



God Is With Me

A Guided Workbook
for Children

After Experiencing a Disaster

This resource was created with love and prayers for the people
of Western North Carolina
by Rachel Doboney Benton and Angela Roberson,
West Market Street United Methodist Church, 2024.

A Note to Caregivers

A spiritual workbook may feel like a luxury right now as you navigate the trauma of all that has been experienced and lost. It is our hope that this book will be a resource as your children attempt to process this catastrophic event alongside their grown-ups who are also processing.

This book can be used in whatever order you feel is right for your child and at whatever pace you have room for. Younger children may need help with the writing while older children may want some privacy to write authentically. We hope in all the chaos that this book will offer a sacred moment to pause and be present with children as they adjust to a new normal - whatever that means for you.

We hope you may also find some comfort in the pages of this book. The prayer below is one just for you. We are praying it with you and for you:

O God of all Creation,

We need your gentleness.

Help us to be gentle with ourselves and with one another.

O Merciful God, our bodies are holding the tension of thousands of worst nightmares; Help us remember to breathe.

Father, help us to say it out loud when we don't know what to do.

Jesus, help us to draw near to one another in community as we live out this experience together and with you.

Holy Spirit, guide us as we make hard decisions and as we adapt to this new way of life.

O God of Resurrection, help us to remember that you are with us even when our hearts are broken, our souls are burdened, our minds are stressed, and our strength has reached its limits.

We cling to the promise that love always has the last word.

May it be so, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

In Christ,

Rachel & Angela

Taking a Deep Breath

Sometimes when a disaster happens, we can feel out of control and overwhelmed. Our bodies might feel restless and hyper, we might want to stay extra-close to our families or have trouble sleeping, we might feel worried and afraid, or we might have other big emotions.

To be kind and gentle to ourselves (something God wants very much for us!), it can help to take a moment to slow down and take a deep breath.

Try using this breath prayer or tracing prayer to guide you.

Breath Prayer

God is as near to us as our very breath! A breath prayer is simply a short prayer we can say silently or aloud as we breathe in and out.

Inhale

Comfort us.

Exhale

**Fill us with
your love.**

Tracing Prayer

With your finger, slowly trace the outline of the cross. Pray: "Jesus is with me." Say it as many times as you'd like, letting the words bring you near to God.



Dear God, during the disaster, I felt...

Circle your feelings below.

 HOPEFUL	 SAD	 ANGRY	 HAPPY	 TIRED
 WORRIED	 EXCITED	 CONFUSED	 LONELY	 CALM
 BRAVE	 AFRAID	 FRUSTRATED	 AMAZED	 PROUD

Thank you for being with me no
matter what.

