



9. You've counted my tears

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. *This is part of our new series 'Songs from the heart'. You may need to tailor this script to suit the needs, age range & levels of concerns of your school community, which of course includes adults as well as children. We use the story of David & Jonathan to explore how David coped with separation from his best friend, and reflect on how David knew God's presence with him and care for him even in the saddest times of his life. Some children may find talking about 'best' friends more difficult, as they have several friends rather than one they would call their 'best', or even be experiencing friendship difficulties. Using the story as it is should allow conversations at many different levels: you know your class best! This collective worship gives children the opportunity to express their own sadnesses and bring them before God like David did; it may well be necessary to allow some extra time this week. It is also important to acknowledge that some children may not want to feel sad, so there is an encouragement to do instead what Paul suggested in 2 Corinthians 1:4 and be a comfort for those who are sad, knowing how it feels to be comforted.*

There are also some suggestions within these resources for dealing with any issues of bereavement or separation that children may have experienced and choose to express during this week.

Any disclosures should of course be handled in accordance with your school's safeguarding policy.



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

Use this section to reference your school's values and the things that are a part of your school's unique vision. This week, the focus is on David's sadness before God – and how the promise that God notices and keeps a count of his tears is a source of comfort to David, and to Christians, in sad times. There is also opportunity for your community to stand alongside any who are sad.

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation.
- **There are two options for the opening discussion slide: choose which you prefer, or use both but at different times in the week.**
- You will either need some blue paper cut into teardrop shapes (tissue paper also works well), or some blue/clear glass nuggets (you can also get small teardrop shapes which are ideal), and a large, clean plastic bottle to gather them in. Stick the words of Psalm 56 verse 8 (CEV translation in the best) onto the empty bottle. If you're using glass nuggets, make sure your bottle neck is wide enough for the beads to go through! Children could write on paper drops if it helps them, but they might feel it's easier to not disclose specifics. Ensure that you act in accordance with your school's safeguarding policy if there are any disclosures.

Gathering:

Slides 1-3: Use these new gathering words for this term, or your usual greeting if you prefer. The greeting comes with BSL signing; you can view the demos using links under the slide.



Leader: As we gather together,

ALL: ...we bring our hearts.

Leader: As we gather together,

ALL: ...we share our thoughts.

Leader: As community together,

ALL: We serve one another.

Signs for greeting: click on links

Hearts: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - heart](#) (or you could use your hands as shown in the image)

Thoughts: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - thought](#)

Serve: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - serve](#) (or you could just open your hands in front of you)

Engaging:

- **Discussion Option 1, Slide 4: What makes someone sad?** Talk together about your answers to the question, being aware that children (like the adults in the room) will feel able to share at a range of levels, from the deeply personal, to what makes 'people' sad generally, or maybe to give



particular examples such as hurting themselves, or a moment in a film. This may have nothing to do with the age of the children.

- **Discussion Option 2, Slide 5: I wonder how many pairs of 'best friends' you can name?** – there are a few to get us talking here in this picture. I wonder who *your* best friend is / *your* friends are – and what made you choose each other? *[if time allows, you could share some stories here]*
- **Slide 6:** We're going to hear a short story now about two best friends, a sad time that they experienced – and some words written by one of them in the middle of great sadness in which there's another promise..... In the story you'll hear the words 'David and Jonathan' (so no guesses as to the best friends' names!) When you do, you might want to join in with the refrain '**the very best of friends**'.
- **Slide 7-12: The very best of friends** *[Use script on p3]* You may wish to pause the story at the end and explore any emotions that pupils might want to share. There is a final wondering question to help you.....
- **Slide 13: Songs from the heart** As we've heard so far this term, there are many examples in the Psalms that David wrote where he shares feelings of sadness and anger – as well as words of great happiness and praise. It was not long after the separation from his best friend, Jonathan, that David wrote these words, expressing his sadness to God:
- **Slide 14:**

**You have stored my tears
in your bottle
and counted each of them....**

He also wrote in Psalm 34:
...God is close to the brokenhearted....

David believed that God had not left him during the difficult times in his life, but instead was taking notice of every tear that David cried and keeping them, treasuring them almost, in his bottle. David's tears mattered deeply to God.

**Slide 15: I wonder what you think about these words?
....I wonder if it helps to know that God sees – and counts – every tear?....
I wonder how these words might bring comfort when someone is sad?....**

Slide 16: We've already heard that David believed that '**God is close to the brokenhearted**', which is what he himself had experienced. But to help us as we draw near to the end of our time together, we're going to hear some more words from the Bible, written by St Paul in the New Testament part of the Bible: '**God comforts us when we are in need, so that we can be a comforter to others in need.**' **2 Corinthians 1: 4** *[adapted CEV translation]* This means that we can help to comfort others when they are sad.

[It's good to think about how you might do this, so pause now and talk about your ideas together e.g. giving others space; sitting quietly beside them; [appropriately] putting an arm around their shoulders; talking with them etc. – children might also be able to think of their own ways to be a 'comforter'.]

Now we're going to use David's picture of tears in a bottle to give each other some space today (& this week in our classrooms) to think about any sadnesses we carry, and if you want to, to bring them before God as David did, or maybe instead to think about how you might bring comfort to someone else in their sadness. *[Pause now, and use the reflective resources to help you....]*

Slide 17: Responding (and words for worship):

.....So now, let's spend a few moments being still and quiet together.....

