

# You Don't Have To Be Afraid

Helping Children Cope with Fear



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**This Book Belongs to**

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## Helping Children Cope with Fear



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## About this Book

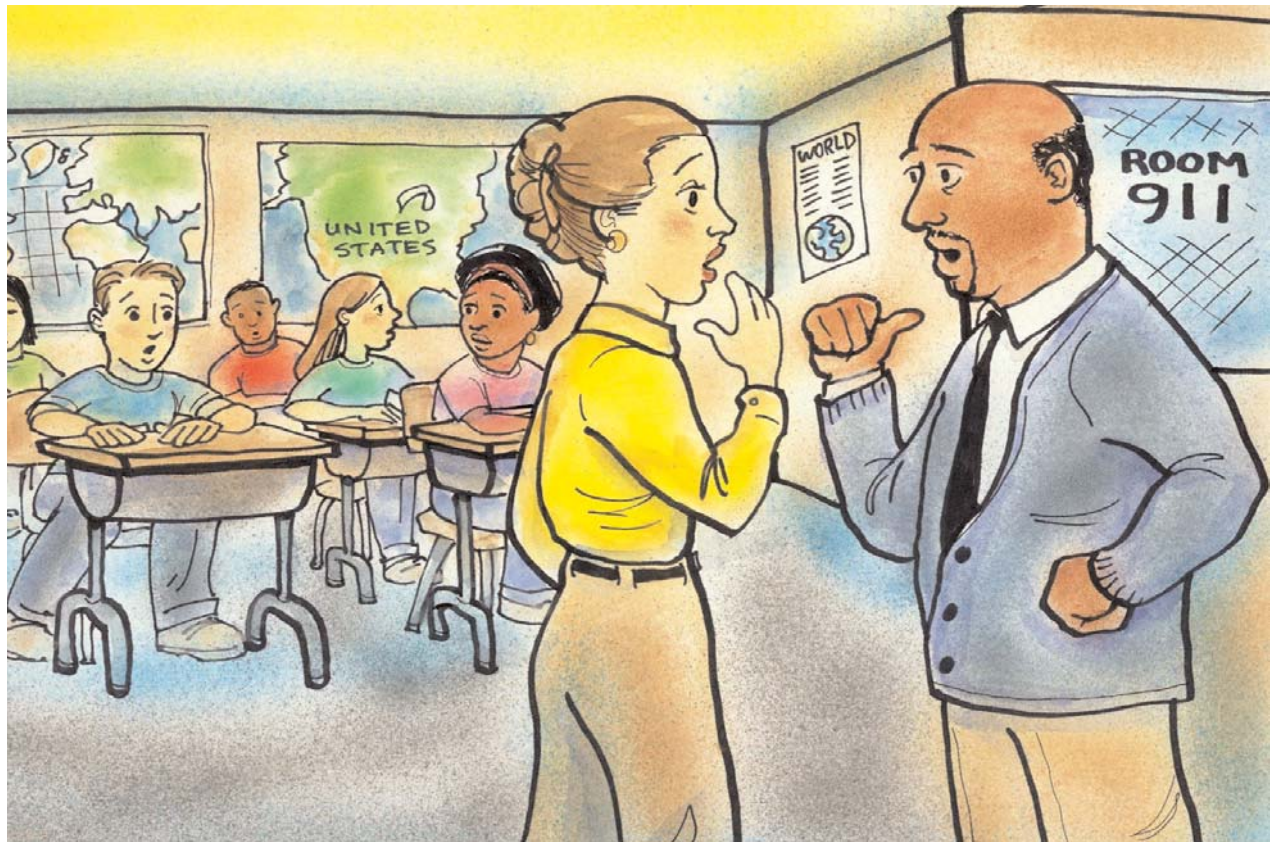
Something very frightening and tragic has happened and you are now afraid. You do not want to be left alone. Maybe you are now having bad and scary dreams. Maybe you don't want to leave your home. Or maybe you can't concentrate in school.

Feelings like this are normal when you learn about events that make you sad and scared. God knows what you are feeling and wants to take care of you. God says,

*I am the LORD your God.  
I am holding your hand,  
so don't be afraid.  
I am here to help you.*

Isaiah 41.13

This book will help you see how much God loves you and how God works through people to provide comfort and hope. You are not alone in feeling afraid. So it is important to talk about what you are feeling with your parents or teachers. And God will be right by your side!



