

Helping Young People Deal With the Ebola Crisis



*Six Lessons about Our Loving God in
Today's Dangerous Times*

Helping Children Deal with Ebola

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Dangerous Times

Christ-centered, age-appropriate lessons
for children

(ages 8-13)

For parents to use with their children

For caring adults to use with groups of children in Ebola-endangered
parts of the world.

Dedicated to the men and women caregivers who put their own
lives at risk to battle this disease in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea,
and around the world

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transforming lives together

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LESSONS

Lesson 1: I'm So Scared of Ebola

Lesson 2: God Listens to My Fears about Ebola

Lesson 3: Someone I Know Died of Ebola

Lesson 4: I Know There Is Life after Death

Lesson 5: Christians Practice Good Hygiene

Lesson 6: My God Is Stronger than Ebola (A Prayer Walk)

RESOURCE ARTICLES FOR YOU

What I Need to Know about Ebola

Helping Children Cope with Worry

How to Help Children When They Grieve

About These Lessons

These lessons were developed to help children who are directly in harm's way. They are vulnerable to Ebola. They have had relatives who have been sick. Perhaps some have died.

The lessons are also written to help children who are not in immediate danger, but they know about the epidemic. They worry that they or their parents will get sick and die.

These six lessons face the issues and questions honestly. They are written for children ages 8 to 13. The lessons emphasize that God does not let His children walk through these difficulties alone. He loves each child, each teen!

Materials You Will NOT Need to Teach These Lessons

Children who need these lessons most are living in places where it is difficult to get school supplies like paper, pencils, and crayons. So these lessons do not use these things. Instead they will use only supplies that are commonly available and free such as leaves, sticks, or a piece of cloth.

Who Can Teach These Lessons?

Teachers—This course is designed for a teacher leading a church or school class or even a special class in an orphanage.

Parents—These lessons are also designed to work with one parent and one child or one parent with a number of children. If an activity is suggested for a number of children, special instructions will be given for the parent who is guiding only one child through the lessons.

Clues for Teaching These Lessons

Clue One

At the beginning of the first five lessons, you will see a short conversation between God and a child. This little conversation is the outline of the lesson.

Clue Two

The information just for the parent or leader will have the type will look like what you see here. This section gives you information to help the children better understand the lessons. Do not read this to your children. You will sometimes be asked to put this information into your own words.

Clue Three

Sometimes in the lesson you will talk directly to the children. Then the type will look dark like this—**You can read this directly to your children or, better yet, you can put the information into your own words.**

Clue Four

- **Every time there is a question that you want one or more children to answer, it will have a dot in front of it and be slightly indented. It will also be in dark type.**

Clue Five

These lessons often suggest active ways to get your children involved in the lesson. Don't skip these child-centered activities! Children best learn through activity and play! They will learn more from the lesson when you use them, and they will be more likely to put what they have learned into practice.

If you are using these lessons with just one child you love, the lesson will give you tips on how you and your child can do the activities together.

My God Is Stronger than Ebola

Lesson 1

Outline for Today

1. I say to God, "I'm so scared of Ebola!"
2. God says to me, "Don't be afraid. I am here."
3. I say to God, "I will trust You when I go through life's storms."

SUPPLIES

- Leaves, grass, or small stones children will gather during lesson

The Lesson

1. I say to God, "I'm so scared of Ebola!"

Explain to your children that you are going to be talking honestly about the horrible disease of Ebola. God is a caring God. He knows what a fearful disease this is. But He is in control. He is stronger than this horrible virus.

- **What do you know about Ebola?**

If the children share something that is untrue or that you are unsure of, that's okay. This lesson and those that follow will teach the true facts about Ebola. It is important that the children feel safe to voice what they have heard about Ebola whether or not it is true. When the children have shared what they know, add this information:

Ebola is a severe, often fatal illness in humans. In fact, it is not unusual for half the people who get Ebola to die. This is not the first time there has been an Ebola outbreak. In 1976 there were outbreaks in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. There have been cases in other countries, too. The name “Ebola” comes from the Ebola River in Congo.

Scientists believe the disease in people started when they touched the bodily fluids of infected animals. For example, if a hunter touched the blood of an Ebola-infected monkey he killed in the rainforest, it is possible that hunter would get it too. Other animals that can carry Ebola are chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelope and porcupines.

Ebola spreads among people when they have direct contact with the blood or other body fluids of someone who already has Ebola. For example, a sick person sneezes. You breathe in some of the sneeze spray, you could get sick, too. Or, if you are changing the bedding of someone who is sick and the bedding is contaminated with diarrhea, vomit, or blood, you could get sick if the fluids entered a cut or scrape on your hand.

This is a terrible disease, but it really is a disease, not a curse. Some people have said it’s a government plot. No, it is a disease.

Stop now and ask the students to get into groups of three to pray for people who are infected and those people who are in harm’s way and may become infected. If you are going through this lesson with just one child, the two of you should pray together.

2. God says to me, “Don’t be afraid. I am here.”

I’m going to tell you a Bible story where fear plays a huge part. The fear is real. People in the story could die.

Jesus had just fed 5000 people from five loaves of bread and two fish. His disciples must have been amazed. Not only was

everyone full, but there were 12 baskets of food left over. The disciples were asking themselves, “Who is this man? Who is this man who can take a little bit of food and turn it into piles and piles of food? He’s a man, but He must be much more than a man.”

Jesus doesn’t directly tell them who He is. He wants them to discover the answer for themselves. In this story, He is showing them more information about who He is.

Today’s story comes from the book of the Bible written by and named for Mark. Mark placed our story right after the story of Jesus’ food miracle. Both of these stories contain clues that tell us who Jesus really is. Listen carefully. The disciples will soon know the answer to their question, “Who is this man?” We will, too.

The disciples headed across the lake in a boat. Jesus wasn’t with them. He told the disciples goodbye and went up into the hills by Himself to pray.

Late that night the disciples were in the boat in the middle of the lake. They were in serious trouble. They were rowing hard and struggling against the wind and high waves. It was about 3 a.m.

Now here comes the amazing part. At 3 a.m., Jesus came toward the boat. He was walking on the water! The disciples saw Him, and they were terrified. They were so afraid. They thought He was a ghost. But Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Take courage. I am here.”

Jesus climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped. Jesus could control the wind.

The disciples still didn’t totally understand the answer to their question, “Who is this man?” But they were beginning to see the truth—only God is the master of nature. Jesus could calm

the sea. He was a man, but He was much more than a man. He was God's Son.

Here's the amazing, huge truth for the disciples and for us—Jesus is here in the storms of our lives. The disciples were afraid of the storm in the sea. We are afraid of Ebola, a huge storm that is hurting so many communities. But Jesus can help calm our fears of the storm. Jesus is in control. He will go with us through the storm.

3. I say to God, "I will trust You when I go through life's storms."

- **This is a very hard question: Why doesn't Jesus make the things that we fear go away? Why doesn't He make Ebola go away?**

Allow children to share their thoughts. When they have finished, add to what they have said by putting the following into your own words.

