



The God of All Comfort By Deborah Wassenberg

When we hear the word 'comfort' we think of feeling at ease. Freedom from discomfort or pain or grief. That's why a bed can have a 'comforter'. Like many words its meaning has changed over the years. Originally, the word comfort was two Latin words: alongside + strength. This is the 'comfort' the Apostle Paul experienced and wrote about. Children will experience loss, pain or grief in their lives. They need to know God will stand alongside them and He will give them His strength to get through challenges and times of discomfort.

You Tube Song Suggestions:

- Way Maker (Allstars Kids Club)
- You Make Me Brave (Lyrics Bethel Kids)
- Our God (Bentwood Benson)

Bible Lesson: Paul Shipwrecked & More!

Bible References: Acts 21; 23:12-32; 27; 28:1-14; 2 Corinthians 11:23-33

You will find illustrations for the life of Apostle Paul at [Free Bible Images](#).

Visual Aid Suggestions:

1. Child wrapped in a comforter (doona)
2. The Apostle Paul in chains
3. Under escort
4. On board a ship
5. Storm at sea
6. Swimming ashore
7. Bitten by a snake
8. Paul before Caesar
9. Paul suffering (just choose one or two!)
10. Child hurting (e.g. broken arm)
11. Child reading Bible
12. Child comforting another child

Words:

1. Who has a 'comforter' on their bed?
We call them doonas here in Australia.
(Discuss colour & pattern etc.)
A comforter makes you feel warm and snugly
in the winter when it is cold and wet outside.
You can hide under your comforter during a storm.
Maybe you hide under your comforter and cry sometimes.
Today you're going to hear about God's comfort.
And God's comfort might just surprise you!
2. The Apostle Paul was under arrest for preaching about Jesus.
He was chained and threatened with being lashed by a whip!
That's not all.
Even as a prisoner, Paul's life was threatened, when some men
vowed to kill him while he was in custody.
So he was moved at 9 o'clock at night with 200 soldiers guarding him,
200 spearmen and 70 mounted troops.
That doesn't sound very comfortable, does it?
3. Paul was being sent to Rome and he had to travel there by ship.
The weather was becoming dangerous for sea travel because of the time of year.
Paul warned the ship's officer's about going on.
'I believe there is trouble ahead if we go on,' said Paul. 'Shipwreck, loss of cargo, and
danger to our lives as well.'
That doesn't sound very comfortable, does it?
4. The ship's officer didn't listen.
Sure enough, a wind of cyclone strength blew them out to sea.
The crew threw the cargo overboard.
They threw the ship's gear overboard.
The storm raged for days, blotting out the sun by day and the stars by night.
In the morning they saw a bay with a beach.
The sailors cut off the anchors and the ship ran aground.
The soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners so they wouldn't escape.
That's doesn't sound very comfortable does it?
5. The commanding officer did not want Paul hurt so he spared the lives of
all the prisoners.
He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard to make for land.
The others held on to planks or debris from the broken ship.
That doesn't sound very comfortable, does it?

6. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire.
Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire when a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand!
That doesn't sound very comfortable, does it?
7. Months later, Paul finally made it to Rome, where he preached about Jesus, and later he would be put to death.
That doesn't sound very comfortable, does it?
8. The Apostle Paul worked harder than any other Apostle.
And he was whipped 5 times and beaten with rods 3 times.
He was put in prison and faced death many times.
An angry crowd stoned him.
He was shipwrecked 3 times and spent a day and a night floating in the ocean.
He went on long journeys and was in danger from robbers and fast flowing river crossings.
He was in danger from angry mobs in the cities and in danger in the wilderness.
He went without sleep, food and water.
Sometimes he didn't have enough clothes to wear.
People he thought were his friends deserted him.
That doesn't sound very comfortable, does it?
9. But listen to the words Paul wrote:
'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
He is the Father who is full of mercy, the God of all **comfort**.
He **comforts** us every time we have trouble so that when others have trouble, we can **comfort** them with the same **comfort** God gives us.
10. Hang on a second!
Isn't comfort about no pain?
Isn't comfort about no suffering?
Isn't comfort about being comfortable?
Paul was talking about a different kind of comfort.
The comfort that God gave him and gives you.
Because God's comfort isn't about never having anything bad happen.
God's comfort is Him being by your side and giving you strength to get through the bad things you may have to go through.
11. So if you're in the hospital...
If you are moving house, leaving everything behind, and changing schools...
If your Mum and Dad are divorcing...
If someone you love has died...
It will be painful. You will feel sad.
But God will comfort you. How?