Mrs. Stiles' second grade class had just started. The kids were getting ready to eat their snack. That's when the principal came in. He looked really upset. He talked to Mrs. Stiles and then he stood in front of the class. "This morning, something bad happened. A bomb exploded in City Hall. Lots of people are hurt. It is on TV. Some of your moms and dads might be coming to pick you up early today. You don't have to be afraid. You are safe in the school building."

None of the kids could believe it. One of the kids was really upset. His name was Aaron. Aaron started to cry because his dad worked in City Hall. Mrs. Stiles put her arm around Aaron and told him that everything was going to be OK.

In the same way Mrs. Stiles comforted Aaron, God will comfort you. God says:

*Don't be afraid. I am with you.*

*Don't tremble with fear.*

*I am your God.*

*I will make you strong,  
as I protect you with my arm.*

Isaiah 41.10



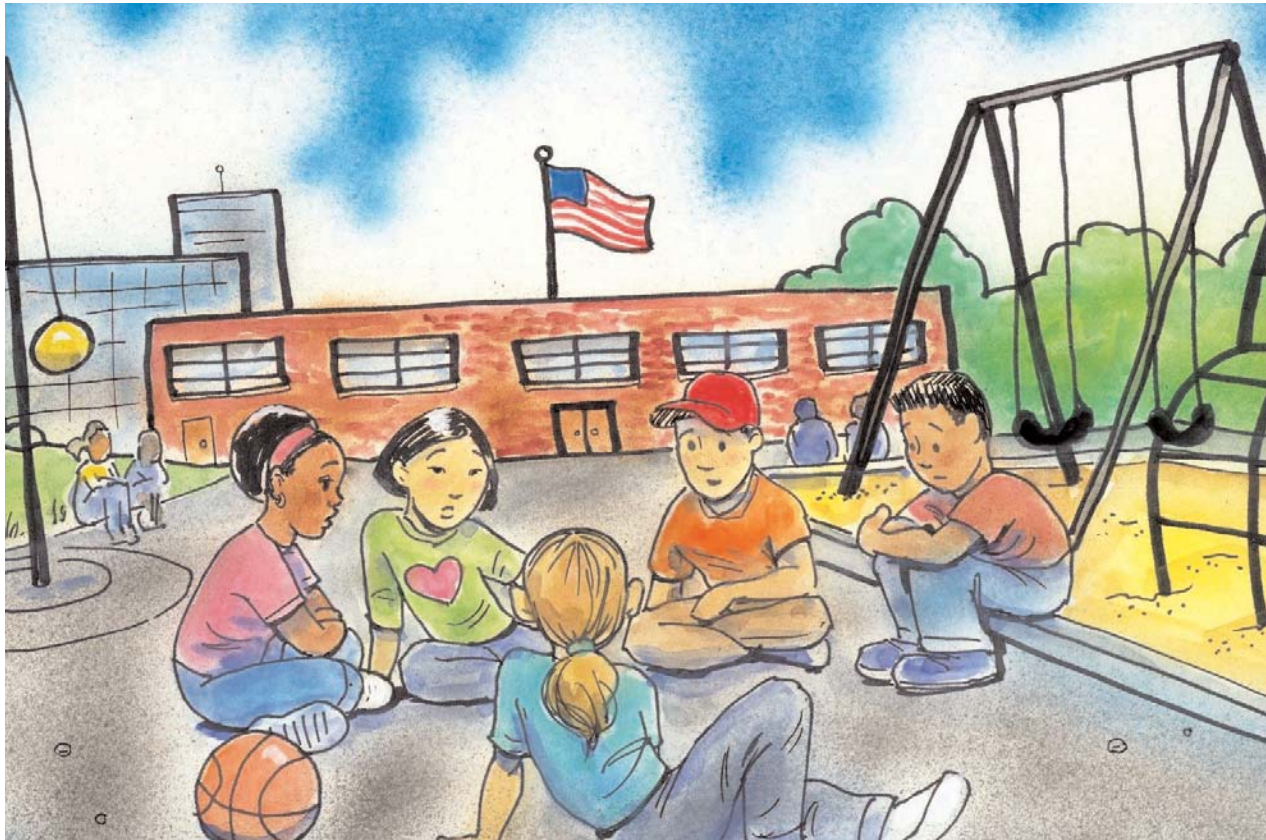
A few minutes later, the principal came back to the classroom. He was not alone. Aaron's mom was with him and she was crying. There was another woman with Aaron's mom. She was Aaron's aunt. The principal talked to Mrs. Stiles for a minute and then Mrs. Stiles told Aaron that he had to go home. "Get your jacket and your lunch box. Don't worry about your homework tonight, Aaron."

