VOLUME 1

Psalms

A GUIDE FOR **FAMILY FUN & DEVOTION**

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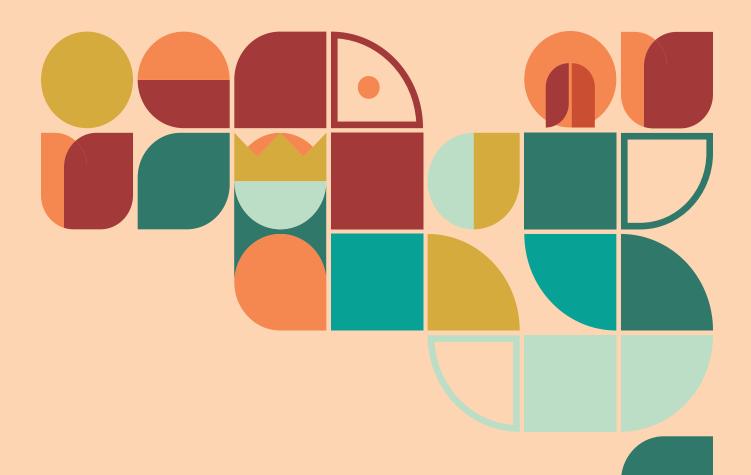


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How to Use This Guide

Welcome to Summer in the Psalms, Vol. I: A Guide for Family Fun & Devotion! In this guide we'll learn about different kinds of songs found in the book of Psalms. We'll then get into the Bible and read, study, apply, and pray texts from Psalms.

Note: The Family Guide matches the Groups Guide, but the Family Guide features shorter Bible passages, questions, and activities. The Family Guide's Bible study is largely meant for a weekly morning, afternoon, or evening devotion. The activities can be completed during that time, but you may decide to scatter the activities throughout the week. Do what fits your family's needs and schedule. You can always revisit one of the Bible studies or activities later.

We're going to go on adventures, too—sometimes in our backyard, a neighborhood park, or somewhere in Austin. We'll also choose from several activities. Some activities will ask us to exercise, and some will exercise our science brains or our arts-and-crafts skills.

We're going to have so much fun this summer, because knowing God and following Him is fun. It's the best thing we can do with our lives. Let's get started!

Introduction to Psalms

Psalms is a BIG book of songs—it has 150 of them! These songs were written by God's people. They wrote songs to celebrate God's kindness to them, and they wrote songs to honor God as their Creator and King.

God's people wrote other kinds of songs, too. Some of these songs taught important lessons about how to be happy. Others asked questions, especially when the people were sad about their sin or sad about being far from home. These songs teach us to talk with God about everything in our lives.

The songs in Psalms are put in categories, which are like drawers in a dresser. When we "put away" the songs, it's a little like putting away our clothes. Socks go in the sock drawer; shirts go in the shirts drawer; and so on and so forth.

In Psalms, we have five drawers, or categories: wisdom, lament, thanksgiving, praise, and trust. These drawers help us read more thoughtfully and listen more carefully. When we need a "sock" for our cold toes—or wisdom about how to follow God's way at school or home—we know where to go. The psalm and its category tell us so.

CATEGORIES IN PSALMS			
Psalm Categories Definition		Example Psalms	
Wisdom	Wisdom psalms teach us to follow God's way.	Psalms 37, 49, 62	
Lament	Lament psalms ask questions or apologize for sin.	Psalms 25, 51, 88	
Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving psalms give thanks for God's mighty acts.	Psalms 18, 34, 116	
Praise	Praise psalms celebrate God as Creator and/or Redeemer.	Psalms 104, 105, 148	
Trust	Trust psalms rest in God's king- ship and care.	Psalms 24, 121, 131	

How to Pray the Psalms

Prayer is how we talk with God. We can talk with God in a lot of ways, from the dance moves we dream up and the art we make to the words we write or speak. That means we can talk with God all the time, anywhere!

God likes to hear from us. He wants to know what we have to say, on our good days and on our bad days and on all the days in between. And—when we don't have anything to say, we can still talk with God. God gives us plenty of conversation topics in His Word, the Bible. When we read the Bible, we're being invited to listen to what God has to say and to answer Him with our own words.

One place we learn how to listen and reply to God is in the book of Psalms. Psalms is not only a big book of songs, but also a big book of prayers, written by people like you and me. They lost their way and needed to be found; they asked God why bad things happened; they looked at the stars and fell silent, stunned by God's handiwork.

We can use the psalmists' words as our prayers, speaking and writing the words from the Bible back to God. We can also use the psalmists' words to start our prayers. We read their words and say (or write or draw or dance) something in response. We can do that on our own, and we can do that with other people.