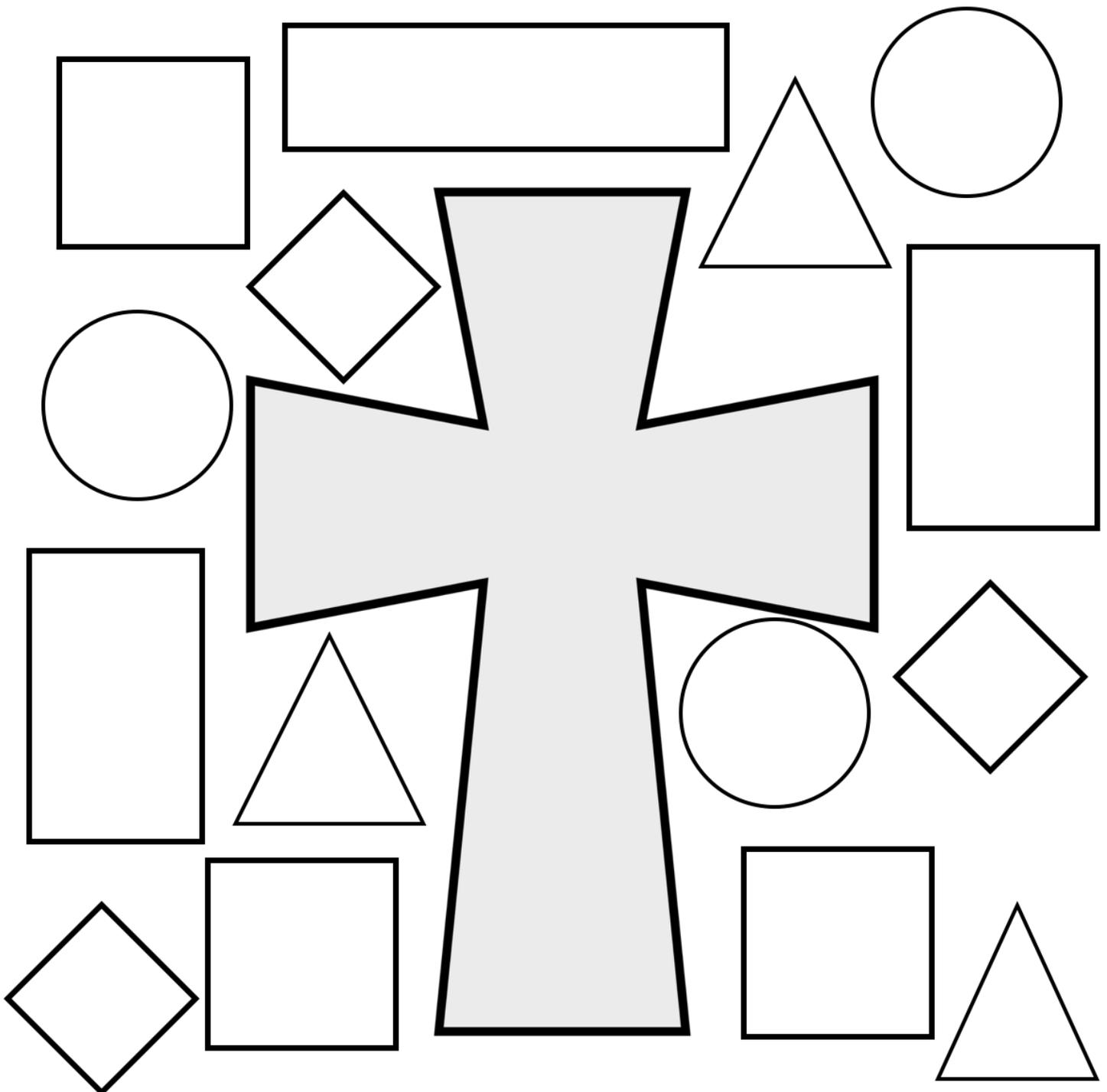
Please _____

AMEN.

Lots of people have had their lives changed by this disaster.
Who are you especially thinking of or worrying about?

Write their names in the shapes. They could be people or pets or something very dear to you. As you do, remember God cares for all of creation.

