



# 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 Manual

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.

Teachers have a unique and powerful role in God's plan. This training is designed to be interactive so that participants have the opportunity to share their successes and challenges in working with children.

The material presented in this training is designed to provide you with a framework. But the Instructor's Guides 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. Plan to send the handouts to participants in advance with enough time to download and print.

## 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. Scripture quotations are both from the New International Version and New Living Translation.

**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.

## Technical Considerations for This Training

This training is designed for use in a digital setting using the Zoom platform. If participants are new to Zoom, consider spending additional time in the first lesson or add an additional training session to explain Zoom and its features.

Each lesson includes a Knowledge Check in the form of a poll. Polls will need to be added to Zoom in advance of the training. If you are not able to create the polls, you can adapt the activity and do the questions through the chat feature.

If you are teaching several lessons back-to-back on Zoom, be aware of the need to take a break between each lesson.

## Icons in the Instructor's Guide



Indicates when you will ask participants to type something into the chat box.



Indicates when you will ask participants to unmute their microphones and share something out loud.



Indicates when you will divide participants into breakout rooms.



Indicates when you will ask participants to use their reactions.



Indicates when you will launch a poll for participants to answer.

The slide icon in the right column indicates which PowerPoint slide to use for each section of content.



## 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 counselor to join you on your training calls.
- 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.

## Reportifying

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](mailto:1for50@gmail.com) or by filling in the online Activity Form on the 1for50 website ([www.1for50.net](http://www.1for50.net)).



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## Materials (Needed for Each Lesson)

- Instructor's notes included in this manual
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Computer with PowerPoint and latest version of Zoom installed
- Bible (Verses are also included in this manual and on presentation slides.)
- Participant Handouts (sent to participants in advance of the training)

## 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.



# 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 and Introduction      | 15 min |
| A Story of Hope               | 5 min  |
| Overflowing with Hope         | 5 min  |
| Starting from the Right Place | 25 min |
| Activity: Poll                | 5 min  |
| Reflection and Action Steps   | 5 min  |

**Approximate Total Time: 60 min**

## Materials

### Illustration options:

- Cup or glass of water
- Tray or towel

### 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

5 min



We are so thankful to have each of you on the call today, and we welcome you to our training on Children and Trauma. (Open in prayer.)



### Reminders for Meeting on Zoom

(If your participants are new to Zoom, you may want to spend additional time explaining Zoom and how to use the different features you will use in the training. Advance slides with every bullet point.)


- Ensure your name is updated. This can be edited by finding participants at the bottom of the screen and selecting your name to modify.
- Please keep your video ON if bandwidth allows.
- Remain muted while not speaking. You should see on your Zoom screen a little microphone icon. If there is a red line through your microphone, that means you are muted. If there is no red line, you are not muted. When speaking, be sure to click on your microphone to unmute yourself.
- One feature we will use a lot is the chat. This is very important for our discussion times, especially for those of you who do not have stable audio. If you are on your computer, you can find the chat box by clicking on the chat icon on the bottom of your screen. The chat will then open on the right side of your screen. If you are using your phone, you can find the chat by clicking "more" at the bottom of your screen and then clicking on "chat." Questions can be placed in the chat at any point during the training.
- View – If you are on a computer or tablet, we encourage you to change your view to "side-by-side." You can find it by selecting View Options located at the top center of your screen and then choose Side-by-Side Mode.



### Getting to Know Each Other

Now we want to spend some time getting to know one another. We do not have the time to allow everyone to introduce themselves in this large group. But we will have time to share and get to know each other more during the next few weeks. Today we'll give you time to meet one another in small groups. On Zoom we do it through breakout rooms.



-  I will share the beginning of a sentence that each person in your group must finish. For example, if the sentence begins, "My name is ... and I am from ...," I would say (demonstrate your response). Every minute I will broadcast a new sentence for each person in your group to finish. This message will appear at the top of your screen, but will only stay for about 10 seconds. Be sure to watch for it! **(Trainer:** Explain to participants how to join a breakout room: a prompt will appear on their screen, inviting them to join a breakout room. They simply need to click on the button. Then when it is time to return, they can either choose to click the "return to main session" button at

the bottom of their screen or wait to automatically be brought back to the main session. **Tech person:** Divide participants into groups of 3-4 people. Every minute broadcast a new sentence starter from the list below. After 5 minutes bring everyone back to the main session.)

Suggested sentence starters (choose 4-5):

- My name is ... and 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 ....

### Introduction to the Training

Welcome back everyone. This 6-session training, entitled "From Brokenness to Wholeness," will address 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 your handouts, and we encourage you to continue 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 throughout this training 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.

Today we will explore together how we can be agents of God's hope as we walk alongside children in need of His healing. Our agenda is as follows:

1. A Story of Hope
2. Overflowing with Hope
3. Starting from the Right Place
4. Reflection and Action Steps





## A Story of Hope

5 min

(For slides 14-17: Once you advance to the slide, images will automatically appear in each white box on the slide.) I would like to begin by sharing a story with you. Mary grew up in a poor urban community in the Philippines that was known for drug trafficking and prostitution. Neither of her parents 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 for those whose voices have been silenced by poverty, abuse, and greed. She also leads a Christian radio broadcast with children that reaches half-a-million listeners! 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 write responses in the chat. Read them aloud.)

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

5 min

### What Comes out of the Cup?

(Have the following demonstration ready. Place a tray or towel over your computer keyboard so that it doesn't get wet. Hold up a glass or a cup of water, filled to the very top. Bump it with your hand so that a little water spills.)


