



Switch on: the real life of 10-14s

10-14 is an important age where young people go through lots of changes and emotions. Explore with your young person that some times we face obstacles, of different sizes, but we can overcome them.

Play: Facing obstacles

Play a board game or even a video game with your young person and explain games can teach us to face obstacles head-on. They also give us the opportunity to think about different strategies for 'winning' without giving up.



Pause: God has plans for you

Look up Jeremiah Ch.29:11 with your young person. The verse 'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' (NIV) are often used to encourage people when they ask questions like 'What should I do?' or 'Where is God?'.

Jeremiah is a prophet telling the people of Israel, who are exiles in Babylon, that they will have to wait 70 years but that God has plans for them... 70 years! Suddenly waiting for a holiday or prom may not seem so bad!

God's plans are better than our own. We need to remember this when we go through things in life that we don't understand e.g. obstacles. We don't always learn the reason why but we have to trust that God is in control. Ask your young person have they ever gone through any obstacles in life that they didn't understand. Do they think there's a purpose behind the difficult situations we face in life? Do they think they'd be where they are today if it hadn't been for facing some obstacles?

Rewind: Handling obstacles

Discuss with your young person obstacles that they've faced in the past. Explain that problems can be different sizes - a test at school might be a small obstacle whereas living with a chronic disability or stressful situation, like the coronavirus pandemic, is a big obstacle. You can also share that some days are tough but other days are less challenging.

How did your young person handle each of the obstacles? Together make a list of coping mechanisms they might draw on in future such as the importance of having a positive and realistic outlook, practising something so it becomes easier, taking little steps towards a goal, and praying to God for strength and wisdom to deal with an obstacle.

Fast forward: Looking forward

Explain to your young person that sometimes if we struggle to defeat an obstacle it can help make us stronger - we try harder the next time or we learn that we can withstand pain and come out on the other side.

Get them to make a creative response to overcoming obstacles e.g. drawing or writing a poem that they can share with others to encourage them.

Switch off: Listen to lyrics

Reflect on the words of this song - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cd6J6Wgnv4M> - and what we can learn about facing obstacles from it.