

I Dare You

Module: Don't Forget the Lyrics

Lesson 3: Bridge over Troubled Water

Objectives:

Students will

- explore negative emotions, like sadness and frustration
- develop a framework from the Psalms for handling those emotions

Materials Needed

- ☐ Printouts or poster boards with various Psalms on them
- ☐ Paper and pen/pencil for each student
- ☐ (optional) Book: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, by Judith Voirst

Minds On

There is a great children's book called *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, by Judith Voirst. If you can find a copy, read this to your students as an introduction.

Say something like: Perhaps you have had a day like the one Alexander had. The truth is, all of us have bad days. We all make mistakes, we all get in trouble, and we all find ourselves in less than favourable circumstances at some time or other. The important thing is how we deal with our terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days.

If you cannot find the book, or as an additional activity, have students break up into groups and develop and perform a skit of a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. Depending on your group, have a panel of judges and give a prize to the best skit.

Action

Say something like: Some of the songs that you brought in a couple of weeks ago expressed strong emotions...and not just positive ones. There are many songs on the radio that are full of hurt or anger or frustration, and music is often a great outlet for those feelings.

In our previous discussion about the Psalms, we talked about how they were basically just songs, like the ones written today. The authors experienced real emotions and frustrations, and used their writing as a way to deal with their situations.

Before your meeting time, post or place around the room the words to various Psalms. This can be done with a simple, one page format or on a large poster board with artistic flair. The Psalms to be chosen for this lesson are ones that express sorrow, frustration, a sense of being overwhelmed, or other similar emotions. Some suggestions are Psalms 6, 22, 38, 42, 54, 69, 77, 130, and 142.

Invite your students to walk around the room reading the different Psalms that are displayed. When they find one that resonates with them, have them stay by it, and form discussion groups

with other people who like the same one. If a group gets to a size of 6-8 people for a particular Psalm, have them break up into two smaller groups. If there is only one person at a Psalm, they can choose to stay there and work on their own or join another group at a secondary choice. You may want to play some soft background music while the small group part of this activity takes place.

In a central location, or at the bottom of each Psalm, post the following questions, and have the discussion pods work through them together.

- What do you connect with from this song?
- What image or phrase stands out to you?
- What do you think was happening in his life at this time?
- How was the author feeling?
- How does he handle or deal with those emotions?

After sufficient time has passed, bring the large group back together and work through their responses, allowing each discussion pod to share some of what they discussed.

The last question is probably the most important because in each Psalm, emotions and frustrations are handed over to God, and trust is ultimately restored in him, despite the circumstances. Help students uncover this connecting factor if they have missed it, and challenge them to do likewise during their own times of difficulty.

Consolidate/Debrief

With the time that remains in your session, allow students to respond by writing down or drawing some of their own frustrations or difficult emotions that they may be dealing with. This could simply be a collection of words or phrases, various images, or a complete poem or song.

This process will be very natural for some, and incredibly hard for others. Give time and space for this to happen, but also make a way for others who may only be a distraction to move to a different location if possible.

Encourage students to share what they have created with a trusted friend or adult leader, and then to pray for one another.