



FROM BROKENNESS TO WHOLENESS

A basic training for children's leaders
working with children wounded by trauma



INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Part of the 1for50 family
of training resources

Revised April 2021



About this Training

This manual will help you facilitate the six-lesson trauma training, "From Brokenness to Wholeness." It will address several of the main areas in which 1for50 feels it is important to prepare teachers who work with children wounded by trauma. After participating in the entire From Brokenness to Wholeness training, participants will:

1. Know and embrace their role as agents of hope in the lives of children wounded by trauma.
2. Understand what trauma is and how it affects a child's whole being.
3. Be equipped to build trusting relationships with children and understand the stages of grief and healing a hurting child will experience.
4. Know the value of listening to children who have been wounded by trauma and be equipped with basic skills in active listening.
5. Understand the damage trauma can cause to a child's spiritual foundations and how to minister to children to help rebuild these foundations.
6. Be prepared to use Bible stories to share foundational truths with children who have been wounded by trauma.
7. Know how to share the Gospel story, From Brokenness to Wholeness, with children.
8. Be equipped with ideas for connecting the Gospel with a child's point of need.

We want teachers and leaders to get the most out of participating in this training. Adults are practical and learn best when they can participate, collaborate and bring their life experience to the training. For that reason, much of the lesson content is discussion and activity-based, with guidelines for the trainer to help discussions stay on topic. It will allow participants to share their successes and challenges in working with children who have experienced trauma, because they have a unique and powerful role in God's plan.

The material presented in this training is designed to provide you with a framework, but the instructor's notes and activities can be modified to reflect and meet the unique cultural needs of your audience. Plan to personalize the material for your audience and your community.

Each lesson has two to four pages of participant handouts containing key information and discussion questions from the lesson. The handouts are not required for the lessons, but they offer support and information to participants.

After your training is completed, please reportify (report and testify) on your event. You can reportify by sending a report to your 1for50 Regional Champion, emailing the 1for50 Global Leadership Team at 1for50@gmail.com or by filling in the online Activity Form on the 1for50 website (www.1for50.net).

Special Considerations for This Training

Because of the specialized nature of the trauma training, we recommend this training be taught in its entirety and that you teach the lessons in the order they are presented in this manual. We also recommend that participants receive basic children's ministry training, such as the one-day 1for50 TWELVE training, prior to attending this training.

Trauma is a sensitive and difficult topic and can trigger many emotions in participants. We need to recognize that participants who attend our training may have experienced trauma as children, experienced trauma as adults, or have children dealing with trauma. Therefore, as a trainer, we encourage you to make the training a safe space for participants by:

- Creating a welcoming and hospitable environment.
- Assuring participants that the training is a safe space to share their experiences and their thoughts and that everything they share will be confidential. Repeat this in every session.
- Providing space for participants to deal with their own grief and trauma in the training.
- Knowing where to direct participants who need to work through their own trauma. You may even want to consider inviting a local Christian counsellor to join you during your training.
- Being prepared to give pastoral care as needed and when appropriate.

Trauma can also be a difficult subject for trainers. We recommend training in pairs or with a team to allow you to step away from certain lessons that may be difficult for you to teach.

How to Use this Manual

As you prepare to teach each lesson, prepare your own heart with prayer. Ask God to open the hearts of participants and to help you share from your heart about the topic. Read through each lesson and the Scriptures used in the lesson. Also gather or prepare the materials listed for the lesson.

Lesson Format

The first page of every lesson offers an overview of the lesson, including:

Objectives: the goals and outcomes for the lesson

Lesson Overview: a list of the lesson's activities and time required to teach each activity

Materials: a list of the materials to be prepared or gathered to teach the lesson as it is written

The rest of the lesson (4-6 pages) includes:

Introduction: a short opening activity to capture people's attention and introduce the lesson's topic and importance

Activities: three to five learning activities, each lasting from 5-20 minutes, providing a variety of creative interactions, group work, etc.

Reflection and Action Steps: a time for review, reflection questions, commitment and prayer

Notations in the Instructor's Guide

Questions: All discussion questions asked by the presenter are in bold type.

Scriptures: All Scripture references are noted in bold type. Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are from the New International Version (NIV) and New Living Translation (NLT).

Instructions: Instructions for what the presenter should do are put in parentheses ().

Transitions: Transition statements help move the session from one section to the next and are presented in a colored box between the sections.

Icons in the Instructor's Guide



Indicates a story to engage the heart. Feel free to substitute the story with one more relevant to your context



Indicates an interactive opportunity for you to ask your audience a question and invite responses



Indicates a small-group discussion or activity

Indicates which PowerPoint slide to use for each section of content



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Materials (Needed for Each Lesson)

- Bible
- Instructor's notes included in this manual
- Participant handouts for each participant
- PowerPoint presentation (optional)
- Pens or pencils and paper for participants to take notes
- White board, chalkboard or large piece of paper
- White board markers, chalk or permanent markers

Technical Needs (optional):

- Computer with PowerPoint installed
- Screen and projector to show Powerpoint slides

Changing or Adapting the Curriculum

This curriculum module is open source. In other words, there are no copyright restrictions. You have permission to reproduce, modify, translate, and distribute this resource while keeping it true to its intent. Since this curriculum is a free resource, it must be kept free (it cannot be sold for profit). If you translate these lessons into another language, we encourage you to share them with the 1for50 global family. Please send updates and translations to 1for50@gmail.com.

About 1for50

1for50 is a global, grassroots movement that equips local leaders to reach, disciple and empower the next generation for Christ.

About OneHope

This material was created in partnership with OneHope. With more than 30 years of children's ministry experience, OneHope has provided resources and training to effectively deliver God's Word to more than one billion children and youth around the world.



Lesson 1

Embracing Our Role as Agents of Hope

Objectives

After this lesson participants will:

- Feel encouraged to walk with children who are hurting.
- Identify the source of hope in their own life and ways to strengthen it.
- Understand God's role and their role in a child's healing journey.

Lesson Overview

Welcome & Introduction	15 min
A Story of Hope	5 min
Overflowing with Hope	10 min
Starting from the Right Place	20 min
Reflection and Action Steps	10 min

Approximate Total Time: 60 min

Materials

Illustration Options:

- Cup or glass of water
- Tray or towel
- 1 sheet of paper for each participant

Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

Scripture Passages:

- Romans 15:13
- Jeremiah 2:13
- Romans 15:4
- Psalm 119:49
- Jeremiah 14:22
- Lamentations 3:21-23
- Psalm 33:18-22
- Ephesians 1:18
- 1 Peter 1:3

Welcome and Introduction

15 min

Welcome

(Greet participants and thank them for coming to the training. Introduce yourself and the training team. Open in prayer.)



Getting to Know Each Other: Sentence Starters

Before we begin the training, we would like to spend a few minutes getting to know one another.



(Ask participants to move to an open space, find a partner and introduce themselves to their partner. Explain that you will share the beginning of a sentence that each partner must finish. You may want to finish each sentence to demonstrate an example as you read it. Suggested sentence starters:

- I am from ...
- The people in my household include ...
- My favorite hobby or leisure activity is ...
- I love working with children because ...
- I came to know Jesus when ...
- I am attending this training today because ...

After partners have shared answers for the first sentence, say, "Switch." Each person should find a new partner and introduce themselves again. Then share another sentence that each partner will finish. Play five or six rounds and then have participants return to their seats.)

We have different reasons for attending the training today. But hopefully we all are here because we share God's heart for children who have been wounded by trauma.

Today's training on children and trauma will look at the following topics:



1. Embracing our role as agents of hope
2. Understanding trauma
3. Walking the journey of grief and healing with children
4. Learning how to listen to children
5. Rebuilding spiritual foundations
6. Connecting the gospel with a child's point of need

This training is designed to give you a basic foundation for working with children who have experienced trauma such as illness, death of a loved one, abuse or war. But there is much more to learn about every topic. We have listed additional resources in the appendix of your notes, and we encourage you to continue growing and learning more about ministry to children in trauma.

We began with an activity to get to know one another because it is very important in a training like this to feel comfortable with one another. The topics we will discuss today can be difficult, so we want this to be a place where you feel safe to express your thoughts and experiences with others.

We also began with a get-to-know you activity because who you are matters. God loves you and sees you, and He has a purpose for you being here today.

In this first lesson, we will explore together how we can be agents of God's hope as we walk alongside children in need of His healing.

A Story of Hope

5 min



I'd like to begin by sharing a true story with you.



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Mary grew up in a poor urban community in the Philippines that was known for drug trafficking and prostitution. Neither parent had a permanent job, and the family often was hungry. Mary's father was a drug addict, and she was abused in different ways as a child, filling her with a sense of fear, shame and hopelessness. Her life was chaos!

With the help of her aunt, Mary started attending church and came to know Jesus. The children's workers at the church lovingly reached out and cared for her and her needs. Even though she knew Jesus, her circumstances did not immediately change nor was the pain she experienced from trauma immediately healed. But the message of the gospel gradually changed the way she viewed herself and God as her heavenly Father. That message of hope allowed her to start thriving and begin her journey of healing, even in a place of poverty and hopelessness.

Today as an adult, Mary runs a ministry for exploited women and children in the same city where she grew up. She speaks as an advocate on behalf of those whose voices have been silenced by poverty, abuse, exploitation and greed. She also leads a Christian radio broadcast with children that reaches half a million listeners! Mary realizes all these things have been made possible because of God's great love in her life, shown to her by God's people who responded to His call.



What is one thing that stands out to you or encourages you from Mary's story? (Invite participants to share in groups of 3-4 people. After two minutes, have a few volunteers share responses with the whole group.)



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Mary's story moved from brokenness to wholeness because of her aunt and the children's ministry workers of the church who reached out to her, cared for her, and introduced her to the good news of Jesus. As she experienced healing through her relationship with Jesus and the church community, she, in turn, also has become an agent of hope for thousands of others, sharing what she has received.

We, too, can be an agent of hope for a child who has experienced trauma. However, we must begin by paying attention to the source of that hope.

Overflowing with Hope

10 min

What Comes out of the Cup?



(Set a cup on a tray and fill it to the top with water. Bump it with your hand so that a little water spills. Ask: **Why does water come out of the cup?**

Answers will most likely include, "Because you bumped it; it is too full; water needed a place to go." Bump the cup again, and repeat the question. The third time ask the question again, but emphasize the word, "water."

Eventually, participants will realize that the correct answer is, "Water comes out of the cup because water is in the cup.")



Water spills out of the cup because water is in the cup. If I had filled the cup with juice or tea, that is what would come out. The same is true for us.

In our lives and ministries, different people and circumstances bump up against us. (Bump the cup.) Sometimes those people and circumstances are quite difficult, including children who have been wounded due to traumatic experiences. Whenever we encounter those difficult people, behaviors or situations, whatever is inside of us will come out. As teachers and children's workers, we want the peace and hope that comes from God to spill out of our lives into the lives of others.



Scripture Reflection

Read Romans 15:13. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (NIV).

In this verse, Paul's desire and prayer was for the believers in Rome to be filled with hope. But notice the sequence in how this filling happens. Both God and the believer have unique roles.



What is God's role? (Hear responses.) He is the God of hope. He fills us with His joy and peace. He makes hope overflow from within us through His Holy Spirit.



What is our role? (Hear responses.) We trust in Him and receive from Him to give to others.



What is one thing that encourages you or challenges you as you reflect on your role and God's role? (Invite participants to share their responses in pairs.)

As we trust in God, He fills us with His joy and peace. As He fills us with His joy and peace, we will overflow with hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the one doing the work. We simply become the channel to share His hope to children who are hurting.

Starting from the Right Place

20 min



We know God's heart is for hurting children to experience His hope and healing through Jesus. We know He wants them to move from brokenness to wholeness. This is our desire, too. But our eagerness to help children cannot be the place where we begin. We must not rely only on our own resources as agents of hope, because they are never enough.



Think about people, including you, who have reached out to help hurting children. **How did you or others respond to hurting children?** (Hear several responses.) **Now think more deeply. Why do you think you or others responded in that manner? From what sources were you drawing?** (Write responses on a board.)



Scripture Reflection

Invite a participant to **read Jeremiah 2:13**: "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water" (NIV).



When we think of this verse in the context of helping hurting children, the first part seems obvious. We have seen people who forsake God and respond to hurting children with evil or manipulative intent. However, the verse also speaks to all of us and "gives us our challenge powerfully and clearly. We are so often tempted to create our own cisterns to hold children's pain and lead them into healing."¹

Broken Cisterns

(Refer to the list on the board.) We identified sources from which we draw when we help children who are wounded by trauma. Some are based upon God, but some of them use our own resources. **Which of these sources are examples of our own "broken cisterns"?** (As examples are identified, draw a bowl/cistern around them.) **What are other examples of broken cisterns we create or draw from when working with children who are hurting?** (Hear responses. You may need to give some examples to get participants started. Draw cisterns/bowls on a flip chart or white board and label them as participants answer. Possible answers include:



- Our own skill and gifts
- Our knowledge and training
- Our experience
- Reliance on a program



¹ Riley, T. and Wright, J-J. (2006). Identifying the Skills and Qualities of Those Who Work with Children. In G. Miles and J-J. Wright (Eds.), *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People Living in Difficult Circumstances Around the World* (p. 207-223). Paternoster.



While these resources can be useful and helpful, they are not where we must begin. (Hold up the cup.) Imagine that we have tried to fill our cup with all the things identified in these cisterns/bowls. **When we then minister to a child wounded by trauma, what possible attitudes and responses could come out?** (Write responses on the outside of the bowls. Possible answers include:

- Frustration
- Being overwhelmed
- Helplessness and inadequacy
- Our own wisdom and advice
- A desire to try to solve everything)

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Springs of Living Water

To effectively minister with children who have experienced trauma, we must be filled from the spring of living water. In Jeremiah 2, God says that He is the spring of living water. He is the one who fills us with hope.

