

# **Suffering, Disasters & Evil:**



**Good God,  
What Are  
You Doing?**

## Opening Discussion: What Would You Say?

*In around 70 AD the last Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. This removed the 'holy place' and centre of their worship so the rabbis needed to explain why it happened. These are the explanations they offered:*

*"The temple was destroyed because the people did not pray the Shema prayer twice a day!"*

*"The temple was destroyed because the children failed to attend the schools of Torah."*

*"The temple was destroyed because of a lack of honest leadership."*

*"The temple was destroyed because of the blatant shamelessness of the people."*

*"The temple was destroyed because rabbis didn't help the needy."*

- From "Theology In Rabbinic Stories" C. Pearl, 1997

Now imagine that our worship centre was suddenly totally destroyed.

Some leaders explain to us:

*"The worship centre was destroyed because the people of Immanuel didn't pray enough."*

*"The worship centre was destroyed because the children failed to attend Lutheran schools."*

*"The worship centre was destroyed because of a lack of honest leadership."*

*"The worship centre was destroyed because of the blatant shamelessness of the people."*

*"The worship centre was destroyed because pastors didn't help the needy."*

Which explanation would you find most challenging or insulting?

Which explanation would you agree with most?

What would you feel like saying in response?

# 1. An Introduction To The Logic Of Theodicy

When people ask about God and evil they are asking about 'theodicy'. When someone answers and explains how our good God allows evil they are speaking a 'theodicy'. Theodicy is a whole branch of Christian theology. Hundreds of thousands of books have been written on this topic. Last week I read four whole books on theodicy!

**'theos' – God**

**'dike' – Justice**

**theodicy = justifying or defending God!**

Theodicy is the branch of theology which deals with problem of Evil in the world. Many people have their own personal way of understanding or explaining things – so there are many 'theodicies'. Some are Biblical and helpful, others are quite strange and may distort our faith.

The classic question of theodicy is supposedly logical and has three parts:

- a. God is all good.
- b. God is all powerful.
- c. So why evil?

For fun here's a similar piece of logic:

- a. All men are pigs.
- b. Andrew is a man.
- c. So why is his cooking clean?

Often people try to answer the 'problem of evil' by attacking one of the three sides:

- a. They say there is no God or that God is not good.
- b. They say it's not God's fault because God isn't all powerful or all knowing.
- c. They say evil isn't as bad, or isn't real, or is necessary.

## **2. Common Theodicies (Attacking a, b or c)**

### **a. Attacking God Or God's Goodness!**

**Atheism: No God. A – meaning 'NO/NOT/NONE' Theos – meaning 'GOD'.**

Atheism defined not positively (by what I do believe) but negatively (by what I reject). In fact it is a belief system defined by doubt: "I'll only trust what I can prove or understand."

Atheists ask 'If there is a good God why is there so much evil?' We respond, 'If there is not a good God why is there so much good?' Some ask 'If there is a good God why is there so much evil?' We respond, 'But if you don't believe in God how can you claim to define good or evil?'

### **b. Attacking God's Power!**

**Dualisms & Taoism: Evil And Good As Co-Creators Of Reality!**

Yin and Yang principles – dark and light, true and false. The two cannot exist without each other. Wherever one is present the other is present also. Yin (negative) is never present without Yang (positive). Many religions solve the 'problem of evil' by asserting a dualism. The ancient 'Zoroastrianism' which was the religion of Persia and the Middle East was dualistic and saw the world as the result of two equal and opposite powers at war (like God and Satan). Some Christian groups are 'dualistic' and regard Satan's power as so massive it seems to be almost equal and opposite to God's power. But it is not! Dualism is not Biblical because evil and good may be opposite, but they are certainly not equal!

**Gnosticism: The Physical Stuff & Physical World Is Evil – But Spiritual & God Is Good**

Gnosticism was an ancient cult that had many forms. It was present shortly after Christ and some of the New Testament books (eg. The epistles of John, Colossians) seem to have been written against some of the earliest gnostic trends. Gnostics believed that God and spiritual things are good, but physical stuff is evil. The more physical something is the more evil it is and the further from God it is. To them evil is a part of physical being. But this is wrong! Can you see how it's not really biblical?

**Openness Theology: God Doesn't Necessarily Know Everything**

Openness theologians argue that the God we read about in the Old Testament isn't completely all-knowing, all-powerful, or unchanging – or at least being all powerful isn't quite

what we might have imagined. They have some good points – because how can we honestly think we understand how God’s all powerful nature (omnipotence) works?

