

What makes you sad in the world today?

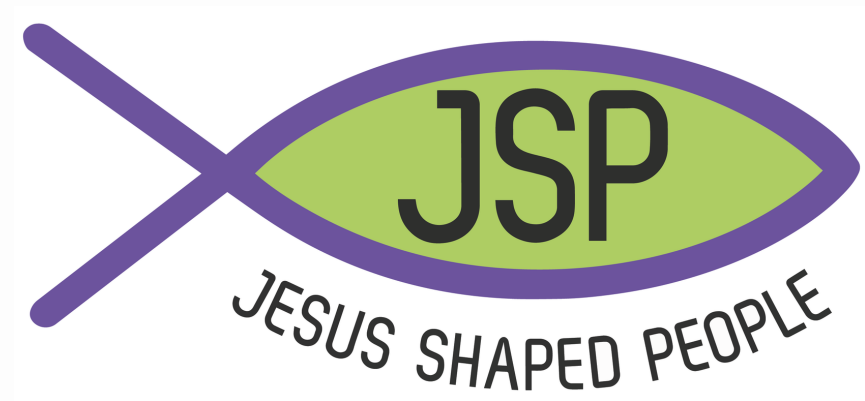
This year (2020) has been sad for many people. Some people have lost their jobs. Some people have lost friends. Some people have had to work really hard. Some people haven't been able to go to school.

What has made you sad?

You might not feel sad at all, or you might feel like crying when you think back to hard times. These are both okay. God promises that He will always be with us no matter how we feel. He will sit beside us and comfort us when life gets sad. When we are ready, God will help us up and continue to walk beside us.

You might like to talk to God about how you feel. You could draw a picture, write a song, write a prayer or make a gift for someone who you know is sad at the moment.

Use the materials here to help you. You also might like to read the two Bible stories that were in the film today. You can find them in Psalms 137:1-6 and Isaiah 57:14-21.



What have you discovered in these times?

This year (2020) has been very different from any other years. Nobody has lived in times such as these. It has given lots of people time to sit and think. Some people have discovered new things about themselves and others.

Have you learnt anything new?

How has it made you feel?

What can we learn from each other?

You might like to draw a big spider diagram, with you in the centre, and put all the things that you have discovered about you around the outside.

We are all made up of many exciting and complex parts. God puts special gifts inside each and every one of us for us to find and to use to help those around us.

You might like to pin these to a wall in church so that your church family can see them.



Where has God been for you?

During 2020 lots of people around the world have been trying to understand what life is. Many people have been looking for God and many have seen Him through online church services and prayers said on the internet.

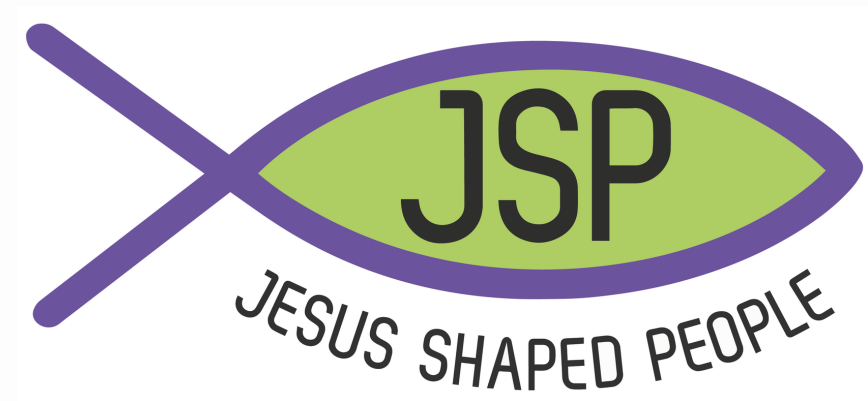
As Christians, sometimes we go through really hard times and we wonder where God is in it all. This is normal. Jesus never said that following Him would be easy; in fact, He said it would be hard. But God asks us to trust in Him completely and He will guide us through whatever situation we are in.

Looking back at the hard times in your life, particularly during 2020, where has God been in your life? How has your prayer life been? Have you been reading your Bible? Have you been telling other people about Jesus? Have you shared your story with other people?

You might like to use this time to talk to God. Ask Him how you can walk closer. You might like to write your story down. Telling our story of how we met Jesus helps other people grow in faith. This is called our testimony. It doesn't need to be long. Try writing your story on one sheet of paper.

You also might like to think about you and God. What helps you feel close to God? It might be that you like singing, or reading your Bible, or walking in the countryside, or looking at a beautiful stained-glass window, or taking pictures of the world around us.

Think about how you can do more of this each and every day. You might like to draw a picture of you and draw pictures of how you most connect with God.



What should church look like now?

This season has shown us that church will look very different from now on. Some things that we have been doing in the past need to be put down. Some things that we have been doing in this season need to be developed. Some things that we need to do we maybe haven't even thought about yet.

You might like to draw a picture of your church and/or community. What would your dream church look like? What would it do? How would it speak to the church family and the wider community? What would you like to do in it?

You might like to pin these pictures on the church wall so that the rest of the church family can look at it.

You might like to build your dream church using the materials on the table. What will it look like? What will the people do in it? What will the people do outside of the church building? Where are you in the church?



What would you like this adventure to do?

Jesus Shaped People is more than a course. It's an adventure into discovering how we can become more like Jesus. But it is one that we can do all together as one big church family.

Over these next seven weeks, you will be looking at what God is saying to the church in these times and how we can equip ourselves with what He wants us to do.

What do you hope that you and your church family will gain by going on this adventure?

You might like to write these down or you might like to draw a picture. You might want to pray and ask God what He wants you to learn and hear. God might give you a picture or a word that you could write down and maybe share with the rest of the church family.

Use the resources on the table to help you listen to God and respond to His voice.



What was your favourite part of the story?

If you like, you can read the three Bible passages. They are:

Psalm 137:1-6

Isaiah 57:14-21

Mark 1:1-12

As you read them, ask God to speak to you through the passages. What stood out for you?

John the Baptist and Jesus began their ministry in a land invaded and occupied by Roman forces imposing a different way of life. The situation created a new spiritual hunger in a wide range of people. John, from a priestly home, became the prophet who 'prepared the way' with a challenging message and invitation.

Our Old Testament readings from Psalm and Isaiah, reflect a time of loss and pain that stimulated a new spiritual hunger and thirst, and led to remarkable spiritual renewal and re-formation in those times.

Perhaps the present crisis can enable God's purposes to reverberate in our world, create a hunger for ways much closer to the Way of His kingdom. If we listen carefully, to our own inner voice, and that of the people around us, we can begin to identify and respond to the voice of the Spirit.

