

# What Do I Do When Someone I Love Dies?

## Bible Story:

The Death of John the Baptist  
Matthew 14:1-14

## Bible Point:

Jesus gives me strength to deal with sad times.

## Bible Verse:

“My body and my heart may grow weak. God, you give strength to my heart. You are everything I will ever need.” Psalm 73:26 (NIRV)

## Note to teachers:

This lesson deals with the death of a pet or a loved one such as a grandparent. The death of an immediate family member is not dealt with. Most kids have only experienced pets or grandparents dying. If you have children who have experienced the death of an immediate family member, you may want to modify the lesson to fit your specific situation.

In the lesson, the children will learn how Jesus dealt with John the Baptist's death. He took some time away but then got back to living. Likewise, children need to grieve for a time. Each child will grieve in his/her own way. However, they should be encouraged to rely on Jesus for strength during this time. And when appropriate, to get back to living the life Jesus has for them.

# Roller Coaster Maniac



Supplies:

- None

**Good morning, my friends call me Boomerang. You can call me the scream machine maniac. I love scream machines! I travel the world looking at scream machines and taking pictures of scream machines and riding scream machines and writing about scream machines and reading about scream machines.**

**Do you even know what a scream machine is? It is a roller coaster. Do you know why they are called scream machines? Because they make you scream. (Gives out an excited type scream.)**

**Roller coasters go up and down and around and upside down (make body move in all directions) and sideways and backwards and all the ways you can think about. And after you ride a roller coaster, what do you do? You run get in line to ride again. That's why my friends call me Boomerang. I just keep coming back for more.**

**Sometimes my life feels like a roller coaster. I get up and the sun is shining and things look good. Then before I know it I am on a wild ride down a steep drop. (With body, show a steep plunge.) All kinds of things can cause that steep drop. I can find out that my dog ate my shoe or that someone drank the last of the milk before breakfast or that no one remembered my birthday. Or it can be one of the rides where it turns me upside down. Totally upside down, dude. (Show with body going upside down.) When that happens, it leaves you breathless. You are just trying to inhale. When life tips you upside down, it can really be bad. Maybe your dog got hit by a car. Or maybe someone in your family is really sick. Or maybe you found out that your grandpa just died.**

**But the good news is that you can't stay upside down forever. Just like a loop on the roller coaster will get you tilted back up straight instead of hanging upside down, life does get better. It may not seem like it when you are hanging upside down. But you just got to have faith that you won't be hanging there forever, things will start turning around.**

## Puppet Song

Blank  
Slide

"You Never Let Go"

From Uncle Charlie's Made To Praise Volume 8.

# Food On A Stick



## Supplies:

- Big pickle
- Large popsicle stick

**Preparation:** Place the pickle on the stick.

**And now it is time for “Food on a Stick”**

**At Amusement Parks or Fairs, you will find different kinds of food on a stick. I am going to show you a puzzle. As each piece is taken away, see if you can guess the food on a stick.**

(As each piece is revealed, have the kids yell out guesses.)

**It is a pickle!** (Pull the pickle out to show the kids) **Does anyone here like pickles?** (Choose someone who raised their hand.) **How would you like to take a bite of this big, juicy pickle?** (Have the child take a bite.) **How did that taste? Was it sour? Sometimes a pickle can taste sour.**

**What kind of face do we make when we bite into something sour?** (Have everyone make that face.) **Sometimes in life we have days when we feel like that. Those days seem to go on forever. It seems like we will never get out of our sour tasting days.**

**What kinds of things can make you feel all sour inside?** (Let the children give you some answers.)

**How many of you have had a pet die? How many of you have had someone you love die? Those things are a lot worse than biting into a sour pickle.**

**But our sour days will not last forever. When we let Jesus comfort us, we find that as time goes on we do not hurt as bad. We find that we can remember the pet or the person and smile and laugh thinking about the joy they brought us. When you have a sour day, hold on to Jesus knowing that He will give you strength to get through it and He will help you smile again.**



# Amusement Park Character



## First Aid Station Worker

### Supplies:

- First Aid kit
- Sunscreen
- Bottle water
- Bandages
- Stretcher (can use two dowel rods and sheet)
- Duct tape

**Preparation:** To make a stretcher: Line up the dowel rods parallel to each other. Cut the sheet to stretcher width. Duct tape to the dowel rods. Enlist an older child to help run the stretcher in.