Let's practice by praying Psalm 16:7–9 as a family. The Psalm says:

PSALM 16:7-9

I will bless the LORD who counsels me — even at night when my thoughts trouble me.
 I always let the Lord guide me.
 Because he is at my right hand,
 I will not be shaken.
 Therefore my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices;
 my body also rests securely.

To pray this psalm, we'll read the first line again: I will bless the LORD who counsels me. Do any words or thoughts come to mind? If so, share them with God. Once we run out of things to say, we read the next line: even at night when my thoughts trouble me. If anything comes to mind, we pray about it. If not, we read the next line. We'll follow that pattern of read-and-response to the end of the selected passage.

7 Basic Truths

The 7 Basic Truths are the theological framework for Kids Ministry at The Austin Stone. They sum up the good news about Jesus in easy-to-understand language. No matter how young or old we get, these truths stay the same.



God made everything, including me (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 139:1–2, 13–14). God is the Creator and Sustainer of all life. God made humans in His image and for His glory, and He made each of us to reflect Him uniquely. He loves His creation!



God is King of everything, including me (Psalm 22:28; Psalm 47:7). God created everything, so He is in charge. God is the King of kings! When happy things happen, we can thank and praise God! And when sad things happen, we know God can help and will use them for His glory and our good.



God is good and is the greatest treasure in the world (Psalm 145:8–9; John 12:1–8; Matthew 6:19–21). God and His Word can always be trusted. He is perfect and always does what is right.



I am born a sinner, and I need a Rescuer (Romans 3:23; Ecclesiastes 7:20). Every person is a sinner. Sin is going against God's will or Word in any way. Our sin keeps us from having a right relationship with God, and we cannot fix that problem. We need God's help.



Jesus is the Rescuer who can bring me to the greatest treasure in the world (Romans 5:8; Ephesians 1:7–10). Jesus is the only way to God. He paid the price for sin and came back to life, proving His power over sin and death! Anyone who trusts in Jesus is rescued from their sin, and their relationship with God is made right.



God gives us the Holy Spirit who helps us remember and obey what Jesus taught (John 14:26; Acts 2:1–4, 36–39). Jesus has taught all we need to know to live a life pleasing to God. Sometimes we forget, and we can't obey God in our own strength, so God gives us His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reminds us of what Jesus taught and helps us obey Him.



Tell the world Jesus is the Rescuer (Matthew 28:16-20; Psalm 96:3). God gave us a mission: to show and tell the world about Jesus through the Holy Spirit's power. We want more people to know, love, and trust Jesus, so we tell as many people as possible about Him.

A Psalm of Wisdom

When Jesus was on earth, He told a story about a wise man and a foolish man. The wise man built his house on the rock. The foolish man? He built his house on the sand. When the winds rose, the rain fell, and the thunder crashed, the wise man's house stood firm. It was built on the rock. The foolish man's house wobbled and warped and fell over with a great BOOM (Matthew 7:24–27).

Jesus said anyone who listens to His words and obeys them is like the wise man. That's what wisdom is: listening to God and doing what He says, even when it doesn't make sense. To be wise is learning to do what makes God happy, whether we have a rule to follow or not.

The book of Psalms overflows with songs of wisdom. Psalm 1 is one of them. It's all about being wise by treasuring God's words, thinking about them, and doing what they say. When we do, we build on the rock-solid words of Jesus. His words are true, and we can trust them.

PSALM 1

- ¹ How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers!
- ² Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.
- ³ He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither.
 Whatever he does prospers.
- ⁴ The wicked are not like this;
 instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away.
 ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- ⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

WORD TO KNOW

righteous — when the Bible says someone is "righteous," that person is in right relationship with God, and they show that right[eous]ness by loving God and other people

READ | WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Draw three things:

- 1. A smiley face next to "How happy is the one who does not." Draw a circle around each of these words: walk, stand, and sit.
- 2. A tree and a water droplet next to "He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams."
- 3. A gust of wind next to "they are like chaff that the wind blows away." Underline the words will not stand up.

What is "chaff"? Look u	p the word in a dictionar	ry and write down the definition.

What does the happy person do and not do?

The happy person does not	The happy person does

EXAMINE | WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

How is chaff different from a tree?

If the way of the wicked leads to ruin, where does the way of the righteous lead?

Do you see any connections to the 7 Basic Truths? If so, circle the Basic Truth below.















APPLY | HOW WILL THE BIBLE CHANGE ME?

Write or draw about three times you've felt happy this week.				

Read verses 1 and 2 again. The Bible says thinking about and obeying God's instruction makes us happy. What do you think about that?

PRAY | WHAT CAN I SAY TO GOD?

