



**GROUP MATERIAL**  
**TERM 2 | 2024**



*How do we know when  
we're struggling with  
our mental health?*



# LIFE LABS 1

*How do we know when we're struggling with our mental health?*



## INTRODUCTION



We all have days when we feel a bit off. Maybe we wake up and feel unhappy, worried, or stressed about the day ahead. But sometimes we can feel off for a long time. We can start to feel sad or anxious all the time, struggle to sleep, and withdraw from others. When we feel off for a long time, we might feel embarrassed or ashamed, lost and out of place, or even wonder if something is wrong with us. It's normal to struggle sometimes, but how do we know if our struggles are out of the ordinary?

**How do I know when I'm struggling with my mental health?**



## PLAY THE 'EMOTION MATCH' GAME



How did you go with the game? Were you able to identify the emotions?  
How do you know how you are feeling?

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# DO THE 'FACT OR FICTION' ACTIVITY



Sometimes, it can be difficult to identify if we're experiencing challenges with our mental health or if we're just having a bad day. This fact sheet can help us understand if we need support with our mental health.

*This information is adapted from the National Institute of Mental Health.*

### My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.



#### Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others



#### If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.



#### Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm

*This information is adapted from Better Health Victoria (2021).*



If you are experiencing severe symptoms that have lasted for two weeks or more, start by talking to your family and friends about what you are feeling. If you would rather speak to someone you do not know, try talking to your school counsellor or local doctor. Your conversations with them are private, and they will be able to direct you to further help through mental health support services such as a psychologist or psychiatrist. We will explore this in more detail in the next Life Lab session.

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# A SAD PSALM

<sup>1</sup> How long will you forget me, LORD?

Will you forget me forever?

How long will you refuse to accept me?

<sup>2</sup> How long must I wonder if you have forgotten me?

How long must I feel this sadness in my heart?

How long will my enemy win against me?

<sup>3</sup> LORD my God, look at me and give me an answer.

Make me feel strong again, or I will die.

<sup>4</sup> If that happens, my enemy will say, "I beat him!"

He will be so happy that he won.

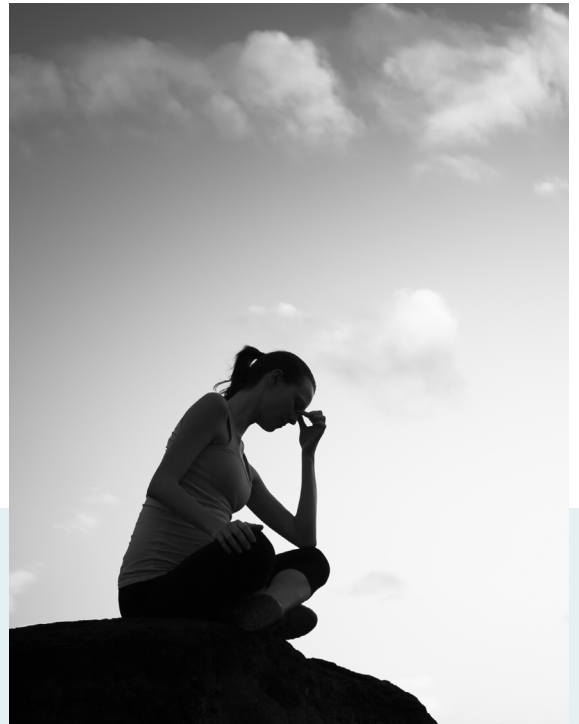
<sup>5</sup> But I trust in your faithful love, Lord.

I will be happy when you save me.

<sup>6</sup> Then I will sing to the LORD

because he was so good to me.

**Psalm 13:1-6 ERV**



### Conclusion

We all have days when we feel a bit off. Maybe we wake up and feel unhappy, worried, or stressed about the day ahead. But sometimes we can feel off for a long time. When we feel off for a long time, we can feel embarrassed or ashamed, lost and out of place, or even wonder if something is wrong with us. The Good News is that God loves us, even if we struggle with our mental health and feel lost and out of place. Like the psalmist, we are no longer lost because God's love is always with us.

# LIFE LABS 2

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*How do we get help if we're struggling with our mental health?*




## INTRODUCTION



*If we struggle with a maths problem at school, we know we can usually ask a teacher or a friend for help. But when we struggle with our mental health, it can be more complicated. We can feel unsure about who to go to for support, have limited options, or be worried about how others might react. When we can't find the support we need, we can feel lost. Our mental health can get worse; we can feel isolated and alone and lose hope that things will ever change. We may know we need help but struggle to know how to get it.*

***How do we get help if we're struggling with our mental health?***



# PLAY THE 'HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?' GAME



*How did you go with the game? Was it easier or more difficult to complete the challenge on your own? When you're struggling, who helps you to get through challenges?*

DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# DO THE 'WHO YOU GONNA CALL?' ACTIVITY



*How did you go with the activity? Did you answer each question?*

*How do you feel after completing your directory? Are you more confident that you can find support when you need it?*

*Have you ever gotten help with your mental health? What happened?*

*What other ways can you get help if you're struggling with your mental health? How do you get support when you need it?*





# “WHO YOU GONNA CALL?” DIRECTORY



Where can I get help online?

