



"O Lord, Why am I Here? Who am I?"



Session Objective

Participants will explore the Psalms by looking at questions contemplated by the psalmists as they offered their prayers and sang their songs. In fact, many of the Psalms begin with a question. One of the ways the Psalms speak to us today is through questions that are similar to those we ask.

Faith Statement

"Q. 1. What is the chief end of [humanity]?"

A. [Humanity]'s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?"

A. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him."

—The Westminster Confession of Faith,
The Shorter Catechism (7.001–7.002)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What are the questions about faith that concern you today? In what ways have your questions changed over time?
- How have the Psalms helped to articulate your questions?
- Which Psalms have sustained and strengthened you?
- What have been the occasions when you heard God speak through the Psalms?



Explore

Read Psalm 8 and explore these questions:

- Picture the psalmist. What may have moved the psalmist to ask the question in verse 4? What emotion does the psalmist express?
- Picture the setting. Where is the psalmist? What is he/she doing? Is the time of day important?
- Picture yourself. How do you feel praying the psalm? Where could you see yourself praying this psalm?
- How would you answer the question, "Why are we here?" How do you think the psalmist might answer the question?



Express

Read the first question and answer of the Faith Statement:

"Q. 1. What is the chief end of [humanity]?"

A. [Humanity]'s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever."

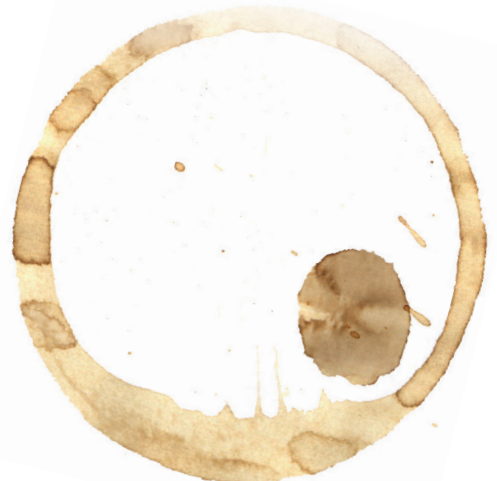
Discuss the following questions to help the youth express what they've learned:

- Why do you think the catechism begins with this question?
- What is another way the question may be asked?
- What are some ways to glorify God?
- What does it mean to enjoy God forever?
- Consider memorizing a psalm or verses of a psalm.



Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together sharing in God's Word.





"O Lord, Where Are You? How Can I Find You?"



Session Objective

Participants will discover how the psalmists express the prayers of the community; they yearn to experience God's presence, to witness God's power, and to understand God's purposes. Our focus compares the prayers of the psalmists with our own deepest desires to experience God.

Faith Statement

"We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love, God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community.

But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.

Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves . . .

In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth.

Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage.

Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.

Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still."
—A Brief Statement of Faith (10.3)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- When do you think the individual psalms were created? What occasions called for a new psalm?
- In what ways did the Spirit guide and inspire the psalmists?
- What are some differences between praying a psalm by yourself and praying it with others?
- Is there a particular time that praying a psalm together in worship made a powerful impact upon you?



Explore

Read Psalm 121 and explore these questions:

- What may have caused the psalmist to cry out to God?
- What does the psalmist long for God to do?
- In what ways is God made known in the prayer?
- How has or will the psalmist come to see God?
- In what way might you complete the phrase, "Where should I look for help in my need?"
- What prayers for help, rescue, and healing do you offer for family, friends, and yourself?
- What prayers do you offer to God for the community, church, and world?



Express

Use the following questions to help the youth express what they've learned:

- Which of God's "wonderful works" within recent history can we add to a psalm of praise, such as Psalm 105?
- What sightings of God's power within your life would be appropriate to add?
- Think about how the Psalms were learned and memorized. Is there a particular song whose words and music helps you through your day?
- Do you have a song for your journey that gives hope and directs you forward?



Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together sharing in God's Word.





"O Lord, What Is There to Fear? How Can I Be Fearless?"

