



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- The psalmist asks of God, "Who are we?" What is one question you ask of God?
- What does it mean to you to glorify God and enjoy God forever?
- The psalmist's question came from awe and wonder. When do you experience awe and wonder?
- Do you have a favorite psalm? Why do you remember it?

Session 2

- At what times do you ask the question, "O LORD, where are you?"
- What does it mean to you to pray or sing a psalm with others in worship?
- What prayers for help and healing do you offer for family, friends, and yourself?
- Where have you seen God at work in your neighborhood and community?

Session 3

- Why is the psalmist able to say, "I will fear no evil?" How does he get courage?
- How does your faith in God help when you are afraid?
- What promises in the Bible give you strength and courage?
- When you sing the words in Amazing Grace, ". . . and grace my fears relieved," what do you think about?

Session 4

- What is something you wish to do with your life?
- What gifts has God given you and how do you hope to use them?
- What do Jesus' words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," mean to you as you look to the future?



QUESTIONS

"Who can ascend the LORD's mountain? Who can stand in his holy sanctuary?"
(Psalm 24:3, CEB)

"My God!
My God, why have you left me all alone? Why are you so far from saving me—so far from my anguished groans?"
(Psalm 22:1, CEB)

"I cried out to you, LORD. I begged my LORD for mercy: 'What is to be gained by my spilled blood, by my going down into the pit?'"
(Psalm 30:8–9, CEB)

"Why, I ask myself, are you so depressed? Why are you so upset inside?"
(Psalm 42:11, CEB)

"Will my LORD reject me forever? Will he never be pleased again?"
(Psalm 77:7, CEB)

"Why do you reject my very being, LORD? Why do you hide your face from me?"
(Psalm 88:14, CEB)

"The LORD is for me—I won't be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"
(Psalm 118:6, CEB)

"Where will my help come from?"
(Psalm 121:1, CEB)



150 PSALMS: A QUICK LOOK

A quick look at the Psalms leads to many discoveries:

1. Psalms in Hebrew is *tehellim* – meaning “praises.” Psalms in Greek is *psalmoi* – referring to “songs accompanied by stringed instruments.” Notice the format of the printed words; the Psalms are lyrics to songs.
2. A particular tune for the words is often provided. What is the tune given “To the Leader” in Psalm 47? Discover the hymn tune for one of the following Psalms: *Psalm 7, Psalm 8, Psalm 9, Psalm 22, Psalm 45, or Psalm 75.*
3. Directions are often given. Notice the Hebrew word *Selah*. Some suggest it means “pause,” others suggest “intensify,” but its meaning is unknown.
4. The 150 Psalms have been collected into five sections. Each section ends with a Doxology—“Praise the LORD!” Read one of the doxologies: *Psalm 41:13, Psalm 72:19, Psalm 89:52, Psalm 106:48, or Psalm 150:6.*
5. Many of the Psalms are linked to a particular event. Discover the event in one of the following psalms: *Psalm 3, Psalm 18, Psalm 54, or Psalm 56.*
6. Nine of the Psalms are acrostics. In Psalm 25, each of the 22 verses begins with a different letter of the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Discover the alphabet in verses or half-verses of one other psalm: *Psalm 9, Psalm 10, Psalm 111, Psalm 112, or Psalm 145.*
7. The psalmists address God in various ways. Many of the Psalms use the title “LORD.” Discover one or more additional names for God in the following Psalms: *Psalm 4, Psalm 8, Psalm 9, Psalm 20, Psalm 47, Psalm 80, and Psalm 84.*

PSALMS



PRAYING THE PSALMS

Psalm 8

(Common English Bible)

One: LORD,
All: Our LORD,
One: How majestic is your name throughout the earth!
All: How majestic is your name throughout the earth!
One: You have made your glory higher than heaven!
All: From the mouths of nursing babies you have laid a strong foundation because of your foes, in order to stop vengeful enemies.
One: When I look up at your skies,
All: at what your fingers made—
One: the moon and the stars
All: that you set firmly in place—
One: what are human beings that you think about them;
All: what are human beings that you pay attention to them?
One: You've made them only slightly less than divine,
All: crowning them with glory and grandeur.
One: You've let them rule over your handiwork,
All: putting everything under their feet—
One: all sheep and all cattle,
All: the wild animals too,
One: the birds in the sky,
All: the fish of the ocean, everything that travels the pathways of the sea.
One: LORD,
All: Our LORD,
One: How majestic is your name throughout the earth!
All: How majestic is your name throughout the earth!

