

# Supplemental Content

## Beach Party Option

### Pack Your Cooler for this Optional Opening Activity:

- Paper
- Pens

Start your time together with this brief icebreaker. Give each student a slip of paper and a pen, and then divide the group in half. Ask the students in one group to write down the very first line of a story (the beginning) and ask the students in the other group to write down the last line of a story (the ending). Encourage them to work individually and to be as creative as they want—the story can be about anyone or anything...or nothing. They have the complete freedom to let their imaginations run wild (in no more than one sentence). Allow about two or three minutes for students to write.

To help spark ideas, tell students that they should write the beginning or end to a great movie that hasn't been written, or even to their own autobiography.

Then have everyone form a pair with someone from the other group. If you have an uneven number of students, write your own line and partner with a student. Have one teenager read aloud the story's beginning and have the other read the ending. These might make for some strange combinations, so expect some laughter.

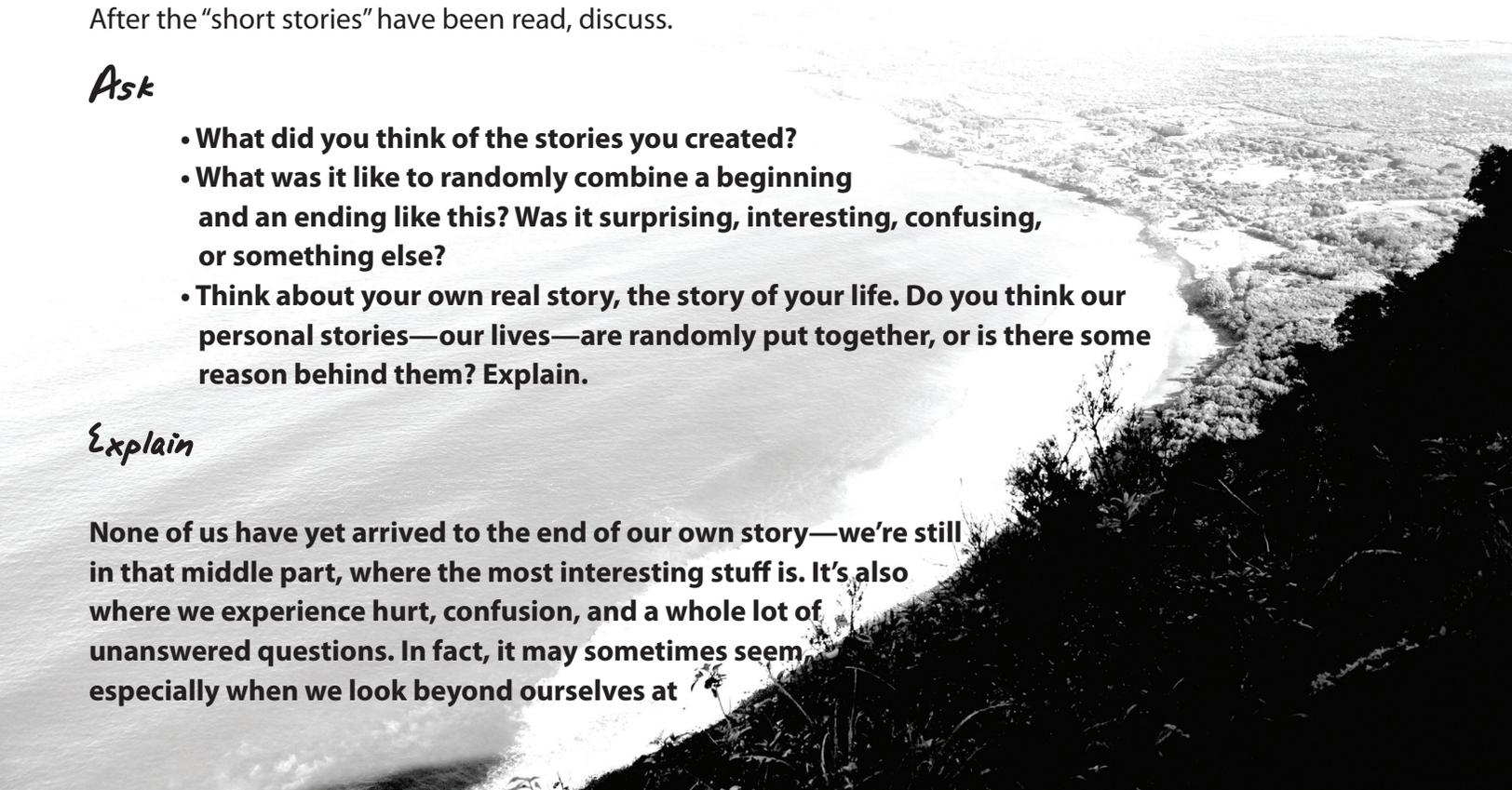
After the "short stories" have been read, discuss.

