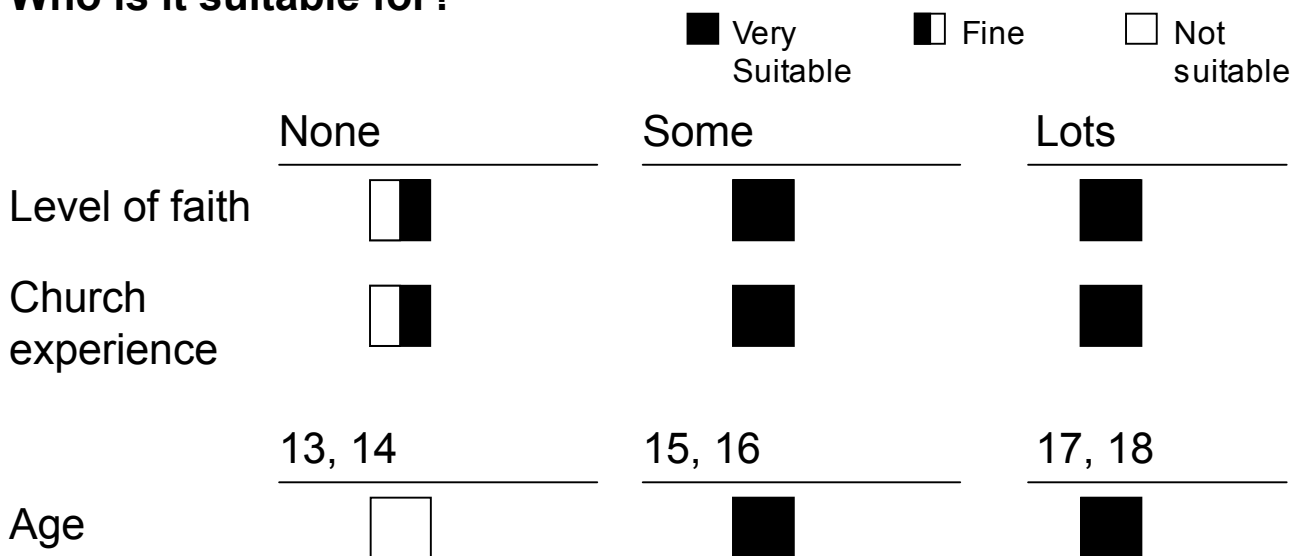


Emotional Rollercoasters

What is this all about?

Hope, joy, peace. But what about the tougher times and the tougher emotions. What does the Bible have to say about the times when it just hurts?

Who is it suitable for?



Overview of the days please!!

- Sunday : Get to know each other
- Monday : Introduction
- Tuesday : Get me out of here!
- Wednesday : Getting angry!
- Thursday : Handling our emotions
- Friday : What about when it hurts?

TENT PRAYERS

Advice for leading Tent Prayers (1/2)

What is the point of Tent Prayers?

A successful tent prayers provides campers with the opportunity to get to know you and each other, to discuss their faith with each other in a friendly and fun environment and to learn together and from each about God.

Five handy hints

(1) Meet in a TOP place (Together, Out of the tent and Private)

- *Together*: Find a place where everyone feels part of one single group. I would recommend sitting in one circle so that everyone can see each other. It helps if everyone is sitting on the same level (avoid having some on the floor and some on seats). Try not to have anything in the middle of the group like a table (feel free to rearrange the any of the marquees to make the right space for your group).
- *Out of the tent*: Definitely leave the tent. A tent is a bad place to have tent prayers. Campers can't really see each other very well and they get really distracted with their belongings. They also tend to fall asleep! Even if it's raining, don't be tempted to meet in the tent. Take some chairs out of the chapel or main marquee and put them up in field. Or meet in the chapel, lounge, teaside or main marquee.
- *Private*: Try to find a space not too near another group so that your campers will be able to talk in private and won't be too distracted by each other!

(2) Prepare

Prepare what you are going to do in advance. Decide at the beginning of the week which tent leader is going to take responsibility for leading each day. In preparing, you can use the material in this booklet. Everything marked with an **R** is recommended, everything marked **O** is optional. You will need to think what is most appropriate for your campers. You will not have time to do everything!

(3) Stop talking!

As much as possible get the campers talking. Ask them what *they* think, ask them what *they* think of what each other has said. If you are not leading the session, try not to talk at all!!

(4) Be yourself

Be yourself with the campers. If you want the campers to share their personal stories and views, then you need to lead by example (without talking too much!!)