The First Aid Station worker and another person enter, running, holding the stretcher between them. Piled on the stretcher is the First Aid kit, sunscreen, bottled water and bandages.

**First Aid: Coming through! Out of our way. OUT OF OUR WAY! This is an important mission. This is the Park's First Aid department coming to the rescue.** (Meanwhile run around the room looking for the hurt individual.) **First Aid! First Aid! First Aid! Anyone need first aid?** (Starts to look puzzled.) **Didn't we get a call for First Aid? I was sure they said here.** (Looks around. Starts to slump dejectedly.) **I know they said here.**

Helper shrugs, then pulls on First Aid worker's arm and points to the kids.

**First Aid: Did you call for First Aid? Someone here in need of assistance?** (Inspects a few kids then picks up the sunscreen.) **Does everyone have on sunscreen? You know you need protection against the damage the sun can do to your skin.** (Picks up the water bottle.) **Did you drink lots of water? When you are hot and running around a lot, you need to drink lots of water. I can't have any of my park guests getting dehydrated.** (Holds up first aid kit.) **Make sure you obey all the rules. No standing on rides. No horsing around. We do not want to be called to a ride because you did not obey the rules.** (Holds up bandages.) **And finally be careful while you are walking around the park. If you should trip and fall, we have just the thing to fix you up. We wrap these bandages right around the wound so it can heal. Funny thing about falling and skinning your knee or your elbow. It hurts a lot right at first. But after a bit the pain starts to lessen. It reminds me of how I felt when my pet died. It hurt a lot at first. Then as time went on it didn't hurt quite so much. Same thing as when my grandma died. It really hurt a lot. I missed her so much. But as time went on, it didn't hurt as bad. I could remember her with a smile instead of tears.**

**Remember to stay safe at the park.** (Speaks to helper.) **Let's gather this stuff and get back to the station.** Appears to be a false alarm.

# Bible Story

## John the Baptist's Death

Matthew 14:1-14



### Supplies:

- Bible story cards

**Preparation:** Print the “Bible Story Cards” (page 11). Cut out.

**I am going to need six volunteers to help me.** (Choose six children and give each child a card.) **I want you to read the card but do not tell anyone what is on your card and do not show anyone.** (Have the children stand in a line. Make sure the child with the card that says “sad” on it is last.)

**You are going to act out your card without making any noise. Everyone is going to try to guess what emotion you are acting out.** (Go down the line with each child acting out the emotion. The other children yell out a guess.)

Feelings used: Happy, tired, angry, excited, lonely, sad

**How many of you have ever felt those feelings? What kinds of things make you sad?** (Allow the children to give you some examples.)

**One of the things that can make us sad is when someone we love dies. Today, I am going to tell you about a time when someone in Jesus’ family died.**

John the Baptist was Jesus’ cousin. He was a very special man. He prepared the way for Jesus, telling people to repent and that someone greater would be coming. He also baptized Jesus. He gave his life telling others about Jesus, living on locusts and honey, and wearing clothes made of camel’s hair. Then, he was arrested and thrown into jail because he told King Herod that the king was doing something wrong. King Herod did not like what he had to say. So into jail John went and there he sat. For a long time.

Until one day. On that one day, King Herod had a birthday. Not only did he have a birthday, but he had a party. And at his party the daughter of Herodias, his wife, danced for him. He liked the dance so much that he promised that he would give her anything she asked.

Can you imagine someone telling you that they would give you anything you asked? What kinds of things do you think you would ask for?

I am pretty sure that what you would ask for and what she asked for are not even close to being the same. She said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.” The king was distressed. But he had promised in front of all the guests at the party. So he granted the request. And John was killed.

