



EXPLORE GOD DISCUSSION GUIDE WEEK 3



MAIN SCRIPTURES:

Romans 5:12
Isaiah 43:1-2
SUPPLEMENTAL:
Genesis 3

MAIN POINTS:

- (1) Suffering is a consequence of sin in the world.
- (2) We are not alone in our suffering.

JESUS CONNECTION:

Jesus chose to go through brutal pain and suffering because He knew He was the only one who could rescue us from our sin.

LEADER CORNER

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

For students to have a safe space to talk about why God allows pain and suffering and hear what we as a Hope Community Church believe.

THINK ABOUT THIS

This is a very emotional topic. Some students in your group may have great pains that run very deep. Before and after your discussion COVER YOUR STUDENTS IN PRAYER. During this lesson, focus on showing your group compassion, listening, and thanking them for sharing – especially if they are vulnerable enough to share something painful in their own lives. If you are willing, be vulnerable with your students – HOW DO YOU CHOOSE TO TRUST GOD WHEN YOU FEEL PAIN? Share that with your group. And know that this topic in particular has TONS of more videos and articles students can explore at ExploreGod.com. There isn't a quick fix to this question, but the answer to be there for anyone is LOVE.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

GET THEM TALKING

What did you connect with in the video?
What stories stood out to you? Why?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If there is a loving God, then why do you think He allows evil in the world?
2. How have you experienced God's healing during times of suffering in your life? (Leaders, be ready to share an example from your life)

READ ROMANS 5:12 and answer the following questions:

3. How did death and suffering enter the world? (If your group needs more context, consider going over Genesis 3).

READ ISAIAH 43:1-2 and answer the following questions:

4. What was God's message to Jacob?
5. What are some tough rivers or fires that high school students face today?
6. What promise does God give us when we are going through tough times?
7. What are some tough things you are going through right now? Do you believe God is with you in these situations?
8. How can we remind ourselves God is with us and cares for us when we are hurting?
9. How can we support each other through tough times?

NEXT STEP

God is there with us when we are hurting.

IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH A TOUGH TIME RIGHT NOW – PRAY TO GOD, ask Him to be with you and know He loves you so much He chose to go through brutal pain and suffering for you.

IF YOU AREN'T GOING THROUGH A TOUGH TIME NOW – PRAY FOR OTHERS. Pray for God to be with them and pick one way you can show them His love this week.

PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests and close your time together in prayer.

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Romans 5:12 (NIV)

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.”

Genesis 3 (NIV)

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.²² And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”

Isaiah 43:1-2 (NIV)

“But now, this is what the LORD says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

BONUS LEADER RESOURCE

WEEKLY TEXT IDEA:

We’ve all had questions about life and God. One big question we are going to explore together is “Why does God allow pain and suffering?” I hope you can come join the discussion.