All of the kids in Aaron's class watched his mom give him a big hug and then walk down the hall. "OK class, let's get back to work," said Mrs. Stiles. She sounded like she was getting ready to cry, too. When something really bad like this happens, your parents and other grownups might get upset. You don't

have to be afraid. They are not upset with you. You didn't do anything wrong. They are upset about what happened, not upset with you. In times like this, God is there to protect you and keep you safe. A long time ago, someone was scared and prayed to God. This prayer is in the Bible:

*You, LORD, are the light  
that keeps me safe.  
I am not afraid of anyone.  
You protect me,  
and I have no fears.*

Psalm 27.1



**A**fter Aaron's mom came and got him, a few other parents got their kids, too. After lunch, everyone always went outside to play. But today, nobody felt like playing. All of the kids were sad, and the teachers were talking to each other. Some of the kids thought that the bad people were going to come to their school. Some other kids were worried about their own mom and dad. Everyone wondered what was going to happen to Aaron.

No matter what happens, there are people who are in charge. You don't have to be scared. The President knows what is going on. The mayor makes sure all of the police officers and fire fighters are going to the right places to help. The principal will check out the school and make sure everything is fine. Your teacher will talk to you and look out for you.

Most importantly, your mom and dad know that their main job is to make sure you are safe. There are lots of adults who are taking care of you. They all know how important their job is.

God is also taking care of you. God is like a shepherd. Here is another prayer from the Bible:

*You, LORD, are my shepherd.  
I will never be in need.*

...

*I may walk through valleys  
as dark as death,  
but I won't be afraid.  
You are with me,  
and your shepherd's rod  
makes me feel safe.*

Psalm 23:1,4



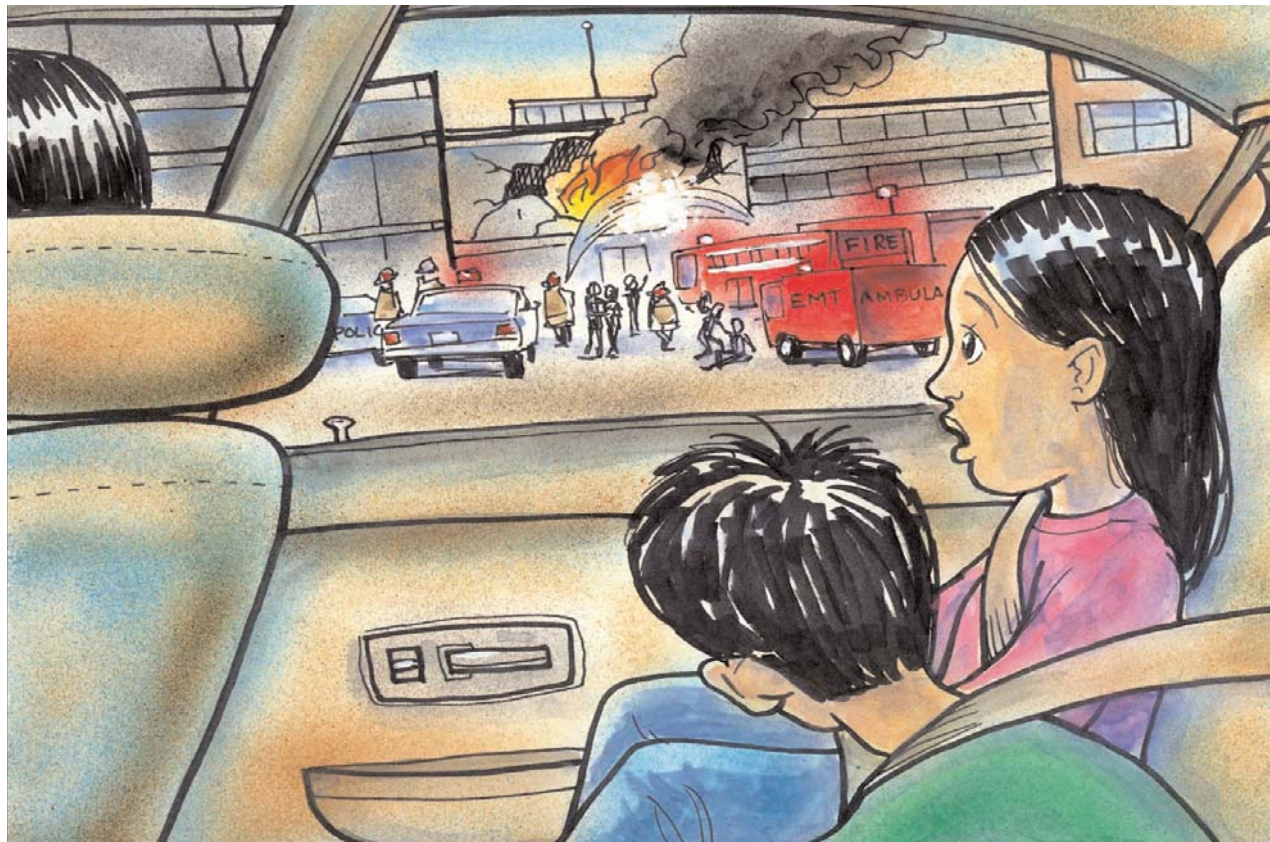
**I**n Joshua's house, everyone was watching the news all the time. It kept showing the same pictures over and over. Joshua wanted to watch cartoons, but there weren't any cartoons on. All of the grown ups in his house talked about how they had to get the bad guys who put the bomb in the building. The man on the news even talked about war. Joshua didn't really understand everything that they were talking about but he didn't want his dad to get in a war with the people who had bombs. He wanted his dad to stay home with him.

