

Show Up for Those Who Mourn

1

JOB 2:10B-13



GOAL

Youth practice showing up and being present for people they care about, including in times of mourning or grief.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

God, center me in your peace. Encourage me with your hope. Guide me with your wisdom. Amen.

THIS SESSION

To comfort someone who mourns or grieves is to simply show up, to be present, to share a physical or virtual space, to let them know that they are not alone in their loss. It is a ministry of presence and companionship, turning our attention to the one who is hurting. Sometimes we want to offer words of comfort or assurances that all will be well. At other times, we don't know what to say or fear that we may say something wrong. When we meet a person where they are—physically, spiritually, and emotionally—it is not about giving advice or trying to fix them, but to simply be with them.

THE BIBLE STORY

Job faced a series of tremendous losses: his livestock have been stolen; the people working for him have been murdered; his children have died after wind destroyed their house; his skin has become plagued. Job's stability, health, prosperity, and joy have been compromised. He is deeply grieved.

In Job 2:10b–13, Job's friends show up, intending to console and comfort. They empathize with his grief, weep alongside him, and simply sit with him on the ground for seven days and nights. In a ministry of presence, Job's friends meet him where he is: at his house, on the ground, in silence, and in grief. They feel his grief with him.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Youth support their friends and family during important moments, such as attending sporting events, band competitions, dance recitals, art exhibits, and more. Showing up for people who are mourning, however, may be a new experience. These events often involve sadness, anger, doubt, grief, and questioning. Help youth connect a practice they already engage in but in a new context, showing up and being present for people they love.

SESSION PREPARATION

- “About Me” (p. 6): Write and display activity instructions on newsprint.

Depending on the options you choose:

- “Opening Litany” (p. 6): Use different colored markers to write and display the opening litany on newsprint. Save it to use in remaining sessions.
- “A Friend's Response” (p. 7): Write listed actions on index cards.
- “Showing Up with All Senses” (p. 8): Label newsprint sheets, each with one of the five senses: touch, sight, smell, taste, hear.
- “Not Alone” (p. 9): Obtain *Comfort Those Who Mourn* infographic poster (bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters, Year 3 Set).

GETTING STARTED

- Prepared newsprint
- Paper
- Markers

ABOUT ME

CT

Prepare and display newsprint with the following instructions:

Respond to the statements, writing your responses on your paper where directed.

Center: Write your name.

Top left corner: Distance/time you traveled to be here today.

Top right corner: Your feelings in this moment.

Bottom left corner: Reasons you showed up today.

Bottom right corner: List what else you might be doing at this moment.

Give each youth a sheet of paper and a marker. Refer them to the prepared newsprint with instructions for writing on their papers.

Gather youth and invite volunteers to tell one another what they wrote on their paper.

Thank them for showing up today and explain that today's lesson is about showing up for other people, even when it isn't easy or comfortable.



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- Newsprint
- Colored markers

OPENING LITANY

QC

One color: What is our comfort in life and in death?

Second color: Knowing that we belong to God.

One color: What can separate us from God's love?

Second color: Absolutely nothing can separate us from God's love.

Jesus is with me.

Jesus is within me.

Jesus is behind me.

Jesus is before me.

Jesus is there to comfort and restore me.

One color (*not spoken*):

—adaptations from the Heidelberg Catechism, question 1;
Romans 8:35, 38–39; St. Patrick's Breastplate

Display prepared newsprint. Lead youth in an opening litany. You read words written in one color; youth read in unison the words in the second color. Save the newsprint for use in sessions 2, 3, and 4.

BIG MOMENTS

C

Invite youth to describe the last time they showed up for a loved one during a big moment. Offer examples such as a sports event, art show, musical or dance recital, or birthday. Encourage them to talk about the event, who was there, what emotions people expressed, and what they did. Use these questions for discussion:

- What do you think your loved one felt knowing you were present?
- What do you think your loved one thought about your presence?
- Why is it important for us to show up for the people we love?

SHOWING UP

G AM

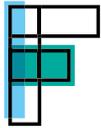
- Moveable chairs

Invite youth to help place chairs in a circle, facing each other. Have youth sit in the chairs. You stand in the center.

Explain that the person in the center will name an event that they want loved ones to show up for. For example: “I want people to show up when it’s my birthday,” or “I want people to show up when I’m not feeling well.” If youth sitting in the circle agree with the statement, they are to stand up and find another seat in the circle. They may not return to the same chair. The person in the center of the circle tries to get a seat. Whoever is left standing then names an event and the activity continues.

Following the game, use these questions for discussion.

- What are other words or synonyms for *show up*?
- What does it mean to you when people show up during important moments?



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or more options.

TRUE OR FALSE

CT

Read the summary of Job’s losses from “The Bible Story” (p. 5). Set aside one copy of Resource Page 1 for your reference. Cut apart a set of cards from Resource Page 1 for each small group of youth.