The Bible tells us that we will have troubles in this life. "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The Bible also tells us that death was brought into the world by Adam and Eve's sin. When they sinned, sin changed everything. The ground began to grow weeds. Animals began to kill each other and people. People had to work hard for a living. No doubt at this time, harmful germs and viruses began to grow and affect people and animals. Because sin entered the world, everything eventually died. Right now, especially during an epidemic like this one, death seems to be in control. But death will not have the last say. God will overcome death. The Bible says, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26).

The Bible tells us that our world is waiting to be freed from its bondage to decay and death (Romans 8:18-25). Christians look forward to the time when God will make the earth perfect again, the way it was at creation before sin changed everything. There will be no more Ebola! There will be no more death.

- **The Bible tells us that Jesus goes with us in the storms of life. What are some ways we can feel His presence with us in troubled times?**

Verses we have memorized from the Bible suddenly pop into our heads and give us comfort. Other Christians surround us with love and care, and we know they are God's hands and feet for us. Sometimes we can hear Jesus actually speaking words of comfort to us, especially when we sit quietly and listen. A pastor's sermon might contain exactly the words you need to hear. Maybe God will use this lesson to calm our fears.

In our Bible story, Jesus calmed the storm at sea, but not all big storms are at sea. There are all different kinds of storms. All of us have storms in our lives. Storms are things like Ebola that can make us ill and scare us. Storms are things in our lives that terrify us! When we go through these huge storms, Jesus will be with us. He tells us, just like He told the disciples, "Don't be afraid. Take courage. I am here."

Ask the children to think about storms they have had. Give them two minutes to walk around outside and think about significant big storms they have had. For every storm, ask them to pick up a leaf, or one piece of grass, or a small stone. When time is up, ask them to get into groups of 3 and briefly share what storm each leaf, grass, or stone means to them. When they have shared, they should lay that leaf, grass or stone on the ground in the middle of their group. When everyone has finished, ask one person in each group to pick everything up. Everyone in the class should follow behind him or her as they walk together to throw the leaves, grass, or stones away. As they throw them away, they should say quietly as a prayer, "I will trust You, Jesus, when I go through life's storms."

If you are leading just one child through this lesson, go with the child to pick up a leaf or one piece of grass or small stone for each storm you identify. Then the two of you can share together. End by taking your "storm" symbols and throwing them away. Say the prayer together quietly three times.

God Listens to My Fears about Ebola

Lesson Two

Outline for Today

1. I say to God, "I'm afraid of the Ebola virus."
2. God says to me, "I care about what you are feeling."
3. I say to God, "I will share my feelings with You and listen for Your voice."

SUPPLIES

- None

The Lesson

1. I say to God, "I'm afraid of the Ebola virus."

- If you heard news this week about Ebola, share what you have learned.

After your students have shared, add the following information about this deadly virus.

Health workers in Liberia said this about Ebola. "Ebola is the enemy. If we don't chase Ebola, it will kill us. You have to know Ebola to fight Ebola."

So let's add a few more things to what we know about this virus.

There is no cure for Ebola. The earlier people come to health caseworkers for treatment, the more likely they are to survive. But no one is quite sure what that treatment should be. Everyone agrees that touching body fluids from an infected person is how Ebola is caught. If the virus enters a cut on your hand, you could catch it. If you touch someone who is sick and then rub your mouth, nose or eyes, you could catch it. If possible, the person who is sick should be kept in a room with the doors and windows closed.

Prevention includes not touching a sick person or being close enough to catch germs—this means staying about a meter away from the person. Don't handle bush meat, and if you eat bush meat, make sure it is cooked thoroughly before you eat it. When you are around someone who might have the disease, wash your hands often and for a long time. If possible, use hot water and lots of soap.

Many people die of this disease, but many people don't. Usually it takes one to three weeks from the time the virus enters a person for that person to get sick. Once someone gets sick with Ebola, the person will be sick for two or more weeks. Reports say that 40 to 50 percent of the people with this disease die, although some reports are higher.

It's hard for a doctor to know someone has Ebola before testing because the symptoms are similar to other illnesses like malaria, cholera, and others. Once a person has symptoms, he or she can be tested for Ebola.

Ebola is the newest worldwide scare, but it is not as big a threat to the world right now as malaria, HIV, or tuberculosis. Ebola is different from these other diseases because it shows itself quickly, and so many people die quickly from it.

- What new things have you learned about Ebola?
- What scares you most?
- What would you say to someone who tells you, "This is scary. I just don't want to know any of this"?

Today, I'm going to share a story from the Bible about a boy and his mother who faced death. In the case of this boy and his mother, God saved them both.

The fighting began soon after Hagar found out she was going to have a baby. Here's the problem. Hagar wasn't actually married to her baby's father, Abraham. She was only a servant in the household, a foreigner. Abraham's real wife was Sarah. But Sarah wasn't able to have children.

At first, Sarah had thought it would be good for Abraham to have a baby with Hagar. But when it actually happened, it didn't seem like such a good idea anymore.

When Hagar's baby was born, she called him Ishmael, a name that means, "God hears." Ishmael enjoyed being the only son of his very old father, Abraham. But one day a miracle happened—even though Sarah was really, really old, God gave her a baby, too. This made Sarah very happy. But not Ishmael! Ishmael wasn't an only child anymore. And because this new son, Isaac, was the son of Abraham's real wife, Ishmael didn't get all the special treatment anymore. He didn't like this new baby, and he let everyone know it.

You can imagine that neither of the mothers was very happy. Sarah complained to Abraham. She wanted Hagar and Ishmael to leave. This upset Abraham terribly. He loved Ishmael. But God told him that He would take care of Ishmael. So, Abraham packed some food and water for Hagar and Ishmael and sent them away.

Into the desert they went. Both of them were very sad. Although she didn't say this to Ishmael, Hagar was sure they would die. When their water ran out, she settled Ishmael under a bush where he could at least have shade. Then she moved away from him a little because she didn't want to watch him die.

So there they both were, Ishmael crying under his bush, Hagar sobbing a few meters away from him. And what do you suppose happened next?

Do you remember what Ishmael's name means? It means, "God hears." If you guess that God heard their cries, you're right!

God heard the boy crying and called to Hagar from heaven. He said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid. I have heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift him up and take him by the hand. I'm going to make him into a great nation!" Then God helped Hagar see what she hadn't been able to see before—a well of water! She went to it and gave Ishmael a drink. From that day on, even though they lived in the desert, God was always with Ishmael. He and Hagar had enough to eat because Ishmael learned to hunt with a bow. And they had enough to drink because God had shown them the well.

God saw them. He heard them. Even before Ishmael was born, God saw him and proved that He cared for him. And He cares about you like that, too!

2. God says to me, "I care about what you are feeling."

Encourage your children to discuss the story:

- **Why do you think I told you this story when we are talking about Ebola?**

Because things seemed helpless for Hagar and Ishmael, but God cared about them. God was with them in their lives, and they were aware of His presence, something people who worry about Ebola can also have.

- **How did God show that He cared about how Hagar and Ishmael were feeling?**

- **Think of times in your past. How do you know that God cared about what you were feeling?**
- **Today many of us are worried about Ebola. How do you know God knows and cares about these feelings of worry?**

For one thing, God gives you these lessons. This is a way God is telling you not to be sick with worry. God also sent me to you as your teacher (or parent). I care about you. I want you to know that you can count on God being with you, no matter what the future holds.