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Who can I call if I'm struggling with my mental health and want to stay anonymous?

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Who can I call for a medical certificate?

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Who can I speak to if I don't feel safe?

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Where can I find information about an eating disorder?

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Who can I go to if I feel stressed with lots of schoolwork?

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Who can I ask for help if I am considering hurting myself?

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Who can I speak to if I'm worried about events happening around the world?

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Who can I call if I feel anxious?

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Who can I speak to if I feel sad a lot?

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Who can I connect with if I experience racism or discrimination?

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## WHO TO CONTACT FOR SUPPORT WITH YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

This information has been taken from Better Health Victoria (2021).

For crisis support, phone and web counselling, and mental health information, contact one of the mental health support services listed below:

**Lifeline** Call 13 11 14 for this free Australia-wide crisis support and suicide prevention service.

**Suicide Call Back Service** Call 1300 659 467 for this free service for people having suicidal thoughts, family or friends affected by suicide and healthcare professionals treating suicidal patients.

**Suicide Line** Call 1300 651 251 for free and anonymous support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week across Victoria.

**Kids Help Line** Call 1800 55 1800 for free counselling and advice for young people between the ages of five and 25.

**Headspace** Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12–25-year-olds.

**Butterfly Foundation** Get support for eating disorders and body image issues.

**Reachout** Visit their website for information, tools and support for young people with mental health issues.

**Youth Beyond Blue** Call 1300 22 4636 for free telephone counselling or visit their website for information, resources and support for young people with depression or anxiety.

**Alcohol and Drug Foundation** Free health advice for young people on substance use and mental health.

### Where to get help

- Your GP (doctor)
- Your counsellor
- Psychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Telephone helplines
- Internet forums



## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# BARTIMAEUS ASKS FOR HELP

<sup>46</sup> Then they came to the town of Jericho. When Jesus left there with his followers, a large crowd was with them. A blind man named Bartimaeus (meaning “son of Timaeus”) was sitting by the road. He was always begging for money.

<sup>47</sup> He heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by. So he began shouting, “Jesus, Son of David, please help me!”

<sup>48</sup> Many people criticized the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted more and more, “Son of David, please help me!”

<sup>49</sup> Jesus stopped and said, “Tell him to come here.” So they called the blind man and said, “You can be happy now. Stand up! Jesus is calling you.”

<sup>50</sup> The blind man stood up quickly. He left his coat there and went to Jesus.

<sup>51</sup> Jesus asked the man, “What do you want me to do for you?” He answered, “Teacher, I want to see again.”

<sup>52</sup> Jesus said, “Go. You are healed because you believed.” Immediately the man was able to see again. He followed Jesus down the road.

