Hope for a world in which children are too often sad – the challenge

The world has many bad stories. Children face pain, are ignored and abused. Many people seem to have little hope. Sadness is everywhere: in families, suburbs, cities and across whole countries.

But if we love Jesus, we should be filled with his hope.

May the God of hope fill you … so that you may overflow with hope. (Romans 15: 13, NIV).

INTERACTION: CHILDREN TO DRAW A PICTURE TO SHOW HOPE – A SITUATION, A STORY, A SCENE

David a life filled with HOPE

We have a lot of stories about all the things that happened to David in the Bible. As a young boy he is a shepherd and has to fight off wild animals. He eventually becomes king. All through his life different people come to fight against him and often call him names. But David never lets go of his hope in God's care and love, “Protect me, my God, … do not let my hopes be dashed.” (Ps 119:116).

We are going to look at just one of the exciting adventures of David, the account of when King Saul and 3,000 top soldiers are after him. God looks after David and tells him what to do. David enters at night the camp of his enemy, Saul. David’s assistant, Abishai, had volunteered to go with David. They discover that Saul and his men are all asleep. They take Saul’s spear and water jug but David refuses to harm his enemy. Later, from the hilltop, David shouts and shows the spear. Saul realises he has wronged David, he says sorry and goes home.

Tell the story of 1 Samuel 26:1-25 in your own words. Then share the World Weekend of Prayer animation of this story.

Let’s now examine how this adventure of David helps us have more HOPE.

Hold. Hold on to the promises of God.

David was friends with God. He understood how GOD had already kept him through many difficult and testing times. David loved God and knew the promises He has made. Promises which we all share. Do you know any of God’s promises? e.g. “I will not leave you.” Jos 1:5. Consider how David hesitates to take revenge. David has a clear chance to take Saul’s life. His assistant, Abishai, urges him to be allowed to hurt Saul. David resists. He knows that God has promised to bring about justice. Let God do the punishing.
INTERACTION: get some empty drink bottle or cans. Wrap paper round each with a different promise of God on each. Hand out, discuss, pretend to drink as a sign this promise is for you. God promises that Jesus will come. God promises to forgive. God will always love you. God will give you courage. God will answer your prayer. God will punish those who don’t love him.

Open. Open up God’s word

The best place to figure out what to do when you come under attack is to find out what Jesus says in the Bible.

In this story see how God’s plan unfolds. Having said no to attacking his enemy, even when he was asleep, David and Abishai make their escape. Nobody wakes up. What would have happened if Abishai had speared Saul? Surely, the 3,000 men would have woken up and struck down David and his assistant. “and they got away; and no man saw or knew it or awoke.” 1 Sam 26:12b.

Let’s stop the cycle of violence. I’m hitting you because you hit me. Jesus said, “But I say to you, love your enemies.” (Matt 5:44)

INTERACTION: GET A CARDBOARD BOX ON EACH OF THE 6 SIDES DRAW A PICTURE OR WRITE DIFFERENT WAYS HOW THE BIBLE HELPS US TO LOVE INSTEAD OF HATE.

Pray. Pray to Jesus as Lord

Jesus loves you more than any other friend. Pray to Him!

Thank Jesus for helping you. As David speaks from the hilltop, he thanks God not only for looking after him so far, but also because he knows God will help him for the rest of the day and in the future. “And let Him look after me from all the bad stuff to come,” 1 Sam 26:24b. Thanking God is an important part of our prayers. Even when things seem very bad in our life, if we give thanks in prayers to Jesus, we will feel better.

INTERACTION: USE PAPER PLATES OR BALLOONS. WRITE ‘JESUS LOVES (name of child inserted).’ HAND OUT TO EACH.

Experience. Feel at peace in your heart

Get peace in your heart and let your fears go to God. Jesus says. My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Jn 14:27.

Get back your HOPE

INTERACTION: work out a dance movement for each of five things hope can do

1. A hope that brings strength.
2. A hope in his wonders and miracles.
3. A hope that will not be cut off.
4. A hope that anchors us
5. A hope in his name.

“So then, just as you get to know Jesus as Lord, continue to live in a way that pleases Him,” Col 2:6.