3. I say to God, "I will share my feelings with You and listen for Your voice."

Today we're going to do something special. It is called "Listening Prayer." We know God listens to us, but today we are going to be quiet and listen to Him. I want you to close your eyes and do what I suggest.

Give the following suggestions to your children and pause between what you say to let them think and pray and listen.

Picture yourself in a room with just you and God. You can tell by looking into His face that He thinks you are special. He loves you. He tells you to climb up on His lap. You climb up on His lap. (Pause.)

He asks what is worrying you. Silently speak to Him and tell Him about your fears about Ebola. (Pause.)

Listen. What is He saying to you? (Longer pause.)

What do you imagine the expression on His face is? (Pause.)

Do you believe He cares about you? (Pause.) **Can you guess what He is feeling for you?** (Pause.)

He says that He wants you to give your fears to Him, because no matter what happens, He will be with you. Even if you got

sick, He would stay with you. He wants you to be with Him forever and ever, on earth today and in heaven some day in the future.

Tell Him what you are feeling now. (Pause.)

Imagine climbing off His lap. Tell Him how you feel about Him. (Pause.) **Take time to let Him tell you how much He loves you.** (Longer pause.)

Close class today by asking children to open their eyes. Walk around the class to each child. Put your hands on the child's head or shoulders and say, "(Child's name,) God wants to take away your fears."

If you are working through this lesson with just one child, close in the same way. If appropriate, ask the child to say the same words, "God wants to take away your fears," to you.

Someone I Know Died of Ebola

Lesson Three

Outline for Today

1. I say to God, "I am so sad. Someone I love died of Ebola."
2. God says to me, "I will help you heal."
3. I say to God, "I will tell you about others who are grieving, and You will help them, too."

SUPPLIES

- None

The Lesson

1. I say to God, "I am so sad. Someone I love died of Ebola."

- A friend asks you what you know about the Ebola virus. What do you share?

When children have reviewed what they have learned, share the following information with them.

The Ebola virus can be deadly. Some of you may have friends or even relatives who have died. I'm so sorry. You must be sad. This lesson will help you walk through your grief in a way that is healthy. Perhaps you don't know anyone personally who has died. Listen carefully to what you learn in this lesson because God may use you to help others who are grieving for a lost friend or parent.

As you know, symptoms of Ebola start two days to three weeks after the virus enters a person's body. In the early days when a person is feeling ill, his or her symptoms may be similar to people who have malaria, dengue fever, or other tropical fevers. Other symptoms are sore throat, muscle pain and headaches. As the person gets worse, he or she might start vomiting or having diarrhea. Some people may have symptoms like sore throat, chest pain, shortness of breath and trouble swallowing. As many as 40 percent of the people who get the Ebola virus get well. If an infected person lives, they usually get well quickly.

Many people are trying to develop a vaccine; however, none exists yet. Scientists say it may take three to five years until one is available.

If a person has died from Ebola, he or she should be buried or cremated only with proper care. Direct contact with the person should be avoided. You can catch the virus from a person who already died from Ebola.

People who practice burial ceremonies in which they have direct contact with the body of their dead friend or loved one can get sick, too. In Liberia, there are reports that some health workers who are trained to safely handle dead bodies are taking bribes so families can bury their loved ones with traditional ceremonies. If you know people who are considering this, tell them how dangerous it is.

When this lesson was written, over 4500 people had died of Ebola. Some of you may be grieving for a person who died. The Bible doesn't tell us why one person dies and another person lives. God is good, and we must remember that He understands everything that happens to us.

The person who died is not a worse sinner than the one who lived. Everyone in all nations is a sinner and needs God's love and mercy. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of

God” (Romans 3:23). Only God knows why one person lives, and another dies.

The Bible also tells us to rejoice with those who rejoice—those who get well—and mourn with those who mourn—those families we know where people have died (Romans 12:15).

Today, we’re going to talk about how to heal from the death of a parent, brother or sister, or good friend. People show their emotions in different ways. It is sometimes hard to understand what they are really feeling. Think about anger. People usually show that they are angry by changes in facial color, tightening their fists, shouting or getting excited. However some people show anger by being silent or not eating.

Suffering is even harder to understand than anger. Sometimes we don’t even understand our own feelings of grief.

Emotions that show grief and loss are often confusing. When you lose someone or something important to you, it is natural to grieve. Most of us cry at first, but as time goes on, we sometimes hide our emotions or bury them down deep because they are painful to feel. But they don’t go away. They just go below the surface. This is bad for us. Others think we are fine, so they don’t try to help us. But really we are hiding our grief and often hurting ourselves in the process. Why? Because we are not healing the way we need to heal in order to be healthy today and in the future.

Divide your class into groups of four. Explain that you are going to read things that their friends or others in their village might say to them. Each has to do with dying and grieving. The groups are to talk about what they would say to this person. Call on different groups to share what they decided to say. After they have shared, add the biblical view if they haven’t. The verses after each situation will help you do this. Study these verses before class.

If you are working with just one child, talk together about how you would say. Let the child do most of the talking. Then share how the Bible gives us help in this situation.

“I got angry at my friend’s father. I wished he would get sick with Ebola and that’s why he did.”

Teacher’s verse: “A person’s days are decided before he is born; you have decided the number of his months and have set limits he cannot live beyond” (Job 14:5). Let your children know that God loves us. He doesn’t punish us or pay us back when we think or do bad things because Jesus already bore that punishment for us.

“My little sister can’t be dead. Kids don’t die.”

Teacher’s verses: “Everyone will die someday” (Ecclesiastes 7:2, NIV). But it also says in Psalm 34:18, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.” It is very sad when children die. Every person will die someday, but God cares about your grief and wants to comfort you.

“I’m afraid I’ll get sick and die like my brother did.”

Teacher’s verse: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my good right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). Whatever you face in life, God is there to help you!

“God, I hate You because You made my dad die.”

Teacher’s verse: “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). Share that the Bible tells us that death came into the world at the beginning when Adam and Eve sinned. But God has made a way for people who believe in Jesus to live forever with Him.

“I miss my mother, but I know she loved Jesus. She’s happy in heaven and the Ebola can’t hurt her anymore, but I will always miss her.”

Teacher's verse: "The God of all comfort] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4). Share that God comforts us when we are grieving. Then we can help comfort others when they experience grief.

2. God says to me, "I will help you heal."

God made us in wonderful ways. He built into us ways to heal both physically and emotionally. Often we need emotional healing when someone we love, or even just know, dies.

Listen carefully to this section, even if you don't know anyone who has died of Ebola. God may use you to help someone who is dealing with grief. These are the stages that we go through when someone we know or love dies.

Let your children know:

People don't go through the stages of grief in the same amount of time. Some people take weeks, others take months, and sometimes people take years.

Not everyone goes through all the stages.

People don't always go through the stages in the same order.

People may come back to a stage they have gone through and go through it all over again.

God built these stages into us emotionally so we would be able to heal.

God is with us in every stage, walking beside us and comforting us.

Now talk with the children about each stage.

DENIAL

Denial happens when a person is shocked by the loss and can't believe it is true. The person thinks, "Other people die of Ebola, but not anyone I know." For example, the child's statement above that said, "My little brother can't be dead.