Psalm 8

(Good News Translation)

One: O Lord, our Lord,
All: Your praise reaches up to the heavens;
One: Your praise reaches up to the heavens;
All: it is sung by children and babies.
One: You are safe and secure from all your enemies;
All: you stop anyone who opposes you.
One: When I look at the sky, which you have made,
All: at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places—
One: what are human beings, that you think of them;
All: mere mortals, that you care for them?
One: Yet you made them inferior only to yourself;
All: you crowned them with glory and honor.
One: You appointed them rulers over everything you made;
All: you placed them over all creation:
One: sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too;
All: the birds and the fish and the creatures in the seas.
One: O Lord, our Lord,
All: your greatness is seen in all the world!





GRAFFITI WALL INSTRUCTIONS

"Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,
be gracious to me and answer me!
'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!'
Your face, LORD, do I seek." (Psalm 27:7–8)

In their songs, the psalmists called out to God for help; they came to see God's presence in acts of liberation, healing, and salvation.

Call out to God to help, rescue, heal, and save.
Add prayers to the Graffiti Wall for family, friends,
and yourself. Add prayers for your community,
church, and the world.





HELP, RESCUE, HEAL, SAVE!

HELP—Psalm 34:17-18

"When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears, and rescues them from all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit."

RESCUE—Psalm 37:39-40

"The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their refuge in the time of trouble. The LORD helps them and rescues them; he rescues them from the wicked, and saves them, because they take refuge in him."

HEAL—Psalm 30:1-2

"I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me."

SAVE—Psalm 69:1-3

"Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God."

Read the psalm and reflect on the following 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?

Read the prayers on the Graffiti Wall/posters and reflect on the following questions:

- What may have caused this particular cry to God?
- In what way does the person desire God to act?

Write a new psalm of at least four verses on one of the themes, Help, Rescue, Heal, Save:

Help
Heal
Rescue
Save



A SONG FOR THE JOURNEY

1. Reflect on the question of the psalmist: "I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?"
2. Put yourself in the sandals of the ancient pilgrims. Imagine what they may have seen along the hillsides as they made their way to Jerusalem.
3. Think about what you see as you make your way to church. What captures your attention along the streets as you travel to church?
4. Reflect on a contemporary paraphrase of Psalm 121:1–2:

"Where should I look for help in my need?
To majestic mountain peaks that probe our skies
Or to giants of industry that hem in our cities?
To satellites that circle our world
Or to computers that store up our knowledge?
The answer to my problems
and the fulfillment of my needs
must come from God Himself,
from Him who created skies and mountains
and man to dwell in their midst."
—Psalm 121:1–2, *Psalms/Now*



5. In what way might you answer the question, "Where should I look for help in my need? I should look to . . ."
6. 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?



A PSALM OF MY OWN

PSALM 105 (*Psalms/Now*)

How great is my God,

and how I love to sing His praises!

Whereas I am often frightened

when I think about the future,

and confused and disturbed

by the rapidly changing events around me,

my heart is secured and made glad

when I remember how He has cared for me

throughout the past.

When I was brought forth from

my mother's womb,

God's hand was upon me.

Through parents and people who cared,

He loved and sheltered me

and set me upon His course for my life.

Through illness and accident

my God has sustained me.

Around pitfalls and precipices

He has safely led me.

When I became rebellious

and struck out on my own, He waited
patiently for me to return.

When I fell on my face in weakness and
failure,

He gently set me on my feet again.

He did not always prevent me from
hurting myself,



A PSALM OF MY OWN

PSALM 105 (*Psalms/Now*) *continued*

but He took me back to heal my wounds.

He has bridged impossible rivers

Even out of the broken pieces of my defeats

and moved impossible mountains.

He created a vessel of beauty and usefulness.

Sometimes through me,

Through trials and errors, failures and
successes

sometimes in spite of me,

My God has cared for me.

He seeks to accomplish His purposes in
my life.

From infancy to adulthood

He has kept me through the stormy past;

He has never let me go.