After something bad like this happens, the best thing to do is to talk with a friend or grown-up about your feelings. Also try to do just what you normally do every day. If you like to play outside, then go ride your bike or your skateboard like usual. If you normally do your homework and eat a snack, then do those things.

Sometimes parents want to know everything that is going on so they watch the news a lot. But it is best for you to find out from your parents what is going on, not from the TV. If you do want to watch TV, you should watch it with a grown-up who can explain things to you. Trust in God to keep you safe. The Bible says:

*God alone is the mighty rock  
that keeps me safe.  
and the fortress  
where I am secure.*

Psalm 62.2



Stephanie was in Aaron's class, too. Her mom and dad got in the car with Stephanie and her brother to go see City Hall. Stephanie thought it looked like something in a movie. She had seen the building so many times, but it never looked like this. There was still smoke from the fire coming out of the windows. There were police everywhere. There were lots of fire engines and she even saw some white trucks with a big antenna on top. They were from the TV station. Stephanie was scared to be so close to where the bomb was. Her mom said, "I can't believe anyone could do this."

"Are they going to come to our house?" asked Stephanie.

Her mom turned around and looked at her. "Stephanie, some people did a really bad thing here. But they are not going to come to our house. You don't have to be afraid. Everybody

in our family is safe; me, your dad, your little brother, you. Even Grandma and Grandpa who live in Virginia are OK. All of your friends are OK, too. When we get home tonight, let's call Grandma and Grandpa and you can e-mail your friends, too. This made Stephanie feel a lot better.

Always remember that God is watching over you and wants to protect you from harm.

*Live under the protection  
of God Most High  
and stay in the shadow  
of God All-Powerful.  
Then you will say to the LORD,  
"You are my fortress,  
my place of safety;  
you are my God,  
and I trust you."*

Psalm 91.1,2



Alyssa was in Aaron's class, too. That night, her parents said there was something she should see, so they got in their car and they drove near City Hall. They stopped by a big crowd of people. There were people who were putting up pictures and there were so many flowers! Alyssa had never seen so many flowers in her life! Someone was handing out little candles.

"What are the candles for mom?" asked Alyssa.

"They are to help us remember all of the people who got hurt in City Hall."

"Can I have one? Please."

"Sure, just be careful."

