not know how to handle that strong emotion in a healthy way. We all feel emotional stress at times in our lives. Listen to these verses about different feelings we may have in our lives.

Show the Memory Verse poster if you are using it.

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,
He has made everything beautiful in its time.*

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4, 11

Listen as I read some difficult situations. Stand up if the situation would make you feel stressed. Stay seated if the situation would not bother you at all. Kneel if the situation would bother you, but only a little.

1. You find out a relative you love is moving far away.
2. Your father tells you he has lost his job.
3. Someone steals your family's cooking pots.
4. You are not ready for an important exam in school.
5. You see a friend hit by a car as she is crossing a busy street.
6. You learn that your oldest brother is getting married.

All month we have been learning to identify our emotions and to express them in healthy ways.

Sometimes we need someone to be with us while we express our anger or anxious emotions. Other times we need someone to comfort us with wise words or thoughtful actions.

Sometimes when we are experiencing strong emotions, people we are close to will automatically help us or at least ask if we need help. Other times, people may not even be aware that we are having a hard time. They would be willing to help if they knew we needed it. Those are times when we need to ask for help. God has given each of us some special people who are willing to be there when we need comfort and help. I am one of those people.

Even more than people, God always provides comfort. Here are some ways God provides comfort:

God will help us find comfort in the psalms or other books of the Bible. As we read God's Word, it speaks to us and lets us know that God cares for us.

Sometimes we find God's comfort in a song. We might sing the song over and over in our minds. We know the words are God's way of sending His comfort.

Sometimes we find comfort when we pray and know that God hears us and cares about us.

Sometimes we hear a pastor's words or something we have talked about in these lessons. What was said helps us. The pastor may not know it. I may not know it. But we know it is a special message to you from God.

Many of the books in the New Testament are letters, and Paul wrote most of them. Let's pretend that Paul is writing to us. Listen to part of his letter to the believers in Corinth. It has been reworded so that it is easier to understand. Listen for clues about what is happening in his life, and think about what Paul may have been feeling.

Dear Friends at (name of your church or school),

Hello! I am glad I can write to you again. So much has happened! I have God to thank for seeing me through some very difficult times. No one can comfort like He does! When I am feeling very sad or I am in trouble, He knows just what I need. He is available to help me. Then, after He comforts me, He turns around and uses me to comfort someone else who is going through something similar. Our God is very wise.

Jesus suffered, and He knows how to comfort others who suffer. We have learned a lot because of His life. Whether I am depressed or scared or being comforted by God, I know He is with me. I go through emotionally difficult times, and God helps me. Then I can help you go through difficult times. Even though I know you will probably go through hard things too, I know you will also be comforted like I have been.

My friends and I suffered really hard times when we were in the Roman province of Asia. We were under great pressure. I thought we might not survive. I thought we were going to die.

But 1 thing we learned through all this—we can depend on God. We certainly could do nothing to help ourselves! God delivered us from death, and we believe that He will continue to save us. Thank you for your prayers. They have also helped. When this difficult time is over, many people will thank God for answering their prayers for us. Keep praying for us.

Your friend, Paul

That was fun to hear! Now listen to a few of the hard things that Paul went through. He almost drowned when his ship sank and was beaten, whipped, and thrown into prison. He experienced hunger and cold. Paul experienced many, many hard things in life!

If possible, show *The Action Bible* images of Paul's challenges as you tell the story.

Once when he was in the city of Ephesus, a riot broke out. In that city there were many silversmiths who made shrines of a goddess and sold them. Paul taught the people of Ephesus that there is only one God, and He is not made by men. One silversmith became angry with Paul and convinced others to join him. They shouted in the streets until the whole city was in an uproar. Paul could have been killed, but God protected him.

- What emotions do you think Paul may have felt throughout these troubles in his life?

Answers may include fear, anger, hopelessness, sadness, etc.

In all these difficult times, God comforted Paul. The people in 1 of the cities where he had preached were praying for him. Paul knew they were concerned about him. One time they even sent someone to join him so he would not be alone. Paul had experienced God's presence and protection before. He believed that God would continue to take care of him. Others were comforted by Paul. When they saw what Paul was going through and how God strengthened his faith and courage, they learned to ask God for help and comfort when they faced difficult situations. They followed Paul's example.

Optional: If you are using *The Action Bible*, have the children read the story on pages 723–726.

3. Responding: Identify difficult areas in life that God might use to comfort and help others.

Ask the children to quickly and quietly get into pairs.

Let's listen again to the difficult situations that we heard at the beginning of class. This time, after I read a situation, I will ask you to talk with your partner about 3 questions.

Read each situation again. After each, read the 3 questions. If you do not have much time, just pick 2–3 situations that are most helpful to your students. Allow the pairs to talk for about a minute after each question.

1. You find out a relative you love is moving far away.
2. Your father tells you he has lost his job.
3. Someone steals your family's cooking pots.
4. You are not ready for an important exam in school.
5. You see a friend hit by a car as she is crossing a busy street.
6. You learn that your oldest brother is getting married.

- What emotions do you think you might have in this situation?
- What kind of help would you need?
- Who could you ask for help in that situation?

Ask the children to give you their attention to finish the lesson.

Have you ever gone through something hard and a friend told you that he knew just how you felt? Sometimes people really do know how we feel because they have gone through the same things we are going through. They learned from their experiences. They know what comforted them and what might comfort you. That is what Paul said!

Now I want you to quietly think about some of the very difficult things you have experienced. As you do, think of how God comforted you in that situation. Perhaps you did not even

recognize it at the time, but when you think about it now you see how God comforted you. Perhaps someone gave you a hug or a smile when you needed it. Perhaps you heard something that gave you courage or soothed your anger. God might use you now to bring comfort to others going through a similar hard time.

Spend a couple minutes thanking God for His comfort. If you still do not see His comfort, ask Him to show you how He was there with you in the hard times. Then pray and ask Him to use you to comfort someone else.

Allow your children a few minutes to pray.

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, allow the children a couple of minutes to write short prayers to God.

Teacher Tip: If the children need help understanding this concept, share an appropriate experience. Tell them about a time when God comforted you. Then share how you can now comfort others because of the comfort you received from Him.

Close the lesson by praying this blessing based on Psalm 103:13–14 over the children.

Blessing: God is a compassionate Father. May you know His great care for you and all that you are feeling and going through. He knows all about you. You can trust His comfort.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song if possible.

"Reckless Love" by Cory Asbury: <https://youtu.be/Sc6SSHuZvQE>