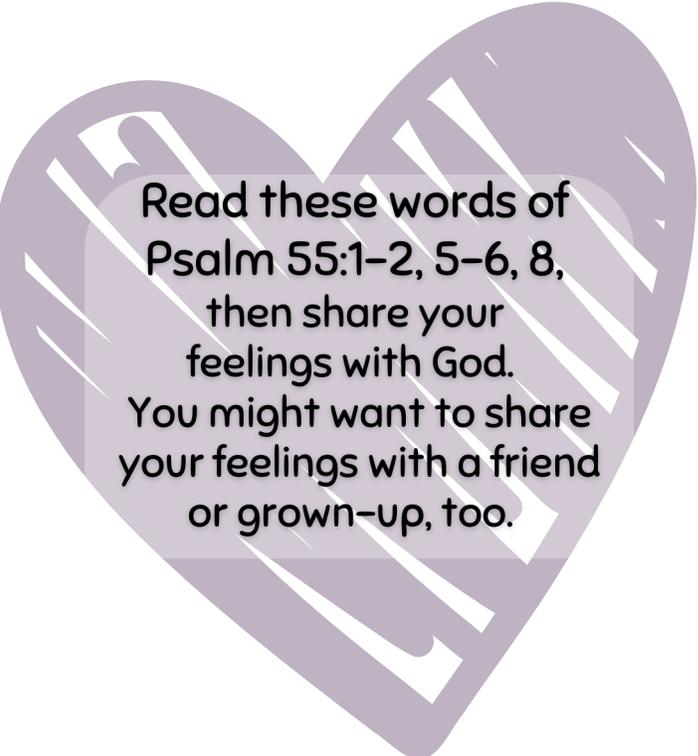
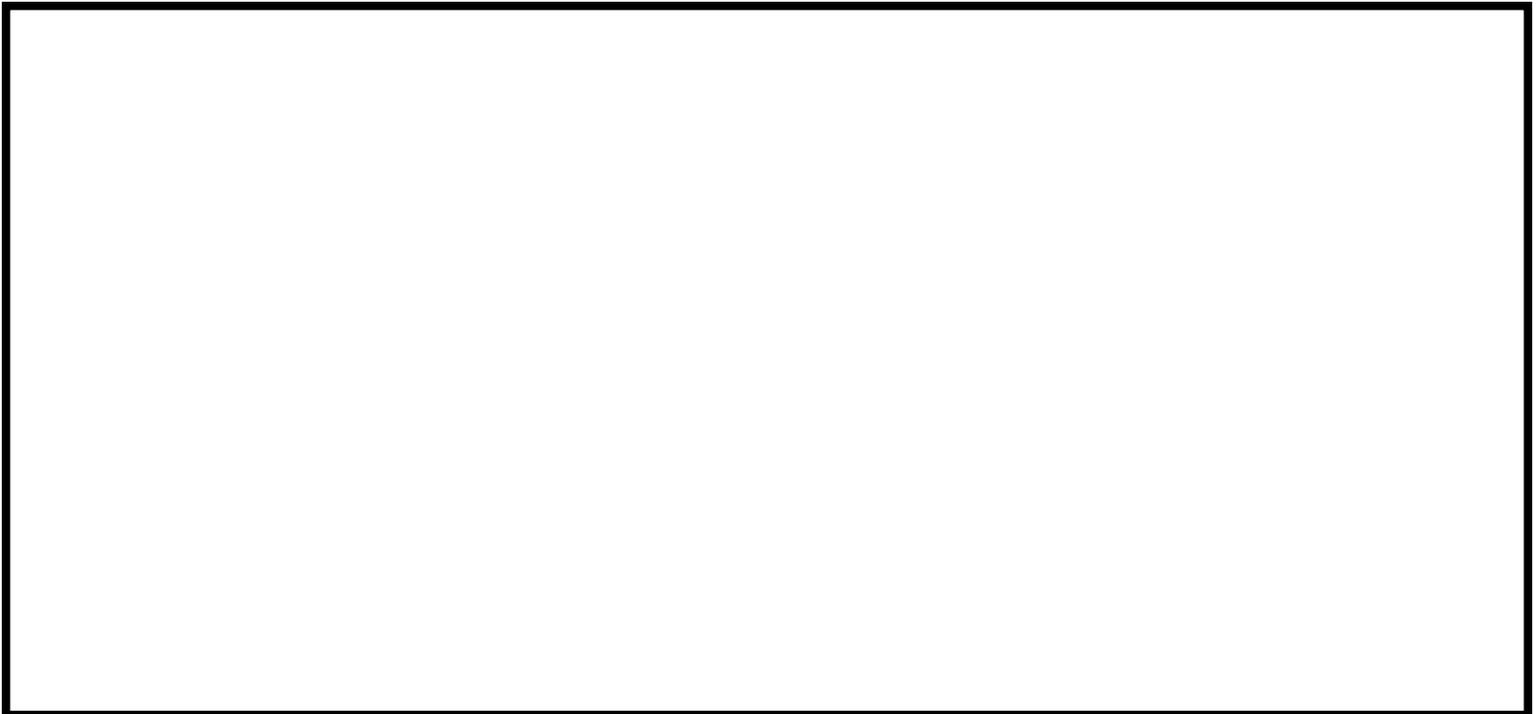
Then, **write a name for God in the cross.** Draw lines between the cross and each name as a reminder that God is very near and will never leave them.



In the disaster, awful things happened.