 13-14

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 **Why does water come out of the cup?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. 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's what would come out. This is also true for us.


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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.

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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.

 23


 **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" (New International Version).

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Paul's desire and prayer were 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?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read 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.

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 **What is our role?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.) We trust in Him and receive from Him to give to others.

 26

 **What is one thing that encourages or challenges you as you reflect on your role and God's role?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)

 27

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.

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## Starting from the Right Place

25 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 sufficient.

Think about people, including you, who have reached out to help hurting children. Then think about how you or others responded to those hurting children. (Pause.) Perhaps you gave advice, comforted the child, prayed for them, provided for a physical need, or shared Scripture. Now think more deeply.



**Why do you think you or others responded in that manner? From what sources were you drawing?** For example, you may have been drawing from your own experience of being hurt in the past. (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Write responses on the whiteboard in a column on the left.)

### Scripture Reflection



**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).

Cisterns are large storage tanks for holding water. In this verse God is rebuking the Israelites for both turning from Him and for building their own broken, "spiritual" cisterns.

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."<sup>1</sup>

### Broken Cisterns

(Refer to the list on the whiteboard.) We identified sources from which we draw when we help children who are wounded by trauma. Some sources are based upon God, but some of them use our own resources.

<sup>1</sup> 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* (207-223). Paternoster.

**Which of these sources are examples of our own “broken cisterns”?**

(Invite participants to write responses in the chat. As examples are identified, underline or draw a circle around them.) **What are other examples of broken cisterns we create or draw from when working with children who are hurting?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. You may need to give some examples to get participants started. Add them to the list on the whiteboard. Possible answers include:

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

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, several attitudes and responses could come out. We may feel:

- Frustrated
- Overwhelmed
- Helpless
- Inadequate
- Want them to listen to our wisdom and advice, or
- Have a desire to try to solve everything

**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.

Let's look at several passages of Scripture and what they tell us about the different sources of hope God provides. (Ask volunteers to read the passages below, then have them summarize the source of hope mentioned in the passage. **Tech Person:** Enable participants to unmute themselves.)



**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” (New Living Translation). God’s Word gives us hope.



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



**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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34



35



36-37



38-39



40-41



**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 – gives us hope.



42-43



**Psalm 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.



44-45



**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.



46-47



**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.



48-49

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.



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**What are some specific ways we can connect with God in order for Him to fill us with His hope?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read 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 His Spirit.)



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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 experienced trauma? What attitudes will overflow from within us?** (Return to the whiteboard used for broken cisterns. Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses and type them in a separate column. Answers may include:)



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- 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.

Let's review together what we have learned about being agents of hope.



## Activity: Poll

5 min



**(Tech Person:** Share the poll with participants and allow several minutes for them to complete it. After several minutes, share the poll results. **Trainer:** Go through the poll and share the correct answers, taking time to clarify any questions that participants seemed to have difficulty answering. **Note:** Polls need to be loaded into the Zoom platform in advance of your training. Correct answers have been highlighted below.)



### Poll

1. In order to be agents of hope, we first need to be filled with God's hope. (True/False)
2. If we rely on our own strength, what responses might we have to children who are hurting?
  - a. Compassion and love
  - b. Patience and humility
  - c. Frustration and a desire to fix things
  - d. Hope and courage
3. God provides His hope through:
  - a. His Word
  - b. His Holy Spirit
  - c. His work in our lives
  - d. Our identity in Christ
  - e. All of the above

## Reflection and Action Steps

5 min

We have learned a lot in this lesson about being an agent of hope. 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. Her healing was not immediate. 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 only 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 on the "Action Steps" page in their handouts. If they do not have the handouts, encourage them to simply write their answers in a journal or notebook. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers. If you are running short on time, you can also choose to have participants answer these questions as a homework assignment and send you 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?**



#### Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented, or you may want to review one of the important points as you conclude.)



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 the chat. (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.) You have heard many words and phrases that describe God's character. Let's close in prayer as we respond to His goodness that gives us hope.



**Optional activity if time allows:** We are now going to allow you to pray together in small groups in breakout rooms. As you pray for one another, ask God to fill you with joy and peace so that you will overflow with hope as you minister to children who have experienced trauma. Pray that you will always go to the spring of living water as the source of your work with children. Pray that you will be agents of hope. When you are finished praying, you may leave the call and not come back to the main meeting room. (Give any final announcements before sending participants to the breakout rooms. **Tech Person:** Divide into breakout rooms in groups of 5-6. Do not end the call until all groups finish praying.)

# 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

|                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Welcome and Introduction    | 8 min  |
| Trauma and Its Causes       | 7 min  |
| Losses from Trauma          | 15 min |
| Trauma and Spiritual Growth | 5 min  |
| Indicators of Trauma        | 10 min |
| Activity: Poll              | 5 min  |
| The God Who Heals           | 5 min  |
| Reflection and Action Steps | 5 min  |

**Approximate Total Time: 60 min**

## Materials

### Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

### Scripture passages:

- Psalm 147:3
- Exodus 15:26



## Welcome and Introduction

8 min

It is wonderful to have you on the call with us again. We are excited by what the Lord has for us today. (Open in prayer or have a participant open in prayer.)

### Reminders for Meeting on Zoom

- Ensure your name is updated. This can be edited by finding participants at the bottom of the screen and selecting your name to modify.
- Please keep your video ON if bandwidth allows.
- Remain muted while not speaking.
- Questions can be placed in the chat.
- To see both the speaker and the PowerPoint presentation, click on View Options and choose Side-by-Side Mode.