Children don't die" was in denial. People often go through denial when they are faced with death or a sickness, such as Ebola, cancer, or AIDS.

ANGER OR RESENTMENT

Anger or resentment is usually the second stage of grieving. The person's statement that said, "God, I hate you because You let my dad die" was in this stage. Grieving people may get angry with the people they think are responsible for making the loss happen. They are feeling such emotional pain that sometimes they are angry at doctors, taxi drivers who never showed up to take the sick person to the hospital, God, or even the person who died. This is a normal stage of grief. When people are in this stage it is easy to think they have lost their faith in God. This isn't true. They need to express their frustration and walk through this part of the grieving process. God understands.

TRYING TO MAKE A DEAL

Bargaining or trying to make a deal is sometimes a part of the grief process. The person tries to talk God into changing the loss by promising to do something for God. "If no one else in my family gets sick and dies, I'll become a Christian," is an example of someone who is bargaining.

DEPRESSION

Another stage of grieving is depression. This is a hopeless feeling. "I will never find anyone who loved me like my little brother did before he died," or "I feel worthless," are examples of someone in deep depression. Depression slows us down and is a paralyzing feeling because it prevents us from doing things we want or need to do. Almost everyone who has suffered a loss experiences depression. People who get through this stage of grief go on to the last stage, acceptance.

ACCEPTANCE

Remember the child's statement that said, "I miss my mother,

but I know she loved Jesus. She is happy in heaven and the Ebola can't hurt her anymore, but I will always miss her"? She is in the acceptance stage. She has accepted the truth that her mother is dead and that she can't change the loss. She is thankful for having had her mother, and now she is ready to go on with her life. This doesn't mean she forgets her mother or doesn't miss her any more. She is beginning to heal.

When we understand the grieving process, we don't need to worry that a person who is grieving has stopped trusting in God. We will realize they are normal and just walking through their sorrow.

You may not want to share this with your children. There are also two other steps that many children experience in their grief—guilt and fear. Children often feel guilty about somehow causing the loss. Because they don't understand the causes behind the losses, they feel responsible for them. Abandonment, or being left alone, is one example. "Mother wouldn't have left me if I had been a better person." Obviously, the child's reasoning is not correct.

Children are often afraid that what happened to someone else will also happen to them. What they don't understand, they fear. For example, a child might think, "My uncle is sick with Ebola upcountry and may die. I'm afraid my mother and I will catch it and die, too, even though there is no Ebola here."

3. I say to God, "I will tell You about others who are grieving, and You will help them, too."

I want you to sit quietly for a few minutes. Close your eyes. In your mind, picture a person you know who is grieving, perhaps because someone they loved is sick or has died of Ebola. Pray quietly that God will help that person grieve in a healthy way. Use that person's name when you talk to God. If you know more than one person affected by Ebola, keep praying until you run out of names.

Tell the children two things in closing:

First, God may give them a chance to comfort the grieving friends they prayed for. If He does, suggest they share the grieving process and then pray together that God will help the friend through the grieving process.

Second, tell them that you realize that one of them may be a child who is grieving. You are available to talk with them or pray when they would like to speak to you alone.

I Know There Is Life After Death

Lesson Four

Outline for Today

1. I say to God, "Without You, I'm scared to die."
2. God says to me, "I love all people and want them to live with Me when they die."
3. I say to God, "I want You to be my heavenly Father forever and I will tell others about You."

SUPPLIES

- None

The Lesson

1. I say to God, "Without You, I'm scared to die."

When the word "Ebola" is mentioned, everyone thinks of death. Death is scary, even for Christians because none of us has ever died before. Explain to the children that today you are going to talk together about what happens when a person dies. What they are learning today is true. It says so in God's Holy Bible.

- **If you could ask God one question about life after death, what would it be?**

People are afraid of death because we haven't ever had it happen to us before. Those who have died can't come back to tell us about it, so people have come up with their own ideas.

The ideas that don't come from the Bible are not true. God's Holy Bible tells what will really happen.

Here are some ideas of what some people believe. Discuss these things with your children, if people in your area believe them. These ideas are *not* true.

People made them up to help explain death without the help of God's true answer. What the Bible says is what really happens.

Some people believe there is no life after death. When you die, that's the end of everything. They believe there is only this earthly life. This is not true.

Some people believe in reincarnation. They believe that when people die they come back in a different form or as a different person to live another life all over again. Many of these people believe that what you were like in your last life determines what you will be in your next life. Those who believe this hope that the spirit works its way up to heaven by being better in each lifetime. If you were good, you return higher on the social scale. If you were bad, you return worse and could be an animal or a bug. When the spirit becomes perfect, it returns to live with its god. This is not true.

Some people believe that dead people return as spirits, ghosts, or demons that stay around forests, homes and rivers. They think these creatures come to torment the people who do not respect them or do things they don't like. People who believe this often believe that when the spirits are unhappy, people have to give sacrifices and perform spiritual rituals, like cleaning tombs and graves, so nothing bad happens to them. This is not true. Any bad spirits come from Satan and fight against God. The spirits do not come from people who have died. And God is more powerful than Satan and his demons.

Ask your children what other beliefs they know about. Then, share the truth.

What the Bible teaches is true. Here is what really happens after death to people who have God as their Heavenly Father.

Those who love God and trust in Him are invited to join Him in heaven and live with Him forever. They will be part of His loving family. This is what the Bible teaches. Heaven is God's special home. It is a place where people who trust in Jesus are His friends and live with joy and in peace. There is no sickness or evil or pain or death or tears there.

Jesus, God's Son, never sinned. He came to earth and died to pay for our sins so we wouldn't have to. But Jesus didn't just die to pay for our sins. He also died to take our sicknesses away from us. And, He also rose from the dead.

Only Jesus died, rose from the dead, and is alive with God the Father in heaven. For this reason, we look to Him to understand what happens after death. His body died, His body was raised back to life, and He is still alive right now. By His example, Christians know the truth. They will spend forever with Jesus and God, our Heavenly Father. Those who love Jesus can be absolutely certain what will happen when they die. They will go to heaven to be part of God's family.

When a Christian dies, his or her friends know they will see their friend again when they die. Jesus has promised that Christians will be with Him in heaven. Of course, friends are sad when they can't see him or her every day on earth, but they know that death on earth is not the end.

Read the following verses three times to your children. Then use the questions that follow the verses to talk about this more.

*Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;
and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.*

John 11:25–26

Listen to what else Jesus says:

*In my Father's house are many rooms;
if it were not so, I would have told you.
I am going there to prepare a place for you.
And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come
and take you to be with me
that you also may be where I am.*

John 14: 2–3

- **Based on what I've shared so far and on these verses, explain to someone two years younger than you what happens after death.**
- **In these verses, what does Jesus say happens to those who love Him when their physical bodies die?**
They will go to live in heaven when they believe in Him.
- **What does Jesus mean when He said, "I am the resurrection"?**
People who believe in Jesus will not die. Their bodies and spirits will be alive with Him in heaven.
- **Many people who died with Ebola were cremated. If their ashes are scattered all over the place, does this mean they can't go to heaven?**
No! God made their bodies and spirits. He can make them whole again in heaven.
- **In the second verse, what does it say Jesus is doing for us in heaven?**
- **What do you think the home in heaven will look like? The Bible doesn't tell us, so have fun and use your creative imagination.**

- I'm going to read you a verse from Psalm 16:11. I'll read it twice. Then tell me what it will be like when we make our home with Jesus. "You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."
- I'm going to read you what Jesus says in Revelation 21:4. I'll read it twice. Then tell me what won't be in heaven. "[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain."

