

## **How to Help Your Child Cope with Being Different? Session Notes**

### **Three Important Questions:**

What is my identity? Who am I?

Where do I belong?

What is my purpose in life?

### **The Grieving Process:**

Shock/Denial

Anger

Depression

Acceptance

## **Practical Ways to Help Your Child Cope with Being Different**

### **Practical Ways for Mom:**

- Pray, Pray, Pray – Constantly lay your child at the feet of Jesus. Place them in the arms of your Heavenly Father who loves and cares for them more than you do. Pray that the Lord would every day refresh your strength and energy.
- Have those spiritual retreats to read, meditate and reenergize with the Lord. He will keep your emotional tank full. We must not let our emotional tank get on empty - our children feed on our emotional system. Praise and Worship is so necessary.
- Give yourself permission to go through the grieving process. Grieving is necessary – it will come many times during the years as you pass through and meet different milestones. Milestones that may not be met or are met in different ways. Ex – going off to school, graduating from school, dating, leaving home, marriage Milestones maybe as small as sitting up on their own, being able to write their name, play appropriate with other children – these little milestones must be acknowledged and celebrated.
- Journal your feelings. It helps to write your feelings down. The written record helps so you can see progress in yourself and in your child. Rick Warren writes this about journaling – “This is not a diary of events, but a record of what you are learning. Write down the insights and life lessons God teaches you about Him, about yourself, about life, about relationships, and everything else.”
- Have a support system – spouse, family, and friends. Get together with moms that have children that are coping with the same differences. Talk, talk, talk. Talking is how we as moms process things. You will oftentimes feel like isolating yourself. Time is short and busy with special needs children but you will eventually deplete yourself.
- Don't forget to take time for a hobby or your own interests. This maybe just a short time but can really perk you up and reenergize you.

### **Practical Ways for Our Children:**

- Remind them often that they are a child of God. They are loved and cared for by their Heavenly Father. They belong to Him – cherished and adored. He has a wonderful plan for their lives. He created them with a purpose in mind.
- Remind them often of their strengths. Protect their self-esteem and self-confidence. Do not let them slip into the “I can't” complex. Teach them to say “I will try.”
- Praise the little things! This is so important. The little things are often the big things for these children. Praise the character trait that was exercised in accomplishing the task that is being praised.
- Help them to identify their feelings through drawing or role playing. Help them to understand that being mad, sad, angry, or frustrated is not bad – what they do with those feelings can be bad or good. Teach them appropriate ways to deal with these very real and ok feelings. Help our children identify the root of their anger and acknowledge that it maybe fear, hurt and frustration that is causing the anger.

- Help them through the grieving process as they grow-up and realize that some things are not going to look like and play out like other peoples lives.
- Make a book that they can refer back to when they need to be reminded that although they maybe different, they are still very precious and special.
  - Chapter 1 – Who made them? Who do they belong too? What is their purpose?
  - Chapter 2 – Things I like best about myself.
  - Chapter 3 – Things that make me feel happy.
  - Chapter 4 – Things that make me feel sad, mad, hurt, or angry.
  - Chapter 5 – Things I have accomplished in life.
  - Chapter 6 – Things I want to accomplish in my life.
- Help them to take one day at a time. Today, I will be OK and the Lord will lead and guide me through this day.
- Read them stories about real people that have been successful with their disability.

### **Because He Lives**

How sweet to hold a newborn baby,  
 And feel the pride, and joy he gives;  
 But greater still the calm assurance,  
 This child can face uncertain days  
 Because He lives.

Because He lives I can face tomorrow,  
 Because He lives all fear is gone;  
 Because I know He holds the future.  
 And life is worth the living just because He lives.

Written by: Gloria and William Gaither

## Study Guide and Journaling Tips

### Study Guide:

- Day 1 Read the chapter, highlighting as you read. Write memory verses on an index card.
- Day 2 Answer half of the questions in the back of the book.
- Day 3 Answer the other half of the questions.
- Day 4 Journal the memory verses.
- Day 5 Write out the journal questions in the study guide.