**Mark 10:46-52 ERV**

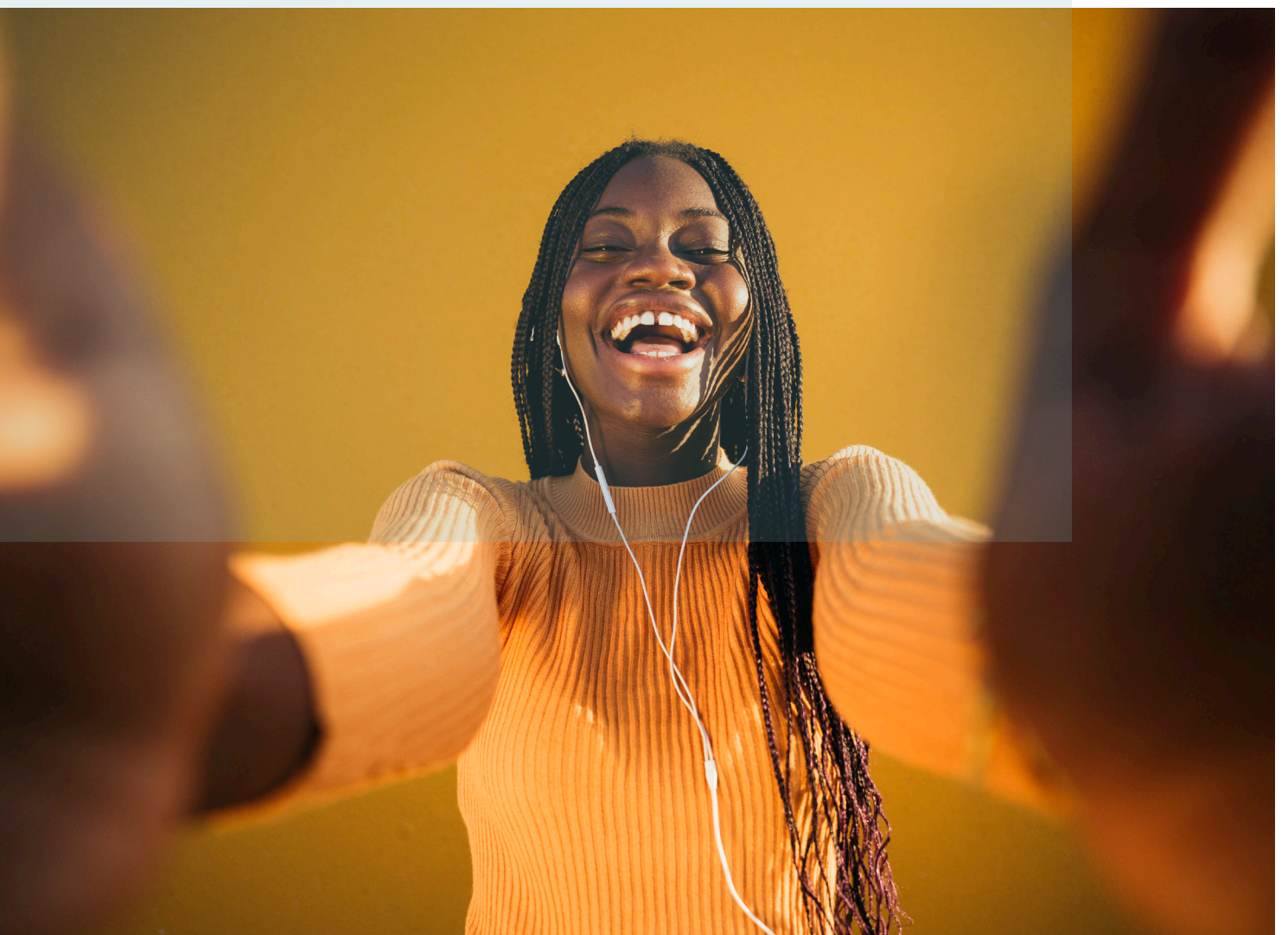


### Conclusion

If we struggle with a maths problem at school, we know we can usually ask a teacher or a friend for help. But when we struggle with our mental health, it can be more complicated. When we can't find the support we need, we can feel lost. Our mental health can get worse; we can feel isolated and alone and lose hope that our mental health can get better. The Good News is that Jesus is there to support us. When we are struggling with our mental health, we can reach out to Jesus and others for help. Just like Bartimaeus, we can follow Jesus when we are struggling, and he can support us and journey with us to find the help we need.

# LIFE LABS 3

*How do we  
develop good  
mental health?*



## INTRODUCTION



We all want good mental health. It helps us to enjoy life, achieve our goals, and feel confident about ourselves. It helps us to be resilient and respond to the challenges that come in life. But what do we do if we don't know how to develop good mental health? It can be difficult when we are surrounded by challenges or nobody has shown us what to do. Just like exercise and eating well can develop our physical health, there are actions we can take to develop our mental health.

**How do we develop good mental health?**



# PLAY THE 'MINUTE TO WIN IT' GAME



Have you ever played games like this before? What skills did you use to get through the challenges? What skills do you use to get through challenges in your life?

DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# DO THE 'GRATITUDE ROCKS' ACTIVITY



*How did you go with the activity? What are you grateful for?*

*Have you done anything like this before? How did it feel to reflect on things you are grateful for?*

*Have you ever tried to improve your mental health before? Is it easy or difficult to develop good mental health? Why?*

*Check out the group material for more ideas about how to develop good mental health. Which practices would you like to try in your life?*



# HOW TO DEVELOP GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

This information has been adapted from Beyond Blue.

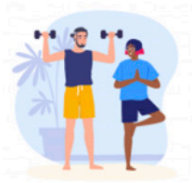
The Wellbeing Action Tool shows different ways to develop good mental health.

## Pause



In a world that can feel overwhelming, sometimes taking moments to pause is essential. Take the time you need to rest and reflect. To practice self-care. To engage in positive self-talk.

## Act



Taking action is about doing the things that help you feel good and thrive. This might come from caring for your body or taking positive steps towards a goal. These actions could be small, big, or somewhere in the middle.

## Connect



Having a sense of connection can help you feel safe, grounded and valued. Think about how you invest in your relationship with others or with your community. With nature or spirituality. Or with something else.

## Enjoy



Think about the things that you know help spark joy in your day, whether big or small. Embrace them by making time for them. Or try something new.