**Note to the teacher:** For older children, you might want to go more in depth with the story of the beheading and the reason behind John being in prison. For younger children, you may wish to not mention the beheading but rather that he was killed. Use your discretion and the guidance of the Holy Spirit on how ready the children are to hear all of the events of the entire story.

After John was killed, his disciples came and took his body. They lovingly buried it. They had followed John. They had loved John. And now they would miss him greatly. They knew who they should go to in their sorrow. They went and told Jesus.

What did Jesus do with this news? He got into a boat and he went privately to a place where nobody else was. The scripture calls it a solitary place. Solitary means to be alone. The scripture does not tell us what He did when He was alone. Do you think He prayed? Other times in scripture when He was alone, He prayed.

Jesus took time away when He heard the news. When we learn that a pet or maybe even someone we love has died, we need to take some time to deal with the news. We will probably cry. We will be sad. We may even be angry for awhile. There are different ways that we may grieve depending on the situation.

While Jesus was still in this private place, the crowds found him. They followed Him on foot. When Jesus landed the boat on the shore, He found a large crowd waiting for Him. He had compassion on them and He healed their sick.

Jesus did not stay in the boat, choosing to stay away from people. Instead He got on with life. He got back to doing what He was supposed to do.

When someone we love dies, we will be sad. We still miss the one who is no longer with us. But we can start to have happy memories and smile when we think about the memories.

When we are sad, we can tell Jesus about it. He knows how we feel. He was here on earth and had the same type emotions. He knows what it is like to feel sad and lonely. And He cares. He loves us. We can always go to Him when we are lonely for the loved one and He will fill our loneliness with His love.

## Prayer

Thank Jesus for loving us and for caring how we feel. If someone has lost a pet lately, pray that the person will feel better. If someone has lost a loved one, pray for that family that Jesus will comfort them.

# The Ride Lab



## Roller Coaster Loops

### Supplies:

- Marbles
- Black tubular polyethylene foam pipe insulation (6 feet long piece for every 3-5 kids - can be found at most home improvement stores)
- Scissors
- Duct tape

**Preparation:** With scissors, cut the foam pipe covering long wise in half. Tape end to end each set to make a long track. This will be the roller coaster track.

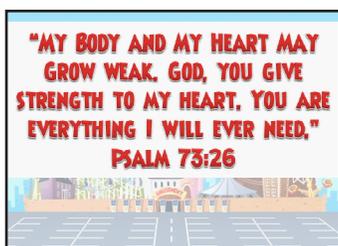
Divide the children into groups of 3-5. Give each group 3 marbles, one piece of track and duct tape.

**I want you to design a roller coaster. Your roller coaster needs to have a loop.** (Take a foam piece and show how to form a loop.) **You can make your loop tall or short. You can make it big or little. You decide as a group how to make it.**

**You will tape the end of the track to a chair. Then make the loop and tape it to the floor. Tape the end of the track to the floor. Then, you will roll a marble down the track. See if you can get the marble to stay on the track all the way to the end.**

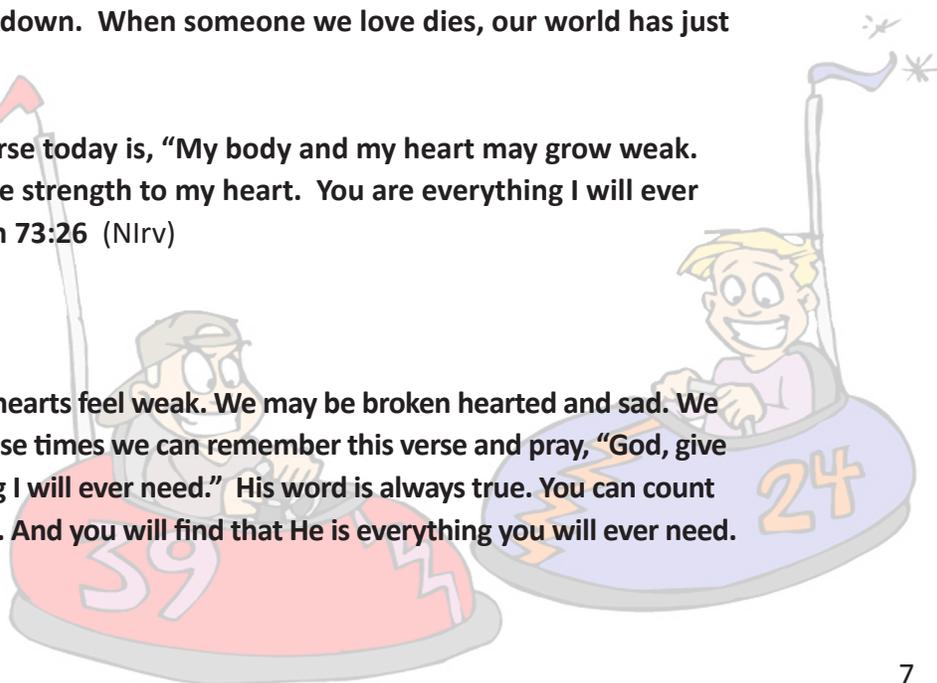
**Have you ever been on a roller coaster that had a loop like this. What do you look like when you are on the top of the loop? You are upside down. Do you stay upside down long?**