*Psalm 22; 23; 27; 40:1-3;
46; 91; 118:1-6, 24*



Session Objective

Participants will reflect on psalms that offer courage and hope during difficult times. Many of our most intense questions of faith arise when we are fearful of what may happen and we cry out to God for help.

Faith Statement

"Try the spirits whether they are of God! Prove also the words of the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church to see whether they agree with Holy Scripture and with the Confessions of the Fathers. If you find that we are speaking contrary to Scripture, then do not listen to us! But if you find that we are taking our stand upon Scripture, then let no fear or temptation keep you from treading with us the path of faith and obedience to the Word of God, in order that God's people be of one mind upon earth and that we in faith experience what he himself has said: 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you.' Therefore, 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'"

—The Theological Declaration of Barmen (8.04)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- How has your faith helped you face your fears?
- In what way are the following words of "Amazing Grace" your testimony: "T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear. And Grace, my fears relieved?"
- What is within your catalog of responses when you think about the grace of God?
- What are your thoughts and feelings when you pray, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me?" (Psalm 23:4)



Explore

Read Psalm 27 and explore these questions:

- What may have led the psalmist to ask the questions in verse 1?
- What is the psalmist seeking from the Lord?
- What is the Lord expecting of the psalmist?
- What question/s would you like to ask the psalmist?



Express

In a fearful time, the Confessing Church in Germany was courageous:

"If you find that we are taking our stand upon Scripture, then let no fear or temptation keep you from treading with us the path of faith and obedience to the Word of God, in order that God's people be of one mind upon earth and that we in faith experience what he himself has said: 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you.' Therefore, 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'"¹

Use the following questions to guide the youth in expressing what they've learned:

- What promises in Scripture give you strength and courage?
- Are there songs that lift your spirit when things are not going well?
- Is there a particular song you turn to when you're going through a difficult time?
- What do Jesus' words, "Fear not, little flock," say to you at this time?



Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together sharing in God's Word.

1. The Theological Declaration of Barmen (8.04)





"O Lord, What Do You Want Me to Do with My Life?"



Session Objective

Participants will explore psalms that provide guidance as to how we are to live our lives in ways that are pleasing to God. The question addressed in response to God's steadfast love, shapes the life and mission of the community of faith.

Faith Statement

"Praise and Prayer

The church responds to the message of reconciliation in praise and prayer. In that response, it commits itself afresh to its mission, experiences a deepening of faith and obedience, and bears open testimony to the gospel. Adoration of God is acknowledgment of the Creator by the creation. Confession of sin is admission of every person's guilt before God and their need for God's forgiveness. Thanksgiving is rejoicing in God's goodness to all people and in giving for the needs of others. Petitions and intercessions are addressed to God for the continuation of divine goodness, the healing of human ills, and deliverance from every form of oppression. The arts, especially music and architecture, contribute to the praise and prayer of a Christian congregation when they help people to look beyond themselves to God and to the world which is the object of God's love."

—The Confession of 1967, Inclusive Language Version (9.50)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- "O LORD, what do you want me to do with my life?" How does this prayer of the psalmist speak to you?
- What do you hear in the similar prayer, "O LORD, how do you want me to live my life?"
- What path are you currently following in your life? How did you discover the path?
- In what ways is God active in guiding your steps and illuminating your way?
- What do you hear in Jesus' words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life?"



Explore

Read Psalm 116. Lead a discussion on the question asked by the psalmist: "What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me?"

- What are we able to discover about the psalmist?
- What has happened in the life of the psalmist?
- What does the psalmist do in response to God's actions?
- What has the psalmist come to know about the Lord?
- Is there a verse or phrase that speaks to you?



Express

Use the following questions to help the youth summarize the sessions.

- In what ways have the questions asked by the psalmists compared to the questions you yourself ask?
- Was there a psalm or a portion of a psalm that spoke a word from God to you? Which one was it? What did you hear in the psalm?
- What changes have you seen in your worship and prayers by coming to know the Psalms?
- In what ways will you continue your journey by reading, praying, and singing the Psalms?



Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together sharing in God's Word.