By His presence. He is by your side and He will give you strength.

(2 Timothy 4:17)

God will comfort you by His Word, the Bible.

The Bible is full of stories, promises and reminders of how much God loves us.

(Romans 15:4)

God will comfort you using other people who will love you and pray for you.

(1 Thessalonians 5:11)

12. Remember what Paul wrote...

'He **comforts** us every time we have trouble **so that when others have trouble**, we can **comfort** them with the same **comfort** God gives us.'

God wants us to receive His comfort but He also wants us to give it to people who need it.

Because you know what it's like to feel pain, grief or sorrow, you're the best person to help others when they are faced with pain, grief or sorrow.

If you wrap them in the love of God like a big, snuggly comforter, they will know that God loves them.

Ministry to the Children:

Jesus is a Comfort: Jesus, God's Son, knows what it feels like to suffer, have pain and feel grief. He gave up His home in Heaven to live as a human, so there's nothing you go through that He doesn't understand. He was physically hurt, He was hungry, thirsty and tired. More than that He died on the cross to take away the guilt and punishment of our sin. He rose from the dead and now is in God's presence praying for us. *(Hebrews 9:24)*.

The Holy Spirit is a Comfort: Another name for the Holy Spirit is 'the Comforter'. When Jesus was returning to His Father in heaven, he told His disciples, 'I will not leave you comfortless.' *(John 14:16-18)* Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to keep comforting us. He gives us strength and stays with us. When Jesus becomes your Lord and Saviour, the Holy Spirit lives inside you. *(Romans 8:9) Altar Call.*

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 1:3 (NLT)

God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort.

(Which means He is with us in trouble and will give us the strength we need for that day!)

Find the feathers!

Use the template on page 6. Photocopy onto coloured card and write one word of the Memory Verse and the reference on each feather. (Laminate each feather if you'd like to keep them as a

resource.) Hide the feathers around the room and ask the children to find them. When all the feathers have been collected, the children put them in the correct order, read the Memory Verse and recite aloud together.

Game: Shipwreck

Mark out a play area for this game and demonstrate the commands you will be using. Tell the children which end is the bow and which end is the stern. Have the children line up on a clearly marked line in the middle of the playing area. The leader becomes the Captain of the ship and the children become the crew. If a crew member does not follow the command, or is the last to follow the command, they are sent to the 'brig'.

Captain's Commands:

Roll call: the crew must line up at the midline of the playing area, feet together, toes on the line, salute and say 'aye-aye captain!' The crew may not lower their salute until the captain salutes and says 'at ease'.

Crow's nest: crew act as if they're climbing up a ladder to the crow's nest and lookout.

Swab the deck: crew act like they're mopping the deck.

Shark attack: the Captain becomes a shark and tries to tag the crew. Those tagged go to the 'brig'.

Break time: active crew members can run to the 'brig' and tag as many people as possible. Those that are tagged can come back in and play again. (Make sure everyone gets let out of the 'brig' during break time.)

Sailor overboard: crew pairs up and decides which one gets on their hands and knees and which one stands and places a foot gently on the other's back while acting like their using a spyglass to find the sailor in the water.

Drop anchor: crew lies on their backs with legs up and acts like an anchor.

Pirates: crew closes one eye, puts up a hook finger, hobbles around like they have a peg leg and say 'Aargh!'

Row to Shore: crew gets in lines of 4 and row to safety, while singing 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat'.

Craft: Comfort Crafts

Children can make a variety of crafts that can be used to make others feel loved and comforted.

- Card with Bible Verse
- Journal (an inexpensive exercise book) covered and hand decorated
- Bath bombs
- Lavender sachets
- Iced biscuits

