



GRIEF, LOSS AND REMEMBRANCE

PSALMS

PREPARATION

- ➔ Provide a smooth pebble - large enough to write a word or two on - for each member, pens able to write on stone eg acrylic markers and a bowl of water large enough to accommodate all the pebbles
- ➔ Prepare a vase with water and have a selection of colourful seasonal flowers in a bucket - with water
- ➔ Source card bunting eg from [hobbycraft.com](https://www.hobbycraft.com) or make-your-own, pens and string
- ➔ Provide pens and print out the:
 - ➔ *Psalm 34 colouring sheets* - cut in two
 - ➔ *Grief, loss and remembrance notes*
- ➔ Source reflective music (optional) eg [Beautiful piano music for grief and loss](#) by SOMA Sound (2:00:00)
- ➔ You may wish to make ensure there are tissues, refreshment and pastoral support for any member who needs it

Additional resources

- ❖ *Psalm 34 colouring sheets*
- ❖ *Grief, loss and remembrance notes*

Be sensitive as the theme may be distressing to some members.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

In this session we will think about how 'grief' comes throughout life, often in many different forms, and what impact the loss of someone, or something has upon us. It may be the grief of losing a loved one, the loss of a home or a place that was important to you. You may have experienced the loss of fulltime work or the grief of losing a family pet. As we consider grief and loss, we will also take time to give thanks for people, places, spaces and the things in life that have impacted us.

ACTIVITIES

REFLECTION

Stones of loss

Place the bowl of water at the front or in the middle of the group. Have the pens nearby, ready to share out.





Invite group members to take a smooth pebble and hold it in their hands. Do a communal act of reflection and remembrance.

‘Imagine you are standing on the edge of the sea or a lake, and you have picked this pebble from the beach. As you hold the pebble in your hand, close your eyes and imagine the water in front of you; the water reaches further than your eye can see.

‘Feel the weight of the pebble, its curves and edges. Imagine all the other pebbles that are under your feet. This pebble represents just one time in your life when you felt a deep loss. There are many other losses that you have experienced but this one is the one that you choose to remember. It may be:

- * the loss of a home that you loved,
- * the loss of independence in some form,
- * the loss of a job,
- * the loss of children leaving home,
- * the loss of a church family,
- * the loss of a friendship,
- * the loss of faith ...

‘Whatever the loss is, open your eyes and write it on the pebble.

‘Because this loss has come to your mind, the chances are that you still struggle in some form with ‘losing’ something from your life. As you place the pebble into the water bowl, know that God understands your heart and mind. He too lost loved ones - his friends, his human life, his home, his place of birth.

‘Jesus does understand your loss, probably better than anyone else. Jesus accepted his losses, and he acknowledged that when we follow him, we in essence lose control of our own lives.

‘In Matthew 16:25 Jesus says, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”

‘Take a moment to try and accept the loss you have experienced. Give thanks for the person, situation, friendship or the whatever that you have lost. And then ask Jesus to help you find a way forward and fullness of life despite your loss.’



THANKSGIVING

The vase of colourful lives

Set up the vase with water on a table. Have nearby the bucket filled with colourful flowers.

Invite members to choose a flower that represents the colour of someone they have loved and lost, whether through death, moving away, a broken relationship, or miles of separation.

Ask members to think about the colour that someone has brought to their lives that they no longer see. Acknowledge that separation for whatever reason brings about grief, but in our grief, we can choose to celebrate a life that has brought light, life and colour into our own lives.

Thanksgiving prayer for colourful lives

Father, as we think of someone who we no longer see,
we thank you for the colour they brought into our lives,
the vibrancy of their personality,
the warmth of their love,
their steadfast kindness or unwavering strength.
Father, separation can bring sadness and distress.
In these moments we choose to think of the colourful lives that have
changed our lives and thank you that our paths have crossed,
our lives fuller because of another person
and we choose to say thank you for them. **Amen**

Invite members to bring their flower to the table and add it to the vase.

