FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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JUSTICE ISSUE: MENTAL HEALTH

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE/ LECTIONARY WEEK:	Psalm 13
SOCIAL PRINCIPLES/ BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS REFERENCES:	*2024 Book of Resolutions* #4207 "Ministries in Mental Health"
OBJECTIVE:	To facilitate an open discussion about mental health challenges.
SUPPLIES NEEDED:	Bibles or a print out of Psalm 13 (CEB) for all participants; dry erase board or large paper pad, plus markers to write with; blank paper, pencils/pens; scrap paper with typed words, or pages from books, magazines, or newspapers that you no longer need, and sharpie markers for everyone.

LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Invite everyone to share their high and low from the week.

Pray: Loving and Gracious God, thank you that you are always with us, in our highs and in our lows. Give us the strength to be vulnerable enough to voice when we are struggling and empower our community to support each other through difficult times. Help us to trust in your faithful love during whatever circumstances life brings our way.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

Ask for a volunteer to read Psalm 13:1-4 out loud as everyone else follows along in a Bible or a printout of the scripture.

Ask: How would you describe what the psalmist is feeling?

What kinds of circumstances could make someone feel this way today?

NOTES

Consider sharing through mutual invitation, where you begin by inviting someone to share, then they invite someone, until everyone has had the opportunity to share. For larger groups break up into smaller groups during this time.

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Say: In the Book of Resolutions 4207 it states, "There are many reasons that explain why persons with mental illness diagnosis exhibit difficult or disruptive behaviors. The reasons include traumatic events like war; abuse or domestic violence; a life of physical or emotional poverty; deprivation of social experiences and limited social skills; and behaviors due to loneliness, being misunderstood, being powerless, or the absence of joy in their lives."

Ask: Can you think of a time when you or someone you know was misunderstood or judged without others knowing the full story?

Have you ever felt lonely, or like no one understood you? If so, what helped you through that time?

Say: This is a prayer or song of King David's, in the format of a lament to God. Laments are expressions of deep sorrow, pain, or suffering which you bring to God as a way of seeking comfort and help. If the Bible includes laments then we know we can be honest with God in prayer about our pain and struggles, and that God cares when we are hurting.

Invite a different volunteer to read Psalm 13:5-6 out loud as everyone else follows along.

Say: Well that took a turn!

Ask: How would you describe how David is feeling in these last two verses?

David went from hopeless to hopeful.

Ask: What do you think made the difference for David?

Ask: What do you think would help young people feel more supported or hopeful in their daily lives?

NOTES

As students name the feelings write them on the board. Add more if their list is not sufficient, such as hopeless, depressed, and suicidal.

Consider having the youth answer these with a partner, or in a smaller group.

As students name the feelings write them on the board.

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GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

Say: We are going to look at some of the results of the 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ young people conducted by The Trevor Project, a non-profit focused on suicide prevention and crisis intervention for LGBTQ youth.

39% of LGBTQ+ young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.

66% of LGBTQ+ young people reported experiencing recent symptoms of anxiety.

53% of LGBTQ+ young people reported experiencing recent symptoms of depression.

50% of LGBTQ+ young people who wanted mental health care in the past year were not able to get it.

The number one reason cited for those who were unable to get mental health care: "I was afraid to talk about my mental health concerns with someone else."

Ask: In general, what do you think causes those in the LGBTQ+ community to experience more mental health struggles than those considered cisgender and straight?

Say: Those in the LGBTQ+ community experience additional stigmatization and mistreatment, which can increase their mental health struggles.

Ask: Do you think young people as a whole struggle with talking about their mental health concerns? Why or why not?

What helps you or others be more open in sharing your mental health struggles?

Say: Art can be one way we bridge the gap, making sharing our struggles easier, whether through painting, drawing, writing, music, dance, or other creative expressions.

We're going to explore one way today called blackout poetry.

NOTES

This is the link for the entire survey results: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/ survey-2024/#:~:text=Anxiety & Depression,-Share:&text=including nearly 3 in 5,cisgender young people (44%).

Consider having these statistics written on the board.

Before this lesson review the instructions for blackout poetry on this website: https://nowsparkcreativity.com/ 2018/10/the-easy-guide-to-blackout-poetry.html

Explain how to create blackout poetry and show examples.

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CLOSING MOMENT (5 MIN.)

Say: Partner up and everyone share your blackout poem with your partner, along with anything you are struggling with that you would like prayer for. Then pray for your partner. A prayer prompt is written on the board to help you if you need it.

Come back together as a large group. Leader can close with a prayer for everyone, along with an invitation for those who are experiencing major struggles to come talk to them later.

NOTES

Consider including this prayer prompt on the board for those who may struggle to pray out loud for their partner:

Dear God, Help (name) with (situation/struggle/pain). Let them know that you are always with them, and you love them no matter what they go through.

Amen.