## Pause

|                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Reflect on my week           | Have a shower or bath              |
| Meditate                     | Stretch                            |
| Journal                      | Practice self-compassion           |
| Have a rest day              | Speak to myself positively         |
| Say no to something          | Check my thinking is helpful       |
| Challenge unhelpful thoughts | Make space for unpleasant feelings |

## Act

|                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Eat a healthy meal             | Dance at home             |
| Drink enough water             | Go to sleep early         |
| Go for a walk                  | Celebrate an achievement  |
| Clean my space                 | Cook a meal from scratch  |
| Do some Yoga                   | Complete a small task     |
| Wake at the same time each day | Take a break from alcohol |

## Connect

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Go on a nature walk                         | Call family or a friend   |
| Volunteer                                   | Say hello to a neighbour  |
| Spend time with pets                        | Do a kind act for someone |
| Join a community group                      | Spend time with friends   |
| Do some gardening                           | Connect to country        |
| Spend time with people who share my culture | Practice spirituality     |

## Enjoy

|                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Play word games              | Watch a favourite show    |
| Learn a new skill            | Visit a gallery or museum |
| Do a puzzle                  | Learn a new hobby         |
| Read a good book             | Make a playlist           |
| Watch a feel good movie      | Watch sports              |
| Learn about land and country | Join a class or course    |

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY

<sup>1</sup> One time Jesus was out praying, and when he finished, one of his followers said to him, “John taught his followers how to pray. Lord, teach us how to pray too.”

<sup>2</sup> Jesus said to the followers, “This is how you should pray:

‘Father, we pray that your name will always be kept holy.  
We pray that your kingdom will come.

<sup>3</sup> Give us the food we need for each day.

<sup>4</sup> Forgive our sins,  
just as we forgive everyone who has done wrong to us.  
And don’t let us be tempted.”

**Luke 11:1-4 ERV**



### Conclusion

*We all want good mental health. It helps us to enjoy life, achieve our goals, and feel confident about ourselves. But sometimes we don't know how to develop good mental health. The Good News is that Jesus shows us ways to develop good mental health. Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, and we can use this spiritual practice to develop good mental health.*



# LIFE LABS 4

*How do we support others if they're worried about their mental health?*



## INTRODUCTION



*We all want to help our friends when we notice them struggling with their mental health. We want to help them but don't know how. We might not feel confident or equipped to help. We can ask ourselves, "What difference will one conversation really make?" or "What do I have to give someone else?". Sometimes, it feels like mental health problems are everywhere, and we can feel lost about how to help. If we are struggling with our own mental health, it can feel impossible to help someone who's struggling with theirs.*

***How do we support others if they're worried about their mental health?***

# PLAY THE 'CAPTURE THE FLAG' GAME



*How did you go with the game? Did you think about your team members who were trapped in jail? In your life, do you notice those around you who are struggling with mental health?*

DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# DO THE 'RUOK' ROLE PLAY' ACTIVITY

Ask

**RUOK?**

Have a conversation using these 4 steps



How are you travelling?

You don't seem yourself lately - want to talk about it?

**Ask R U OK?**



I'm here to listen if you want to talk more.

Have you been feeling this way for a while?

**Listen**



What do you think is a first step that would help you through this?

Have you spoken to your doctor about this?

**Encourage action**



Just wanted to check in and see how you're doing?

Have things improved for you since we last spoke?

**Check in**

Learn more at [ruok.org.au](http://ruok.org.au)

## ROLE PLAYS

In each role-play, Person 1 has a scenario they are struggling with. Person 2 uses the RUOK Poster questions (as shown above) to ask how Person 1 is doing, show they are listening, and encourage action. For example, if Person 1 shares their struggle, the first question Person 2 would ask might be, “Have you been feeling this way for a while?”

### Scenario 1: I have too many assignments.

**Person 2 (ask R U OK):** are you okay? You don't seem like yourself lately. Do you want to talk about it?

**Person 1:** I'm doing okay. I just have a lot of assignments that I need to finish by the end of the week.

**Person 2 (Listen):** I'm here to listen if you want to tell me more about it.

**Person 1:** One of my carers is sick at the moment, which means I've had a lot of chores to do at home. It's been taking me ages to get it all done. I'm so tired once I've finally finished all my chores that I can barely concentrate on my homework. I'm feeling quite stressed and overwhelmed right now.

**Person 2 (Encourage Action):** What do you think is the first step that would help you through this?

**Person 1:** I could speak to one of my teachers or the student support worker about my circumstances at home and see if they can help.

*\*Person 1 leaves the room (to go and speak with the teacher)\**

*\*Person 1 returns\**

**Person 2 (Check In):** I just wanted to check in and see how you're doing.

**Person 1:** After our conversation, I spoke with my teacher, and they helped me get back on top of my homework by giving me an extension. I'm so happy that I received the help I needed. My carer is back to full health now, so I'm relieved there is less to do around the house and more time for things I enjoy.

### Scenario 2: No one will hire me.

**Person 2 (ask R U OK):** are you okay? You don't seem like yourself lately. Do you want to talk about it?

**Person 1:** I feel awful. I've been for five job interviews, and no one will hire me!

**Person 2 (Listen):** I'm here to listen if you want to tell me what happened.

**Person 1:** I went for an interview at Maccas last night and completely froze. The person interviewing me asked me a question, and I had no idea how to respond. I'd put so much pressure on myself to do well during the interview that I felt so worried and nervous. My heart was racing, and I couldn't speak clearly during the interview, which just made me feel worse. Then, once I left the interview, I felt completely overwhelmed and found it difficult to breathe.