In today's lesson we will explore topics for understanding trauma. Our lesson will cover:

1. Trauma and its Causes
2. Losses from Trauma
3. Trauma and Spiritual Growth
4. Indicators of Trauma
5. The God Who Heals
6. Reflection and Action Steps

### Introduction: God's Big Story

(For slides 5-10: Once you advance to the slide, images will automatically appear in each white box on the slide.) I would like to begin by telling 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, people's 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. God Himself will come down and dwell with us. And there will be no more brokenness. Hallelujah!



**What stands out to you as you think about God's Big Story in Scripture in the context of brokenness and wholeness?** (Share answers aloud. Invite those who want to share to raise their hand using the reactions Then call on several participants to unmute and share. **Tech Person:** Enable participants to unmute themselves.)



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" (Psalm 147:3 New Living Translation).



We must continue to minister as agents of hope and wholeness for children who are hurting and broken.

## Trauma and Its Causes

7 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.<sup>2</sup> Many of us on this call have experienced some form of trauma in our own lives.

 15


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 or relationships?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat if they feel comfortable. 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.)

 16

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.

### The Difference Between Calamities and Evil Deeds

The traumatic events children experience fit into two categories: Calamities and Evil Deeds.<sup>3</sup>

 17

Calamities: Trauma that was not caused or intended by humans, such as an earthquake or an illness.

 18

Evil Deeds: Trauma that was deliberately caused by humans, such as war or abuse.

 19

**As you think about children in your community, what are some of the traumatic things they have experienced?** Just think about it for a moment.

 20


**Of the traumas you are thinking about, which are calamities?**

(Invite participants to write responses in the chat and write the responses in one column on the whiteboard. Examples include floods, earthquakes, fires, illnesses, diseases, pandemics, accidents, death.)

 21


**Which are evil deeds?**

(Invite participants to write responses in the chat and write the responses in a second column on the whiteboard. Examples include bombings, war, physical and mental abuse, rape, violence, crime, exploitation, neglect.)

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Velazco, G.A. (2001). Petra College Lectures.

## 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.

If we think of the traumas identified earlier, we can see how different losses happen from one trauma. For example, think of the trauma of divorce. When a child experiences divorce, their physical losses may be their home and community if they must move. Social-emotional losses include a close relationship to the parent who leaves, stability in the family, security, and peace. Mentally the child may lose understanding or the ability to focus. Spiritually the child loses trust that God heard their prayers, and feels guilt that it was their fault.

 Now it is your turn. You will be going into breakout rooms for five minutes to discuss the question, **“What types of losses might a child experience due to traumatic events?”** Think about the traumas we listed earlier. Then, as a group, brainstorm the losses children may experience in each of the four categories: physical, social-emotional, mental and spiritual. Be sure to select a spokesperson for your group.

**(Tech Person:** Divide participants into breakout rooms of 6-8 people for five minutes. Broadcast the categories to the groups. **Trainer:** When the groups return, invite the spokespersons to put their name in the chat. Ask each group to share a few of their answers, writing the responses on the whiteboard according to the four categories. If there is confusion, guide participants to identify the correct category for each loss. Answers may include:)

 22-23 24 25 26

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

Children who experience trauma often suffer multiple losses. If a child loses a parent, they might also lose love, security and possibly faith. If a child is sexually abused, they would lose their sense of innocence and their ability to trust adults.

 27

Understanding multiple losses helps to see that trauma affects a child's whole being. It can wound them physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Children may not realize they have multiple losses, but our awareness helps us to minister to them at their various points of loss.

 28

Since the losses affect their whole being, our response to their trauma also needs to be holistic.

 29


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 do you think are easier for children to deal with or recover from—calamities or evil deeds?** On the screen you see the statement: Children recover more easily from calamities. **Is this statement true or false?** Using your reactions, choose "yes" for true or "no" for false or type true or false in the chat. (Pause and allow participants to respond.) It is easier to deal with calamity-related trauma.

 30

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.

 31

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.

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

 32

Think back to our list of losses children suffer in trauma. **How might their losses impact a child's understanding of God?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers may include:)

 33

- 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

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 with them and expect they will receive or accept it.

 34

Think of a child's heart like soil. This is seed falling on 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.

 35

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 the 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.

 36

Think of a child you know that has experienced trauma. **What behaviors and emotions did they express? Did they act out? Were they withdrawn?**

 37

Now look at the checklist in your handouts called, "Indicators of Trauma in Children,"<sup>4</sup> and put a check mark before each item that describes the child you identified. If you do not have the handouts, you can look at a shortened list on the screen. (Pause for 1-2 minutes to allow participants to read. Then read the key points included on the PowerPoint slide.)

#### 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 don't 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 |

 **What stands out to you as you look at this list of indicators?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read 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.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Velazco, G.A. (2001). Petra College Lectures.

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.



## Activity: Poll

5 min



We have learned a lot about trauma in this lesson today. Let's take a few moments to review what we have learned.

(**Tech Person:** Share the poll with participants and allow several minutes for them to complete it. After several minutes, share the poll results. **Trainer:** Go through the poll and share the correct answers, taking time to clarify any questions that participants seemed to have difficulty answering. **Note:** Polls need to be loaded into the Zoom platform in advance of your training. Correct answers have been highlighted below.)