**Life is often like a roller coaster. We are going to be talking about that in the next few weeks. Sometimes we feel like we are upside down. When someone we love dies, our world has just been turned upside down.**



Our bible verse today is, "My body and my heart may grow weak. God, you give strength to my heart. You are everything I will ever need." Psalm 73:26 (NIRV)

**When we are feeling upside down, our hearts feel weak. We may be broken hearted and sad. We may cry a lot. We may feel lonely. In those times we can remember this verse and pray, "God, give strength to my heart. You are everything I will ever need." His word is always true. You can count on it. He will give strength to your heart. And you will find that He is everything you will ever need.**



# The Midway



## Pop Can Toss

### Supplies:

- 10 empty pop cans or plastic individual milk bottles
- Bean bag or small plastic ball

**Preparation:** Stack the pop cans in a pyramid shape.

**Large group:** Choose three children to try the game. Divide the rest of the children into teams to cheer for each child.

**Small group:** Allow each child to try the game.

Have the child throw the bean bag or ball at the stacked cans. Re-stack. Allow the next child to try to knock over the stacked cans. Continue until the children have all had an opportunity.

**Today we have talked about how it feels to lose a pet or a friend or family member. On those days it makes us feel like we have been knocked down, just like the cans.**

**However, we know that we serve a God that can put our lives back together when we feel like we have been knocked down by sadness. We just have to ask Jesus to give us the strength and the comfort. And He will.**

# Believe It Or Not!



**Which of the following is not true?**

1. Richard Rodriguez set the Guinness World Record in 2007 by riding the Pepsi Max Big One-Big Dipper in England for 401 hours.
  2. Matt Crowther and Betsey Abrams got married on the Cannonball at Lake Winnepesaukah in Chattanooga, Tennessee with all their close friends and family accompanying them on the roller coaster.
  3. Six Flags Magic Mountain has the most roller coasters of any park in the world.
- #3: Cedar Point in Ohio has the most: 17!

# TIME STRETCHERS

## Role Playing

Divide the children into groups. Have them act out within their group the situation and possible responses.

A friend comes to you and tells you that his pet died last night. How do you respond?

## Craft

### Comfort Verse

#### Supplies:

- Card stock
- Markers
- Stickers

**Preparation:** Cut the card stock into 4" by 6" rectangles.

Write the memory verse or another meaningful bible verse on the card stock. Decorate the cards using the markers and stickers.

Give the comfort verse card to someone who is sad. Or if a child has recently lost someone, he/she should put it in a prominent place as a reminder.