He will secure and guide me

His love has led me—or followed me—

through the perilous future.

through the valleys of sorrow

I will never be afraid

and the highlands of joy,

no matter how uncertain

through times of want

the months or years ahead of me.

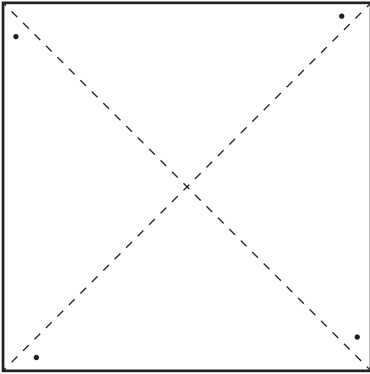
and years of abundance.

How great is my God,

and how I love to sing His praises!

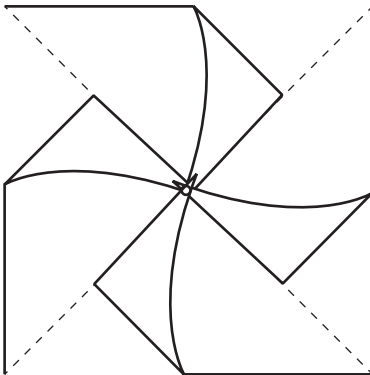
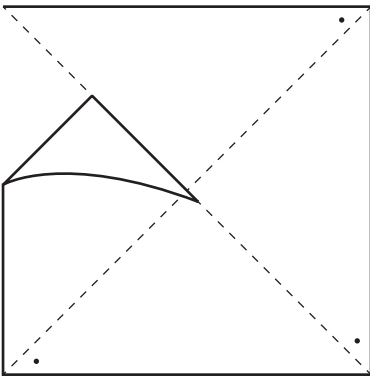


PINWHEEL



Set out the other supplies: scissors, pencils with erasers, pushpins, marking pens or crayons.

1. Cut letter size sheets of paper (at least 24/60 lb.) so they are 8½ inches square.
2. Draw diagonal pencil lines across the squares so they meet in the center. The four corners will contain two triangles.
3. Place a large dot on the point of the left triangle on each corner.
4. Make four cuts into the center of the square but do NOT cut all the way into the center.
5. Gather the four pointed corners bearing the dots and use the pushpin to bring them together and poke it through the meeting point of the lines in the center.
6. Notice which side of the paper will be seen once the pushpin is attached. Remove the pin and write/draw on the side that will be showing. Our question today is, "O Lord, what is there to fear?" Express something about what you fear in words and pictures.
7. Push the pin back through the corners and the center point and then into the eraser of the pencil.





GIVE TO THE WINDS THY FEARS

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1653.

Give to the winds thy fears,
Hope and be undismayed.
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head.

Through waves and clouds and storms,
He gently clears thy way;
Wait thou His time; so shall this night
Soon end in joyous day.

Still heavy is thy heart?
Still sinks thy spirit down?
Cast off the world, let fear depart
Bid every care be gone.

Leave to His sovereign sway
To choose and to command;
So shalt thou, wondering, own that way,
How wise, how strong this hand.



DO NOT BE AFRAID

Read two or more of the following Psalms and discuss the questions:

Read Psalm 27

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

- What may have caused the psalmist to ask the question?
- 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?

Read Psalm 56

"What can a mere mortal do to me?"

- What was happening in the life of the psalmist?
- What do you hear in the words, "You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle?"
- What question do you have for the psalmist?

Read Psalm 23

"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil."

- Why is the psalmist able to be so fearless?
- In what ways has the psalmist come to know the LORD?
- What question do you have for the psalmist?

Read Psalm 103:8-18

"But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him."

- What do you think it means to "fear the LORD?"
- In what ways is the fear of the LORD different from being afraid?
- What question do you have for the psalmist?