### Poll

1. Trauma can affect every part of a child. (True/False)
2. Only certain types of trauma cause loss. (True/False)
3. What type of trauma is most difficult for children to heal from?
  - a. Trauma caused by calamities
  - b. Trauma caused by evil deeds
4. The losses children suffer because of trauma can distort their understanding of God. (True/False)
5. One indicator of trauma in children is a change in their normal behavior. (True/False)

As we consider the brokenness that causes trauma and the brokenness which results from trauma, our hearts may feel overwhelmed. We must remember to turn our focus back to the God who brings wholeness from brokenness.





## The God Who Heals

5 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. (Invite participants to type their responses into the chat. Read answers aloud.)



44

At the beginning of this lesson we read **Psalms 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.



45



In our previous lesson, we shared words or phrases about God's character that fill us with hope. (Give a few examples.) **Which of God's character qualities speaks to the way you are feeling?** (Invite participants to type their responses into the chat. Read answers aloud.)



46

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:



47



**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).



48

"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.



49

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.



50

## Reflection and Action Steps

5 min

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



51

(For each of the following questions, ask participants to write their answers on the "Action Steps" page in their handouts. If they do not have the handouts, encourage them to simply write their answers in a journal or

notebook. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers. If you are running short on time, you can also choose to have participants answer these questions as a homework assignment and send you 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?**

#### **Question and Answer**

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented, or you may want to review one of the important points as you conclude.)

(Close in prayer or have a participant close in prayer. 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.)



# 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

|                                       |        |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Welcome and Introduction              | 8 min  |
| Stages of Grief                       | 12 min |
| Building Trusting Relationships       | 15 min |
| Activity: Poll                        | 5 min  |
| Our Own Journey of Grief and Healing  | 10 min |
| Reflection and Action Steps           | 10 min |
| <b>Approximate Total Time: 60 min</b> |        |

## Materials

### Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

### Scripture passages:

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

## Welcome and Introduction

8 min

Welcome, everyone. Thank you for being here. (Invite someone to open in prayer.)

### Reminders for Meeting on Zoom

- Ensure your name is updated.
- Please keep your video ON if bandwidth allows.
- Remain muted while not speaking.
- Questions can be placed in the chat.
- Click on View Options and choose Side-by-Side Mode to see speaker and presentation.

### Introduction to the Training

Today in our lesson we will be talking about the journey of grief and healing that children experience as a result of trauma. 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" (New Living Translation).



Nehemiah experienced many losses, including his home, his country, and the honor of his people. **How did Nehemiah react to these losses?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers include: He wept, he mourned, he fasted, he prayed.)



Nehemiah experienced grief in response to the losses he suffered. **Have you ever experienced grief?** (Invite participants to use their reactions to respond "yes" or "no".)



Grief is the combination of emotions and reactions we have any time we lose someone or something important to us. "Whether small or enormous, all losses affect us and make us experience some degree of grieving."<sup>5</sup>

 10

In the previous lesson we identified the many losses children experience when trauma occurs. Every loss they experience causes grief. While every child expresses their grief differently, grief is normal and is part of their journey toward healing and wholeness.

 11

But children need our help. They need trusting, caring adults who can walk with them and support them through the grieving process.

 12

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.

 13

We will look at the following topics:

1. Stages of Grief
2. Building Relationships of Trust
3. Our Own Journey of Grief and Healing
4. Reflection and Action Steps

## Stages of Grief

12 min

 14

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.

 15

### Stages of Grief

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.


 16

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

 17

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


have experienced, angry that God did not answer their prayers. They may even have a hard time believing that the traumatic event occurred.

 **What kinds of behaviors might you see from children at this stage of grief?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers should include aggression, irritability, defiance, refusal to participate, etc.)

 18

Another stop on a child's journey of grieving is the Neighborhood of No Hope. At this stage children will experience hopelessness, where their sense of loss will feel overwhelming.


 19

 **What kinds of behaviors might you see children exhibit at this stage?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Responses should include isolation, tears, depressive behaviors, self-harm, unresponsive, fear, etc.)

 20


But there is hope! As children grieve and experience God's love and healing, they will move toward the Neighborhood of New Beginnings.

 21

 **What kinds of behaviors might you see as children move toward New Beginnings?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers should include longer periods of play, more smiles, less tension, willingness to talk about the loss, adjusting to a "new normal," etc.)

 22

### 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?** (Invite participants to use their reactions to respond "yes" or "no" or type answers into the chat.)

 23

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.

 24-25 26-27

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.

 28

### 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."<sup>6</sup> 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.



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

(Share answers aloud. Trainer: Invite those who want to share to either raise their hand using the reactions or type their name into the chat. Then call on several participants to unmute and share. 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.

**Tech Person:** Enable participants to unmute themselves.)

God made us with the need to grieve our losses.<sup>6</sup> 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?

## Building Trusting Relationships

15 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.<sup>7</sup> 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?



**Think about the people in your life whom you trust. Why do you trust them?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)



**As you consider the answers we have shared, what are some ways we can build trusting relationships with children?** (Trainer: Invite each group to select a spokesperson who will report for the group. **Tech Person:** Divide

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

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

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participants into breakout rooms of 5-6 people and give them five minutes to discuss.

When groups return, have spokespersons put their name in the chat. Allow each group to share 2-3 answers and write the answers on the whiteboard. 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.
- Ask children for permission before offering a hug or praying with them.

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.



## Activity: Poll

5 min

Before we move on, let's take a poll to check our understanding of what we have learned so far in our training.



