



The Scream: Edvard Munch

Week 2 - Challenge

Prayer in challenging times

Diocesan Lent Course

FOR YOUTH



YEAR OF PRAYER 2018

Week 2 - Challenge

Prayer in challenging times

Aim

To explore how prayer can help us through challenging times. Living in a world where anyone can take 25 pictures to find the perfect one to post on Instagram. Nothing is as perfect and simple as it seems.

Learning outcomes

Life can be challenging. God never promises us an easy ride, but he does promise that he is always with us, through the good times and the bad. Prayer is vital for living with God through the tough times. In the story of the wise and foolish builder, one thing that we're told for certain is that storms do come and floods rise.

Materials needed

- Video clips
- Screen to watch clips and speakers for sound
- Bin bags/tarpaulin
- Enough bananas for everyone playing the banana game
- Pens and paper
- Some small prizes (perhaps edible)
- Printout of Edvard Munch's The Scream or a large copy on a screen.
- Square (horseshoe) nails and string/cord/wire
- "The Ocean" by Mike Perry - ready to play

Any videos or downloadable resources needed in this session can be accessed from:

youth.chichester.anglican.org/lent

Alternatively; from the Diocesan youth website navigate to 'Year of Prayer' then 'Lent Course for Youth'

Breathe...Pray...Let's begin...

Quick recap

Recap on last week's session. Ask around how people did with the takeaway from last week. Has anyone been wearing their bracelet and managed to talk to anyone about it? What was the response? Has anyone been using their prayer journal? How has their week been? How many times have they pulled faces like in the Scream painting this week?

Icebreaker

Banana Peel

Get a few volunteers to come up to the front, or in a smaller group give every volunteer a banana. Young people take off their shoes and socks and sit on a chair. Lay down bin liners or tarpaulin to keep floor clean.

Give each volunteer a banana and ask them to peel it with their feet. The fastest one wins a prize.

You need to inspect the bananas after the game and prizes can go to the ones who kept the banana whole and looking best.

An extra prize for another volunteer who would like to eat the banana!

—BRING A TOWEL TO CLEAN FEET AFTERWARDS

Video

Start by using this brief introduction video. You can find it on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttXrb2tRNm0>

Or at youth.chichester.anglican.org/lent

This is a moving video of the intro to the pixar movie UP set to the song "Wasn't expecting that" by Jamie Lawson. It's moving and sets the scene for the session.



A little thought

The reality is we all have challenging times. Just in the words of this song and images we see, we know that life can be hard for the best of us. Not to mention the ones who live in pain or without the creature comforts in life, a warm loving home, enough food, clean water etc. We have all seen pictures of the worst places. Yet each of us personally have times of challenge. Disappointment creeps in and sometimes we don't even see it until it is a big thing.

So how can prayer help us? How can a seemingly invisible God help when the rubber hits the road.

You can probably remember the book *Going on A Bear Hunt*— at each moment they come to a problem, a challenge and they stand there and say—I can't go under, I can't go over it, I can't go round it so I will have to go through it. Never before has there been a book so true to life. There are situations which we have to go through. When we go

through them we learn how to navigate the problem. The Holy Spirit will guide us if we ask him. Going through builds our character to persevere and not give up. Jesus didn't tell us to follow him and that it would be easy but he said follow him and we will see great things. There is no magic wand to wave to make life a bed of roses but when we face our challenges and our face and insides look like the painting of The Scream what do we do?

Creative Prayer Ideas

Doodle Prayer

Doodle Prayer – think about the picture of the scream!

Start with a blank piece of paper. In the centre, write a name for God, name of someone for whom you're praying, or a scripture verse. Draw a shape around the words to start the doodle. This is your prayer space. Start to doodle around it, releasing your words to God in prayer. Doodle in silence or talk to God if you feel led.

Add other people, other names for God, or other parts of the scripture verse to your paper. Draw a shape around each set of new words to create a separate prayer space.

Doodle around these and pray.

Pause and say "amen" between each prayer space you add.

Don't worry about the artistic quality of your doodles. Just let your pen draw and your mind focus on your prayers.