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Let's look at several passages of Scripture and what they tell us about the different sources of hope God provides.

(Invite volunteers to read the passages below. Then have them summarize the source of hope mentioned in the passage.)

Romans 15:4: Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled" (NLT). God's Word gives us hope.

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Psalms 119:49: "Remember your promise to me; it is my only hope" (NLT). God's promises give us hope.

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Jeremiah 14:22: "Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, Lord our God. Therefore our hope is in you, for you are the one who does all this" (NIV). The work God does gives us hope.

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Lamentations 3:21-23: "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (NIV). God's character – His love, His compassion, His faithfulness – give us hope.

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Psalms 33:18-22: "But the Lord watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone" (NLT). The ways of God, the things He does for us give us hope.

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Ephesians 1:18: “I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance” (NLT). Our position as God’s people gives us hope.



1 Peter 1:3: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...” (NIV). We have a living hope through Jesus and His resurrection.



How blessed we are as the people of God to have such a wellspring of hope! But just as we need to go to a spring daily for drinking water, we also need to be daily drinking from the spring of living water. **What are some specific ways we can connect with God in order for Him to fill us with His hope?** (Hear responses. Answers should include worship, reading His Word, meditating on God’s promises, thanking Him for how He has provided, trusting Him with our needs, asking Him to fill us with us with His Spirit.)



When we abide in Christ, when we are filled with His Spirit, when His Word is in our hearts, when we remember who He is and who we are in Him, we are filled with hope, and that hope can overflow as we work with children who have been wounded by trauma. **When God fills our hearts with hope, how will we respond when we encounter children who have been wounded by trauma? What attitudes and responses will we see overflow from within us?** (Hear responses.)



- Humility
- Reliance on the Spirit
- Love and compassion
- Patience
- Courage
- Hope

God is the source of living water for each one of us as we seek to minister to hurting children. We may feel inadequate to the task, but God can use us as we allow His hope to overflow in our lives.

Reflection and Action Steps

10 min



Think back to the story about Mary, told at the beginning of this lesson. Mary’s story shows that God is the God of hope. Mary experienced pain and trauma. It took a long time to heal. But through her aunt and others, God did a work of healing and redemption in Mary’s life. He brought her from brokenness to wholeness. He can do the same for children we know who have been wounded by trauma. We simply need to trust Him and rely on Him so that He can fill us and minister through us. We can be agents of hope.

What has God been saying to you? Take time to listen to His voice as you reflect on the following questions.

(For each of the following questions, ask participants to write their answers in the "Action Steps" section in the participant notes for this lesson. Read each question aloud, and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers.)

1. **What is one new thing you learned about being an agent of hope, and how will it change what you do?**
2. **What broken cisterns are you tempted to draw from when ministering to hurting children?**
3. **What will you do, instead, to be filled with God's living water?**



(Give a sheet of paper to each participant.) As we close this lesson, let's focus on God, our source of hope. As you reflect on God, which of God's characteristics fills you with hope? Think of a word or phrase that describes what fills you with hope. Then write the word in large letters on a sheet of paper and decorate it if you wish.



(After 1-2 minutes have participants take their sheet of paper and place it on the floor in an open part of the room or along the walls of the room. Then give 3-4 minutes for participants to prayerfully go around the room and read all the papers, to stop at the words that speak to them, and to thank God for who He is and who we are in Him. Play worship music softly while they do this. Finally, encourage participants to find one or two other people and spend a few moments praying together, asking God to fill them with joy and peace so that they will overflow with hope as they minister to children who have experienced trauma. Pray that they will always go to the spring of living water as the source of their work with children. Pray that they will be agents of hope.)

Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented.)



Lesson 2

Understanding Trauma

Objectives

After this lesson participants will:

- Understand the different types of trauma a child might experience.
- Identify the multiple losses children experience through trauma and the effects of trauma on a child's whole being.
- Be aware of the physical, behavioral and emotional indicators of trauma in children.

Lesson Overview

Introduction	5 min
Trauma and its Causes	10 min
Losses from Trauma	15 min
Trauma and Spiritual Growth	5 min
Indicators of Trauma	10 min
The God Who Heals	10 min
Reflection and Action Steps	5 min

Approximate Total Time: 60 min

Materials

Illustration Options:

- Sticky notes

Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

Scripture Passages:

- Psalm 147:3
- Exodus 15:26

Introduction

5 min



I would like to tell you a story, God's Big Story. It begins when God called into being a marvelous creation. Humans were created in God's image. They were whole, in perfect communion with God and one another. Everything in creation was perfect, the way God designed it to be:

- Creation was whole.
- People were whole.
- People's relationship with God was whole.
- People's relationships with each other were whole.
- People's relationship with creation was whole.
- Things were the way they were supposed to be.

But humanity refused to follow God's guidance and chose to seek life apart from Him: sin entered the world. As a result, their relationship with God was destroyed, they experienced personal shame and guilt and were expelled from the garden. All that God had created was broken:

- Creation was broken.
- People were broken.
- People's relationship with God was broken.
- People's relationships with each other were broken.
- People's relationship with creation was broken.

God chose to express His redemptive plan for the world through the Israelite people. God gave them a promise of future redemption, hope and healing. Moses gave the Law, and the Israelites tried to restore relationship and wholeness through the Law, through judges and kings, but without success. God's word was spoken but not heeded. Brokenness remained.

The coming of Jesus is a turning point in the story. Christ came to bring restoration and healing through living out and teaching the reality of the kingdom of God, a message of salvation holistically demonstrated by healing physically, emotionally and spiritually. Through His death and resurrection He removed the spiritual brokenness and made a way for humans to be reconciled to God and restored to wholeness.

Through the Holy Spirit we now live as agents of God's kingdom on earth, bringing the good news of wholeness through Christ to a broken world. But one day God will make all things new. Everything will be restored in the new heavens and earth including the final redemption of humanity for those who believe.

- Creation will be restored.
- People will be restored.
- Relationships will be restored.
- And God Himself will come down and dwell with us.
- There will be no more brokenness. Hallelujah.

▶ 28

▶ 29-30

▶ 31

▶ 32

▶ 33

▶ 34



What stands out to you as you think about God's Big Story in scripture in the context of brokenness and wholeness? (Hear responses.)

Sin brought brokenness into the world, and the traumas children experience today are a result of that brokenness. While we look forward to the day when God completely makes all things new, we know He longs to bring healing now to children who are hurting.

In the Psalms we read, "He [the Lord] heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds" (**Psalms 147:3** NLT). We must continue to minister as agents of hope and wholeness for children who are hurting and broken.



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Trauma and Its Causes

10 min



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What is Trauma?

Trauma is defined as an unexpected out-of-the-ordinary experience which causes distress and a sense of being out of control.² Many of us in this room have experienced some form of trauma in our own lives.



Think back to a traumatic experience you had, such as an accident, natural disaster, sudden loss of a loved one, illness, etc. **What reactions did you experience in your body, emotions, thoughts, actions and relationships?** (Allow participants, if they feel comfortable, to share their experiences in pairs for two to three minutes. Be aware that this question may bring pain from their trauma to the surface. Be sensitive to the non-verbal feedback you receive and allow space for participants to go for a drink of water or express emotions freely. Assure them of your care for them.)



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Reflecting and remembering our own reactions to trauma can be painful. But it also helps us to understand what others may feel or experience, including children in our community who are hurting due to trauma.



As you think about children in your community, what are some of the traumatic things they have experienced? (Invite participants to share responses. Write responses on a white board or flip-chart.)



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The Difference Between Calamities and Evil Deeds

The traumatic experiences we shared fit into two categories: Calamities and Evil Deeds.³



- Calamities: Trauma that was not caused or intended by humans, such as an earthquake or an illness. **Which of the traumas on our list are calamities?** (Circle the examples on the board that are calamities as participants identify them. Examples include floods, earthquakes, fires, illnesses, diseases, pandemics, accidents, death.)



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² Greener, S. (2006). The effects of failure to meet children's needs. In G. Miles and J-J. Wright (Eds.), *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People Living in Difficult Circumstances Around the World* (p. 127-135). Paternoster.

³ Adapted from Velazco, G.A. (2001). Petra College Lectures.



- **Evil Deeds:** Trauma that was deliberately caused by humans, such as war or robbery. **Which of the traumas on our list are evil deeds?** (Underline the examples on the board that are evil deeds as participants identify them. Examples include bombings, war, physical and mental abuse, rape, violence, crime, exploitation, neglect.)

Losses from Trauma

15 min

Identify Losses

Whenever trauma occurs – whether from a calamity or evil deed – a loss is experienced. As we think about children, we must remember that losses that seem minor or trivial to us as adults may still be traumatic to a child, such as the death of a pet. Of course, some types of trauma have greater impact than others, with deeper and longer-lasting effects.

The losses children experience can be put into four different categories. Physical losses include losses related to their body, such as their home or health. Social-emotional losses include relationships or the way they view themselves. Mental losses affect their minds, such as their ability to concentrate. Spiritual losses include things like the loss of faith.



What types of losses might a child experience due to traumatic events?

(Divide into groups of 6-8. Give each group six post-it notes or small pieces of paper. On each post-it note/paper have them write one loss a child might experience due to trauma. Write the following four titles on a board or on flip-chart paper laid flat on a table or the floor: "Social-Emotional Losses," "Physical Losses," "Mental Losses," and "Spiritual Losses." When groups have finished their papers, they can place them into the category the loss best fits. When all the papers have been placed, read them aloud, eliminating any duplicates. Answers may include:)

Physical Losses	Social-Emotional Losses	Mental Losses	Spiritual Losses
Basic needs Health Use of body or senses Home, country Security Opportunity	Family or friends Identity, status, or position Personal integrity Self-respect Innocence Happiness Confidence	Normal routines Brain function Education Concentration	Faith Hope Dreams Trust

Debrief: (Large group discussion)

- **What are some things that you notice as you look at this list of losses?**
- **Why is it important to understand multiple losses children might experience?**

(Important things to include in the debrief if not mentioned by participants)

- One loss might lead to another loss. For example, if a child loses a parent, they might also lose love, security and possibly faith.
- Trauma affects a child's whole being. It can wound them physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.
- Children may not realize they have multiple losses. Our awareness helps us to minister to them at their various points of loss.



All traumatic experiences will be painful to a child. **As you consider the wounds and losses caused by calamities and those caused by evil deeds, which traumas are easier to deal with or recover from? Why?** (Hear responses.) It is easier to deal with calamity-related trauma. Trauma from evil deeds destroys the child's basic trust in the bond between humans. The closer the relationship is between the child and the violator, the greater the damage to the child. That is why evil deeds such as abuse and violence in the family are so much more traumatic to a child than disasters from the outside. The losses take much longer to grieve and heal. Though we always can be an agent of hope and healing for a child, in some severe cases, it is important that a professionally trained counselor be consulted to assist the child.

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When children have experienced losses due to trauma, especially if they have been victims of evil deeds such as exploitation, abuse or abandonment, they may grow to find it difficult to believe in a God who loves and cares for them.

Trauma and Spiritual Growth

5 min



Look at our created list of losses children suffer in trauma. **How might their losses impact a child's understanding of God?** (Brainstorm together.) Answers may include:)

- A destruction of trust (in people and in God)
- Loss of true identity and worth as having been created in the image of God
- Feeling unloved and incapable of giving love
- Lacking a sense of belonging
- Loss of innocence
- Guilt over their behavior
- If they have been hurt by their father, God as a "Father" is not comforting
- Anger that God did not protect them or rescue them

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Why is it important to understand the impact of trauma on children's view of God? (Hear responses.)

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One key issue that relates directly to the way children understand and relate to God is their ability to trust adults. The degree to which a child trusts adults influences his or her ability to trust a Heavenly Father. If a child's view of God is damaged, we cannot simply preach or pray for them and expect they will receive or accept. Think of a child's heart like soil. This is seed falling on

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rocky soil or soil with weeds. We need to tend the heart of a child who has experienced trauma so they can receive the Word and God's love for them. We will talk more about this later in our training.

Now that we understand the losses children face, we are ready to understand the indicators that help us identify that trauma has occurred.

Indicators of Trauma

10 min



Because trauma affects every part of a child, we should expect to see these effects manifest themselves in children in response to the trauma they have experienced. Some of these behaviors and emotions are expressions of the grief from losses that children are experiencing inside.

Think of a child you know that has experienced trauma. What behaviors and emotions did they express? Did they act out? Were they withdrawn? Now look at the checklist in your notes called, "Indicators of Trauma in Children,"⁴ and put a check mark before each line item that describes the child you identified. When you are finished, form groups of 3-4 people and compare the indicators you observed.



BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS: WHAT THEY DO

Bullying and aggression: attacking things or people
Declining grades: poorer and poorer performance in school
Family and peer conflicts: fighting or arguing with family and friends
Misbehaving: getting into trouble with the law/juvenile crime
Poor concentration or attention
Poor peer relations: not getting along with children of the same age
Regression: reverting to younger behavior (baby talk, clinging, bed-wetting)
Running away
Social withdrawal: they don't want to mix with friends or family
Being overly friendly or seeking physical contact with adults they do not know well
Stealing
Substance abuse and self-harm: glue sniffing, alcohol, drugs
Tantrums: violent outbursts of anger, kicking, or shouting

EMOTIONAL INDICATORS: WHAT THEY FEEL

Anger: making more enemies than friends
Anxiety: being tense and worried all the time
Insecurity: clinging to adults, refusing to be left alone
Depression: feeling very sad, hopeless, or tired for extended duration
Fear: of adults (or specific adults)
Guilt
Low self-esteem or lack of self-confidence
Obsessions: "fixating" on specific things, repeating actions
Often thinking about suicide

⁴ Adapted from Velazco, G.A. (2001). Petra College Lectures.