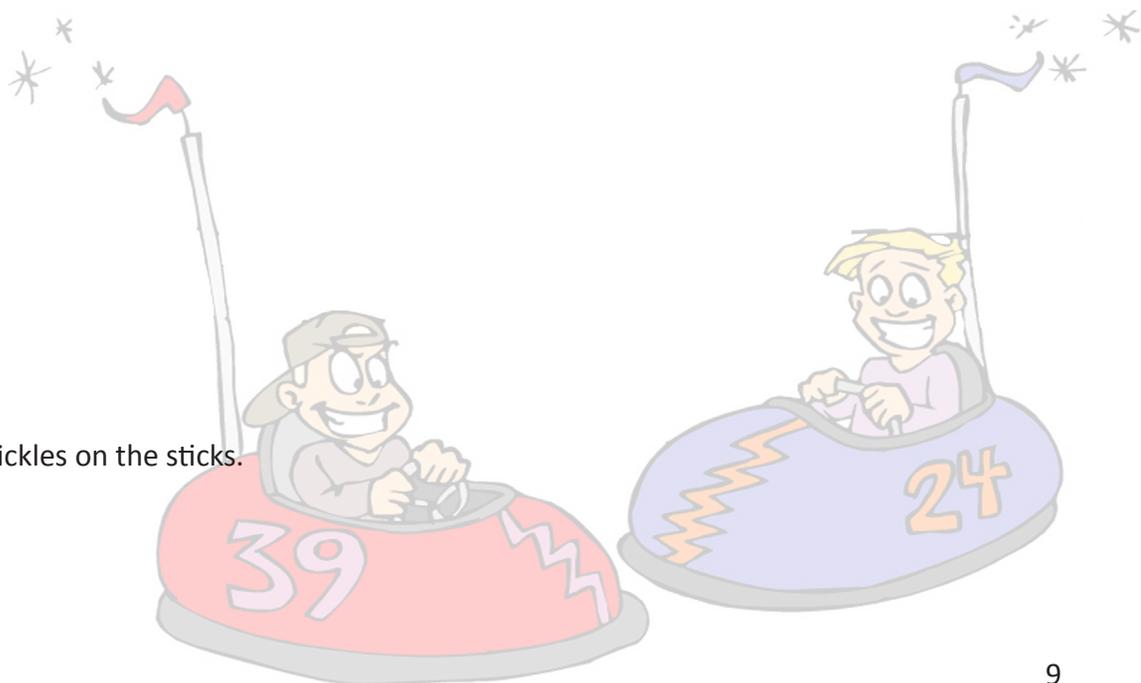
## Snack

### Pickles on a Stick

#### Supplies:

- Large pickles
- Popsicle sticks

Have the children put the pickles on the sticks.



# Game

## Upside Down Relays

### Supplies:

- None

Divide the children into teams for relays. Each relay is an “upside down” type race.

1. Do front rolls.
2. Do the crab walk.
3. Do cartwheels.
4. Hop backwards

Discuss how it feels like we are upside down when we have sad days. But just given time and with Jesus’ strength, we will end right side up again.

# Memory Verse

## Scripture Pop Up

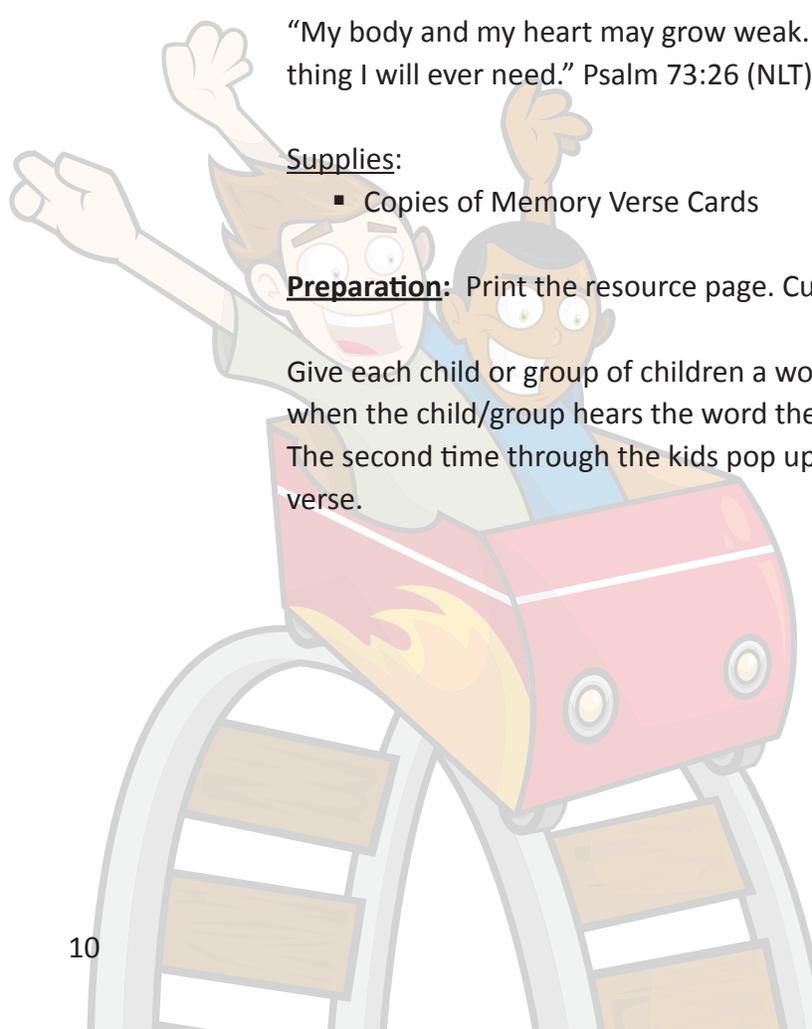
“My body and my heart may grow weak. God, you give strength to my heart. You are everything I will ever need.” Psalm 73:26 (NLT)