Thank God for water and trees and sunshine and blue skies that stretch forever. Thank God that loving and obeying His words makes us grow. When we listen to God and follow His directions, we become like big shade trees on hot summer days. Everyone wants to come sit beneath our leaves and rest!

Adventure

LIKE A TREE

Supplies Needed

- The great outdoors (can be a backyard, a neighborhood, a nearby park, or a nature reserve)
- A notebook for recording observations
- · A pen or pencil for taking notes
- · Bottled water
- Snacks

- 1. Before you start your outdoor exploration, read the following aloud: Trees are like a crowd of people. They blend together until we stop, walk around them, peer at them, and notice what makes each tree unique.
- 2. Ask: What characteristics do trees have that help us see them as distinct from another tree? Possible answers: bark, texture, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, roots, location, twigs, branches, animals, conifer, deciduous, shape, size
- 3. Depending on the age of your kid(s), have them walk around on their own and return with observations for at least three different trees. (If your kids are younger, you can place markers at three different trees. Have them look for the markers and then talk about what is unique about each tree.)
- 4. When you have your snack (or return home to the great, cool indoors), talk about how exploration and observation can teach us about delight and meditation. Observation and meditation ask us to slow down and pay attention. And exploration invites us to be curious—who knows what we'll find around a bend in the trail? It could be a deer or a cat or our next-door neighbor! That kind of curiosity gets us excited, kind of like when we get curious about the Bible. We're ready for God to take us on adventure, either in His world or in His Word.

Activity

YOUNGER KIDS

HOW HAPPY FREEZE TAG

Supplies Needed

• A large space, preferably free of obstacles (indoors or outdoors)

- 1. Choose someone to be "it."
- 2. Instruct anyone caught to freeze in place, taking one of the following poses mentioned in Psalm 1:
 - a. Walking stance, like you're holding a walking stick or ski poles
 - b. Standing still, like a toy in its box
 - c. Sitting cross-legged
 - d. Arms outstretched to the sky (delight)
 - e. Praying (meditation)
- 3. Once everyone is frozen but the chaser, start over with a new "it."
- 4. Play until everyone needs a break

FINGER PAINT TREES

Supplies Needed

- Finger paint
- · Glossy white paper
- Wet wipes
- Plastic tablecloth

Note: If you don't have paint or would rather not paint, draw trees with crayons, markers, or chalk on copy or construction paper.

- 1. Set up your art station: put out the tablecloth, put on paint smocks or big shirts that can get paint on them, and set out the other supplies.
- 2. Ask your kid(s) what a healthy tree looks like and what a healthy tree needs to grow.
- 3. Paint trees using your fingers.
- 4. Clean up!
- 5. As you finish the activity, connect what trees need to grow with what we need to grow. Start by asking your kid(s) what they think they need to grow. If they mention the Bible, great! If they don't, introduce how we need the Bible to grow into people who know, love, and obey God.

OLDER KIDS

SCRIPTURE BANK

Supplies Needed

- Scripture Bank (final pages of this book)
- Pens or pencils

Instructions

Two options:

- 1. As a family, build a Scripture bank with verses about people relying on God's Word. You can use the Scripture Bank found at the end of this guide, or you can start one in a journal or on a big piece of paper pinned to a wall or refrigerator.
- 2. Assign your older kid(s) the role of treasurer. Have them remember or look for verses about people who depended on God's Word. Ask them to share the treasures they find.

LIKE A TREE DRAWING

Supplies Needed

- Lightweight paper (can be printer paper)
- · Crayons, chalk pastels, or oil pastels
- · Leaves from several trees

Instructions

When exploring and observing nature, encourage your older kid(s) to collect leaves from at least three, but no more than five, different trees. (You can also send them out on a separate expedition.)

- 1. Have each kid talk about their collection of leaves. How is each leaf different? What trees do their leaves come from? (Use the Arbor Day Foundation's Field Guide (arborday.org/trees/whattree/) to identify the trees.)
- 2. Instruct your kid(s) to make a drawing from the rubbings of their different leaves. (If they haven't made a leaf rubbing before, instruct them to set the leaf, bottom-side up, beneath the paper. They should then rub the side of the chalk, crayon, or oil pastel gently across the front of the paper.)
- 3. Encourage your kid(s) to experiment with how they set their leaves beneath the paper to create a design.
- 4. Have your kid(s) select and incorporate a verse from Psalm 1 into their artwork in some way.