Heaven is God's special home. Jesus was taken up to heaven after His resurrection to live with His Father. When we die, if we are Christians, we will go to our heavenly home to meet our Heavenly Father too.

Share the following information with your children if they ask, or if you believe they have questions.

What happens to people who never asked God, the heavenly Father, to be part of His family? This is a very important question. The Bible says that people who have accepted God will be rewarded and people who have not accepted God and do not love Him will be separated from Him. Only God knows who has accepted Him and who has not. We don't know. Only God knows. Some may believe in Him and accept Him right at the end like the thief on the cross (Luke 23:38–43). Whenever possible, we should share information about God our Heavenly Father with those we love. We want them all to be with us and with Him forever.

2. God says to me, "I love all people and want them to live with Me when they die."

Ask the children to think about God's family and how wonderful it is to be part of it. God loves everyone and wants all people to be part of His family. Share John 3:16 with the children:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one
and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but
have eternal life.*

John 3:16

Tell them that you want to share with them more about joining God's family. The following information will help you explain what it means to be a Christian.

Children who are ages 8-14 can understand the following things about joining God's family.

- They can understand that God is a loving, Heavenly Father, and He's in charge.
- They can understand that Jesus took their pain on the cross they wouldn't have to carry it.
- They can feel sorry about the bad things they have done and choosing their own way instead of God's that has separated them from Him.
- They can say with sincerity that they are sorry.
- They can understand that Jesus took the punishment for their sins that they deserved.
- They can understand that Jesus died for their sins. After He died, He came back to life.
- They can understand that Jesus is now in heaven preparing a place for those who love God the Heavenly Father and want to live with Him forever.

Encourage students to ask questions and to express God's plan in their own words. Reassure children that Jesus has a special place in His heart for them.

If one of your students clearly wants to follow Jesus, read the following truths to him or her, one at a time. (It would be great to spend some minutes alone with a child who wants to make this decision, so the child or teen feels no pressure from the group to make the decision.) If the child or teen believes the truth, he or she should say, "I (name) believe this is true." Tell each person to answer honestly. God is listening and wanting him or her to be part of His family. When each child has answered, pray with him or her.

God is a loving, Heavenly Father. He wants to be my friend. He wants to take my pain and fear.

But I have done wrong things and disobeyed Him. I deserve to be punished for what I have done.

But God loves me. He loves me so much that He sent His perfect Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for the wrong things I've done. Jesus never did anything wrong.

Jesus is wonderful. He loves children, teens and adults. He loves poor and rich people and people with power and without power. He loves people sick with Ebola and people who are healthy.

Jesus loves everyone. He loves me so much that He wants me to join Him in God's family. He was willing to die to make this happen.

Jesus died as the punishment for the wrong things each person on earth has done. But this is not the end of the story.

Jesus came back to life! Jesus is no longer dead. He is alive today.

Jesus wants me to love Him and live in ways that please His heavenly Father. This will bring joy to me and to my Heavenly Father.

When I believe these things, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit will live inside me so that God and I are never apart again. I can talk to Him whenever I want and know His closeness and friendship.

When I die I will go to heaven and live with my Heavenly Father forever.

Some children may not be ready to make this decision today. That's fine. Pray with them and tell them you would like to talk about this again in the near future. Tell them you will be praying for them. Ask them to think about God who loves them and to ask Him to show them the right thing to do. Someday soon they will understand. Then, it will be time for them to ask Jesus to guide the rest of their lives.

3. I say to God, "I want You to be my heavenly Father forever and I will tell others."

When you love God and know the truth about what happens when we die, you will want to tell others you love about Him. Close your eyes, and think for a minute now about the people you would like to tell. (Pause.) Think about what you would like to say to that person. (Pause.) Think about what you would say if that person said to you, "Yes, I want to love and serve my Heavenly Father. How can I do that?" (Pause.)

Silently pray now and ask God to give you opportunities to safely tell others about His love.

Christians Practice Good Hygiene

Lesson Five

Outline for Today

1. God says to me, "I made your body. Keep it as clean and healthy as you can."
2. I say to God, "I will keep my body as safe as possible from Ebola and other diseases."
3. I say to God, "I will share with others what I know about keeping my body healthy."

SUPPLIES

- If possible, a bowl of water and soap

The Lesson

1. God says to me, "I made your body. Keep it as clean and healthy as you can."

We have been studying Ebola and learning what scientists know about keeping safe from the virus. For example, health care workers now wear protective suits, masks, glasses, gloves, and shoe coverings so they don't get infected while they are treating people with Ebola. Even so, some caught the disease. In the fall of 2014, 416 health workers in East Africa had been infected and 233 died.

Finding qualified health workers is difficult. In just Sierra

Leone, an additional 750 doctors and 3,000 nurses are needed. The head of a medical charity said, "There is a significant fear factor. These caregivers are risking their lives for people they have not met. It's a courageous thing to ask them to do."

Developing safe equipment and training health workers takes money. The United Nations has made an urgent appeal for more money to fight the disease. They've set up a trust fund where people can donate money to help.

Ask your children to stop right now and pray for the country of Sierra Leone. Tell them that until recently, it had only one district in the mountains that had not been touched by Ebola. One worker said, "It was the only place you could go in the whole country and breathe a sigh of relief." But now Ebola has broken out there too.

Ebola has been limited mostly to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea since the outbreak was identified in the spring of 2014.

On the positive side, two African countries, Senegal and Nigeria, may have stopped the disease by having tighter border controls and good patient training and medical practices.

Ebola is a very bad disease, but it is only one thing that can make us very sick. Poor hygiene, or not taking care of our bodies, is another huge reason why people get sick. Today, we are going to look at personal hygiene. It may help you avoid Ebola and it will help you stay healthier in many ways.

• What is personal hygiene?

Simple steps we can all do to keep our bodies clean and as safe as possible. We can't avoid ever getting sick, but we can do some very important things to show we honor the wonderful body God gave us.

Listen to what the Bible says about our bodies:

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

If we don't take care of our bodies by practicing personal hygiene, we often become sick from bad germs we have not washed away.

Germs are so small that we can't see them with our eyes. They are so small that millions of germs could fit on the head of a pin. Germs are everywhere. For example, they are on the ground, on the table, in the street, in the house, and on things.

Some germs are good for us and are used in medicine. Some germs are bad and make people sick. Germs that make us sick are found in human and animal feces or waste and in rotten food and uncooked meat. Bad germs are also in body fluids like mucus from a runny nose and in unclean water.

Germs easily stick to dirt on your hands. From your hands, bad germs get into your body when you touch your mouth, eyes or nose. When they are in your body, germs can make you sick, especially with the cold or flu and diarrhea. Germs from your hands can get on things you touch and make other people sick. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze by doing it into your elbow. Keeping your hands clean helps everyone stay healthy.