Openness theologians point out that God seems to change (or change his mind) a lot (eg. Genesis 6:6-7, Exodus 13:17, Isaiah 5:4). They point out that in the Old Testament God seemed to act like he didn’t know what would happen next. Perhaps God’s all knowing qualities (omniscience) don’t work how we thought? Or perhaps God stays out of people’s brains?

One good thing about Openness theology is that these people are emphasizing that God is open to our prayers and actions – this is true. Our prayers can certainly change things. God is willing to change things based on prayer and faith.

Openness theologians (or open-theists) include: Clark Pinnock, John E. Sanders, Jürgen Moltmann, Richard Rice, Robert Ellis. US Lutheran Terry Fretheim is a teacher of openness. I understand him to say that God did not create the world on his own, but that the world, everything and people are contributors to the process of creating. It’s a cooperative thing.

There are good points to this (because God is open to our input!) but it can be taken too far. Taken too far Openness theology ignores some important Bible themes. For instance:

*“The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations...”*  
– Psalm 33:11.

*I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please...”* - Isaiah 46:9-10.

### **Process Theology: God Can’t Change Things!**

Process theologians teach that God is not actually able to force things to change but can only influence things! Some versions say that God has chosen to ‘limit’ himself to respect human free will and the ‘processes’ of the universe he created (eg. the laws of physics). Process theologians include: Alfred North Whitehead, some modern Jewish teachers, William E. Kaufman, and Harold Kus.

## **c. Attacking Evil!**

### **Buddha: Pain is an illusion. Evil & suffering caused by wrong understanding of reality.**

The classic teaching of Buddha is that suffering is not real. Suffering is caused by our ‘attachment’ to physical things. If we can be freed from attachment – from clinging to the physical one will not suffer!

Is suffering real or not?

What do you make of this approach?

How would you feel if you were suffering in hospital and a counsellor said it was an illusion?

### **Augustine (354-406) & Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274): Evil As A Lack Of Good**

These great Christian teachers argued that evil is not a thing on its own.

For them evil cannot be defined as a thing or as a substance or as some kind of being. Instead evil is either a negation (*negatio*) of the good, or a privation (*privatio*) of the good. As darkness is not actually a 'thing' but a 'lack of a thing' evil is only known because there is such a thing as good – it's the 'flipside'.

Augustine said that evil is parasitic — it depends upon the good for its very definition. So evil gets described with 'un' words:

- unrighteous,
- disobedient,
- immoral.

All of these definitions depend upon the positive good and couldn't exist without it! Even if Christians have trouble explaining evil, atheists have a problem that is twice as difficult. Those who complain about the problem of evil now also have the problem of defining the existence of the good. And without God there is no ultimate standard for the good!

### **Leibniz (1646-1716): The Best Of All Possible Worlds**

Leibniz is famous for saying "we live in the best of all possible worlds". By this he meant that if you imagine as many 'worlds' or universes as you can – that are real and have their own laws of physics that work, that this one is the best possible one! For instance a world without free will wouldn't have real love (because love is a choice) so it wouldn't be the best possible world.

### **Paul Brand (1914-2003): It's Not All As Bad As You Think**

Paul Brand was a modern Christian well known for his incredible work to treat and cure victims of Hansen's Disease (Leprosy). He was an amazing witness to the love of God. His most famous book was called "Pain: The Gift Nobody Wants". He saw pain as vital for the preservation of healthy tissue. In fact, pain is a gift that preserves our lives. Without pain, people with Hansen's Disease can risk terrible damage. Paul Brand certainly spoke like a prophet when he questioned why Westerners base their lives on pleasure and spend all our time avoiding pain! But while God may use pain for good (to teach us, to grow patience or wisdom) I am not sure it is right to call pain "good" or "a gift" because this doesn't seem to be what it says in Genesis 3. For those of us who suffer 'chronic pain' we know it's not all good!

### 3. The Problem With Human Logic

*Ecclesiastes 1:1-2*

*The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem:*

*"Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."*

These are the words of the preacher (King Solomon) in his book of Ecclesiastes. He talks about his journey of learning all that could be learned, and how at the end of it all he was just bewildered and confused. He discovered that logic doesn't answer all the questions. Logic doesn't explain the universe – logic can become meaningless! Ultimately all logical world views have problems. That's what King Solomon meant by 'meaningless'. The human mind is incapable of understanding the totality of being!

