



BRITE IDEA



God is with us in scary times.

Psalm 121

**PSALM 121:2**

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Many of our children are hearing about war for the first time. The conflict between Ukraine and Russia is causing anxiety and fear for many kids.

This discussion and response resource is brought to you from the creators of brite* curriculum. This resource was developed to give you the tools to talk to kids and disciple them through the conflict in Ukraine in an age-appropriate way. This resource is customizable and can be utilized in a church Sunday school or home setting. By engaging kids in experiences and conversations that reinforce the Gospel and deepen faith in Jesus Christ we can help them navigate our changing world.

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**MEMORY
VERSE**

Psalm 121:2

**BIBLE
PASSAGE**

Psalm 121

**DISCUSS:****What is happening in our world right now?**

You may have heard that there is a war going on right now in the country of Ukraine. After World War II, Russia took over Ukraine and it became a part of the Soviet Union. In 1989, the Soviet Union fell apart and Ukraine was soon their own country again. Now Russia has attacked Ukraine, sending in soldiers and bombing many places.

Thousands of Ukrainians have left the country, looking for safety. They are called "refugees". Many Ukrainians have stayed to help the military and fight for their country.

Why does war happen?

Wars happen because our world is broken by sin. This was not God's design for people or our planet. God cares about the hard things that are happening in the world and He grieves when sinful acts take place (Isaiah 63:10). He sent Jesus to earth to make a way for sin to be forgiven so that all can be right again one day. Our world will only be 100% peaceful after Jesus returns and God makes all things new. The Gospel is the only hope our world has.

Can God stop war?

Psalm 46:11 says, "He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear." God can stop war, but that doesn't mean He always does. God has a perfect plan for the world and uses even the terrible things that happen to bring glory to Himself and to help people learn about Him. Even if He doesn't stop the war, He is always with us in the midst of what is going on.

Are there followers of Jesus in Ukraine?

There are many believers in Ukraine. During the years when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, churches weren't allowed to meet. The church went "underground", meaning believers had to meet in private. Now Ukraine has freedom of religion. It's not against the law to be a Christian in Russia, but you can't talk about Jesus outside of church. God is with the believers in Ukraine. He loves them and is grieved that they are hurting.

Are we safe?

All of our safety and security comes from God. None of us know what will happen from one day to the next. Only God knows. But, we can trust that God is always with us. He is in control. We know that He protects us. We know that He gives us peace and strength. We can continue to ask Him to protect us and to protect the people in Ukraine.

Is God with us when a war is happening?

God is always with His people no matter what. He is with the believers in Ukraine. He is with believers in Russia. He is with His people who are nowhere near the war. Even when scary things are happening around us, God is with us.

**NAVIGATING TOUGH TOPICS**

When a tough topic is brought up, it can be hard to know what to do. Start by **validating their feelings** and **ask open-ended questions** to learn more. **Point back to Jesus** by sharing what you know to be true about the character of God through Scripture. Connect with your Pastor and check out:

<https://www.resilientdisciples.com/toughtopic>.

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**TEACHING INTRODUCTION:**

You may have heard that there is a war going on in another part of our world.

What are some words that you think of when you hear the word “war”?

Let's see how many words we can think of.

Allow kids to share words and record them on one side of a white board or a piece of paper.

We all have different thoughts or feelings when we hear the word “war” and that’s okay! For some, war is a very scary idea. I think you agree, just by looking at the words we have on our list. There have been wars all the way back to Bible times. King David fought many battles and sometimes he wrote Psalms before or after them. Psalm 121 is one of the Psalms he wrote. As I read it, listen for the things he says God does for him.

**BIBLE PASSAGE: PSALM 121**

Read Psalm 121. As you read, pause to write down key words from the passage on the other side of the paper or whiteboard.

(For younger kids, after each verse, pause to make a motion to go along with that verse).

1. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?

Look up high and then hold hands out and shrug.

2. My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Write down the word “Help.” Point to self, then point up for “Lord” and “heaven.” Point down for “earth.”

3. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

Write down the words “Won’t be moved.” Stomp foot, then lay head to the side on folded hands like you’re sleeping.

4. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Write down the words “Doesn’t sleep.” Switch hands and head to lay down on the other side.

5. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.

Write down the word “Keeper.” Point up, then hold hands up as if blocking the sun.

6. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

Hold hands to make a circle, then use one hand to show a half-circle.

7. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

Write down the words “Keeps from evil.” Hold arms in an “X” in front of your chest and hug yourself.

8. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Write down the words “Keep you as you go.” Walk two steps forward and then two steps back.

Refer to words from the teaching introduction about war.

When we hear about war we might feel _____. *Recap words from introduction.*

We might worry about _____. *Recap words from introduction.*

It’s completely normal to feel that way!

Here’s what we know to be true about God. *Refer to words written down from Psalm 121.*

God helps. God didn’t sleep. God protects. God keeps from evil. God watches over us. God protects. *Write down the word “Protect.”*

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**RESPOND:**

Small Group Activity

Supplies Needed: coloring utensils, paper

Instructions:

Give each kid a piece of paper.

Assign each kid (or pair/group of kids if you have a larger group) one of the verses of Psalm 121 to illustrate.

Gather kids in a circle and encourage those who are willing to share their illustrations.

Tell kids that you are going to pray for the people in Ukraine and Russia using these verses.

Assign one of the following groups of people to each student or group of students: children of Ukraine, churches in Ukraine, missionaries, refugees, leaders of Ukraine, leaders of Russia, soldiers, people who are scared.

They can pray, "Lord help the churches know" and then read their verse or they can pray in their own words.

Close by praying, "God, thank You for being with us even in scary times. Thank You for never leaving us. Help us trust in You. Help the people in Ukraine and Russia trust in You. Amen."

Discussion Questions:

- Which verse from Psalm 121 is most encouraging to you?
- What would you say to a friend who was worried about the situation in Ukraine?
- Even though we may be away from the war, can you think of ways that you and your family can help in this situation?

**GOODBYE:**

As the kids leave, encourage each one that the Bible tells them God is with us in scary times.