



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: SECONDARY

**THEME: How do we make
sense of our feelings?**



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Emotions – particularly the ones that we consider to be ‘negative’ – can often be hard to understand. Look at the words of Psalm 139:1,2 & 14 ‘You know all about me....you know my thoughts before I think them’ and ‘I am wonderfully and mysteriously made’ [our translation!] Christians believe that Jesus was fully human and experienced the full range of human emotions – and that means he understands all that they are feeling. Jesus also being God, means that God does too!

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

The video material that accompanies this resource is based on the story of Jesus and Lazarus. This is a complex story that raises many issues deeply significant issues: Can miracles happen? What is the evidence for this? As a follow up exercise, it would be good to explore these questions with your students.

But for many Christians what matters here is that Jesus was with them in this and showed real compassion. It is summed up in the famously shortest verse in the Bible, John 11 verse 35

‘Jesus wept’

The bible passages should be used to encourage students to talk about both positive and ‘negative’ emotions that Jesus displayed – and consider why it is so important to Christians that Jesus felt ‘like them’

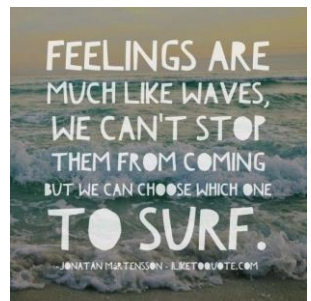
Gathering



If it is practical light a candle and invite the group to focus on the flame.

Ask the group to think about situations, feelings and thoughts they are experiencing that need light!

Use this quote from the Bible ‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it’ John 1 v 5



Engagement

In this act of worship, we are going to consider two of the vast array of emotions that we experience – sometimes on an hourly basis! Christians believe that because Jesus was human, like them, he experienced human emotions – just like us.

Jesus experiences sadness at the death of his friend

John 11 v 17-37

Recall from the video and retell the story very briefly – ask students to identify the emotion Jesus shows here.

It's not difficult to imagine why Jesus was sad, when his friend Lazarus died.



When you look at the words in the Bible, it also says that Jesus was sad because Lazarus' family were sad.

Sensitively talk about times when sadness has seemed overwhelming – and how we are affected when others are sad. How might it help Christians to know that Jesus experienced this emotion?

Jesus feels angry in the temple – Luke 19:45



Retell the story briefly What emotion do you think Jesus is showing here?

Does it surprise you to know that Jesus could be **angry**?

What do you think made Jesus feel this way?

Was Jesus right to do what he did? [He said that the Temple was a place for prayer, not selling things. The sellers were also stopping people from coming into the Temple to pray.]

Can being angry sometimes be a **good** thing? How might we learn from Jesus' example here? Talk about how it's important to be allowed to express anger – but not to act in a way that hurts others.

Now think about the emotions you've explored through the eyes of Jesus. Which have left you with questions to ask? Which have taught you something about yourself? How might these stories help you to understand and accept the emotions that you feel?

This well known religious poem is special to many Christians as it reassures them that whatever situations they are facing and whatever emotions they are experiencing Jesus is with them and is carrying them through. It has given hope to many facing testing times. Read the poem and pose the question who do you have to carry you?

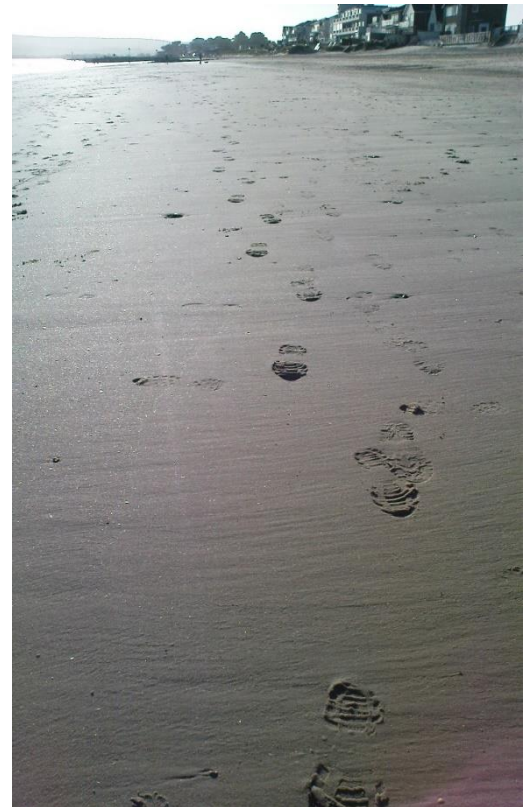
*One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.*

*After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.*

*This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."*

*He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."*

(Mary Stevenson)



Response

Christians would say that Jesus being so sad gives them permission to feel sad when hard things happen and when others are sad, angry at things that they know would make God angry, comfort knowing that Jesus understands how it feels to be abandoned and a commitment to live compassionately, feeling for other people, as Jesus did. This means that no matter what, they can bring all the confusion, hurt and pain – as well as joy and wonder – that they feel to Jesus, knowing that he understands.

Spend some time in quiet, bringing all your emotions – the more difficult ones as well as the good ones – before God, or holding them in your heart if you prefer. Think about the people around you who support you when you need them and give thanks for them.

Use your hands to express this response – if your students know the BSL or Makaton signs, you could use these instead of our suggestions.

When I am angry [close fists tightly]..... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am sad [use fingers to draw tears on your face].... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am worried or afraid [hide behind your hands]... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am happy [clap hands].... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

Whatever I feel [go freestyle!!]..... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

Sending

Read these words from Romans 12:15&16:

Be happy with those who are happy. Be sad with those who are sad. Live together in peace with each other. Do not be proud but make friends with those who seem unimportant. Do not think how smart you are.

How might these words inspire you to help others this week?

To conclude

Each day the tide comes in and goes out, everything on the beach is washed away and completely cleared.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

1. **Make a set of emotion stones** for your classroom – or students could make individual sets from smaller stones. Draw a different emotion on each stone – you could look at [emojis](#) to help you decide what works best. At times when you need to, hold a specific stone in your hand and bring how you are feeling to God.
2. **Draw a Feelings Graph** for the last week or so in your life. On the horizontal axis write down the things that have happened to you. On the vertical axis of good to bad draw emojis to express how you felt.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the EXAMEN prayer to reflect on your emotions recently. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for the times when you have felt good or positive emotions.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the more difficult emotions.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the people that have helped you through the day
4. SAY SORRY for the times your feelings have hurt others, or you have ignored others' feelings.
5. DECIDE how you will support others when they are happy / sad / anxious / angry etc.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Revisit the story of Jesus and Lazarus. This version covers the whole chapter which places this in its theological context, it explores some deep emotions and complex ideas. Use this as a conversation starter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cONM7poWcXc>

What questions does this story raise for you?

Listen to the well know song 'Everybody Hurts' by R.E.M. or Watch this video (from 1990's)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rOiW_xY-kc

Who or what helps you hold on?

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?