Demonstrate hand washing. If possible have a bowl of water and soap. If not, just pretend to do the following demonstration.

Now I am going to show you something you already know. I am going to show you how to wash your hands. I will use just enough water to cover my hands. Now I will rub my hands together for about 20 seconds. It is important for me to use soap because soap breaks down dirt so germs can't stick to my skin anymore. See how I wash in between my fingers, my thumbs, my palms, the backs of my hands, and under my fingernails. Germs get caught under the tips of my nails. We should all keep our nails short and never bite them.

If I were at a sink, I would rinse my hands with running water. I want to use clean water. Finally I dry my hands with a towel.

Pick a child to redo this demonstration, while you keep talking as he or she demonstrates.

It's important to keep all your skin clean, not just your hands. Here are some fun things to know about our skin.

Skin is the largest body organ. An average adult's skin covers 6 ½ square meters, weighs 4 kilograms, and contains almost 18 kilometers of blood vessels. If you walked 18 kilometers, where would you be? That's how far one person's blood vessels would reach if they were all laid out in a straight line.

Every 24 hours, the top of the skin loses a layer of dead cells.

We shed an average of 40 kilograms of skin in a lifetime. How big a bag would you need to fill it with 40 kilograms of rice?

Every 28 days, the top layer of skin is completely new.

Skin is softer some places than others. Eyelids have the thinnest skin and our palms and the soles of our feet have the thickest skin.

Skin has three purposes.

- 1. It provides a waterproof barrier that keeps germs and dirt out of the body.**
- 2. Skin allows us to feel touch, pressure, heat, cold, and pain.**
- 3. Skin controls our body temperature.**

Here's how to keep your skin healthy. Wash your face and neck every morning and night. Try to wash your body every day. Start washing at the top of your face, neck, and ears; then work your way down to your toes. Make sure you really wash the places where dirt and germs like to collect—under your arms, between your legs, and on your feet. Be careful not to use soap in the area between your legs. It can cause the skin there to be irritated. Just use clean water in that spot.

Now let's talk about our teeth and hair. First, let's talk about how to brush our teeth.

Tell the children you are going to remind them how to correctly brush their teeth. Tell them to pretend a finger is the toothbrush, but they are not to put their fingers in the mouths. Their fingers may be dirty. They should just pretend to brush on the outside of their mouths.

To start, you need a toothbrush that fits in your mouth, toothpaste, and clean water. Clean water is water from a well or water that has been boiled or bottled or bagged. NEVER use water from a river, pond, or the sea. Also never use water to brush or drink that has already been used for bathing or washing unless it is boiled first.

Wet your toothbrush to make the bristles of your toothbrush soft.

Add a pea-sized drop of toothpaste to your toothbrush.

Start brushing the front of your top teeth at the back of your mouth. Hold your toothbrush sideways and make short strokes down from the gums. Brush the front side of all your top teeth.

Now brush the back of your top teeth the same way. Brush the front of your bottom teeth. Use short strokes moving up and away from your gums.

Now brush the back of your bottom teeth. Brush the bottom of your top teeth and the top of your bottom teeth.

Don't forget to brush your tongue to get rid of germs and have good breath.

Brush your teeth gently for two minutes. You can sing a two-minute song in your head to know how long to brush.

Brush twice a day, in the morning after breakfast and before bed.

Here's a rule for brushing your gums. Always brush your gums gently in the direction of your teeth. You do not want to push your gums away from your teeth.

Ask a child to demonstrate again.

Hair is next. Having clean, healthy hair looks nice and makes you feel good.

Here are two problems with hair:

Dandruff is dead cells from the skin on the head. It looks like white flakes on the scalp and can be itchy. You cannot catch dandruff from other people.

Head lice are very small bugs that cling to the hair and are hard to see. They suck your blood and lay eggs, called nits, in your hair. Lice bites are very itchy. If your head is very itchy,

ask an adult to check your scalp. You can catch head lice from other people.

Do not share your brush, comb or head covering with others.

Here's how to care for your hair:

Comb or brush your hair every day when you get up.

Wash your hair with soap and water at least once a week. When you wash your hair, gently rub your scalp with your fingertips. Make sure you rinse the soap out of your hair. Washing regularly gets rid of dirt, dead cells, oil, and sweat. Remember to grease your skin and hair to keep it healthy.

Wash your brush and comb to keep them clean.

If you are going to braid someone's hair, be sure that the person's hair and your hands are clean before braiding. Clean hair and hands BEFORE braiding is very helpful in keeping clean!

2. I say to God, "I will keep my body as safe as possible from Ebola and other diseases."

Encourage children to talk about what they have just heard about keeping hands, skin, teeth and hair clean. Use the following questions to guide the discussion.

- **What did you learn that you didn't know before?**
- **What makes personal hygiene important for everyone?**
- **Why is it especially important for Christians?**
- **Is there anything we talked about that would be hard or even impossible to do? If so, let's talk about some other ways you could keep your body as clean as possible.**

3. I say to God, "I will share with others what I know about keeping my body healthy."

This is a review. Ask children to demonstrate or talk about the following.

- **How would you explain to a little child how to brush her teeth?**
- **Explain to someone your age why it's important to have clean skin.**
- **A friend does not often wash his hands. Explain why this may make him or others sick.**
- **Your friend asks to use your comb. How do you explain why your answer is no?**

Close this session by asking one or more children to thank God for their wonderful bodies.

My God Is Stronger than Ebola!

Lesson Six

Outline for Today

Note—this Prayer Walk lesson does not follow the same pattern.

1. I say to God, "I want to take a prayer walk with You today."
2. God says to me, "I love when you talk to Me."
3. I say to God, "I want to talk to You every day of my life."

SUPPLIES

- Optional: leaves, stones
- Stick

If you can take the Prayer Walk as described below, you don't need to prepare any supplies prior to class. If you do the optional way, you will need leaves for each child (place 1) and stones (places 2 and 5).

The Lesson

Prayer Walk

This last lesson in this unit is a special one. Today you will pick five different places and go with your children to each of those places. At each place you do something different. Tell your children that this will be a "Prayer Walk." At each place, they will get to talk with God. If you are going through this lesson with only one child, you can still do the prayer walk.

If it is unsafe for children to go outside, this prayer walk can be done in a house or even a room.

Place 1

Take your children to a place where there are trees or bushes. Ask them to pick a leaf and look at it closely. Optional: give each child a leaf.

God made each of these leaves, and each is a work of art. Look at your leaf. What makes it different from other leaves? Can you see the veins, or lines, in it? Why do you think God cared enough to make leaves so special and so beautiful when many leaves grow and no one ever looks at them or thinks about their beauty? Do you think God cares for you more than He does leaves?

Yes, you are very important to Him. He knows that you are frightened of Ebola. It's a very scary virus. He promises to be with you even in the hard times. He wants you to know that you are millions of times more important to Him than the leaf you are holding.

Ask students to put their leaves in a pile and hold hands around the pile. They should pray aloud, asking God to keep them and their families safe. They should pray for the health care workers who deal with people who are very sick. Pray that they will get the protective coverings they need to stay as safe as possible.