### Supplies:

- Copies of Memory Verse Cards

**Preparation:** Print the resource page. Cut the cards with the words out.

Give each child or group of children a word card. Mix up the cards. Go through the verse and when the child/group hears the word they are holding, they should pop up and sit down quickly. The second time through the kids pop up and say their word in order as you go through the verse.



**Bible Story cards**

**Happy**

**Tired**

**Angry**

**Lonely**

**Excited**

**Sad**

# Memory Verse Cards

**My**                      **Body**                      **and**  
**my**                      **heart**                      **may**  
**Grow**                      **weak.**                      **GOD,**  
**you**                      **Give**                      **strength**  
**to**                      **my**                      **heart.**  
**you**                      **are**                      **everything**  
**I**                      **will**                      **ever**  
**need.**                      **Psalm 73:26**

# **Role Play cards**

A friend comes to you and tells you that his pet died last night. How do you respond?

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# What Do I Do When Someone I Love Dies?

## Bible Story:

The Death of John the Baptist  
Matthew 14:1-4

## Bible Point:

Jesus gives me strength to deal with sad times.

## Bible Verse:

“My body and my heart may grow weak. God, you give strength to my heart. You are everything I will ever need.” Psalm 73:26 (NIRV)

## Family Discussion

Did your parent ever have a pet die? Have them tell you about their pet. Have you had a family member that has died? Share some stories about the family member. How has God given strength to your heart when you have had a sad day?