Form groups of at least three youth. Distribute card sets to each group. Challenge youth to separate the cards into piles of true or false if the statements happened to Job or not. Check their work using your copy of Resource Page 1.

Discuss what the youth think Job was feeling during all that happened to him. Explain that today’s Scripture tells of how Job’s friends responded to his tragedies. Distribute Bibles. Read Job 2:10b–13 aloud as youth follow along. Invite them to identify the different ways Job’s friends offer support and comfort to Job. Discuss whether they would find these actions comforting. Have them say what they might do to comfort a friend in a situation of loss or grief.

- Copies of Resource Page 1
- Scissors
- Bibles

A FRIEND’S RESPONSE

AM AT

Distribute Bibles. Read the summary of Job’s losses from “The Bible Story” (p. 5). Read Job 2:10b–13 aloud as youth follow along. Distribute index cards to each youth. Have them spread out around the room and pantomime the action on their card. One by one, invite each youth to explain to the group what they are doing. Explain that these represent the actions Job’s friends took to be present with and comfort Job. Discuss what they think is comforting about the actions of Job’s friends. Invite them to identify other actions that comfort another person.

- Bibles
- Prepared index cards
- Pen

 Write these actions on separate index cards. Prepare enough cards for each youth to receive one.

- Weeping aloud
- Tearing your robes
- Sprinkling dust on people’s heads
- Sitting on the ground
- Offering sympathy and comfort

Bibles

MODERN JOB

D

Distribute Bibles. Read the summary of Job's losses from "The Bible Story" (p. 5). Read Job 2:10b–13 aloud as youth follow along. Form groups of four youth. Invite them to imagine the story of Job in modern times and prepare to act out the story. Encourage groups to consider what tragedies Job may have experienced, how his friends learned that Job was mourning, and how his friends showed up for him.

Invite groups to perform their skit. Invite them to name differences and similarities between the skits.



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

Internet-connected device

SITTING SHIVA

T C

Ask youth if they have heard about the Jewish tradition of sitting *shiva*. Invite them to share what they know. Explain that sitting *shiva* is a Jewish mourning practice with certain behaviors prescribed for a number of days.

Show the YouTube video "Why Do Jews Sit Shiva?" (bit.ly/FMWhySitShiva, 1:09). Invite youth to list the different practices of sitting *shiva*. Identify how people are showing up in this practice.

Show the YouTube video "Rochester Community Invited to 'Sit Shiva' for Victims of Gun Violence" (bit.ly/FMViolenceShiva, 1:02). Discuss the following questions:

- ➔ What and who are being mourned?
- ➔ How do the practices of sitting *shiva* vary in the two videos?
- ➔ What was important to the participants who sat *shiva* in these ways?

Internet-connected device

IRANIAN PROTESTS

T C

Show the YouTube video "Students Gather in Tehran to Mourn Victims, Protest Iran Officials in Wake of Downed Plane" (bit.ly/FMTehranMourn, 1:44). Invite youth to share their impressions and responses to the video. Use these questions for discussion:

- ➔ What are people in the video mourning?
- ➔ What actions did you see of people mourning?
- ➔ How were people showing up for others who were mourning?
- ➔ How do you think the families of the people in the plane felt by the ways people showed up?

Five sheets of newsprint

Markers



Label each newsprint sheet with one of the five senses: *touch*, *sight*, *smell*, *taste*, *hear*. Display these around the room.

SHOWING UP WITH ALL SENSES

CT

Invite youth to reflect on a time that they showed up for someone. Provide markers. Have youth move to the five newsprint sheets and list different things they touched, saw, smelled, tasted, or heard during that *showing up* experience. For example, they touched a friend with a hug; they saw pictures; they smelled flowers; they tasted food; they heard music.

After all youth have contributed, acknowledge the similarities on the lists. Then acknowledge the differences. Discuss various ways of showing up that move beyond words.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Explain that active listening involves paying attention and focusing on the person who is speaking. Only clarifying questions are asked if needed.

Form pairs. Explain that each person will take turns talking about their experiences with loss and grief for approximately 90 seconds, while their partner actively listens. Their experiences could pertain to the death of a loved one or pet, an end of a friendship, a move, an injury that prevented them from participating in something important, or other experiences.

Encourage youth to talk about how they felt with each loss, what their grief looked like, and what helped them heal. Keep time and indicate when 90 seconds has passed. The listening partner has 30 seconds to reflect back what they heard before switching roles and repeating the active listening.

Gather youth and discuss these questions:

- ➔ What feelings came up when you listened to the other person?
- ➔ Why do you think it is important to allow space for those who are grieving to talk?
- ➔ Is it easy to show up for those who mourn? Why or why not?

C



Teaching tip: When discussing experiences of grief and loss, assure participants that they may opt out of sharing their stories.

GRIEF CYCLE

Distribute copies of Resource Page 2. Explain that there are five common stages of grief as described by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross in *On Death and Dying* (1969). The stages can occur in any order and can look different from person to person because everyone mourns differently. These stages can arise even years after the grief-event occurs.