*"Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Saviour of Israel." - Isaiah 45:15*

When it comes to God logic seems to break down totally. Logic can 'prove' God's existence. Logic can also be used to 'disprove' God. It seems that God exists and works in a way that forces us to rely not entirely on our brains, but also on something deeper. There is a 'hiddenness' about God when it comes to human thinking and reason.

Every logical explanation can fall apart – including atheist logic.

For Instance:

- 1. It is illogical to talk about 'good' or 'evil' without believing in God. Accepting that good and evil exist implies that there are universal standards of morals – and a God who defines good and evil.*
- 2. It is illogical to believe in the existence of something orderly (the universe / life / intelligence) without believing in a principle of order or ordering (God).*
- 3. It is illogical to believe in an effect (the universe or the big-bang) without a cause (God).*
- 4. It is illogical to believe in a universe that always was (or always will be) or that is infinite (unlimited) with no cause. To believe that is to believe in eternity – which is surely a leap of faith!*

Ultimately logic fails us.

Eventually we all make a step 'of faith' one way or another.

Atheism is an 'illogical faith' too!

## 4. Going Deeper With God – Enjoying Paradoxes!

*For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. "Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? God has made foolish the wisdom of the world? - Romans 1:19-20*

*"Can God make a stone so big he can't lift it? Yes, but God can lift it!"*

The problem for most of us is that we have not approached thinking of God with humility, admitting that we cannot ever 'explain God'. In fact, as we meditate on God and grow deeper into knowing God we discover more and more 'paradoxes' (opposites that exist side by side) and we start to enjoy them and love them. For instance:

- a. God is above and beyond all things (2 Cor 6:18, Rev 1:8, Isaiah 55:8-9)
- b. God is personal (Gen 1:26-28, Isaiah 55:3)
  
- a. God is everywhere (Psalm 139:5-10)
- b. God can be especially present (1 Kings 19:11-13)
  
- a. God has a perfect standard that condemns us called law (Deut 6:25)
- b. God's heart is one of grace (Eph 1:6-7)

### **And Now (Drum Roll Please...) The Deepest Paradox (Often called 'Compatibilism')**

- a. God is in control (Prov 16:33, Matt 19:26)
- b. But we have real choices and responsibility (Deut 30:19-20, Psalm 51:4, Prov 1:28-29)

Both God's control and our choices are real. All the time. Neither can be lessened or wiped out. If we take away God's control, then God is no longer God. If we take away our choices then it's like 'fatalism' where we have no say and 'whatever will be will be' and we're just robots.

One of the best examples is compatibilism is found in Genesis 50:20

*"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*

We don't know exactly how these two 'opposites' can be compatible, but they simply are. Explaining this is possible in many different ways, but no explanation is perfect. God is truly beyond our logic!



## 5. Biblical Answers To Evil

### a. Freedom And The Fall

*Genesis 3:17-19*

*"Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.  
It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.  
By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

The Bible says that evil is the result of a great 'rebellion' or 'fall' that started with angels and included Adam and Eve and now all human beings. The choice of humankind to rebel against God has created 'ripples' throughout the universe. Like a once still pool, every corner of our earth is now affected by this fall.

C.S. Lewis wrote:

*"It would, no doubt, have been possible for God to remove by miracle the results of the first sin ever committed by a human being, but this would not have been much good unless God was prepared to remove the results of the second sin, and of the third, and so on forever. If the miracles ceased, then sooner or later we might have reached our present lamentable situation: if they did not, then a world, thus continually underpropped and corrected by Divine interference, would have been a world in which nothing important ever depended on human choice, and in which choice itself would soon cease from the certainty that one of the apparent alternatives before you would lead to no results and was therefore not really an alternative."*

- C.S. Lewis, *The Problem Of Pain*, Fount. 1940, Pg 59.

The Bible is not a 'fairy tale' where everything is always nice. In fact, it contains some of the most dark, disturbing, and scary history of suffering we can imagine. The Bible never pretends evil is not real. It talks much of suffering – and deals with it as a real thing.

The book of Romans tells us that the 'fall' is all part of God's ultimate plan which will result in something greater than we can imagine! (see Romans 8:20-21)

## **b. Human Rebellion Creates Ripples**

The evil that affects us personally is not always due directly to our own individual sin. While the sin of Adam and Eve (and therefore all humans) has brought a curse on creation. We are not always responsible for the evil that happens to us individually!

