



**LEADER MATERIAL**  
**TERM 2 | 2024**



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



# SESSION 1

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

### SESSION OUTLINE

**Purpose:** this session aims to help young people identify when they are struggling with their mental health and consider the Good News that no matter what they are going through, God loves them.

**Game:** the 'Emotion Match' game gets young people to experience identifying emotions.

**Activity:** the 'Fact or Fiction' activity helps young people break down stigma and consider their beliefs about mental health.

**Scripture:** the Scripture Psalm 13 explores how when we are struggling and feel lost God's love is always there for us.

### How to run a session

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session
- Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

### Equipment needed for this session

- Emotion Match PowerPoint (downloadable file)
- Emotion Card cut-outs (1 set per participant)
- Fact or Fiction cut-outs (1 set per pair)
- Envelopes

### Feel Prepared to Run this Session

Mental health can be a complex and challenging topic to discuss, especially with young people. We can worry about saying the wrong thing, not know how to address different mental health challenges and feel overwhelmed by how prevalent it is in the world. Mental health is an important topic for young people. Therefore, during the following four sessions, we want to foster spaces where mental health can be discussed and young people can be encouraged to seek support if needed.

If any of your young people disclose that they are experiencing mental health challenges that could put them at risk of harm, follow The Salvation Army's reporting procedures and draw attention to the support services in the group material that young people can access.

## READ THE INTRODUCTION, PLAY THE GAME

10 MINUTES



*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?*

*As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the Emotion Match game.*



# PLAY THE 'EMOTION MATCH' GAME

**Equipment:** Emotion Match PowerPoint

**Preparation:**

- The aim of the game is for participants to select the emotion they think represents how the character is feeling on the slide show.
- Each participant is given an envelope with the cut-out emotions cards.
- Show participants the first character and get them to hold up the emotion card they think represents that character.
- Ask for a volunteer to explain why they chose their card. If other participants have chosen a different emotion, you can ask them to explain their choice.
- Continue until you reach the end of the slide show.



*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

15 MINUTES

# HOW TO DO THE 'FACT OR FICTION' ACTIVITY

**Equipment:** Fact or fiction cut-outs (1 set per pair), envelopes

- Participants get into pairs and are given an envelope with the cut-out statements about mental health.
- Each pair determines which statements are fiction and which statements are fact by placing the statements in two piles.
- Give participants 10 minutes to complete the activity.
- Discuss the answers as a group after 10 minutes (or when every pair has finished the activity).

This activity is adapted from Positive Psychology. Original available at: <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/Mental-Illness-Myths-and-Reality.pdf>

### Leaders, watch the participants for:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict



### Discuss the activity

*How did you go with the activity? Did you learn anything about mental health?*

*Were there any answers that surprised you? Why?*

*How did you decide what was fact or fiction? How do you usually find information about mental health?*

*How do you know if you're struggling with your mental health? Who can help you if you're not sure?*

### In the group material

*Information about how to identify if you need help with your mental health*

## HOW TO IDENTIFY IF I MIGHT NEED HELP WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH



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

15 MINUTES

# 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**



## DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS



*What do you think about what we just read? How might it relate to how we know if we are struggling with our mental health?*

*In the Scripture, the psalmist feels sad, rejected, and forgotten. Have you ever felt this way?*

*The psalmist cries out to God for comfort. Do you feel confident turning to God for comfort when you're struggling with your mental health? Why or why not?*

*The psalmist trusts that God loves them even though they are struggling. Is that something you agree with? When you're struggling, what difference does it make knowing that God loves you no matter what?*



### Notes on the scripture for facilitators

- The psalmist is experiencing challenging circumstances and doesn't know when it will end. These challenging circumstances cause the psalmist to feel sad, rejected, and even forgotten by God.
- The psalmist then realises their need for help and cries out to God. Amid the challenge, the psalmist doesn't feel alienated by God but is drawn to God.
- The psalmist is no longer lost and finds security and trust in God's love. Even through challenging circumstances, the psalmist reflects on God's love and goodness towards them.
- It is important that we are sensitive when we talk about mental health and faith. Mental health conditions are like any other health issue, and we understand that while God sometimes heals, sometimes we live with illness or disability. This does not mean that God loves us less or we have less faith. As we discuss mental health and following Jesus in these four sessions, it is important that young people know that it is not their fault if they struggle, and that sometimes it can take time and treatment for our mental health to improve.