It seemed like everyone in town was there. People were crying, but also smiling and giving hugs to each other. It seemed like such a happy place. There are more good people in

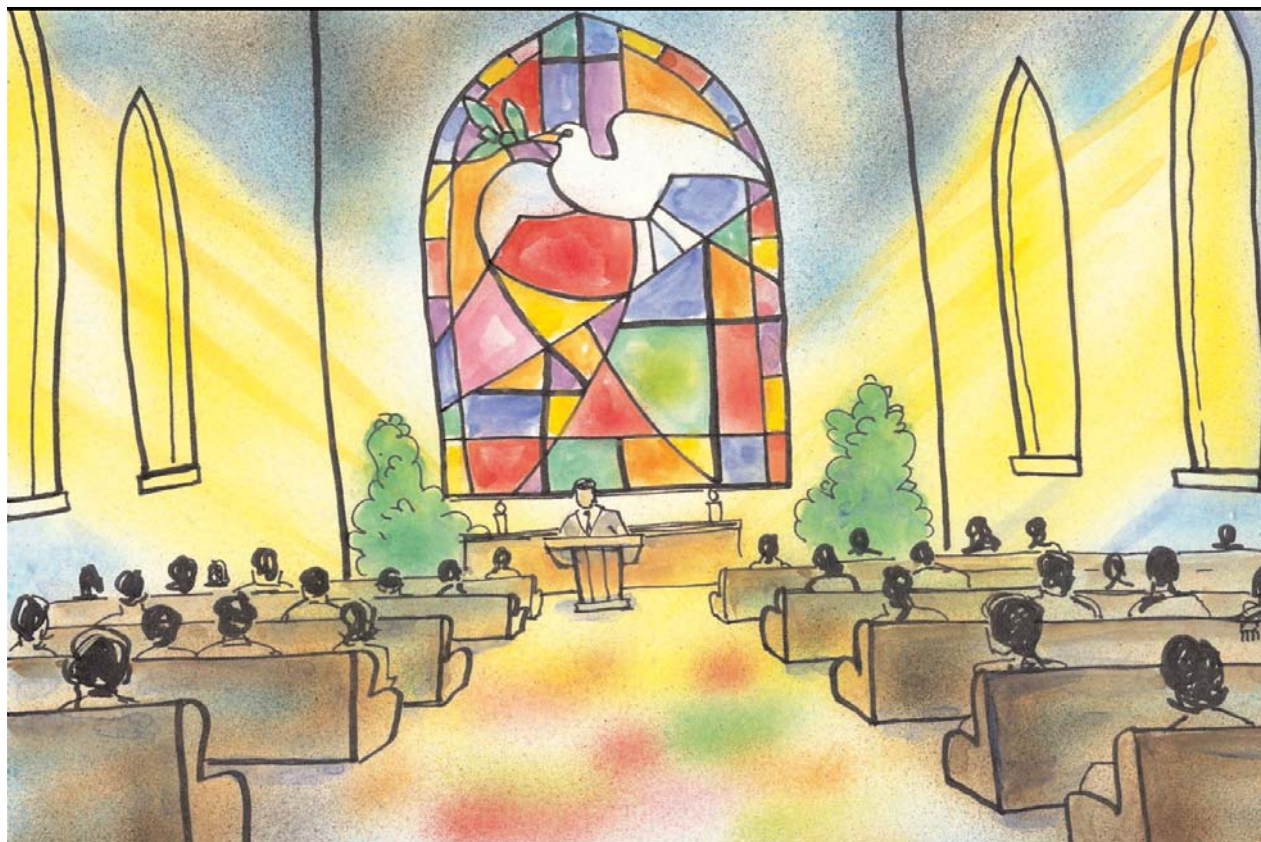
the world who want to help others than there are bad people who want to hurt others.

Sometimes it helps to think about all of the people who are helping, like the fire fighters, the police officers, rescue workers, medical professionals, even the other little kids who are drawing pictures. We can all do something to help.

We can help and give comfort to others, just like God comforts us.