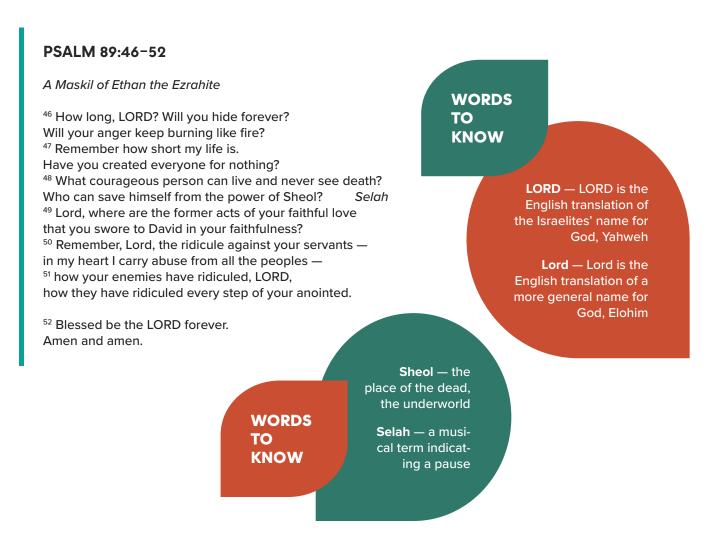
A Psalm of Lament

A psalm of lament is a song of sadness. The psalmists wrote them when they were sad about their sin. They wanted God to know they were sorry for hurting Him with their sin, so they wrote a song about it. Sometimes, like in Psalm 89, they were sad because their homes were in ruins, and they were being sent far away, to another country.

Psalms of lament teach us to sing and pray to God about everything, from our happiest day to the saddest one. God cares about our days, and He cares about how we feel. When a friend hurts our feelings, we can tell God. When we find out we're going to have to take medicine for the rest of our lives, we can tell God. When we yell at someone and feel sad about it, we can tell God and that person, too. We can even tell God when we're sad about good things. When our dad gets a job after not having one for a while, when we start a new school year, or when we find out we're going to be a big brother or sister—these are all good things! But even good things can come with some sadness.

It's okay to be sad. Life is hard and full of change, and we're going to make mistakes. We're going to be sad sometimes. And when we are, we can let God and our loved ones know how we're feeling. They want to know so that they can give us a big hug and tell us they care.

A man named Ethan wrote Psalm 89. He wrote songs with other singers and poets at God's temple in Jerusalem.



READ | WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Who is David? What Bible stories do you know about him?

Go on a word search! What words are repeated? When you see a word used more than once, underline or circle it with the same colored pen, pencil, marker, or crayon. Use different colors for your sets of repeated words.

EXAMINE | WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

How do you think the writer of this psalm feels? How do you know that?

Why is it good to bless the LORD even when it feels like the LORD is hiding?

Do you see any connections to the 7 Basic Truths? If so, circle the Basic Truth below.







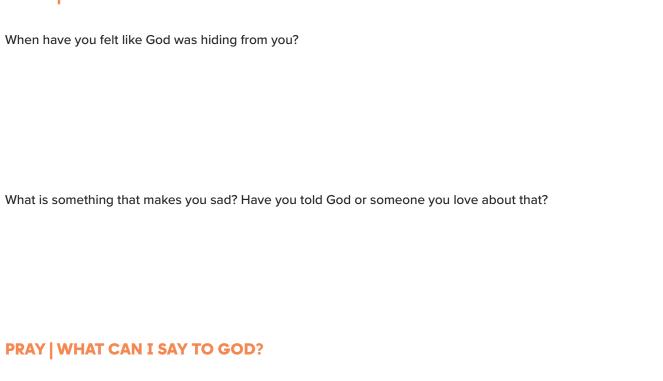








APPLY | HOW WILL THE BIBLE CHANGE ME?



God knows everything about us, from the number of hairs on our heads to the number of LEGOs under our beds. He knows whether we like cats or dogs and how much we want one—or another one. God also cares about our emotions. Tell God how you're feeling today. He wants to hear from you!

Adventure

BIG EMOTIONS, BIGGER GOD PRAYER WALK

Supplies Needed

- · A body of water, such as a bathtub, pool, pond, or lake
- · Rocks of assorted sizes
- · A pail or bag to carry the rocks

Optional:

- · A notebook for recording observations
- · A pen or pencil for taking notes
- · A stopwatch

- 1. Gather a collection of assorted rocks and take them with you when you go to a body of water.
- 2. Say: When our emotions are big and loud, everything can feel really long and hard.
- 3. Hand your kid(s) a rock and ask them to toss it into the water. (If you have multiple kids, have them take turns.)
- 4. When the rock enters the water, ask the following:
 - a. What happened to the rock?
 - b. What kind of ripples do you see?
 - c. How long did the ripples last? (Either count or use a stopwatch.)
- 5. Say: Our big emotions can feel like heavy rocks we carry all by ourselves. But our emotions send out ripples, just like the rocks we tossed into the water. Our emotions affect other people. But just like those rocks, the ripples eventually stop. They don't last forever. We just have to wait and be patient with ourselves and with each other.
 - While we wait, we can **do** something. We can pray, like we read in Psalm 89. Prayer helps us say what we're feeling and leads us to trust God, even when He doesn't remove our sadness right away. We can thank God, too. Let's do that right now. What are you thankful for today?

