

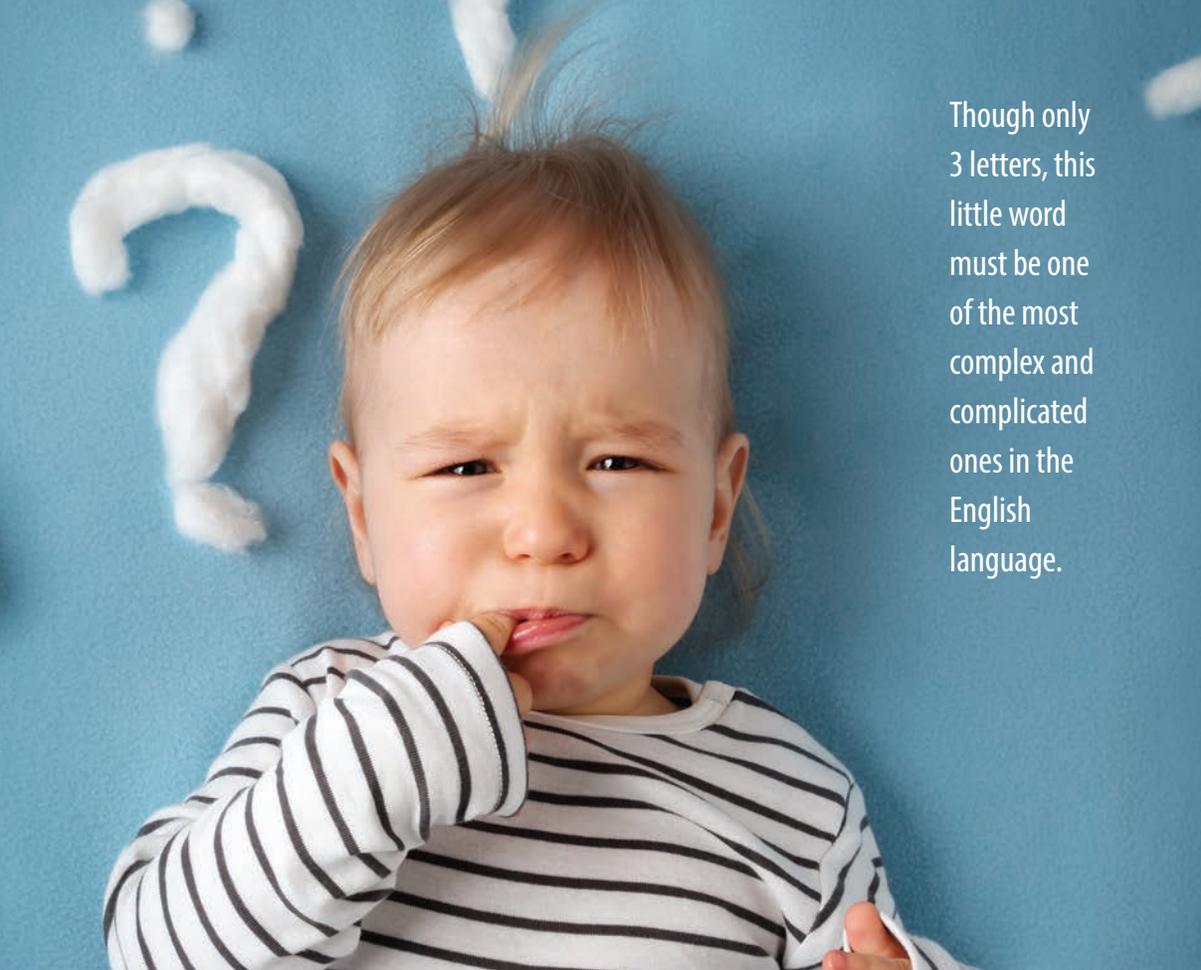


Children's National™

Chaplaincy Services



Why



Though only 3 letters, this little word must be one of the most complex and complicated ones in the English language.

For who can dare to assume that this word, when posed in the context of tragedy and loss, uncertainty and pain is only an existential question; or has any universal, simple straightforward answers?

God, O God, I do not understand! I can not make sense out of what is happening! The space around me feels hard, and yet strangely empty. . . I want to beat my way out with hands, and tears, and the very pounding of my heart! There is no air; there is no light: there is too much light – too much everything. Why? Can You tell me why? Is this deserved? Are You a God of love who could so test my love? If I am to learn something from this I rather be dumb!



People of faith have been confronted by the why? question for centuries. And God's people, whether great philosophers or simple believers have predicated various traditional responses:

- Bad things happen because there is free will
- Bad things happen because chaos is still present in the world
- Bad things happen because the Evil One is constantly at war with God
- Bad things happen because we have sinned and are being punished
- Bad things happen because they are a way God tests our faith
- Bad things happen because God chooses to "refine" us in the fire of trouble to make us stronger

Perhaps one of these answers is familiar to you. It may help you make sense out of what is happening in your life right now. But, even if one of these answers seemed a likely one a few days, or weeks, ago, today it may no longer seem true.

When we seek beyond "why" all we can ever be absolutely sure of is mystery. In the Hebrew Scripture the book of Job, Job hurtles the question 'why' at God over and over. Demands an explanation for his pain, his losses; demands understanding. And God ultimately responds. But not with the answers to this question. Effectively God says: "Job – you are Job and I am God. I could, perhaps, find an answer for you, but it would be in a language that would be meaningless to you. I am God. You are Job." That was good enough for Job. Sometimes it might be good enough for us – sometimes not.

I once asked a mother as she held her dying child, "where is God for you in all you've gone through?" She replied: "I choose to believe that what has happened, is happening, is by God's hand, part of God's plan. I do not want to be a victim of carelessness, or chaos, or Satan. I do not want there to be any power Greater than God's. If this is by the hand of God, then God is real, God is here, and God can help something good come from this."

God – the words keep pouring out of me – why? why? why? – like a fountain, a river. Even when other words find their way to my mouth: hello – come in – sit down – thanks –tell me again -- -- my mind keeps up the mantra: why? why?

I look for comfort in answers to other questions, but there is little comfort there and not the understanding I desperately want.



Why?

I want to scream – 'there is no good answer!' And I am right. There is no good answer.

*I pray – let me keep asking the question in Your presence. Perhaps my comfort will come in the asking – out of the whirlwind – from the beginning of the world.*

*Be with me, O God. May sense and understanding find its way to my heart – my life. May peace come in my trust that You will not turn away from my question. Amen.*



**For more information, contact your chaplains  
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