(5) Have fun and let it flow

You're not at school. And even if you were, people learn better if they're enjoying themselves! Having banter and playing games are a critical part of tent prayers – not a waste of time!! Also don't worry too much about covering all the material you have planned if the campers get into a debate or discussion. It is fine to go where the energy is.

TENT PRAYERS

Advice for leading Tent Prayers (2/2)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I have to use all the time?

A: No, definitely not. It is much better to have a really good 15 minute session, than a 30 minute session that drags. However, if you find time is dragging I would encourage you to spend the extra time playing games or walking to the beach together as then you are getting to know each other!

Q: How do I get them out of bed?

A: First of all, expect them to get out of bed. Expect them to do what you say. You are their authority figure and they will tend to do what you say, if you make it clear that you expect them to. However if you appear unsure whether they will do what you say, then they will realise that and not do it. On this basis, tell them what you want them to do and then assume they will do it. When it comes to getting out of bed, give them advance notice of what you expect them to do: i.e. when and where you expect them to be. (You can give them a choice about where they want tent prayers to be – but not in the tent!!) Having told them to get up, try not to hover over them. If you hover, they will feel that you don't believe they are going to do what you say. If they are being very slow go back and tell them once – act amazed that they haven't got up. If they continue to take ages get some 1 on 1 time with them afterwards, ask why they were so late and explain that it is important that they are there on time. If you have any problems here, talk to a Cheese

TENT PRAYERS

Sunday: Get to know each other (1/2)

AIM OF THE SESSION

- Get to know each other a little. Help the campers to feel comfortable with each other and with you by getting them talking (about anything!!)
- Explain what you will be doing in Tent Prayers each morning.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

R Get together

- Get everyone together in a TOP place (Together, Out of the tent and Private)
- Explain that you have until breakfast at 9am to have a bit of time to get to know each other.

R Get to know each other

- Find out a bit about each other. One way to do this is to 'Go round the circle' (described below)

'Go round the circle:'

- Go round the circle asking everyone to say: (leaders should do this too)
 - Their name
 - Where they come from
 - Their favourite TV show as a kid (alternatively their yuckiest food, best dream, ideal job)
- Go round the circle again asking everyone to say: (leaders should do this too)
 - Whether they've come to camp before
 - How they ended up coming this time
 - What they want to get out of the week

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. It helps to lighten the tone. (I would strongly recommend it – I found it worked with all the boys tents I ever led and girls aren't that different really, are they?!!!!).

Possible games (all explained in more detail in the appendix)

- Yee-ha
- 'Question, Question'
- Monkey Fight
- The 'Yes, No game'
- Call my bluff

TENT PRAYERS

Sunday: Get to know each other (2/2)

R Explain Tent Prayers

- Explain that you'll be meeting every day at 8.30 for Tent Prayers.
- Explain what the point of Tent Prayers is – a chance to get to know our tent and to discuss together some of our thoughts about God.
- Ask them if they would be interested in leading it themselves and say you will be asking one of them later today if they would like to lead it tomorrow. (don't forget to do this!!)

O Read a Bible Verse

- You may want to use a bible verse to illustrate how the aim of tent prayers and camp as a whole is to find out about God

Verses about finding out about God



- Luke 19 v1-4: Zacchaeus was prepared to climb a tree to find out about Jesus. Camp is a great opportunity to 'climb a tree'
- Matthew 7 v7: This passage tells us to you Ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. Camp is great chance to have a go at asking, seeking and knocking.

O Find out where you're all at

- You may want to take a moment to find out where you campers are at in their faith. The best way to do this is to use an appropriate analogy which gives everyone an opportunity to say where they are. The football analogy below works well with boys, but there are plenty of others.
 - The Football Analogy: One way to think about faith is think about a football pitch. On a football pitch, you've got your strikers (who are zooming around, everything going well – they might score at any moment). You've got your midfielders (who are doing pretty well too, they're just a bit further back from the strikers but they also might score). You've got your defenders (who are much further back from the action, but they have moments when they get further forward, and they are on the pitch). You've also got the substitutes who are not on the pitch. And then there's the supporters who aren't in a team and aren't likely to get on the pitch. If the strikers are people who feel very strongly about their faith in God, the midfielders less so etc, etc, where would you put yourself?
 - You can also use a train station analogy (are you on the train, thinking of getting on the train, buying a ticket, thinking of buying a ticket, in the car park, at home etc.). There are lots of others – feel free to be imaginative.
- Explain the analogy and give everyone a chance to say where they are at. Make sure you say where you are at. Don't start with the keenest bean otherwise campers will feel that they have to say they are doing brilliantly with God and will be embarrassed to say otherwise. The key thing is to get them opening up about this stuff just a little!

