

The Worry Backpack

A 20-minute lesson for Sunday school, VBS or midweek kids • Matthew 6:26

AGES	Best for 4–9. Adaptations for younger and older classes are on the last page.
YOU NEED	20 minutes • a screen with sound and internet • smooth pebbles or crumpled paper balls, one handful per child • a backpack • a bowl or basket • printed family guides to send home
EPISODE	The Worry Backpack (2 min) — youtu.be/PN6O9Hve5O4
MEMORY VERSE	Matthew 6:26
GRANDMA'S BIBLE STORY	Jesus and the birds of the sky — Matthew 6:25–34

THE ONE THING THEY TAKE HOME

Worries get heavy when we carry them alone. God already knows, God already cares, and He gives us people to tell. A child who learns to **say the worry out loud** — to God and to a grown-up who loves them — is a child who can put the backpack down.

Class plan

MIN	WHAT HAPPENS
0–2	Open with the hook. Hold up the backpack. "I want you to imagine something. Every time you feel worried, a rock goes in your backpack. What if nobody sits with me at lunch? Rock. What if I get it wrong? Rock." Drop a pebble in with each one so they hear it land.
2–4	Watch the episode. Play <i>The Worry Backpack</i> (2 minutes). Captions are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.
4–9	Talk about it. Use the three questions below. Let the room be a little quiet — the answers that matter take a few seconds to come.
9–13	Open the Bible. Read Matthew 6:26 aloud, then tell the birds story in your own words (teaching notes below).
13–18	Do the activity. The Worry Rock Prayer (below).
18–20	Pray and send home. Pray the prayer below, then hand every child the printed family guide for their parents.

Talk about it

- What made LJ's backpack so heavy? (Listen for: the worries, not the books. Name it plainly — that is the whole idea.)
- What happened when LJ kept his worry secret? What happened when he told Mom? (Hidden worry got heavier. Shared worry got lighter. Same worry, different weight.)
- LJ saw Marcus sitting alone and went over. Who might be sitting alone this week — at school, at church, on your street?

If a child names a real worry, don't rush past it. Thank them for saying it out loud, and say it back: "That's a real one. Let's put it in the bowl together." That moment is the lesson.

Open the Bible

“Look at the birds of the sky, that they don’t sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you of much more value than they?”

Matthew 6:26 (World English Bible)

How to tell it. Jesus was sitting on a hillside with a crowd of people who had plenty to worry about — food, clothes, tomorrow. He didn’t tell them their worries were silly. He pointed at the birds. Birds don’t plant fields. Birds don’t fill barns. And God feeds every single one of them. Then He asked the question that turns the whole thing: *aren’t you worth much more than they are?*

Land it here: God is not annoyed by your worries. He is already paying attention. If He keeps track of sparrows, He is keeping track of you.

GOING DEEPER WITH OLDER KIDS

Read Matthew 6:31–34 too. Jesus doesn’t promise an easy life — He says “each day has enough trouble of its own.” The promise is that we don’t carry tomorrow’s trouble today, and we never carry any of it alone. Pair it with 1 Peter 5:7: “casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you.”

Activity: the worry rock prayer

5 minutes · pebbles or paper balls, a backpack, a bowl

- Give every child a pebble. Tell them: hold it and think of one thing that makes your stomach feel funny. Don’t say it out loud unless you want to.
- Pass the backpack around and let each child drop their rock in. Then lift it. “Feel that? That’s what carrying it alone feels like.”
- Now set the bowl in the middle. One at a time, each child takes a rock back out of the backpack and puts it in the bowl. As they do, the class says together: **“God, You can carry this one.”**
- Lift the empty backpack at the end. Let them see it swing.

KEEP THE BOWL

Leave the bowl on a shelf in your classroom. Come back to it each week — add a rock when someone is worried, empty it together when God answers. Children remember the object long after they forget the talk.

Close in prayer

God, thank You for caring for the birds, and for caring for us even more. When our worries feel heavy, help us tell You, and help us tell someone who loves us. Show us who is sitting alone this week, and make us brave enough to go sit with them. Amen.

Adapting it

Ages 3–5: skip the deeper passage. Do the rock activity first, then watch. Ask one question only: “Who can you tell when you feel scared?” Let them answer more than once — the repetition is the point.

Ages 10–12: ask what worries look like at their age, and whether they think adults stop having them. Have them write a worry on paper instead of using a rock, fold it, and put it in the bowl unread. Nobody opens them. That is the lesson.

Large group: run the rock activity in circles of six with one adult each, then bring everyone back for the prayer.

Short on time (10 minutes): hook, watch, question 2, Matthew 6:26, prayer. Send the activity home on the family guide.