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

5 MINUTES



*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.*



### Ask the group

*Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.*

*Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.*

*Remind them when the next session is.*



# CLOSE THE SESSION





## EMOTION CARDS

<b>ANGRY</b>	<b>SAD</b>	<b>DISGUSTED</b>
<b>SCARED</b>	<b>HAPPY</b>	<b>WORRIED</b>
<b>STRESSED</b>	<b>EXCITED</b>	<b>EMBARRASSED</b>
<b>CONFUSED</b>	<b>CONFIDENT</b>	<b>OVERWHELMED</b>

<b>ANGRY</b>	<b>SAD</b>	<b>DISGUSTED</b>
<b>SCARED</b>	<b>HAPPY</b>	<b>WORRIED</b>
<b>STRESSED</b>	<b>EXCITED</b>	<b>EMBARRASSED</b>
<b>CONFUSED</b>	<b>CONFIDENT</b>	<b>OVERWHELMED</b>

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<b>STRESSED</b>	<b>EXCITED</b>	<b>EMBARRASSED</b>
<b>CONFUSED</b>	<b>CONFIDENT</b>	<b>OVERWHELMED</b>

## FACT OR FICTION CARDS

Fiction	Fact
Mental health illnesses are something that only adults suffer from.	Mental illness can occur in anyone, regardless of their age.
People with a mental illness will struggle with work, study, and life in general.	Mental illnesses can sometimes make different things more difficult. This may include studies, home life, and professional work - but there's always help available.
Having a mental illness makes life much more difficult. It's tough to live independently when you're an adult, to look after yourself or find a home.	Not all mental health conditions are the same. Living with a mental health illness, or being diagnosed with a mental health disorder, will not necessarily prevent you from living on your own.
Mental illnesses are for life. There is no recovery.	People with mental health complications recover all the time, and no two illnesses are alike.
There's no point in talking about mental illnesses. Medicine is the best and only way to feel better.	Just like with physical complications, mental illnesses require more than medication alone.
Mental illnesses make people violent, aggressive, and dangerous.	More often than not, people living with mental health issues are not dangerous or violent.
Some minorities are more vulnerable to mental illness than others.	Anyone can be diagnosed with a mental health complication, regardless of their race, gender, religious background, or where they live.

# SESSION 2

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

## SESSION OUTLINE

**Purpose:** this session aims to help young people identify how they can receive support when they are struggling with their mental health and consider the Good News that Jesus supports us to find the help we need.

**Game:** the *How Low Can You Go?* game gets young people to experience how it's easier to do things together than on their own.

**Activity:** the '*Who You Gonna Call?*' activity helps young people identify helpful support resources available to them.

**Scripture:** the Scripture Mark 10:46-52 explores how Jesus can support us to find the help that we need.

## How to run a session

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session
- Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

## Equipment needed for this session

- Broom handle or similar

## READ THE INTRODUCTION, PLAY THE GAME


10 MINUTES



*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?*

*As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the How Low Can You Go? game.*



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

**Equipment:** Broom handle or similar

- Tell participants that the purpose of the game is to lower the broom handle to the ground without dropping it.
- Ask each participant to have a go lowering a broom handle. Participants use one finger to lower it to the ground from standing. They cannot use any other body part or object to assist them. To win, the broom handle must be laying on the ground and never lose contact with the participant's finger.
- Once everyone has had a go, if they haven't thought of it already, suggest they try to lower the broom handle with a partner. Let everyone have a go at completing the challenge.



*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

15 MINUTES

# HOW TO DO THE 'WHO YOU GONNA CALL?' ACTIVITY

- Participants get into pairs and complete the Who You Gonna Call? Directory in their group material.
- Give participants 10 minutes to fill in as much as they can.
- When participants have finished, as a group, discuss and share answers for each participant to add to their own directory.

### Leaders, watch the participants for:

What they say to each other  
What they find hard  
What they find easy  
What worked  
What caused conflict



### Discuss the 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?*

### In the group material

*Participants complete the Who You Gonna Call? Directory. Information about who to contact for mental health support.*

# “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

15 MINUTES

# 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**





## 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 how we get help if we're struggling with our mental health?*

*Bartimaeus had been struggling for a long time, but when he heard Jesus walking past, he reached out for support. What do you do when you need support?*

*Jesus hears Bartimaeus and asks him what he needs. Bartimaeus then tells Jesus how he can support him. Do you feel confident expressing your needs to Jesus? Why or why not?*

*Jesus helps Bartimaeus, but Bartimaeus doesn't stop seeking support. Instead, he follows Jesus down the road. How does following Jesus help you when you're struggling with your mental health?*



### Notes on the scripture for facilitators:

- Bartimaeus had been facing challenging circumstances for a long time and was known as someone who always begged for money. When Bartimaeus recognised that Jesus was walking past and could help him, he reached out to him for support.
- Even though other people discourage Bartimaeus, Jesus hears his cries for help, goes to him and asks him what he needs. Bartimaeus articulates what he needs from Jesus.
- Jesus is able to help Bartimaeus, but Bartimaeus doesn't stop seeking support. He continues to engage with Jesus and journeys with him down the road.
- As noted in Session 1, Jesus doesn't promise to heal us of our mental health challenges. However, He does promise always to be there to support us and journey with us to find the help we need.

