RE:LAX

What are some other words / feelings we could use to describe stress?

Can you re:late to feeling worried and anxious? Share some experiences.

Do you think Jesus was ever stressed?
Do you have any examples of when you think He might have been and why do you think so?

Jesus was a perfect human, yes, but He still felt all the emotions we do.
Read Matthew 26:36-46, which is about a time when Jesus was greatly troubled and said,
"My soul is _____ with _____ to the point of _____.
Stay here and _____ _____ _____ me."

? How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus can also **re:**late to the emotions, troubles, concerns, worries and stresses that we go through?

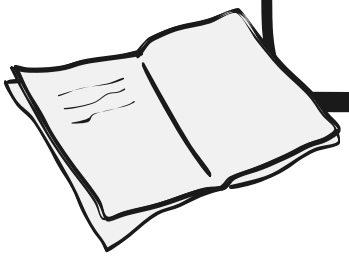
? What were some things Jesus did to cope with His overwhelming stress in Gethsemane?

Jesus uses a combination of being with people and also being alone.
? When you are feeling anxious, would you prefer to be completely alone, with people, or a combination, like in Jesus' example?

? Do you feel like you could ask someone to be there with you if you needed it? Why / why not? Who?

? Have you tried praying for help, peace and comfort, and what did you experience?

One evening during a road trip I was on, I was sitting on the curb outside my hostel whilst crying on the phone to Mum. All of a sudden, a car drove past and the boys in it yelled at me and threw balloons filled with who-knows-what, at me! I was already upset, so this caught me off guard and I was frightened! My body reacted by sending me into my first-ever panic attack. I started hyperventilating, could barely breathe, couldn't speak, couldn't move and started losing feeling in my arms and legs. All the while, my poor mum and sister were on the other end of the phone trying to understand if I was ok, as they had heard the commotion and were also hearing me struggle to breathe. Talk about stress for all of us!



? What are your coping techniques during stressful times?

? What are your triggers / things that cause you greatest anxiety at the moment?

GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

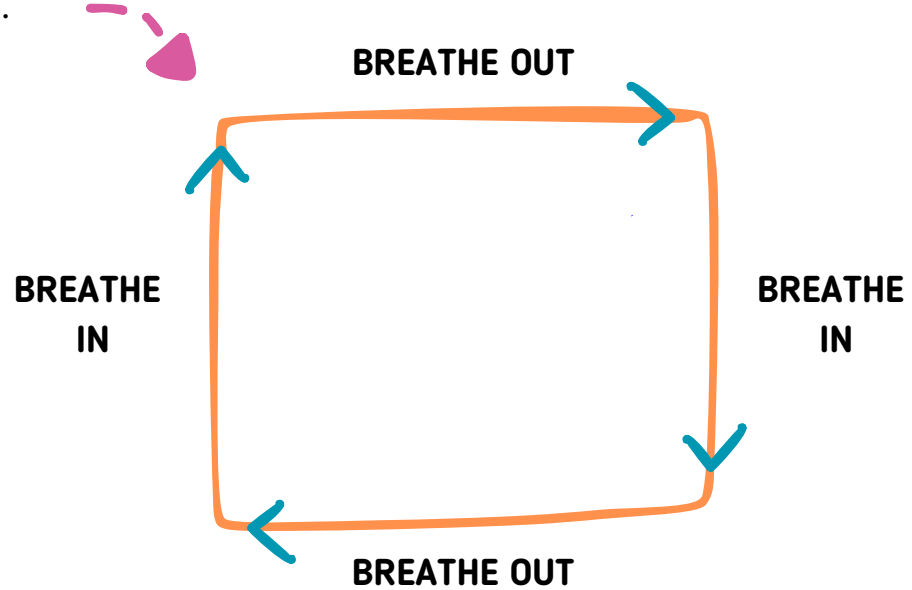
When we feel stressed or anxious, it is easy to lose perspective. It can be hard to focus and make decisions, and it can feel overwhelming. There are times when these feelings are so strong, that it might feel like you are losing control.
We can use grounding techniques on ourselves, or to help guide others with if they are upset, to bring the body and mind back to a calmer, more **re:**laxed state.

