



## Top 10 tips for leaders

As a church or youth leader, you will have seen the toll exams can take on young people. It is a time of great stress for them, so you will want to support them as much as possible.

Here are 10 ways in which you can help decrease the stress of exams for the teens you care about.

### 1) Prayer Time

Set aside some prayer time in your life to just pray for the young people. You can get together with other leaders to pray, as well as including those going through exams in your own personal prayers. You may also want to schedule an hour or two with the young people themselves, to pray for each other prior to exams.

### 2) Provide space for studying

Discuss with leaders at the church the possibility of setting up some quiet study rooms. This will provide young people with a safe place in which to focus completely on revising. If your church does not have the space, see if there is space at your local library, community centre or even one of the local schools.

### 3) Set up study groups

Create study groups for young people in the week or two prior to exams. Enlist support from teachers or other knowledgeable individuals in your congregations. Run a 'how to study' class using our resources and showcase websites that can help. You can set up groups for exams or regular tests where the young people can provide support to one other.

### 4) Help them to 'blow off steam'

Even though study time is stressful and young people can get pretty intense when under exam pressure, you can offer them a little break from all that. Use silly and stupid games or icebreaker activities to give the young people a much needed release.

## 5) Hold an 'end of exams' celebration

After exams young people need a way to release all that pent-up energy. Give them something to look forward to by throwing a little party at the end. It doesn't need to be anything fancy. It could just be games, food or even a film night or sleepover.

## 6) Be available

During exam times, make time and space in your sessions just to be available, enabling opportunity to talk.

## 7) Don't organise major events during this time

At 3Generate 2012 children and young people asked the Methodist Church to support them during exam times. Here is what they said and what Conference agreed on:

- The Conference, in supporting the view that local churches should be more aware of, and better at, understanding the pressures young people face during exam periods, urges Districts to facilitate youth groups to provide relief from pressures associated with exam stress.
- The Conference encourages youth groups to avoid crucial examination times when facilitating key events, so that such events do not conflict with revision thereby enabling young people to attend free of exam stress.

## 8) Use chaplaincy support

If there is a local school chaplain, encourage your young people to speak to them if they feel under pressure. Have a conversation with the schools chaplain and consider any joint work you could do to support the young people.

## 9) Set up a prayer space in school

Help set up a prayer space in school, particularly to help the pupils pray and reflect upon their exams (see [www.prayerspacesinschools.com](http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com)).

## 10) Get the whole church involved

Encourage members of the congregations to sign a card for the young people who engage with your church who will be taking exams, to show their prayerful support. Encourage church members to work with you in finding creative ways to show support and care for young people during this time.