

## God is Near

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*Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Psalm 139:7*

1. Sometimes when I'm in bed at night  
My room is so dark and I feel afraid  
So I talk to God and He talks to me  
I feel much better when I remember that . . .

God is near; I will not fear  
The shadows on my wall  
God is here; I will not fear  
He hears me when I call

2. Sometimes when I can't find a friend  
I sit by myself and I feel alone  
So I talk to God and He talks to me  
I feel much better when I remember that . . .

God is near; I will not fear  
When I am alone  
God is here; I will not fear  
He tells me I'm His own

### Bridge and Ending

God is near, God is near  
He'll never go away  
God is here, God is here  
Right beside me He'll stay

3. Sometimes I don't know what I should do  
I'm so afraid I'll make a mistake  
So I talk to God and He talks to me  
I feel much better when I remember that . . .

God is near; I will not fear  
When I do something wrong  
God is here; I will not fear  
His love for me is strong *[to bridge and ending]*

## **God is Near**

### *Teaching Resources*

#### **Background**

All of us – children and adults – have fears. Various objects, events, and situations we experience can cause worry, uncertainty, apprehension, withdrawal, and possibly even tears. Often we adults forget how difficult it can be for children to navigate a complex world full of new experiences and unfamiliar social norms and expectations. As we grow into adulthood, most of us learn how to manage and cope with our fears, but young children do not have the breadth and depth of experience or language to express their fears, place their fears into perspective, or deal with them.

Fears are inevitable for all of us – both young and old. We cannot eliminate fear completely from our lives, but a starting point for all of us in dealing with our fears is understanding the basic truth that God is always with us – always near. Because God is spirit, He is always present in our moments of great happiness and joy, as well as our moments of deepest grief, despair, and fear. The Psalmist asks,

**Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?**  
Psalm 139:7

The answer:

**If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.**  
*Psalm 139:8-10*

In other words, there is no place we can go where God's Spirit is not with us. Knowing and sensing God's presence – or nearness – does not necessarily take our fears away or insulate us from feelings of fear, but it assures us that He is there beside us and provides a sense of calm in the midst of the storm. Handling fear is never easy, but it is always easier when you know you have a good friend beside you to lean on, talk to, and trust.

I began thinking about some of the common fears that children have, like fear of the dark, fear of being alone, or fear of doing the wrong thing. To adults, these may seem like silly, trivial things to be afraid of, but for young children they are very real. "God is Near" is a song that I hope might bring comfort to children during times of fear by reminding them that God's Spirit is always with them and they can always talk to Him and listen to His voice.

#### **Preparing Activities**

1. What is a phobia? Hundreds of phobias have been identified and named. Share a few unusual phobias with children and talk about how people might acquire these types of fears:

- Agoraphobia – fear of being in a place where leaving or escaping might be difficult
- Aquaphobia – fear of water
- Ornithophobia – fear of birds
- Dentophobia – fear of dentists

Emphasize that even though some phobias may seem funny to us (i.e., how could someone be afraid of that?), there is nothing funny about it for the person who actually has that particular fear. For them, the fear is real, and we need to support them – not make fun of them.

2. All of us – children and adults – have fears. It is OK to be afraid of something. It is not OK to be paralyzed by that fear or to allow that fear to control our lives. As an adult, share some of the things you fear or that cause you worry or anxiety. Encourage children to share some of the fears or worries they have. Explain how you, as an adult, cope with your fears so that they do not paralyze or control you.

3. The song emphasizes that in all fearful situations we experience, God is always with us. How is that possible? How can God be near to all of us all the time? God is spirit (see John 4:24). What does that mean for us?

4. The song talks about three types of fear children might experience:

- Fear of the dark
- Fear of being alone (i.e., loneliness)
- Fear of making a mistake (i.e., doing the wrong thing)

Ask children to think about – and verbalize, if they are willing – times in their lives when they have experienced one or more of these three fears. How did they feel? How did they cope with the fear?

### **Extending Activities**

1. The song says, “I talk to God, and He talks to me.” How do we talk to God? How does God talk to us? Do we actually hear a voice? How can God “talk to us” through His Word, songs we know, the words of other people, and past experiences we’ve had when God helped us? Are there other ways that God “talks to us?” Food for thought: perhaps if we wish to “hear God’s voice” in difficult situations, we should spend more time reading, studying, and planting God’s Word in our minds.

### **Related scripture**

- Psalm 27
- Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus calms the stormy sea)