REFLECTION

Colouring sheets

Share out the *Psalm 34 colouring sheets* and let members choose which version appeals; depending on where they are in their grief journey.

- * 'I will praise the Lord at all times. His praise is always on my lips.'
(Psalm 34:1 ICB)
- * 'The lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.' (Psalm 34:18)



BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

Psalm 34:18

In the Old Testament, King David wrote of turning to the Lord in times of grief. The psalm is filled with times of deep hurt; of fears, troubles and shame. Yet the psalm starts with praise and thanksgiving - praise the lord, glorify him and exalt his name. You may ask why. Why does a psalm exploring grief and loss start with praise? Because after each encounter of grief, David says that the Lord hears them, saves and delivers them; that he can provide refuge. During our most troubled times, God is there for us.

We know that God fully understands our pain of grief and loss; Jesus experienced these human emotions many times. In John's Gospel we read the story of Lazarus, the friend of Jesus who became sick and eventually dies. The sisters of Lazarus send a message to Jesus with the words '*Lord, the one you love is sick.*' (John 11:3). What we hear in this passage of Scripture is the depth of love that is shared between Jesus and Lazarus, with the sisters knowing that Jesus will know exactly who was poorly - his friend Lazarus.

The story continues with Jesus reminding the sisters that death is not the end, it is the moment we rise in Glory! If you know the story well, you will know that Jesus performs a miracle. Jesus visits Lazarus and brings him back to life. Even though it is not recorded, we know at some point Lazarus will die again and not come back to life; instead, he will rise in Glory, living eternally, just as Jesus had said.

Grief and loss are inevitable for humans; we will all experience grief and loss at some point in our lives, and probably not just the once.

- * We may grieve the loss of a loved one, or a place that we can no longer see or visit.
- * We may grieve the loss of a pet, a relationship, or even our independence.
- * We may grieve the loss of a well-functioning body, our hearing, our sight or even our memory.

But there is good news! Death and grief and loss is not the end. What awaits us is bigger and better than we could ever imagine. One day all these things will become unimportant, even though it may not feel like that just now, as we will be basking the presence of Jesus.

When we experience grief and loss, we may feel that no one understands, and we can feel isolated and alone. Just have a little look around at the people in this group. They care about you, we all should care for one another, and we are called by Jesus to, '*love each other as I have loved you.*' (John 13:34 ICB)





One form of grief people experience is if someone they love is living with dementia. It can be a struggle when to see a loved one lose the ability to remember certain things or participate in activities. This can be very hard for everyone. How do you find a way to live with this kind of loss?

Commissioner Robert Street, Bob, cares for his wife Janet who is living with dementia. They were both Salvation Army officers for many years before Janet was diagnosed with dementia. Bob wrote a book called *Caring for Janet*, in which he beautifully explains how, when they came to each 'last time' of being able to do an activity, they gave thanks for all the times they had experienced that activity together.

It is quite a beautiful example of turning loss into thanksgiving. With the help of God and those who care for us, this is possible - as we read in Scripture that '*with God nothing shall be impossible.*' (Luke 1:37 KJV) Let us praise the Lord at all times; let his praise always be on our lips.

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving bunting

In these closing moments encourage members to choose to turn their grief and loss into thanksgiving. Ask members to take a piece of coloured bunting and write either a prayer of thanksgiving - for the person, place or things that they have lost.

Members might want to write about the colour the person, place or situation brought into their life. If they loved their job and miss it, write a thank you note for the time that they were able to work and for the strength they found throughout that time.

Add all the group's thoughts and prayers together to make a string of thanksgiving bunting that actually comes out of a place of grief and loss.

REFLECTION

Grief, loss and remembrance

Invite members to take a *Grief, loss and remembrance note*, which they can either fill in as music plays or can take home, to complete in the privacy of their own space.