**Person 2 (Encourage Action):** Have you spoken to a professional about this?

**Person 1:** I could call Headspace to get some support and better understand how I'm feeling. But I'm so nervous about contacting them.

**Person 2:** do you want some help to ring Headspace?

**Person 1:** that would be great.

*\*Person 1 and Person 2 leave the room (to go and ring Headspace)\**

*\*Person 1 and Person 2 return\**

**Person 2 (Check In):** I just wanted to check in and see how you're doing.

**Person 1:** After we called Headspace, I arranged a session with a psychologist. I've only had one session, so I have not noticed much change yet. But it was beneficial to talk about my experience with someone. Talking with the psychologist has helped me to have a better understanding of my emotions, and I now have some strategies I can use to help if I feel stressed or anxious.

## ROLE PLAYS

### Scenario 3: I feel a bit off.

**Person 2 (ask R U OK):** are you okay? Is there anything you want to talk about?

Person 1: I don't know what it is; I just haven't felt like myself lately.

**Person 2 (Listen):** Have you felt this way for a while?

**Person 1:** Most days, I don't even want to leave my room. I always feel sad, I'm having trouble sleeping, and I never want to get out of bed in the morning. I don't understand why I feel so sad all the time.

**Person 2 (Encourage Action):** Have you spoken to your doctor about this?

**Person 1:** not yet. I'd rather talk to someone I know, so I'll arrange an appointment with our school counsellor.

*\*Person 1 leaves the room (to go and speak with the school counsellor)\**

*\*Person 1 returns\**

**Person 2 (Check In):** I just wanted to check in and see how you're doing.

**Person 1:** After our conversation, I spoke with our school counsellor, who referred me to a child psychiatrist. I was nervous to speak to them at first, but in the first session, they made me feel comfortable and relaxed, and it felt good to talk about how I feel. After sessions with the child psychiatrist, I have been diagnosed with depression. I still have a lot of questions, but I feel like I'm gradually getting answers and working through what this diagnosis means for my life. I feel relieved to better understand why I've been feeling so down and learn strategies to help me.

### Scenario 4: I don't think anyone likes me.

In this scenario, Person 1 feels down because they think they don't have any friends. They have been struggling to connect with people at school and feel lonely. Person 2 can suggest they speak to a counsellor, youth worker, or carers.

Improvise this scenario using what you learned from the above scenarios and the 4 Steps poster in the group material.



## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# A GOOD FRIEND

<sup>25</sup> Then an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. He said, “Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you understand from it?”

<sup>27</sup> The man answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’[a] Also, ‘Love your neighbor the same as you love yourself.’[b]”

<sup>28</sup> Jesus said, “Your answer is right. Do this and you will have eternal life.”

<sup>29</sup> But the man wanted to show that the way he was living was right. So he said to Jesus, “But who is my neighbor?”

<sup>30</sup> To answer this question, Jesus said, “A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some robbers surrounded him, tore off his clothes, and beat him. Then they left him lying there on the ground almost dead.

<sup>31</sup> “It happened that a Jewish priest was going down that road. When he saw the man, he did not stop to help him. He walked away.

<sup>32</sup> Next, a Levite came near. He saw the hurt man, but he went around him. He would not stop to help him either. He just walked away.

<sup>33</sup> “Then a Samaritan man traveled down that road. He came to the place where the hurt man was lying. He saw the man and felt very sorry for him.

<sup>34</sup> The Samaritan went to him and poured olive oil and wine[c] on his wounds. Then he covered the man’s wounds with cloth. The Samaritan had a donkey. He put the hurt man on his donkey, and he took him to an inn. There he cared for him.

<sup>35</sup> The next day, the Samaritan took out two silver coins and gave them to the man who worked at the inn. He said, ‘Take care of this hurt man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again.’”

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus said, “Which one of these three men do you think was really a neighbor to the man who was hurt by the robbers?”

<sup>37</sup> The teacher of the law answered, “The one who helped him.”

Jesus said, “Then you go and do the same.”

**Luke 10:25-37 ERV**



## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS



### Conclusion

*We might notice that our friends are struggling with their mental health but don't know how to help them. Sometimes, it feels like mental health problems are everywhere, and we can feel lost about how to help. The Good News is that we can all make a difference and help someone who is struggling. Just like the Samaritan, we can care for our friends and keep checking in on them. When we care for our friends, we're doing the most important thing we can do. Each one of us can help someone be no longer lost.*



# LIFE LABS 5

*What does it  
mean to be part  
of a church?*





## INTRODUCTION



'Church' can mean different things to different people. You might think of church as a building, a place where people go on a Sunday morning to sing songs and read the Bible. Or perhaps you think of church as your youth group, being with your friends, and learning more about God together. Or maybe you've heard that church is full of strange people who follow strict rules. Churches can be communities that support us and help us grow in faith. But with so many different ideas about church, knowing what it's all about can be confusing.

