

TRY IT ON

WHAT FITS MY GRIEF?

The Grieving of Jesus

Some features to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the circumstances are similar to your own:

- Recurring rejection
- Anticipation of death
- Abuses by trusted leaders
- Concerns for children after a departure
- Unreturned love

Some feelings to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the emotions are similar to your own:

- Sadness
- Rejection
- Anticipation
- Foreboding
- Repetition
- Frustration

A summary about what happened.

Jesus felt concern for those he was serving – especially as he anticipated leaving them. Despite repeated attempts to help Jerusalem, Jesus was told that the leaders wanted to kill him. However, Jesus continued to share meals with them. At the meals he communicated his sadness. He pointed out how they were neglecting justice and love, seeking praise from the people, contaminating people, refusing to help the oppressed, silencing different voices, and keeping people from knowing the truth. After expressing these concerns, Jesus left so they could think about what he said, but he did not let their threats drive him away. Jesus continued to interact with them. He compared them to young chicks who refused to be protected by their mother. Like a mother hen, Jesus wept because they rejected what would bring them well-being. Jesus anticipated the dangers and invited them to mourn how their actions would bring destruction. When they rejected the invitation and chose to kill him, Jesus still cared for them. While he was dying, Jesus asked God to forgive them because they did not know what they were doing.

Some of the actions of Jesus that you can *TRY ON* to see if any fit you well:

- **Share a meal** - Meals can help difficult conversations. Eating together can show others that you desire what is good for them. A meal also gives things to do and taste while the people are hearing your concerns or frustrations.
- **Get up and leave** - Rather than forcing others to hear you, taking a break from being together can help to calm frustrations and lead to reflection on what was said. More productive interactions often come after a time of separation.
- **Weep openly** - Let others see your frustrations and your tears. While laughter can diffuse tense moments, crying can clue others into the amount of pain that is being felt. Others may not know how deeply you care until they see you weep openly about it. Tears can be invitations to join you in the suffering and to begin to care like you do.
- **Explore metaphors** - Expressing concerns and feelings openly helps sometimes, but other times can require comparisons to bring awareness. Comparing your situation to one that they have experienced can help them connect with you. If you are anticipating your departure or death, how can you express your love and concerns for those you will leave behind? What might be some of the everyday experiences that they have that you could use to help them realize what you are experiencing right now?
- **Communicate consequences** - Thinking through negative consequences can help to persuade others against harmful courses of actions. You can ask whether they really want those negative effects to happen. Working backward from the end results can help others see the ramifications and your desire to help. Use scriptures for support.
- **Redirect grief** - Others may express empathy at what they assume is tragic for you without really knowing what is making you sad. Redirect misinformed expressions of sympathy. This can produce a deeper connection and function as an invitation to weep together about the same things. Tell others what is bothering you so that your mourning can match.

Some of the phrases of Jesus that you can *TRY ON* to see if any feel right for you:

- Woe to you!
- I want to gather you under my wings.
- Don't neglect justice and love.
- How often I longed to help you.
- Look at what will happen.
- I wish you knew what would bring well-being.
- Weep for yourselves and your children.

Some ideas you can *TRY ON* with a child:

- **Give space** - Give time at meals to discuss with your child what is actually bothering you or your child. Encourage your child to take some time alone or apart from you to think about how to communicate the feelings better. Talk about your concerns for what is coming next.
- **Weep together** - Invite your child to express why your child is sad, share why you are sad, and cry together. Kids may not have the ability to articulate their needs in the way adults do. Try to allow your child to begin crying as you join your child in the weeping or begin crying yourself to invite your child to weep with you. Do not force the tears, but see how your child responds to your tears. Remember that God weeps with us and wants to wipe away our tears too.
- **Make comparisons** - It can be difficult for you or your child to have words for feelings. Stories, books, movies, or recent experiences can help. Think back to a time that your child responded similarly and ask your child to compare feelings with that time. Try using animals or characters familiar to the child. Be willing to model these comparisons by offering your own.
- **Search scriptures** - Invite your child to read a story or a poem in the Bible and ask if it matches how your child is feeling or not. Finding a word in a concordance or digital search can help to locate passages

that connect with your child's situation. Read together the surrounding context to help with the connections and to see what happened next in the Bible. This can lead to a similar response or anticipation of what might happen next for you and your child.

- **Speak worries** - Express to your child how you feel about the future. What are your hopes and fears for your child? Writing or recording these ahead of time can make the conversation flow more smoothly. Ask God to help with identifying or expressing worries for your child. Show your emotions about what you think is best for your child moving forward.

A summary of what happens next:

Three days after they killed him, Jesus was raised from the dead and began to train his disciples in how to show justice and the love of God to the ones who had rejected him. Jesus taught them how to grieve well with and for others. As the disciples followed the example of Jesus, they too were attacked and opposed by the same leaders, but in time many of those same leaders came to accept what Jesus and his disciples were saying and changed their decisions and behaviors. Many became followers of Jesus and started loving and weeping like him.

Where to find the *Grieving of Jesus*:

Luke 11, 13, 19, 23