

TEACHING THE BEATITUDES: PICKING UP OUR CROSSES TO FOLLOW JESUS

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“Why?” You’ve probably heard that question a lot as a parent. Sometimes, “why” has an easy answer. We wash our hands so we don’t get sick. We put on our coats so we’re not too cold. But if your child is being bullied or hurt—especially if that ridicule is because of their faith—that can be a difficult “why” to explain.

Jesus often talked about picking up our cross to follow him, leaving our ambitions to pursue his plan, and suffering for the gospel’s sake. He said we’d face trouble, but we can take heart because he’s overcome the world ([John 16:33](#)).



Try this at home to help your child prepare for challenging circumstances—and trust that God will help them.

- **Find encouragement in the Bible.** Here are a few passages to help your family discuss suffering and rejoice that God’s love withstands hardship.
 - Read [Daniel 3](#). Ask your child: What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego say when the king commanded them to worship a golden statue? Do you think they were scared? Who was with them in the fire? Who’s with us, even when we’re facing trouble?
 - Read [Acts 16:16-40](#). Ask your child: When Paul and Silas were in prison, what did they do? Did they pout and question if they had done the right thing in following Jesus? No! They sang praises to God anyway. What kind of trouble might we face as Christians? How can we remember to worship God no matter what?
- **Remind yourselves daily.** Write encouraging Bible verses on notecards and tape them where you will see them (doors, mirrors, the back of the driver’s seat). When you see them, read them aloud together. Maybe you want to create motions or a song to help you memorize them together! Here are a couple that my family has used:
 - [Romans 5:3-5](#). But that’s not all! We gladly suffer because we know that suffering helps us to endure. And endurance builds character, which gives us a hope that will never disappoint us. All of this happens because God has given us the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with his love.
 - [1 Peter 3:14](#). Even if you have to suffer for doing good things, God will bless you. So stop being afraid and don’t worry about what people might do.
- **Pray for those who are persecuted.** Persecution worldwide is a challenging but essential topic to discuss with your family. As a parent, research to find age-appropriate stories to share about persecuted churches and then pray for them. Here are a few resources to help you pray for our brothers and sisters.
 - [iCommitToPray.com](#)

- [Prayer Ministry: How do We Pray for the Persecuted Church?](#)

As parents, we must ensure our kids understand that following Jesus won't make life easy. We don't become Christians so that we can get to heaven, live a fulfilled life, or "be a better person." We're Christians saved by grace through faith. We follow the example of Jesus by being crucified with Christ and letting him live in us ([Galatians 2:19-21](#)). And that might result in facing persecution here on earth, but we—and our kids—can take heart because we're part of God's kingdom. James said to consider it pure joy when we face trials ([James 1:2-4](#)). As a family, acknowledge your trials and find true joy in Jesus' victory.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Persevering Through a Difficult Season](#)

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