(**Tech Person:** Share the poll with participants and allow several minutes for them to complete it. After several minutes, share the poll results. **Trainer:** Go through the poll and share the correct answers, taking time to clarify any questions that participants seemed to have difficulty answering. **Note:** Polls need to be loaded into the Zoom platform in advance of your training. Correct answers have been highlighted below.)



**Poll**

1. Grief is an abnormal response to loss and should be avoided. (True/False)
2. The three stages of grief children will experience are:
  - a. Denial/Anger, No Hope, Happiness
  - b. No Hope, Depression, Anger
  - c. Denial/Anger, No Hope, New Beginnings
3. The false bridge promises a way around the pain of grieving but does not lead to healing. (True/False)
4. Hurting children need a relationship with a trusting, caring adult. (True/False)

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.

## Our Own Journey of Grief and Healing

10 min



In your handouts you have a list of the stages of grief. Consider one significant loss you have experienced in your life. Then, in your notes, mark where you are on your journey of grief. Are you in the Neighborhood of Denial and Anger? 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.) **Where are you on your own journey of grief and healing?** If you are comfortable sharing, I invite you to type your responses into the chat. (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)



As you can see, 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).



44-45

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.



46

## Reflection and Action Steps

10 min



47

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, what is God saying to you and how will you respond?



48

(For each of the following questions, ask participants to write their answers on the "Action Steps" page in their handouts. If they do not have the handouts, encourage them to simply write their answers in a journal or notebook. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers. If you are running short on time, you can also choose to have participants answer these questions as a homework assignment and send you their answers.)



49

- 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?**

(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 to 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.

### Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented, or you may want to review one of the important points as you conclude. Before ending the training, ask participants to have a piece of paper ready for drawing for the next lesson.)



# 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

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Welcome and Introduction       | 5 min  |
| Active Listening Demonstration | 15 min |
| Interactive Demonstration      | 10 min |
| Listening Practicum            | 20 min |
| Activity: Poll                 | 2 min  |
| The Ministry of Presence       | 3 min  |
| Reflection and Action Steps    | 5 min  |

**Approximate Total Time: 60 min**

## Materials

### Illustration option:

- Sheet of paper for drawing (Ask participants in advance to have this ready for the training.)
- Mirror

### Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

### Scripture passages:

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

## Welcome and Introduction

5 min



Welcome back everyone. How are you doing today? Please type one word into the chat that describes how you feel today? (Read responses.) Thank you for sharing. However we are feeling, we know that God is with us. (Open in prayer.)



1-2

Today's lesson focuses on learning to listen well to children. 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.



3



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?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)



4-5



The Scriptures remind us of the importance of listening. **Read Proverbs 18:13.** "To answer before listening – that is folly and shame" (New International Version).



6



**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).



7

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.



8

In today's lesson we will cover the following topics:

1. Active Listening Demonstration
2. Improving our Active Listening
3. Listening Practicum
4. The Ministry of Presence
5. Reflection and Action Steps



9

## Active Listening Demonstration

15 min

(Trainer: Stop screen sharing here and remind people with computers to go to the speaker view for the following demonstration. **Tech Person:** Use the Zoom "spotlighting" to spotlight the two presenters doing the listening demonstration.)

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. They could either be done by two people in two different locations, or by two people in the same room showing up in one video frame.)

### Scenario #1: Poor Listening

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

Child: (Looking sad)

Teacher: (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. 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 and how did he/she do it?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers



11

may include: didn't give eye contact, didn't listen to the child, jumped to give advice or blame the child, impatient, uncaring, not believing the child, etc.)

- **Why do you think the teacher responded the way he/she did?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers may include: busy, did not know how to respond, etc.)
- **What was the effect on the child?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers may include: disappointment, guilt, loss of trust, etc.)



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, etc.)

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 to hurt your father.

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: It sounds like 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'm 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 and how did he/she do it?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)
- **Why do you think the teacher responded the way he/she did?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)
- **What was the effect on the child?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)



15



16



17

(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 didn't offer any advice; they only listened.

When we use active listening, we allow the child to speak, and we 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.



18

Remember, we are like mirrors, reflecting facts and reflecting feelings. (Repeat the statement together.)



19

## Interactive Demonstration

10 min



20

Now we're 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.

Imagine that my partner 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 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."

 21

Now listen to these responses and tell me what the adult is doing wrong. (Read each statement. After each statement, ask why it is a wrong approach or problem. Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)

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 the way they should think or behave. It does not communicate acceptance.

 22-23

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.

 24-25

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.

 26-27

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.

 28-29

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.

 30-31

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.

 32-33

You have identified several bad listening responses: judging, interpreting the situation, false optimism, questioning, giving advice, and preaching. To review, here is the situation once more:

(Have a 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."



**How might we respond to this child in an understanding way as active listeners, just reflecting his/her facts and feelings?** (Share answers aloud.

Invite those who want to share to either raise their hand using the reactions or type their name into the chat. Then call on several participants to unmute and share. You may want to go back to the previous slide so they can see the child's words again.)

In a few minutes you will have an opportunity to practice active listening to one another as you share parts of your own stories.

## Listening Practicum

20 min

(Before the training, instruct participants to have a sheet of paper ready for drawing. Invite participants 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. Option: Show an example of a picture you have drawn. Give participants 2 minutes to draw.)



In a moment, you will be divided into breakout rooms of 3 people. One person will tell their story, one will be the listener, and one the observer. The storyteller is free to pause during their story to allow the listener to make active listening comments. Each speaker/listener duo will have about 3 minutes to practice active listening. Then take one minute to talk as a group about positive things the listener did and what they could improve upon. We will broadcast prompts to the breakout rooms so you know when it is time to give feedback and when it is time to switch storytellers. Groups should rotate three times, so each person has the opportunity to be the listener.