R Close

- One of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Monday: Introduction (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- Send one person out of the 'room'. Those left have to think of an emotion. When the person outside is let back 'in', their task is to guess what emotion the group chose. They do this by asking members of the group to perform certain actions (stand up/pass them something/take a look at what the weather's doing). Members of the group have to perform these actions in the style of the emotion the group has agreed on (eg happily, angrily or whatever). This carries on til the emotion has been guessed at which point you can choose someone else and start again.

R Introduction

- Explain: this week we'll spend some time looking at a book in the Bible called Psalms.
- Some questions
 - ? Has anyone heard of it/read any of it before?
 - ? What did they think of it?
 - ? Does anyone know anything about who wrote it/what the point of it was originally?

R Looking at a Psalm



Get the campers to read Psalm 88 v6-9

Go round getting people's reactions

– Possible Questions

- ? Have they read things like this in the Bible before?
- ? What could have happened to make the writer feel like this?
- ? Are feelings like this towards God common?
- ? Do we often talk about them?
- ? Psalms are a certain type of poem – not a soppy poem about daffodils and clouds, but one that is specifically meant to express strong emotions the author is feeling, and is usually put to music (think – do we have anything equivalent now? Could be Christian or secular...)
- ? The Psalms were written over a timespan of about 1000 years – 1500 BC to 600 BC. Ask – are they still worth reading? Why/why not?
- ? They grew out of people in Israel's worshipping of God (Can you imagine singing the Psalm we just read in a worship session at camp? Should there be more songs now that express the same things as this Psalm? Why/why not?)
- ? Out of all the Old Testament books quoted by people in the New Testament, the Psalms are quoted the most often. (Why do you think that is? Is this surprising? Why/why not?)

TENT PRAYERS

Monday: Introduction (2/2)

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Tuesday: Get me out of here! (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers

R Looking at a Psalm



Get campers to read out Psalm 55 vs4-8

- It could be helpful to look also at the Message translation:
"My insides are turned inside out; specters of death have me down.
I shake with fear, I shudder from head to foot.
Who will give me wings," I ask— "wings like a dove?"
Get me out of here on dove wings;
I want some peace and quiet.
I want a walk in the country,
I want a cabin in the woods.
I'm desperate for a change
from rage and stormy weather."
- Possible Questions
 - Look at verses 4,5. On a scale where '0' is totally chilled out, and '100' is totally flipped out, where would you say the writer is?
 - How many different feelings does the writer mention in verses 4,5
 - Can you relate to feeling several emotions at once?
 - Look at the next section, v 6-8. What have all the emotions made the writer want to do?
 - Have you ever felt the same way? Share situations if people feel comfortable doing this.
 - Do you think the place the writer wants to run away to is a physical place? What else could it be? What might this look like?
 - Is God a way of 'running away' or escaping from strong emotions like this? (looking at v 22,23 might prompt some discussion about this)

TENT PRAYERS

Tuesday: Get me out of here! (2/2)

R A challenging thought

- Remind the campers that yesterday we talked about whether and how the Psalms could be useful. It might be helpful to read the following as they relax and listen and process stuff. You could make this a time they can pray silently on their own if they're comfortable with that.

“Recently I read a blog post by a guy who is a vicar in a small town in America. Last month something terrible happened in this town. The daughter of one of his church members was found murdered. This vicar wrote on his blog:

- At times like this, words fail us. We talk and we talk and we talk, trying to make sense out of the senseless, trying to connect the dots to make a straight line out of something crooked. And the words fail us, the dots can't be connected. 'Disappointed in our efforts to explain the unexplainable, where do we turn? When straight line language can't express what needs to be shouted out, we turn to poetry instead. And not just any poetry, but the poetry of the Bible, the prayer book of the Bible, the Psalms. Poetry as prayer, prayer as poetry.

- The Psalms give us permission to yell at God, even as we pray. What do you think of the idea that you can shout at God without lightning striking you?

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders of a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Wednesday Tent Prayers do not always happen. If there is no time, then move straight on to Thursday's recommended activities.

TENT PRAYERS

Wednesday: Getting angry!

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers. mention the idea of being able to 'yell at God' or express really strong emotions, and affirm this.

R Looking at a Psalm



Get campers to read out Psalm 4 v1-8

- Discuss this passage.
 - Possible Questions
 - According to this Psalm, is anger a wrong emotion?
 - What do you think about this – do you agree? Disagree? Not sure?
 - What do we have to be careful of when we feel angry?
 - What could sin as a result of anger look like – any ideas?
 - Can you identify with the challenge of being angry without sinning? Is anyone comfortable sharing a time they were angry that did or didn't result in doing something wrong?
 - How can we avoid sinning when angry, is there any advice here?

