

**SUB TOPIC THEME:
NO CONTROL – JUST DEAL!**

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

Identifying feelings and strategies for dealing with the stress that accompanies the feelings of having no control in our lives. While we do have many choices that we make every day, we can also feel vulnerable and helpless to some things that happen to us, especially when we live in military families. Realizing that God is in control and, in his love, provides for us in ways far beyond how we can care for ourselves is a lesson we can take from the Lazarus story as well as from the Hiding Place. Learning how to trust him is key to our resilience.



Set Up Info:

Supplies Needed:

1. Computer or internet connection to watch the YouTube video
2. Straws cut at different lengths
3. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
4. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the ones below)
5. A passion to see students transformed in their positive influence on friends!

Instructive Prep:

There are a lot of ways that people choose to cope or deal with stress. Stress can oftentimes have fear as it's cause, and that fear is very real for teens who feel like they have no control in their lives. Transitions like PCSes can make kids feel hugely helpless and sometimes vulnerable. While we don't mention it very often, the fear of the death of a parent is ever-present with military teens. If that were to happen, life would change dramatically and instantaneously for a teen and their family! That prospect is downright scary!

This session is designed to look at ways teens can openly identify some of their emotions of feeling helpless and vulnerable and discuss the ways they try to cope. Leading kids toward a strategy of trusting Jesus Christ with these real-life issues is the goal. Helping kids understand God's sovereignty and provision for his people in Christ is critical to teens developing life-long coping skills for the inevitable stresses and pressures of life.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: *learn, feel, do and what next.*

The goal is for students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some degree, and participate in doing something during the study (like making a hand gesture as a weapon). Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change in attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, the movement is toward spiritual and emotional transformation in kids' lives, so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

INTRO:

There are a lot of ways that people choose to cope or deal with stress. Stress can often-times have fear as its cause, and that fear is very real for teens who feel like they have no control in their lives. Transitions like PCSes can make you feel hugely helpless and sometimes vulnerable. Often we turn to some fairly destructive ways of dealing with stuff like this in our lives, but God offers us some very real options that reach much farther into our deepest needs.

INTRO STORY:

When you really think about it, there are a lot of things we get to control in our lives. We make a hundred decisions every day about what we're going to eat, where we're going to go, who we're going to talk to and what we're going to talk about. We can play and pray wherever we want; our freedoms are pretty extensive.

Even so, we do have periods where we feel helpless and vulnerable, and we truly have very little or no control over what's seems to be happening to us. Being in a military family carries some inherent issues of control (or no control). When your military parent gets orders, they pretty much tell you where you're going next! When is the last time the military asked for your vote in that as a teenager? That can be frustrating and cause a lot of stress, and people deal with stress in a variety of ways in order to cope. That can be good, because resiliency is built through finding positive ways to handle this stress.

The real-life story of Corrie Ten Boom that's captured in the book and movie "The Hiding Place" is an account of a Dutch family that faces the establishment of Nazi Germany in their homeland. Because of their Christian convictions, they make a decision, while they still had some control, to hide Jews in their home. They even built a false wall to hide them, acquired numerous ration cards for food, practiced "hiding" drills, and kept a vigilant lookout for the Nazis. One day, the Nazis came, and everything changed.

Watch these two video clips where they first lose control over their everyday lives and later find themselves in the hellish conditions of a concentration camp.

<http://www.vimeo.com/21973331>

<http://vimeo.com/24017996>

Their deep faith in the power and provision of Jesus in the midst of the most dire circumstances seems to be very real. No matter how hard it gets, they acknowledge his goodness. Other scenes in the movie show Corrie questioning God's presence and timing, which is a very honest reaction to such conditions, yet they ultimately continue to trust in his sovereignty and control over all things, especially their lives.

Intro Questions:

1. In general, do you think you have more control or less control of your life?
2. Have you ever had some input into a PCS move?

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Literally draw straws to see who goes first. Use the short straw to go first. After each question, re-do the straw draw for fun.

1. Have you ever felt helpless and out of control when you learned about a PCS move? What did you do?
2. What methods do you use to cope when you have no control over situations? Use the list below to identify all of the things you've tried. (use Student response sheet)
3. What do you think it would be like to be in the Ten Boom's shoes and be picked up by the Nazis for harboring Jews?
4. Make a list of the internal values that the Ten Boom family held that led them to this super difficult place in a concentration camp. Which of these values do you share with them? (use Student response sheet)
5. Write your own questions: _____

CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES

Perhaps the ultimate feeling of having no control in the human experience is when it comes to death. In this story from the Gospel according to John, we see the hurt and frustration from Martha, the sister of Lazarus who died. They had called Jesus to come, but he had lingered and got there too late! Meanwhile, Martha and her sister, Mary, could not do anything to stop Lazarus from dying. We read at other points in Scripture that Martha was a "do-er" by nature, but she could not do anything here. She was helplessly out of control.

