



Walking with Jesus - Together!

AT HOME WEEKLY – March 29th

Fear, anxiety, nervousness



To our wonderful parents and caregivers,

With fears of coronavirus your children may be feeling anxious and nervous. How can we talk to children about scary news?

Let children lead your discussion. That way you answer the questions they have—not the questions you assume they have (if we answer questions they don't have, we risk adding to their anxiety with things they hadn't even thought of).

Give children a chance to voice their worries. Ask them to tell you what their worry is telling them. You'll find that often what's on their minds is very specific.

How do you answer their questions? Here are some thoughts.

1.Be factual in response to questions. The amount of fact and honesty depends on your child's age and stage so you are the best judge of this. However, it doesn't hurt to explain that viruses can't do much damage without help and there is a lot we can do to not help them. That's why people are being asked to stay home and limit their travel.

2.Open the Bible – Read together Philippians 4:6-7 NLT

'Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.'

A prayer for when we feel anxious.

Holy God, You are with us from the spinning planets in our sky to the tiniest microbe that lives on the tiniest paw of the tiniest mouse. You care for creation and you care for us. Whether we are out in the world or tucked inside at home, we know that you are as close as the air we breathe. Thank you for being our friend and comforter. Amen.

3.Focus on the helpers. In the film 'A Beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood' we can take a lesson from Mr. Rogers, who said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' Doctors, scientists, and paramedics are helping with the coronavirus. Show children that helpers are all around and that you – no matter how small – can be a helper, too. **This week think of ways you can help, and do an action that makes children feel like they're contributing. I wonder what you can do together to show kindness?**

4.Remind children that God is in charge. This excerpt from the book, 'Thoughts to Make Your Heart Sing' by Sally Lloyd-Jones might help:

Every morning we enter a new day. Who knows what the day will bring?

God knows.

Which is why he tells us not to be afraid. He has already gone ahead of us into the new day. He knows the way, what will happen, all we'll need.

In the morning we can put our day in his hands. And let him bring into our day—*into our year!* – whatever he has for us.

And then, in the evening, we give it back to him. And trust him with all that happened in it.

So let your children lead those hard conversations about their worries. Listen to them. Take their fears seriously. And let those conversations lead back to this truth, that God knows what the day will bring, and we don't have to be afraid.

Blessings,

Wendy Wakerley
Children & Families Pastor

(special thanks to Illustrated Ministry and to Sally Lloyd-Jones for her thoughts around helping children with scary news)