*John 9:1-4*

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus...*

These words of Jesus were an incredible comfort to me when my son was born disabled and dying. I wondered for a moment what I had done that was being punished. But then I remembered that sin creates 'ripples' that affect all of reality. I was not being specifically punished, but was just a part of a fallen broken world.

Sin spreads and seems to 'randomly' hurt others.  
Like ripples in a pool. Like glass in a park.  
Like a red shirt in with the white clothes.  
Like a dirty shirt in with the clean washing.  
Like pollution in a waterway.

## **c. Eternity Makes Sense Of The Present**

What if someone said to you: "If you suffer thirty minutes of pain now, you will be pain free for the rest of your life?" [Yancey, *Where Is God When It Hurts*, p176]

*Romans 8:18*

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

*2 Corinthians 4:17-18*

*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

There is a sense of incompleteness in the world which calls for an answer? God's goodness completes us!

Consider the musical parable CDEFGAB of pain and suffering... (Fun!) What does it teach?

*Revelation 21:4*

*He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

## d. God's Plan Is Bigger Than We Can See Or Know

The Old Testament book of Habakkuk is only three chapters (6 pages) but it is amazing! It's a conversation between Habakkuk where he complains to God about You can read the lot in 15 minutes... today!

### **1:1-4 Habakkuk complains:**

*"God how long must I cry out – you don't listen or answer?  
Violence is everywhere, there is destruction everywhere,  
The evil people seem to be winning, why are you letting this happen?"*

### **1:1-11 God replies:**

*"I'm going to sort it all out – be amazed!  
Your corrupt and evil people of Judah will get their just desserts,  
Because I'm sending the Babylonians to destroy Judah and take over!"*

### **1:12-2:1 Habakkuk asks:**

*"Oh! I thought you were so holy and pure God?  
Why would you use people so evil as the Babylonians for your plan?  
They are terrible – they just keep conquering and destroying forever.  
Now I will stand and wait for God's answer to my complaint!"*

### **2:2-14 God replies:**

*"Babylon is all arrogant and puffed up with pride,  
But the righteous will live by faith!  
Woe to Babylon, as you steal you will be stolen from!  
Woe to Babylon, what you have built will turn against you!  
Woe to Babylon, you'll come to nothing,  
But as the waters cover the sea all the earth will be filled with knowledge of God!  
Woe to Babylon, all your tricks will come back to haunt you!  
People worship many things and idols that can achieve nothing,  
But one day the whole earth will be silenced before God."*

### **3:1-19 Habakkuk sings a long and beautiful song of praise to God!**

What is the point of all this?

God's plan stretches beyond the current small part we can see. His greater plan integrates all that has happened into a greater whole that will bring perfect good! Everything, even evil and suffering will ultimately fit into God's purposes and result in a greater good than we can imagine. We may not understand the plan, but God is truly taking it all somewhere good!

## e. God's Ultimate Answer To Evil – The Cross

*Isaiah 53:2-6*

*He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of dry ground.*

*He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.*

*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*

*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

God's answer to the suffering of our world is Jesus Christ. God came as one of us – to suffer with us – and to break the curse upon this world. God hasn't ignored the suffering and evil, but has entered into the world to suffer with and for us – to break the curse.

No answer to suffering can ever just be a logical or intellectual one.

We cannot speak about suffering without our hearts being moved.

We must never confront suffering without compassionate action (even if only prayer).

God is our example of this because he does not turn away from the world's suffering.

God's answer to evil and suffering is to take it on himself.

*“One man, totally alone, is swaying back and forth as if dizzy, his face in his hands. Suddenly he crumples to me, the ground ‘Abba! Abba!’ The sound is strangled in his throat. His fingers dig dirt like the roots of the trees. His chin and beard grind against the earth. ‘Abba Father, I don’t want to do this. Please! You can do anything; you can take this cup away from me...” The man’s voice is hoarse, a kind of guttural barking. But then he sucks air and howls at the top of his lungs, “Hell is in that cup! Death and damnation are in that cup! My Father, my Father, it will tear me away from you! No, I don’t want to do this! No! Sin is in that cup – and if I drink it you won’t look at me, you will loathe me, I will hate myself! I don’t want to drink it. Abba, Abba, take this cup away from me...” The man twists his body underneath the trees, then holds himself in tense, unnatural posture, his face upward, his eyes shut, his breathing sharp through his teeth. He grimaces, as if smiling, then whispers almost inaudibly, whispers as soft as the leaves: ‘Nevertheless, not what I want, what you want, do.’”*

- Walter Wangarin Jr. “Reliving The Passion” Pg. 63

God isn't distant – he takes it on himself to save us. Thank you Jesus!