### Ask

- **What did you think of the stories you created?**
- **What was it like to randomly combine a beginning and an ending like this? Was it surprising, interesting, confusing, or something else?**
- **Think about your own real story, the story of your life. Do you think our personal stories—our lives—are randomly put together, or is there some reason behind them? Explain.**

### Explain

None of us have yet arrived to the end of our own story—we're still in that middle part, where the most interesting stuff is. It's also where we experience hurt, confusion, and a whole lot of unanswered questions. In fact, it may sometimes seem especially when we look beyond ourselves at



the rest of the world, that it's pretty senseless, even random, and that nobody's really in control. We don't know what's waiting at the finish, and we wonder why this part of the story has to be so tough sometimes. Today we're going to talk about just that, and discuss what place God might have in the story.

## Additional Discussion Questions

Catch the Wave Additional Discussion Questions. After the video,

### *Ask*

- **Greg said that every belief system has to deal with the problem of pain. How do you explain it?**
- **What hope might we have in a world full of bad things? In the midst of our own suffering? How do you think we should deal with the problem of pain?**
- **Do you believe God could stop bad things from happening? If so, why doesn't He?**
- **How might we reconcile God's unconditional love with His knowledge that we would experience pain and suffering?**

Dive Deep Additional Discussion Questions.

### *Ask*

- **Does accepting the inevitability of bad things mean we should give up and be OK with it? If not, how should we respond?**
- **How might you use your ability to choose good instead of bad? What role, if any, might you play in preventing pain, either in your own life or others'?**
- **How do these verses explain why bad things happen? What about bad things that aren't moral evil? What does it tell us about our current problem of pain?**
- **According to this passage, what else does a seed represent?**
- **What does it mean to you personally that, when you choose to accept Jesus Christ into your life, a new seed is planted? How can this hope change your life?**

Sail Home Additional Discussion Questions.

### *Ask*

- **What can we discover about God in these passages? How might it bring us hope in the midst of pain?**
- **What are the hard rains in your life? How might God be protecting you, or helping you thrive in spite of them?**
- **Priscilla shared how her pain was somewhat healed when she reached out to her mother. How can you experience healing when you're in pain?**
- **In what ways can we comfort others who are suffering? Help them to heal?**

## Music/Media Option

If you'd like to include another media element in today's session, find *The Valley Song (Sing of Your Mercy)* by Jars of Clay. The song is a heartbroken but hopeful prayer by someone crying out for God's comfort. Play the song either from an mp3 player or *Furthermore: From the Studio/From the Stage* CD, and encourage students to listen carefully. Afterward, discuss what responses and feelings the song triggered.

## Supplemental Bible Verses

Encourage students to read more Scripture passages after the session. Recommend they check out these verses for more insights about today's topic:

- Isaiah 14:12
- Romans 5:1-8
- Isaiah 53:1-7
- Psalm 23:4

## Background/Resources

- *Disappointment with God* by Philip Yancey
- *The Problem of Pain* by C.S. Lewis
- *When God Weeps* by Joni Eareckson Tada

## Parent Newsletter and Activities

Dare 2 Share Ministries strongly believes in involving parents in the *Maui* series. We encourage you to use the following newsletter to help your parents stay informed and engaged. The newsletter is designed to be sent prior to the meeting in which you will watch the corresponding episode because it summarizes what's coming up and provides parent/teen activity ideas or discussion questions. Feel free to reproduce this letter for use in your youth ministry in either paper or email format.



## Dear Parents,

This week's episode of *GOSPEL Journey Maui* will be addressing the question: *Why do bad things happen?* We will be dealing with the problem of evil and suffering and will be discussing the Bible's answer to this difficult question.

It is important that you discuss these kinds of faith-defining questions with your teen. Studies show that teens who wrestle through the challenging questions of their faith during their high school years have a deeper, stronger faith to draw upon once they graduate from high school.

**Here are some ideas for activities to do as a family this week that might help you approach this challenging topic:**

- Over dessert, discuss this C.S. Lewis quote: "We were promised sufferings. They were part of the program. We were even told, 'Blessed are they that mourn.'" (Source: Think Exist Quotations.) Then, read together Matthew 5:1-12, which is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Talk about your reactions to the passage, and take turns sharing ways you are mournful, meek, insulted, or persecuted. Then share the ways God strengthens and comforts you—or ways you'd like Him to.
- Take on a family service project together. Brainstorm ways you can help someone who's hurting, then do it together. You might volunteer at a soup kitchen or rescue mission, make repairs at a halfway house or domestic abuse center, visit friends who are in the hospital, or donate clothes to victims of a natural disaster.
- Have each family member read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 individually, considering how its message relates to your family. Then, have the oldest family member email everyone else the beginning of a prayer that's centered on this passage. The next oldest person should reply to all with the next part of the prayer, and so on until the youngest person finishes the prayer. Print the email and post it prominently in your home so you'll be reminded to pray for your family.

**You might also find some of the following discussion questions helpful as you interact with your teen on this topic:**

- How often do we talk as a family about why God lets bad things happen? In what ways can we communicate more about our trust or lack of trust, understanding or lack of understanding?



- What kind of bad things have happened to our family? What kind of pain are we experiencing?
- Is it important that we accept His healing and comfort in bad times? If so, what steps can we take as a family?
- What kinds of suffering do we see in people close to our family? What can we do about it?

Thanks for partnering with me as our youth group tackles some of these great life questions!

Your youth leader,