.... let's bring all that we have experienced in this space and time....

....and choose to leave it here....

....maybe you might want to put it into God's hands, trusting that he has noticed you and the sadnesses you carry, just as he noticed David....



Slide 18: Prayer:

Now I am going to use some words of a simple prayer; you can join in with the words 'Thank you that you notice us' at the end of each of my lines if you would like to.

When our lives are good and we are happy

Thank you that you notice us.

When our lives are troubled and we are confused,

Thank you that you notice us.

When sadness creeps in and causes us to cry,

Thank you that you notice us.

Whatever happens in our lives,

Thank you that you notice us.

Slide 19: Amen

Sending: Slide 20

Leader: As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead,

All:may we serve one another in our **thoughts** and **words** and **actions**.



Signs for response: click on links

Thoughts: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - thought \(signbsl.com\)](https://www.signbsl.com/words/thought)

Words (use 3rd definition): [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - word \(signbsl.com\)](https://www.signbsl.com/words/word)

Actions: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - action \(signbsl.com\)](https://www.signbsl.com/words/action)

To sing / listen to:

[Kum ba Yah](#) (BBC) or [Hold On](#) (POP UK)

- If you subscribe to Fischy Music, there is a really good song. 'My old friend tears', which helps children to hear how tears heal as well as hurt. Clip here: [My old friend tears - Fischy Music](#)
- A positive reminder that God is with you every step: [Every Step \(Official Lyric Video\) - Nick & Becky Drake - YouTube](#)



Ideas for classroom reflection: Tears in a bottle

Place an empty clear water bottle in your reflective area, along with blue glass nuggets or tear shapes cut from blue paper or tissue paper.

During the week, leave these out as a way for children to express any sadnesses they carry.



Extra ideas for spiritual development:

This week, we share some additional ideas to support good conversations around loss – either through bereavement or separation.

- This booklet from the Church of England Education Office contains some useful ideas. ['Never the Same' - Resources for school leaders | The Church of England](#)

These are especially useful:

- [The Invisible Suitcase](#) for KS2 or older
- Archie from CBeebies for younger children <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/archie-the-dog>
- There is also a brilliant resource pack from our colleagues in Canterbury to support all in your school community who have experienced bereavement or loss. There is an especially good section on p. 26 about how children grieve in 'puddles', but lots more support elsewhere! You can find the pack here: [Grief and bereavement resources - Diocese of Canterbury](#)
- These reflective prayer activities from Prayer Spaces in Schools are all about bereavement or loss.
 - [The Empty Chair Prayer Space Idea](#)
 - [Beads of Loss](#)
 - [Dealing with Loss](#)
 - [Honour Wall](#)
 - [Torn Clothes](#)



The very best of friends

The full story can be found in 1 Samuel chapters 18-20 & 31, and 2 Samuel 1. (If you want to read David's reaction to the news of Jonathan & Saul's deaths, then look in 2 Samuel 1: 11-12)

Invite children to join with the refrain in **bold**:
David and Jonathan – ***the very best of friends***

Slide 6: In the Bible, there's a story about two friends. David wrote songs for the King. Jonathan was a prince, the son of King Saul, and David was his best friend.

David and Jonathan – ***the very best of friends***

Slide 7: They'd been friends since David was not much more than a boy. I expect you can imagine some of the things they got up to!! However, being the friend of a prince wasn't as easy as you might think, especially when Jonathan's father, King Saul, was as jealous of David as he was.

David and Jonathan – ***the very best of friends***

Slide 8: People liked and admired David for how great he was on the battle field, but King Saul hated hearing this, and wanted David out of the way for good, even though David and Jonathan were – ***the very best of friends***.

Slide 9: Jonathan found out about the plan and decided that he cared about David too much to let his father hurt him in any way.

David and Jonathan – ***the very best of friends***

Slide 10: So, Jonathan sent David away, knowing what that meant; knowing that they might never meet again; knowing how much he would miss his friendship, but wanting more than anything else to protect David and keep him safe.

David and Jonathan – ***the very best of friends***

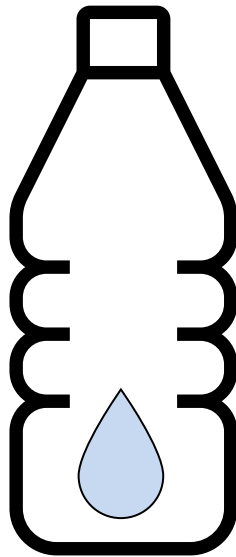
Slide 11: David left the palace and went to live in Gath, a long way away, with sadness heavy in his heart. Maybe you can understand what he was feeling.....

David and Jonathan – ***the very best of friends***

Slide 12: Sadly, David never saw Jonathan again [*optional: for Jonathan died in battle beside his father*], but he never forgot their friendship. He wrote: 'I miss you most of all: you were like my brother, truly loyal to me.'

David and Jonathan – ***the very best of friends***

I wonder what this story teaches us?



After Jonathan died, David was very sad. He wrote in Psalm 56: 'You have stored my tears in your bottle and counted each of them.' He believed his tears mattered to God.



Are there things that make you sad? Or do you know someone who is sad?



You might want to talk to someone you trust about how you feel.



Take a 'tear' and hold it in your hand. Then pop it into the bottle as a way of bringing your sadness to God or letting it go.