Place 2

Ask students to find and pick up a smooth stone or pebble. Then point to a place where they should all meet in a few minutes. When they are all together again, say:

Take off your sandals. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Hold your smooth stone in your hand. Make it your "worry stone." Give it a worry name. What have you been worrying about? Now offer your worry to God. Let God take care of whatever that worry is.

Close your eyes and ask Him to take the worry. Imagine His love pouring over you. God doesn't want us to worry about things we have no control over. When you start worrying about things, it's like getting a sharp stone stuck in the sole of your sandal. It bothers you every step you take. Get rid of your worry and give it to Him.

Ask children to open their eyes and throw their stones as far away from them as possible. They are throwing away their worries and asking God to take care of them. Be sure they are throwing it away from all other people so no one gets hurt.

Place 3

Walk for about a minute in a direction away from where the students threw the stones. If you are doing the prayer walk inside, walk in a circle for about a minute. When you stop, explain that you are going to say some Bible verses together. These come from God's true book, the Bible. Explain that you will say one line, and they will repeat it after you. Go through the verses twice. The verses come from Psalm 46.

*God is our protection and our strength.
He always helps in times of trouble.
So we will not be afraid
even if the earth shakes
or the mountains fall into the sea,
even if the oceans roar and foam,
or the mountains shake at the stormy sea.
The Lord all-Powerful is with us.
The God of Jacob is our defender.*

Psalm 46

Place 4

Ask the students to hold hands and walk quietly with you for a little distance. After a minute or two, stop and say to your children:

In this part of the prayer walk, it doesn't matter where we're walking. The main thing is who is walking beside us. Imagine yourself with a good friend, with someone who loves you very much, someone who lights up the journey, and makes the walk easier. This "someone" is Jesus.

He is the light of the world. Close your eyes and remember how He calmed the storm, how He promises that we will be with Him forever, how He gave us wonderful bodies as gifts to keep healthy. He knows you by name. He loved you enough to give His life for you. He is all-powerful God, and He is our friend. That gives us hope for every part of life—today, even with Ebola in our country. He is much stronger than Ebola. Jesus is walking with us.

Share this poem with your students.

**Jesus is always with me.
Jesus loves me.
Jesus walks beside me
When I am happy, sad, or afraid.**

**Jesus will never leave me.
He loves me and wants me to trust Him.
Jesus is my friend.
He is always here when I am happy, sad or afraid.**

Now, tell them you are going to read it again. This time they should dance to the words and celebrate all Jesus has promised. If you are working with just one child, say the poem twice and then dance together while you read it a second time.

Place 5

Walk for about two minutes. As you walk, pick up a small stick. Ask the children to stand in a circle. Tell them you are going to give the stick to one of them. That child should hold it and say a sentence prayer to God. For example, he can ask Him to keep him safe from Ebola. She can tell Him how sad she is because someone she knew died. He can praise Jesus that He is with him always. If a child doesn't want to pray, he or she can simply give the stick to another student. A person can pray more than once.

If you are working with just one child, hand the stick back and forth, each of you saying several sentence prayers to God. When you are finished, close by praying something like this:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for loving each of us and promising to be with us always. I pray that the Ebola virus will be defeated soon. Please take this fear away from us and from our country. I pray for those who are sick and those who have been exposed and might get sick. Give them Your comfort. Strengthen their bodies to fight off this disease. Help the health care workers. Keep us safe. We love You. You are our Father and we are Your children. In Jesus' name, amen.

Email us!

Please email us the following information at Global@DavidCCook.org.

1. Your email address

2. The name of your country and the area where you live:

3. How many children were in your group? _____

4. Which of the following statements best describes your experience?

_____ These lessons brought my children closer to God and His love.

_____ These lessons were very helpful for my children.

_____ These lessons were somewhat helpful for my children.

_____ These lessons were not helpful for my children.

5. Which statements are true for your children? (Include all that apply.)

_____ My children learned helpful information about Ebola.

_____ My children were less fearful of Ebola after the lessons.

_____ My children learned to pray more honestly to God in these lessons.

_____ One or more of my children came to love God and be part of His family.

_____ My children shared what they learned about Ebola with others.

_____ My children are practicing better hygiene now.

6. Share a 2–5 sentence story about something that happened in your class.

Send us an email by simply writing numbers of the questions and your answers. Thank you!

Resource Article for Leaders

What I Need to Know about Ebola

Age-appropriate information about Ebola is included in most of the six lessons you will lead.

Ebola is a severe, often fatal, illness in humans. It is not unusual for more than half the people who get Ebola to die. This is not the first time there has been an Ebola outbreak. In fact, in 1976 there were outbreaks in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The name Ebola comes from the Ebola River in Congo.

How Ebola Started

Scientists believe the disease in people started when they touched the bodily fluids of infected animals. For example, if a hunter touched the blood of a monkey in the rainforest and that monkey had Ebola, it is possible that hunter would get it too. Other animals that can carry Ebola are chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelopes, and porcupines.

Ebola is the newest worldwide scare, but, right now, it is not as big a threat to the world as malaria, HIV or tuberculosis. It could be, but right now it is not. Ebola stands out from these other diseases because it appears in one to three weeks, and so many people die quickly from it.

Symptoms

Usually it takes about two weeks from the time a virus enters a person for that person to get sick. The person will then be sick for two or more weeks. Symptoms may be similar to those who have malaria, dengue fever, or other tropical fevers. Other symptoms are sore throat, muscle pain, and headaches. As the person gets worse, he or she might start vomiting or having diarrhea. Some people have symptoms like sore throat, chest pain, shortness of breath,

and trouble swallowing. Some reports say that 40 to 50 percent of the people with this disease die.

It's hard for doctors to be sure that a person really has Ebola until tested. At first the person may have the same symptoms as someone with malaria, cholera, or fever.

A person with Ebola will have decreased function of the liver and kidneys. They may begin to bleed within the body and externally.

How Ebola Spreads

Ebola spreads through direct contact with the blood or other body fluids of someone who already has Ebola and who is already showing symptoms. For example, a sick person sneezes. You breathe in some of the spray that is in the air from the sneeze. You could get sick, too. Or, if you are changing the bedding of someone who is sick and the bedding is contaminated with sweat, blood, diarrhea, or vomit, you could get sick if the fluids enter a cut in your hand. Body fluids that carry the disease include saliva, mucus, vomit, feces, sweat, tears, breast milk, urine, and semen. There is some evidence that there can be sexual transmission for over two months from a person who has recovered.

This is a terrible disease, but it really is a disease, not a curse. Some people have said it's a government plot. No, it is a disease. When this article was written in the Fall of 2014, 4500 people had died.

Treatment

There is no cure for Ebola. The earlier people come for treatment, the more likely they are to survive. But no one is quite sure what that treatment should be. Everyone agrees that touching body fluids from an infected person is how Ebola spreads. If you touch someone who is sick and then rub your mouth, nose or eyes, you could catch it. If possible, the person who is sick should be kept in a room with the doors closed. You should stay at least a meter away from a sick person.

Many people die of this disease, but many people don't. If a person survives, recovery is often quick and complete.

Efforts are underway to develop a vaccine. However none exists yet. Those who are infected are often given oral rehydration therapy—a slightly sweet and salty water to drink. Where possible, they are given intravenous fluids. This care improves the survival rate.

