

Why is life hard?

Wow! You are on track to be a philosopher (someone who studies really big questions about life and how the world works)! **This is something that people have been asking for a loooooooooooooong time.** It's not an easy question to answer, is it? There's a lot of bad things happening in the world, and our lives can be really hard sometimes.

*We all get scared and worried sometimes, and sometimes taking **deep breaths** can help. Try it! Put one hand on your belly and one hand on your heart. Take three big deep breaths. After you breathe in, say, "I am right here." After you breathe out, say, "I am right now."*

Some bad things happen because of the patterns of nature. Things like earthquakes, fierce animals hurting people, even sickness can be hard and terrible, but we are part of a larger natural world in which the earth and other creatures are also trying to live and flourish. Those land shifts, animals in self-protection, and microbes can cause humans harm just by doing what they are supposed to do.

Some bad things happen because people make mistakes. Breaking a bone while playing outside, car crashes, missing a party or an important appointment—all happen and for no reason other than no one's body or mind is perfect. We aren't superheroes, and people make mistakes.

Some bad things happen because people make terrible choices. War, the ways that the earth and climate are changing and hurting, and people not having a safe place to live or enough food to eat—all happen because human beings choose their own power and comfort over the well-being of all persons and the natural world.

In all these different kinds of bad things, **it is okay to be angry and sad. It is okay to be scared.** It is fantastic if you think about these bad things and decide you want to get to work at changing them!

A very important thing for us to know and remember is that **God is always with us, even in hard times.** You can find God's presence in loving and kind people around you. You can find God when you pray or take deep, calming breaths. You can find God when you read or listen to stories of how God always takes care of people and how people take care of each other.

If life is really hard right now, I just want you to know that you are loved and cherished by both God and the people around you. Sometimes talking to people can help: your Sunday School teacher, a friend, or Ms. Kenna would all love to be by your side.

– Kenna Easter, *Minister for Early Childhood*

Also using language from *New Directions for Holy Questions*
by Claire Brown & Anita Peebles