

“Under God’s Wings” – Designed for ages 6+, but can be adapted for preschoolers

This ceremony brings parents and children together at a time when a traumatic news story or stressful event is happening in the world and if affecting the family. The beauty of this activity is that it gives children a space to talk about their feelings if they want to, but it does not demand that they speak at all. It also helps children to feel safe, protected, and sheltered.

*“[God] will cover you with [God’s] feathers,
and under [God’s] wings you can hide.” (Psalm 91:4a, NCV)*

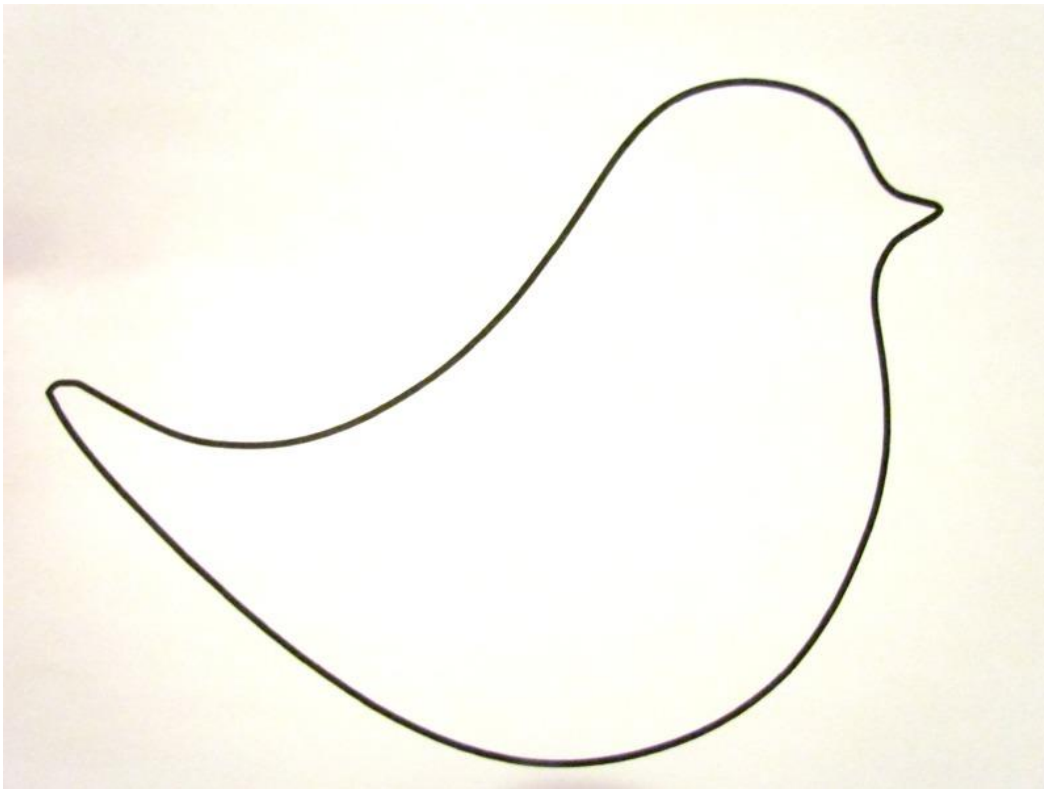
Materials

1. Paper
2. Scissors
3. Pen/pencil/crayons/finger paints/watercolors
4. Faux feathers or tissue paper (optional)
5. Glue (optional)

Time Investment: 10 – 30 minutes (depending on how elaborately you decorate the birds)

How To

1. Draw several large birds on writing or construction paper. Use the template provided here or create your own.



2. Invite children to the table for a special activity.
3. Say something like, “The past few weeks we’ve been hearing about the Coronavirus.”
 - a. Describe the event that has happened in bare terms, using age appropriate language. See notes below for guidance.
4. Say, “I want you to know that you are safe and protected. There is a verse in the Bible that says:

*“[God] will cover you with [God’s] feathers,
and under [God’s] wings you can hide.” (Psalm 91:4a, NCV)*

Today we can remember that God wants to protect and cover you up. You can feel safe knowing that God is with you and feeling like God is giving you a big hug!”

5. Hand out the bird outlines and let the kids decorate it however they would like with the materials you gathered.
 - a. For older kids encourage them to write words or phrases of things that make them scared or anxious under the bird or write words or phrases that help them feel safe and loved. Some kids may need to work through and name their anxiety, while others need to be reminded of the good stuff. Either way, remind them that God is there to comfort them.
6. At the end of the activity, write the Bible verse on the page and hang them up somewhere in the house as a reminder for the children that God is with them.
7. Give the children hugs and snuggles and say, “You are like my baby birds. I will do everything I can to make sure you are safe. I love you, and God loves you!”

Discussion Notes:

At this point the conversation has probably already come up and you have already handled it with wisdom. However, if you are still at a loss for how to talk about what’s going on, here are some tips.

- How you describe the issue will depend on the children’s ages and what they have already heard. A good guideline is to start out with less information and then encourage questions/elaboration from the children.
- It’s important to be truthful, but not volunteer extra information if it is not necessary. Be sure to reassure children that they are safe. De-center children: share concerns and solutions in a way that doesn’t center children as those who are threatened. Say something like, “we are all staying home (and washing our hands, modifying behavior, etc.), because people in our congregation and community might be sick or elderly and need our help to stay healthy.”
- Avoid developmentally inappropriate concepts that inspire a sense of existential threat and powerlessness. Describing a pandemic to children younger than 3rd or 4th grade makes little sense because they do not have a developed sense of global geography and the impacts are

abstract while communicating “this problem is so big and threatening and we have no power.” Instead use smaller terms that they understand.

- Pray together for people in your church who are vulnerable. You might already be in relationship with someone in the church who is sick, immunocompromised, or otherwise at risk. If not, pray for your kids Sunday School teachers, grandparents, etc. This is a great opportunity to pray for those people and to give them a call and check in! Teach your kids how to stay connected, even when we aren’t together at church.
- Share developmentally appropriate facts. Children 4th grade and older will possibly be interested in the facts and science. They may want to see charts and graphs from the CDC, World Health Organization or hear about some of the science involved in collective action. Share fact-based information you know from reliable sources.

*Activity and some discussion points are taken from:

[*Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home*](#) by Traci Smith, pages 126-129