


OVERCOMING FEAR


“Scary Sounds in the Campground”


Understanding Fear from Your Child’s Point of View:

In “Scary Sounds in the Campground,” Mr. Quigley takes some of the friends camping, and they have a wonderful time eating and telling stories...until bedtime, when Bubba hears strange noises. The noises get louder and Bubba’s imagination runs wild, until he confronts his fear and discovers the culprit!

Fear is the uneasy feeling of danger or trouble or alarm. Young children are just learning about the world and its wonderings – and the unknown and new can hold many fears for them. Here are some things to consider in teaching your child about overcoming fear.

 **3 & 4 year-olds** are bound by their sensory perceptions. They deal only with that which they experience through their senses (i.e., what they see, hear, smell, feel). They focus on just one aspect of the situation at a time. For example, when they see someone put on a mask, their visual perception convinces them that the person has actually changed into something else. Youngsters are imaginative and may have imaginative fears. In many cases, imagination equals reality, at least their own reality. Youngsters may need opportunities to “play out” their fears in safe situations where they actually control the play and therefore learn to deal with the fear. Children need to feel safe and secure and know that adults are available to intervene and calm their fears. Youngsters need to have their fears acknowledged and know that it’s okay to be afraid. Everyone gets afraid sometimes.

 **5 & 6 year-olds** continue to have difficulty in distinguishing between reality and fantasy. They believe, “If I think so, then it must really be so.” They do not understand metaphors, symbols, or abstract ideas. They take other people’s comments literally. Parents can help youngsters overcome fear by patiently listening to their concerns and finding concrete ways to demonstrate the reality. Do not deny their feelings or tell children that they just shouldn’t be afraid. Parents may have to deal with the same fear again and again, until children have enough experience to believe the reality. Children can learn coping strategies to handle their fear: singing a song, slow breathing, knowing that Jesus is with them. When a specific situation is anticipated, such as a trip to the doctor, parents can help children learn about it in advance. For example, take your children to visit the doctor’s office or the hospital prior to the scheduled appointment. Help teach the children about the medical procedures and the clinic situation they will be experiencing.

 **7 & 9 year-olds** are developing their cognitive and language skills. They talk and tell stories, but because they are still struggling with perception and reality, they may tend to exaggerate. They are likely to still fear the new and unknown. They may still be focusing on the concrete information they receive through their senses. Parents can continue to model how to deal with fear by teaching children specific steps to take to find out the reality or the truth. Science experiments and opportunities to explore are important projects for children of this age. Opportunities to try new experiences with adult supervision and support, such as sleeping in a tent outside, are ways for children to address their fears.



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Follow Up Activities for You and Your Child

During the video, you may want to occasionally stop it and ask your children: “What do you think you would do (or feel or say) in this story?” Then, watch how the program ends.

After the program, you may want to try these activities:

- 1 Ask your children to share what they thought about the story. What character was their favorite? What character was most like them? In what ways?
- 2 Collect props so you and your children can pretend to go camping, as Mr. Quigley’s friends did on the video. You might use: tent, sleeping bag or blanket roll, pillow, flashlight, etc. If children are willing, you could sleep outside as a family and learn about the night sounds and watch the stars. At first, you might just spend an hour or so outside, rather than the entire night.
- 3 Use a flashlight to play shadow games. How do the shadows of things look different than those things in reality? Try the shadows of hands, head, pets, furniture, trees, etc.
- 4 Invite your children to complete this sentence with you: Sometimes I get scared when... Then, brainstorm together how that situation might be handled.
- 5 Have a family meeting where you talk about the importance of overcoming fear. Each family member can share about one of their greatest fears and why they are afraid. Describe something or someone who helped you handle your fear.
- 6 Learn and sing together one of the songs from “Scary Sounds in the Campground.”



Supplemental Materials for You and Your Child

Additional resources and can be found at: www.quigleysvillage.net