PHYSICAL INDICATORS: WHAT THEIR BODIES SHOW

Bruises: purple or blue marks, swellings, rashes on the body
Cannot eat properly or overeats
Bed-wetting or soiling themselves
Headaches or stomach aches
Pain, itching, bad body odor
Problems walking or sitting
Sleep disturbance: cannot sleep or sleeps too much, nightmares



What stands out to you as you look at this list of indicators? (Hear responses.) This checklist is a list of typical indicators of trauma in children. The presence of one or more of these indicators does not necessarily mean trauma has occurred, but the presence of several indicators may mean some type of intervention is required.

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Many times, the change in a child's normal behavior is what indicates something has happened to him/her, such as a talkative child becoming very quiet or a happy child suddenly being depressed. Remember, every child and every situation will be different when responding to trauma. It is easy for adults to focus only on behaviors and label children as "naughty" or "problem children." But the naughtiness can be hiding much deeper hurts or needs. These children often need love and acceptance more than anything because they are showing the symptoms of a deeper trauma.

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As we consider the brokenness that causes trauma and the brokenness which results from trauma, our hearts may feel overwhelmed.

The God Who Heals

10 min



How are you feeling at this point in the training? After learning about trauma and how it affects children, how are you feeling: overwhelmed, sad, hopeful, tired? Write one word or phrase to describe the emotions you are experiencing. (Give each participant a sticky note/small piece of paper. Have them write down one or two words describing how they feel at this point in the training. Then have them place their sticky note next to the characteristics of God scattered/hung around the room from the first lesson that addresses their feeling.)

54

At the beginning of this lesson we **read Psalm 147:3** "He [the Lord] heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds" (NLT). When we are confronted with pain and suffering, whether from our own pain or that of children, we must feel that pain, but we also must remember the character of God. (Read some of the feeling papers aloud and then read some of the character-of-God postings aloud.)

55

When God brought the Israelites out from Egypt, they came to a place where they needed water, but the water they found was bitter. God showed Moses a piece of wood to throw into the water. When he did, the water became fit to drink. Then God said these words to Moses:

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Read Exodus 15:26. “If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you” (NIV).

“I am the Lord who heals you.” The Hebrew name God uses for Himself in this verse is Jehovah Rapha. Rapha means to heal or make whole.

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God is Jehovah-Rapha. He is the God who heals and makes whole. He does not always heal in the same way. He does not always heal instantaneously. But He does heal. He does bring wholeness from brokenness. And because of that, we can have hope – both for ourselves and the children to whom we are ministering.

Reflection and Action Steps

5 min

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What is God saying to you about your response to the children in your midst who have experienced trauma?

(For each of the following questions, ask participants to write their answers on the “Action Steps” section in the participant notes for this lesson. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers.)

1. **Think about a child you know who has experienced trauma and look at the four categories of losses. What were some of the losses they have experienced?**
2. **Are you currently working with children who show multiple indicators of trauma? Write down their names. What specific things can you pray for them?**

 59

(Have a time of prayer together or in small groups. Pray for the children experiencing trauma in your community/nation and the losses they have experienced. Ask God to open your eyes to children who are hurting because of trauma. Pray that God would be Jehovah Rapha – God their healer.)

 60

Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented.)

Lesson 3

Walking the Journey of Grief and Healing with Children

Objectives

After this lesson participants will:

- Understand that the underlying emotion children experience due to trauma is grief and be able to identify the stages of grief a child will experience.
- Understand the importance of building trusting relationships with children who have suffered trauma and have practical ideas for building trust with children.
- See how their own journey of grief and healing can speak into a child's life.

Lesson Overview

Introduction	5 min
Stages of Grief	15 min
Building Relationships of Trust	10 min
Our own Journey of Grief and Healing	10 min
Reflection and Action Steps	10 min

Approximate Total Time: 50 min

Materials

Illustration Options:

- Signs that say "Neighborhood of Anger and Denial," "Neighborhood of No Hope," and "Neighborhood of New Beginnings."
- Tape
- Three chairs

Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

Scripture Passages:

- Nehemiah 1:1-4
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Introduction

5 min



As we read the Bible, we see that trauma and loss have been a part of humanity's story ever since sin entered the world. Nehemiah was one of God's faithful followers who experienced trauma and loss. Due to Israel's disobedience, God allowed the Israelites, including Nehemiah, to be taken captive and sent into exile. After many years, groups of Israelites began to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their city and their lives.

Read Nehemiah 1:1-4. "In late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was at the fortress of Susa. Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem.



They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire. When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven" (NLT).



Nehemiah had experienced many losses, including his home, his country, and the honor of his people. **As we look at this passage, how did Nehemiah react to these losses?** (Hear responses. Answers should include he wept, he mourned, he fasted, he prayed.)



Nehemiah experienced grief in response to the losses he suffered. **Have you ever experienced grief?** Grief is the combination of emotions and reactions we have anytime we lose someone or something important to us. "Whether small or enormous, all losses affect us and make us experience some degree of grieving."⁵



In the previous lesson we identified the many losses children experience when trauma occurs. Every loss they experience due to trauma causes grief. While every child will express their grief differently, grief is normal and is part of their journey toward healing and wholeness. But children need our help. They need trusting, caring adults who can walk with them and support them through the grieving process.



In this lesson we will learn about the journey of grief and healing and how we can be a trusting support to a child as we walk with them along the journey.

⁵ Hill, H. et al. (2014). *Healing the wounds of trauma: How the church can help* (North American Edition, p. 33). American Bible Society.

Stages of Grief

15 min

(Set up three chairs with several feet in between each chair. Label the first chair "Neighborhood of Denial and Anger," the second chair "Neighborhood of No Hope," and the third chair "Neighborhood of New Beginnings." Option: change the title 'Neighborhood' to something more appropriate for your group: village, camp, bus stop, etc.)

The following material that will help us understand the journey of grief was first developed in the "Healing the Wounds of Trauma" curriculum published by the Trauma Healing Institute. The Trauma Healing Institute is part of the American Bible Society and is a great place to find additional resources as you minister to hurting children.

It is helpful to think about the process of grieving and healing as a journey with different stops along the way. During each stage children will demonstrate different behaviors, which are a manifestation of the grief they are experiencing. Think about grief like a volcano. When children experience grief, their hearts are like the inside of a volcano. The emotions and behaviors they display are like the lava that flows (spews) out of the volcano – the visible expression of what is happening inside of them. As we look at each stage, we will also identify some of the behaviors children might display during this stage.



Stages of Grief

When children suffer a loss, one of the first stops they will make is at the Neighborhood of Denial and Anger. They may be angry over the loss they have experienced, angry that God did not answer their prayers. They may even have a hard time believing that the traumatic event occurred. (Move to the chair marked "Neighborhood of Denial and Anger" and sit down.)

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What kinds of behaviors might you see from children at this stage of grief? (Hear responses. Answers should include aggression, irritability, defiance, refusal to participate, etc.)

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Another stop on a child's journey of grieving is the Neighborhood of No Hope. (Move to the next chair.) At this stage children will experience hopelessness, where their sense of loss will feel overwhelming. **What kinds of behaviors might you see children exhibit at this stage?** (Hear responses. Responses should include isolation, tears, depressive behaviors, self-harm, unresponsiveness, fear, etc.)



But there is hope! As children grieve and experience God's love and healing, they will move toward the Neighborhood of New Beginnings. **What kinds of behaviors might you see as children move toward New Beginnings?** (Hear responses. Answers should include: you might see longer periods of play, more smiles, less tension, willingness to talk about the loss, adjusting to a "new normal," etc.)

The Journey



For those of you who have experienced grief and healing, is the journey from the Neighborhood of Anger and Denial to the Neighborhood of New Beginnings a straight line? (Hear responses.)



We know from our own experience that grieving and healing rarely follows a straight line. This also is true for children. Children will go back and forth between the stages. They may arrive at the Neighborhood of No Hope, only to have a few days of being angry again. They may feel like they are experiencing new beginnings only to have a reminder of the trauma trigger a sense of loss and grief. And we never know how long they will remain in any of the neighborhoods before moving on. (Move back and forth between the chairs as you explain this.)

The severity of the loss they have experienced and the support they have around them will affect the healing journey of a child. For example, a child who has been sexually abused by a family member will most likely have a longer journey of grief and healing than a child whose father has lost his job. A child who has strong relationships of love and support with their family will more than likely heal faster than a child without strong family relationships.

The False Bridge

"Sometimes we think that since we have the gospel and believe all the promises of God, it would be wrong to feel angry or sad about a loss. Our culture may reinforce this idea."⁶ We may even share this perspective with children who have experienced loss. We might tell them to simply trust God and not be sad. We might encourage them to receive Jesus so all their pain will go away.



But this is a false bridge. The false bridge promises a way around the pain of grieving. It appears to provide a straight path from the moment of the loss directly to "New Beginnings" without passing through neighborhoods 1 and 2. (Walk past the other neighborhoods directly to the Neighborhood of New Beginnings and then fall down on your knees.)



Why do you think this is a false bridge that will not lead to healing?

(Hear responses. Answers should include: children don't have time to process their grief; they might have a distorted view of God because of their trauma; not grieving leaves them in a state of denial.)



God made us with the need to grieve our losses.⁶ As agents of hope working with children, God has given us both the privilege and responsibility to walk with children through their grief in helpful, life-giving ways. What might children need from us on the journey?



⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

Building Relationships of Trust

10 min

One of the most important things a child needs on their healing journey is a relationship with a caring, trusting adult. Trust is essential for a person's sense of safety and value and forms the basis for all relationships.⁷

Unfortunately, some children who have experienced trauma have lost their ability to trust adults. How do we develop trusting relationships with children who have been wounded by trauma?



Think about the people in your life whom you trust. Why do you trust them? (Hear several responses from the group.)



As you consider the answers we have shared, what are some ways that we can build trusting relationships with children? (Divide participants into groups of 4-5 people and give them five minutes to discuss. Then hear a few answers from each group and write the answers on a white board or flip chart. Be sure to include the following answers if they are not mentioned by the groups.)

- Value children as unique individuals
- Model in word and deed what you are teaching from God's Word
- Be a person of truth. Keep your word, be honest
- Respect children – respect their boundaries, listen to them
- Be consistent and reliable
- Only make promises you can keep
- Be patient – do not force a relationship
- Be available and accessible)

Trust is developed over time as we consistently demonstrate love and respect to children. Trust will help children feel safe and valued. This is why it is so vital that we build relationships of trust with children as they journey toward healing from grief and trauma.

As we walk with children on their journey of grief to healing, we must be aware that we, too, may be on our own journey of grief and healing. We all experience trauma and losses in our lives that impact us in different ways and at varying degrees.

⁷ Kilbourn, P (2013). *Healing for Hurting Hearts: A Handbook for Counseling Children and Youth in Crisis*. (p. 168). CLC Publications.

Our Own Journey of Grief and Healing

10 min



In your handouts you have a picture of the stages of grief. Consider one significant loss you have experienced in your life. Then, on the diagram in your notes, mark where you are on your journey of grief. **Are you in the Neighborhood of Anger and Denial? Are you in the Neighborhood of No Hope? Or are you in the Neighborhood of New Beginnings?**



(Give participants a few moments to reflect and mark their maps. Then invite them to share what they discovered with a partner.)

If we could hear from everyone, we would see that many – if not all of us – are on this journey of healing right now. Perhaps you have experienced a loss recently and you have just begun your journey. Perhaps you have experienced a trauma in your life that you have never grieved. We want to remind you again that there is hope. God is Jehovah Rapha, and He is with you on your journey of grief and healing. Perhaps some of you have experienced healing and are in the Neighborhood of New Beginnings.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. “All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with His comfort through Christ. Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us” (NLT).



What does this verse say to us about our own suffering and the suffering of others? (Hear responses.)



God will redeem our suffering and trauma. When we experience healing and move from brokenness to wholeness, our experience becomes a powerful testimony of hope to children who are now on that same journey.



Reflection and Action Steps

10 min



Journeys can be short, but they also can be very long. They have unexpected setbacks and turns in the road. They require patience and perseverance. The same is true of children who are healing from grief and trauma. They need us to accompany them for the long term. As we walk with children on their journey of grief and healing, let us be the one they can lean on.

As you reflect on your role while you walk the journey of grief and healing, what is God saying to you, and how will you respond?

(For each of the following questions, ask participants to write their answers on the “Action Steps” section in the participant notes for this lesson. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers.)

1. **Have you ever tried to build a false bridge to heal from grief? If so, what might you do differently?**
2. **If you have experienced trauma and loss in the past, how might it help you walk with a child who is on the journey of grief and healing?**
3. **What are one or two ways you will build a trusting relationship with a child in order to walk with them along their healing journey?**

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(Have a time of guided prayer, allowing people to pray individually after you prompt them. Pray for the grief and loss participants have experienced. Pray for those who are still on their journey of healing. Thank God for those who have received healing. Pray that we will build trusting relationships as we walk with children on their journey. Pray that God would be Jehovah Rapha – God their healer.)

Talking about trauma and grief can be hard and cause many emotions to rise within us. If you are struggling right now, it is okay to take a break. Perhaps you would like to spend more time in prayer or go for a walk. Perhaps you need someone to talk to or to pray with you. If so, please reach out to us or to someone else that you trust.

(Note to Trainer: Be aware of the need to take time during a break after this session to pray with individuals whose grief has surfaced during the session.)

Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented.)

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Lesson 4

Learning to Listen Well

Objectives

After this lesson participants will:

- Be able to identify and implement key dynamics for good communication with children.
- Be equipped with basic skills in active listening.
- Know the value of listening to children.

