



Playtime with Dad

Welcome (10 mins)

What was your favourite game in the playground + why?
And - What was the most enjoyable thing about playing as a child?

Worship (20 mins)

Play some mellow music, and just spend time in God's presence together. But actively imagine God being playful with you, larking about, being on his knee, having a water fight, him reading you a story, going for a walk on the beach or on the hills - whatever your favourite childhood things were.

(NB if there are issues for people re: their childhood being a very negative experience then be sensitive to this but ask the Holy Spirit to redeem and heal).

Word (40 mins)

- Read Isaiah 40:11; Zephaniah 3:17; Numbers 6:24-26. These are all verses from the Old Testament. We sometimes think that God was grumpy in the Old Testament but chilled out a bit more in the New...but actually all through Scripture the revelation of what God is like is the same...He is tender-hearted, loving, kind, emotional and responsive to his people.
- Make a list together of phrases/words that have been used to describe God incorrectly and have painted a wrong picture of what he is like. Rip up this list at the end and pray for the Holy Spirit to renew each of our minds.
- Read Psalm 86:1-10 together (others you could include are 1 John 3:1; Psalm 23:1-3)
What are the characteristics of God described here?
Do any surprise you?
Are any particularly difficult to believe/engage with?
- Now read Luke 10:21 - here Jesus is responding to the return of his disciples after they have been out preaching, healing and delivering in surrounding communities.
Imagine 'Jesus, full of the joy of the Holy Spirit.'
What images/words come to mind?
What might Jesus' face have looked like / his laugh have sounded like?



Let yourselves just go with different ideas on what the joy of God sounds and looks like!!

- We can establish from this selection of scriptures that God is utterly kind, we can relate to Him and He expresses emotion. He is not the frustrated or irate parent out to trip us up we sometimes make him out to be!

- So, if God is a person who shows emotion (longing, joy, laughter...) then we should expect our interaction with him to be the same. When we pray, read Scripture, sink into the beauty of His creation, talk about Him with others...not only is it natural and healthy for there to be playful emotion and conversation and activity involved, but it is essential.
 - Why is play important?
 - Why do we tend to think play is 'less spiritual' than other things?
 - What can we learn from children in the respect of play?
 - If play with God is important then how does this affect the way we talk to God?; the way we think of God when we have messed up?
 - What do you feel/think is the biggest obstacle to making 'playing with God as your loving parent' a reality for you? (e.g. Past experience? Low self-esteem? It seems strange?)

- Take some time to think about what you can do practically to respond this week.
e.g.
Is there a letter you can write to God to begin to express your thoughts/feelings on this?
Is there a place you could visit with God (a playground, a forest, a beach)...
Is there something you could buy to remind yourself of this...etc.

- Prayer together:
Pray in small groups/pairs - for fresh revelation that God wants to play with us and that this would impact our day to day reality of life with God.
Pray for a brand new openness for the Spirit of God to bring good surprises!

Witness (20 mins)

Pray that your friends would see God as he really is - a loving Father

Cell Plan



who is well up for partying (see Luke 15!!)

Be praying for the people you are going to invite to the next event.

Pray that the tender, real, playful, liberating love of God would be poured out on their minds and hearts.

Pray for opportunities to share your story with them of what God has done for you and the message of Jesus that is relevant for their life.

Notes

Cell Plan