

Show Up

JOB 2:11-13

GOAL

Adults explore ways of showing up with their friends who mourn, offering nonjudgmental presence, companionship, and hope.

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



Visit our YouTube channel, bit.ly/FMYouTubeGFR, for conversation starter videos.

PRAYER

God, center me in your peace. Encourage me with your hope. Guide me with your wisdom. Amen.

THIS SESSION

To comfort someone who mourns or grieves is to simply show up, be present, share a physical or virtual space, and let them know that they are not alone in their loss. It is a ministry of presence and companionship, turning our attention to the one who is hurting. Sometimes we want to offer words of comfort or assurances that all will be well. At other times, we don't know what to say or fear that we may say something wrong. We want to *do* what will be the most helpful but often find ourselves at a loss over another person's loss.

When we meet a person where they are—physically, spiritually, and emotionally—it is not about giving advice or trying to fix them, but simply to be with them. A ministry of presence offers solidarity that speaks beyond words. It communicates that we are sharing in the person's grief, listening to a person's story, and honoring a memory. Showing up is a powerful practice of setting aside time to mark a loss and share the burden of grief and communicating that the person is not bearing their mourning alone.

THE BIBLE STORY

Job faces a series of tremendous losses: his livestock have been stolen; the people working for him have been murdered; his children have died after wind destroyed their house; his skin has become plagued. Job's stability, health, prosperity, and joy have been compromised. He is deeply grieved. Job's friends gather to console and comfort him, initially weeping and sitting with Job when there were no words to offer.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "Opening Litany" (p. 5): Use different colored markers to write and display the opening litany on newsprint. Save it to use in remaining sessions.

GETTING STARTED

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome participants and engage in gathering activities particular to your group (*introductions, offering, prayer concerns, and announcements*). Review the Unit Overview on pages 4–5 of the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Explain that a more detailed discussion of the practice can be found in the foundational essay, which begins on page 45 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Encourage participants to read the essay during the course of the next four sessions.

OPENING LITANY

Before the session begins, prepare newsprint with the following litany, which will be used in all sessions.

One color: What is our comfort in life and in death?

Second color: Knowing that we belong to God.

One color: What can separate us from God’s love?

Second color: Absolutely nothing can separate us from God’s love.

Jesus is with me.

Jesus is within me.

Jesus is behind me.

Jesus is before me.

Jesus is there to comfort and restore me. Amen.

One color (*not spoken*):

—adaptations from the Heidelberg Catechism, question 1;
Romans 8:35, 38–39; St. Patrick’s Breastplate

When all have gathered, lead participants in the opening litany. You read words written in one color; others read in unison the words in the second color. Save the newsprint for use in sessions 2, 3, and 4.

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

CONVERSATION STARTER VIDEOS

Show the “*Comfort Those Who Mourn Overview*” video and the “*Comfort Those Who Mourn Session 1*” video from the Growing Faith YouTube channel (bit.ly/FMYouTubeGFR). Lead a brief conversation about participants’ thoughts and questions the videos prompt as you introduce the practice.

LOSSES

Distribute pens. Direct participants to page 6 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Read aloud the first two paragraphs as participants follow along. Have them read the lists of individual losses and communal losses. Invite them to place a check mark next to losses they have experienced. Encourage them to write in other losses not listed.

Invite volunteers to tell the group what other losses they added. Discuss what brings people comfort when they experience loss. If the community has experienced communal loss, identify what they found to be comforting.

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- This and all sessions require that the leader and participants have their copy of the *Adult Reflection Guide* with them.

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- Newsprint
 - Colored markers

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- Internet-connected device

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- Pens

RESPONSES

Explain that, whether alone or in community, humans mourn. Invite participants to discuss the responses they offer when someone else mourns.

Explain that we want to find the right words to say to a person who is grieving to bring comfort and express our care. Often, we do not know what to say. Direct participants to the bulleted list on page 7 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Discuss whether they have heard or spoken these phrases to offer comfort. In what ways can these statements be helpful or not helpful?

Explain that words often fail us when we try to speak messages of comfort. Sometimes the needed response is a ministry of presence, to simply show up and be there for one another in times of deep loss. Discuss the reflection question on page 7:

➔ Imagine yourself showing up. What does this look like to you?

FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

JOB AND FRIENDS

Refer participants to “Finding the Practice in the Bible” on page 8 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Read aloud the text box on page 8 and the paragraph introducing the story of Job. Invite volunteers to read the brief summary of Job 1:6–2:10 on page 8. They may each read one sentence at a time through Job 2:11–13.

Discuss how Job may have felt during all that happened to him. Invite participants to identify the different ways Job’s friends offered support and comfort to Job. In what ways did they show up for Job? Discuss whether they would find these actions comforting. Have them describe what they might do to comfort a friend in a situation of loss or grief.