SQUARE BREATHING

Draw a square in the air with your finger, where each line = **4 seconds** of breathing in or out.
Another way to do this is to breathe in for 4 seconds >> hold for 4 seconds >> breathe out for 4 seconds >> hold for 4 seconds.

When you start feeling anxious, **RE:**PEAT this technique by 'drawing' at least **7 squares** in the air.

Why not give it a try now?!



5 SENSES COUNTDOWN

What are **5** things you can **see**?
What are **4** things you can **feel / touch**?
What are **3** things you can **hear**?
What are **2** things you can **smell**?
What is **1** thing you can **taste**?

WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?

Google '*50 ways to relax*' and choose 10 ideas you have never tried, but would consider using to help you **re:**lax and calm down. Draw / list them in the box below.

MINDFULNESS

The Bible has a LOT of great advice, comforting words, and verses we can fill our minds with and use as another grounding technique to **re:**focus our thoughts.
Find 3 verses (*use Google if you need!*) that **re:**sonate with you, to write down and memorise, so that you can **re:**call them in a time of need.
Re:member to write where in the Bible they are from!

Read **Luke 22:39-46** and fill in the blanks for **V44**.

'And being in _____, he prayed more _____, and his _____ was like _____ of _____ falling to the ground.'

This is the same story that we read at the start, but with an extra detail.

? What are your thoughts on Jesus being under so much stress that He sweated blood?

? What do you think it means when it says, 'He prayed **more earnestly**'?

? Are there different levels in prayer?

Read **Philippians 4:4-9** and fill in the blanks for **V6**.

'Do not be _____ about _____, but in _____ situation, by _____ and _____, with _____, present your _____ to God.'

? What is the difference between prayer and petition?

Re:write V6 in your own words.

_____

_____

Read **1 Peter 5:6-11** and fill in the blanks for **V7**.

'Cast ____ your _____ on _____ because He _____ for _____.'

O List Bible characters who experienced stressful things and write what strategies they used.
(use Google for some ideas if you need!)

Character	Strategy

Write a sentence that you can **re:**peat to yourself in a time of stress.

