

*unexpected*



# GROUP CURRICULUM



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## OVERVIEW - UNEXPECTED

The theme for this curriculum is “Unexpected.” Explore the unexpected challenges and joys of the foster and adoptive journey, the unexpected reality of our experiences, and the unexpected ways that God’s love steps in. Even when life is at its most unexpected—we can find hope in a God who sees us and loves us no matter what.

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## UNEXPECTED: Hope

*"Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."*

*Psalm 43:5*

We brought her in for a thorough neuropsychological exam. It required several days of testing; we were anxious for answers. She was in kindergarten and though her learning delays were severe, they anticipated that she would be able to participate in a mainstream classroom by 6th grade. We were awed by their projection and I carried that prediction in my heart with expectation for the next five years.

Here we are, however, on the cusp of 6th grade and our recent IEP meeting confirmed that she would be remaining in her small, instructional classroom. Though I would have been devastated by this news even a few years ago, I left her IEP meeting feeling a sense of peace, and - dare I say it? - hope.

The progress my dear daughter has made in the past five years is astounding. Is she learning at grade-level and able to do what her neuro-typical peers can do? Absolutely not. Has she progressed beautifully at her own pace? She certainly has. I can look to her middle-school experience next year and be grateful even though that original goal remains unmet.

That my friends, is a miracle. My change in heart. Just ask the friends we met with years ago who heard the cries of my unchanged heart. The severity of my daughter's special needs felt agonizing. I could not have imagined feeling like I would ever have enough patience or kindness to make it through my day with her. Nor could I have imagined attending an IEP meeting and not crying. Feeling hopeful for her middle school experience? Not a chance.

I will yet praise Him, you see? God changed my hardened heart without any help from me. Over many years, he changed my downcast spirit, putting my hope in HIM rather than any of her own abilities or my parenting skills. I can look to her future now and smile rather than be paralyzed with fear, an unexpected miracle only He could have done.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Where have you noticed hope where there was once fear or anxiety?*
  
2. *Where do you need us to pray hope into your family?*