



# Authorised Mess — LAMENTATIONS

## Your details

Name: Anne Le Bas

Church: St Peter and St Paul, Seal

<b>Bible book</b>	<b>Lamentations</b>
<b>Theme of session</b>	The focus is on Lamentations 3:22–3 and dealing with sad times. What cheers us up and keeps us going? God is with us in sad times as well as happy times. We should not give up hope just because things look bleak.
<b>Notes</b>	We were rather low in numbers for this session, but those who came found it helpful, and I think the helpers in particular enjoyed it, especially the 'weebles', which provoked much discussion about emotional resilience. Although the activities have been put into the various categories (girls, boys, and so on), most of them had a wide range of appeal.

## Session details

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Younger participants	Rainbow mobile	Colour and decorate the rainbow, sun and cloud shapes. Tie the sun and cloud to the 'legs' of the rainbow to make a mobile.	Rainbow, sun and cloud shapes cut out of card, pens/crayons, string.	To make a rainbow you need sun and rain. Our lives have happy and sad times in them. It is normal to be sad sometimes.
Younger participants	Happy and sad faces	Draw happy faces and sad faces on different circles. Stick these together with a stick/skewer sandwiched between them to form a lollipop. Twist the stick slowly to watch the smiling face turn to a sad one and back again.	Circles cut out of card, lolly sticks/skewers, pens, sticky tape.	To help talk about what makes us happy and sad. Emphasise, as above, that sadness is normal sometimes.



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Older participants	Self-righting people (weebles)	Fill one-half of a ball with air drying clay. Stick the pot on to this base with duct tape. Draw a person on the paper and stick this around the bottle. The person should roll back up if knocked over.	Actimel or similar yogurt drinking pot; ping pong balls, cut in half; air drying clay (playdough is too light); paper (A6) and pens; duct or packing tape.	Sometimes life seems to knock us over. What helps us to bounce back up again?
Girls	Picture frames	Fold the card in half lengthways, then into three widthways. Cut three square 'frames' out of the top half of the card. Then fold this down and staple between the 'frames'. Decorate with stickers, glitter, felt pens. Take home and slot in photos either of people who cheer you up, or of yourself, and give to someone who might be cheered by it.	Card (A4), glitter, stickers, pens, scissors, staplers.	To identify those who cheer us up, or those who we bring comfort to. We often know God's love through the love of others.



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Boys	Traditional games	Get everyone to play the various games.	Games such as marbles, jacks, pick-up sticks, Mancala—or you could try making your own. See this website for details on making a Mancala game: <a href="http://frugal.families.com/blog/make-a-homemade-mancala-game">http://frugal.families.com/blog/make-a-homemade-mancala-game</a> .	Getting together with others and playing games can help us to overcome the isolation that sadness can make us feel.
Word-based	Inflatable ball icebreaker	Write questions on different parts of the ball. Then throw the ball to each other and answer whatever question is under the left thumb.	Large inflatable beach ball, marker pens.	Making friends and getting to know others can help us in times of trouble.
Food-based	Chocolate cornflake cakes	Make chocolate cornflake cakes working in groups.	Chocolate, cornflakes, syrup or honey, butter or margarine. Scales, bowls, baking sheets, cake cases. A basic recipe can be found at: <a href="http://www.netmums.com/family-food/recipes/a-z-of-family-recipes/chocolate-cornflake-cakes">http://www.netmums.com/family-food/recipes/a-z-of-family-recipes/chocolate-cornflake-cakes</a> .	Chocolate cheers us up! It can be a 'comfort' food. What are the pros and cons of comfort eating? Gathering together to eat and drink cheers us up and helps us.



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Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Quiet	Book corner	Create a book corner in a carpeted 'quiet area' for children and parents to read together.	Collection of children's books (such as <i>The Gruffalo</i> , <i>Where the Wild Things Are</i> , <i>The Cat Who Lost His Purr</i> ) or suitable Bible stories dealing with emotions—families might lend some comforting favourites, or some could be borrowed from a library.	Other people's stories can help us to deal with our own problems. The act of sharing a story is comforting in itself.

## Celebration suggestion

**Song:** 'If you're happy and you know it' as you gather together.

Tell some of the story of Jeremiah. The prophet Jeremiah was very sad. His city, Jerusalem, had been destroyed by enemy soldiers and many of its people had been taken into exile. Everything looked hopeless. But he knew that, whatever happened, God would not stop loving his people. However sad he was now, he would not be sad forever.

Talk together about the things everyone has made during the activities and the reasons for making them.

Talk together about the things that make us sad, and the things that cheer us up. We can discover that God is with us in many ways.

Pray for those who are sad today, asking that they will know God is with them. Ask for topics/names to include in prayer.

**Song:** 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases', from *Songs of Fellowship*, No. 549. For details, see [www.eden.co.uk](http://www.eden.co.uk).



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## **Meal suggestion**

- ✿ Happy and sad food!
- ✿ Chocolate cornflake cakes (made in the activity).

## **Faith in Homes suggestion**

- ✿ Take home sheets with the summary of story, as above, and some questions to talk and think about.
- ✿ Select photos together for the picture frame made in the activity and talk about your choices.
- ✿ As a family, talk about who you might give a 'weeble' to and why.

## **Primary School RE idea**

There are lots of links that can be made with SEAL PSHE themes and the Leuven initiatives on well-being, to do with emotional resilience.