Lesson Overview

Introduction	5 min
Active Listening Demonstration	15 min
Interactive Demonstration	10 min
Listening Practicum	20 min
The Ministry of Presence	5 min
Reflection and Action Steps	5 min

Approximate Total Time: 60 min

Materials

Illustration Options:

- Mirror
- 1 sheet of paper for drawing for each participant

Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

Scripture Passages:

- Proverbs 18:13
- James 1:19
- Job 2:11-13

Introduction

5 min

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If we desire to build trust and walk with children who have experienced trauma, it is essential that we learn to listen well to them. It may seem strange to think of learning to listen, but it is a valuable and necessary skill as we walk with children who are hurting. The way we listen can either help or hinder children's ability to work through their trauma.

Think of a time in your life when you had something important to share with another person, and you felt they really listened well. Think of what they said or did not say. Think of how they acted. **What happened? How did you know they were really listening? How did you feel because of the way they listened?** (Allow participants to share in pairs for two minutes and then hear several responses.)



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The Scriptures remind us of the importance of listening. **Read Proverbs 18:13.** "To answer before listening—that is folly and shame" (NIV). **Read James 1:19.** "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (NIV).

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Both these verses remind us that it is important to listen first and wait to speak. Sometimes it is difficult to listen and not speak when children are going through hardship. But one of the most valuable gifts we can give to children who are hurting is the feeling that someone has really listened to them.

This lesson will guide us in learning how to listen well to children.

Active Listening Demonstration

15 min

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Watch the following demonstrations of an adult listening to a child. Take note of the things the adult does well or not so well. Imagine that this child is lingering after class one day. (These demonstrations must be practiced in advance so they can be done well without reading the scripts.)

Scenario #1: Poor Listening

(Be sure to use body language that is not inviting throughout the script, such as no eye contact, not sitting with the child, staying distant, arms folded, checking phone, etc.)

Child: (Sitting and looking sad)

Teacher: (Notices the child and speaks somewhat impatiently) What's wrong, _____?

Child: (sniffles)

Teacher: Speak up. I do not have all day.

Child: Um, Last night some thieves broke into our house.

Teacher: Thieves! That's terrible! What happened? Where were your parents? What did the thieves take?

Child: Um, I don't...

Teacher: I bet they took your new television. They always look for electronics and things they can sell. I remember when my cousin was robbed. Ooh, they took all the expensive items, and almost cleaned out the whole house.

Child: Yes sir/ma'am (sniffles again).

Teacher: If you want my advice, you tell your parents to get stronger locks for your doors. People today just do not take the proper safety precautions.

Child: Teacher, I was very scared.

Teacher: (in disbelief) Scared? Come now. You're a big girl/boy. There is no need to be scared.

Child: But I was scared.

Teacher: (with a judging tone) Have you forgotten what God's word says? "Fear not, for I am with you." God is with you. You should not be afraid. Where is your faith?

Child: They had knives.

Teacher: Yes, but you are safe now, so we can just thank the Lord (looks at their watch or phone). Oh, look at the time. I have to go now. Thanks for talking with me. I will pray for you. See you next week.

Child: (still sad) OK. Bye.



Debrief:

- **What did the teacher do?** (Answers may include: didn't give eye contact, didn't listen to the child, jumped to give advice or blame the child, etc.)
- **How did the teacher do it?** (Answers may include: impatiently, uncaring, not believing the child, etc.)
- **Why do you think the teacher responded the way he/she did?** (Answers may include: busy, did not know how to respond, etc.)
- **What was the effect on the child?** (Answers may include: disappointment, guilt, loss of trust, etc.)



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When adults listen to children, they typically ask the children many questions, give advice or try to solve the problem. Sometimes adults do not even take the time to listen to children, communicating that children have nothing of value to say.

Let's look at the same scenario, but with a style of listening called Active Listening. Think of active listening being something like a mirror. (Hold up a mirror.) A mirror reflects what it sees. In active listening, the listener reflects back the feelings and the facts the speaker is saying.



Scenario #2: Good Active Listening

(Be sure to include good nonverbal listening skills like eye contact, a welcoming way of sitting, appropriate touch.)

Child: (Sitting and looking sad)

Teacher: (Notices the child and sits beside him/her.) _____, you look so sad.

Child: (Nods but says nothing)

Teacher: Something definitely has upset you.

Child: Um, last night some thieves broke into our house.

Teacher: Thieves?

Child: Yes, they came in the middle of the night.

Teacher: They came while you were sleeping.

Child: Yes, they began to break things and we woke up. When daddy shouted at them, they waved a knife at him.

Teacher: They threatened your daddy.

Child: Everyone was shouting and I was so scared.

Teacher: The noise and the knives really scared you.

Child: I didn't know if they were going to hurt us or even kill us.

Teacher: That's very frightening.

Child: I wanted to hide in the closet until they went away.

Teacher: So you are saying you felt very unsafe where you were.

Child: Yes. My daddy gave them his money, and they took his mobile phone and tablet. Finally they went away.

Teacher: You were relieved when they left?

Child: Yes, but when mommy came to my bed and hugged me, I just cried and cried.

Teacher: Sometimes we cry when we are relieved.

Child: Yes. I felt better but it was hard to go back to sleep. I kept wondering if they would come back.

Teacher: You were worried they would return.

Child: I even had bad dreams.

Teacher: I am sorry you had trouble sleeping.

Child: I feel better now that I am here.

Teacher: I'm glad you feel safe here. You can come talk to me any time.

Child: Thank you teacher.



Debrief:

- **What did the teacher do differently this time?**
- **How did the teacher do it?**
- **Why do you think the teacher responded the way he/she did?**
- **What was the effect on the child?**

(Be sure to include the following answers if not mentioned by participants.)

- They used appropriate eye contact.
- Their body language was welcoming.
- They reflected back what the child was saying and affirmed their feelings.
- They did not offer their opinion or judgment about what happened.
- They did not show surprise or shock.
- They did not offer any advice – they only listened.

When we use active listening, we allow the child to speak and let our words and non-verbal language encourage them to continue. Notice that when we are using active listening, we do not ask a lot of questions. We are not interrogating the child to gain information. We are listening. Remember, we are like mirrors, reflecting facts and reflecting feelings. (Repeat the statement together.)

Now we are going to practice identifying the wrong things an adult might say or do when a child comes to them. Then I want you to suggest an alternative response that would demonstrate active listening, just reflecting facts and their feelings.

Interactive Demonstration

10 min

Imagine that my volunteer is Michelle/Michael, a 10 year old child in your ministry who has been wanting to talk with someone about a trauma she/he is dealing with. Finally she/he comes to a children's worker. After greeting, she/he starts to talk.

(Have a volunteer or training partner read this) "The children in my class at school have been very mean to me. They call me names, tell me I am stupid and ugly and they criticize me all the time. Even though the teacher knows about their bullying, the children have not stopped. I don't want to go to school."



Now listen to these responses and tell me what the adult is doing wrong. (Read each statement and then pause to discuss why it is a wrong approach or problem.)

1. "You are much too sensitive about their words. You should not let their words hurt you."

Problem: Judging – The adult decides what is right or wrong and tells the child how they should think or behave. It does not communicate acceptance.

2. "I think the reason they are bullying you is because of their own insecurities. It makes them feel better when they criticize someone else."

Problem: Interpreting – The adult tries to give an explanation of why people acted as they did, as if they know more about the situation than the child does.

3. "Oh, don't worry about it. I'm sure that it will get better soon. These things usually work out all right."

Problem: False Optimism – Being positive and simply saying that everything will work out may negate the child's feelings.

4. "What kinds of names are they calling you? How do they criticize you?"

Problem: Questioning – The child might feel interrogated or the conversation moves in the direction of the person asking the questions.

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5. "Well, my advice to you is to go straight to the headmaster/principal of the school and let him know what is happening."

Problem: Advice-Giving – This will shut down communication because a child most likely will not challenge the advice an adult gives.

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6. "You know what the Bible says about those who criticize others. In Ephesians 4:29 it says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Problem: Preaching – Children are not looking for a sermon when they talk about a problem.

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You have identified several bad listening responses: judging, interpreting the situation, false optimism, questioning, giving advice, and preaching. **How might we respond to this child in an understanding way as active listeners, just reflecting his/her facts and feelings?**

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(Have participants work in groups of three. Give one minute to create a response. As groups share answers, note where they are actively listening and correcting what might not be active listening according to the six problems above.)

Now you will have an opportunity to practice active listening to one another as you share parts of your own stories.

Listening Practicum

20 min

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(Ask participants to take out their piece of drawing paper. Explain that they have 3-4 minutes to draw a simple picture of a difficult event in their lives – NOT a deeply traumatic event, but something that was frightening or sad or frustrating. Then have participants return to their groups of 3. One person will tell their story, one will be the listener, and one the observer. Give each speaker/listener duo about 3 minutes to practice active listening. The one telling the story can pause while telling to allow for active listening responses. Then have the observer share at least one positive thing they noticed and one thing to improve upon. Rotate three times, so each person has the opportunity to be the listener.



Debrief:



- What was challenging about actively listening?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn from watching others?

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Active listening is a skill that takes practice because it requires us to be fully attentive to a child. We must listen with our ears, eyes and spirit, and pay attention to the child's body language as well as their words.

One important note: It is very important to be aware of issues of confidentiality. Part of building trust with children is respecting what they say and not sharing it without their permission. However, when a child discloses something like abuse or ongoing danger, it is wrong to assure the child that we will not share it with others. There may be a legal obligation to report child abuse to the authorities. (Note to Trainer: Be aware of local or national laws about child protection, who to report to, and how to report. Share it with participants at this time and explain where you found the information. You also may want to include a note to participants about creating a child protection policy for their church or ministry.)

As was mentioned in the previous lesson, part of the healing journey for children includes sharing their story or talking about their trauma. But what should we do if the child is not ready or able to talk?

 101

The Ministry of Presence

5 min

Read Job 2:11-13. "When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words" (NLT).

 102-103



What did Job's friends do? (Hear responses. Answers should include the following list.)

- They came to be with him – showed love.
- They empathized – wept and tore their robes.
- They sat with him – NOT SPEAKING.
- They patiently waited – for seven days.

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Job's friends demonstrated what is called the "ministry of presence." They were content just to sit with their friend who was grieving. There are times when children cannot or will not talk about what has happened because it is too painful or they lack the words to explain themselves. In those moments, our presence communicates to a child that we love and value them. The child can draw a picture and talk about their drawing to ease the difficulty in expressing themselves. You can do other quiet activities together, such as puzzles, blocks or coloring. Or you can just sit and hold their hand, give them a hug or another appropriate touch. It is in those activities the child may or may not talk. It is OK to be silent! It took seven days before Job began to speak. Resist the urge to fill the silence or "make it better." Remember that when Job's friends began to speak, they did more damage than good!

 105

The ministry of presence can be one of the greatest gifts we give to children who are experiencing grief and trauma, communicating God's presence and love to them.

Reflection and Action Steps

5 min



Communicating well with children is not easy. It takes practice to be an active listener, mirroring children's feelings and facts, and resisting the urge to give advice or fix the problem. We have only introduced the idea in this lesson, and there is much more to learn. As you reflect on your ability to communicate with children, what is God saying to you, and how will you respond?

(For each of the following questions, ask participants to write their answers on the "Action Steps" section in the participant notes for this lesson. Read each question aloud, and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers.)

1. **What aspects of active listening were easy for you? What aspects were difficult? What is one thing you have learned about listening to children that you will put into practice?**
2. **How can you practice a "ministry of presence" with children?**
3. **Think of a child in your community or family with whom you can practice listening. Plan a time to practice active listening with them.**



(Close in prayer as a group. Ask for forgiveness when we do not communicate effectively with children. Pray for the capacity to listen well and help children heal from their trauma.)

Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented.)



(Note to Trainer: Be aware of the need to take time during a break after this session to pray with individuals who have had emotions surface, or pause to see how people are feeling.)

Lesson 5

Rebuilding Spiritual Foundations

Objectives

After this lesson participants will:

- Understand the damage trauma can cause to a child's spiritual foundation.
- Know the importance of demonstrating love to children and affirming their significance, and have ideas for how to demonstrate those truths to children.
- Be prepared to use Bible stories to share foundational truths with children who have been wounded by trauma.
- Be equipped with ideas to help children reflect on truths shared through Bible stories.

Lesson Overview

Introduction	5 min
Three Spiritual Foundations	15 min
Importance of God's Word	5 min
Sharing Truth through Stories	10 min
Helping Children Reflect on the Story	15 min
Reflection and Action Steps	5 min

Approximate Total Time: 55 min

Materials

Illustration Options:

- Bottle or glass of water

Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

Scripture Passages:

- Mark 10:13-16
- Psalm 119:89-93
- Psalm 119:114

Introduction

5 min



In our last few lessons, we have discovered several things that children need in order to move from brokenness to wholeness. **What are some of the things they need?** (Hear responses.)

- They need time and help to grieve the losses they have suffered.
- They need relationships with trusting adults.
- They need to be listened to, to have a safe space to share their stories.

Sometimes trauma causes "... long-term losses in the areas of trust, acceptance, unconditional love and a sense of value and worth. These long-term losses cause deep emotional wounding and erode a child's spiritual foundation"⁸ If children are to move from brokenness to wholeness, these spiritual foundations need to be rebuilt. The Holy Spirit does this work of rebuilding as children encounter the truth of who God is and who He made them to be.

Let's listen to Jesse's story.

Jesse's Story



From the moment Jesse was born, he was relentlessly abused physically, sexually and emotionally. He was often beaten, deprived of food and sent to school in clothes stained with urine. Jesse purposefully misbehaved at school so that teachers would give him detention and keep him after school. Detention provided him with a safe and quiet place to be.

When Jesse was seven years old, a Christian couple from down the street offered to take Jesse and his siblings to church. This simple act of taking three smelly and unruly children to church each week demonstrated God's great love to Jesse.