John 11

The Death of Lazarus

¹ A man named Lazarus, who lived in Bethany, became sick. Bethany was the town where Mary and her sister Martha lived. (²This Mary was the one who poured the perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was sick.)³ The sisters sent Jesus a message:

"Lord, your dear friend is sick."

⁴ When Jesus heard it, he said,

"The final result of this sickness will not be the death of Lazarus; this has happened in order to bring glory to God, and it will be the means by which the Son of God will receive glory."

⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.⁶ Yet when he received the news that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days.⁷ Then he said to the disciples,

"Let us go back to Judea."

⁸ "Teacher," the disciples answered,

"just a short time ago the people there wanted to stone you; and are you planning to go back?"

⁹ Jesus said,

"A day has twelve hours, doesn't it? So those who walk in broad daylight do not stumble, for they see the light of this world.¹⁰ But if they walk during the night they stumble, because they have no light."

¹¹ Jesus said this and then added,

"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I will go and wake him up."

¹² The disciples answered,

"If he is asleep, Lord, he will get well."

¹³ Jesus meant that Lazarus had died, but they thought he meant natural sleep.¹⁴ So Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,¹⁵ but for your sake I am glad that I was not with him, so that you will believe. Let us go to him."

¹⁶ Thomas (called the Twin) said to his fellow disciples, "Let us all go along with the Teacher, so that we may die with him!"

Jesus the Resurrection and the Life

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had been buried four days before.¹⁸ Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem,¹⁹ and many Judeans had come to see Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother's death.

²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house.²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died!²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask him for."

²³ "Your brother will rise to life," Jesus told her.

²⁴ "I know," she replied,
"that he will rise to life on the last day."

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die;²⁶ and those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ "Yes, Lord!" she answered. "I do believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

Jesus Weeps

²⁸ After Martha said this, she went back and called her sister Mary privately.

"The Teacher is here," she told her,

"and is asking for you."²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up and hurried out to meet him. (³⁰ Jesus had not yet arrived in the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him.)³¹ The people who were in the house with Mary comforting her followed her when they saw her get up and hurry out. They thought that she was going to the grave to weep there.

³² Mary arrived where Jesus was, and as soon as she saw him, she fell at his feet.

"Lord," she said,

"if you had been here, my brother would not have died!"

³³ Jesus saw her weeping, and he saw how the people with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved.³⁴

"Where have you buried him?" he asked them.

"Come and see, Lord," they answered.

³⁵ Jesus wept.³⁶

"See how much he loved him!" the people said.

³⁷ But some of them said,

"He gave sight to the blind man, didn't he? Could he not have kept Lazarus from dying?"

Lazarus Is Brought to Life

³⁸ Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance.³⁹

“Take the stone away!” Jesus ordered.

Martha, the dead man's sister, answered,

“There will be a bad smell, Lord. He has been buried four days!”

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her,

“Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believed?”⁴¹ They took the stone away. Jesus looked up and said,

“I thank you, Father, that you listen to me.⁴² I know that you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so that they will believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ After he had said this, he called out in a loud voice,

“Lazarus, come out!”⁴⁴ He came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave cloths, and with a cloth around his face.

“Untie him,” Jesus told them,

“and let him go.”

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. List the involvement that each player in the story had to Lazarus' illness. Next, list their response to his death. (use Student response sheet)
2. Share a real-life situation where someone trusted Jesus and how it worked out. Discuss how God can still be in control even though everything doesn't work out the way we want. Did you wonder how Corrie Ten Boom could thank Jesus in the midst of such harshness and death?
3. Develop your own group list of the three best ways to deal with the normal human stress of having no control on situations. Decide when and how to use them. (use Student response sheet)
4. Actively pray together after group members have an opportunity to talk about things that are happening in their lives over which they feel like they have no control (or worry or stress). Make a commitment to pray for each other every day this week! (use Student response sheet)
5. Write your own challenge: _____

STUDENT RESPONSES:

1. WHAT METHODS DO YOU USE TO COPE WITH HAVING NO CONTROL OVER SITUATIONS? Mark all that apply.
 - a. Distractions: like sleeping, reading, drawing, playing computer games, listening to music, playing with pets and trying not to think about the situation.
 - b. Sports/Exercise: like running, swimming, team sports, and lifting weights.
 - c. Lashing Out: primarily verbal with increased arguments and yelling; also stuffing emotions to protect other family members.
 - d. Friends: confiding in friends,
 - e. Self-Harm: like snapping yourself with a rubber band, cutting, burning with a cigarette
 - f. Isolation.
 - g. Spirituality: like prayer, Bible study, counseling
 - h. Other: _____

2. MAKE A LIST OF THE INTERNAL VALUES THAT THE TEN BOOM FAMILY HELD. WHICH OF THESE VALUES DO YOU SHARE WITH THEM?

