**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# Worry

### MEETING AIM

To know that God loves and cares for each of us, and that we are special to him.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:25-34

### 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.

This session focuses on how God loves and cares for each one of us, and how we can choose to trust him instead of worrying. Worry can be a difficult feeling for young children to talk about, as they may not yet have learned to describe how it feels for them. Using other words around feelings can be helpful and allow them to explore what worry might feel like for them. However, rather than focusing on worry, keep drawing back to how much God cares for us and how we can trust him.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome each child by name and encourage them to share stories from their week. Celebrate any birthdays or special events. Ask the children: “Who cares for you?’ Thank God that he’s with you and ask him to help you learn more about him today.

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** cooking oil; water; three clear containers; food colouring

Pour some cooking oil into a container and explain that it represents being worried. Worrying is when we might feel scared or unsure because we don’t know what’s going to happen.

Pour some water and a few drops of food colouring into a second container. Explain that this one is going to be trusting God, remembering that we don’t need to be afraid because he is taking care of us.

Ask the children if they think worry and trust mix. Pour some oil and water into the third container together. At first, they will seem to mix before they separate. Trusting God with all our hearts and worrying at the same time don’t mix. We’re going to hear today about how Jesus told people that God wants us to trust in him and not worry. God cares for us and he knows everything that has happened and will happen.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** picnic blanket; pictures of birds, feathers and flowers; mirror

Lay out your picnic blanket and invite the children to sit down. Then tell this story:

Jesus loved speaking to people. One day, he was teaching a huge crowd of people all about how they could be more like God. They had all sat down on a mountainside to listen.

Jesus talked to the people about worry. Who sometimes feels worried? Sometimes we can feel worried or scared because we don’t know what is going to happen, but Jesus told the people not to worry because God cared for them.

Let’s hear what Jesus said: “You don’t need to worry about your life,” said Jesus, “or what you will eat or drink, or your body or the clothes you will wear.

“Look at the birds. They don’t worry and store away food. They don’t need to worry. Father God knows what they need and he feeds them. You are even more precious to God than the birds. Worrying doesn’t help; it won’t change the situation.” *Show the children pictures of birds and feathers. Chat about which birds are the children’s favourite and what their feathers might feel like.*

“And you don’t need to worry about clothes,” continued Jesus. “Look at the beautiful flowers in the field. They don’t go to work every day trying to earn money to buy lovely clothes. Has anyone ever seen a flower putting on clothes?! Even a king in his finest robe still wouldn’t look as beautiful as one of the flowers. If God cares for them that much, then think about how much he cares for you.” *Show your pictures of flowers. Chat about which ones are the children’s favourite and what they might smell like.*

Jesus carried on: “You are more important than the birds and the flowers. God looks after the birds and the flowers, and he loves to care for you too. God doesn’t want you to worry; he made you and he loves you. Trust in him, connect your heart with his and learn to be more like him, and he will look after you.”

*Pass the mirror around the children. As each child looks at their reflection, tell them: “God made you, he loves you and he will take care of you.”*

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, ensuring everyone has the chance to contribute:

* What was your favourite part of the story?
* Do you have a favourite bird or flower?
* What makes you feel worried?
* How do you feel knowing that God loves you even more than the birds or flowers?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** pictures of birds and flowers; collage materials including feathers, petals and dried flowers

Invite the children to choose a picture and collage their own flower or bird picture. As you work, chat about how God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers. Remind the group that God cares for us even more and looks after us too. What does this say about what God thinks of them?

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** a feather for each child

Invite the children to each hold a feather. Explain that you’re going to take it in turns to say something you’re worried about, if the children are happy to do so. Then you’re going to think about how we can choose to trust in God because he cares for us.

After everyone has had a chance to speak, invite the children to blow the feather away and thank God for caring for them:

“God, thank you that you look after us and that you love to hear what we’re thinking and feeling.”

**ANNIE WILLMOT**

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