

Bible Point ▶

God protects us when we're afraid.

Bible Verse

“Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will ■ identify their fears,
 ■ learn that they can trust God's protection, and
 ■ thank God for helping them handle their fears.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Hagar and Ishmael wander in the wilderness.

**Genesis
21:8-21**



It was typical in Abraham's culture to have a celebration when a child was weaned, which was usually at 2 to 3 years of age. The celebration for Isaac was probably even bigger than most because he was something of a miracle child.

Unfortunately the joyous occasion soon turned to bitterness. We don't know if Ishmael's mocking of Isaac happened on the day of the celebration, but it must have occurred soon afterward. Ishmael had been born to Abraham through Hagar, Sarah's maidservant, a decision

Sarah made to “build a family” (Genesis 16:2). By the time Isaac was 2 years old, Ishmael was about 16 (Genesis 16:16; 21:5). The animosity ran deeper than the teasing. Sarah and Hagar had been at odds since Hagar was pregnant with Ishmael (Genesis 16:4-10).

Abraham didn't want to send Hagar and Ishmael away. When God told Abraham to go ahead and do what Sarah wanted, God didn't say it was right. But God did promise to take care of Ishmael.

It seems odd that God responded to Ishmael's cry but sent an angel to speak to Hagar. It may be that Ishmael was simply too weak to even get water for himself. It also seems likely that the well had been there all the time but Hagar didn't see it until God made it visible to her. God was actually there taking care of them and providing the water they needed, but they couldn't see it until they acknowledged their need for God. When they cried out to God, God heard and responded. And we can count on God to always do the same for us!

Another Scripture used in this lesson is Psalm 121.

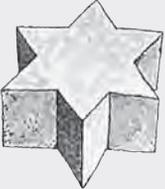
Prayer

- Read Psalm 115:9.
- When has God helped and protected you in the past? What do you need God's help with today?
- Pray: Dear Lord, thank you for always being there for me. Thank you for your love, help, and protection. Please help me teach my students that they can always rely on you. Help me model trust in you by...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Students Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Attention Grabber	Protection Shuffle Tag —Wear the Rainbow of Promise and Protection in a game of tag.		 
Bible Exploration & Application	What Are You Afraid Of? —Identify their top fears, read Isaiah 41:10, and discuss how God could protect them from their fears.	Bibles, tape, newsprint, markers	
	Wilderness of Fear —Listen to noises of the wilderness, and hear a story from Genesis 21:8-20.	Bibles, CD player	
	Fear Busters —Learn ways to handle their fears, and read Psalm 121.	Tape, newsprint, marker, “Comfort Me” handout (p. 85), list of fears from “What Are You Afraid Of?”	
Closing 	People Who Help —Thank God for people who have helped when they were afraid.	Markers, “Comfort Me” handouts	

Welcome



As kids arrive, ask them how they put what they learned last week into action. Ask questions such as, “Did you ask God’s forgiveness for your sins?” and “How does knowing that God forgives you make you feel?”

Remind kids that whenever you honk the *Harpo horn* twice, they are to stop talking, clap twice, and focus on you. Explain that it’s important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

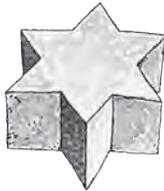


It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

Attention Grabber

■ Protection Shuffle Tag

SUPPLIES: none



Say: **We’re going to play a game of Shuffle Tag. One person will be “It.” If the person who is “It” tags you by tossing the *foam star* at you, you’re out of the game. Everyone, including the person who is “It,” must keep both feet on the floor at all times. Let’s practice shuffling for a minute.**

Let kids practice, and then say: **Our game will be just like regular Shuffle Tag, except that one person will get to wear the Rainbow of Promise and Protection. Hold up the *rainbow spring*. If you’re wearing this rainbow, you must be tagged twice before you’re out of the game.**

When you leave the game, you’ll give the Rainbow of Promise and Protection to someone else who’s out. Then that person can go back into the game.