The wife of this couple was also Jesse's Sunday school teacher. Week after week the Bible stories she told caught Jesse's attention. He desperately longed to be loved, and in the stories, he met a God who showed His love over and over again. He was especially captivated by the stories of Jesus.

It was in that Sunday school class that Jesse heard the gospel for the first time. Could it really be true that the Creator God could love someone as small, dirty and worthless as Jesse believed he was? It was true, and Jesse chose to ask Jesus to be his Savior.

Though it would take years for Jesse to heal from the trauma he endured, Jesse considers that Sunday school class to be a transforming time in his life. It was there that he encountered the truth of Jesus' love. It was there that he met Jesus. Today, Jesse is living out these truths and his deep love for Jesus as he runs a ministry in Guatemala for children who have been orphaned.



109-110



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⁸ Kilbourn, P. (2013). *Healing for Hurting Hearts: A Handbook for Counseling Children and Youth in Crisis*. (p. 35). CLC Publications.



What stands out to you in Jesse's story? (Invite participants to share with a neighbor. Hear a few responses as time allows.)



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Jesse's journey from brokenness to wholeness began as he encountered the truth of God's love both through God's people and through God's Word.

This lesson will help us think about spiritual foundations that are broken due to trauma in children's lives and how the Holy Spirit can repair these foundations as we minister to children. We will look at ways God's people can personally demonstrate and share the truth and hope of God's Word to children in the areas where their spiritual foundations have been broken.

Three Spiritual Foundations

15 min

Spiritual Foundation 1: Love and Belonging

The first spiritual foundation that can be broken by trauma is love and belonging. All children need love and belonging. God created us to be in relationship, first with Himself and then with each other. Trauma can cause children to lose this sense of belonging and connection. They may feel alone or forgotten. They may even feel that they are no longer worthy of love.

As the family of God, we are called to reflect God's love and acceptance by providing a place where hurting children are both known and loved – a place where they belong.



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Jesus' Example

In Mark 10 we see an example of Jesus welcoming children and showing them that they did indeed belong. **Read Mark 10:13-16.** "One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them" (NLT).



115-116



(Divide participants into groups of 3-4 people. Have them discuss this question together: **How did Jesus assure children that they belonged?** (After a few minutes, hear answers from the groups. Answers should include ideas from the following list.)

- He welcomed them.
- He took them in His arms (physical touch/presence).
- He took time for them.
- He put His hands on them and blessed them (spoke words of significance over them).
- He rebuked the disciples for not making children feel like they belong, so He stood up for the children/advocated for them.



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Nurturing Belonging in our Ministries



As we look at Jesus' example, what are some practical ideas we could implement in our ministries that would demonstrate to children that they belong? (Hear responses. Write answers on a white board or flip chart.)

Answers could include taking time to listen and get to know them, being willing to get on their level and play with them, welcoming children, inviting children to participate but also giving them freedom to choose not to.)

As we follow Jesus' example and demonstrate God's love to children, children begin to see that they truly are wanted, loved and have a place to belong.



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Spiritual Foundation 2: Significance

A second spiritual foundation that can be damaged in children who have experienced trauma is their need to know they are significant. Children need to know they are valuable and precious – not because of anything they have done but simply because they exist and are made in the image of God.⁹

When children experience trauma, especially abuse or exploitation, they may lose this sense of significance and dignity.



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(Refer to the written list from the last activity.) **As you look at the list of ideas we created, which ideas also help affirm a child's significance?**

(Hear responses.)



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What other ideas could we add to this list that would help a child who has suffered trauma to know that they are valued and that they matter?

(Hear responses and then add them to the list on the board. Answers could include affirming specific things about their character, sharing how important they are to you, offering praise and encouragement, helping them discover what they are good at, giving them opportunities to serve and to succeed.)

Spiritual Foundation 3: Rebuilding Trust

A third spiritual foundation that can be broken by trauma is a child's ability to trust. Earlier in our training, we discovered that children who have been significantly wounded by trauma may have lost their ability to trust God. Children may have a hard time seeing God as good. They may be angry that He did not answer their prayers or protect them. If they were abused or exploited, especially by their father, they will have a difficult time relating to God as the Perfect Father.



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We already discovered in a previous lesson practical ideas for building trusting relationships with children. It is important to remember that as we build these relationships, we are also helping children learn how to trust again. Ultimately, we want them to put their trust in the God who made them, loves them and is the only one completely worthy of their trust.

⁹ Adapted from Bennett, C. (n.d.) Lesson 6: What do children need? In J-J. Wright (Ed.) *Celebrating Children Workbooks: Book Three: Risk and Resilience* (p. 28) Viva.
<http://learn.viva.org/equip/celebrating-children/>

The Importance of God's Word

5 min

Nurturing love and belonging, affirming a child's significance and building trusting relationships all demonstrate to children that they are loved and valued by a trustworthy heavenly Father. But children also need to hear these truths from God's Word.

Read Psalm 119:89-93. "Your eternal word, O Lord, stands firm in heaven. Your faithfulness extends to every generation, as enduring as the earth you created. Your regulations remain true to this day, for everything serves your plans. If your instructions hadn't sustained me with joy, I would have died in my misery. I will never forget your commandments, for by them you give me life" (NLT).



What do these verses tell us about the importance of God's Word in the heart of a child wounded by trauma? (Hear responses. Answers should include: God's Word sustains and brings joy; God's Word gives life; His Word is eternal – it is something unchanging they can trust.)

God's Word brings life and sustaining joy. Later in **Psalm 119:114** the psalmist declares, "You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my source of hope" (NLT).

The truth of God's Word can bring healing and hope to a child's wounded heart. Let's look at how it speaks specifically to the three broken foundations we have identified.

Learning Truths From God's Word

In your notes you will see a list of Scriptures that communicate the truth of God's love, our significance to Him and His trustworthiness.

- Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:9 – God loves us so much He sent Jesus to die for us.
- Jeremiah 31:3 – God's love for us is everlasting. He has always loved us and always will.
- Psalm 13:5; 33:22 – God's love for us is unfailing.
- 1 John 3:1, John 1:12 – God makes me His child and lavishes His love on us.
- Romans 8:38-39 – Nothing can separate us from God's love.
- Psalm 139:14-18 – We are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- Isaiah 43:4 – We are precious to God and honored in His sight.
- Luke 12:6-7 – God knows how many hairs we have, we are worth more than many sparrows.
- Ephesians 2:10 – We can serve God because He created us to do good things.
- Psalm 9:10 – The Lord does not forsake those who seek Him.
- Lamentations 3:22-23 – God is faithful.
- Psalm 46:1 – God is an ever-present help in trouble.

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As you look at this list, circle 2-3 verses that are the most meaningful to you. (Give a few moments for participants to read and circle. If time allows, invite them to share with a neighbor.)

These truths from God's Word are powerful and life-changing. Now that we have looked at some of the truths from God's Word, let's consider the best ways to communicate these truths to children.

Sharing Truth Through Stories

10 min

Stories are one of the best ways to communicate the truth of God's Word to children. We have already identified verses that speak to a child's need of love, significance and trusting relationships. Now we want to look at how we can share these truths through stories.



For example, let's say I want to share with children the truth from Isaiah 43:4 that they are precious and valuable to God. I must ask myself, "What Bible story could I share that would convey that truth?" I might choose to tell the story from Mark 10 we read earlier about Jesus welcoming the children when the disciples tried to keep them away.

Here is a brief demonstration of how I might use the story to share this truth with children. (Tell the following story as if you're telling it to children.) Boys and girls, sometimes we feel like we are not very special. Sometimes we feel that we are not valuable to others. It is not a nice feeling. Some children in the Bible had that same experience, but then they met Jesus and He changed everything. Here's what happened.

One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so He could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering Him. When Jesus saw what was happening, He was angry with His disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them (**Mark 10:13-16 NLT**).

Jesus got angry with the disciples for trying to keep the children from coming. Jesus saw how precious and valuable every child was. He took the children in His arms. Imagine what that must have felt like! He put His hands on their heads and He blessed those children. He honored them. I would have felt so special to be with Jesus. How would you feel?

In the Bible God says, "You are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you" (Isaiah 43:4). Jesus wanted the children to know they were precious and honored and loved. You, too, are precious to God. You are valuable to Him.

From this example you can see that I had the truth I wanted to share, and then I selected the story, weaving the truth into the story and then sharing it.





Let's look at another example. Perhaps you want to share with children the truth from Psalm 33:22 that God's love for them is unfailing. **What Bible story could you share that would communicate that truth?** (Hear responses. Answers could include Jesus saving Peter from drowning, parable of the prodigal son, Jesus healing the woman with the issue of blood, the Samaritan woman, Jesus dying on the cross.)



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What Bible stories could help you teach the truth found in Psalm 46:1 that God is an ever-present help in trouble? (Hear responses. Answers could include Jesus calming the storm, Moses and the people of Israel, Joshua and the walls of Jericho, Daniel in the lion's den, the three men in the fiery furnace.)



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As we can see, there are many Bible stories we can use to teach children each of the truths of God's love and trustworthiness and our significance to Him.

Helping Children Reflect on the Story

15 min

After sharing the Bible story, we also want to help children reflect on the truth of the story. Reflecting on the story allows children time to think about the truth they have heard and what it really means for them, helping them connect God's Word to the hurt or trauma they have experienced in their own life. Reflecting on the story is more than simply reviewing the story or reinforcing the main points of the story. It is an invitation for children to respond to God, think more deeply about the story and what it means for them and consider how they can apply the truth to their lives.



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After we have taught the Bible story, what activities could children do to help them reflect on the Bible story? (Hear responses. Answers could include praying, drawing, journaling, designing a poster, singing, etc.)



132

Let's go back to the story of Mark 10. Listen to how I invite the children to reflect on the story.

In the Bible God says, "You are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you" (Isaiah 43:4). Jesus wanted the children to know they were precious and honored and loved. You, too, are precious to God. You are valuable to Him.

Boys and girls, I'm now going to invite you to draw a picture of yourself sitting with Jesus like the children in the story. As you draw, think about how you feel being with Jesus. After we're finished, maybe some of you would like to share how being with Jesus makes you feel.

You can see from the demonstrations of this story that I selected the truth, I told the Bible story and then I had two reflection activities that I invited the children to do.

Now, it's time for you to practice. We are going to divide into groups of four, and I will assign each group a different Scripture/truth from the list we covered earlier. Then in your groups, select one Bible story that illustrates the truth about God and then think of two activities that invite children to reflect on the story.



(Divide participants into groups of four. Assign each group a different Scripture/truth from the list above. Remind participants that they only need to choose the story and reflection activities – they do not need to tell the story. After several minutes, invite each group to share their truth, the Bible story they selected, and one of their reflection activities.)



133

Great job, everyone! In your notes we have provided you with additional stories and truths from God's Word that may be meaningful as you work with children who have experienced trauma.

Reflection and Action Steps

5 min



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(Show participants a bottle or glass of water.) Water is beneficial. It is refreshing, life-giving, cleansing and renewing. It is necessary for life.

But water can also be very harmful and cause damage. Torrential rains, floods, drowning and erosion are all devastating effects of water.

The deep emotional wounds caused by trauma can damage a child's view of God, themselves, and others. These spiritual foundations can only be restored as children encounter and believe the truth of who God is and who He says they are. His Word is life-giving and refreshing and healing – just like water.

But we also need to be sure that we are sharing His Word with humility and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. If we use the Bible to try to fix a child's problem, if we preach at them instead of truly listening, if we tell them a story of God's love but then treat them poorly in class, what we are doing is no longer life-giving. In fact, our misuse of God's Word can be harmful. We always want to share God's Word with children in ways that represent His heart for them. As we do, those truths from God's Word will penetrate deep into a child's spirit, bringing healing and providing a source of hope that children can draw from their entire lives.

As agents of hope, God is calling us to both demonstrate and share His truth with children in life-giving ways. How will we respond?

(For each of the following questions, ask participants to write their answers on the "Action Steps" section in the participant notes for this lesson. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers.)

1. **Think about children you know who have suffered trauma What are 2-3 things you could do to demonstrate God's love for them? What are 2-3 things that you could do to affirm their significance?**
2. **What is something new you learned about sharing truth through stories? How will you begin implementing what you have learned?**
3. **What Bible story reflection activities will you use with the children in your ministry?**



Only the Holy Spirit can do the work of rebuilding a child's spiritual foundations. As we walk with hurting children, we must make praying for them a central part of our ministry, crying out to God to do the work of healing and rebuilding that only He can do.

I invite you to think of one child you know who has been wounded by trauma. As we close in prayer, pray that the Holy Spirit would use His Word to bring hope and healing to that child.

(Close in prayer, asking God to help participants demonstrate and share His truth in life-giving ways.)

Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented.)



Lesson 6

Connecting the Gospel to a Child's Need

Objectives

After this lesson participants will:

- Understand the gospel as a story from Brokenness to Wholeness and know how to share this story with children.
- Be equipped with ideas for connecting the gospel with a child's point of need.
- Have ideas for how to help children grow in their identity in Christ.

Lesson Overview

Introduction	5 min
From Brokenness to Wholeness:	
The Gospel Story	10 min
Practice Sharing the Gospel	10 min
What the Gospel Offers	5 min
Connecting the Gospel to a Child's Need	15 min
Identity in Christ	5 min
Reflection and Action Steps	10 min

Approximate Total Time: 60 min

Materials

Illustration Options:

- Picture of Kintsugi bowl (if not using the PowerPoint)

Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

Scripture Passages:

- Colossians 1:6
- Genesis 1:1, 27, 31
- Genesis 3:1-19
- Romans 5:12
- Romans 3:21-25
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-9
- John 1:12
- Revelation 21:1-7
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Introduction

5 min

In our final lesson we want to talk about the deepest need that all children have – a need to be reconciled to God through Jesus. It is only in this relationship with Jesus that children wounded by trauma can truly become whole.