**What does it mean to be part of a church?**



# PLAY THE 'TEAM SONG' GAME



How did you go with the game? Did your team song help you feel connected to the group? When have you felt part of a group?

**Our Team Song:**

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DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# HOW TO DO THE ‘WHAT DOES CHURCH MEAN?’ ACTIVITY

How would you describe what a church is?

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What kinds of activities or services do churches provide?

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What effect do churches have on people that are part of them?

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What effect do churches have in their communities?

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Name all the churches you know about in your community. If you're unsure, you can use your phone.

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What are some of the differences between the churches in your community?

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What do you know about the Salvation Army in your area? What do they do? Where are they?

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What would you like to learn more about churches?

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## CHURCH

Here are some different ways that people might use the word “church” and what they mean.

| Phrase   | What “church” means in that sentence  |
|--|---|
| “Are you coming to church on Sunday?”          | Church means the ‘meeting’ or ‘service’ that happens every week on a Sunday or sometimes on other days of the week.   |
| “Did you lock up the church?”                  | Church means the physical building that people meet in.   |
| “How does our church respond to homelessness?” | Church is the group of people in a particular community who follow Jesus together. They often meet together and share common beliefs.   |
| “Jesus is the head of the Church”              | Church means all of the people around the world that follow Jesus. Usually this meaning for church would be spelt with a capital ‘C’ and sometimes called the ‘universal Church’. |



## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# THE BELIEVERS OF GOD LIVE IN COMMUNITY

<sup>42</sup> The believers spent their time listening to the teaching of the apostles. They shared everything with each other. They ate together and prayed together.

<sup>43</sup> Many wonders and miraculous signs were happening through the apostles, and everyone felt great respect for God.

<sup>44</sup> All the believers stayed together and shared everything.

<sup>45</sup> They sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those who needed it.

<sup>46</sup> The believers shared a common purpose, and every day they spent much of their time together in the Temple area. They also ate together in their homes. They were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts.

<sup>47</sup> The believers praised God and were respected by all the people. More and more people were being saved every day, and the Lord was adding them to their group.

### Acts 2:42-47 (ERV)



### Discuss these topic questions

*What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to what it means to be part of a church?*

*In the Scripture, the church community is described as people who follow God, support the needy, and help others experience God and find belonging in a community. How would you describe church?*

*In the Scripture, the church community spent a lot of time together. They learnt, ate, prayed, and shared what they had with each other. How does this compare to your experience of church? How is it similar or different?*

*More and more people were added to the church community daily. What difference does it make knowing that church is for everyone?*



### Conclusion

*A church community can support us and help us grow in faith. But sometimes, we can feel lost about what a church community is and how we might be a part of one. The Good News is that the church is for everyone. Just like the believers in the Bible, we can follow Jesus in a community. Being part of a church community means we have other people to support us, a shared purpose to help the needy, and a place where everyone belongs and can follow Jesus together.*

# LIFE LABS 6

*How can  
church help our  
faith grow?*



## INTRODUCTION



*Have you ever felt like the odd one out because of your faith in Jesus? Maybe none of your friends at school are Christians. Or perhaps God isn't talked about much at home. Sometimes, when we feel alone and discouraged as followers of Jesus, it can be challenging to grow in our faith. We can feel lost and not know who to turn to for support and encouragement. Sometimes we need other people to help our faith grow.*

***How can church help our faith grow?***



# PLAY THE 'KEEP AWAY' GAME



*How did you go with the game? How did it feel to be the person who was 'it'? What do you do if you feel alone or like you don't belong?*

**DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS**

# DO THE 'EACH ONE TEACH ONE' ACTIVITY

Use the table below to list what you want to learn and identify people from your church community that could teach you.

| What I would like to learn | Who from my church community could teach me |
|----------------------------|---|
|                            |   |
|                            |   |
|                            |   |
|                            |   |

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# GROWING IN OUR FAITH TOGETHER

<sup>24</sup> We should think about each other to see how we can encourage each other to show love and do good works.

<sup>25</sup> We must not quit meeting together, as some are doing. No, we need to keep on encouraging each other. This becomes more and more important as you see the Day getting closer.