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

5 MINUTES



*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.*

### Ask the group

*Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.*

*Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.*

*Remind them when the next session is.*



CLOSE THE SESSION

# SESSION 3

## How do we develop good mental health?

### SESSION OUTLINE

**Purpose:** this session aims to help young people explore how they can develop good mental health and reflect on the Good News that Jesus shows us ways to develop good mental health.

**Game:** the *Minute to Win It* game gets young people to experience finding some challenges easier or more complicated than others.

**Activity:** the *Gratitude Rocks* activity helps young people practice finding things in their lives to be grateful for.

**Scripture:** the Scripture Luke 11:1-4 explores how Jesus teaches us how to develop good mental health.

### How to run a session

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session
- Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

### Equipment needed for this session

- Empty cereal boxes
- Toothpicks
- Balloons
- Small rocks
- Markers
- Stickers
- Speaker
- Music device

## READ THE INTRODUCTION, PLAY THE GAME

10 MINUTES



*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?*

*As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the Minute to Win It game.*



# PLAY THE 'MINUTE TO WIN IT' GAME

**Equipment:** empty cereal box, toothpicks, balloons.

- Split participants into two teams. (Depending on group size, you may need more).
- Each group has 1 minute to try and complete each challenge.
- Both groups complete the same challenge at the same time. Therefore, make sure you have double the equipment for each challenge.



*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?*

## MINUTE TO WIN IT CHALLENGES



### Challenge 1: Cereal Box Puzzle

- Cut one side of a cereal box into 15-20 pieces.
- Participants are given 1 minute to reassemble the puzzle.



### Challenge 2: Toothpick Words

- Give each group a pack of toothpicks.
- Tell each group to spell three-letter words without breaking or bending the toothpicks.
- Each group is given 1 minute to create five words.



### Challenge 3: Keep the Balloons Up

- Each group is given two balloons.
- Participants must keep the balloons off the ground for 1 minute by hitting or kicking them into the air.
- Participants cannot touch the balloon twice in a row. They must wait for another person to touch it.
- Participants cannot hold onto the balloon at any point.

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

15 MINUTES

# HOW TO DO THE 'GRATITUDE ROCKS' ACTIVITY

**Equipment:** small rocks (can get packs of rocks from Bunnings approx. \$9), markers, stickers, Speaker, music device.

**Preparation:**

- Play some calming and reflective music.
- Spread out rocks and markers in a shared space.
- Encourage each participant to take a rock and use the coloured markers and stickers to write or draw something they're grateful for.
- Participants may write a word or phrase, draw a picture, or decorate it with a pattern that means something to them.
- Encourage participants to share what they've written or drawn on their rock if they're comfortable at the end of the activity.
- Each rock acts as a symbol that participants can keep, reminding them to be grateful for the things in their lives, especially when they might need some extra encouragement.

**Leaders, watch the participants for:**

What they say to each other  
What they find hard  
What they find easy  
What worked  
What caused conflict



### Discuss the 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?*



### In the group material

*A list of ways to develop good mental health.*

# HOW TO DEVELOP GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

This information has been adapted from Beyond Blue.

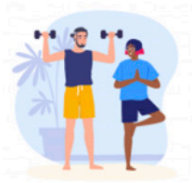
The Wellbeing Action Tool shows different ways to develop good mental health.

## 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

15 MINUTES

# 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



### Discuss these topic questions

*What do you think about what we just read? How might it relate to how we can develop good mental health?*

*Prayer helps Jesus connect with God, pause to reflect on his past, and ask for help. These actions all help develop good mental health. Have you ever done anything like this to develop your mental health? What happened?*

*Jesus often went off alone to pray, especially when he needed time to process. How might spending time with God help you to develop good mental health?*

*Have you tried any spiritual practices to develop your mental health before? What difference might these spiritual practices make in your life?*

### Notes on the scripture for facilitators:

- In Luke 5:16, we read that Jesus would often pray in the wilderness by himself. Jesus did this before and after significant events in his life when He needed to develop good mental health.
- In Luke 11:1-4, the disciples notice Jesus praying and ask him to teach them. They want to learn from Jesus and follow His example.
- Jesus listens to His disciples and teaches them a reflective prayer. Praying can help us develop good mental health by connecting with God, practising gratitude for all He provides, reflecting on our lives, and being forgiven for our past mistakes.
- Jesus’ actions teach us how to develop good mental health. When we face mental health challenges, we can follow the example of Jesus and learn from how He lives.



## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

5 MINUTES



*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.*

### Ask the group

*Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.*

*Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.*

*Remind them when the next session is.*



# CLOSE THE SESSION

# SESSION 4

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

## SESSION OUTLINE

**Purpose:** this session aims to help young people explore how they can support other people with mental health concerns and reflect on the Good News that we can help support our friends by caring for them like the Samaritan.

**Game:** the *Capture the Flag* game gets young people to experience noticing when someone is struggling and needs help.

**Activity:** the *RUOK Role Play* activity helps young people practice talking with their friends about their mental health.

**Scripture:** the Scripture Luke 10:25-37 explores how we can help people who are struggling and need assistance.

## How to run a session

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session
- Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

## Equipment needed for this session

- Large Flags
- RUOK resources (provided)
- Screen to show video (with sound)

## READ THE INTRODUCTION, PLAY THE GAME

10 MINUTES



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?

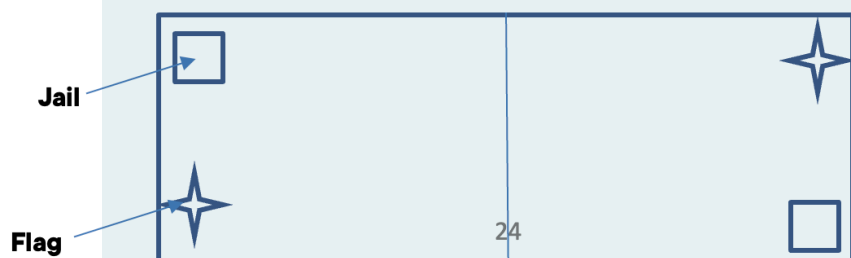
As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the Capture the Flag game.

# PLAY THE 'CAPTURE THE FLAG' GAME

- Divide participants into two groups.
- Set up a playing space with a 'halfway line' and room for participants to safely run around.
- Each team is given one flag and a jail to be placed at the back of their team's side (see diagram).
- The object of the game is to grab the opposition's flag and return it to your team's side without getting tagged.
- Each participant is safe while on their team's side but can be tagged when on the opposition's side.
- If a participant is tagged, they go to the other team's jail.
- To be rescued, a team member must make it to the jail un-tagged and grab their team member's hand. Both participants are then safe and can cross back to their side.
- Each team only gets a point for capturing the flag if none of their team members are in jail.



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

15 MINUTES

# HOW TO DO THE 'RUOK ROLE PLAY' ACTIVITY

**Equipment:** Screen to show video (with sound)

**Leader to read out:**



*"How do I bring up mental health with my friends?"*

*If you notice a friend or someone you know is struggling, you might want to help but not know how to. When people are struggling with their mental health, someone checking in and asking what is needed can make a big difference. Let's look at how we can check in with other people about their mental health."*

**Show video:** <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask>

### Do the RUOK Role Play Activity.

- Tell participants they will practice using the A.L.E.C. questions to start a conversation about mental health.
- Get participants into groups of three for the role plays.
- Each participant chooses to be Person 1, Person 2, or the observer for the first scenario. Rotate characters after each scenario.
- Show the group the 4 Steps Poster from RUOK in their group material.
- Encourage each group to take turns role-playing the different scenarios and using the 4 Steps Poster to ask follow-up questions. Participants might also like to improvise a conversation using Scenario 4.
- Even though it might be awkward to read a script and feel a bit fake, it is an example of how the RUOK questions can be used to help our friends.

### Leaders, watch the participants for:

What they say to each other

What they find hard

What they find easy

What worked

What caused conflict



## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

### Discuss the activity

How did you go with the activity? Have you ever had a conversation like this before?

Which role did you find most comfortable to play? Do you feel more comfortable asking for help or giving help? Why?

Think of a time when you noticed someone was struggling with their mental health. How did you respond?

How can this conversation template help you to support other people with their mental health?