Appoint one person to be “It.” Give him or her the *foam star*, and give another person the *rainbow spring* to wear in any way that doesn’t damage the spring: slung over the shoulders, as a turban, as a belt, and so on. Then let kids play the game. Appoint a new “It” every two minutes or so. After everyone has had a chance to wear the Rainbow of Promise and Protection, honk the *Harpo horn* twice to get kids’ attention. Place the *rainbow spring* and *foam star* out of sight. Gather kids in a circle, and ask:

- **What was it like to wear the Rainbow of Promise and Protection?** (Cool; safe; powerful; fun.)
- **What was it like to have no protection?** (Exciting; scary; not fun.)
- **How was the *foam star* like things that scare you?** (It popped up behind me when I wasn’t expecting it; I kept trying to get away from it; sometimes I feel like my fears are attacking me.)
- **The *rainbow spring* protected you from being tagged. What do you need protection from every day?** (Bullies; bad weather; people who might hurt me.)
- **In our game, you were protected by wearing the *rainbow spring*. What or who protects you every day in life?** (My parents; teachers; police officers; my dog.)

Say: ► **God protects us when we’re afraid. Today we’re going to learn how God can help us with the scary things we encounter each day.**




teacher tips

Be sensitive to kids' answers to these questions. You may have kids in your class who have been victims of abuse. If any of your students suggest they need protection from a friend or family member, talk with them after class.

Bible Exploration & Application

■ *What Are You Afraid Of?*

SUPPLIES: Bibles, tape, newsprint, markers

Ask: • **What are some things that scared you when you were younger?** (The dark; going down to the basement by myself; monsters under my bed; the drain monster in the bathtub.)

• **Are you still scared of those things? Why or why not?** (No, that's sissy stuff; sometimes, when I have to go to bed before my parents get home; yes, because I can't see what might be hiding when it's dark.)

Say: **Everyone has things they're scared of—even grown-ups. With a partner, take a few minutes to think of something that scares you now. Then think of places or times your scary thing might pop up. When we come back together, be ready to give two or three clues about your scary thing. The rest of us will try to guess what scary thing you're thinking of.**

Make sure all kids have found partners. After about five minutes, honk the *Harpo horn* to bring the class back together. Wait for kids to respond, and then have them give clues about their scary things.

Tape a sheet of newsprint to the wall. As the class guesses each person's fears, list them on the newsprint. After all have shared, read the list of fears. Invite kids to add additional fears to the list.

Have kids form groups of four. **Say:** **Look over our list of fears, and pick the three things that would scare your group the most. Choose one person in your group to be the Discussion Leader who asks everyone what he or she is scared of, one person to be the Encourager who makes sure everyone contributes to the discussion, one person to be the Reporter who reports your responses to the class, and one person to be the Timekeeper. You'll have about two minutes.**

Give groups about two minutes to pick their top three fears. Honk the *Harpo horn* to bring the class back together, and wait for kids to respond. Have each group's Reporter draw a star on the newsprint beside each of the three things his or her group was most scared of. Count the number of stars by each fear, and then rank the top fears from one to five.

Ask: • **What goes through your mind when you look over our list of fears?** (Those are scary things on the list; one of those things might happen to me; I didn't know others were afraid, too.)

• **Do you think God wants us to be afraid? Why or why not?** (No, God wants to protect us; I don't know why God made scary things if he doesn't want us to be afraid.)

Distribute Bibles, and help kids look up **Isaiah 41:10**, ► **“Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”** After everyone has found the verse, ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Then ask:

• **How can this verse help you face your fears?** (It helps to remember that God is with me; it helps to know that God is stronger than anything I'm afraid of; God promises to help me and protect me.)

Say: **We've just named a lot of scary things. But God is more powerful than any of the scary things on our list. And ► God protects us when we're afraid.**

Leave the list of fears displayed for use later in this lesson.


teacher tips

Rely on the Holy Spirit to help you as you teach. Don't be afraid of kids' questions. Remember, the best answers are those the kids find themselves—not the ones teachers spoon-feed them.