Bible Reading

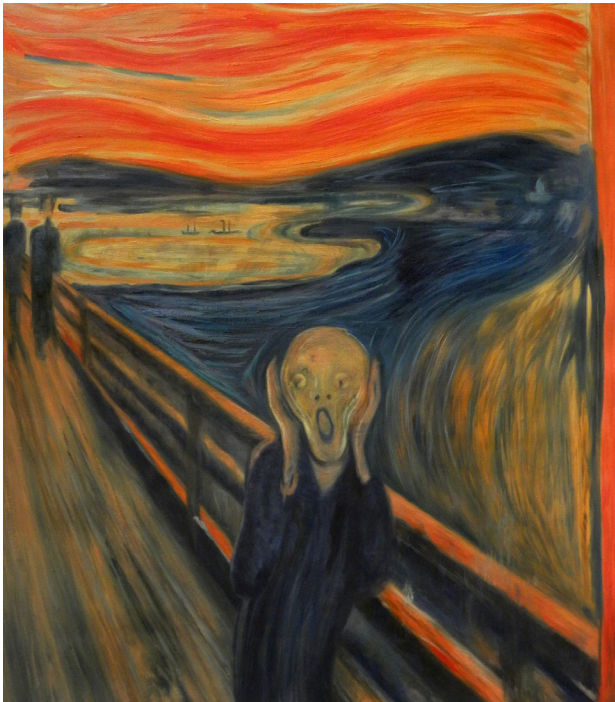
James 1:2-8

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Reflection

Listen to "The Ocean" by Mike Perry. This song was in the charts last year and although the lyrics are probably not written to or about God the imagery portrayed in the lyrics speaks of a safe place we can find with God. You can view the lyrics here <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/mikeperry/theocean.html>

Whilst it's playing show the image of Edvard Munch's The Scream. Either on a screen or print out a large copy of it so that everyone can see it.



When the song has finished ask the young people:

What do you **think** is being depicted in the painting?

What did you **feel** whilst listening to the song and examining the painting?

What captures your **imagination** in this image?

How does this inform the way you understand who God is?

Game [Premade worksheet available here or from the website](#)

SMS VERSE

Give each team a sheet of paper with a bible verse on but written with the numbers for the letters like sending a text on an old mobile phone – Proverbs 3:5 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

8-777-88-7777-8 444-66 8-44-33 555-666-777-3
9-444-8-44 2-555-555 999-666-88-777 44-33-2-777-8 2-66-3 555-33-2-66 66-666-8 666-66 999-666-88-777 666-9-66 88-66-3-33-777-7777-8-2-66-3444-66-4.

Give them some time to work it out. Their phones will still show which numbers correspond to which letters so they can use that as a reference.

1	2 ABC	3 DEF
4 GHI	5 JKL	6 MNO
7 PQRS	8 TUV	9 WXYZ
	0	⌫

Discussion

Perhaps start with this thought provoking video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpQxM5OFE60>



Does God care about what you're going through in life?

The Bible teaches us that God is always with us, He loves us. Difficult times will come but nothing can separate us from His Love. This is a comfort but sometimes it doesn't feel like God is close. Try handing out bible passages for young people to look up:

Joshua 1:9, Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:38-39, Matthew 6:25-34, Psalm 23:4, John 14:16-17, Matthew 18:20, 2 Timothy 1:7, Philippians 4:13

What can we do when we're going through challenging times?

Who can young people talk to in the church? Are there people they can pray with or ask to pray for them? If there is a specific need are you (as youth leader) aware of how you can make a referral to specialist help. Be aware of anything young people open up about during this discussion and don't brush anything off as insignificant. Take whatever time is needed and don't push for information young people don't want to share

How can we support others going through difficult times?

How can we pray for others? Has anyone ever offered to pray for someone else, either there in person or at a later time? Have you ever seen God answer prayers either for yourself or for someone else?

Takeaway

Get each young person to make a cross from some square nails and wire or string.

Each young person uses four square horseshoe nails, arranges them into a cross and ties them together with wire or string. They can be made into a necklace or just as a trinket to keep in a pocket or display somewhere.

The nails can represent challenges and struggles and the wire or string can represent the power and strength of God.

You may want to share the cross in my pocket poem found [here or on the website.](#)



Encourage the young people to use these as a reminder of God's love for us, that even in the tough times, he's with us.

They can take these crosses home with them. They may even want to give them away to a friend or family member they know is going through a challenging time.