**(Tech Person:** Divide participants into breakout rooms of 3 people for 12 minutes. Every four minutes, broadcast into the rooms that it is time to switch to the next speaker/listener.

After 3 min – **Discuss how the listening went.**

After 4 min – **Start the second story now!**

After 7 min – **Discuss how the listening went.**

After 8 min – **Start the third story now!**

After 11 min – **Discuss how the listening went.)**



Welcome back from your groups! **What did you learn from your attempt to actively listen or from watching others?** (Share answers aloud. Invite those who want to share to either raise their hand using the reactions or type their name into the chat. Then call on several participants to unmute and share. **Tech Person:** Enable participants to unmute themselves.)

 39

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.

 40

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.

 41

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.

 42

If you would like more information and training on how to handle and prevent child abuse in your church or ministry, we encourage you to take the online course, "Safeguarding Children from Abuse." Information for how to access this training can be found in the "Additional Resources" handout.

(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.)

---

## Activity Poll

2 min

 43

As we close, let's do a poll together to check our understanding of the lesson.

(**Tech Person:** Share the poll with participants and allow several minutes for them to complete it. After several minutes, share the poll results. **Trainer:** Go through the poll and share the correct answers, taking time to clarify any questions that participants seemed to have difficulty answering. **Note:** Polls need to be loaded into the Zoom platform in advance of your training. Correct answers have been highlighted below.)

**Poll**

1. Listening is one of the most important things we can do for a child wounded from trauma. (True/False)
2. Listening well involves:
  - a. Using welcoming body language
  - b. Making appropriate eye-contact
  - c. Keeping judgments and advice to ourselves
  - d. All of the above
3. When we use active listening with children, we ...
  - a. Reflect feelings, share Bible verses
  - b. Reflect facts, reflect feelings
  - c. Reflect facts, provide a solution

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?

## The Ministry of Presence 3 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).

We see from these verses that Job's friends did many things:

- They showed love by coming to be with him.
- They empathized with him, weeping and tearing their robes.
- They sat with him – NOT SPEAKING.
- They patiently waited for seven days.

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. However, by observing their body language, we know something is wrong. In those moments, our presence communicates to a child that we love and value them.



44



45-46



47



48

Our ministry of presence can involve doing activities with the child. Invite the child to draw a picture and talk about it. Do other quiet activities together, such as puzzles, blocks or coloring. Or just sit and hold their hand, give them a hug or another appropriate touch. During 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!

 49-52

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.

 53

## Reflection and Action Steps

10 min

 54

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" page in their handouts. If they do not have the handouts, encourage them to simply write their answers in a journal or notebook. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers. If you are running short on time, you can also choose to have participants answer these questions as a homework assignment and send you their answers.)

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.**

 55 56



(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, or you may want to review one of the important points as you conclude.)



57

# 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

|                                       |        |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Welcome and Introduction              | 5 min  |
| Three Spiritual Foundations           | 15 min |
| The Importance of God's Word          | 5 min  |
| Sharing Truths Through Stories        | 10 min |
| Helping Children Reflect on the Story | 15 min |
| Activity: Poll                        | 5 min  |
| Reflection and Action Steps           | 5 min  |

**Approximate Total Time: 60 min**

## Materials

### Illustration option:

- 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
- Isaiah 43:4

## Welcome and Introduction

5 min

 1-2

Welcome back everyone. It is wonderful to have you with us again today.  
(Invite someone to open in prayer.)

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?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)

 3

- 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..."<sup>8</sup>

 4

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.

 5

### Jesse's Story

Let's listen to Jesse's story. (For slides 6-11: Once you advance to the slide, images will automatically appear in each box on the slide.) 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.

 6-7

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.

 8

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.

 9

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

 10


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



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.

▶ 11

 **What stands out to you in Jesse's story?** (Invite participants to unmute and share or write responses in the chat. Read responses.)

▶ 12

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.

▶ 13

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 the following topics:

▶ 14

1. Three Spiritual Foundations
2. The Importance of God's Word
3. Sharing Truth Through Stories
4. Helping Children Reflect on the Story
5. Reflection and Action Steps

## 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.

▶ 15

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.

▶ 16

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.


▶ 17



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


▶ 18-19

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" (New Living Translation).

 **How did Jesus assure children that they belonged?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. 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.

 20

 **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?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Write answers on the whiteboard with the heading "Belonging." 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, meeting a physical need that they have.)

 21

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.

 22

## 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.

 23

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.<sup>9</sup>

 24

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

 25

 (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?**

 26

<sup>9</sup> 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/>

(Share answers aloud. Invite those who want to share to either raise their hand using the reactions or type their name into the chat. Then call on several participants to unmute and share. Optional: Using the "Stamp" feature in the whiteboard, place a check mark beside each item in the list that also affirms a child's significance. **Tech Person:** Enable participants to unmute themselves.)

**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?**

(Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Add responses to the list on the board with the title "Significance." 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.

We already discovered in a previous lesson practical ideas for building trusting relationships with children. It's 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.

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.

## The Importance of God's Word

5 min



**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?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read 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.)



33



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



34

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.



35

### Truths from God's Word

On the PowerPoint slide and in your handouts you will see a list of Scriptures that communicate the truth of God's love, our significance to Him and His trustworthiness.



36

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.



