

Life in all its fullness

John 10.10

Themes: Life, worth, youth suicide, mental health

Summary: This is a devotion with discussion questions and a prayer which were used as part of the INFLUENCE youth suicide prevention training in 2019. As part of this training, youth leaders from across the church took part in a Youth Suicide prevention workshop, and then helped to form a response to the church in the form of a reflection talanoa. This resource may be used in your context to invite safe and open discussion. Please note, it is merely a devotional resource and prayer, and for deeper training and resourcing around mental health and youth suicide prevention, you should contact relevant agencies and providers. That being said, the church remains committed to creating space for these issues to be openly talked about and stigmatized – in a safe and respectful way that aligns to the Connexional vision, *Let the Children Live*.

How to use: This resource is merely a guide. If you wish to use in its delivered form entirely, feel free to do so. If you wish to add, omit or edit anything, feel free to do so. It is intended to be a guide and provide some assistance in prep time for busy youth ministry leaders.

Suicide Prevention Prayer – Rev. Greg Hughson.

Loving god, thank you that my life is precious. Therefore, I promise you, and I promise myself, that from today onwards, I will tell someone I trust whenever I am feeling stressed, overwhelmed or suicidal. I will look out for warning signs of distress in myself and in others. If I am concerned that a friend or family member might be suicidal, I will ask them if they are indeed thinking of taking their own life. Help me, lord, to listen without judgement, and to do all I can to keep myself and my friends and family safe. Motivate me to get help for myself and for others when needed. I know that I do not need to feel ashamed to ask for help. Whatever I have done or however whakamā I am feeling, I am still loved. Thank you lord for your love for me, a love which will never leave me, no matter how bad I am feeling. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Life in all its fullness - Devotion

In the ancient world of the Bible, when going to a friend's house for a meal, there was a specific act which indicated that the time of your visit was up.

You would go, enjoy company, food and drink. The host would ensure that you are always fed, comfortable and well-looked after. Your cup, filled with wine or whatever beverage of the time, would always remain full. As long as your cup is full, you are welcome.

As the night winds down, and your host is ready to go to bed, your cup may begin to go down and no longer be filled to the rim. When your cup runs dry, it's time to go.

The world, often the uncrowned shaper of our own sense of self-worth, offers things to fill

About this resource: This resource is developed from TCYF Ministries under Mission Resourcing, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa. It is available for use in any church, and may be freely edited and contextualized to any church setting, however please credit *Mission Resourcing, MCNZ* when doing so. Please note also that this resource does not necessarily reflect the views of the Methodist Church of New Zealand as an institution.

our cup. Things which may be good in the short term, present moments of pleasure and make us appear to be fully satisfied. These things however, like the cup of guest at a feast in a visitors house, will eventually run dry. The short term, synthetic, virtual, close-minded things of the world that fill us, eventually will leave us empty. This is not just exclusive to material things - it also relates to our mental and spiritual well-being, our identity and the essence of our being.

People today are searching to have their cup be filled. The more disappointed they become when they come to realize the things they are finding do not satisfy, the more vulnerable they may become. This is a cycle that sadly afflicts many young people in our land today. Our dire statistics around youth suicide underpin this disheartening reality that Aotearoa finds itself in.

What then, can we do? Where can we turn, as the church, in the face of such worrying statistics and issues?

Faith in Christ offers something different. Something filled with hope and eternal promise, but of value to a life still here now on earth. When invited into the presence of God, our presence in His company is everlasting. Our cup will always remain full - or as the Psalmist pens in Psalm 23.5 - my cup overflows.

When we understand our identity as being shaped in God and made in Gods image, we are filled. When we see the Holy Spirit at work in and through us, we are filled. When we stand on the teachings of Christ, find hope in Him and embrace the responsibility of being his hands and feet in the world, we are filled.

We have the chance to offer something different. Something authentic and real. To know that God is not done, because our cup is overflowing. And the good news is that there's more than enough for every person and every life. When our cup is being filled by God, we are receiving life in all its fullness.

Some questions for discussion:

1. What does it mean to have a full life?
2. What are things we can do to manage our energy and worth?
3. What are things we can do if feeling anxious, tired or down about life?
4. What are things about God and faith that can assist us in everyday life?
5. How do we pray about these things?

About this resource: This resource is developed from TCYF Ministries under Mission Resourcing, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa. It is available for use in any church, and may be freely edited and contextualized to any church setting, however please credit *Mission Resourcing, MCNZ* when doing so. Please note also that this resource does not necessarily reflect the views of the Methodist Church of New Zealand as an institution.



About this resource: This resource is developed from TCYF Ministries under Mission Resourcing, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa. It is available for use in any church, and may be freely edited and contextualized to any church setting, however please credit *Mission Resourcing, MCNZ* when doing so. Please note also that this resource does not necessarily reflect the views of the Methodist Church of New Zealand as an institution. _____