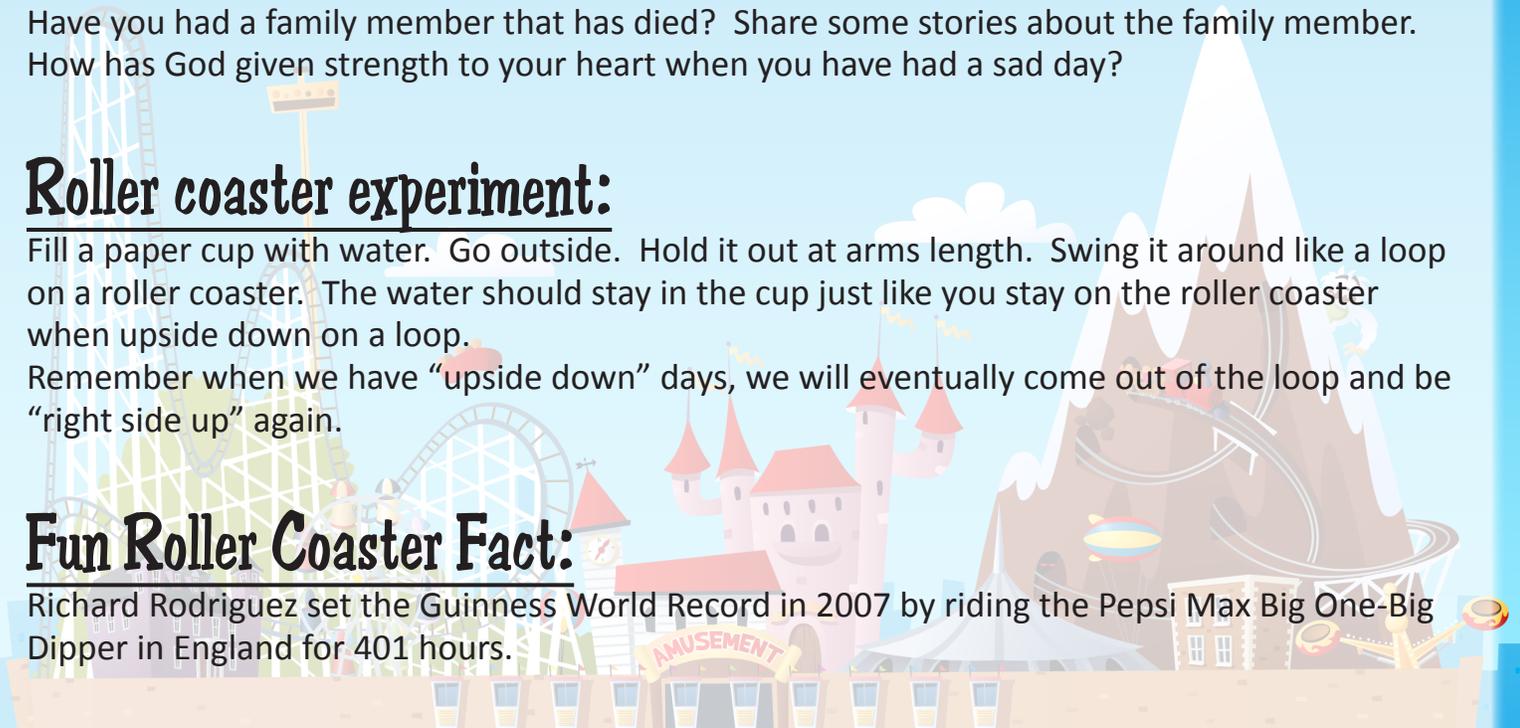
## Roller coaster experiment:

Fill a paper cup with water. Go outside. Hold it out at arms length. Swing it around like a loop on a roller coaster. The water should stay in the cup just like you stay on the roller coaster when upside down on a loop.

Remember when we have “upside down” days, we will eventually come out of the loop and be “right side up” again.

## Fun Roller Coaster Fact:

Richard Rodriguez set the Guinness World Record in 2007 by riding the Pepsi Max Big One-Big Dipper in England for 401 hours.



# Teaching Needs

## Teachers/Characters:

Roller Coaster Maniac \_\_\_\_\_

Puppet Song \_\_\_\_\_

Food on a Stick \_\_\_\_\_

First Aid Station Worker \_\_\_\_\_

Bible Story \_\_\_\_\_

The Ride Lab \_\_\_\_\_

Time Stretchers \_\_\_\_\_

## Supplies:

Roller Coaster Maniac: None

Food on a Stick: Big pickle Large popsicle stick

First Aid Station Worker : First Aid kit Sunscreen Bottle water  
Bandages Stretcher (can use two dowel rods and sheet) Duct tape

Bible Story: Bible story cards

The Ride Lab: Marbles\* Black tubular polyethylene foam pipe insulation (6 feet long piece for every 3-5 kids) Scissors Duct tape

The Midway: 10 empty pop cans or plastic individual milk bottles  
Bean bag or small plastic ball

Believe it or Not: Powerpoint presentation

Role Playing: Copies of Role Playing questions per group

Snack: Large pickles Popsicle sticks

Craft: Cardstock Markers Stickers

Game: None

Memory Verse: Copies of Memory Verse Cards

Take Home Paper: Copy for each child

\*Denotes item available in optional kit from RiversEC.com