The Psalms are prayer-songs that tell God the truth about feelings. Some Psalms are prayer-songs of lament. Lament helps us talk about what hurts our hearts and what makes us sad and angry.

This is space for you to share what's made you sad and mad. You can share with words or pictures about what's been hard, what you miss, and how you're feeling.



Read these words of Psalm 55:1-2, 5-6, 8, then share your feelings with God. You might want to share your feelings with a friend or grown-up, too.



God, listen to my prayer.
Do not turn away when I ask you to help me.
Listen carefully and answer me.
I am very upset because of all my troubles.
They are too many for me.
I am shaking with fear!
My troubles are too much for me.
So I say, 'If I had wings to fly like a dove,
I would fly away to a safe place.
I would hurry to my place of escape,
far away from the wind and storm.

During the disaster, when have you seen God's love?

Sometimes we see God's love when people help us, when they are kind, when they give us a hug, when they say an encouraging word, or when they share something they have.



Draw a picture and mark where you saw God's love with hearts.

A large empty rectangular box for drawing and marking.

During the disaster, who has shared God's love with you?

*Sometimes we feel God's love in people who are helpers.
Who has helped you?*



Draw a picture and mark hearts on who shared God's love with you.

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing and marking hearts.

During the disaster, who have you shared God's love with?

In this hard time, people are seeing God's love in you through your tears, your smiles, your hugs, your helping hands, your stories, and more.



Draw a picture and mark hearts on the ways you shared God's love.

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing and marking hearts.

A Story about Jesus

Sometimes after a disaster, it can feel like we've lost a lot and there's nothing left. It can be hard to be hopeful.

Did you know that Jesus did some amazing things with just a little when it seemed like there wasn't going to be enough?

Color the picture as you read this story from John 6.

One day, when Jesus was teaching to a crowd of people, the disciples realized the people needed something to eat.

A little boy shared 5 loaves and 2 fish and it was enough for over 5,000 people! There were even leftovers!



In these moments where it might not seem like there is enough, know that there are people who follow God who are going to share what they have, and somehow, with Jesus' help, it is going to be more than we ever thought it could be.

Write/draw about a time where there wasn't enough food or water, or when you've been surprised by how people have shared what they had with you.

My Disaster Story

These pages are to help you tell your story so that some day, you will remember all that happened.

There was a disaster where I live in _____ . During our disaster, I was _____ years old.

Remembering What Happened:

Where were you during the disaster? _____

Did you have to leave your house? _____

If you had to leave your house, what did you bring with you? _____

Is there anything you wish you could have brought with you? _____

If you didn't have to leave your house, did you have friends or family that did? _____

Who was with you? _____

Who is with you now? _____

God remembers each and every moment, too.

My Disaster Story

What is the scariest thing you saw during the disaster? _____

When did you feel the most sad? _____

What was something that happened that made you feel hopeful? _____

What is something you wish you could forget? _____

What is something you hope you never forget? _____

Holding the hard and the good together

When we tell our disaster story, it helps us remember all the hard things that have happened. It also helps us remember there were good things, too.

Finding the good moments in all the hard moments help us to remember that God is with us. So even when we are sad, we can remember with joy when something made us laugh, smile, or feel safe!



We can say thank you to God for the good around us, even in the midst of all the hard stuff. If you'd like, pray these words from Psalm 96.



Sing to the Lord a new song!
Sing to the Lord, all the earth!
Sing to the Lord! Bless his name!
Tell the good news of his saving work every single day!

Draw yourself doing one of your favorite things.

You might notice some of the grown-ups around you are feeling sad or mad or stressed and might not be quite like themselves. Even though hard things are happening all around you, God still wants you to be you (and your grown-up does, too!). When you feel like it, it's okay to laugh, dance, play, and sing!



Dear God, now I'm feeling...

Circle your feelings below.

