

God's Word Endures

The Comfort of Isaiah 40

Isaiah 40:1-11 *NIV*

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

God's Word Endures

The Comfort of Isaiah 40



God's Word is everlasting, reliable even when everything else in our lives changes or doesn't last. The hopeful message of Isaiah 40 reminds us of this, promising that God will always be with us and that we can count on Him no matter what. God loves us and cares for us, nurturing His people like a shepherd and responding when we call. He wants to comfort us and give us His peace. This lesson highlights elements of the passage, including the "fading flowers" verse and the comfort component, to bring to life how marvelous our great God is in our lives.

God is with us no matter what. We know that His promises are reliable and true and that all He says will last. We have the hope of Christ's coming, death, and resurrection. Recalling this helps us to know that God is faithful to His promises and mighty to save. This passage assures us that God gives us hope and comfort, strengthening us with His care. When all else in life seems great, God is there. When all else seems to fail, God is there!

Passage: Isaiah 40:1-11

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; decorative supplies; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; paper plate; plants; dying plants; paper bags; small treats; comforting items; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story "Isaiah - God's Story"](#) from Crossroads Kids
- Watch the [video Bible story "Jesus is God's Plan"](#) from Saddleback Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet children and discuss the death of plants in winter...

Hello, children of God!

You know, we are nearing the season of winter, and I must admit, I don't love it. For one thing, it gets uncomfortably cold in winter. And then, everything dies. Spring is so happy and hopeful, with green things sprouting. But when winter rolls around, it sort of all turns brown and leaves fall off trees and everything is bare. In spring, I tried to plant a nice garden. Now, there's not much left of it...*display the dead plants. You could also have a bouquet of some sort that has since wilted.* Nothing else will grow from this now. It's all withered up and fading away. I guess the only thing that gives me hope in a situation like this is knowing that someday, I'll have an opportunity to plant again. Winter doesn't last forever. Spring will return and things will blossom and bloom once more. Even when things seem bleak and brown, I know it won't last forever.

In fact, nothing on Earth lasts forever, for good or for bad. Sadly, all things pass away: plants, seasons, even animals and people. Things grow old or worn out or faded. However, we have the hope of something greater than all of that, something that lasts when everything else falls away. Do you know what that is? The answer is in the book of Isaiah. We talked a little about the prophet Isaiah, who spoke about promises of Jesus long before He came to Earth. Well, Isaiah said that we are like grass in a way. Grass withers and flowers fade, but the word of God endures forever. Isaiah wanted to reassure people that God's word does not fade away. Even when everything else in life is failing, HE remains. We can count on His Word in the Bible and know that it is reliable, true, and lasting.

Isaiah spoke those words to bring hope and comfort to God's people. In fact, earlier in the same passage, God spoke and said "comfort my people." God wants to bring comfort into our lives. There are a lot of things that people might look to for comfort. *Hold up examples as you describe.* Some people enjoy "comfort foods" like pasta or chocolate. Children might take comfort in toys, blankets, or pacifiers. But the one thing that brings true and lasting comfort is knowing that Jesus loves us and saves us. God's comfort brings peace and hope. Isaiah promised that God was faithful and loving and would send a promised Messiah. We know that promise has been fulfilled! Christ has come, Christ is risen, Christ will come again, and He is present with us now and forever. We can be comforted by His promises, presence, and peace. We know that there are a lot of things in life we cannot count on. But just as we know that spring will come again during the winter doldrums, we know that God is mighty to save and will always be with us. We can read His word and trust what it says. What a comforting hope!

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you that we can hope in you

Even when everything else in life fades away.

Help us to trust in your promises

And rely on You.

Thank you for your everlasting Word.

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions (10 minutes)



This passage from Isaiah contains a few special elements to highlight, all of which point to the comfort and hope we have in Jesus. God gives us His joy and comfort, no matter what is happening or changing in our lives. To get students thinking and ready to learn, consider an activity opener along these lines:

- Fading flowers match-up: Provide students with pictures or real like examples of flowers or plants that have died or are dying, along with pictures or the same plants in their more “lively” state. Have students match the living plants with their decaying counterparts.
- Crooked made straight paths: set up two obstacle courses for students, featuring a lot of crooked or bumpy areas. Have students race in two sets of pairs to complete the course, where one partner goes first and tries to straighten out all of the challenges for the next partner to easily race through.
- Smooth it out by hand: provide students with rough pieces of wood and sandpaper. Invite them to observe how the sandpaper, although it is rough, smooths out the wood. In the same way, God comes to smooth our paths, even though that might at times seem like things are harder for a time.
- Shepherd and sheep hide and seek: designate half of the students in the group to be “sheep” and the other half “shepherds.” Call for the sheep to scatter across a field and try to hide away. Then invite the shepherd to go look for them and bring them back to the “flock.”
- Comfort relay: set out several items that might be considered comforting, and split students into two teams. Provide students with papers that have a situation described, and have students race one at a time across a playing area to retrieve the item that might help (for instance, a blanket might help on a cold day). Try to see which team identifies and grabs all of the items fastest.

Explain to students that the focus passage in this lesson talks about how God comforts us, and how He is our hope and salvation even in the midst of life’s difficulties.

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



The passage in this lesson comes from the prophet Isaiah. It does not lend itself to a story format or acted out version as much, but is a great one to go through together and discuss a verse or two at a time. Have older students take turns reading, or read out loud for younger kids.

