



WEEK 3

HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE

DOUBT IT

THE BIG IDEA

Our questions don't always get answered.

THE BIBLE

Job; Romans 8:28; Hebrews 11:13-16

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

A NOTE ON YOUR DISCUSSION TIMES

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Remember, this series is designed to be discussion-based! To do this well, we recommend having your students sit in small discussion circles, allowing them to discuss as a group or in pairs throughout the teaching time. For more details, and a brief script for how to explain this set-up to your students, check out the Room Design section of this series and [this article](#) by Irene Cho, the series author.*

OBJECT LESSON | Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

- I know we usually read from The Bible, but I've got another book I wanted us to read from today.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Hold a copy of [the book](#) and read from it (or ask a student to give a dramatic reading). You could also ask a student to act it out while you read.*

ACTIVITY | Never Have I Ever

- I think we can all agree that life can be disappointing and frustrating sometimes, but I'd like to see if that's true.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students stand toward the back of the room and let them know they'll be responding to a series of statements. Tell them to step forward if they . . .*
 - Have **never** experienced disappointment.
 - Have **never** experienced things going badly.
 - Have **never** been rejected.

- Have **never** lost something valuable or precious to them.
- Have **never** lost out to someone else.
- Have **never** experienced sadness.
- Have **always** had all their prayers answered the way they wanted.
- Clearly, everyone here has experienced disappointment, rejection, or unanswered prayers at some point. Here's one more question. Step forward if . . .
 - You've **ever** heard (or thought) that following Jesus would make everything in your life okay?
 - Okay, now you can take your seats!
- There's a verse in the Bible (Romans 8:28) that tells us that, in everything, God works for our good. Some people interpret that verse to mean, "If I follow Jesus, everything's going to be all right!"
- But we know from our own experience that this isn't true. Even when we follow Jesus . . .
 - We don't get everything we want.
 - We still get hurt.
 - Bad things still happen to us.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have students turn to their circles. They can either discuss with their group or with a partner in pairs. If time allows, ask a few students to volunteer to share with everyone at the end. If no one wants to share with the entire group, that's okay!
- **Talk about a time you really hoped something would happen, but it didn't.**
- **Have you ever asked God to do something, but God didn't do what you asked? How did that feel?**
- **Do you believe God answers prayers? If so, how do you think prayer works? If not, what would it take for you to believe God answers prayers?**

SCRIPTURE | Job

- Let's take a look at a man whose life is pretty much an extended version of Alexander's terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read or summarize the entire book of Job together, in several sections. We suggest alternating between reading and summarizing. And try using a translation that is good at storytelling like *The Message* or *New Living Translation*, since Job is a difficult book for teenagers to understand. Have students read and discuss each section in their groups.
- **READ JOB 1:1-5**
 - **What kind of person does Scripture tell us Job is?**
- **READ JOB 1:6-2:10**
 - **What just happened to Job, and how did Job react?**
- **SUMMARIZE JOB 3**
 - After everything he experienced, Job cried out to God and asked, "Why? Why is this happening?" He'd done his best to follow God, and couldn't understand why God was allowing him to suffer.

- **SUMMARIZE JOB 4-37**

- Job had three friends who tried to comfort him through all of his pain. But after sitting with Job for a week, they decided they had an answer to Job's question about why all of this was happening to him. Except . . . their answers were pretty bad — offensive and hurtful, actually. Here's what they told Job:
 - **"THIS IS YOUR FAULT.** Bad things don't happen to innocent people, so you must be guilty of something."
 - **"YOUR KIDS DESERVED IT TOO."**
 - **"GOD HAS A PLAN.** You just have to wait and see what it is!" (That's not comforting or helpful when you're grieving the loss of your entire family.)
 - **"BE THANKFUL.** God must be disciplining you for something. Be grateful it's not worse."
- That's pretty terrible, but don't we hear things like this all the time? Maybe we've even said it to someone else!
- These "friends" of Job go on lecturing him for a very long time. When they're done, Job finally tells them, "Hey! Everything you've said has been really hurtful and offensive. And you're wrong."
- Job says he hasn't sinned against God, but even if he had, nothing he's done would deserve the kind of suffering he's experiencing.
- Job cries out in pain, asking God to just end his suffering already, because it's all too much.

- **SUMMARIZE JOB 38-41**

- Finally, God responds. God appears and speaks to Job out of a great whirlwind. What do you think God's going to say?