 137

Read Colossians 1:6. "This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace" (NLT).

 138

The good news of Jesus changes lives! Let's listen to how it changed the life of a boy named Greyson.



Greyson grew up in a small village in Malawi. After his Muslim father chose to marry a second wife, Greyson's mom decided to leave with him and his siblings.

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Greyson's mom struggled to provide for the family, and then later became sick and passed away. Greyson went to live with his grandmother who abused and neglected him. He was not allowed to attend school but was forced to work at a young age.

When Greyson was a young teenager he met the director of a Christian home for children who had been orphaned or neglected. The director listened to Greyson's story and invited him to live at the home. Greyson accepted.

Missionaries came to the home and shared the gospel with the children. When Greyson heard the message of Jesus, he was angry. He had grown up a Muslim and did not want to hear the truth about Jesus.

Then one night Greyson had a dream. A man with long hair stood on the opposite side of a river. In Greyson's native tongue from the village where he grew up, this man invited Greyson to come to him. Greyson was scared and did not know what to do.

The next night Greyson had the dream again. This time he shared the dream with the home's director. The director shared with Greyson that the man in his dream was Jesus. Jesus, the One who gave His life for him, was inviting Greyson to come.

The next night Greyson had the dream again. This time when Jesus asked him to come, Greyson accepted the invitation. When he woke up, he knew he would never be the same. He was disciplined by the leaders in the home and by others on his journey of healing and growth. Today Greyson runs an outreach ministry to children throughout Malawi.



What stands out to you in the story? (Invite participants to share with a neighbor. Then hear a few responses.)

 140

Like Greyson, children who have suffered trauma need to hear the message of Jesus in ways that deeply connect to their hearts. In this lesson we want to consider how to connect the gospel to a child's point of need.

From Brokenness to Wholeness: The Gospel Story 10 min

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As we think about connecting the gospel to a child's point of need, it is important to remember that the gospel – the good news that Jesus died and rose again – is one part of the overarching story of the Bible, a story of brokenness to wholeness. We heard this story earlier in our training, but now we want to learn how to share the story with children. Listen as I share the story with you as if I were sharing it with a child.

God created the world and everything in it. His most special part of creation was people—you and me! The first two people God created – Adam and Eve – enjoyed a perfect relationship with Him, a relationship of closeness and trust. They also lived in peace with each other and the world around them. Everything was good and whole and right, just the way God intended it to be. Because He loves us, God wants all people to enjoy a perfect relationship with Him (**Genesis 1:1, 27, 31**).

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We can remember this part of the story by saying “wholeness” and doing this hand motion. (Hand motion: Interlock your fingers from both hands.)

Unfortunately, the peace and wholeness God intended did not last. Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan and chose to rebel against God and to seek life apart from Him. This rebellion is called sin – choosing to follow our own selfish way rather than following God's perfect way. Adam and Eve's sin had serious consequences for them and for you and me. Sin brought death and broke our relationship with God, with others and with creation. Every one of us is now born wanting to follow our own way instead of God's. Because of sin, people fight and cheat and hurt one another. Creation also experiences the effects of the sin through conflict, sickness and destruction. (**Genesis 3:1-19, Romans 5:12**).

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We call this part of the story “brokenness.” (Hand motion: Interlock fingers and then pull hands apart.)

But God loved us so much that He promised to send Someone to rescue us from our sin and to fix the brokenness in the world

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When the time was right, God kept His promise and sent His Son Jesus to our broken world. Jesus was born as a baby, grew up, and lived among us. He taught people about God, He healed those who were sick, He loved people no one else would love. He lived a perfect life. Because He was perfect, He was able to do for us what no one else could do. Jesus loved us so much that He bled and died on a cross, taking the shame and punishment for our sin and the sin of the world. He then came back to life, defeating sin and death forever and making a way for the world to be made whole again.

Because of what Jesus has done, anyone who trusts in Him can have a right relationship with God and new life in Him – a life filled with love and hope and purpose. You and I can have this right relationship with God if we choose to trust in Jesus as our Savior. We can be known as His daughters and sons (**Romans 3:21-25; 1 Corinthians 15:1-9, John 1:12**).

We can remember this part of the story by simply saying, “Jesus” and making our arms like a cross. (Hand motion: Make arms like a cross.)

God’s story is not over! God has promised that one day He will make all things new again and renew the whole world back to the way He intended it to be in the beginning. All of the brokenness and sin will be gone. He will make right everything that is wrong. This will happen when Jesus comes back; then, those who chose to follow Him will live forever with Jesus in His perfect Kingdom. Until then, we can be a part of His story, enjoying a relationship with Him and sharing His love with others, helping them move from brokenness to wholeness (**Revelation 21:1-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**).

This last part of the story we call “To wholeness again.” (Start with your arms in the cross position and then interlock your fingers in front of you again.)

Let’s do all of the hand motions together: Wholeness, Brokenness, Jesus, To wholeness again.

What a beautiful story! Did I just share the gospel with you?



What did you notice about this story that may be different than how you might be sharing the gospel with children? (Hear responses. Answers may include:

- It’s a story that starts with creation and ends with the new creation.
- It is not just about the child, it is about God’s plan of redemption for the world.
- It is about a restored relationship with God, not about going to heaven.
- Many times we only talk about a child’s sin and Jesus’ death, but the gospel makes a way for children, and indeed the whole world, to be made whole.)

As we share the gospel as God’s Big Story, we help children who have suffered trauma understand:

- The depth of Jesus’ love for them.
- That the pain they are experiencing is not what God intended.
- That Jesus came into our brokenness and also experienced trauma.
- That Jesus took all the pain, the guilt, the shame and the sin of the world on himself.
- That through Jesus they can experience forgiveness, healing and hope.

Now let’s take a few moments and practice sharing this story.



Practice Sharing the Gospel

10 min



(Invite participants to practice in pairs sharing the gospel story From Brokenness to Wholeness. Give the first partner 4-5 minutes to share and then ask them to switch roles. Then give the second partner another 4-5 minutes to share.)



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What the Gospel Offers

5 min

The gospel is so beautiful – it is so rich and so deep that it can connect with a child at their deepest point of need, whatever that need might be.

Think about children who have suffered trauma and what God offers to them through the gospel:

- To a child who feels shame, the gospel offers honor.
- To a child who feels rejected, the gospel offers acceptance.
- To a child who feels helpless, the gospel offers power through the Holy Spirit.
- To a child who feels guilty, the gospel offers forgiveness.
- To a child who feels betrayed, the gospel offers God's faithfulness.
- To a child without a family, the gospel offers adoption as sons and daughters of God.
- To a child who is lonely, the gospel offers God's constant presence.



What else does the gospel offer to children? In groups of 2-3 think of several more statements similar to the ones we just heard. (Give groups three minutes to discuss. Then hear answers from several groups.)



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The gospel is so beautiful and so rich. It is so much more than a presentation, so much more than an invitation for children to go to heaven. We want to be good stewards of this message, connecting it to a hurting child's deepest point of need. How do we do this?

Connecting the Gospel to a Child's Need

15 min

Looking at an Example

Many times we share the gospel with a group of children all at once. If we know there are heart needs that group of children have – perhaps you are working with children in a refugee camp – you can certainly adapt the gospel as you share with that large group. There are also times when we have opportunities to talk with children individually. As we listen to one child, we can then adapt the gospel message to connect with that child's unique needs. Let's consider an example together.

Let's consider an example together. A new girl, Sarah, begins coming to your Sunday school class. As you get to know her, she shares that her father has lost his job and the family is now living with her grandparents. Sarah had



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to leave her school and her friends. Her father is depressed and her mother is worried all the time. She tells you that it feels as though no one cares about how hard the move has been for her.



What are some of the losses Sarah has experienced? (Hear responses. Answers should include friends, security, her home, attention, someone to really care about how she feels.)



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What might be Sarah's point of need? (Hear responses. Answers could include she is lonely, she feels unseen and forgotten, no one is paying attention to her.)

Let's choose just one of these needs—that Sarah feels unseen and forgotten. Now, how might we adapt the gospel story we heard earlier to speak to Sarah's need?

When we share about wholeness, we could share that God saw Adam and Eve and everything they needed. He sees us, too. Because we are His special creatures, God never forgets us. We are always on His mind.

When we share about brokenness, we could say that because of sin, this close relationship with God was broken. God has not forgotten about us, but we have forgotten about Him and are far away from Him.

Then when we share about Jesus, we can explain to Sarah that because of what Jesus has done, she can become God's daughter. He promises that He always sees and always hears His children.



Do you see how we have connected the gospel to Sarah's point of need?
What is something that stands out to you from this approach to sharing the gospel? (Invite participants to share with a neighbor for one minute. Then hear several responses.)



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Practice

Now it's your turn. Imagine that Matthew attends your weekly Bible club. Matthew is sweet but easily becomes angered. As you spend time with Matthew and build a relationship with him, he tells you that his mom died when he was very young. His dad works a lot and is hardly ever home. When he is home, he yells at Matthew and tells him that he is no good at anything.

In groups of 4-5, discuss these three questions:

- **What losses has Matthew suffered?**
- **What are Matthew's deepest needs?**
- **How could you adapt the gospel story to speak to one of those needs?**



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(Divide participants into groups of 4-5 people. Give them 7-8 minutes to discuss the three questions. Then have everyone come back together and

share responses. For the sake of time, you may ask one group to share the losses, another group to share the needs they identified, etc., rather than each group sharing their answers to all three questions.

- What losses has Matthew suffered? (Love from his mom, significance, nurture.)
- What are Matthew's deepest needs? (Love and nurture, to know that he matters and is significant.)
- How could you adapt the gospel story for Matthew? (Emphasize God's desire to be in a relationship with us or that because He made us, we are significant and valuable to Him. Share that we are so valuable to God that Jesus died for us. When we choose to follow Him, Jesus has good works He chose for us to do.)

When is a Child Ready?

As we connect the gospel to a child's point of need, we must remember that the process of a child coming to know Jesus belongs to the child and to the Holy Spirit. Some children may need a lot of time before they are ready to hear the gospel. Others may be ready to hear the gospel, but take more time to respond and say "yes" to Jesus. Our role is to walk with each child through this process, loving them, praying for them, answering questions, and helping them when they are ready to begin their relationship with Christ.

How might we know when a child who has suffered trauma is open to hearing the gospel and ready to receive an invitation to follow Jesus? Usually children give us some kind of indications that they're ready, such as:

- They ask questions about God, sin, Jesus, or gospel truths.
- Their facial expressions and body language might change from being closed (arms crossed, scowling, distracted) to open (arms uncrossed, relaxed, looking at you).
- Their attitude may change. A child who has been angry with God might begin to soften. A child who has been distant may begin to participate and ask questions.
- They express a remorse for sin or a desire to have Jesus in their life.

In the examples of Sarah and Matthew we saw the importance of developing a relationship of trust with the child. It is in the context of this relationship – as we listen to the Holy Spirit – that we can discern when a child is open to hearing the good news of Jesus.

Connecting the gospel to a child's point of need is an amazing privilege and a sacred trust. To steward this trust well, we will need to apply everything we have learned in our training. We will need to rely on the Holy Spirit and minister in humility. We will need to understand trauma and the losses it causes. We will need to build trusting relationships with children and walk with them on their journey of grief. We will need to listen to children to understand their hearts' needs. We will need to demonstrate and share the truth of who God is and who children are so that the Holy Spirit can rebuild their spiritual foundations. Then, as agents of hope, we will be ready when



the Holy Spirit leads us to share with hurting children the life-changing message of Jesus.

We also play an important role after children begin their relationship with Jesus. We get to help them discover their identity in Christ!

Identity in Christ

5 min

Christian children who have suffered trauma need to know who they are in Jesus. Embracing these truths will help children continue to heal and give them hope and confidence as they navigate life in a broken world.

Think about your own identity in Christ. As you listen to this statement, how could you complete the thought with a truth about your identity?

Because I am in Christ, I

For example, we could say, "Because I am in Christ, I no longer need to be afraid." Or, "Because I am in Christ, I am His precious son or daughter."



How would you complete the statement? (Hear several responses.)



In the New Testament we find many truths about our identity in Christ. **What are some of these truths that might speak the most to children who have been wounded by trauma?** (Hear responses. Answers could include:

- They are valued as sons and daughters of God (Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 3:26; 4:6,7).
- They are completely loved and accepted by God (Ephesians 1:3-4; John 1:12; 1 John 4:16-17).
- They will never be separated from God (Romans 8:38-39, Hebrews 13:5).
- They are not alone – God is with them in their suffering (John 16:33; Romans 8:35; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
- They are new creations, and God is continuing to do a good thing (2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:6).

In your notes, we have included a list of Scriptures and what they communicate about our identity in Jesus. As we walk with Christian children on their journey of healing, we want to thoughtfully share with them the truth of who they are in Jesus so they can continue to grow into all God created them to be.



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Reflection and Action Steps

10 min

The truth of God's great love for us – that we can be made whole through a relationship with Jesus – is still the best news for children today. As agents of hope, how will we respond to what we have learned in this lesson?



(For each of the following questions, ask participants to write their answers on the "Action Steps" section in the participant notes for this lesson. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers.)

1. Write something new you learned about sharing the gospel as a story from brokenness to wholeness. How will what you learned change your approach to sharing the gospel with children who are hurting?



2. Think of a child you know who has been wounded by trauma. What are the deep needs of this child? How could you adapt the gospel to speak to this child's need?



3. What's one thing you will do to teach children in your ministry about their identity in Christ?

Closing:

Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with a substance mixed with powdered gold or silver. It treats the breakage and repair as part of the history of an object, seeing it as something beautiful rather than something to hide.



Kintsugi is a perfect picture of the healing and hope that comes through Jesus ... both for us and for children who have been wounded by trauma.