To continue the adventure, consider these options for emotional check-ins:

- Choose different colored stones to signify different emotions. (For example, blue for sadness, yellow for happy, red for anger, etc.) Then, set up an emotions jar in your kitchen or entryway. Invite everyone— including you—to add a stone once or twice a week. Ask questions about the stone(s) your kid(s) chose, and share why you chose the stone(s) you did, too.
- When your kid(s) come home from school or an activity, ask them about their highs (their happies) and their lows (their sads). Listen. Before talking about possible solutions to any unhappy situations, say, "I care about what you're feeling, and God does, too."
- Regularly talk about challenges you face as a family. This can occur once a week or once a month. As you talk about these challenges, focus on these words rather than on solutions:

□ l'm	going to ask God to _		, because God cares about
		, and I do, too.	

Activity

YOUNGER KIDS

DANIEL TIGER'S "HAVING MIXED FEELINGS" SONG

Supplies Needed

- A phone or computer to sing along (unless you already know the song)
- Look for Daniel Tiger's "Having Mixed Feelings" by PBS (https://www.pbs.org/video/having-mixed-feelings-song-locwpe/)

- 1. Clear some space or stand in an open area.
- 2. Start the song and sing along.

HIDE-AND-SEEK

Supplies Needed

• A large space (indoors or outdoors)

- 1. Choose someone to be the seeker.
- 2. Instruct everyone else to hide.
- 3. Instruct the seeker to count to 45 (or as high as they can count).
- 4. Play until everyone needs a break.
- 5. After you finish playing hide-and-seek, talk about how it's hard to find God sometimes. But God hasn't gone anywhere. He's still near and holding us close. When we feel like God is hiding from us, we should tell Him. We should ask Him questions, and we should praise Him. We will find God again, if we keep seeking Him.

OLDER KIDS

SCRIPTURE BANK

Supplies Needed

- · Scripture Bank (final pages of this book)
- · Pens or pencils

Instructions

For this Scripture bank, introduce the necessity of hope in the midst of sadness. You can use the following words or different ones to begin the conversation.

One way we get better at being sad and sharing our sadness with God is remembering who God is and the promises He has made and kept. That's what Ethan, the author of Psalm 89, did. Let's follow his example by storing up Scripture for the days when we're sad and feel like we'll never be happy again.

Two options:

- 1. As a family, build a Scripture bank with verses about God's promises and the fulfillment of those promises.
- 2. Assign your older kid(s) the role of treasurer. Have them remember or look for verses about God's promises and the fulfillment of those promises. Ask them to share the treasures they find.

BIG EMOTIONS ACTIVITY

Supplies Needed

- Cotton balls
- Q-tips
- A shallow bowl or tray
- A small bowl or measuring cup
- Milk (whole milk, if you have it)
- · Dawn dish soap
- · Food coloring (any food coloring should work, but the McCormick brand tends to work best)

To see the two experiments: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kS10lugFrnl.

Instructions

Option 1:

- 1. Fill a shallow bowl or tray with a layer of milk.
- 2. Fill a small bowl or measuring cup with a small amount of Dawn dish soap.
- 3. Add drops of food coloring **around** the tray of milk.
- 4. Dip a Q-tip into the dish soap.
- 5. Touch the Q-tip to the milk and/or spot colors.
- 6. Watch the results.

Option 2:

- 1. Fill a shallow bowl or tray with a layer of milk.
- 2. Fill a small bowl or measuring cup with a small amount of Dawn dish soap.
- 3. Add drops of food coloring to the center of the tray of milk.
- 4. Dunk a cotton ball in the dish soap.
- 5. Set the cotton ball in the **center** of the tray.
- 6. Watch the results.

As you conduct the experiment or after you finish it, talk about how we can feel more than one emotion at once. Our emotions can swirl around and—like the ripples from a stone tossed into a body of water—bump into other things. But even when our emotions are swirly, we can trust God. God is good, and God cares about us. He wants to know what's going on in our lives. Let's talk with God about how we're feeling today. (Lead your kid(s) in sharing your emotions and circumstances with God.)