If a person dies from Ebola, he or she should be buried or cremated only with proper care. Direct contact with the person who has died should be avoided. You can still catch the virus from a dead person just as you could from a live person. People need to be educated so they know that if they have direct contact with the body of their dead friend or loved one during burial ceremonies, they could get sick too.

Prevention

Prevention includes not touching a sick person or being close enough to catch germs. When you are around someone who might have the disease, wash your hands often and for a long time. If possible, use hot water and lots of soap.

Don't handle bush meat, and if you eat bush meat, make sure it is cooked thoroughly.

Health care workers now wear protective suits, masks, glasses, gloves, and shoe coverings to avoid contamination while they treat people. All this is very expensive. The United Nations has made an urgent appeal for more money to fight the disease. They've set up a trust fund where people from any nation can donate.

Research Article for Leaders

Helping Children Cope with Worry

Worry is sometimes called anxiety or fear. It consists of uncomfortable feelings like being tense, nervous, or panicky. Bodily signs of worry include increased heart rate, butterflies in the stomach, sweaty palms, shaky hands, dizziness, headaches, and stomachaches. Some children develop nervous habits such as nail-biting, hair twirling, knuckle cracking, or fidgety legs.

Common Worries:

- World events like the Ebola crisis, war, terrorism, and natural disasters
- Performance—how they are doing at school or as part of a team
- Appearance—how they look
- Social problems—making and keeping friends, being bullied, or feeling left out
- Safety of self and loved ones
- Death

When Worry Is a Problem

- When worry is age-inappropriate (for example, when older children or teens fear monsters, the dark, thunder and lightning, or sleeping alone)
- When worry is so strong that it is very upsetting to the child
- When worry interferes with relationships and daily activities such as school or play
- Re-living a traumatic experience, being easily startled or frightened, or avoiding situations that are reminders of a trauma may be signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

How You Can Help

Listen and use empathy. Your children's worries are very real to them, even if they seem trivial to adults. Before they can tackle their worries, they need to feel supported and understood.

Share the facts. Sometimes children and teens worry because of misinformation or a lack of understanding. When children have questions about big issues such as Ebola or war, provide them accurate information and calmly explain what adults are doing to help.

Share the big picture perspective. When children worry about small things, point out that many problems are temporary and solvable, and they will have other opportunities to try again. Teach your children to be strong and hopeful.

If your child doesn't improve by talking about fears and getting information, it may be necessary to take him or her to a counselor or health care worker. However, most children walk through their grief and their fears by talking about the concerns with a caring adult.

Problem-solve. Talk through problems and help your children come up with solutions, but don't solve their problems for them.

Offer comfort and reassurance. Sometimes when children are worried, they need a hug, a talk, or time together doing something fun or positive. The prayer walk in Lesson 6 is an example.

Relax. Teach young people how to slow their heart rates and relax their bodies by deep breathing, imagining their favorite place or memory, or tensing then relaxing muscles in their arms, legs, neck and shoulders.

Think positive. Teach children how to talk back to their worries. They can tell themselves why their lives are in God's hands. Even Ebola can never separate them from His love.

Face fear. This course doesn't allow children to ignore the truth about Ebola. But it encourages them to face those fears with God as their confidence.

Read the Bible and pray together. This course is filled from beginning to end with prayer and God's promises. Children and teens can give their worries to God.

Be a good role model. Set a good example by your response to Ebola. Show your children that you are confident and trust God to help you.

This resource was written by Dr. Carey Sturgeon.

Resource Article for Leaders

How to Help Children Who Are Grieving

Children feel grief when someone they know dies, is sick or is injured. They also feel grief when they are abused or when they live through natural disasters, like a famine or a flood.

Children go through stages of grief. Lesson 3, "Someone I Know Died of Ebola," explains these stages.

Short Times of Grief

Children go through short times when they feel very, very sad. In between the sad times, they may be happy and act as if the terrible thing had never happened. You can never tell when they will be very sad or happy and playful. Their emotions are still developing, and they will not respond like adults do. Sometimes in the middle of a happy time, something will happen to remind children of the loss. This can be something someone says, something they remember or even something they smell. You just never know when it's going to happen.

Most Children in Grief Will Experience These Things:

- They don't want to eat.
- They don't sleep enough, often waking up several times at night.
- They have headaches and stomach aches.
- Nothing pleases them.
- They have difficulty paying attention.
- School grades go down.

Some Children in Grief, But Not All, Will Experience These Things:

- They will eat too much or vomit what they do eat.
- They will have nightmares.
- They will be angry and want to fight.
- They won't make new friends.
- They worry that more bad things will happen.
- They won't believe that the bad thing happened.

Children and teens with these symptoms may need to see a doctor or counselor.

What Grieving Children Need

Grieving children and young teens want you to know that just because they experience grief differently than adults does not mean they are too young to feel hurt. They are worried about what is going to happen to them and they fear being left alone. They want to talk about loss, but they don't know how to start. They feel less upset when someone explains what has happened and what is going to happen. As they grow up, they may experience grief again at important events, such as a high school graduation or their own wedding.

Sometimes adults want to make grieving easier for children, so they don't share the details of what happened. For example, when a friend dies, the child isn't invited to say goodbye to the loved one. This does not help a grieving child. Children are helped when they are told the truths about a death (even one from Ebola). They are helped when they can be part of the funeral or a church service that honors the death of the person they knew—if they want to be a part of the event and if they can do so safely. Answer the questions they ask, and answer as honestly as possible.

What Not to Do

Adults sometimes tell children to be strong and not to feel sad. Don't do this. Children will learn to not trust their feelings. They

will learn to hide their feelings. They may even be ashamed of their feelings. This can stop them from healing. Adults sometimes say things that don't mean anything to children. For example, "At least she's not suffering now." Or, "She's in a better place." This makes children feel like they are wrong to feel pain and sadness.

When our children experience loss, they want others to know how bad they feel. They want adults to share their sadness, too. This sharing can help the child begin to heal.

Six Steps to Help a Grieving Child

What is the best way to help a child who has had a terrible loss and is grieving? First, build a friendship with that child.

Second, talk about what happened. Ask questions and listen when the child answers. The child may not be ready to talk for some time, so you will need to be patient. Know that the child really does want to talk about what happened.

Third, when the child or young teen is ready to talk, listen. Don't stop your child by asking questions or correcting a wrong detail. Let the child talk. You can't say anything that will make the pain go away, but listening helps. Let the child know that her feelings are okay. She may need to tell her story many times.

Fourth, let the child or teen know that she will survive. A child may be frightened and not know what to do with the feelings inside her. Tell her over and over that soon she will begin to feel better, even though she will never completely forget her loss.

Fifth, you might suggest some ways a child can hurt less. For example, the child could write a letter to the person who died. Or the child might make a memory book or plant a tree or flowers for a loved one who dies. She might build a memorial out of rocks and branches. Every time she sees it, she will remember how

wonderful the person was. Tell the child that there is nothing wrong with having fun and being happy.

Sixth, be ready for the child to feel guilty and fearful from time to time. Be ready to comfort and reassure her that you are there for her and God is, too.

This resource was written by Dr. Carey Sturgeon.