**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 4 of 4

# Worry

### MEETING AIM

To explore Jesus’ teaching on worry and what that means for us.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:25-34

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

This week we’re exploring a passage where Jesus preaches about worry. This is so pertinent to young people in an age where we’re increasingly aware of their generation’s anxiety. This session seeks to explore these ideas better, with space to self-reflect. Be aware that talking about worry might feel less easy for those with anxiety problems. It also could be unhelpful to understand Jesus’ words as judgement against those who worry, rather than an invitation to live without worries.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

As you invite everyone to join you, you could begin a discussion around the theme by asking everyone: “What’s the bravest thing you’ve ever done?”

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** balloons; chalk or masking tape

Mark two lines at either end of your space. Split the group into two teams and line up the teams behind one line. Put a big pile of balloons behind the other line. The first person runs and gets a balloon and then comes back. When they get back to the rest of the team, they pass the balloon to the next person and then they go with the balloon and get another balloon. When they get back, they pass the two balloons onto the next person, and then they have to get another one and so on!

When a person drops a balloon, the team loses all their balloons and they have to start again. At the end of a set time limit, the team with the most balloons in play wins.

### BIBLE EXPLORATION – 10 mins

If possible, go and find somewhere outside that you might see some flowers, trees or birds. Ask the group to look out for them, and let them point them out and interrupt you. Depending where you hold the group, it might be easy to stay outside and read the passage out here, or it might be better to have a small walk around and then return to where you were meeting, but while you’re walking ask the group to look out for birds and plants. (If you can’t go outside, provide pictures of different nature scenes and play some birdsong in the background.)

Read the passage out to the group. Making a specific point of looking at what’s around you.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Following on from ‘Bible exploration’, discuss these questions:

* Why do you think it was important to Jesus that his followers not worry?
* What do you think Jesus means when he says: “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”
* Why do we worry? What does worry achieve?
* Do you think Jesus gives us enough reason not to worry?
* Is it easy to stop worrying? How do you do it?
* What might be the emotions that replace worry?
* Jesus uses flowers and birds as examples of things that are taken care of without worrying: do you have any other examples of people or other beings that you find inspirational?
* What would churches be like if Christians worried less than other people?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** A4 card; pens

Give everyone a piece of paper or card and ask them to fold them in half. Encourage them to spend some time reflecting about their own worries, and use this as a guide.

Ask the group to write ‘My worriers’ at the top of the left-hand side of the paper and then list things that they worry about. They might want to talk about what they write or be more private. Try to create space for gentle conversation for those who want it, but space for those who don’t. It might help to play some music at the same time.

Next, ask them to write ‘My life without worries’ on the right-hand side. Invite them to think about what their lives might be like without any worry. What would be some of the riskier things that they would do? What would they be like? What might be different? Give them time to write and think about these things as well.

After they’ve written their thoughts, you could invite people to share if anyone wants to. Did they find it helpful thinking about this? How might you all encourage each other to live more as though you didn’t have worries?

### PRAYER – 5 mins

Explain to the group that you’re going to try a way of praying that is really helpful. In this prayer, you use your breath to help you. Ask the group to get comfortable and explain that it would be good to close their eyes so that they aren’t distracted by other people.

Encourage the group to focus on breathing in and out slowly. Explain that as we breathe, we breathe in what we need – oxygen – and breathe out what we need to get rid of – carbon dioxide.

Jesus told his followers that they did not need to worry. He reassured them that they would be taken care of by the heavenly Father. As you breathe in and out, try to concentrate on breathing out worry on the out breaths: letting go of the things that stop us living each day fully. And as you breathe in, breathe in faith: breathe in life to the full. Breathe in the Holy Spirit, who gives us faith and helps us not to fear.

Encourage the group to keep on praying like this for a minute in silence. It might be helpful to tell them it will be a minute, so that they have a sense of how long they will be doing this for. You could finish this time of silence in a prayer:

“Jesus, you told us not to worry. Help us leave our worries in your safe hands, and in exchange give us faith that all that we need is found in you. Amen.”

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