### Journaling Tips:

**Memory Verses** – At the top of the page, write out the verses as they are written in your Bible. Then write them out again in first person, as if they were written just for you. Use the pronouns: I, my, me, mine, etc...Write out what that verse is saying to you. After you do that, answer the questions, “How do those verse make me feel?”

**Write out prayers to the Lord** – Just start out at the top of the page with Dear Lord...

I share an entry of mine as an example for you. “Dear Lord, let me go through this day and the days to come really resting in You and trusting in You to overcome the obstacles of the day. To guide and direct me in the plans that You have for me each day. Be the Director of the orchestra of my life! Orchestrating it and pulling it together to make a beautiful melody with the low notes of pain and suffering blended with the high notes of joy and peace. Put them together in such a way that the music is in harmony to bring all praise, glory, and honor to the One that wrote it and directs it. I praise You—O Lord, with the songs of my heart!”

You might start out your journaling page with this statement,, “Lord, I hear you saying to me...” Take some time to read God’s word and pray. Then build a tabernacle around you—close your mind to the cares of the day. Just sit in quietness before Him and then begin writing as you enter into His presence.

### Set up your journal:

- Page one Chapter title and notes from the book or from the lecture.
- Page two Memory verse journaling.
- Page three What did I learn about God this week?
- Page four What did I learn about myself this week?
- Page five My prayer of “remembering” what God has taught me.

## Feeling Word List

**Pleasant Feelings:** accepted, active, adventurous, adequate, aggressive, alert, alive, amused, appreciated, bold, brave, calm, capable, care for, caring, cheerful, comfortable, confident, content, daring, delighted, determined, ecstatic, eager, elated, encouraged, energetic, excited, fantastic, fascinated, fatherly, fine, fortunate, free, friendly, full, glad, good, great, grateful, gutsy, happy, healthy, high, hopeful, humble, important, intense, joyful, loved, lovely, loving, motherly, open, optimistic, overjoyed, peaceful, playful, pleased, positive, powerful, proud, quick, refreshed, relaxed, relieved, rested, satisfied, secure, snappy, solid, successful, surprised, sympathetic, thankful, thrilled, tranquil, turned on, understood, up, warm, wonderful, zany

**Pleasant Feelings:** abandoned, abused, accused, afraid, aggravated, angry, annoyed, anxious, apathetic, ashamed, awful, awkward, bad, baffled, bashful, betrayed, bitter, blue, bored, bothered, burned up, cautious, cheated, concerned, confused, crazy, critical, crushed, dazed, deceived, defeated, defenseless, defiant, depressed, determined, disappointed, discouraged, disgusted, disorganized, disoriented, dissatisfied, distracted, distressed, disturbed, down, embarrassed, enraged, envious, exhausted, fed up, fearful, foolish, fragile, frail, frightened, frustrated, furious, gloomy, glum, guilty, harassed, hate, hateful, helpless, hesitant, hopeless, horrible, horrified, hurt, ignored, ill, impatient, impotent, inadequate, insecure, intimidated, irritated, jealous, jittery, jumpy, let-down, lied-to, lifeless, lonely, lost, low, mad, manipulated, man, miserable, misunderstood, mixed up, nervous, outraged, overwhelmed, pained, painful, possessive, panicked, panicky, paralyzed, powerless, provoked, pushed, puzzled, quiet, rage, rejected, remorseful, resentful, robbed, run-down, sad, shaky, shy, sick, sore, sorry, stuck, stunned, stupid, surprised, suspicious, tense, terrible, terrified, threatened, timid, tired, torn, trapped, troubled, tuned off, uncertain, uncomfortable, uneasy, unhappy, unloved, unsure, upset, uptight, used, used-up, useless, vulnerable, weak, weary, wishy-washy, worn out, worried, wounded