

*First Day School Plan on: Hard Topics: A Terrible Thing  
Happened* by Margaret Holmes

*Spiritual Reflection:* Psalm 121

See The Message translation. “The Lord will keep you—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

*Teacher Notes:* Contact parents in advance. Give them a heads up about the lesson on hard things that happen sometimes. We are hoping to broach the issue when there isn't an obvious crisis. Sometimes there are events in home life or extended families that are tender. Please let us know if this is the case. It may not be the right time to use this book or gently open this topic. You may also want to consult your Ministry and Counsel about your plan to cover this pastoral care topic. See page 3 for a sample letters.

*Songs:* #218 God's Love is a Light, #207 Tender Shepherd, #220 Love Grows One by One,

*Opening/Story:* Sometimes things make us feel happy, or sad or angry. Sometimes if you keep feelings inside, you feel like you're going to explode. It's always OK to talk to someone about your feelings. Maybe it's a special person who you really love like your parent or grandparent. Today our story talks about what happened to a little boy named Sherman

*Wondering Questions:*

I wonder what you use to make you feel safe or give you comfort?  
I wonder what parts of the story are important to you?  
I wonder what part of the story you like?

### *Activity:*

Begin the activity introducing the idea of comfort foods. Ask also about favorite aromas, happy memories. Do they have favorite pictures of themselves perhaps with a pet or family member.

Ask the children what they do to feel safe/ comfortable. Perhaps they want to draw a picture. The teacher could record their words and then children could create a book.

Keep one copy of the class book in the classroom as a record of your work together. With older children, make a Comfort Quilt on the bulletin board with squares representing some of the children's ideas—pictures, drawings, magazine cut-outs, fabric swatches, etc.

*Materials:* paper, crayons, markers or fabric to represent a blanket.

Perhaps an art tablet to create a book for the class. For older children, they may want to make a book for themselves. With younger children, consider a class book that you duplicate. Include the lines from the Psalm above.

***Notes to Parents:* Here are two sample notes, feel free to use them or write one in your own words. However, we strongly suggest that parents or caregivers be alerted.**

## SAMPLE LETTERS

### *Before you read:*

Dear Parents,

We will be reading a book called A Terrible Thing Happened in our FDS class. The reader never knows what the "thing" is it just describes the potential feelings that might arise. It also encourages the reader to find a trusting adult with whom to share these feelings. Before using the book with class, I/we wanted to make sure that there has not been a significant upset in your family where the book would cause more problems than bring comfort. Please let me/us know and we will postpone using the story.

In the Light,

### *After you read:*

Dear Parents,

Our \_\_\_\_\_ class has been continuing on with our unit on "Speaking Youth Truth."

Today we read the book entitled A Terrible Thing Happened. The reader never learns what that "thing" is. However, the story highlights how events can influence our feelings, and the value of talking about them with a trusted adult. Drawing pictures can sometimes help a person express feelings and deal with troubling situations, too. We practiced putting our feelings into pictures.

We hope that we have encouraged your child to express his or her concerns as they arise. We particularly wanted to open these tender conversations about speaking their truth before there was an difficult subject to discuss. We wanted to raise up your valuable role as a listener and offer you this opening to continue the conversation at home.

In the Light,

The Teachers \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_