### In the group material

Role plays and 4 Steps Poster available at: [https://irp.cdn-website.com/22b3e3c9/files/uploaded/COMM\\_ALL\\_evergreen\\_4Steps\\_Poster\\_230406.pdf](https://irp.cdn-website.com/22b3e3c9/files/uploaded/COMM_ALL_evergreen_4Steps_Poster_230406.pdf)

**Ask**  
**RU OK?**™

Have a conversation using these 4 steps

- 1 Ask R U OK?**  
Illustration: Two characters, one with a question mark above their head.  
Dialogue: "How are you travelling?" and "You don't seem yourself lately - want to talk about it?"
- 2 Listen**  
Illustration: One character listening to another who is speaking.  
Dialogue: "I'm here to listen if you want to talk more." and "Have you been feeling this way for a while?"
- 3 Encourage action**  
Illustration: One character pointing towards another who is walking a dog.  
Dialogue: "What do you think is a first step that would help you through this?" and "Have you spoken to your doctor about this?"
- 4 Check in**  
Illustration: One character sitting at a table with another who is eating.  
Dialogue: "Just wanted to check in and see how you're doing?" and "Have things improved for you since we last spoke?"

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

15 MINUTES

# 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



### Discuss these topic questions

*What do you think about what we just read? How might it relate to how we can support other people with their mental health?*

*In this parable, the Samaritan stopped to help when he saw the person was struggling. How do you know when people need help?*

*The Samaritan knew he couldn't support the person in need on his own. Who are the people who can help you when supporting someone with their mental health challenge is too big for you to handle?*

*In the same way the Samaritan cared for the person in need, we can care for our friends who might be struggling with their mental health. How can we support someone with their mental health?*



### Notes on the scripture for facilitators:

- All three people who passed the man noticed that he needed help, but only the Samaritan stopped to help. Jesus' audience would not have expected the Samaritan to be the hero, which reminds us that even unexpected people can make a difference for others.
- The Samaritan had compassion for the beaten-up man and gave his resources to help a stranger in need.
- Helping others has a cost for us. Whether it's giving up our time, money, or energy, helping people is not always easy, but it's the right thing to do.
- The Samaritan said he would return and check in on the man while he was recovering. The Samaritan wanted to continue being this man's friend and check in to ensure he was okay.

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

5 MINUTES



*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.*



### Ask the group

*Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.*

*Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.*

*Remind them when the next session is*



# CLOSE THE SESSION

# SESSION 5

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

### SESSION OUTLINE

**Purpose:** the purpose of this session is to help young people explore their perspectives of being part of a church and consider the Good News that we can follow Jesus with others in a community.

**Game:** the 'Team Song' game gets young people to experience being a part of a group.

**Activity:** the 'What Does Church Mean?' activity helps young people consider what they know about church and share their views.

**Scripture:** the Scripture Acts 2:42-47 explores how being part of a church means that we have people who support us, a shared purpose, and a place where everyone can follow Jesus together.

### How to run a session

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session
- Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

### Equipment needed for this session

None

## READ THE INTRODUCTION, PLAY THE GAME

10 MINUTES



'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?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the Team Song game.



# PLAY THE 'TEAM SONG' GAME

- Get the group to create a team song to introduce and describe each team member. If you have a larger group, split into two teams.
- They can clap, click, sing, stomp, whisper, yell, etc. Encourage them to think about how you can make different sounds without using instruments.
- Encourage the group to have a specific action or dance for each team member.
- Each member needs to be involved in the song.
- After 5 minutes, have them perform their song and encourage one another!



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?

### In the group material

Space for young people to write their song.

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

15 MINUTES

# HOW TO DO THE 'WHAT DOES CHURCH MEAN?' ACTIVITY

- Participants complete the 'What does church mean?' worksheet in the group material.
- Give participants 10 minutes to fill in as much as they can. They can do this activity as individuals or in pairs.
- When participants have finished, as a group, discuss and share answers for each participant to add to their worksheet.

Here are the questions from the 'What does church mean' activity in the group material.

1. How would you describe what a church is?
2. What kinds of activities or services do churches provide?
3. What effect do churches have on people that are part of them?
4. What effect do churches have in their communities?
5. Name all the churches you know about in your community. If you're unsure, you can use your phone.
6. What are some of the differences between the churches in your community?
7. What do you know about the Salvation Army in your area? What do they do? Where are they?
8. What would you like to learn more about churches?

### Leaders, watch the participants for:

What they say to each other  
What they find hard  
What they find easy  
What worked  
What caused conflict



### Discuss the activity

*How did you go with the activity? Did you learn anything new about 'church'?*

*What do you think about when you hear 'church'? What's been your experience of church?*

*What have you heard people say about 'church'? Do you agree? Why or why not?*

*How do you know if you're part of a church? What difference does it make being part of a church community?*

### In the group material

*Participants complete the 'What is the Church?' worksheet and learn how we can use the word 'church' in different ways.*

## WHAT DOES CHURCH MEAN?

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

15 MINUTES

# 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?*

### Notes on the scripture for facilitators:

- The early church spent a lot of time together. They learnt and studied the scriptures, ate meals, prayed, and shared what they had with each other. The early church was a tight-knit community.
- In the Scripture, the church community is described as people who loved and followed God together, helped the needy by sharing their resources, and was a vehicle for others to experience God and find belonging in a community.
- The people spent time together growing spiritually and supported one another's physical needs by sharing what they had.
- The early church was constantly growing, with new people being included in the community daily. New people were able to connect with God because of the community.



## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

5 MINUTES



*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.*



### Ask the group

*Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.*

*Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.*

*Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.*

*Remind them when the next session is.*



# CLOSE THE SESSION

# SESSION 6

## How can church help our faith grow?

### SESSION OUTLINE

**Purpose:** the purpose of this session is to help young people explore how other followers of Jesus can help our faith grow and consider the Good News that our faith can grow when we are encouraged, loved, and supported by a church community.

**Game:** the 'Keep Away' game gets young people to experience feeling like they don't belong to a group.

**Activity:** the 'Each One Teach One' activity helps young people experience growth by learning and teaching new skills and abilities from each other.

**Scripture:** the Scripture Hebrews 10:24-25 explores how, in churches, we can feel encouraged, loved, and supported by the community.

### How to run a session

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session
- Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

### Equipment needed for this session

- A ball

## READ THE INTRODUCTION, PLAY THE GAME

10 MINUTES



*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?*

*As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the Keep Away game.*



## PLAY THE 'KEEP AWAY' GAME

- Get the group to form a circle.
- Nominate one person to be 'it'. This person stands in the centre of the circle.
- The participants in the circle throw a ball to each other while the 'it' player in the middle tries to catch it. Participants cannot pass the ball to someone next to them.
- If the 'it' participant in the middle catches the ball or tags the person holding the ball, then the last participant who touched the ball is now 'it'.



*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

15 MINUTES

# HOW TO DO THE 'EACH ONE TEACH ONE' ACTIVITY

- Get participants into pairs.
- Each participant thinks of a skill that they could teach their partner.
- When everyone has thought of a skill, have each pair choose a participant to teach their skill first.
- Allow approx. 5 minutes to teach the skill.
- After the first participant has taught their skill, switch.
- Some example skills are braiding hair, whistling, skipping, doing a cartwheel, way to remember the order of planets, etc.

### Leaders, watch the participants for:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict



### Discuss the activity

*How did you go with the activity? What skill did you teach?*

*How did you feel after learning a new skill? Are you more confident to try it now that someone has taught you how to do it?*

*Have you ever learnt something important from someone else? How did you learn from them?*

*What life skills would you like to learn? How could belonging to a church community help?*

### In the group material

*Participants list what they want to learn and identify people from their church community that could teach them.*

**DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS**

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

15 MINUTES

# 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?*

### Notes on the scripture for facilitators:

- This Scripture says that followers of Jesus should encourage each other to show love and do good works. In this way the church community supports each other to grow in their faith.
- The author wrote this passage at a time when the government were suspicious of Christians meeting and would persecute those who were caught gathering. Even though meeting could cause Christians to be persecuted, the author highlights the importance of supporting one another and gathering together.
- As Christians, there can be times when we feel out of place, alone, or discouraged because of our faith in Jesus. A supportive church community can help encourage us to continue growing in our faith.
- The “Day” refers to Jesus’ return and the fulfilment of God’s Kingdom on Earth. The early Christians were encouraged throughout the New Testament to be ready. One way to remain ready is to continue to gather together to stay connected.

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

5 MINUTES



*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.*

### Ask the group

*Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.*

*Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.*

*Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.*

*Remind them when the next session is.*



**CLOSE THE SESSION**

# SESSION 7

## What role can we play in church?

### SESSION OUTLINE

**Purpose:** the purpose of this session is to help young people explore how they can contribute to church communities and consider the Good News that we all have a part to play with our church in making the world a better place.

**Game:** the 'Shazaam Hotseat' game gets young people to experience working together as a team.

**Activity:** the 'Story Time' activity helps young people practice contributing to a community to achieve a shared purpose.

**Scripture:** the Scripture 1 Corinthians 12:15-20 explores how everyone has something to contribute to the Church, and when we do, we can make a difference in the world.