Read the description of one stage. Invite a volunteer to read the phrases associated with that stage. Ask the group how they could show up for someone who is in that stage of grief. Repeat for each stage.

Discuss the following questions:

- ➔ Which stages would be hard for you to show up for someone mourning? Why?
- ➔ Which stages would be easy for you to show up? Why?

C AT

Copies of Resource Page 2

NOT ALONE

Display the *Comfort Those Who Mourn* infographic poster. Read aloud the information in the two boxes in the middle of the poster: “Grief is . . .” and “You Are Not Alone.” Invite youth to summarize today’s session: “Show Up for Those Who Mourn” in their own words. Have them study the poster and identify actions that reflect *showing up*.

Challenge youth to name actions they do when comforting a loved one. Discuss the intended effect of these actions. If anyone in the group has received or offered support and comfort by showing up, invite them to tell about their experiences. You may offer a personal example if appropriate.

C

Comfort Those Who Mourn infographic poster



FOLLOWING JESUS

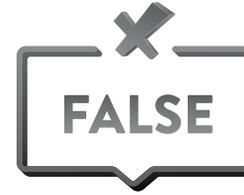
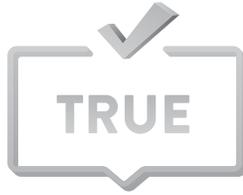
JOYS AND CONCERNS



Form a circle. Remind youth that we show up for each other during sad, bad, happy, and good times. Go around the circle and invite youth to name one joy and one concern in their life.

Lead the group in a prayer for the joys and concerns they identified. Conclude by saying the Lord's Prayer in unison.

True or False



People stole Job's oxen and donkeys.

A drought killed Job's crops.

Fire burned Job's sheep and the servants watching them.

Job's house burned down in a fire.

People stole Job's camels and killed the servants watching them.

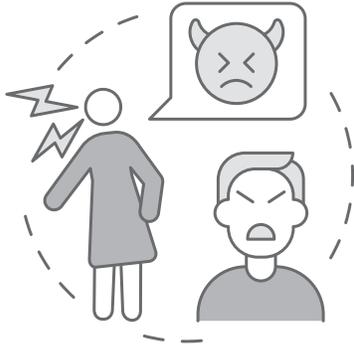
Job's dogs ran away during a storm.

A wind collapsed Job's son's house, and all his children died.

Job fell and broke his bones.

Job's skin broke out in painful sores.

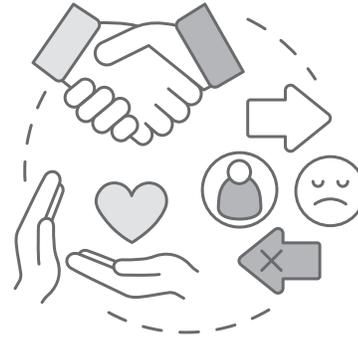
Job's wife became ill.



ANGER

“I hope they fail.”
“They should have known better.”

Anger is a masking effect that can hide the pain someone is experiencing. Anger can be targeted at people or objects not directly linked to the loss and may include feelings of bitterness or resentment.



BARGAINING

“If only I had called them, this wouldn’t have happened.”
“If only I was better, things would be different.”

When people mourn, they can feel out of control. Bargaining is an attempt to regain control of the situation, even though it is not always rational.

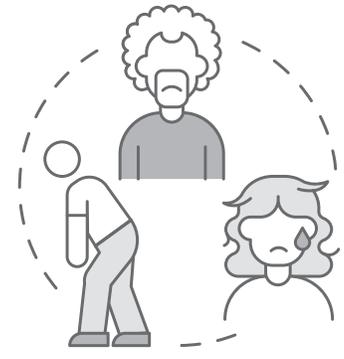
THE STAGES OF GRIEF



DENIAL

“This isn’t happening.”
“It’s not true.”

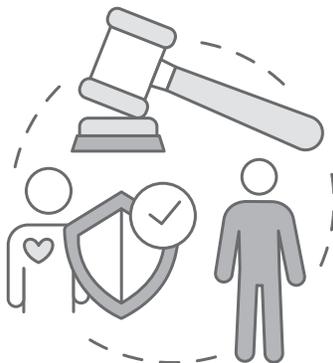
Denial is a coping mechanism that suppresses the grief someone can feel after a loss. It is common for people who mourn to feel numb at some point.



DEPRESSION

“I don’t know how to go forward from here.”
“My whole life is in shambles.”

People who mourn may find it hard to get out of bed, care for their basic needs, or engage with other loved ones. This is usually a quiet stage of grief.



ACCEPTANCE

“I am thankful for the love I have shared with others.”
“I have many new opportunities going forward.”

Sometimes people experience peace while mourning. Acceptance usually takes time. People who have accepted their loss can still feel anger, depression, or denial.