Bibles



Instead of performing a skit, you may distribute paper and pens and have each small group write a modernized version of Job and his friends. Read the stories aloud for one another.

MODERNIZING JOB

Distribute Bibles. Read Job 2:11–13 aloud as participants follow along. Form groups of three or four. Invite each group to imagine the story of Job in modern times and prepare to act out the story. Encourage groups to consider what tragedies a modern Job might experience, how his friends learn that Job is mourning, and how his friends show up for him.

Invite groups to perform their skit. Have them name differences and similarities between the skits. Use these questions for discussion:

- ➔ When have you showed up and shut up?
- ➔ What other ways do you show up?
- ➔ What effect does a ministry of presence have on Job? On his friends?

FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

Internet-connected device

SITTING SHIVA

Ask participants if they have heard about the Jewish tradition of sitting *shiva*. Invite them to share what they know. Explain that *shiva* is a seven-day Jewish mourning practice following the death of a loved one.

Show the YouTube video “Why Do Jews Sit Shiva?” (bit.ly/FMSitShiva, 1:09). Invite the group to list the different practices of sitting *shiva*. Identify how people show up in this practice.

Show the YouTube video “Rochester Community Invited to ‘Sit Shiva’ for Victims of Gun Violence” (bit.ly/FMViolenceShiva, 1:02). Discuss the following questions:

- ➔ What and who are being mourned?
- ➔ How do the practices of sitting *shiva* vary in the two videos?
- ➔ What was important to the participants who sat *shiva* in these ways?

HOSPITAL VISITATIONS

Explain that people of faith have developed various ways of showing up to offer comfort and support during difficult circumstances. “Finding the Practice Then and Now” includes several ways to show up. Distribute pens and direct participants to “Hospital Visitation” on page 10 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*.

Have participants read the first paragraph and underline the various ways of showing up when a friend has a loved one who is hospitalized. Invite volunteers to tell what they underlined. Encourage them to tell about experiences they have had, either holding watch with a friend whose loved one is hospitalized, or having someone visit them while waiting with a loved one in the hospital. Discuss the different comfort that is offered when one is a patient and friends show up, or when one is waiting for a hospitalized loved one and friends show up to hold watch.

Pens

PUBLIC VIGILS

Refer participants to “Public Vigils” on page 11 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Read aloud the paragraphs. Ask participants if any have attended a prayer vigil following a natural or public tragedy. Discuss their reasons for attending and their feelings as they participated and prayed. How was their physical presence helpful in a time of mourning?

If participants have not attended a prayer vigil, show and discuss the YouTube video “Vigil Held for Nashville School Shooting Victims” (bit.ly/FMNashville, 2:47). Invite participants to discuss their reactions and impressions from the video. Continue discussion with these questions:

- ➔ Why did people gather for the vigil?
- ➔ What courage does it take to show up for public vigils like this one?
- ➔ How did gathering together provide comfort?
- ➔ How did the use of prayer and Scripture offer comfort?

Internet-connected device

PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

LEARN ABOUT GRIEF

Direct participants to “Learn about Grief” on page 12 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Read aloud the opening paragraph. Ask participants if they have heard about Kubler-Ross’s stages of grief theory and what insights they may have gained. Invite volunteers to read aloud the description of each grief stage on page 13. Following each stage, discuss ways to be present with a person who may be experiencing grief in this way.

Remind participants that people experiencing grief may move through and return to the different stages over time and across their grief journey.

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- Internet-connected device
 - Pens

CONSIDERING WHAT TO SAY

Direct participants to “Practice What to Say” on page 12 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Read aloud the first paragraph. Explain that funeral directors have helpful insights about walking alongside people who grieve, not only around death but in other situations of mourning. Show the YouTube video “What Should I Say to the Grieving Family at a Funeral Service?” (bit.ly/FMGriefFamily, 1:19). Invite participants to discuss new information they learned in the video.

Return to “Practice What to Say” (*Adult Reflection Guide*, p. 12). Read aloud the sample statements that might be helpful in grief situations. Invite participants to add other statements they might offer in light of insights from the video. They may record these in their *Adult Reflection Guides*.

FOLLOWING JESUS

CLOSING SONG

Remind participants that showing up for a person in mourning requires some thought. Invite each participant to name one meaningful action or statement they can offer when showing up and offering comfort.

Music is a powerful way that many experience comfort when our own words don’t come easily. Show the YouTube video “When We Are Living—Hymn—PFUMC” (bit.ly/FMWeBelongToGod, 3:10).

CLOSING PRAYER

Invite participants to join you in the closing prayer on page 14 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*.

Merciful God of peace, you know our sorrows, and whether we are few or many, you know the things that we mourn. May your mercy and peace be visible in our midst, so that those who mourn may feel the comfort that you give through your people. In the name of Jesus Christ, in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.