VIDEO | "The Book of Job," from The Bible Project

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play a clip from [this video](#) (3:04-5:21).
- After all of that, God *didn't* even answer Job's question. **Job wanted to know why so many terrible things had happened to him. God answered — but not in the way Job expected.**
- Job asked, "Why?" God said . . .
 - "I'm the Creator of everything."
 - "I'm bigger, greater, more powerful, and kinder than you could ever imagine."
 - "You are so small compared to me."
- **Job didn't get the answer he was looking for, but he did get an encounter with the Creator of the universe** — and that was enough for Job.
- If you're dissatisfied with how this story ends, I get it! I used to feel that way too. To be honest, I still do sometimes. When horrible things happen, I still want God to tell me why they're happening.
- It's hard to have faith when you're experiencing something difficult that you can't understand or explain. That's okay! That's the point of Job's story.
 - Just like we said two weeks ago, **you're not alone in your questions.** Job had a lot of questions for God too.
 - Like we said last week, **God doesn't shame us for our questions.** God never condemned Job for asking why because God understands our pain.

- Now in Job's story, we learn a third important thing about our questions and doubts. **Our questions don't always get answered.**
- Let's talk about this. As we do, please **be sensitive and kind to each other**, knowing that this is a difficult subjects for many of us. And please **try to be honest, but don't feel pressured to share.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students turn to their circles. They can either discuss with their group or with a partner in pairs. If time allows, ask a few students to volunteer to share with everyone at the end. If no one wants to share with the entire group, that's okay!*
- **Have you ever asked God a question that never got answered? What did you ask?**
- **Have you ever asked God for something that you never received? What was it?**
- **Have other people ever tried to comfort you during a tragedy? How did they comfort you, and was it comforting?**
- **Do you think God has ever spoken to you like God spoke to Job (minus the whirlwind)? Tell us about it.**

SCRIPTURE | Romans 8:28

- At the end of Job's story, God restores Job's life by giving him double of everything he had before. **But that doesn't take away the pain and suffering Job experienced.**
- Let's return to that passage we mentioned earlier — the one people sometimes think means, "Everything will work out just fine!"
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Romans 8:28 together.*
- This verse doesn't mean our lives will eventually have a happy ending, like the end of a sitcom or our favorite Disney movie.
- When we experience pain and heartache, the hard truth is that **our questions don't always get answered** — but God can redeem what we've suffered or lost.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

ACTIVITY | "Redemption" Brainstorm

- Everyone say the word *redeem* with me. Now repeat it three times. What do you think it means?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *On a white board, large sheet of paper, or sticky notes, ask students to define "redeem," and write down their answers.*
- To "redeem" something is to reclaim, repurpose, restore, or regain it. Like Job, sometimes we lose a lot, but redemption means our stories don't end there.

STORY | Talk about a time God redeemed a difficult situation in your life.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time when you experienced something difficult, but God redeemed it. Be sure to avoid stories with happy endings. Instead, talk about how you experienced God even when you didn't get answers or resolutions to your suffering.*

- We may not be able to avoid pain. We may not be able to fix it. We may never even know why it happened. But here's what we know: God promises to redeem our stories so we can . . .
 - Know God better.
 - Help others and make the world a better place.
 - Become more like Jesus.
- If you find yourself suffering seemingly without reason, I hope you *won't* take the advice of Job's friends. Instead, I hope you'll learn to trust that knowing the God who made you is even better, and more important, than knowing "why."
- We may not know how everything is going to work out, or even if it will work out. **But even when we don't have every answer to every question, we can still have faith in our Redeemer** — and that is good news.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students turn to their circles. They can either discuss with their group or with a partner in pairs. If time allows, ask a few students to volunteer to share with everyone at the end. If no one wants to share with the entire group, that's okay!*
- **What stood out to you most from today's conversation?**
- **What are some reasons people might ask God, "Why is this happening?"**
- **Do you identify with Job? Why or why not?**
- **How can we move forward in our faith after experiencing tragedy that causes us to question God?**
- **Read Hebrews 11:13-16. What could this passage teach us about holding onto our faith even when our questions don't get answered?**
- **Have you ever seen God redeem a difficult or painful situation in your life? Are there any difficult or painful situations in your life that you still need God to redeem? Tell us about it.**
- **What are some things we shouldn't say to someone who's suffering?**
- **What are some ways we can comfort someone when they're suffering?**
- **What's one way today's conversation is going to change the way you see your own doubts or questions?**
- **What's one way today's conversation is going to change the way you see others' doubts or questions?**