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Thursday: Handling our emotions (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- ❓ Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers. If necessary remind them that we've looked at whether Psalms are helpful, the emotions they express which are sometimes pretty strong. We've talked about what it can feel like and some situations we've been in where it's been hard to deal with strong feelings.

R Looking at some Psalms

- ❓ Can reading the Psalms help us understand more about how to cope with these emotions? Why/why not?



Split campers into groups and give each group one of the following passages to read.

- Psalm 94: 16-19.
- Psalm 69:29-30
- Psalm 43:5
- For each one, get them to think about
 - How practical is this advice?
 - Think of a real life situation involving strong feelings. What would it look like here if someone was to follow the advice in this Psalm?
 - Are there times in my life I might be able to use this advice? (no need to share with group unless you're comfortable)

R Discussing in the group

- As a whole group, share your individual answers and discuss
 - When the advice doesn't seem very practical, why is this?
 - Even if the writer doesn't know what to do, he still writes the Psalm. Why?

O Writing a Psalm

- As individuals, try writing your own Psalm about something that is affecting your feelings (if this seems a bit daunting, choose a short one like Psalm 43 and try writing it in language that makes sense to you).

TENT PRAYERS

Thursday: Handling our emotions (2/2)

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Friday: What about when it hurts? (1/2)


R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- ☐ Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers

R Looking at a Psalm

 Ask one of the campers to read Psalm 121

- ☐ How many phrases can you think of that describe emotions and also involve a direction? Eg 'I've cheered up'; 'I'm feeling down'; (my mum used to say to me 'why are you so down in the dumps?' – it's never up in the dumps!)
- ☐ What does it mean to 'lift up your eyes to the hills'? Is it easy to do? What can help?
- ☐ How do we reconcile the verses in this Psalm with the fact that difficult and painful things do happen to us, and we need to deal with them? (you could also look at
- ☐ Isaiah 43:1,2)
If God doesn't promise to take away the painful stuff, what does he promise? What does this promise mean to you?

If people are comfortable discussing these:

- ☐
- ☐ Which part of this Psalm is the most meaningful or relevant to you now?
Are there any situations you would you particularly like to know that God is watching over as you go back home?

R Praying to finish

- Depending on how much your group have bonded and how comfortable they feel praying, either:
 - ☐ Get into pairs or the whole group, and share a feeling or situation that's difficult and pray for each other
 - ☐ As individuals, write down a situation they want to recognise God's control over; write the emotions involved; pray it over either on their own, With the group, or with a leader if that helps.
 - ☐ Sit and read over the Psalm again to themselves while you play Tim Hughes' Whole World in his hands while people read the Psalm over again (I think this is quite a good example of a song dealing with the tension between a loving powerful God who is in control, and the fact that we suffer, plus it actually quotes from this Psalm...well, right at the end!)

TENT PRAYERS

Monday: Introduction (2/2)

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Appendix: Games

1 Yee-Haw

- Everyone plays at once
- Great fun – but easier to explain face to face! Ask Jonny Hopper or Mikey Walker to explain it to you

2 Question, Question

- Two people play at a time
- Person 1 asks Person 2 a question. Person 2 needs to respond with a question (that makes sense as a response!). Person 1 has to then respond to that with a question, etc.etc.
- The first person not to be able to respond with a question that makes sense as a response without pausing for too long loses!
- Winner stays on!

3 The Yes, No Game

- Everyone plays at once
- One person is selected to be 'on'. That person is then asked questions by everyone else in any order. They must answer every question without saying Yes or No (or any version of these words – e.g. Yep, Nope.) They are also not allowed to shake or nod their head. They are not allowed to ignore questions. Once they say one of these words, their go is over and a new person is 'on'.
- The person who lasts the longest wins. (if anyone lasts 60 seconds, you might want to stop and declare them a winner)

4 Monkey Fight

- Everyone plays at once
- Great fun – but easier to explain face to face! Ask John Tomlinson, Andrew Tomlinson or Jon Yates to explain it to you!

5 Call my bluff

- Everyone plays at once
- Get one person to come up with three (or four) statements about themselves. One of these should be a lie and the rest should be true. They then tell everyone the statements in any order without telling the group which is the lie. The group then has to vote on which they think is the lie.
- You could play this everyday which a different person doing it everyday. However, you will need to give campers advance notice that they need to come up with some statements or the game will take forever!!