_____

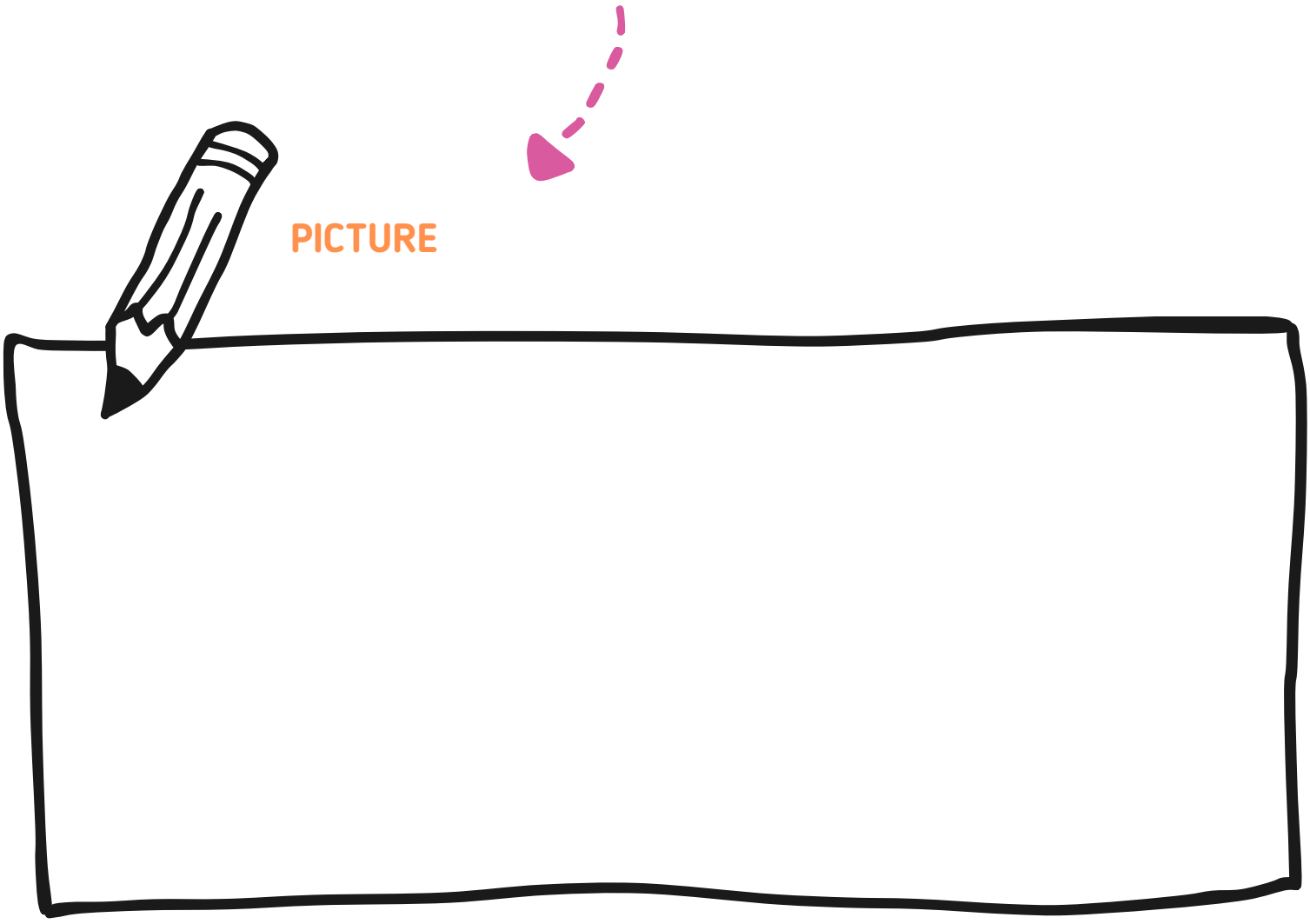
_____

? How much do you think God cares about your worries and stresses? Explain your thoughts.

? Have you ever leaned on God for help with your worries and stresses?
? Was that scary? Did it help? Does it help in the same way every time?

? Do you know who you would call for support?
If not, think about who you could **re:**ly on.

? Do you know who might call you for support and are you prepared?



Draw something to represent your thoughts and feelings after this moment together. Or, if you are not thrilled about drawing, go back through today's gathering and use a colour or symbol, underline or circle the words that stood out to you. Is there a theme in what you noticed?

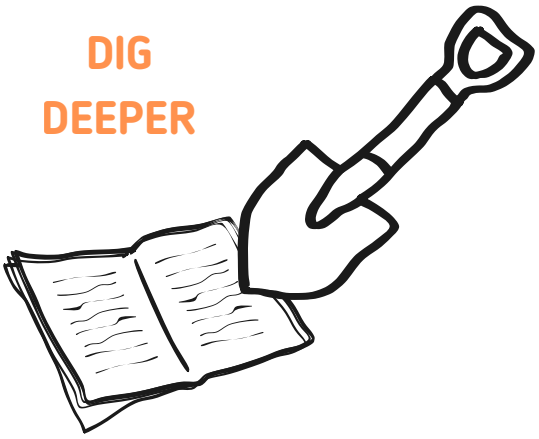
SONG

Holds It All - *Travis Clark*

QUOTE

Sorrow looks back, worry looks around, faith looks up.
– *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

DIG DEEPER



Extra verses to extend the exploration!

- Matthew 6:25-34
- John 14:15-31
- Psalm 116

PONDER

- What will you do to tap into God's peace when you feel anxious?
- What things are causing you stress in your life that you need to give over to God, so that you can finally **re:**lax?

WORD

Summarise this time together in 1 word or sentence.
*What is something you want to **re:**member?*

Use this word now in a short prayer between you and God.

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