A Psalm of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a yearly celebration in America. We eat turkey or tamales and loads of mashed potatoes—and probably pumpkin or pecan pie!—at a special table. We stop all our everyday activities to remember the things for which we are grateful.

In the Bible, psalms of thanksgiving—like Psalm 136—helped God's people remember every good thing came from God. They sang these songs during special holidays and festivals, and they sang them on ordinary days, too. As they sang these songs throughout their lives, thankfulness to God became a habit.

A habit is anything we do regularly and consistently. Brushing our teeth, for example, is a habit. It's a good one. It keeps the cavities away and our dentists happy. Thanking God for His gifts also is a good habit. It teaches us to trust God, and it reminds us that God loves us and loves to lavish good gifts upon us.

Grab a Bible, and open it to Psalm 136. It says God's faithful love endures forever **26 times**! Wow! Talk about forming a habit. Now you try saying it 26 times, and see what happens!

PSALM 136:1-9

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

His faithful love endures forever.

² Give thanks to the God of gods.

His faithful love endures forever.

³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords.

His faithful love endures forever.

⁴ He alone does great wonders.

His faithful love endures forever.

⁵ He made the heavens skillfully.

His faithful love endures forever.

⁶ He spread the land on the waters.

His faithful love endures forever.

⁷ He made the great lights:

His faithful love endures forever.

8 the sun to rule by day,

His faithful love endures forever.

⁹ the moon and stars to rule by night.

READ | WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

God's people often sang, "God's faithful love endures forever." Sometimes they sang it in celebration of all the good things God had done for them. Other times they sang it to remember God's goodness, especially when they were sad or confused or discouraged. Let's remember God's love for us by highlighting or underlining His faithful love endures forever in verses 1–9 with a favorite color.

Time to draw! Draw five things:

- (1) A plant and (2) an ocean wave next to "He spread the land on the waters"
- (3) A sun next to "the sun to rule by day"
- (4) A moon and (5) some stars next to "the moon and stars to rule by night"

EXAMINE | WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

"Endures" means something that lasts. The Bible says, "God's faithful love lasts forever." What does it mean to "last forever"?

Why do you think God's people had to keep singing and saying, "God's faithful love endures forever"?

Do you see any connections to the 7 Basic Truths? If so, circle the Basic Truth below.















APPLY | HOW WILL THE BIBLE CHANGE ME?

Write or draw three AMAZING things you saw or that happened to you today:

God gives us good gifts each and every day—rainbows after a hailstorm, a friend who asks us to a sleepover, soft puppy-dog ears, and peanut butter on apple slices. The next time you're happy about something good you see or that happens to you, thank God for it!

PRAY | WHAT CAN I SAY TO GOD?

Thank God in prayer three times this week. (This can be done over a shared meal, at bedtime, or during family devotions.) If you need help getting started, use the prayer prompts below.

Gracious God, You are	
By Your great power, You	_•
Thank You, God, thank You!	
You are bigger and stronger than	_, yet You are near to us.
We give You thanks for	and for how
You .	
Thank You, God!	
Thank You for Jesus, our Rescuer who leads us to the greatest treasure in the world. Spirit who makes us more like You. And thank You for our church and this family.	Thank You for the Holy
You are good, and You do good. Thank You, God, thank You!	
In Jesus' name, amen.	

Adventure

THANKSGIVING BOX

Supplies Needed

· One empty Kleenex box

Note: Any kind of box will do, but an adult should cut an opening in the box if it does not already have one.

- Wrapping paper or brown Kraft paper
- · Decorations (stickers, glitter, sequins, ribbon, pom-poms, etc.)
- Scissors
- Tape
- · Small notecards
- Pens, pencils, and/or crayons

Instructions

To make the box:

- 1. Wrap the box with paper.
- 2. Cut a small slot in the paper, large enough to drop cards in.
- 3. Have everyone help decorate the box.

Now for the adventure:

- 1. Go to a favorite spot, whether that's the backyard, a park, or some other location.
- 2. Give everyone a few pieces of paper and a writing utensil.
- 3. Instruct everyone to explore the area and to write down or draw something they are thankful for.

Continue the adventure by having everyone drop notes in the thanksgiving box throughout the week. Open the box at the end of the week and celebrate all the good gifts God has given. When you reach the final note, ask your kid(s) to say with you, "God's faithful love lasts forever!"

Activity

YOUNGER KIDS

"THANK YOU, LORD" SONG

Supplies Needed

- A phone or computer to sing along with YouTube (unless you already know the song)
- Look for "Thank You, Lord" by CAM ArtMade (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEYz4i2SL2k)

- 1. Clear some space or stand in an open area.
- 2. Start the song and sing along.
- 3. Act out the different animals (monkeys, bears, and alligators)!

