

AMPLIFY: Suffering

Lesson 1: It's on Us

What we want students to learn: That while God is in control of all things, suffering is a result of our rebellion against Him.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To flesh out what clinging to God in the midst of suffering looks like in their own lives.

Scripture Focus: Genesis 3:14-19; Job 1:9-12; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 34:8; Job 1:20-21; Job 19:25

Overview: How can a loving God allow so much suffering? It's a question that people have wrestled with for a long, long time. It's one that almost all of us have or will ask at some point in life. And as Christ-followers, it's a question we're going to be asked as people we know and love, maybe even our students, struggle with it themselves. Let's face it: it's a tough question. But it's one that we don't need to be scared of or shy away from. For the purposes of these lessons, we'll define suffering as the pain, turmoil, and darkness that exist in our world because of our sin and rebellion against God. In Lesson 1 we'll take a look at how suffering entered the world and also examine God's role in suffering. In Lesson 2 we'll see how Jesus stepped into our suffering to ultimately free us from it. Finally, in Lesson 3 we'll look at how God uses suffering in this life for His glory and our good.

Lesson 2: He's Near

What we want students to learn: That God chose to step into the midst of our suffering--in the form of Christ's death on the cross--not to remain distant from it.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To consider the trials they face in their lives, and to apply the truth that Jesus has overcome the suffering of this world to how they deal with their struggles.

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 53:4-10; Matthew 16:21; Matthew 8:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24-25; John 16:31-33

Overview: In the previous lesson, we talked about some pretty common (and definitely understandable) questions that people wrestle with when it comes to God and suffering. In that lesson, we defined suffering as the pain, turmoil, and darkness that exist in our world because of our sin and rebellion against God. Another question that we regularly ask in the midst of suffering is, "Where is God in all of this"? This is another tough question that's totally normal for us to struggle with. When we look to Scripture for the answer, though, we learn that He's near. He's near to those that suffer because He chose to step into our suffering and take it on Himself. Jesus could have remained distant, but He chose to draw near to us and suffer on our behalf.

Lesson 3: Through the Fire

What we want students to learn: That God uses trials and suffering to accomplish His purposes and shape our faith.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To broaden their understanding of how God uses suffering in our lives and reflect on how trials in life have impacted their own lives.

Scripture Focus: Genesis 50:20; 1 Peter 1:3-7; James 1:2-4; Romans 8:28; Job 2:9-10

Overview: How can a loving God allow so much suffering? Where is God in the midst of all this? These are two questions we've talked a bit about in Lessons 23 and 24. Another question we've probably all dealt with in the midst of suffering is this: "What's the point of all this"? This is another real, honest question our students may ask, one that doesn't have a neat, cookie-cutter answer. While we can't give an exact answer for specific instances of pain and suffering, Scripture does speak to this issue. It tells us that God is at work in the midst of suffering and uses it to accomplish His purposes and strengthen our faith. This truth doesn't eliminate the pain of suffering or make it any less real, but it can give your students comfort and hope as they face various trials.