We were created as God's workmanship, beautiful and whole. And we are all broken because of sin. Pain, abuse, rejection, death, or any number of traumatic experiences lead to more brokenness. Some people have only a few broken pieces, while others are shattered, but we all are broken.



Yet, instead of being thrown away, our lives – and the lives of children who have experienced trauma – can become even more beautiful for having been broken.

Thanks be to God that Jesus Christ can repair the brokenness. He is the gold that puts us and the children in our ministries back together. He makes us whole.

When we allow Him to repair our brokenness, the pain we have gone through and the suffering we have endured will be restored. Although we

may have scars, they become scars of gold, testimonies to the healing and hope of Jesus, just like we saw in Mary, Jesse and Greyson's stories.

This can be the story of children who have been wounded by trauma. They, too, can be made whole by the gold that is in Jesus. As agents of hope, may our stories help tell His story better. May we humbly and prayerfully help children move from brokenness to wholeness.¹⁰

(Close in an extended time of prayer.)

¹⁰ Adapted from Passini, D. (2018, February 12). Kintsugi Jesus. Retrieved from <https://danielpassini.org/kintsugi-jesus/>

Appendix

Additional Resources

Trauma Healing Institute

A global collaboration of ministries dedicated to helping people around the world heal from the pain of trauma. Find resources and training for working with adults, youth and children affected by trauma.

Website: <https://www.traumahealinginstitute.org/>

For Use with Children

- There is Hope for Me by Phyllis Kilbourn. A free interactive trauma recovery workbook for children. Available in Arabic, Dutch, English, German, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, and Russian. Includes the children's booklet and is accompanied by a Facilitator's Guide with step-by-step instructions for each of the child-focused pages.

Website: <http://crisiscaretraining.org/product/there-is-hope-for-me-free-resource/>

Books and Workbooks

- *Healing for Hurting Hearts: A Handbook for Counseling Children and Youth in Crisis* by Phyllis Kilbourn (CLC Publications)
- *Healing the Children of War: A Handbook for Ministry to Children who have Suffered Deep Traumas* by Phyllis Kilbourn (MARC)
- *Celebrating Children* workbooks by Viva
 - Risk and Resilience
 - Child Protection
 - Caring for Self and Staff

Website: <http://learn.viva.org/equip/celebrating-children/>

- Compassion International – Training materials to help develop holistic child development and guidelines for child protection.

Website: <http://www.forchildren.com/>

Training

- Crisis Care Training International – Training modules on working with children in trauma, including street children, orphans and vulnerable children, children in armed conflict, and children with disabilities.

Website: <http://www.crisiscaretraining.org/>

- Petra Institute's "Walking with Wounded Children" – a course designed to equip children's workers in handling emotionally wounded children on a very fundamental level.

Website: <http://www.petra.co.za/courses/walking-with-wounded-children/>

- Online training from Trauma Free World, a community of people dedicated to helping children around the world heal from childhood trauma.

Website: <https://traumafreeworld.org/training/>

- Safeguarding Children from Abuse

Website: <https://414academy.pathwright.com/library/>



FROM BROKENNESS TO WHOLENESS

A basic training for children's leaders
working with children wounded by trauma



PARTICIPANT NOTES

Part of the 1for50 family
of training resources

Revised April 2021





What if every child in every community had someone to reach, disciple and empower them to become an influential Kingdom Champion? This is the dream of the 1for50 Movement. And we believe it is possible, because this is God's dream, not ours.

This six-hour 1for50 training is designed to equip children's ministry workers and leaders with basic skills and understanding for working with children wounded by trauma. After completion of this training, you will:

- Understand and embrace your role as agents of hope in the lives of children wounded by trauma.
- Learn what trauma is and how it affects a child's whole being
- Be equipped to build trusting relationships with children and understand the stages of grief and healing a hurting child will experience.
- Know the value of listening to children who have been wounded by trauma and be equipped with basic skills in active listening
- Understand the damage trauma can cause to a child's spiritual foundation and how to minister to children to help rebuild these foundations.
- Be prepared to use Bible stories to share foundational truths with children who have been wounded by trauma.
- Learn how to share the gospel story, From Brokenness to Wholeness, with children.
- Be equipped with ideas for connecting the gospel with a child's point of need.

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You will need (In addition to these Participant Notes):

- Bible
- Pens or pencils and extra paper to take notes

Embracing Our Role as Agents of Hope

A Story of Hope

What is one thing that stood out to you or encouraged you from Mary's story?

Overflowing with Hope

Romans 15:13 NIV

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read **Romans 15:13**. What is God's role and our role as agents of hope?



God fills us with His hope. We are the channel to share His hope to children who are hurting.

Starting from the Right Place

We must not rely only on our own resources as agents of hope, because they are never sufficient.

What are examples of broken cisterns we draw from to minister to children who are hurting?

Jeremiah 2:13 NIV

My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

When we draw from these broken cisterns to minister to hurting children, we may feel:

God is our Spring of Living Water

What do the following Scripture passages tell us about the sources of hope God provides?

Romans 15:4 NLT

Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.

Psalms 119:49 NLT

Remember your promise to me; it is my only hope.

Jeremiah 14:22 NIV

Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, Lord our God. Therefore our hope is in you, for you are the one who does all this.

Lamentations 3:21-23 NIV

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Psalms 33:18-22 NLT

But the Lord watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone.

Ephesians 1:18 NLT

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

1 Peter 1:3 NIV

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

What are some specific ways we can connect with God in order for Him to fill us with His hope?

When God fills our hearts with hope, how will we respond when we encounter children who have been wounded by trauma?

God is the source of **living water** for each one of us as we seek to minister to hurting children. We may feel inadequate to the task, but God can use us as we allow **His hope to overflow** in our lives.



Action Steps

1. What is one new thing you learned about being an agent of hope and how will it change what you do?
2. What broken cisterns are you tempted to draw from when ministering to hurting children?
3. What will you do, instead, to be filled with God's living water?

Understanding Trauma

God's Big Story

What stands out to you about God's Big Story in the context of brokenness and wholeness?

Psalm 147:3 NLT

He heals the brokenhearted and
bandages their wounds.

Trauma and Its Causes

Trauma is an unexpected, out-of-the-ordinary experience which causes distress and a sense of being out of control.¹

The traumatic events children experience fit into two categories:

1. **Calamities**²: Trauma that was not caused or intended by humans. Examples:
2. **Evil Deeds**: Trauma that was deliberately caused by humans. Examples:

Losses from Trauma

Whenever trauma occurs—whether from a calamity or evil deed—a loss is experienced.

What types of losses might a child experience due to traumatic events?

Physical Losses	Social-Emotional Losses	Mental Losses	Spiritual Losses

¹ Greener, S. (2006). The effects of failure to meet children's needs. In G. Miles and J-J. Wright (Eds.), *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People Living in Difficult Circumstances Around the World* (127-135). Paternoster.

² Adapted from Velazco, G.A. (2001). Petra College Lectures.

Because trauma affects a child's whole being, our response to their trauma needs to be holistic.

Do children recover more easily from trauma caused by calamities or evil deeds?
Why?

Trauma and Spiritual Growth

How might a child's losses impact their understanding of God?

The degree to which a child trusts adults influences his or her ability to trust a Heavenly Father.

Indicators of Trauma in Children

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS: WHAT THEY DO

Bullying and aggression: attacking things or people
Declining grades: poorer and poorer performance in school
Family and peer conflicts: fighting or arguing with family and friends
Misbehaving: getting into trouble with the law/juvenile crime
Poor concentration or attention
Poor peer relations: not getting along with children of the same age
Regression: reverting to younger behavior (baby talk, clinging, bed-wetting)
Running away
Social withdrawal: they don't want to mix with friends or family
Being overly friendly or seeking physical contact with adults they do not know well
Stealing
Substance abuse and self-harm: glue sniffing, alcohol, drugs
Tantrums: violent outbursts of anger, kicking, or shouting

EMOTIONAL INDICATORS: WHAT THEY FEEL

Anger: making more enemies than friends
Anxiety: being tense and worried all the time
Insecurity: clinging to adults, refusing to be left alone
Depression: feeling very sad, hopeless, or tired for extended duration
Fear: of adults (or specific adults)
Guilt
Low self-esteem or lack of self-confidence
Obsessions: "fixating" on specific things, repeating actions
Often thinking about suicide

PHYSICAL INDICATORS: WHAT THEIR BODIES SHOW

Bruises: purple or blue marks, swellings, rashes on the body
Cannot eat properly or overeats
Bed-wetting or soiling themselves
Headaches or stomach aches
Pain, itching, bad body odor
Problems walking or sitting
Sleep disturbance: cannot sleep or sleeps too much, nightmares

Many times, the **change** in a child's normal behavior is what indicates a trauma has occurred. The presence of **several indicators** may mean some type of intervention is required.

The God Who Heals

Which of God's character qualities speaks to the way you're feeling?

Exodus 15:26 NIV

If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.

The Hebrew name God uses for Himself in this verse is **Jehovah Rapha**.
Rapha means to **heal or make whole**.

God does heal. He does bring wholeness from brokenness. And because of that, we can have hope.

Action Steps

1. Think about a child you know who has experienced trauma and look at the four categories of losses. What were some of the losses they have experienced?
2. Are you currently working with children who show multiple indicators of trauma? Write down their names. What specific things can you pray for them?

Walking the Journey of Grief and Healing with Children

Introduction

Nehemiah 1:1-4 NLT

In late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was at the fortress of Susa. Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem. They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire." When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.

How did Nehemiah react to the losses he experienced?

Grief is the combination of emotions and reactions we experience any time we lose someone or something important to us.

Stages of Grief³

During each stage children will demonstrate different behaviors, which are a **manifestation** of the grief they are experiencing.



Neighborhood of Denial and Anger

What kinds of behaviors might you see from children at this stage of grief?

Neighborhood of No Hope

What kinds of behaviors might you see children exhibit at this stage of grief?

³ Hill, H. et al. (2014). *Healing the wounds of trauma: How the church can help* (North American Edition, p. 33). American Bible Society.

Neighborhood of New Beginnings.

What kinds of behaviors might you see as children move toward New Beginnings?

The journey of grief and feeling rarely follows a straight line. Children will go **back and forth** between the stages.

The false bridge promises a way around the pain of grieving.

Why do you think this is a false bridge that will not lead to healing?



God made us with the need to grieve our losses. It is a **normal, healthy** response to loss.

Building Trusting Relationships

One of the most important things a child needs on their healing journey is a relationship with a caring, trusting adult.

Think about the people in your life whom you trust. Why do you trust them?

What are some ways we can build trusting relationships with children?

Trust is developed over time as we **consistently** demonstrate love and respect to children.

Our Own Journey of Grief and Healing

Where are you on your own journey of grief and healing?

Neighborhood of Denial and Anger
Neighborhood of No Hope
Neighborhood of New Beginnings



2 Corinthians 1:3-7 NLT

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us.

God will **redeem** our suffering and trauma. When we experience healing, our experience becomes a **powerful testimony** of hope to children who are now on that same journey.

Action Steps

1. Have you ever tried to build a false bridge to heal from grief? If so, what might you do differently?
2. If you have experienced trauma and loss in the past, how might it help you walk with a child who is on the journey of grief and healing?
3. What are one or two ways you will build a trusting relationship with a child in order to walk with them along their healing journey?

Learning to Listen Well

Introduction

Think about a time when someone listened to you. What happened? How did you know they were really listening? How did you feel because of the way they listened?

Proverbs 18:13 NIV

To answer before listening—
that is folly and shame.

James 1:19 NIV

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of
this: Everyone should be quick to listen,
slow to speak and slow to become angry.

Active Listening Demonstration

Poor Listening Example: What did you notice?

In active listening, the listener **reflects back the feelings and the facts** the speaker is saying.

Good Listening Example: What did you notice?

Good listeners...

- Use appropriate eye contact.
- Demonstrate welcoming body language.
- Reflect back what the child says and affirm their feelings.
- Do not offer their opinion or judgment about what happened.
- Do not show surprise or shock.
- Listen. They do not offer advice.

Identify the problem in the listening approach:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



What did you learn from your attempt to actively listen or from watching others?

Active listening is a skill that takes practice. It requires us to be fully attentive to a child. We must listen with our ears, eyes and spirit, and pay attention to the child's body language and words.

Confidentiality: We must respect children and not share what they say to us. However, when a child discloses something like abuse or ongoing danger, it is wrong to assure the child that we will not share it with others. There may be a legal obligation to report child abuse to the authorities.

The Ministry of Presence

Job 2:11-13 NLT

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words.

When children cannot or will not talk about what has happened, we can:

- Invite the child to draw a picture.
- Do another activity with the child.
- Sit and hold their hand, give them a hug.
- Simply be quiet.

Action Steps

1. What aspects of active listening were easy for you? What aspects were difficult?
2. What is one thing you have learned about listening to children that you will put into practice?



3. How can you practice a “ministry of presence” with children?

4. Think of a child in your community or family with whom you can practice listening. Plan a time to practice active listening with them.

Rebuilding Spiritual Foundations

Introduction

Trauma can cause long-term losses that erode a child's spiritual foundation. What stood out to you in Jesse's story?

Three Spiritual Foundations

Spiritual Foundation #1: Love and Belonging

God created us to be in **relationship**. Trauma can cause children to lose this sense of belonging.

Mark 10:13-16 NLT

One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

How did Jesus assure children that they belonged?

Practical ideas that would demonstrate to children that they belong:

Spiritual Foundation #2 – Significance

Children need to know they are **valuable**. Trauma can cause children to lose this sense of significance.

How can we help a child who has suffered trauma know they are valued and that they matter?

Spiritual Foundation #3 – Ability to Trust

Children who have been significantly wounded by trauma, may have lost their ability to trust God. As we build trusting relationships, we are also helping children learn how to trust again.