*The Father is a merciful God, who always gives us comfort. He comforts us when we are in trouble, so that we can share that same comfort with others in trouble.*

2 Corinthians 1.3b, 4



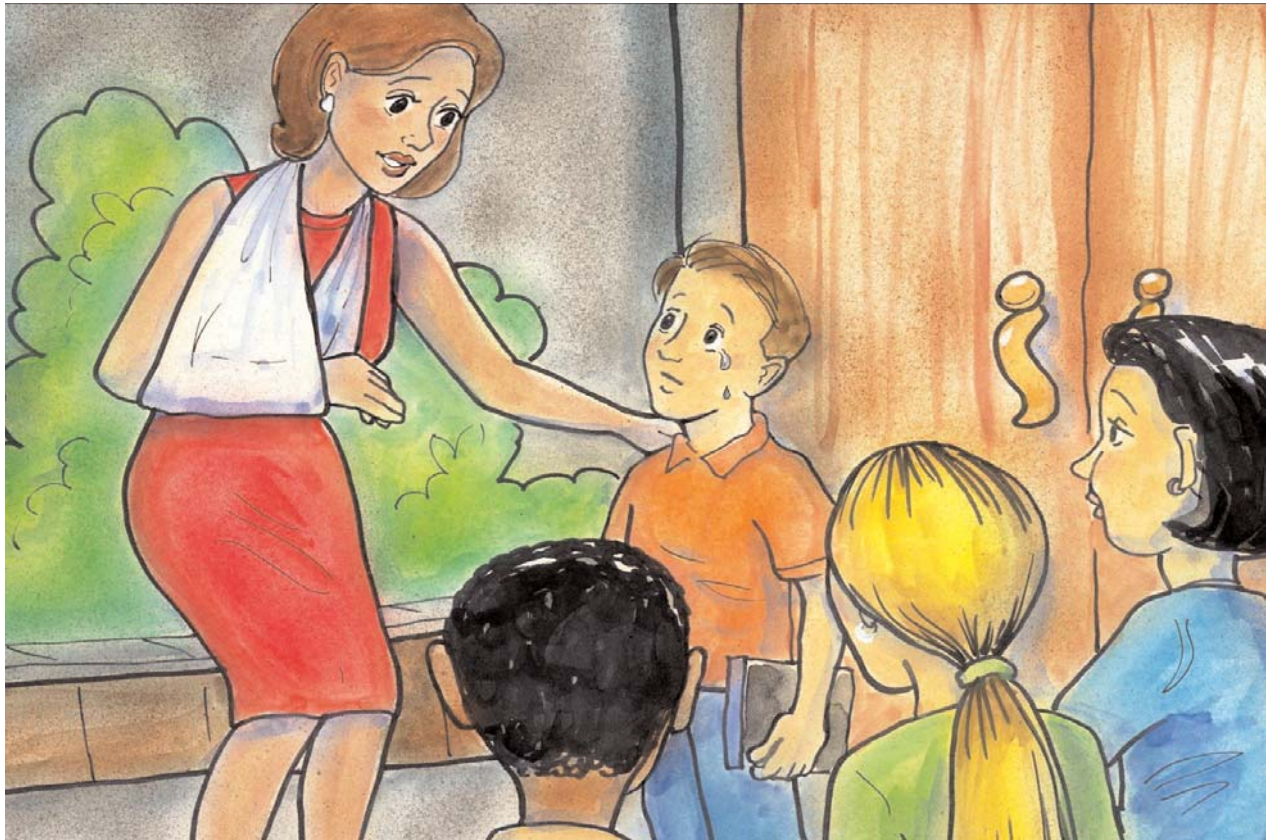
A few days later, there was a Memorial Service at the big church by City Hall. Everyone came to remember the people who had died or who had gotten hurt in the explosion. Aaron was in the front row with his mom. His mom was wearing a black dress because Aaron's dad had died. Lots of people were there. Some of them were crying. Everybody was listening. Different people came up to talk. Some kids even sang a song. Then the minister prayed. It was beautiful. The kids from Mrs. Stiles second grade class were all there with their parents. They waved at each other, and shook hands with the grownups. People came to church that day because they knew life was important. It is something we have to think about. It is impossible to figure out why bad things happen. But coming to

church can make us feel closer to God and closer to each other, and that helps us feel better, even when we don't know all the answers.

God's love is always with you, and nothing can separate you from God's love. Here are some encouraging words from the Bible that express complete trust in God's love.

