

## **All-age Service: Lament**

### **Resources:**

[Powerpoint Slides](#)

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/resource/symbol-cards>

Symbols for artwork – [punctuation marks](#), [tears and speech bubble](#)

Large words – [how long o God?](#)

[Psalm 13 – A3](#)

### **Service Outline:**

**Opening songs** (or however you normally start your service)

**Whakawhanaungatanga:** relationships and making connections

Slides 1-2 Use the Symbol Cards on your tables. Pick a picture which answers the following question. Share with your group the picture you chose and why:

How was your week?

Now choose another card to answer this question:

How is your faith journey going?

**Introduction** to using images as a tool of lament: Using pictures of graffiti art on slides.

Slide 3 I wonder how you found using these images? There is a well known saying that a picture speaks a thousand words, and I wonder if you think that is true. Images speak to us and for us, they can express how we are feeling, whether that is joy or sorrow, peace or fear, hope or disappointment. In recent years we have seen the increase in a form of art known as street art or graffiti art. This is the sort of art that pops up in

public spaces and gives voice to how the artist is feeling about current issues and they can be a powerful form of commentary on what is happening in society. Here are some examples: show the images and pause for people to answer.

What are the issues here? [Slides 4-5](#)

Some of these street artists are quite famous. Who painted this? [Slide 6](#)

What is this one about from Tauranga? [Slide 7](#)

And some become the image associated with a tragic event or movement. Recognise this one? What is this one about? [Slide 8](#)

What these artists are doing is a form of lament. They are expressing their grief and sorrow. [Slide 9](#) And sometimes their hope that things will get better.

[Slide 10](#) Lament is actually a biblical practice, one that we Christians today are not very good at. We have almost lost the art of lament as a way of praying, of honestly expressing our grief and sorrow to God. Our sermon series on the book of James has touched on this especially in the last couple of weeks; it covered our attitude to suffering, and gave examples from Job who lamented and cried out to God. In chapter 5, it talked about prayer as a response to pain, which is an inevitable part of life. 'Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray.' James 5:13

Christians are often really good at expressing how we are feeling when everything is great, or pretending everything is great when it's not. When someone asks us how we are, we answer with the word 'fine' or 'good' because that is the expected answer. We struggle to admit when we are struggling and sometimes we can think that God is not interested in our pain, or that it is somehow unchristian to be honest with him about how we are feeling. But that is not what we see in the Bible. There are 42 Psalms of lament. Let's have a look at just one of them...

**Reading aloud** Psalm 13:1-4 in NLT and The Message.

NLT Slide 11 - Divide congregation up into four groups and get a section to read one verse each.

Message - Slide 12 – 3 volunteers (preferably representing different generations) to read one section each.

**Looking at the Psalm in groups** – slide 13

Underline or circle the words that stand out to you. What do you notice?

What are the feelings that are expressed in this Psalm?

Feedback

**Questions to consider** - Slide 14 How would you finish these sentences?

How long Lord... ?

How long must I/we struggle with...?

Sit and think quietly for a minute and then we are going to listen to a song as you continue to think....

**Song** Rend Collective – Weep with me – Play for 3:15 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVw4Pu13xLI>

**Making a piece of street art**

Slide 15 We started our service with pictures... a picture speaks a thousand words. We are going to make our own communal piece of street art or graffiti art. Choose a symbol that best matches what you have been thinking or feeling: a question mark, exclamation mark, tear drop or speech bubble. Use the supplies on your table to draw, colour or

write a lament. You don't have to use words. Once you have finished, bring your laments up and we will staple your prayers to our board.

Replay song

### **Conclusion**

Lament usually – though not always – end with expressions of hope, confidence and trust as we anticipate that God will make everything new in his timing. Read verses 5-6 of Psalm 13.

**Read verses** together as a prayer. Slide 16

Final praise **song** to finish.