SUN, MOON, & STARS CRAFT

Supplies Needed

- Paper plate(s)
- A pencil or marker
- Paint (gray or silver, yellow or orange)
- Paintbrushes
- · Foam or cardstock
- Glue

Options: If you don't have paint or would rather not paint, try out these ideas:

- · Construction paper—cut the paper into half-spheres or cut the paper into small pieces for a mosaic effect
- Outdoor chalk—draw a big version of the paper plate model on a sidewalk, driveway, or back patio

- 1. Draw a curved line with a pencil or marker to separate the "sun" and "moon" on the paper plate. (Start the curved line along $\frac{1}{3}$ of the plate—the paper plate should have a sliver moon or sun on one side.)
- 2. Invite your kid(s) to paint one half gray or silver and the other half yellow or orange.
- 3. While they paint, cut out three stars of various sizes from cardstock or foam.
- 4. Once the paint dries, have or help your kid(s) attach the stars to the plate.
- 5. Write, "God's faithful love lasts forever!" along the edge of the plate.
- 6. Hang on the refrigerator with a magnet.

OLDER KIDS

SCRIPTURE BANK

Supplies Needed

- Scripture Bank (final pages of this book)
- Pens or pencils

Instructions

Two options:

- 1. As a family, build a Scripture bank with verses about God's attributes (His qualities and characteristics) and/or God's good gifts.
- 2. Assign your older kid(s) the role of treasurer. Have them remember or look for verses about God's attributes and/or gifts. Ask them to share the treasures they find.

MOON & STARS CHART

Supplies Needed

Moon & Stars printout

Instructions

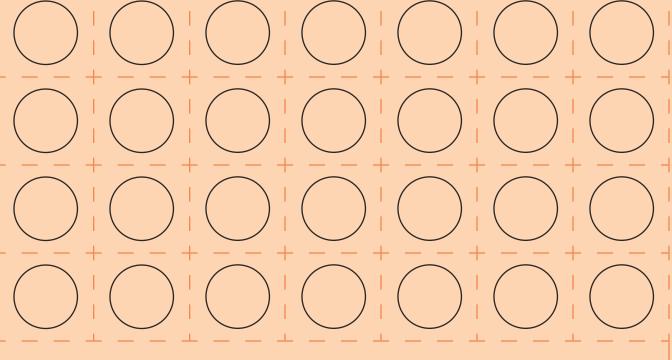
- 1. For the rest of the month, have your kid(s) catalog how the moon waxes and wanes.
- 2. Invite them to share their findings.
- 3. Talk about how God made the moon and stars to rule by night.

MOON & STARTS OBERATION CHART

Date Obsersations Started:

Time to check the moon each night:

Look at the moon at the same time each night and draw what you see.



What constellations did you see?

A Psalm of Praise

When God created the heavens and earth, and everything that lives in them, He said His work was good. He said it every day. And then He said something different: very good. After He created people—that's you and me—He said His creation was **very good**.

Psalms of praise, like the one David wrote in Psalm 139, are one way people can agree with the very good work God has done. They sing praises to God the Creator for thinking up aardvarks and zebras, beetles with triceratops heads, and teeny-tiny jellyfish. God made everything, including you and me!

Other psalms of praise celebrate God rescuing His people. These songs set history to music. They're kind of like the songs we use to learn about the American presidents or to remember important events. The people sang these songs to celebrate God, their Redeemer and Savior.

We can praise God, too. God is our Creator, and He made each one of us wonderfully well. God is our Redeemer, too. He sent us Jesus, the Rescuer. Both of those things are reasons to shout and sing!

PSALM 139:13-18

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

¹³ For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴ I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well.
¹⁵ My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret, when I was formed in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶ Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began.

God, how precious your thoughts are to me; how vast their sum is!
 If I counted them, they would outnumber the grains of sand; when I wake up, I am still with you.

READ | WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

The writer of this song is talking to God. Underline every *you* and write *God* above it. Read Psalm 139 again. Say "God" every time a "you" appears. What is one thing God does? What word pictures do you hear and/or see in the text? **EXAMINE | WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** How does God put each person—including you!—together? What does the word "priceless" mean? Do you see any connections to the 7 Basic Truths? If so, circle the Basic Truth below.

APPLY | HOW WILL THE BIBLE CHANGE ME?

Y	
You are special, because God says you're special. He made you feel? What questions do you have?	e you, just the way He wanted to! How does that make
What's something you love about your parents, guardian(s)	siblings or friends? Write or draw it below
vinite something you love about your parents, guardian(s)	, sibility s, or menus. Write or draw it below.
God planned that, too!	
PRAY WHAT CAN I SAY TO GOD?	
We can praise God the same way the writer of Psalm 139 d	id. Take turns answering the prompts.
Father God,	
You made me	I praise You for that.
God, You are	. I know that very well!
You think about me	. That's amazing!
God, You are	I praise You for that.
In Jesus' name, amen.	

