

EXERCISE

Laughter



Time: 3 minutes



Setup and materials: pencil and paper



Good For: Large Groups, Small Groups, Self-study

Framing:

Many of us are afflicted with terminal seriousness. We put pressure on ourselves. We work to exhaustion and don't get enough relief from the ongoing demands of life. We compromise our immune system. How can we counteract the effects of these things? We could laugh more.

It seems strange that we would consider creating a strategy to help us laugh more, but if we don't, days and weeks can go by, bereft of chuckles, giggles or side-splitting guffaws. Over time, life is just a little less fun.

In this exercise, first we will be laughing, then we will make a plan for laughing in the future. You might find a way to work jokes or comedy into your laughter plans, but you could also make a habit of laughing about everyday things. Life is funny if you take that perspective.

Steps:

1. Full group, 1 minute

Put a pencil in your mouth to get the face of a smile. That will get you started. Next, test out how your chest and stomach and breath work when you are laughing. Take a deep breath in, then number of short breaths out, as if you are laughing. Tighten your stomach as if you are laughing.

2. Full group, 2 minutes

Laugh. Notice how infectious laughter is. Notice the thoughts that come into your head when you are laughing.

3. Ongoing practice

Laugh. Smile.

“Fake it” laugh by smiling and moving your body as if you are laughing.

Find some triggers that make you laugh, and keep them handy. They could be written words, or video, or audio, or images. Learn what tickles your funny bone.

Remind yourself of the people you laugh with, and find ways to spend more time with them.