



Leader Notes

Depending on what/who students are listening to, this question of “why does God allow bad things to happen?” can get some pretty mixed answers. Sometimes students think bad things happen because they are inherently bad or they are not loved by God. We know this is not true. The goal today is to show students what God’s word says about His creation, that it was good, and to see that our free will choices lead to consequences. We’ll use scripture to show students God’s plan and then that despite trouble and trials, He has not abandoned us.

The Big Idea

We live in a fallen world, but we are not without hope.

Focus Scripture

Romans 8:28
Genesis 1-3

Materials Needed

Conflicted Scripture Card
Provided: labeled index cards for opener
Silly gift for prize(s)

Video:
RightNowMedia
Apologetics by Matt Chandler
Why Does God Allow Suffering?

Come Together (5 minutes)

(or choose your own activity)

Ask for five students to play a game. Give each a card, they should look at, but keep secret. Say: “One of these cards identifies the winner...but not so fast. Someone else has a card that says “First Trade.” If you have that card, you may trade cards with any other cardholder. (NOTE: No one can refuse a trade.) Look around, read their minds, and find your trading partner. Now trade cards with that person, but don’t show anyone what you got because someone else has a “Second Trade” card. If you have that card, you may now make a trade with anyone. Now let’s see who has the winning card. Hail to the victor! Award a silly gift and play multiple rounds if desired

Connect It:

Sometimes people talk about life like a card game. Someone “had a good hand dealt to them.” Or, “it just wasn’t in the cards” for something to happen. Some people get good lives and others have to struggle, and sometimes it seems like a big game of chance . . . like getting the WIN card or having it taken from you. How does God figure into all of that? Is he just dealing the cards, or does he have an interest in how the game is played? Let’s think this through as we watch a few minutes of this video.

Leader: Start video at 3:10 and end at 11:11

Talk About It! (25-30 minutes)

(get students talking and thinking – you may not have time to discuss every question)

1. When it comes to suffering and tragedy in the world, what are the events or things that are hard for you to understand why they happen?
2. As people, we want to know WHY these things happen. I am not going to pretend to know God’s ways or wisdom, but we can go back to scripture to help us understand what has happened. (Take them on a walk through scripture- have students look up the scripture on their own as you discuss each point- see below)
 - **Genesis 1: 31a:** Genesis records that God created everything in 6 days and he declared it “very good.” Original creation wasn’t broken or marred or filled with suffering; it was good. It was perfect. There would be no death, sickness, disaster, etc. That didn’t last long. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God’s command.
 - **Genesis 2:17:** We see here the one command they were given. Genesis chapter 3 shares the complete story of what happened when they broke the one command God had given.
 - In **Genesis 3:16-24** we see the consequences. The punishment for this disobedience and rebellion was death. Creation became broken AFTER this sin. This is when we see sin, and its consequences, enter the world.
 - **Romans 5:12, 8:22:** Because of the sin in the garden, **what do we now suffer from?** (death, pains of brokenness beginning at childbirth)

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Talk About It (continued)

3. How do you feel knowing that this world is not how God once intended it? Can you imagine what things would be like if this world was still as God intended?
4. Why do you think God doesn't just force us to do whatever He wants? (lead into discussion on free-will; we are given free will to choose or reject God, to sin or not sin, etc)
5. Reality is life in a fallen world almost guarantees we won't live a life without struggle, harm, hurt. But God has not abandoned us. We are not alone. **Read Romans 8:28.** What hope can we find in this verse? What does this verse make you think about your own struggles?

Next Step (10 minutes)

(help students apply this to their life)

People say lots of things about why bad things happen. You heard tonight (and have a card as a reminder) of what God's word says about this.

Maybe right now you're feeling a little conflicted or still a bit confused, maybe not sure what to believe. I want to encourage you to keep asking questions, reading what God's word says, and trusting that as you read more, the more you will begin to understand. What matters now is what choice you make. Will you believe that God's design was good, that He loves us enough to allow us to make our own choices? That those choices have consequences that can affect a lot of things? Will you choose to believe that even if something bad happens in your life, you are not forgotten, abandoned, or unloved? The choice is yours to make.

Make sure your students understand that you're happy to chat with anyone who wants to talk more about this or who might still feel conflicted. Encourage them to keep their card as a reference.

Encourage students to join you in a 10- Day Devotional on YouVersion called "Quick Question: Why do Bad Things Happen?" to continue exploring this topic.

Encourage them to invite friends to join next week for our next Conflicted topic: Dating and Relationships

Pray together.