A MIGHTY FORTRESS

Psalm 46:1–3 (NRSV)

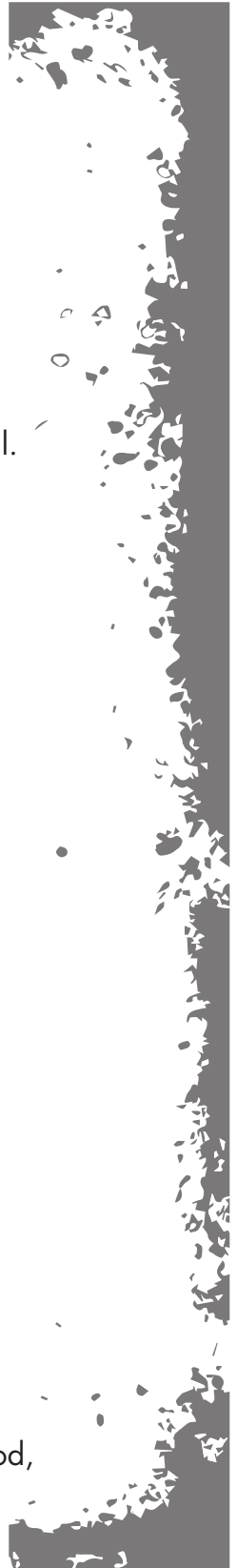
God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

"A Mighty Fortress" (*Ein Feste Burg*, Martin Luther)

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
our helper he amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.

Psalm 46:1–11 (The Message)

One: God is a safe place to hide,
All: ready to help when we need him.
One: We stand fearless at the cliff-edge of doom,
All: courageous in sea storm and earthquake,
One: Before the rush and roar of oceans,
All: the tremors that shift mountains.
One: Jacob-wrestling God fights for us,
All: GOD-of-Angel-Armies protects us.
One: Giver fountains splash joy, cooling God's city,
All: this sacred haunt of the Most High.
One: God lives here, the streets are safe,
All: God at your service from crack of dawn.
One: Godless nations rant and rave, kings and kingdoms threaten,
All: but Earth does anything he says.
One: Jacob-wrestling God fights for us,
All: GOD-of-Angel-Armies protects us.
One: Attention, all! See the marvels of GOD!
All: He plants flowers and trees all over the earth,
One: Bans war from pole to pole,
All: breaks all the weapons across his knee.
One: "Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God,
above politics, above everything."
All: Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, GOD-of-Angel-Armies protects us.





THE SHEEP OF GOD'S PASTURE

One: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

All: Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing.

SING

(Select a song for the group to sing.)

One: Know that the LORD is God.

All: It is he that made us, and we are his;

One: we are his people,

All: and the sheep of his pasture.

One: The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

PAUSE

One: He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

All: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;

One: for you are with me;

All: your rod and your staff – they comfort me.

PAUSE

One: Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.

All: Give thanks to him, bless his name.

BLESS GOD

(Invite the youth to verbally express their blessings to God.)

One: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

All: you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

One: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

All: and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

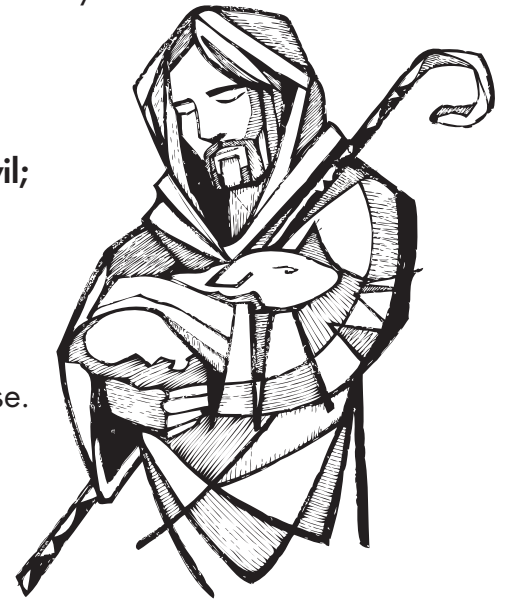
PAUSE

One: For the LORD is good;

All: For the LORD is good;

One: his steadfast love endures forever,

All: his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."





GOD IS HERE!

Psalm 116 (*Psalms/Now*)

I know that God is here.

I know this because,

my soul bare and body naked before Him,
He looked upon me with love
and responded to my cry for help.

There was a time when I didn't care!

I was not aware of any particular need for Him.

But then I hit bottom.

Death itself reached out to embrace me.

There was no one else to turn to.

I cried out to God in my desperation.

I could almost feel His invisible hand
encircle me and draw me to Himself.

Now I am convinced.

