



**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Series:** Character Shapers  
Spring Year 2, Lesson 50

# Taming Troubles

**Take Home Point:** \*God can use troubles to shape our character. \*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

**Bible Event:** 2 Corinthians 4:15-18

**Key Verse:** 2 Corinthians 4:17, "Our suffering is light and temporary and is producing for us an eternal glory that is greater than anything we can imagine."

**We will help kids know:**

- God is interested in shaping our character or who we are on the inside. This is more important than how we look on the outside.
- When facing troubles we should talk to God, hear what he has to say, check with others, trust him and obey.
- An eternal life with God is more important than temporary problems. In comparison, problems are light and momentary.
- We face challenges in life that God can use to shape our character if we let him. These are called character shapers.




**We will help kids feel:**

- Hope when they face problems knowing that God will do something good.
- Empathy for one another because they know one another's hurts.

**We will help kids do:**

- Identify a problem they've had in the last three months.
- Listen to others' problems and how they have dealt with them. Practice talking to God about problems or potential problems and taking action where appropriate.
- Make a group sculpture that helps them see how their character is formed in the midst of troubles.

# THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
<b>Small Group Warm-Up</b> 	3	Students discuss a problem they have had by relating them to a balloon that can make us feel stretched.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one large deflated balloon per group</li> </ul>
<b>Large Group</b> 	4 7	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Pablo Pistachio, the famous artist, will be the guest visitor for the next several lessons as he shapes a masterpiece sculpture named Alfred. Alfred helps illustrate how God shapes kids and their character if they let him.</p> <p>Kids will see how a balloon can be like our troubles that are light and temporary compared to eternity, yet can make us go in wayward directions. Even during times of trouble, kids can learn to tell God about their problems, thank God that he uses them for our good, and that they can look for things that last forever.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>head shape to be used throughout series, such as a Styrofoam wig stand, a mannequin, or made from paper maché—see directions at the end of the lesson</li> <li>tape for marking the starting line on floor</li> <li>a clipboard with group names and three columns for recording distances</li> <li>tape rule</li> <li><i>Optional:</i> small prizes to the team whose balloon traveled the farthest distance</li> <li>soft feathers from a craft store</li> <li>heart object such as chocolate heart, paper heart, cut-out heart, sticker heart, etc.</li> <li>paper eye cut-outs or glasses, etc.</li> <li>pins or tape to attach decorations to sculpture</li> </ul>
<b>Small Group Application</b> 	4	Students make a paper maché head to remind them that they are shaped into the likeness of Christ, even during difficult times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>newspaper strips</li> <li>maché paste</li> <li>inflated balloon</li> <li>floor covering</li> <li>clean up supplies</li> </ul>

## Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



**Purpose:** *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

*Supplies: one large deflated balloon*

Give kids a minute to think of a problem they have faced in the last three months. Then hold the balloon and stretch it. Say:

**Now, pretend this balloon reminds you of the problem. Sometimes problems stretch us. When we are stretched, we learn how far we can go before we snap or pop. Even though problems may be difficult and no one likes to have them, God can use them to help us grow to trust him.**

**Think again of the problem you have had in the last three months or maybe some other difficulty. When you can think of one to share, I'll pass you the balloon and you can tell us about your problem. I'll begin.**

Stretch the balloon out wide and let it snap back. Then explain a problem that you have faced in the last three months. *(Please don't pick a problem that is too overwhelming or include too many details about an "adult" problem.)* Pass the balloon around to the students as a discussion starter. As they share a problem, have them repeat what you did in stretching the balloon and letting it snap back.

Ask for a volunteer to repeatedly blow up and deflate the balloon during large group. Take the balloon with you to the presentation.

**Today as you think about your problem(s), remember that everyone has them, and that *\*God can use troubles to shape our character.***

# Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



**Purpose:** *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Pablo Pistachio, the famous artist, will be the guest visitor for the next several lessons as he shapes a masterpiece sculpture named Alfred. Alfred helps illustrate how God shapes kids and their character if they let him.

Kids will see how a balloon can be like our troubles that are light and temporary compared to eternity, yet can make us go in wayward directions. Even during times of trouble, kids can learn to tell God about their problems, thank God that he uses them for our good, and that they can look for things that last forever.

# Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



**Purpose:** *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

*Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.*

## Observation Questions: What happened?

**In large group, Pablo Pistachio attached feathers, lips, and eyes to his sculpture. These were to remind us of the three things we can do when we have problems. Do you recall what the three things are?** *(Tell God our problems. Thank God that we can trust him while we are having difficulties. Look for what will make last forever.)*

## Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

**Today's key verse from 2 Corinthians 4:17 says, "Our suffering is light and temporary and is producing for us an eternal glory that is greater than anything we can imagine."**

**From what you have learned today, describe how our problems can be light and temporary.** *(Compared to the length and glory of eternity, our biggest problems on earth seem short and small.)*

**How does our suffering in this world “produce for us an eternal glory that is greater than anything we can imagine?”** (*\*God can use troubles to shape our character, which affects our souls that last forever. God gives us rewards in heaven for what we suffer on earth for him.*)

## **Application Questions: What does this mean to me?**

**When Jesus came to earth, he experienced every bad thing we experience. He suffered more than we will ever have to. Remembering this also gives us encouragement and hope. He gives us his resurrection power to endure.**

### Application Activity

*Supplies: small bowl of flour paste, strips of paper and an inflated balloon tied off in a knot, floor covering and clean up supplies—paper maché directions are at the end of the lesson*

**Think of the problems we talked about at the beginning of this lesson. Remember how we tried to imagine them like a balloon? God says that these problems are light and momentary. When we think of this, we can better trust that God will bring an eternal glory that outweighs them all.**

Refer to the inflated balloon and say:

**Today as we pray, we cover our problems with something that will truly last. After all, this balloon will only be light and float around for a little while and eventually it will shrink or pop.**

**Today we will make something more lasting. While we pray, we will make a paper maché head by covering the balloon with paper strips. When the balloon pops or shrinks the paper mache sculpture will remain. This head will remind us that we are shaped into the likeness of Christ, even when we face difficulties. Our prayers will continue to cover our problems and are lasting.**

**Think back to one of the problems you had and a way that God may have used that problem to help you trust him more. When you think of it and are ready to share with the group, dip one of these paper strips into the paste and put it on the balloon. But phrase it in a way that your problem becomes a prayer. For example....**

**Say something like: “Dear God, thank you for my brief illness and the care I received which helped me see how important it is to help others who are sick.”**

This may require some thought from the students and you may also need to give another example.

**As you think about your problem, imagine its effect on you in a million years. How big does this problem seem then?**

Have kids share what they think. Guide kids to think about how this problem may shape their character for eternity. For example, you might say something like:

**In a million years, I'll be in heaven and this problem helped me trust Jesus more as my Savior and Lord on earth.**

*As kids continue to add paper strips to the sculpture, let them add any special facial features, even though they will get a chance to get to do that again in the future.*

Conclude with the take home point:

**Today we learned that *\*God can use troubles to shape our character.***

Closing Prayer:

Encourage students to pray for each other and for strength to deal with their problems both now and in the future. Thank God that they can tell him their problems because he cares. Thank him that he uses our troubles to shape our character and that we can look for what lasts forever because of what Jesus has done for us.

**Safety and Security:** Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

# Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

## Character Shapers: Troubles

### Introduction to the series: "Character Shapers"

*We face challenges in life that God can use to shape our character if we let him. These are called character shapers. These challenges might seem negative, such as encountering troubles or facing personal failures. Or they may be positive, such as encountering opportunities to show service or faithfulness. All of these can be character shapers if we allow God to shape us through them.*

*Pablo Pistachio will present this series. This artistic character might be costumed with an artist's smock, palette and beret. A prop used from week to week is the figure of a sculpted head on a table. This will be a significant visual prop as different features are applied in conjunction with weekly discussions about how God shapes our character. The features added will create abstract art, but will give clear visual illustration to the concept of the day.*

*Create a head for this series that will act as the focal point for "shaping one's character." Form a paper maché head (see directions at the end of the lesson) with a filled balloon, strips of paper and paste. Create eyes, nose, ears, eyebrows, and lips from magazine cutouts or with markers. This needs to be prepared ahead of time and dried. Other options that could be used are a Styrofoam head and straight stickpins, or a mannequin head.*



