



Stressed Out Soda Can

STRESS Small Group Exercise

Main Point of Discussion: Stress and worry are a normal part of life; the question is...how should we deal with it? Many people internalize the stress and end up suffering consequences. The good news for Christians is that God gives us a strategy to deal with pressure in a healthy and non-consequential fashion.

Opener:

Start the meeting by telling a funny story about being stressed out. At the same time, have a few adult leaders shake a can of soda in the crowd.

After the story, ask the crowd a few generic questions, while more leaders shake more cans of soda, for instance:

- *Why are all of you looking at _____ hold that can of soda? You look a little worried. Why?*
- *Have you ever felt like you were going to blow up like those cans of soda will when we open them?*
- *Do you think there's a safe way to open the can after it's been shaken up?*

The Video Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5xbgNTxApo>

Transitional Statement:

This guy just showed us how to deal with a can of soda that was under pressure. At first it probably seemed like even though he tapped on it, it would still explode, but as we saw, his method of dealing with the pressure worked perfectly. Just like the can under pressure, our lives can reflect something that's about to blow, but there is a Biblical method to deal with it that takes the pressure away.

Divide into Small Groups:

Let's go ahead and split up into our discussion groups, and then afterward we'll come back together

for a final word.

Discussion Questions:

1. AROUND THE CIRCLE: Before we begin, tell everyone your name and what is your favorite soda/power drink?

2. ASK A FEW: When was a time that you felt like a can of soda being shaken up?

3. ASK A FEW: How do you usually deal with stress?

4. ASK A FEW: Is it helpful? Why or why not?

5. ASK A FEW: Is it possible to live life and not face stress and pressure? Why or why not?

6. ASK A FEW: How would your life be different if you dealt with stress and pressure effectively?

7. ASK A FEW: What do you think is God's design for dealing with stress?

Read the following passage:

Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

8. ASK SOMEONE: How is it possible to not worry about anything?

9. ASK A FEW: How are we instructed to respond when life is shaking us up like a can of pop?

10. ASK A FEW: How might praying about everything help dislodge the ‘bubbles’ of stress?
11. ASK A FEW: How would thankfulness for what God has done help us find peace?
12. ASK A FEW: How does ‘God’s peace’ differ from human peace?
13. ASK A FEW: What does a peace that ‘exceeds anything we understand’ look like?
14. ASK A FEW: The Greek word for ‘guard’ literally means “to protect by a military guard, to prevent hostile invasion” (Bible.org). Based on this definition, how does prayer and thankfulness to God bring about protection against worry and stress?
15. ASK A FEW: Is peace in the midst of pressure a promise or a possibility? Why?
16. AROUND THE CIRCLE: What are some pressures you are facing that prayer and thankfulness would help alleviate?

Wrap Up:

The Message version of our passage (Philippians 4:6-7) reads:

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.

The ultimate question at stake here is this: “do I really believe God is good and He knows what He’s doing?” You see, much of the pressure we let build up in our lives is a result of not believing that God is in control and has our best interests in life. That’s why prayer and thankfulness to God shifts our perspective off the circumstances and on to the One who can do all things and works all things together for our good. Let’s take some time in closing to do that.

Pass out 3x5 cards and ask the students to write down their worries and stresses on one side, then things they are thankful for on the other side. Spend a few moments in prayer, letting them pray silently or out loud for their requests and praises.

Close in Prayer

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