

Resiliency: God Takes Our Worries

Quarter 5 • Lesson 11

Focus on Life Skills

1. *Connecting*: Watch an object lesson about releasing worry.
2. *Teaching*: Learn what to do with worry (Matthew 6:25–27, 34; Philippians 4:6–7).
3. *Responding*: Act out releasing worries (1 Peter 5:7).

SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Bowl or pan filled with water
- Small block of wood or other object that will float (foam, empty plastic bottle, etc.)
- Stones

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- Permanent marker
- Student Pages
- Pencils
- Paper

Before class, fill a bowl or pan with water. If you have a marker, draw a smiling face on the wood. If you do not have a block of wood, use cardboard, foam, or an old plastic bottle with a lid. Place the wood or other object in the bowl or pan. Place several stones on it so that it stays at the bottom. Place the bowl in a prominent place where everyone can see it.

Teacher Devotion

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
Psalm 91:1

Worrying doesn't change anything. Instead, it distracts us and keeps us awake at night. It can even cause physical illness. Worrying serves no positive purpose. So why do we worry? We worry because we do not fully recognize who God is and how much He loves us. We worry because we want to have control of our lives but circumstances show us that we don't. When we fully believe that God will take care of us, then worry disappears!

Worry focuses on "what ifs" instead of what is. So, when you feel worry creeping in, read the following true statements out loud and ask God to help you believe each one: God is good. God is in control. God is trustworthy. God is faithful. God loves me. God cares for me. When you trust God and know who He is, you will find your rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Family Connection: Encourage families to ask their children about the 4 steps to overcoming worry that they learned this week. If anyone in the family is worried, they can go through the steps together: 1. Recognize you are worried. 2. Say what you are worried about. 3. Think an opposite thought. 4. Give your worry to God.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Watch an object lesson about releasing worry.

Welcome the children to class. Ask them to gather around the bowl with the object in it.

Listen as I tell you about a girl who was weighed down by problems, just like that block of wood is weighed down with stones. Her name is Martha.

- Do you think she will ever rise out of that low place?

Let's see if she manages to get all those problems off her back. She has a lot of problems. She has many things she could worry about. Her father is an alcoholic. Every time he gets paid, he spends most of his money on alcohol. He gets drunk, and then he yells at Martha and her mother for no reason.

Because of this, the family has no money to pay the school fees. Martha will have to drop out of school if they cannot pay her fees this week. Martha is worried because the exams are coming soon. She does not want to miss school. That is one of her problems.

Martha could have worried about this problem. Instead, she prayed about what to do. What do you think happened? A well-wisher of the school offered to pay the school fees of 10 of the best students in each class. Martha was one of them. Her teacher told her she did not have to worry about paying fees for the rest of the year! She could continue attending school. She could not stop thanking God all the way home. So that problem is taken off her back.

Remove one stone from the block of wood.

Another problem weighing her down is her anger at her father. She hates how her father's drinking affects the family, and there is nothing she can do about it. So she just stays angry inside. That is another stone. One day, she read some verses in the Bible that made her pay attention.

*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*
Matthew 6:14–15

That made Martha begin to think. She needed to forgive her father. It was hard to even think about forgiving him, but she asked God to help her and He did. Then she realized that her heart felt much lighter. She actually felt sorry for him because he was caught in his habit of drinking. She wished she could help. She decided to pray for him every day.

Remove the next stone. Add a few more small problems to this story, choosing situations you think the children would be familiar with. Remove one stone when each problem is solved.

Wow, look what happened! The wood has risen to the top of the water. Like the wood, Martha rose above her problems. It looked almost impossible at first. Now things are looking much brighter, and Martha is smiling.

- Do you really think we can get through difficult situations, no matter how hard they are?

I think so. I have had many problems that looked like they would not go away, but they did. Not all of our problems go away, but God will help us in the middle of them, just like He helped Martha. Her family situation did not change, but God helped her.

Share a problem you had and how God helped you.

- Raise your hand if you have a problem or situation that you are facing right now that causes you to worry.

Pause for children to raise hands.

To worry about something means to dwell on negative thoughts and to be anxious or overly concerned about something. All of us worry sometimes. Today we will learn that God wants to help us when we worry, just like He helped Martha. We will learn that giving our worries to God helps us bounce back from our problems and be resilient.

2. Teaching: Learn what to do with worry (Matthew 6:25–27, 34; Philippians 4:6–7).

Let's read from the Bible to hear what Jesus said about worry.

Read Matthew 6:25–27, 34 from your Bible.