## 6. Earthquakes, Tsunamis, Cyclones, Floods, Bushfires Answering Specific Questions...

### **a. Are Earthquakes Specific Punishments? Mostly No!**

If the recent string of natural disasters are all punishments for specific evil acts then why have Christians and very good people died while utter thieves have survived?

It's important to understand the role of prophecy with regard to cataclysmic events. Biblical prophecy is often misunderstood. Prophets do not 'foretell' – they 'forthtell'. Prophets do not 'predict' things – they 'create' them by speaking the word of God. Can you see the common denominator in the opening words of all these prophets?

*Jeremiah 2:1-2*

*The word of the Lord came to me: "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem..."*

*Ezekiel 6:1-2*

*The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them..."*

*Hosea 4:1 \**

*Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites, because the Lord has a charge to bring against you...*

*Jonah 1:1-2*

*The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it because its wickedness has come before me..."*

*Joel 1:1-2*

*The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel. 'Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land...'*

*Amos 3:1-2*

*Hear this word the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel-against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins..."*

In the Old Testament we certainly do see God threatening disaster – through prophets that speak on God's behalf. The prophets speak of warning and provide a chance for change and repentance. Notice how prophets speak on behalf of God and speak of the 'present' just as much as the 'future'. Their role is not to 'predict' but to speak for God. The disasters are the result of the prophecy. In fact, sometimes the prophecy results in change and a disaster is avoided! Can you see which of the above prophets did that?

## **b. Are Disasters God's Judgement?**

Jesus said "no". Disasters are often not a personal judgement.

It can be very dangerous to say 'they suffered earthquake because of their evil.' Why?

*Luke 13:1-5*

*Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them-do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."*

## **c. Can Any Good Come From Suffering?**

*John 9:1-4*

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life..."*

As a father of someone born differently abled this Bible passage has given me great comfort! Great comfort! Because here I see that my situation is one in which 'the work of God might be displayed...' Now I'm actually attentive for it to be displayed in my family's life!

## **d. Why Do Disasters Happen?**

### **Genesis 3 – The "Broken Glass" Principle**

Like ripples in a pool. Like glass in a park. Like pollution in a waterway.

Sin and its effects spread cosmically. Creation is fractured and no longer completely 'kind'!

### **Romans 8 – The Groaning Of Creation**

Natural disasters are part of 'all creation groaning'. The rebellion of angels and humans has caused evil in the universe. Creation groans – humans are caught up in it.

*Romans 8:18-22*

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

## 7. Your Response – Acting Out Job!

The book of Job is a big drama and is quite likely a parable as it is not a part of the ‘history’ books of the Old Testament but a part of the ‘wisdom writings’ (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs) and because of its satirical (exaggerated) nature.

God boasts about Job’s faith. Satan comes along and asks if he can test Job to see if he will break and curse God! Job loses everything. His family die. His wealth is gone. Finally he gets sick with boils from the top of his head to the soles of his feet! He sits down in ash terribly depressed but he does not curse God. His wife tells Job to just curse God and die! Then the fun begins. Three friends arrive to comfort Job and this is how it starts...

Eliphaz says,

***‘God always punishes bad people so you must have done something wrong! Admit your sin!’***

But Job can’t find something to confess.

Bildad says,

***‘Stop whinging and whining! Stand straight and tall. Be righteous and God will listen!’***

But Job says, ‘But how can I be perfect before God?’

Zophar says

***‘Your problem is that you think you are above others – that’s why you are being punished!’***

But Job just laments his suffering.

Elihu says,

***‘You go on and on about nothing but God is fair so you are getting what you deserve!’***

Job replies:

***“I have heard many things like these; miserable comforters are you all! Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing? I also could speak like you, if you were in my place; I could make fine speeches against you and shake my head at you. But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief.***

***Job 16:2-5***

The conversation continues with useless attempts to explain or comfort Job. In the end God intervenes, shuts everyone up, and give Job a vision of his great glory and plan!

### **Your Turn**

Imagine and present a response to Job’s suffering. You could act out one of the four people above. You could say things like theirs. Or you could present a better and positive response. Be creative, have fun, and find a way to present a response to someone’s suffering. It can be serious or fun, helpful or unhelpful. But have fun and include everyone in your group!