*Supplies: tape (to make a starting line in advance of presentation), a clipboard with group names and three columns for recording distances, tape rule, feathers, heart object such as chocolate hearts, paper cut-out hearts or sticker hearts, paper eye cut-outs or glasses, tape or pins to make attachments to sculpture*

## Introduction

**How do you do? I am Pablo Pistachio, the famous artist. I will be visiting you over the next several weeks as we shape a masterpiece character I shall name Alfred. Alfred will help us illustrate how God shapes our character and us if we let him. Week to week we will shape this character as only I, an artist, can do.**

**Please don't be jealous because you wish you looked as beautiful as this masterpiece that I will create, because God has his own way of shaping you. He is shaping you on the inside, not on the outside. I, on the other hand, am shaping Alfred on the outside to demonstrate what God is doing to you on the inside. If this is confusing for you, that is okay, because, after all, this is modern art.**

## Shaped into God's image

**In the Bible, 2 Corinthians 3:18b says this, *"We are being changed into his image."* What does this mean? It means that by the power of the Holy Spirit, God is shaping us to become more and more like Jesus. But he uses the most unusual tools, like circumstances or events, to do this. He can use challenges in life to shape us and form our character. Of course, we need to learn how to respond so that God can shape us just the way he wants.**

**This week we will learn that *\*God can use troubles to shape our character.* Let me read 2 Corinthians 4:15-18 to you:**

***"All this is for your sake so that, as God's kindness overflows in the lives of many people, it will produce even more thanksgiving to the glory of God. That is why we are not discouraged. Though outwardly we are wearing out, inwardly we are renewed day by day. Our suffering is light and temporary and is producing for us an eternal glory that is greater than anything we can imagine. We don't look for things that can be seen but for things that can't be seen. Things that can be seen are only temporary. But things that can't be seen last forever.***



## Play the balloon game

Have the balloon blower from each small group come up front with the deflated balloon used in Warm-Up. Don't let kids blow up the balloons until you have given all the directions.

Explain that kids will have three attempts at blowing up the balloon and letting it go to see which balloon travels the farthest away from the starting point.

Begin the contest, let the balloons fly and record distance points.

*Optional:* Instead of measuring each distance, have another kid from each group go and stand where the balloon landed. (The balloon blower retrieves the balloon and returns to the starting line each time.) The marker only moves if the balloon travels to a further distance in one of the following two attempts. In other words, they mark the *farthest* point at which their team balloon lands.

Recognize the team whose balloon traveled the farthest from the starting line. Following the contest, have kids return to the audience and have a brief ceremony to recognize the winning group. *Optional: award a small prize to the team whose balloon traveled the farthest distance.*

Then say:

**Notice the pattern of these balloons when they flew. Earlier in your small groups, you talked about how problems sometimes stretch you. When we watch these balloons fly like crazy around the room, it reminds us of another thing about problems. Problems can make us feel panicked and lead us in all different directions. For some people, it might even seem like problems and troubles make them feel desperate and out of control.**

## Troubles can be light and momentary

**Now I'd like all the balloon contestants, while sitting with their small groups, to blow up their balloons one last time and tie it with a knot. Hold the balloon still until I tell you what to do next.**

Pause as they complete this.

**Now with all of you remaining seated, gently tap the balloons and continue tapping them forward until they all come back here.**

Let kids complete this and set the balloons aside. *(They should be returned to groups later for their application activity.)*

**This is a picture of what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:17, “*Our suffering is light and temporary...*”**

**This is how God would have us look at our suffering or problems. They are light and temporary when we bring them back to God. These balloons act in the same way when we compare them to what God has prepared for us. What has he prepared for us? A life that lasts with him, not only in this world but for a million, zillion, billion, billion, zillion years with him in heaven. When we compare our problems with this, we see that our troubles are light and momentary.**

### Troubles can help us trust God better

**The whole point of troubles is that God can use them to help us better learn to trust him. He uses these troubles to better shape our character to become more and more like Jesus. Let me give you three things we can do when we face troubles that can better help us to trust God.**

#### 1) Tell God

Use the feathers for the following.

**The first thing we must do when we have troubles is to tell God about them. Troubles can be heavy on our mind, so I’m putting these feathers on Alfred so it will look like his hairdo. This will remind us that when we face our troubles, they are light and momentary. God can use your problem to help you better trust him as you tell him about it. Think of the problem in comparison to what God will do for you as you live with him now and forever. These troubles are light and even momentary. They won’t last very long when you compare them with all of eternity.**

#### 2) Thank God

Attach the heart decorations to the lip area of the head sculpture.