**Hebrews 10:24-25 (ERV)**



### Discuss these topic questions

*What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to how the church can help our faith grow?*

*This Scripture says that followers of Jesus show love and encourage one another. What difference does it make when you have people who love, encourage, and support you?*

*Followers of Jesus meet together and encourage each other, which helps them grow in their faith. Does being a part of a church community help you to grow your faith?*

*As this Scripture says, sometimes people disconnect from churches. Why do you think people leave churches? Why do you connect or disconnect from church communities?*

### Conclusion

*When we feel alone and discouraged, it can be challenging to grow in our faith. We can feel lost and not know who to turn to for support and encouragement. The Good News is that we are not alone as followers of Jesus. A church community can encourage us, love us, and support us to grow as followers of Jesus.*



# LIFE LABS 7

*What role can we  
play in church?*

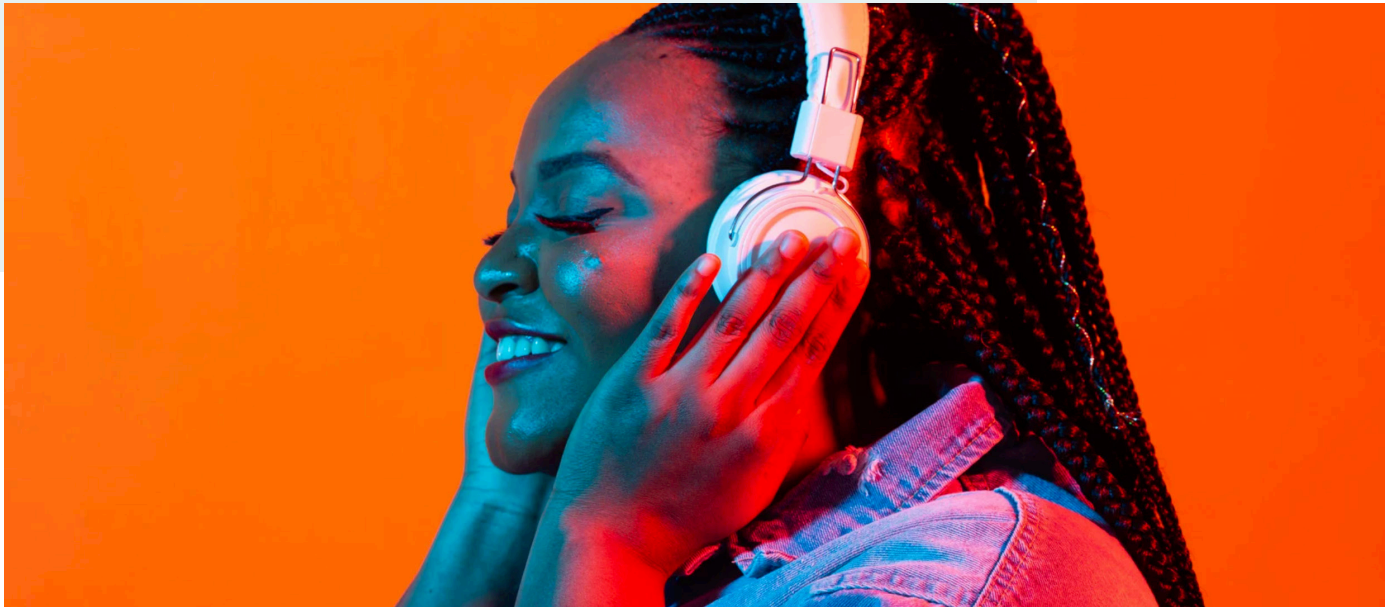


## INTRODUCTION



*When we are part of a group, we want to feel like we belong. Belonging to a church means that we feel connected, but it also means we have a role and a part to play. But what if we don't have a role in our church? Maybe our church community doesn't give as many opportunities to younger people. Or we don't have the power to make decisions and contribute to making a positive difference. Maybe we feel like we don't have anything to offer. When we struggle to find a role in the church community, we can wonder if there is a place for us at all.*

***What role can we play in church?***



# PLAY THE 'SHAZAAM HOTSEAT' GAME



*How did you go with the game? How did you help your group?  
What do you contribute to the groups you are a part of?*

DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# DO THE 'STORY TIME' ACTIVITY

Here is a list of some spiritual gifts and their description. Take some to read them and reflect if any represent you. There are many spiritual gifts so if you have a spiritual gift not listed you can write it down with a description in the space below.

**The Gift of Serving:** providing practical help to others when they need help.

**The Gift of Teaching:** being able to help others to learn and understand different aspects of faith and God.

**The Gift of Encouraging:** noticing the good in others and building them up with your words.

**The Gift of Giving:** sharing your resources generously with others. This might be sharing your time, money, or anything that you have that can help someone else.

**The Gift of Leadership:** helping others to follow Jesus with guidance and wisdom. People might look to you for advice or naturally follow you.

**The Gift of Mercy:** noticing when others are struggling and showing them compassion, kindness, and empathy.

**The Gift of Faith:** having a strong confidence and trust in God. You can inspire and motivate others to trust God too.

**The Gift of Discernment:** being able to understand what God is like. You can usually see when something is 'off' in the world or in churches. You can help people to understand what God is really like.

**The Gift of** \_\_\_\_\_ :  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# THE BODY OF CHRIST

<sup>15</sup> The foot might say, "I am not a hand, so I don't belong to the body." But saying this would not stop the foot from being a part of the body.