BIBLE VERSE ►



BIBLE POINT ►



Say: **Ultimately, most of our fears have at their root a fear of dying. But because of Jesus' work on the cross, we no longer have to fear death! If we have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, we will live forever with him in heaven after we die. That's something to celebrate, not to fear!**



Third- and fourth-graders may be embarrassed to admit their fears to the class. If kids aren't willing to volunteer things they're scared of, help them get started by sharing some things that still scare you.

■ Wilderness of Fear

SUPPLIES: Bibles, CD player



tracks 8 & 9

Before class, cue the CD to “Wilderness Sounds” (track 8). If possible, place the CD player out of sight, near the light switch. Say: **How many of you have gone out for a walk at night? Let's pretend to do that now.**

Encourage kids to join hands and huddle together as if they're really scared. Turn off the lights, and play “Wilderness Sounds” on the CD. As you hear each sound, ask the kids questions such as, “What was that?” and “Did you hear that noise?”

When the track ends, turn on the lights. Then have kids form pairs to discuss the following questions. Pause for a minute or so after each question to give kids time to discuss their answers.

Ask: • **How did you react when you first started hearing the noises?** (I was curious about where they were coming from; I was surprised because I wasn't expecting them; I wondered what they were.)

• **How would you feel hearing those same noises if you were really outside at night?** (I'd be scared that a wild animal was going to attack me; I'd be nervous about the noises I couldn't recognize; I'd be afraid that a storm was coming.)

Honk the *Harpo horn* to bring the class back together. Wait for kids to respond, and then ask them to share what they learned from their partners.

After all the kids have shared, say: **Our Bible story today is about two people who were left alone in the wilderness all night. Follow along in your Bibles to see how they handled a scary situation.**

Help kids find **Genesis 21:8-20** in their Bibles. When all kids have found the passage, play track 9, “Hagar and Ishmael,” on the CD.

When the track ends, have kids return to their pairs to discuss the following questions. Pause after each question to give pairs time to discuss their answers.

Ask: • **What were some of the scary things that happened to Hagar in the wilderness?** (She was all alone with Ishmael; she ran out of water; she was worried about Ishmael; she thought Ishmael would die of thirst.)

• **How did Hagar handle her fear?** (She ran away; she cried; she put Ishmael down to die; she listened to what God said.)

• **How is this like the way we handle our fears?** (Sometimes we're too scared to know what to do; we want to run away; we can trust God to protect us.)

• **How did God protect Hagar?** (God heard Ishmael crying; God sent an angel; God showed Hagar where to find water.)

• **How is that like the way God protects us?** (God knows when we're afraid; God is always listening to us; God can show us how to handle our fears.)

Honk the *Harpo horn* twice to bring kids together. Wait for kids to respond, and then invite them to share insights they gained from their partners.



Explain to the kids that their Bibles might tell the story using words slightly different from the words they heard on the CD.



BIBLE POINT

Say: ► **God protects us when we're afraid, just as he protected Hagar and Ishmael. God also helps us find ways to handle our fears. Sometimes we find comfort in God's Word, the Bible. Other times we're comforted by people who care about us—our parents, teachers, pastors, or friends. Let's explore ways to handle our fears now.**

HANDS-ON BIBLE

Give each student two large plastic or paper cups, plenty of newspaper, a raw egg, and some tape. Make sure kids have their *Hands-On Bibles*. Bring extra newspapers to protect the floor, and bring paper towels in case of accidents.



Have students turn to Psalm 90 in their Bibles and complete the "Protecting the Egg" activity found there. Then have them show off their eggs.

Ask: • **How did you protect your egg?** (I made sure it was safe; I surrounded it so it wouldn't get hurt.)

• **How does God protect us?** (God sends his angels to protect us; God also uses people to protect us.)