*I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love—not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future, and not the powers above or the powers below.*

Romans 8.38,39a



**A**fter the service, Aaron's friends came over to say hi. They didn't know what to say because Aaron and his mom were still crying. When they were standing there, a woman came up to Aaron and told him how she worked with his dad. She wanted to tell Aaron the story about the last time she had seen his father. Everyone who was standing around Aaron stopped to listen to what she had to say.

When someone we love dies, we are sad and we cry. But God promises that there will be a time when all people will be happy!

**The Bible says:**

*The LORD All-Powerful  
will destroy the power of death  
and wipe away all tears.*

...

*At that time, people will say,*

*"The Lord has saved us!*

*Let's celebrate.*

*We waited and hoped –  
now our God is here."*

Isaiah 25.8a, 9

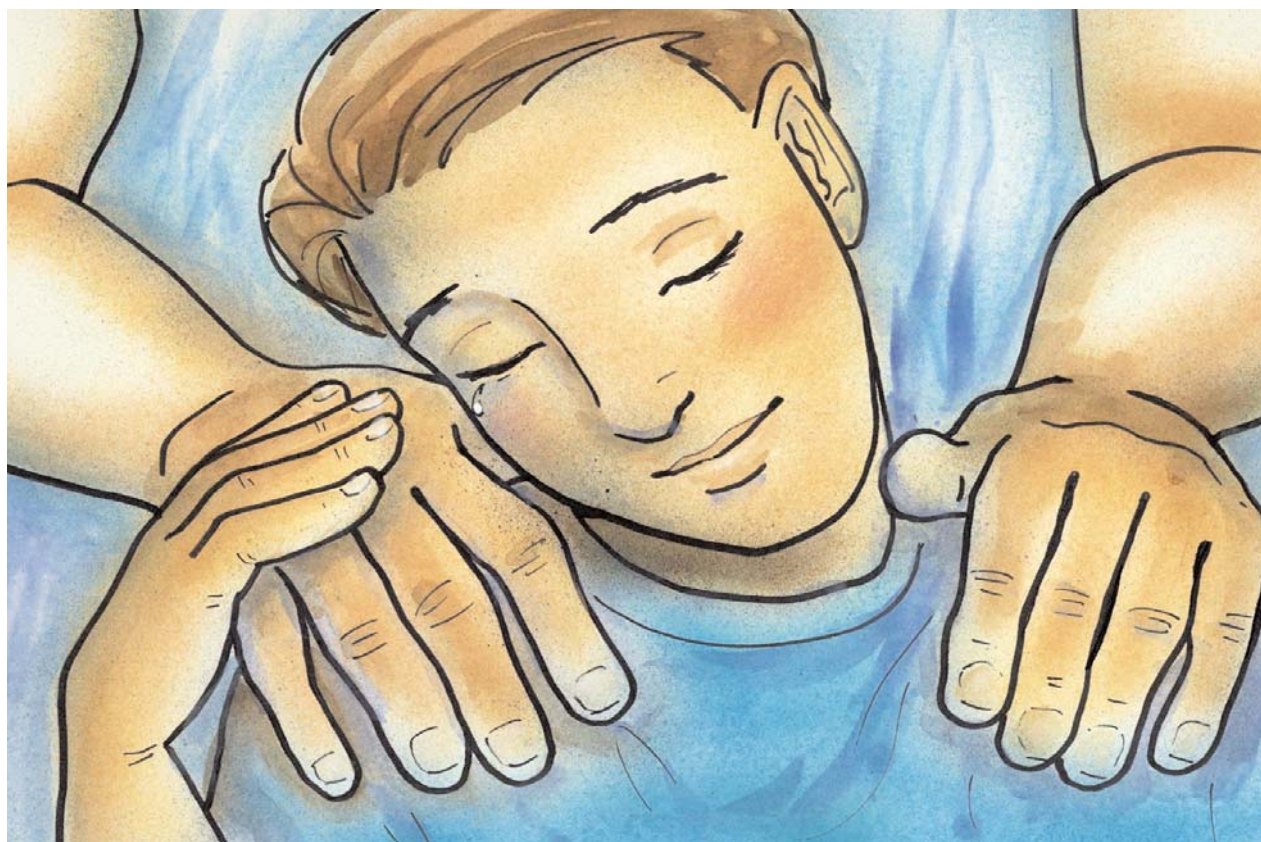


"Your father and I worked together for a long time. I knew him pretty well. He was always so kind to everyone. We all liked your father very much. Last week when . . . well, on that day, everyone was very scared. People were hurt really bad. Your father helped lots of people get out alive. He helped me to get out of the building and then he went back in to help other people. Your father was a very brave man. Everyone at work will miss him so much. He always talked about you Aaron, he talked about what a great little man you are. I know he was proud of you. And I hope you are proud of him, too."