Isaiah 40:1-2 NIV *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. (2) Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.*

Isaiah speaks on behalf of God at the beginning of this chapter. He is literally giving words of comfort as he announces how God has called for a soft and tender message. The “warfare is ended”, meaning that God is not acting out of anger or wrath, but compassion. The people have already been punished as much as needed, and God is ready to love and care for them.

Ask: How do you think God speaks to us? What kinds of things bring you comfort?

Isaiah 40:3-5 NIV *A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. (5) And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”*

For older students, you might mention the prophetic connection here to John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare for Jesus. If that's a little heavy for younger audiences, simply point out how God's glory is being revealed. God is acting to make things new and better. He will and is acting like a special concrete truck, in a manner of speaking, making bumpy roads new and smooth and straight. Remind students that these are the words of a prophet. Isaiah spoke about the coming of Jesus, and how He would make things new and better. Isaiah never knew Jesus on Earth, as he preached long before the birth of Christ. However, He knew that His coming would change everything. In a sense, though, we can also prepare the way for the Lord. We can tell others about Him and live in a way that honors and celebrates His coming.

Ask: What are some things that might seem like "rough roads" in your life? How do you think God will make those things "straight" again?

Isaiah 40:6-8 NIV *A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. (7) The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. (8) The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."*

Discuss things that fade away. In different seasons, all things fade and die. Winter can be a somewhat saddening time, as we see plants and trees grow brown and barren. In fact, nothing truly lasts forever. People change and move away. Plants and animals and even loved ones pass away. These verses give us hope, though. Just as we know that winter cold will eventually give way to springtime blossoms, we know that seasons in our lives will transform and the hope of the Lord will prevail. Here we see that "the word of our God will stand forever." The hope we can cling to in the midst of life's changes is that God's word prevails. We can count on that! Not much in this life is reliable...but the word of God is!

Ask: How can we remember that God's Word remains and gives us hope?

Isaiah 40:9-11 NIV *You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain.*

You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" (10) See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. (11) He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

This is something of an announcement, providing joyful news to the people. This shout is given to God's people, reminding them how He is with us always and takes care of us. This is, of course, not the only place in the Bible where God is referred to as a shepherd. A shepherd looks out for the helpless sheep and takes care of them. In this verse, we see a beautiful image of the shepherd gathering lambs in His arms and leading them gently and carefully. God will gather us in His arms, caring for us and leading us with love and strength. There is nothing we need fear when we know that God is with us. He will always be with us, and His might and strength are behind us. We trust in Him and rely on Him as sheep trust their good shepherd. This final part of the passage gives us even more comfort. God is with us always. We have the hope of His presence and of His goodness, now and forever.

Ask: We don't have many shepherds in this day and age...can you think of something else that God might be like if we consider Him our "shepherd"? (Pet owner, parent, guide, etc.)

Remind students that God loves us and comforts us. In our lives there will be seasons and changes, but we know that God is with us through all of those things. He will never change. Nothing can remove His love, and we have the hope that He is faithful to all of His

promises. No matter what else happens, we can be comforted by His love and steadfastness, now and forever.

Craft Activities (15 minutes)

Isaiah 40 contains beautiful and powerful messages about God's comfort and strength. Even though all else in our lives might pass away, His word remains. These crafts highlight elements of the passage. A double-sided "Don't Wither Away Decoration" recalls how He is faithful despite life's changes. A "Comfort Bag" provides a creative gift that can be used to comfort others with God's love. Let's get crafty!

Craft one: “Don’t Wither Decoration”

You will need:

- Paper plate(s)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Markers or crayons
- String or pipe cleaner
- Cupcake liners and/or coffee filters
- Decorations (stickers, pom poms, etc.)

Procedure:

1. On one side of a paper plate, decorate with a “dying plants” theme. Glue real withered leaves or draw some, along with vines or other signs of decay.
2. Add verses and captions.
3. On the other side of the plate, create some decorative flowers by gluing or taping colored cupcake liners onto pipe cleaner “stems.”
4. Add stickers, pom poms, or other decorative elements as desired.
5. Add verses and captions. Attach a string or pipe cleaner to display the final product.



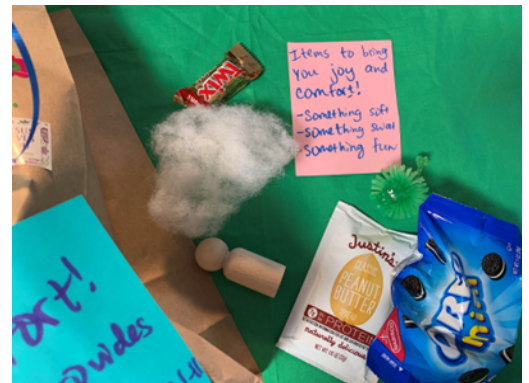
Craft Two: “Comfort Bag”

You will need:

- Paper bags or gift bags
- Markers or crayons
- Decorative elements (stickers, glitter, etc.)
- Small treats or candies
- Cotton or cotton balls
- Small toys or trinkets
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Scissors

Procedure:

1. Decorate the bag with stickers, verses, and pictures.
2. Write out an explanation card on paper or cardstock, describing the comforting elements of items inside.
3. Place “comforting” items in the bag, such as soft cotton, small toys, or treats.
4. Designate a recipient and give the bag away to someone who could use a little extra comfort!



Isaiah 40:8 NIV

*The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of
our God endures forever.*





Word Search Puzzle

Comfort - God - Jerusalem - Wilderness - Mountain - Hill

Plain - Grass - Wither - Flower - Zion - Shepherd

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Word Search Answers

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