■ Fear Busters

SUPPLIES: tape, newsprint, marker, "Comfort Me" handouts (p. 85), list of fears from "What Are You Afraid Of?"



Tape another sheet of newsprint to the wall next to the list of fears from the "What Are You Afraid Of?" activity. Also place a sheet of newsprint on a table or the floor, and have kids stand in a circle around it. Say: **Look at our list of fears again. Think about one or two things on the list that really scare you. When I spin the plastic spin-top, call out the fear you're thinking of and one way you can handle that fear.**

For example, if you're afraid of being alone, you might say, "Call a friend on the telephone." After you've called out your fear and one way to handle it, sit down. Let's see how many we can come up with before the top stops spinning. Ready? Go!

Spin the *plastic spin-top* on the newsprint. Record kids' responses on the newsprint you put on the wall. If any kids are still standing when the top stops spinning, spin it again. Repeat the activity until you've generated at least 10 to 12 responses. Then place the *plastic spin-top* out of sight.

Ask: • **What happens to your heartbeat when you're trying to come up with answers quickly?** (It speeds up; I always panic when I'm racing against something, so my heart beats faster.)

• **How is that like what happens to your heartbeat when you're afraid?** (My heart races because I'm nervous; my heart beats faster when I'm afraid, even if I'm just watching a scary movie; my adrenaline kicks in and my heartbeat increases.)

Have kids return to the groups of four they formed in the "What Are You Afraid Of?" activity. Have each group choose a new Discussion Leader, Encourager, Reporter,

Bible Insight

The story of Hagar and Ishmael emphasizes the recurring theme of misery, signified by the meaning of the name Ishmael: "May God hear your misery."

teacher tips

Encourage kids to share what they're really thinking, even if others have given the same response. This will help them come up with ways to cope with things they're really scared of.

and Timekeeper. Encourage students to choose different roles than they had before. Assign each group one of the top five fears from the list of fears. Have each group use the list of responses the class has just generated to decide how to handle that fear.

After about five minutes, have Reporters present their groups' decisions to the class and tell why they chose that response. Encourage other kids to help explain if Reporters seem stumped.

Say: ► ***God protects us when we're afraid. And God has given us many ways to handle our fears. Next time you're feeling scared, try one of these responses. And remember that God will always be there to comfort you. Let's read about God's promise together.***

Give everyone a photocopy of the "Comfort Me" handout. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself. Say: **Take a minute to silently read the psalm printed on the handout. Then we'll read it together. I'll read the leader's lines, and you read the people's lines all together. When we've finished reading, see if you can tell me what these verses say God is like.**

Lead kids in reading the handout responsively. Then ask:

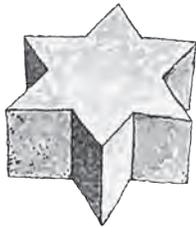
- **What do these verses say God is like?** (God is like a guard; God is like a protective shade; God protects us from danger; God never sleeps.)
- **What does a bodyguard do?** (A bodyguard takes care of someone famous; bodyguards guard people so they don't get hurt.)
- **How is God like our bodyguard?** (He takes care of us; he protects us; he watches us all the time.)
- **What's it like to know that God watches you even when you're sleeping?** (I feel safe; I'm protected; I'm not as scared.)

Say: ► ***God protects us when we're afraid. God has also given us family and friends to comfort us when we're afraid. Let's thank God for those people now.***



Closing

■ People Who Help



SUPPLIES: markers, "Comfort Me" handouts

Distribute markers. Have kids fold their "Comfort Me" handouts in half and draw or write in the thought bubble the thing that scares them most.

Then have kids form pairs. Say: **We all have people in our lives who help us when we're afraid. Tell your partner about one person who's helped you handle the fear you drew in your thought bubble. Write that person's name on one of the slanted lines on your handout.**

After a minute, have students discuss the following question with their partners:

- **How is this person's help like God's protection?** (God works through this person; God doesn't leave me alone.)