Just like Aaron's father helped many people to escape, God is always there to help you.

*Our LORD, you keep your word  
and do everything you say.  
When someone stumbles or falls,  
you give a helping hand.*

Psalm 145.13b,14



**Y**ou don't have to be afraid when something bad like this happens. Remember that your parents and teachers are with you. It is their job to make sure that you are safe. More than that, God is with you. God can give you peace in your heart. When you say your prayers, make sure you pray for the people who have been hurt, and for the people who are scared. You should even pray for the people who did this bad thing. You don't have to be afraid. You are not alone.

Pray this prayer from the Bible:

*You, LORD, are all I want!  
You are my choice,  
and you keep me safe.*

*You make my life pleasant,  
and my future is bright.*

*I praise you, LORD,  
for being my guide.  
Even in the darkest night,  
your teachings fill my mind.  
I will always look to you,  
as you stand beside me  
and protect me from fear.  
With all my heart,  
I will celebrate,  
and I can safely rest.*

Psalm 16.5-9

### **Tips for Parents:**

1. Provide your child with an appropriately balanced worldview. Children believe people are good, life is good and the world is a safe place. Don't try to make them "street smart" too soon. Children should see the good in society before they see the bad.
2. Explain that there are a few people who do bad and hurtful things, but most people want to do good and help people. Point out people you see and hear about on the news that are helping. "Look how many there are! Most people want to do good things!"
3. Listen to your children with your eyes and your ears. Watch for changes in behavior: withdrawing, fighting, crying, clinging, listlessness. Be ready for times when they are more likely to talk: just before sleep, in the car, when they are alone with you, while you are cooking. Make yourself available at their chosen time. Listen for a long time before you offer your opinion or ideas.
4. Make sure that your child knows that those people closest to him or her are OK. Even though it may seem obvious, children need to hear the members of their immediate

family—Mom, Dad, brothers and sisters—are all safe. This is essential even if you live nowhere near the site of one of the attacks. Next, reassure your child about other relatives.

5. Try to maintain the daily schedule as best as you can. A regular routine gives children a sense of structure and security.

6. Although you may feel a need to keep the television on, for the sake of your children, it's best to turn it off while they're in the room. If your children do watch the news, make sure that you sit with them to help explain what is happening.

7. Let your child know that people in authority—the President, the mayor, teachers—are all making sure that everyone is going to be safe. Remind your child that you are also making sure that he or she is safe.

8. Children are sensitive to the emotional state of their parents. It's fine to let your children know that you are upset and sad, but make it clear that you're not upset with them, and try to be as calm and reassuring as possible.

### **A Message for Parents:**

Our nation is mourning from recent terrorist attacks against innocent civilians. When horrendous events like these occur, not only is each and every adult shaken and mired in disbelief, but it also becomes impossible to shelter our children from what they see and hear all around them. While we struggle to comprehend these awful events, it is important that we take into account our children's perspective and help them cope as well. No matter how upset we are by the grim reality that our country is not as safe as we would like it to be, we have to offer our children some sense of order and security.

In using this book with children, it will be important to help them understand that God is still in control. Children may ask, "Why did God let this happen?" This is not an easy question to answer. Explain that when bad things like this happen, God is very sad and that God will be with them always.

Refer to the Scripture passages in this book and then show your child where these verses can be found in the Bible.

Discuss the illustrations with your child. Have your child explain what is going on in the picture, and encourage them to use their five senses in the description. For example: "What do you think the people in the picture see, hear, smell, taste and/or feel?"

Encourage your child to memorize verses that might be especially meaningful. You might want to suggest that your child write the verse on drawing or poster paper and draw a picture to show what the verse means.

Discuss trust and what it means to trust in God. Talk about how the Scripture passages show God's love for everyone.



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