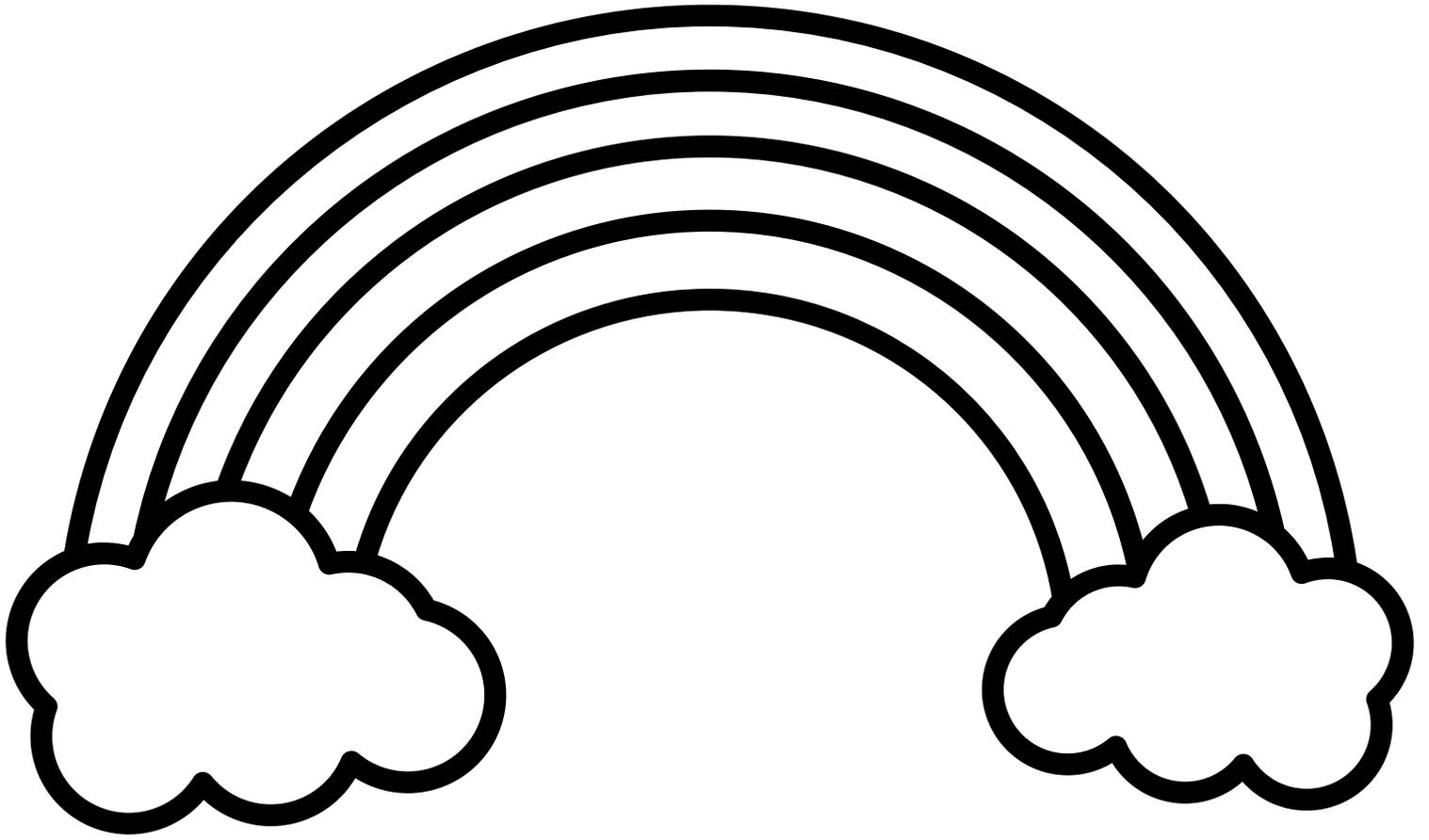
 HOPEFUL	 SAD	 ANGRY	 HAPPY	 TIRED
 WORRIED	 EXCITED	 CONFUSED	 LONELY	 CALM
 BRAVE	 AFRAID	 FRUSTRATED	 AMAZED	 PROUD

Help me to see and feel your love
around me, even when it is hard.

Help me to _____

AMEN.

I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love—not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future, and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord! - Romans 8:38-39



God promises to
always be with us.