**As you look at this list, what Scripture is the most meaningful to you?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)



37

These truths from God's Word are powerful and life-changing. Now let's consider the best ways to communicate these truths to children.



38

## Sharing Truths 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.



39

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?"



40

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's a brief demonstration of how I might use the story to share this truth with children. (Stop sharing your screen and tell the 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 NLT). 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?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read 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.)

 **What Bible stories could help you teach the truth found in Psalm 46:1 that God is an ever-present help in trouble?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read 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.)

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.


 After we have taught the Bible story, **what activities could children do to help them reflect on the Bible story?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers could include prayers, drawing, journaling, designing a poster, singing worship songs, etc.)

Let's go back to the story of Mark 10. Listen to how I invite the children to reflect on the story. (Stop sharing your screen.)

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.

Now, boys and girls, I want 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 demonstration of this story that I selected the truth, I told the Bible story and then I had two reflection activities.

 Now it's time for you to practice. You will be going into breakout rooms for 5 minutes. If you are in an even-numbered room, your group will focus on the truth "Nothing can separate us from God's love" (Romans 8:38-39). If you are in an odd-numbered room, your group will focus on the truth "God is faithful" (Lamentations 3:22-23). Select one Bible story that illustrates the truth about God and then think of two activities that invite children to reflect on the story. Also choose a spokesperson for your group. **(Tech person:** Divide participants into groups of 6-8 for five minutes. Broadcast into the rooms: "Rooms 2,4,6 - Truth: Nothing can separate us from God's love;" Rooms 1,3,5 - Truth: God is faithful." Adjust according to the number of rooms. Trainer: When groups return, have the spokesperson type their name into the chat. Then call on them to share answers from their group.)

 46

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 50

In your handouts 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.

## Activity Poll

5 min



Before we conclude, let's do a poll together to check our understanding of the lesson.

(**Tech Person:** Share the poll with participants and allow several minutes for them to complete it. After several minutes, share the poll results. **Trainer:** Go through the poll and share the correct answers, taking time to clarify any questions that participants seemed to have difficulty answering. **Note:** Polls need to be loaded into the Zoom platform in advance of your training. Correct answers have been highlighted below.)



### Poll

1. The losses children experience due to trauma can damage their spiritual foundation. (True/False)
2. Which of the following is NOT one of the broken spiritual foundations we explored in this lesson:
  - a. A child's need for love and belonging
  - b. A child's ability to trust
  - c. A child's need to know they are significant
  - d. A child's ability to make new friends
3. Which of the following is the best way to communicate God's truth to children:
  - a. Preaching a sermon
  - b. Sharing a Bible story
  - c. Reading long passages of Scripture
4. Children can reflect on the Bible story by:
  - a. Praying
  - b. Drawing a picture
  - c. Preparing a drama
  - d. Discussing questions in small groups
  - e. All of the above

## Reflection and Action Steps

5 min

(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" page in their handouts. If they do not have the handouts, encourage them to simply write their answers in a journal or notebook. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers. If you are running short on time, you can also choose to have participants answer these questions as a homework assignment and send you 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?**



52



53



54



55



56



57



58



59



### 3. How will you help children reflect on the Bible stories you share with them?

#### Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented, or you may want to review one of the important points as you conclude.)

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.)



# 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

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Welcome and Introduction                                    | 5 min  |
| From Brokenness to Wholeness: The Gospel in God's Big Story | 10 min |
| Practice Sharing the Gospel                                 | 10 min |
| What God Offers Through the Gospel                          | 5 min  |
| Connecting the Gospel to a Child's Need                     | 10 min |
| Identity in Christ  | 5 min  |
| Activity: Poll  | 5 min  |
| Reflection and Action Steps                                 | 10 min |

**Approximate Total Time: 60 min**

## Materials

### Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

### Scripture passages:

- Colossians 1:6

## Welcome and Introduction

5 min

Welcome to our last lesson in the Children and Trauma training. (Open in prayer.)

In our last 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.

In this session we will consider how to connect the gospel message to a child's need and will discuss the following topics:

1. From Brokenness to Wholeness: The Gospel Story
2. Practice Sharing the Gospel
3. What the Gospel Offers
4. Connecting the Gospel to a Child's Need
5. Identity in Christ
6. Reflection and Action Steps



**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" (New Living Testament).

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

(For slides 6-11: Once you advance to the slide, images will automatically appear in each box on the slide.) 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.

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.

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.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



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 discipled 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 write responses in the chat. Read responses.)



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 in God's Big Story

10 min



As we think about connecting the gospel to a child's point of need, it is important to remember that the gospel 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. 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 people are so special to God, He wants everyone – including you and me – 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. Invite participants to do the hand motions with you.)

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. Every one of us is now born with sin, and our relationship with God is broken. Because of sin, people fight and cheat and hurt one another. Creation also experiences the effects of sin through sickness and destruction.

We call this part of the story "brokenness." (Hand motion: Interlock fingers and then pull hands apart. Invite participants to do the hand motions with you.)

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 (Genesis 3:1-19, Romans 5:12).

When the time was right, God kept His promise and sent His Son Jesus to live in our broken world. Jesus 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 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 a new life in Him – a life filled with love and hope and purpose (Romans 3:21-25; 1 Corinthians 15:1-9, John 1:12).

We can remember this part of the story by simply saying "Jesus." (Hand motion: Make arms like a cross. Invite participants to do the hand motions with you.)

