



LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE!

PERSONAL JOURNEY

PREPARATION

- Invite members to come prepared to share a funny anecdote or story
- Prepare some stories in advance, just in case, eg from [Reader's Digest, rd.com](#)
- Bring some balloons blown up and ready to use
- Select some balloon games to play from [empowerparents.co](#)
- Buy ice creams or lollies to enjoy
- Prepare some funny TV clips to share - suggestions below
- Print or prepare the TV sitcom quiz

Additional resource

- ❖ *TV comedy quiz*

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Why do humans laugh? What are the benefits of laughter? What is the effect of humour? In this session we will experience and explore laughter and joy and remind ourselves that Jesus himself had a sense of humour!

ACTIVITIES

GAMES

Balloon games

Form two teams, sitting in a line opposite each other, and bat a balloon between the teams. Award points for keeping the balloon in the air - or, more easily, score negative points if the balloon hits the ground.

Take turns to see how many times each individual can bat a balloon in the air without letting it drop to the ground.

Visit [empowerparents.co](#) for lots more balloon game ideas.

Laughing games

Play a *Make someone laugh* game. A volunteer is chosen and the rest of the group take turns to try to make the individual laugh.

Connect



For example, play a game of *Sausages and squashed frogs*. Ask a volunteer to answer questions for 30 seconds, eg What's your favourite TV show, what do you like to wear, what's your favourite food? But the answer must either be 'Sausages' or 'Squashed frogs'. If they laugh or say something else, they are out!

SHARE

Spend some time enjoying each other's funny stories or anecdotes. If needed, share some prepared stories, eg from [Reader's Digest, rd.com](#).

WATCH

Enjoy some classic funny TV moments while enjoying an ice lolly or ice cream. Here are some suggestions:

- * [Mr Bean live performance at the London 2012 Olympic Games](#) by Olympics
- * Or any [Mr Bean clip!](#)
- * [Children interrupt BBC News interview](#) by BBC News
- * [The vicar of Dibley: the puddle](#) by gold.uktv.co.uk

BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

We're told that laughter is the best medicine - and it may well be that this old adage is true! A recent study has demonstrated that having a chuckle causes the tissue inside the heart to expand and increases oxygen flow around the body.

Patients with coronary artery disease who engaged in a course of laughter therapy had reduced inflammation and better health, the research found.

'Our study found that laughter therapy increased the functional capacity of the cardiovascular system.'

Prof Marco Saffi, Lead author
Hospital de Clínicas de Porto Alegre, Brazil
[Webmd.com](#)

We also know that laughter has a number of other benefits to wellbeing including:

- * Relieving tension
- * Lowering blood pressure
- * Strengthening the immune system
- * Improving memory
- * Promoting collaboration

Connect



- * Removing barriers between people
- * Improving alertness

We may never have articulated fully the benefits of having a good laugh, but we probably have all experienced the happy aftermath of a really good chuckle - with a friend or by receiving a silly video on our mobiles that has made us 'lol' ... laugh out loud!

In familiar verses from Luke 6, *The Sermon on the Plain*, we read:

📖 'Looking at his disciples, [Jesus] said:
"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh."'

(Luke 6:20-21)

Jesus was teaching his newly-called disciples and introducing them to the upside-down Kingdom he was bringing in. A counter-cultural way of living, with eternal hope - and laughter - as the ultimate reality.

In the life of Jesus, we see the whole remit of human emotion expressed: love, compassion, anguish, anger, fear, empathy, and joy. When Jesus spoke about removing planks of wood from our eyes, as recorded in Matthew 7:3-5, the listeners must have laughed at the ludicrous image he portrayed. Maybe he spoke these words with a twinkle in his eye!

📖 'Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.'

(Matthew 7:3-5)

Then we read that when Jesus called James and John, the sons of Zebedee, to follow him, he renamed them 'Boanerges' which means 'sons of thunder' or 'sons of commotion', a humorous reference to their sometimes misplaced and impulsive behaviour! Some fun banter perhaps? I wonder what name Jesus might call each of us - in jest, of course!

While our call to follow Jesus is serious business, his desire for each of us is to experience the joy and fun that discipleship brings. Maybe in the week ahead we can remember that laughing is a wonderful gift from God, one that we sometimes push away in difficult seasons.

Connect



Instead, let's embrace it. Seek out people who make us laugh. Read books and watch shows that make us chuckle. And see it as gift from the God who loves us!

PRAYER

Thank you, God, for creating us with the gift of laughter:
For the joy of release, the delight of humour, the connection with friends and family, and the transformation of perspective it brings.
You are the God who laughs and enables us to laugh too.
Come close to us and help us laugh in all seasons, in pain and peace, that we may experience your gift each day.
Amen.

SONGS

- ♪ SASB 909 'When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed (Count your blessings)'
Sing along with this [version \(no lyrics\)](#) with the International Staff Songsters and smile!
- ♪ SASB 370 'I want to sing it, I want to shout it'
Enjoy the [no lyric video](#) feat Chelmsford Citadel Songsters by lovegodandloveothers or the [instrumental lyric video](#) by Norridge Citadel Salvation Army
- ♪ 'Rejoice in the Lord always'
Join in singing in a round, with the [lyric video](#) by Divine Hymns or for a much more [upbeat take \(no lyrics\)](#), 'Lord you are good' by Israel Houghton

WEBSITE AND CONTACT DETAILS

- Connect website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/connect
- Family Ministries website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/families
- Emails: familyministries@salvationarmy.org.uk
- Facebook: @sarmyfm
- Twitter: @ukifamily
- Instagram: safamily_ministries



Family Ministries

Having faith in the family

Providing intergenerational support, training and resources for

Children | Adults | Everyone



QUIZ

TV comedy quiz

1. In which seaside town is the sitcom *Fawlty Towers* set?
2. In which TV sitcom did Michael Crawford make a name for himself?
3. 'What's occurring?' is often uttered by which *Gavin and Stacy* character?
4. In which town is *The Office* (UK) set?
5. What is the name of Blackadder's faithful but, with every series increasingly more dim-witted, servant?
6. Complete this *Only Fools and Horses* catchphrase: 'Don't worry Rodney. This time next year, we'll be ...'
7. Anthony, Barbara, Dave, Denise and Jim are members of which famous TV family?
8. What is the name of the café in *Friends*?
9. What is the occupation of Lance-Corporal Jack Jones in *Dad's Army*?
10. What is the name of Arkwright's [Ronnie Barker's] love interest in *Open All Hours*?



QUIZ ANSWERS

TV comedy answers

1. In which seaside town is the sitcom *Fawlty Towers* set?
Torquay
2. In which TV sitcom did Michael Crawford make a name for himself?
Some Mothers do 'ave 'em
3. 'What's occurring?' is often uttered by which *Gavin and Stacy* character?
Nessa
4. In which town is *The Office* (UK) set?
Slough
5. What is the name of Blackadder's faithful but, with every series increasingly more dim-witted, servant?
Baldrick
6. Complete this *Only Fools and Horses* catchphrase: 'Don't worry Rodney. This time next year, we'll be ...'
Millionaires
7. Anthony, Barbara, Dave, Denise and Jim are members of which famous TV family?
The Royle Family
8. What is the name of the café in *Friends*?
Central Perk
9. What is the occupation of Lance-Corporal Jack Jones in *Dad's Army*?
Butcher
10. What is the name of Arkwright's [Ronnie Barker's] love interest in *Open All Hours*?
Nurse Gladys Emmanuel