### How to run a session

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session
- Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required

### Equipment needed for this session

- Something to play music on
- Confectionary prize
- Spotify playlist (Shazaam Hotseat playlist)





## READ THE INTRODUCTION, PLAY THE GAME

10 MINUTES



*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?*

*As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the Shazaam Hotseat game.*

# PLAY THE 'SHAZAAM HOTSEAT' GAME



**Equipment:** "Shazaam Hotseat" Spotify Playlist (QR Code), Something to play music on, prize for the winning team.

- Get participants into 2 teams. If you have enough participants, you could add more teams.
- The object of the game is for each team to work together to guess the name of the song played.
- Separate the teams from each other and place a chair at an equal distance from the teams.
- Each team nominates one participant to be the 'runner'.
- To start the game, play a random song from the Spotify playlist.
- If the team knows the song their 'runner' runs to the chair. The first runner to touch the chair gets to guess the song.
- If the first runner guesses incorrectly, the second runner can guess. If no one gets the song, it's a draw.
- Each team gets one point for each correct guess.
- The team with the most points at the end of the game wins the prize.



*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

15 MINUTES

# HOW TO DO THE 'STORY TIME' ACTIVITY

- The object is for the group to create a story together, one word at a time.
- Get participants to sit in a circle.
- Choose a participant to start. The first 4 participants in the circle then get to 'set the scene' for the story. The first participant chooses a character, the second a place, the third an item, and the fourth an event. For example, Character = Spy, Place = The Outback, Item = Car, Event = Lost in the desert.
- Then, begin the story by going around the circle, each participant adding one word to the story.
- Encourage participants to be as creative as possible while making sure the story makes sense.
- Once you've been around the group a few times and the story is over, try another one or two (the group will get better at this).

### Leaders, watch the participants for:

What they say to each other

What they find hard

What they find easy

What worked

What caused conflict



### Discuss the activity

*How did you go with the activity? How did it feel to make the story together?*

*How did you help your team create the stories? Did you find it easy or challenging to contribute to your group's story?*

*Have you ever been part of a group that worked on a project? What was that like for you?*

*What skills or roles do you have that contribute to groups? What difference does it make when you have a part to play in a group?*



### In the group material

*Descriptions of common spiritual gifts for young people to reflect on.*

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

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**

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## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

15 MINUTES

# 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?*

### Notes on the scripture for facilitators:

- Just as each part of the body is good at something, we are also each good at something. We each have unique talents and skills that God has given us.
- God has given us these gifts so that we can love and serve other people. When we acknowledge and embrace our diversity, the church becomes like a complete body able to function at its best.
- -This Scripture highlights that even though each part is different, they still belong in the body. We can belong in a church community because we have a part to play.
- This Scripture points out that we wouldn't expect our feet or hands to be good at the same things. Likewise, we shouldn't compare ourselves to others, but some skills can be seen as more valuable than others. Within a church community, we can encourage one another's gifts and contributions to growing God's kingdom.



## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

5 MINUTES



*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.*



### Ask the group

*Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.*

*Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.*

*Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.*

*Remind them when the next session is.*



# CLOSE THE SESSION

# SESSION 8

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

### SESSION OUTLINE

**Purpose:** the purpose of this session is to help young people explore how they can handle interpersonal conflict in churches and consider the Good News that God is love, and we can look for people and communities that show us God's love.

**Game:** the 'Rob the Nest' game gets young people to experience conflict in groups of people.

**Activity:** the 'What to do when church isn't working' activity helps young people consider a framework to help them face and work through conflict in churches.

**Scripture:** the Scripture 1 John 4:7-8 explores how we can find God's love in church communities that love each other.

### How to run a session

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session
- Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

### Equipment needed for this session

- Hula hoops (One per participant plus one extra)
- Small balls or bean bags (at least 20)

## READ THE INTRODUCTION, PLAY THE GAME

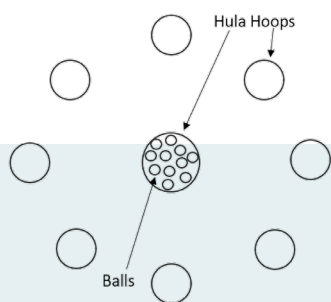
10 MINUTES



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?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the Rob the Nest game.



# PLAY THE 'ROB THE NEST' GAME

**Equipment:** one more hula hoop than the number of participants, small balls or bean bags.

- Place a hula hoop in the centre of the playing space and spread out hula hoops in a circle around it, 1 or 2 metres away from the centre hoop (see diagram).
- Place all the small balls or bean bags into the centre hoop.
- Each participant stands next to a hoop with nothing in it. No participants should be sharing a hoop.
- When the leader calls out "go", participants must run to the middle hoop and take one item from it at a time to take back to their hoop.
- Once all items have been stolen from the middle hoop, participants can then steal items from one another.
- Participants cannot protect their items from being stolen by hovering over or hiding them.
- After 2-3 minutes, the participant who has the most items in their hoop at the end of the 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?



## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

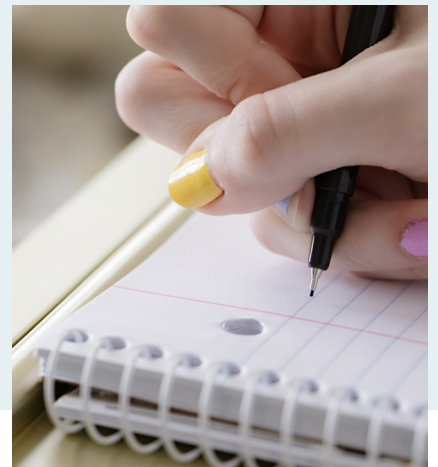
15 MINUTES

# HOW TO DO THE 'WHAT TO DO WHEN CHURCH ISN'T WORKING' ACTIVITY

- In this activity, participants will be asked to reflect on conflict they have experienced at church or other places. Leaders should be sensitive about approaching these topics, as young people may not feel comfortable talking about conflict. The activity is designed so young people can write their answers privately in their material and only share if they wish.
- Participants complete the 'What to do when Church isn't working' template in the group material. If participants can't think of a conflict they've had in a church space, encourage them to use the template for other situations where they have experienced conflict.
- Give participants 10 minutes to fill in as much as they can.
- When participants have finished, ask them to find a friend and discuss their action plans if they would like.

### Leaders, watch the participants for:

What they say to each other  
What they find hard  
What they find easy  
What worked  
What caused conflict



### Discuss the activity

*How did you go with the activity? Have you ever tried resolving an issue in this way?*

*Think of a time when you experienced conflict. How did you feel? How did you respond?*

*Do you think this framework could help you in times of conflict? How can this framework help you if you experience conflict in your church community?*

*How do you know if your church community isn't working for you? If church isn't working, how can you keep growing as a follower of Jesus?*

### In the group material

Participants complete the 'What to do when Church isn't working' activity.

## 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> Explain the issue. It may be a challenge, disagreement, situation, or recurring problem.</p>	
<p><b>It's significant because:</b> 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> What specific results would you like to achieve?</p>	
<p><b>Relevant background information:</b> 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> What actions have you taken so far to try and improve the situation?</p>	
<p><b>The options I am considering are:</b> 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> How can your church, youth leader, youth group, friends, family, etc. help you?</p>	

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

15 MINUTES

# 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?*

### Notes on the scripture for facilitators:

- Churches are groups of people that are God's children. In this Scripture, God's children are identified by their love for others.
- Sometimes in church communities we can experience conflict. When we experience this conflict, we are encouraged to love one another.
- When we are in church communities that aren't working for us, we can always look for people and communities that love us like God. When we find love, we find God.

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

5 MINUTES



*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.*

### Ask the group

*Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.*

*Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.*

*Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.*

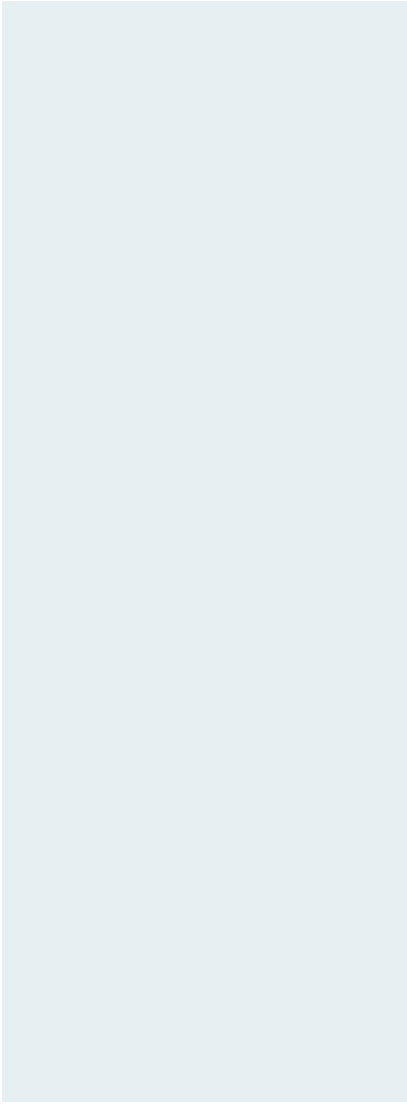
*Remind them when the next session is.*



# CLOSE THE SESSION



## NOTES



*Give us  
feedback*





## Contact Us

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