God's story is not over! If we choose to trust Jesus, our new life with Him will start now and last forever. God has promised that one day Jesus will come back and make all things new again. All of the brokenness and sin will be gone, and life will be the way He intended it to be in the beginning. Until then, we get to be a part of His story, sharing His love and His hope with others (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.)

What a beautiful story! Did I just share the gospel with you? Let's review the hand motions: Wholeness, Brokenness, Jesus, To wholeness 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?**



(Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read 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: (Advance slide with each bullet point.)


- 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.

 23-27

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

## Practice Sharing the Gospel

10 min

 **(Trainer:** Explain that participants will divide into breakout rooms of 3 people. Ask them to number themselves from 1-3 when they get into their rooms. The first person should be the "adult" and begin sharing the gospel as God's Big Story as if they are sharing it with a child. When they see the message in their breakout room that it is time to switch, the second person will be the "adult" and share the gospel. **Tech Person:** Divide participants into breakout rooms in groups of 3 for 10 minutes. Be sure to broadcast when it is time to switch.

After 4 min – **Switch speaker now!**

After 7 min – **Switch speaker now!**

 28

The gospel is amazing, isn't it? It is so deep and powerful that it can connect with a child at their deepest point of need, whatever that need might be.

 29

## What God Offers Through the Gospel

5 min

Think about children who have suffered trauma and what God offers to them through the gospel: (Advance slide with each bullet point.)

- 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.

 30-36

 **What else does the gospel offer to children?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses.)

 37

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?

 38

## Connecting the Gospel to a Child's Need

10 min


 39

### 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.

Sarah begins coming to your Sunday school class. As you get to know her, she shares that her father lost his job and they had to move. She doesn't like her new school and she misses her friends. Her dad spends all his time looking for a new job, and her mom is always worried. Sarah feels like no one cares about how hard the move has been for her.

 40

 **What are some of the losses Sarah has experienced?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers should include friends, security, her home, attention, someone to really care about how she feels.)

 41



**What might be Sarah's point of need?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers could include she is lonely, she feels unseen and forgotten, no one is paying attention to her.)

 42

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

When we share about wholeness, we could share with Sarah that when God made the world, He was thinking about her. Long before she was born, God saw her and loved her.

 43

Then when we share about Jesus we can share with Sarah that because of what Jesus has done, God invites her to become His child. As His child, God promises to always be there for her, to listen to her and to help her.

 44

Do you see how we have connected the gospel to Sarah's point of need?

Let's try another example. 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.

 45

**What losses has Matthew suffered?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read responses. Answers may include: love from his mom, significance, nurture.)

 46

From these losses we see that Matthew's deepest needs may be that he needs to be loved and nurtured. He needs to know that He is significant.

 47

**How could you adapt the gospel story to speak to one of those needs?**

(Share answers aloud. Invite those who want to share to either raise their hand using the reactions or type their name into the chat. Then call on several participants to unmute and share. Answers may include: 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. **Tech Person:** Enable participants to unmute themselves.)

 48

### 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.

 49



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 are ready, such as: (Advance slide with each bullet point.)

- 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.

 50-53

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 must apply everything we have learned in our training: (Advance slide with each bullet point.)

- We must rely on the Holy Spirit and minister in humility.
- We must understand trauma and the losses it causes.
- We must build trusting relationships with children and walk with them on their journey of grief.
- We must listen to children to understand their hearts' needs.
- We must 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.

 54 55-60

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

 61

## Identity in Christ

5 min

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?

 62

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?** (Invite participants to write responses in the chat. Read 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?** (Share answers aloud. Invite those who want to share to either raise their hand using the reactions or type their name into the chat. Then call on several participants to unmute and share. **Tech Person:** Enable participants to unmute themselves.)



63

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 8:35-37; 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).



64

In your handouts, 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.

## Activity Poll

5 min



65

Let's take a moment to review what we have learned in this lesson by taking a poll.

(**Tech Person:** Share the poll with participants and allow several minutes for them to complete it. After several minutes, share the poll results. **Trainer:** Go through the poll and share the correct answers, taking time to clarify any questions that participants seemed to have difficulty answering. **Note:** Polls need to be loaded into the Zoom platform in advance of your training. Correct answers have been highlighted below.)

**Poll**

1. Sharing the gospel as God's Big Story helps children ...
  - a. Understand that the gospel is for all people.
  - b. See sin and pain as part of a broken world.
  - c. Know that one day God will make all things new.
  - d. **All of the above**
2. The gospel can connect with a child at their deepest point of need. **(True/False)**
3. When we learn that a child has experienced trauma, we should immediately share the gospel with them. **(True/False)**
4. Which of the following is NOT a statement about a child's identity in Christ?
  - a. They are a new creation.
  - b. **They will no longer sin.**
  - c. They will never be separated from God.
  - d. They are loved completely by God.

## Reflection and Action Steps

10 min



66

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" page in their handouts. If they do not have the handouts, encourage them to simply write their answers in a journal or notebook. Read each question aloud and be sure to pause and allow participants time to write their answers. If you are running short on time, you can also choose to have participants answer these questions as a homework assignment and send you their answers.)



67-68

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?

##### Question and Answer

(If you have time remaining, you can ask participants if they have any questions about the material presented, or you may want to review one of the important points as you conclude.)

 69

##### Closing

(For slides 70-75: Once you advance to the slide, images will automatically appear in each box on the slide.) Kintsugi<sup>10</sup> 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.

 70

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.

 71

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.

 72

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.

 73

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.

 74 75

(Close in an extended time of prayer.)

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<sup>10</sup> 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/>