**There is a second thing we can do to trust God even when we face troubles. 2 Corinthians 4:15, says God’s kindness overflows in our lives and produces thanksgiving to the glory of God. *“All this is for your sake so that, as God’s kindness overflows in the lives of many people, it will produce even more thanksgiving to the glory of God.”***

**When we face troubles, we can thank God because God’s kindness is going to overflow. That’s why it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, *“Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God’s will in Christ Jesus that you do this.”***

### 3) Look for things that last forever

Attach the paper eyes or sunglasses onto the sculpture.

**2 Corinthians 4:18 says, “We don’t look for things that can be seen but for things that can’t be seen. Things that can be seen are only temporary.”**

**This room is only temporary. This table is only temporary. In fact, this body is only temporary. What are the things that last forever? The Bible says things that *can’t be seen* last forever. Our souls cannot be seen with our eyes. God wants to shape our souls to better trust him because our soul will last forever with him. Sometimes he shapes us by allowing us to face difficulties.**

#### We need each other

**Now look at my artful masterpiece.**

Pause and look like you’re thinking.

**Wait, I think something is wrong. Pause. It looks like Alfred needs some kind of adjustment.**

Have a student come up.

**What kind of adjustment does Alfred need? Can you make an adjustment in the eyes or mouth for me?**

Coach the student to make some kind of adjustment.

**Ah, that’s just what he needed. You see, when we face our problems, it’s also important that we have each other to help us see what God is doing. That’s why it’s important that we don’t keep our problems to ourselves, but share them with other people who love and care for us like our family or our friends here at church. Then together we can see how God can use a situation to shape our character.**

#### Conclusion: Jesus gives us his presence

**As we are shaped into God’s image, we can remember that Jesus gave his life for us on the cross. He did this so that not only are our sins forgiven, but to give us the power to shape ourselves and be just like him.**

## Prayer

**Dear Jesus, we know that when we face troubles and difficulties that you are with us. Help us to trust you more so that our character becomes more like you. Help us to talk to you about our problems and give thanks even while we are going through our hard times. Help us to see that what you're doing in us will last forever and is much more important than the "light and momentary troubles" that we face now. Help us to encourage each other in our groups as we discuss the challenges that we face. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

# Paper Maché Instructions

## Paste:

- Make paper maché paste (there are many different options):
  - OPTION 1: 3/4 white glue to 1/4 water (or if using a good, thick glue, like Elmers, you can do 1/2 and 1/2)
  - OPTION 2: COOK METHOD: 1 part flour to 5 parts water... boil about 3 minutes and let cool
  - OPTION 3: 1 part flour to 1 part water. Stir together.

### Suggestion ...

*Rather than make paste for paper maché, use liquid starch that is relatively inexpensive. It can be bought in a large jug at the supermarket. It gives the same result as the cooked method. It dries smooth and clear - fantastic for use with gift wrap scraps and with brown paper grocery bags.*

NOTE: Humidity really does play a factor! If you live somewhere very humid, add less water (up to 1/4 less).

NOTE: if you add a couple tablespoons of salt to your paper maché, it will not mold.

## Preparation

1. Prepare your desired paper maché form (mannequin, balloon, Styrofoam head).
2. Tear newspaper (or brown paper bag) into strips.
3. Spread out and use plastic tablecloth as a work surface.
4. Dip one piece of newspaper at a time into prepared paper maché paste. Hold the strip over the paste bowl and run it through your fingers to squeeze off excess paste.
5. Stick the newspaper strip over the form you want to paper maché and smooth it down with your fingers.
6. Completely cover your creation with a layer of newspaper strips. They should all be overlapping.
7. Do not put more than one layer of wet newspaper on creation at a time. Each layer needs to dry completely before a new layer is added.
8. Put finished creation on plastic cloth on top of countertop. Identify by group name.

## Tips:

1. Tear the newspaper (or paper bags) into strips, do not cut it!
2. Be generous when dipping the newspaper strips into the paste, you want each piece thoroughly saturated!
3. Let each layer dry *completely* before adding another.