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:25–27, 34

God cares about even the smallest parts of His creation, such as the birds. He cares even more about you! You do not need to worry because God is good and you can trust Him with your problems.

When you worry, there are 4 steps you can take.

1. Recognize that you are worried. Recognize that you are feeling anxious about something. Worry and anxiety are sensations you can feel in your body as well as your mind. When you worry, you might feel lightheaded, have headaches, have stomachaches, or feel a fluttering sensation in your stomach. When you feel this way, it may be because you are worried about something.

- **Have you ever experienced one of these?**

Pause for children to raise their hands.

2. Say what you are worried about. Try to identify the specific problem or situation that is bothering you. If possible, tell a trusted friend, family member, or teacher about it. If that is not possible, say it to yourself.

3. Replace negative “what if” thoughts with positive thoughts from God’s Word. “What if” thinking usually increases our fears and worries instead of helping us to feel better. Instead of thinking those negative thoughts, think about the truth you know. For example, if you feel afraid and think, “What if my sister gets sick and my family cannot pay to see a doctor?” You can tell yourself the truth that God cares about your sister and loves her very much.

Ask your children to share some truths they know from God’s Word. If they can’t think of any, share some that you know.

4. Give your worry to God. Pray and ask God to take your worry. When we give our worries to God in prayer, He fills us with peace.

Read Philippians 4:6–7 aloud:

*Don’t worry about anything. Instead, tell God about everything.
Ask and pray. Give thanks to him. Then God’s peace will watch over your hearts
and your minds because you belong to Christ Jesus.
God’s peace can never be completely understood.
Philippians 4:6–7, NIV*

Often we worry because we do not remember that God is in control and that He loves us. We do not remember that we can trust Him with our problems. The more we trust every part of our lives to God, the less we worry. We will practice giving our worries to God later in the lesson. When we are part of God’s family, He promises to give us peace no matter what we go through in life.

- **Next time you are worried about something, what 4 steps can you take?**

Allow children to share what they remember about the 4 steps. Remind them of the steps as needed: 1. Recognize that you are worried. 2. Say what you are worried about. 3. Replace “what if” thoughts with God’s Word. 4. Give your worry to God.

3. Responding: Act out releasing worries (1 Peter 5:7).

Each of us has problems and worries. Now we will release our worries to God. Think about a difficult problem you have—something you really worry about. You do not have to share this. Now we will follow the advice in 1 Peter 5:7.

Show the Memory Verse poster if you are using it.

*Cast all your anxiety on [God] because he cares for you.
1 Peter 5:7*

We will do this by praying. I will say a sentence of the prayer and pause. During the pause, you can talk with God about your worries.

Lord Jesus, You know my problems and every worry in my heart. (Pause.)

There are some things that I worry about that make me feel like crying. (Pause.)

But You love me and can help me. I place my problems into Your hands and ask You to bring a change in my heart and in my life. (Pause.)

Thank You for giving me the joy of knowing that You care for me. I love You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember the 4 steps we learned about releasing worry:

- 1. Recognize that you are worried.**
- 2. Say what you are worried about.**
- 3. Replace "what if" thoughts for truth from God's Word.**
- 4. Give your worry to God.**

Now let's act out casting our worries and problems on God. Everyone stand up and act out the things I say.

Your problem or worry is heavy. Pretend that you are carrying a worry that is very heavy. How would you walk? How would you look? Act out how you would feel.

Give the children 1 minute to act out carrying a heavy worry.

Now we will throw these worries onto God. Act out throwing that worry away from you. Lift that heavy worry and throw it far from you. Then walk around showing how you feel now that you are not carrying that heavy weight. What would you feel? How would you look now?

Give the children 1 minute to act out throwing their worries down.

Now let's all shout, "God wants to help me with my worries. He cares for me."

Optional Supplies:

Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil. The children will write or draw worries or problems they have. Assure them that no one except God will see their papers, so they are free to write down any problems or worries that are on their minds. Give the children a few minutes to work. You can do the exercise, too. Then, instead of acting out throwing away their worries, they will tear up the papers and throw them away.

If you are using the Student Pages, there is space for children to review the 4 steps to overcoming worry and write a prayer to God.

End of Option

Close class by praying a blessing over the children based on Proverbs 3:5:

Blessing: Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not lean on what you can see and understand. Give Him all your problems and worries. May He fill you with His peace!

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

"Great Are You Lord" by All Sons and Daughter: <https://youtu.be/vQLMnPYoR9k>