Honk the *Harpo horn* twice to call the class back together. When kids respond, have them form a circle. Hold up the *foam star*, and say: **In our game of Protection**




BIBLE POINT ▶

Shuffle Tag, the *foam star* reminded us of our fears. Being scared often makes us feel alone and helpless. When we're around others who trust God, they help us handle our fears. Their faith helps us use our faith, too. They help us remember that ▶ God protects us when we're afraid. Each time someone comforts you when you're afraid, you can add his or her name to your handout.

Let's take turns thanking God for those special people. I'll start. For example, I might say, "Thanks, God, for our pastor." When it's your turn, say, "Thanks, God, for..." and add the name of a special person who helps you when you're afraid. As you say the name you're thinking of, crush the *foam star* in your hands to remind you that your special person can help you overcome your fears. If you don't want to pray out loud, you can say your prayer silently. When you finished praying, pass the *foam star* to the person on your left to let that person know it's his or her turn.

Start the prayer. Close by saying "In Jesus' name, amen" when the prayer has gone around the circle. Encourage kids to keep their "Comfort Me" handouts near their beds as a reminder that God is always watching over them.


Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Hands-On Fun at Home" handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week's topic.



COMFORT

Psalm 121

LEADER: I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there?

PEOPLE: My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!

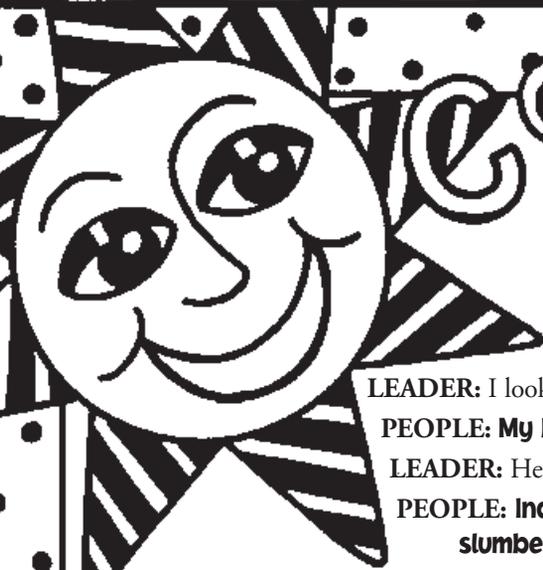
LEADER: He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber.

PEOPLE: Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps.

LEADER: The Lord himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade. The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon at night.

PEOPLE: The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life.

LEADER AND PEOPLE: The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.



Hands-On Fun at Home

LESSON 7



God protects us when we're afraid.



Bible Verse:

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you.

Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

Check It Out

• **Read Psalm 91:9-16.**

Tell about a time God protected you from danger or harm.

• **Read Mark 4:35-41.**

How can trusting God help you handle your fears?

Never-Fear Pinwheel

Cut a sheet of white paper into a square. Fold the paper in half



diagonally, and then in half again. When you unfold the paper, the fold lines should form four triangles. Use crayons or markers to decorate it with designs. Along the top edge of each triangle, write one or two words from the sentence, "Never fear; God is near."

Cut along each of the fold lines to within about a half-inch of the center. Bring one corner point from each triangle to the center of the pinwheel, and then attach all four corners to the center with a straight pin. Stick the pin through a straw, behind the pinwheel, and bend the sharp edge of the pin down and tape it to the straw.

Whenever you're feeling scared, blow on your pinwheel to remind yourself of God's protection.

Notables

Fill out the coupon below, and give it to someone who has helped you when you were afraid.

Dear _____,

When I was afraid, you

_____.

Thank you.

Love, _____

"Every time I think of you,
I give thanks to my God"
(Philippians 1:3).

Way to Pray

The writer of Psalm 91 tells about many ways God protects us. Read this psalm.

Then make a list of the times God has protected your family. Write your own family psalm of thanks for God's protection. Ask your family to pray your psalm together each night before you go to bed.