<sup>16</sup> The ear might say, "I am not an eye, so I don't belong to the body." But saying this would not make the ear stop being a part of the body.

<sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, it would not be able to hear. If the whole body were an ear, it would not be able to smell anything.

<sup>18-19</sup> If each part of the body were the same part, there would be no body. But as it is, God put the parts in the body as he wanted them. He made a place for each one.

<sup>20</sup> So there are many parts, but only one body.

...

<sup>27</sup> All of you together are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of that body.

<sup>28</sup> And in the church God has given a place first to apostles, second to prophets, and third to teachers. Then God has given a place to those who do miracles, those who have gifts of healing, those who can help others, those who are able to lead, and those who can speak in different kinds of languages.

<sup>29</sup> Not all are apostles. Not all are prophets. Not all are teachers. Not all do miracles.

<sup>30</sup> Not all have gifts of healing. Not all speak in different kinds of languages. Not all interpret those languages.

<sup>31</sup> Continue to give your attention to the spiritual gifts you consider to be the greatest.

**1 Corinthians 12:15-20, 27-31 (ERV)**



## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS



### Discuss these topic questions

*What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to what role we can play in church?*

*The Scripture describes us like a body and each of us as different parts with different characteristics. What do you do well? What have you heard other people say you are good at?*

*Just like the Body of Christ, our church community can work together to serve others. What do you enjoy doing to serve others? How can you do this as part of the church?*

*The Scripture says that God has given each of us gifts, but sometimes a church community can view some skills as more valuable than others. Have you ever negatively compared your contributions to others? What difference does it make that your skills and gifts come from God?*



### Conclusion

*When we are part of a group, we want to feel like we belong. Belonging to a church means that we feel connected, but it also means we have a role and a part to play. When we struggle to find a role in the church community, we can wonder if there is a place for us at all. The Good News is that we all have a role to play in church communities. God has given us gifts and skills, and when we use our skills to contribute to church communities, we can find our place.*



# LIFE LABS 8

*What do we do if  
a church doesn't  
work for us?*



## INTRODUCTION



Church communities can be great environments where we feel like we belong. They can help us to grow in our faith, discover our purpose, and be encouraged and supported by a loving group of people. But what do we do if the church we're at isn't for us? Maybe we feel conflicted when some of the church's beliefs don't align with our values. Perhaps we're bored at church because we don't have a say in what is talked about. Or maybe we have disagreements with leaders, friends, or members of the church community. When we experience conflict in church communities it can reach a point where it feels like a church no longer works for us.

**What do we do if church doesn't work for us?**

# PLAY THE 'ROB THE NEST' GAME



How did you go with the game? How did you feel when people stole from your hula hoop? How do you deal with conflict with others in groups you are a part of?



## WHAT TO DO WHEN CHURCH ISN'T WORKING

Use the table below to list what you want to learn and identify people from your church community that could teach you.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>The issue I am having at church is:</b><br/>Explain the issue. It may be a challenge, disagreement, situation, or recurring problem.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>It's significant because:</b><br/>Why does this matter? What's at stake if you can't resolve this issue? What impact could this have on your life as a follower of Jesus?</p>   |  |
| <p><b>My ideal outcome is:</b><br/>What specific results would you like to achieve?</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Relevant background information:</b><br/>Summarise the situation with bullet points: what, who, where, when, how, and why.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>What have I done up to this point?</b><br/>What actions have you taken so far to try and improve the situation?</p>   |  |
| <p><b>The options I am considering are:</b><br/>What actions are you considering? What other actions could help? Some examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking on a new role at church to make things better.</li> <li>• Talking to someone about the issue.</li> <li>• Changing the way that you're involved in the church.</li> </ul> |  |
| <p><b>The help I want to receive is:</b><br/>How can your church, youth leader, youth group, friends, family, etc. help you?</p>  |  |



## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

# GOD IS LOVE

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has become God's child. And so everyone who loves knows God.

<sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

**1 John 4:7-8 (ERV)**



### Discuss these topic questions

*What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to what we do if church doesn't work for us?*

*Churches are groups of God's children. In this Scripture, God's children are described as those who show love to one another. How have people at church shown God's love to you?*

*Conflict can occur within church communities that can make us think that church doesn't work for us. In the Scripture, we are encouraged to always show love to one another. How do you show love to others who you aren't getting along with?*

*When we find people and places that show us love, we find God. When you're struggling with church, who are the people and places that show you God's love?*



### Conclusion

*Church communities can be great environments where we feel like we belong. But sometimes we can experience conflict in church communities and feel like a church no longer works for us. The Good News is that church communities can show us God's love. Even when they fall short, we know that God is love, and we can look for people and places that love us like God does.*



## Contact Us

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[salvationarmy.org.au/youth-ya](http://salvationarmy.org.au/youth-ya)  
[equileaders.com.au](http://equileaders.com.au)

