



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: SECONDARY

HOW DO WE FACE OUR FEARS?



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi:

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).

When we are scared, when we are fearful, when we feel that the ground is shaking beneath our feet and we can't see the way out... it is understandably hard to manage our anxiety. The Apostle Paul was physically injured, shipwrecked, in danger, sleepless, hungry and cold and yet he could say he could do everything through God who gave him strength.

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

Elijah Gives Up.

Background – the prophet Elijah had just had one of the most amazing experiences of his life where God had shown up in a powerful way, encouraging Elijah and showing him to be a real hero and man of God in a world where lots of false Gods were being worshipped. However, his ecstasy was short lived when he found that his life was in danger from an angry evil King who didn't like what had happened.

[1Kings 19:3-9 \(NIV\)](#)



Painting – Revd Ally Barrett

1 Kings 19: When Elijah couldn't even, God gave him permission to rest by providing a tree for shelter, some water and a cake. <https://reverendally.org/art/>

Engagement

Explain that sometimes, we have a false view of characters from the Bible. Because they are in the Bible we think that they are somehow perfect - like they are in a film. With them all having great hair, being brave and bold and heroic, never doubting or struggling. If they were anything less, surely they wouldn't be remembered for thousands of years afterwards? Don't we want our heroes to have it 'all together'?

Yet the Bible is really the opposite. Full of normal people - empowered and loved by a supernatural and powerful God of love and grace - yet still only humans! With their worries, their fears, their egos, their dark sides. One such character is Elijah – his story has stood the test of time and features in the Bible – yet he struggled too.

Read through the text of 1 Kings 19:3-9 twice, perhaps reading a verse at a time around the class or around a circle. On the third reading, an adult reads through very slowly and asks at the correct points -

- What was Elijah feeling?
- In the story what did God provide?
- What did Elijah do that helped himself?

Point out that whilst an angel appearing would be an incredible, amazing and supernatural thing, actually the things that helped Elijah's mental state and ability to go on were very simple... Food and sleep!

Ask the group if anyone ever loses perspective, confidence or gets angry when they are tired or hungry.

Despite his recent triumphs, Elijah is now experiencing the very real fear of his life being in danger. What a rollercoaster!

Take a moment for individual reflection, with individual pieces of paper one per student.

Consider a time when they might have felt scared, anxious or despondent. On one side of the paper, have them write down all the things that might be provided to help us. On the other side, write down all the things that we can do to help ourselves. What do they find works best for them? Is it the same for everyone?

Invite your students to share something from their piece of paper to encourage and inspire one another. Discuss how we deal with fear and anxiety in different ways.

Response

Strong Wall Activity

Gather large plain cardboard boxes (or paint them a neutral colour) and give the students black marker pens or black paint and paintbrushes. Or print out some 'bricks' to build into a wall display

Explain that we are going to build a wall of things that are helpful to emotionally strengthen us. Giving each student initially one sealed empty box, invite them to write on the sides some things that strengthen us.

Give some examples e.g. 'Advice from a Teacher' 'having a good cry'

After a few minutes, everyone is invited to read out their brick as they are able. You may like to have some spare boxes for keen students, or to add some of your own e.g. 'realising that I am enough' and 'Being who I am made me to be'

Invite the students to build a wall from all their boxes to signify that we do not need to despair – there are so many things that we can do to help ourselves and each other and we are better together than separately.

Discuss how being in community can help us overcome our fears. How might this help us in the current situation? What might we do to support one another with our fears and anxieties?

Sending

Take-home challenge.

Remembering this acronym can help some people to remember where their fear really comes from:

False

Evidence

Appearing as

Real

Optional Prayer: Watch out this week for where your fear or anxiety is coming from. Perhaps this week when you feel worried, try immediately giving those feelings to God and asking Him to bring you perspective and comfort.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

EXPERIENCES that can help us **ENCOUNTER**:

Come As You Are

Watch the lyric video for 'Come as you are' by Crowder and let the words sink in.

<https://youtu.be/yjgioXrnEME>

The chorus says:

So lay down your burdens

Lay down your shame

All who are broken

Lift up your face

Oh wanderer come home

You're not too far

Lay down your hurt lay down your heart

Come as you are

Reflect upon these words.

There are lots of ways of responding - quietly in your heart, or by speaking with a trusted person, or using drawing, writing, prayer and poetry.

Linvoy's Story

Linvoy Primus the former professional footballer (you may need to explain that Portsmouth were once in the premiership and won the FA Cup in 2008) has an amazing story and testimony of how God accepted and uses him, for who he was and the gifts he had been given. As you watch this video, ponder upon these questions.

1. What were the feelings that Linvoy described in his early career? (Anxiety, emptiness, what is his purpose)
2. What did Linvoy wrongly think he had to do once he came into a relationship with God? (Become a vicar)
3. How has Linvoy used his God-given gifts?

<https://youthvids.com/linvoy-primus-my-story/>

Linvoy believes God gave him gifts to be used to enjoy, to build others up and to glorify God. He didn't have to be something he was not to do this. God wanted him to be a footballer, not a vicar! Often when we feel anxious and sad it is because we have unreasonable expectations of ourselves or we are comparing ourselves to others. We try to be something or someone who we are not.

Optional prayer: If you have things in your life that you feel like this about, why not ask God to help you to let them go. He wants you to be exactly who He made you to be. You!

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Emotion Journalling

Journalling is a great practice and discipline to help us to understand relationships – with ourselves, those around us and, for those of faith, with God. It is often only when we look back upon a journal that we can understand patterns, triggers for stress, the things that make us truly happy and through all of this.

It doesn't have to be an expensive leather-bound journal, and if you don't do it for a few days that is fine.

On a piece of paper, in a book, on the notes on your phone – each time you feel something strongly (happiness, disgust, emotional pain, anger) write down the date and time, what you felt, what had happened to bring on that emotion (don't worry if you don't know), and what you did as a result.

It is good to do both school days and weekend days. After a few days, look back upon your journal either on your own or with a trusted adult. Look for patterns.

What situations bring you joy?

Which cause anxiety?

What things help you?

Don't forget to celebrate good things and also celebrate healthy responses to harder things too.

Anchoring

Also known as grounding, anchoring is a helpful technique that can be done at any time when we feel fearful, anxious or distant from situations we are facing. Anchoring is about bringing ourselves back into the present and acknowledging that we are safe and grounded when sometimes we emotionally feel like we are like a boat tossed around in a storm.

Use the 5 digits of your hand to actively think about the five senses as below.

Find **FIVE** things you see around you.

Find **FOUR** things you can touch

Listen for **THREE** things.

Find **TWO** things you can smell.

Acknowledge **ONE** thing you can taste.

Anything will do – a window, the cat, your hairbrush

Anything nearby – grass, a woolly jumper, your hair

Anything outside your body – birds, sirens, people talking

A flower, a wooden pencil, a flavoured cordial

Either already in your mouth, or something you can drink or eat

After doing this, notice how much if your anxiety has calmed down and how much more in control you feel. Do you know of other anchors in your life that settle you in a similar way?

Create a Self-soothe box

Whilst it is important to be able to share with a trusted person how we feel and to seek help in that way, often we will need to be able to deal with strong emotions on our own, even if it is just for a short time. One way of doing this is to create a self-soothe box. See the below link from the amazing charity Young Minds for ideas.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-make-a-self-soothe-box/>

[Here](#), young people explain how to make one.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

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?