♪ [Beautiful piano music for grief and loss](#) by SOMA Sound (2:00:00)

Ensure members are aware of who is pastorally caring for the group and invite them to speak to someone if they want to share how this week's session has





spoken to them or made them feel. Ensure that everyone knows there is someone who cares about their situation and feelings of grief and loss.

If people ask for prayer, try to turn the prayers into remembrance and thanksgiving while acknowledging the deep pain that comes from grieving and the loss we experience in life. We do not want to make light of anyone's feelings of pain.

PRAYER

The serenity prayer

God, give me grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed.

Courage to change the things which should be changed,
and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time,
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace.

Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it.

Trusting that You will make all things right,
if I surrender to Your will,

so that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
and supremely happy with You forever in the next.

Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

SONGS

- ♪ 'Jesus, all for Jesus'

[Official video](#) (no lyrics) by Robin Mark (3:52)

[Lyric video](#) by ExaltHIMvdo (4:43)

- ♪ SASB 483 'When I was lost, you came and rescued me'

[Official lyric video](#) by Kate Simmonds (6:11)

[Brass instrumental lyric video](#) by St Albans Salvation Army (2:37)

[Soloist lyric video](#) by Scarborough Citadel Salvation Army (2:32)

- ♪ SASB 741 'When peace like a river attendeth my way [It is well with my soul]'

[Official lyric video](#) by Audrey Assad (4:10)

[Piano instrumental lyric video](#) by Droitwich Spa Salvation Army (3:08)

[Official lyric video](#) by CeCe Winans (3:10)

[Official lyric video](#) by SovereignGraceMusic (5:17)





WEBSITE AND CONTACT DETAILS

- Connect website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/connect
- Family Ministries website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/families
- Emails: familyministries@salvationarmy.org.uk
- Facebook: @sarmyfm
- Twitter: @ukifamily
- Instagram: safamily_ministries



