



+ Generations Together

Fear Not – Managing Stress & Anxiety

Here is a cross-generational session for all members of the congregation exploring effective ways to manage the day-to-day stresses and anxieties families experience today. This session is designed to be conducted in about 90 minutes, and can be adapted for a shorter or longer timeframe.

Introduction

What does your family worry about most? By exploring Matthew 6:25-34 and other passages your family will explore what God has to say about worry. Life is full of challenges and changes. From starting school to moving to a new home, the way we adapt and move forward with change makes a difference.

I. Gather

[use the following adaptation of the activity Worry Knot]

Needed

Each family or small groups needs the following items: Bible, one yard of rope, one sheet of paper, highlighter pen

Activity Plan

1. Say the following prayer for the whole group.

Worry can make us sick, God. Help us to read your Word and learn how to handle our worries better. Keep us praying as we face the scary feeling of worry. Amen.

2. In small or family groups talk about what it means to worry. Write each person's name down the side of the paper. Use these questions to fill in each person's worst worry.
 - Why do we worry?
 - How do you know when you are worried?
 - Who do you tell when you are worried?
 - What is your worst worry?
3. Ask someone from each small/family group to read Matthew 6:25-34 from the Bible to their group. Instruct the groups to underline things you sometimes worry about. Highlight words or phrases that explain why we should not worry. Read the highlighted parts a second time through.
4. Explain that in ancient Greece, small stones were rubbed to produce good feelings and get rid of stress. We will adapt that practice for the family or small group. Tie one knot in your worry rope for each worry listed on your piece of paper.

5. Ask families to take the rope home and put it on the meal table to help everyone remember not to worry. In a week or so, revisit your list of worries and the rope. Try untying a knot together when a worry ends.

II. Grow

[use an adaptation of the activity Moving Forward with Change]

Needed:

Each person will need a quarter, nickel, or penny

Activity Plan

1. Ask someone to read aloud Genesis 28:15.

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

In small or family groups, talk about how God promises to be with us wherever we go.

2. In family groups, talk about the types of changes you’re facing at the moment:
 - Going to a new school or child-care center
 - Starting a new school year with a different teacher and classmates
 - Physical growth spurts
 - Moving to a different home
 - A parent changing jobs
 - A change in a family member’s health
 - A new family member or a new pet
 - The loss of a grandparent or other family member
 - Separation, divorce, or blending families
 - Another change
3. Give each person a coin. Have family members practice tossing the coin into the air, catching it, and placing it in his or her hand without looking at it, and then seeing whether the coin shows “heads” or “tails.”
4. While gathered in family groups, have one family member toss the coin into the air, catch it, and place it in his or her hand. If it shows “heads”, have that person name one thing he or she is looking forward to (what’s ahead) with the change. If it’s “tails”, have the person name one thing he or she is sad about the change (what’s being left behind). For families with preschool children, have “heads” represent something that makes them happy about the change and have “tails” represent something that makes them sad or mad about the change.
5. Each person takes a turn. Depending on the type of change you’re facing, consider having family members repeat the process. Embrace each person’s feelings about change. It’s okay that some family members are more open to change while others are more resistant.
6. If your family is going through more than one change, repeat the activity with a different change that your family is facing.
7. When groups have finished, read aloud the scripture passage (Genesis 28:15) again. Remind participants that not only is God always with us but that family members are also there to support each other through change.

III. Go Forth

[use an adaptation of the activity Weather Worries]

Needed: Bible

Activity Plan

1. Ask one person from each family group to read aloud from the Bible Mark 4:35-41, the story often referred to as "Jesus Calms a Storm." Jesus is looking for some quiet space. The Disciples wake him up in a frantic state.

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

2. Invite discussion: Which do you think concerned Jesus more: the storm or the screaming disciples? If you were Jesus, what do you think you would have said to the disciples?
3. Read the same story as told in Luke 8:22-25. (Explain that this story appears in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.)

One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

- Discuss what you think it means that Jesus can speak to the weather and calm it down.
4. Invite family groups to use the following questions to connect this Bible story to the previous discussions about worry and about change:
 - How does your response to a worry or a change make it better or worse?
 - How do you think Jesus would want to respond to your worry or change?
 - Where in your life do you need to hear Jesus say, "Peace, be still!"?
 - What person or activity helps you calm down in the midst of chaos?
 - Where in the lives of friends and family does Jesus call you to say, "Peace, be still!"?
 - Where is the church called to speak, "Peace be still!" in our world today?

Invite some participants to share one or two comments with the whole group.

5. Have families/small groups stand in a circle and holding onto the rope with knots in it. Say together,

"We will not worry about tomorrow. And so we pray that we can stop worrying about _____." End with a big **AMEN!**

Worry Knot!

By Christy Olson



What does your family worry about most? By exploring Matthew 6:25-34 your family will explore what God has to say about worry. Make a knotted rope to replace worry with prayer.

For

Young Family

Season

Fall

Needed

Bible (or see passage on next page), one yard of rope, one sheet of paper, highlighter pen

Activity Plan

1. Begin in prayer.

Worry can make us sick, God. Help us to read your Word and learn how to handle our worries better. Keep us praying as we face the scary feeling of worry. Amen.