God is here, and I shall trust Him forever.

I will no longer wait for pain and suffering
to drive me to Him.

I will walk in His course for my life.

I am committed to His purposes,
and I intend to carry out that commitment.

I can never repay God for His ever-present love.

I can only dedicate my life to praising Him
and to serving Him wherever I may be.

I am His servant and His son; I shall love Him forever.

I shall proclaim to all the world: "God is in our midst."



YELLOW PATH

Psalm 16:11 — "You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Psalm 17:5 — "My steps have held fast to your paths; my feet have not slipped."

Psalm 23:3 — "He leads me in right paths for his name's sake."

Psalm 25:4 — "Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths."

Psalm 25:10 — "All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees."

Psalm 119:105 — "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Psalm 119:105 — "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."



HIGH SCHOOL REUNION: SAVE THE DATE

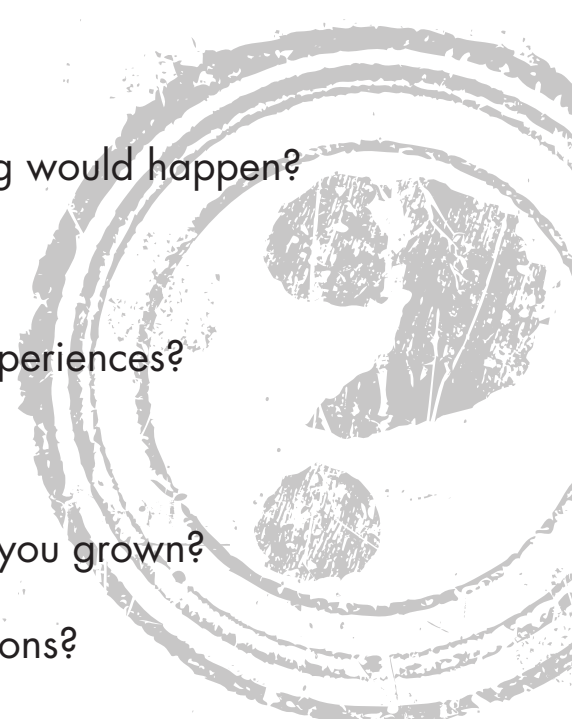
First, read together these words of the psalmist:

"The days of our life are seventy years,
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away . . .
So teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart."

Psalm 90:10, 12

Second, respond to one or more of the following questions:

- What did you dream about doing with your life when you graduated?
- Has the dream changed? In what ways?
- What were some of the things you were hoping would happen?
- In what ways have your hopes been fulfilled?
- What has been one of your most significant experiences?
- What has been a disappointment or failure?
- What have you learned through it? How have you grown?
- In what ways has your faith guided your decisions?
- What has been one of the wonderful surprises of the last 25 years?
- How did high school prepare you for what was to come?
- If you could offer advice to students today what would that be?





LIFE FROM A TO Z

Open your Bible to Psalm 119.

There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Notice that Psalm 119 contains 176 verses. Each stanza of 8 verses begins with a letter of the alphabet! Note the page from the Hebrew text—reading right to left.

Write a similar psalm written in English. It would contain 208 verses, eight verses for each of the 26 letters of our alphabet. The eight verses of the first stanza would begin with the letter A, the second stanza with the letter B, and so on.

Choose one of the 26 letters and write a simple eight verse stanza. Choose a theme such as Love, Joy, Wonder, Thanks, Hope, Happiness, or Praise.

Following through on a singular theme is important, particularly in Psalm 119. Every verse except one contains a word for God's guidance through the Law: word, commandments, statutes, ordinances, law, and so forth. Wow!

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PSALM COOKIES

Psalm 1:1—"Happy are those who do not take the advice of the wicked."

Psalm 2:11—"Happy are all who take refuge in him."

Psalm 33:12—"Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD."

Psalm 40:4—"Happy are those who make the LORD their trust."

Psalm 41:1—"Happy are those who consider the poor."

Psalm 84:5—"Happy are those whose strength is in you."

Psalm 94:12—"Happy are those whom you discipline, LORD."

Psalm 106:3—"Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times."

Psalm 112:1—"Happy are those who fear the LORD."

Psalm 119:1—"Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD."

Psalm 119:2—"Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart."

Psalm 146:5—"Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God."