Family Ministries

Having faith in the family

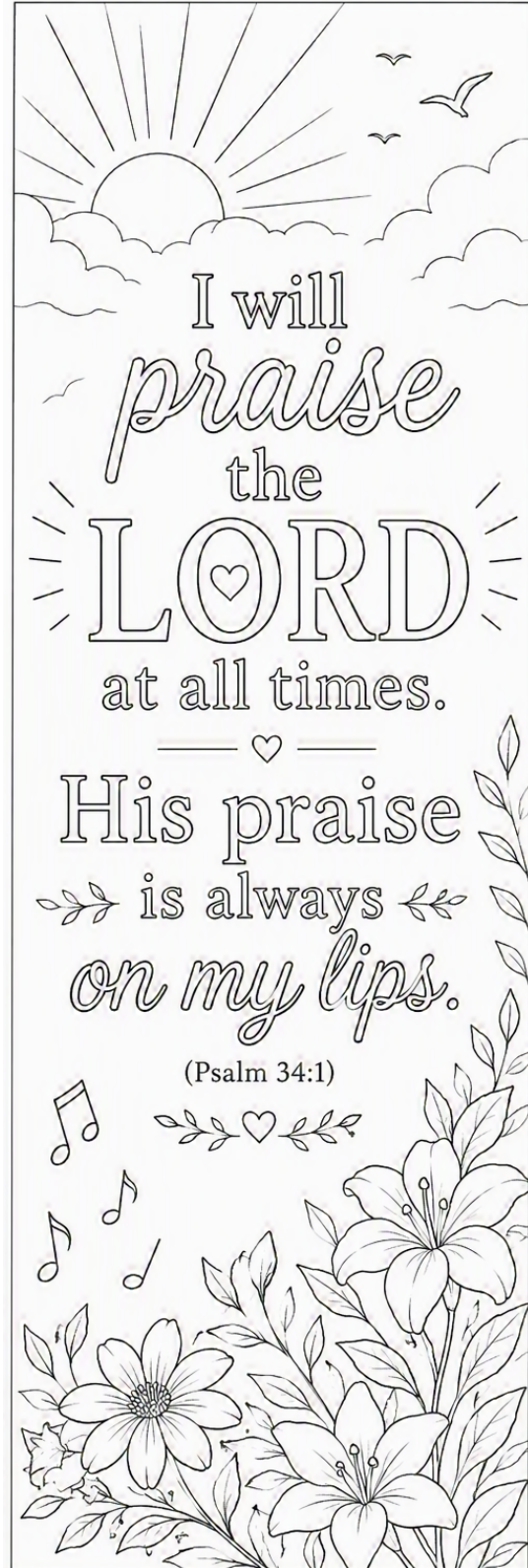
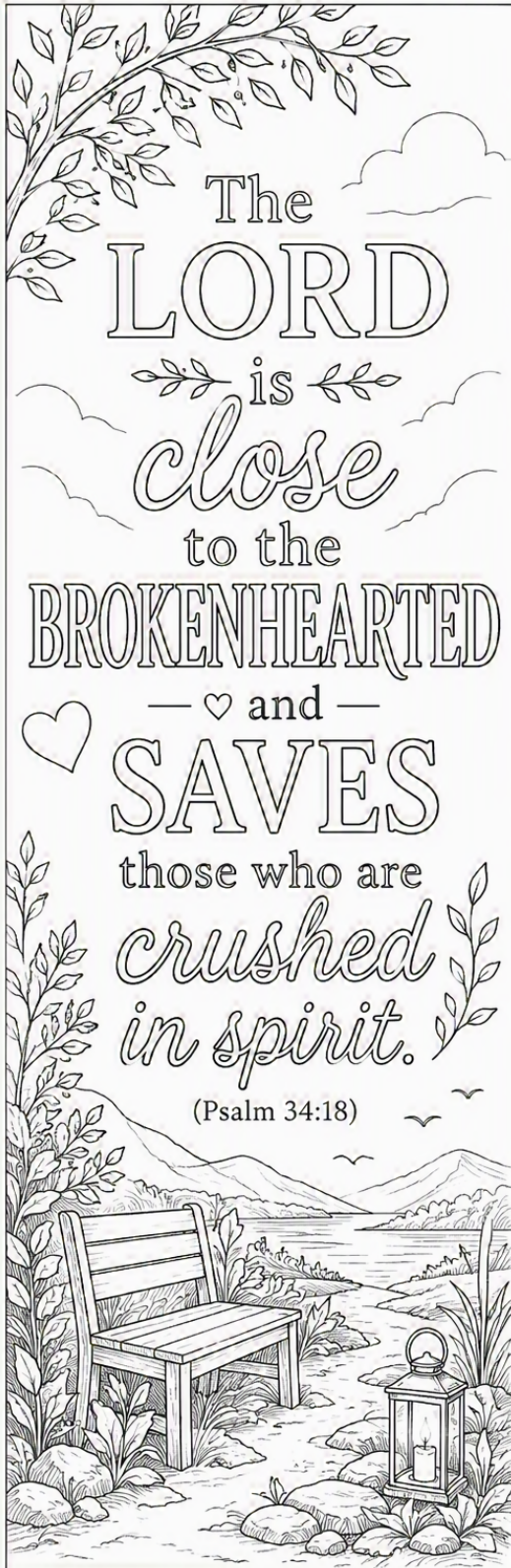
Providing intergenerational support, training and resources for

Children | Adults | Everyone



PSALM 34 COLOURING SHEETS

Images generated with the help of AI.





GRIEF, LOSS AND REMEMBRANCE NOTES

Lord, in my grief I seek ...

Lord, in my loss I seek ...

Lord, as I remember, I give thanks for ...

PEACE

Lord, in my grief I seek ...

Lord, in my loss I seek ...

Lord, as I remember, I give thanks for ...

PEACE