The Importance of God's Word**Psalm 119:89-93 NLT**

Your eternal word, O Lord, stands firm in heaven. Your faithfulness extends to every generation, as enduring as the earth you created. Your regulations remain true to this day, for everything serves your plans. If your instructions hadn't sustained me with joy, I would have died in my misery. I will never forget your commandments, for by them you give me life.

Psalm 119:114 NLT

You are my refuge and my shield;
your word is my source of hope.

What is the importance of God's Word in the heart of a child wounded by trauma?

The **truth** of God's Word can bring **healing and hope** to a child's wounded heart.

1. **Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:9** – God loves us so much He sent Jesus to die for us.
2. **Romans 8:38-39** – Nothing can separate us from God's love.
3. **Isaiah 43:4** – We are precious to God and honored in his sight.
4. **Ephesians 2:10** – We can serve God because He created us to do good things.
5. **Psalm 9:10** – The Lord does not forsake those who seek Him.
6. **Lamentations 3:22-23** – God is faithful.
7. **Psalm 46:1** – God is an ever-present help in trouble.

Circle the scripture that is most meaningful to you.



Sharing Truths Through Stories

Stories are one of the best ways to communicate the truth of God's Word to children.

Example 1

Verse: Isaiah 43:4

Truth: You are precious and valuable to God.

Story: Jesus welcomes the little children.

Example 2

Verse: Psalm 33:22

Truth: God's love for them is unfailing.

Story: What Bible story could you share that would communicate that truth?

Example 3

Verse: Psalm 46:1

Truth: God is an ever-present help in trouble.

Story: What Bible stories could help you teach this truth?

Helping Children Reflect on the Story

After sharing the Bible story, we also want to help children reflect on the truth of the story, helping them connect God's Word to the hurt or trauma they have experienced in their own life.

What activities could you do with children to help them reflect on the Bible story?

In groups, choose one of the truths about God we have talked about. Select one Bible story that illustrates the truth about God and then think of two ideas for how you could invite children to reflect on your chosen story.

Action Steps

1. Think about children you know who have suffered trauma

What are 2-3 things you could do to demonstrate God's love for them?

What are 2-3 things that you could do to affirm their significance?



2. What is something new you learned about sharing truth through stories? How will you begin implementing what you have learned?
3. How will you help children reflect on the Bible stories you share with them?

Only the **Holy Spirit** can do the work of rebuilding a child's spiritual foundations. As we walk with hurting children, we must make **praying** for them a **central part of our ministry**.

More Ideas for Sharing Truth Through Stories

God is Trustworthy

Verse: Hebrews 13:5-6

Truth: God will never leave us or forsake us

Bible Stories: David flees from King Saul (1 Samuel 24); God frees the Israelites (Exodus 11-15)

Verse: Psalm 46:1

Truth: God is an ever-present help in trouble

Bible Stories: Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16:16-40); Fiery furnace (Daniel 3)
Joseph in prison (Genesis 39-41); Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6)

Verse: Psalm 34:18

Truth: God is close to us when we hurt

Bible Stories: Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21:8-21); Birth of Moses (Exodus 2);
Job (Job 1,2, 40-42)



Verse: Philippians 4:19, Matthew 6:24-27

Truth: God will provide for our needs

Bible Stories: Elijah fed by ravens (1 Kings 17:2-16); Moses gets water from a rock (Exodus 17:1-7, Numbers 20:1-13); Israelites and the manna (Exodus 16)

Verse: Nahum 1:7, Romans 8:28

Truth: God is good and working all things for good

Bible Stories: Ruth (Ruth 1-4); Joseph (Genesis 37, 39-45)

God Loves Us

Verse: Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:9

Truth: God shows His love by sending Jesus

Bible Stories: Jesus death and resurrection (Matthew 26-28; Mark 14:12-16:20; Luke 22:7-24:12; John 18-20)

Verse: Jeremiah 31:3, Psalm 13:5; 33:18-22

Truth: God's love for us is unfailing and everlasting

Bible Stories: Jesus touches the leper (Luke 5:12-16); Jesus heals the woman with the bleeding issue (Mark 5:21-34); Prodigal Son parable (Luke 15:11-32)

Verse: Romans 8:38-39

Truth: Nothing can separate me from God's love

Bible Stories: John 10 (Good Shepherd)

God Gives us our Significance

Verse: Psalm 139:14-18

Truth: We are fearfully and wonderfully made

Bible Stories: Creation (Genesis 1-2)

Verse: Romans 15:7

Truth: God accepts us

Bible Stories: David and Mephibosheth (2 Sam 4:4; 9:1-13); Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4); Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

Verse: Isaiah 43:4

Truth: We are valuable to God

Bible Stories: Parable of the lost sheep, coin (Luke 15:1-10); Jesus and the children (Mark 10:13-16)

Verse: Ephesians 2:10

Truth: We can serve God because he created us to do good things

Bible Stories: Samuel (1 Samuel 3); Daniel (Daniel 1); Naaman's Servant Girl (2 Kings 5:1-15)

Connecting the Gospel to a Child's Need

Introduction

What stood out to you in Greyson's story?

Colossians 1:6 NLT

This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

The Gospel Story, "From Brokenness to Wholeness"

From Brokenness to Wholeness:

God created the world and everything in it. His most special part of creation was people—you and me! The first two people God created – Adam and Eve – enjoyed a perfect relationship with Him, a relationship of closeness and trust. They also lived in peace with each other and the world around them. Everything was good and whole and right, just the way God intended it to be. Because He loves us, God wants all people to enjoy a perfect relationship with Him (**Genesis 1:1, 27, 31**).



We can remember this part of the story by saying "wholeness" and doing this hand motion. (*Hand motion: Interlock your fingers from both hands.*)

Unfortunately, the peace and wholeness God intended did not last. Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan and chose to rebel against God and to seek life apart from Him. This rebellion is called sin – choosing to follow our own selfish way rather than following God's perfect way.



Adam and Eve's sin had serious consequences for them and for you and me. Sin brought death and broke our relationship with God, with others and with creation. Every one of us is now born wanting to follow our own way instead of God's. Because of sin, people fight and cheat and hurt one another. Creation also experiences the effects of sin through conflict, sickness and destruction. (**Genesis 3:1-19, Romans 5:12**).

We call this part of the story "brokenness." (*Hand motion: Interlock fingers and then pull hands apart.*)

But God loved us so much that He promised to send Someone to rescue us from our sin and to fix the brokenness in the world.

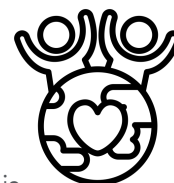


When the time was right, God kept His promise and sent His Son Jesus to our broken world. Jesus was born as a baby, grew up, and lived among us. He taught people about God, He healed those who were sick, He loved people no one else would love. He lived a perfect life.

Because He was perfect, He was able to do for us what no one else could do. Jesus loved us so much that He bled and died on a cross, taking the shame and punishment for our sin and the sin of the world. He then came back to life, defeating sin and death forever and making a way for the world to be made whole again. Because of what Jesus has done, anyone who trusts in Him can have a right relationship with God and new life in Him – a life filled with love and hope and purpose. You and I can have this right relationship with God if we choose to trust in Jesus as our Savior. We can be known as His daughters and sons (**Romans 3:21-25; 1 Corinthians 15:1-9, John 1:12**).

We can remember this part of the story by simply saying “Jesus” and making our arms like a cross. (*Hand motion: Make arms like a cross.*)

God’s story is not over! God has promised that one day He will make all things new again and renew the whole world back to the way He intended it to be in the beginning. All of the brokenness and sin will be gone. He will make right everything that is wrong. This will happen when Jesus comes back; then, those who chose to follow Him will live forever with Jesus in His perfect Kingdom. Until then, we can be a part of His story, enjoying a relationship with Him and sharing His love with others, helping them move from brokenness to wholeness (**Revelation 21:1-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**).



This last part of the story we call “To wholeness again.” (*Hand motion: Start with your arms in the cross position and then interlock your fingers in front of you again.*)

What did you notice about the way I shared the gospel story that may be different from the way you typically share the gospel with children?

As we share the gospel as God’s Big Story, we help children who have suffered trauma understand:

- The depth of Jesus’ love for them.
- That the pain they are experiencing is not what God intended.
- That Jesus came into our brokenness and also experienced trauma.

- That Jesus took all the pain, the guilt, the shame and the sin of the world on Himself.
- That through Jesus they can experience forgiveness, healing and hope.

What God Offers Through the Gospel

To a child who feels shame, the gospel offers honor.

To a child who feels rejected, the gospel offers acceptance.

To a child who feels helpless, the gospel offers power through the Holy Spirit.

To a child who feels guilty, the gospel offers forgiveness.

To a child who feels betrayed, the gospel offers God's faithfulness.

To a child without a family, the gospel offers adoption as sons and daughters of God.

To a child who is lonely, the gospel offers God's constant presence.

What else does the gospel offer to children?

Connecting the Gospel to a Child's Need

Example of Sarah

What losses has Sarah experienced?

What might be Sarah's point of need?

How could we connect the gospel to Sarah's point of need?

Example of Matthew

What losses has Matthew experienced?

What might be Matthew's point of need?

How could we connect the gospel to Matthew's point of need?

When is a Child Ready to Receive Jesus?

The process of a child coming to know Jesus belongs to the **child** and to the **Holy Spirit**.

How might we know when a child who has suffered trauma is open to hearing the gospel and ready to receive an invitation to follow Jesus?

- They ask questions about God, sin, Jesus, or gospel truths.
- Their facial expressions and body language might change.
- Their attitude may change.
- They express a remorse for sin or a desire to have Jesus in their life.

Connecting the gospel to a child's point of need is an **amazing privilege** and a **sacred trust**. To steward this trust well, we must apply everything we have learned in our training.

Identity in Christ

Christian children who have suffered trauma need to know who they are in Jesus.

Because I am in Christ, I ...

- am valued as a son or daughter of God (Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 3:26; 4:6,7)
- am completely loved and accepted by God (Ephesians 1:3-4; John 1:12; 1 John 4:16-17)
- will never be forsaken (Romans 8:38-39, Hebrews 13:5)
- am not alone - God is with me in my suffering (John 16:33; Romans 8:35-37; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
- am a new creation, and God is continuing to do a good thing (2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:6)

More Truths About Identity in Jesus:

1. I am God's child (John 1:12).
2. I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit for Jesus (John 15:16).
3. I am no longer a slave to sin (Romans 6:6).
4. I am alive in Christ (Romans 6:11).
5. I am free from condemnation (Romans 8:1-2).
6. I am adopted into God's family and can call God, "Father" (Romans 8:15).
7. I cannot be separated from the love of God (Romans 8:31-39).

8. I am accepted (Romans 15:7).
9. I have been bought with a price, and I belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
10. I am a temple of the Holy Spirit. He lives in me. (1 Corinthians 3:17).
11. I have been declared right with God because of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21).
12. I am a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
13. I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).
14. I am crucified with Christ, and He lives in me (Galatians 2:20).
15. I am blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3).
16. I have been chosen by God (Ephesians 1:4).
17. I am seated with Jesus in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6).
18. I am God's workmanship, created to do good works (Ephesians 2:10).
19. I can approach God with freedom and confidence (Ephesians 3:12).
20. I have been rescued and forgiven of all my sin (Colossians 1:13-14).
21. I am complete in Christ (Colossians 2:9-10).
22. I can go directly to God because of Jesus (Hebrews 4:16).
23. I am chosen by God, and I am special to Him (1 Peter 2:9).
24. I am loved by God (1 John 3:1).
25. I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me (1 John 5:18).

Action Steps

1. Write something new you learned about sharing the gospel as a story from brokenness to wholeness.
2. How will what you learned change your approach to sharing the gospel with children who are hurting?
3. Think of a child you know who has been wounded by trauma. What are the deep needs of this child? How could you adapt the gospel to speak to this child's need?
4. What's one thing you will do to teach children in your ministry about their identity in Christ?



Additional Resources

Trauma Healing Institute

A global collaboration of ministries dedicated to helping people around the world heal from the pain of trauma. Find resources and training for working with adults, youth and children affected by trauma.

Website: <https://www.traumahealinginstitute.org/>

For Use with Children

There is Hope for Me by Phyllis Kilbourn. A free interactive trauma recovery workbook for children. Available in Arabic, Dutch, English, German, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, and Russian. Includes the children's booklet and is accompanied by a Facilitator's Guide with step-by-step instructions for each of the child-focused pages.

Website: <http://crisiscaretraining.org/product/there-is-hope-for-me-free-resource/>

Books and Workbooks

- *Healing for Hurting Hearts: A Handbook for Counseling Children and Youth in Crisis* by Phyllis Kilbourn (CLC Publications)
- *Healing the Children of War: A Handbook for Ministry to Children who have Suffered Deep Traumas* by Phyllis Kilbourn (MARC)
- *Celebrating Children* workbooks by Viva
 - Risk and Resilience
 - Child Protection
 - Caring for Self and Staff

Website: <http://learn.viva.org/equip/celebrating-children/>

- Compassion International – Training materials to help develop holistic child development and guidelines for child protection.

Website: <http://www.forchildren.com/>

Training

- Crisis Care Training International – Training modules on working with children in trauma, including street children, orphans and vulnerable children, children in armed conflict, and children with disabilities.

Website: <http://www.crisiscaretraining.org/>

- Petra Institute's "Walking with Wounded Children" – a course designed to equip children's workers in handling emotionally wounded children on a very fundamental level.

Website: <http://www.petra.co.za/courses/walking-with-wounded-children/>

- Online training from Trauma Free World, a community of people dedicated to helping children around the world heal from childhood trauma.

Website: <https://traumafreeworld.org/training/>

- Safeguarding Children from Abuse

Website: <https://414academy.pathwright.com/library/>