2. Talk about what it means to worry. Write each person's name down the side of the paper. Use these questions to fill in each person's worst worry.
 - Why do we worry?
 - How do you know when you are worried?
 - Who do you tell when you are worried?
 - What is your worst worry?
3. Read Matthew 6:25-34 from your Bible (or see the text on the next page). Underline things you sometimes worry about. Highlight words or phrases that explain why we should not worry. Read the highlighted parts a second time through.
4. In ancient Greece, small stones were rubbed to produce good feelings and get rid of stress. We will adapt that practice for family. Tie one knot in your worry rope for each worry listed on your piece of paper.
5. Stand in a circle and hold onto the rope. Say together,

*"We will not worry about tomorrow. And so we pray that we can stop worrying about _____." End with a big **AMEN!***

6. Put the rope on your meal table to help everyone remember not to worry. In a week or so, revisit your list of worries and the rope. Try untying a knot together when a worry ends.

Do Not Worry

Matthew 6:25-34

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Moving Forward with Change

By Jolene Roehlkepartain

Life is full of changes. From starting school to moving to a new home, the way we adapt and move forward with change makes a difference.

For

Young Family

Season

Fall

Needed

Bible, a 25-cent coin for each family member

Prepare in Advance

- Mark your Bible to Genesis 28:15 (or see text below)
- Get a 25-cent coin for each family member

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

God, remind us how you are always with us, no matter where we go. Amen.

2. Ask someone to read aloud Genesis 28:15.

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

Talk about how God promises to be with us wherever we go.

3. As a family, talk about the types of changes you’re facing at the moment:
 - Going to a new school or child-care center
 - Starting a new school year with a different teacher and classmates
 - Physical growth spurts
 - Moving to a different home
 - A parent changing jobs
 - A change in a family member’s health
 - A new family member or a new pet
 - The loss of a grandparent or other family member
 - Separation, divorce, or blending families
 - Another change
4. Give each family member a 25-cent coin. Have family members practice tossing the coin into the air, catching it, and placing it in his or her hand without looking at it, and then seeing whether the coin shows “heads” or “tails.”
5. Have one family toss the coin into the air, catch it, and place it in his or her hand. If it shows “heads”, have that person name one thing he or she is looking forward to (what’s ahead) with the change. If it’s “tails”, have the person name one thing he or she is sad about the change (what’s being left behind). If you have preschool children, have “heads” represent something that makes



them happy about the change and have “tails” represent something that makes them sad or mad about the change.

6. Each family member takes a turn. Depending on the type of change you’re facing, consider having family members repeat the process. Embrace each person’s feelings about change. It’s okay that some family members are more open to change while others are more resistant.
7. If your family is going through more than one change, repeat the game with a different change that your family is facing.
8. When you finish, have someone read aloud the scripture passage (Genesis 28:15) again. Remind family members that not only is God always with us but that family members are also there to support each other through change.

Weather Worries

By Rev. Lee Yates



In this story there is a storm, there are spastic disciples and Jesus gets a nap. Could this story actually be advice for navigating the constant change and chaotic pace of our young adult years? Read this story again and listen to Jesus. He could be talking to you.

For

Young Adults

Season

Fall

Needed

Bible, computer with internet connection and Microsoft Word

Activity Plan

1. Visit www.weather.com and follow the links to *i-Witness Weather* and look through some of the photographs posted. Choose a few that really get your attention. Copy the photographs into Microsoft Word or similar program on your computer. Give each picture its own page. Below each picture, write a paragraph or more about a time in your life that the picture could be describing. This can be literal or symbolic. For example, if you remember a tornado coming through your community as a child, you can describe what you remember. You might also have a time in your life that felt like you were spinning out of control and hurting those around you. The same picture could be used to illustrate both. Save each picture with a reflection on a life experience.
2. After exploring your own weather worries, open your Bible to Mark 4:35-41 (see next page) and read the story often referred to as "Jesus Calms a Storm." You can read similar versions in Matthew 8 and Luke 8. In each version, Jesus is trying to take some time away from a large crowd. Jesus is looking for some quiet space. In each version, the Disciples wake him up in a frantic state.
 - Looking back at each of your weather reflections, think about what you would want Jesus to do for you. What did you pray then or how would you pray if you were in that situation today?
3. Read the Bible story again, and think about what impact twelve grown men would have running around a small boat screaming, yelling, and shaking Jesus.
 - Which do you think concerned Jesus more: the storm or the screaming disciples? If you were Jesus, what do you think you would have said to the disciples?

4. Read the story a third time, and think about the wind and storm. Think about the power of the storm.
 - What does it mean that Jesus can speak to the weather and calm it down.
5. Look back at your weather reflections. Use the following questions to further connect the Bible story and your weather reflections:
 - How does your response to a problem make it better or worse?
 - How do you think Jesus would want to respond to your problem?
 - How do you think Jesus would want to respond to your response?
 - Where in your life do you need to hear Jesus say, "Peace, be still!"?
 - What person or activity helps you calm down in the midst of chaos?
 - Where in the lives of friends and family does Jesus call you to say, "Peace, be still!"?
 - Where is the church called to speak, "Peace be still!" in our world today?
6. Are you willing to share your weather pictures and reflections? We would love to share some of your storm stories with us at [Vibrant Faith @ Home](#). Log on to see what storms other users are facing and how God has helped calm their storms.

Jesus Calms a Storm

Mark 4:35-14

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Matthew 8:23-27

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

Luke 8:22-25

One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"