**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 3 of 4

# Job

### MEETING AIM

To encourage the children to honestly share their struggles with God.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Job 3

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

Job is possibly one of the most uncomfortable and challenging stories of the Bible. It doesn’t fit with our image of a loving God, and we often hear our own voices in those of Job’s friends, questioning everything he believes to be true. This session explores how there are often no easy answers to difficult questions but reminds our children that we can take our challenges and struggles to God and be honest with him about how we respond to stories of suffering in our world.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Ask the group how they are feeling. What sort of week they have had? What have they enjoyed? What has been more difficult to deal with?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** a selection of newspapers ([*First News*](https://www.firstnews.co.uk/) is designed specifically for children and may be the most appropriate choice)

Explain to the children that every day we hear bad news stories. Some of these can seem very far away and mean little to us, but sometimes big, bad news stories hit home and we somehow encounter some of the nasty stuff in the world. Your group or local community may have been affected by a particular recent event, which they want to talk about here. Alternatively, make the newspapers available and invite the children to tear out and gather together some of those stories of hurting or suffering in the world. Gather the group together and invite the children to share some of the things they noticed. Where do they see people hurting or suffering in the world? Explain that we will be looking at some of these things today and how we can take these issues to God.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** Bibles

Gather the children together and introduce the character of Job. Explain to the group that Job’s story is one of great heartbreak and suffering. In a way your children will be able to understand, explain that this story raises many questions for us, but it also reassures us that we are not on our own when we are suffering. Our experiences are not ‘wrong’ or our fault, but rather represent how the world suffers because of sin and Satan’s involvement in the world.

Introduce the story by telling the children that while we get to read the first part of Job’s story, he didn’t know this is what had happened. Job was a faithful follower of God, always doing the right thing before God. Satan saw Job and didn’t like this. He told God that Job only served God because he had never had his faith tested. God had given Job an easy life; he had no reason to doubt God!

God agreed that Satan could test Job. What would happen to Job if Satan took away the things that mattered to him? Job lost his children, his wealth, his home and his own health. His protected life had been shattered, but would he lose his faith in God?

Ask someone to read Job 3 from an easy-to-read translation, such as the Good News Bible or the Contemporary English Version. Encourage the reader to rehearse beforehand and to perform the passage as a monologue, calling out to God in their angst. Depending upon the age and understanding of your group, you may wish to shorten the passage a little.

Later in the session, you may wish to share the ending of Job’s story with the group, not now, where it will distract from what you want the children to discover and undermine the opportunity to explore where God is in our session. Rather, come to this later as a reminder that God is with us and continues to offer us hope, even in our darkest places.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* How does this story make you feel?
* Which parts of Job’s speech can you most relate to?
* What might you say to God in Job’s situation?
* What do you want to say to Job?
* What questions do you want to ask?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** lining paper; marker pens; paint; paintbrushes; cover-up and clean-up equipment

Before the session, cover a wall in lining paper to create a blank surface. Remind the group that just as Job needed to shout out to God in his despair, there are situations and circumstances where we want to do the same.

Explain to the group that the blank wall is a graffiti wall where they can come and write, draw, paint or graffiti their shouts out to God. It may be a whole prayer or letter, like Job, or it may be one word. It may be a picture which represents their struggles or it could be that they stick up a story they have found in the paper.

As you work, allow the children to add their responses discreetly, but give the opportunity to talk about those challenging times in life when we can’t make sense of the hurt that we, or those we love, have to face up to. Remind the children that we can take all those feelings and reactions to God and shout out to him.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** the graffiti wall from ‘Creative response’

Gather the children together in front of the graffiti wall and invite them to spend some time standing quietly, thinking through all of the thoughts and questions that have been written on the wall. Encourage them to talk to God about some of the things that have been written or drawn.

Bring this time of quiet to a close, praying aloud for all the children gathered here, for all of the struggles that they are facing. Thank God that he is big enough to handle our difficult questions and that he is with us in every circumstance that we may face.

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