Adventure

MORE THAN SAND

Supplies Needed

- A beach
- A notebook for recording observations
- · A pen or pencil for taking notes
- Bottled water
- Snacks

Need ideas for where to find a beach in and around Austin? Here are six:

- 1. Lake Georgetown
- 2. Lake Pflugerville
- 3. Emma Long Metro Park
- 4. Lake Travis
- 5. Deep Eddy / Barton Springs
- 6. Canyon Lake

Instructions

As you head to the beach, read Psalm 139:17–18 aloud:

¹⁷ God, how precious your thoughts are to me; how vast their sum is. ¹⁸ If I counted them, they would outnumber the grains of sand; when I wake up, I am still with you.

Ask:

- How many grains of sand do you think there are at this beach?
- If God's thoughts outnumber grains of sand, how many thoughts would that be?
- What do you think about that?

Praise God for beaches and sand and for His thoughts, which dreamt up beaches for us to enjoy.

Activity

YOUNGER KIDS

"IF I WERE A BUTTERFLY" SONG

Supplies Needed

 A phone or computer to sing along with Psalty: https://www.psalty.com/track/686292/the-butterfly-song

- 1. Clear some space or stand in an open area.
- 2. Start the song and sing along.
- 3. Act out the different animals and actions!

GOD MADE ME MIRROR

Supplies Needed

- · Cardstock or cardboard, cut in a square
- Mirror board sheet or other reflective material, cut in a circle
- Large popsicle stick
- Decorations (glitter, stones, beads, stickers, etc.)
- · Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Bottled glue

Instructions

- 1. Give your kid(s) the cardstock or cardboard square and invite them to decorate it with crayons, markers, or pencils.
- 2. Glue the circular mirror board to the square.
- 3. Write "God Made Me" somewhere on the mirror frame.
- 4. Invite your kid(s) to add more decorations (stones, beads, stickers, glitter, etc.).

Note: You may need to supervise or help with the glue.

- 5. Attach the popsicle stick to the back of the mirror frame.
- 6. Allow the mirror to dry completely.
- 7. Hand the mirror to your kid(s) and say, "Who did God make? God made you, and He made me, too!"

OLDER KIDS

SCRIPTURE BANK

Supplies Needed

- Scripture Bank (final pages of this book)
- Pens or pencils

Instructions

Two options:

- 1. As a family, build a Scripture bank with verses about God the Creator.
- 2. Assign your older kid(s) the role of treasurer. Have them remember or look for verses about God the Creator. Ask them to share the treasures they find.

SELF-PORTRAIT

Supplies Needed

- Construction paper or white printing paper
- Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
- Reference materials (i.e., photographs or handheld mirrors), if needed

- 1. Put out paper and drawing utensils.
- 2. Set a timer for 10–15 minutes.
- 3. Have everyone at the table draw a portrait of themselves (including you!).
- 4. Have everyone pass their self-portrait to the person on their left.
- 5. Ask the person on your right, "What do you see when you look at _______'s self-portrait?"
- 6. Reply, "Yes, and I see a boy/girl wonderfully made by God!"
- 7. Keep going around the table until everyone has had a chance to answer the question. Reply to each answer with the words, "Yes, and I see a boy/girl wonderfully made by God!"

WONDERFULLY MADE LETTERS

Supplies	Needed

- Printed copy(ies) of letter
- Pen or pencil

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Write back and forth a	t least twice, usin	g the provided	starter lette	r below. (I	Print additional	copies,	if need
ed, or start a new lette	r based on other	topics.) Invite y	our kid(s) to	write to	ou first.		

Something I like about myself is	
that because	·
Dear,	
I like that about you, too. I also like that	I thank God fo
Dear,	
Sometimes I wonder if God	I wonder that because
Dear,	
It's okay to	I wonder
	But I remember God
	, and that reminds me God is always good and

A Psalm of Trust

Psalms of trust are confident songs. They sing about God's goodness and nearness, and they rejoice in God the good King, with good plans. Psalms of trust often speak of Jesus, the Anointed One, who will rescue His people.

That doesn't mean the people who wrote psalms of trust were unafraid. David wrote Psalm 62, and he felt afraid. But when he was scared—of lions prowling around his sheep, a king trying to spear him to a wall, or people accusing him of being a bad king—David turned to God. He remembered how God had delivered him from lions and bears and giants. He also studied his people's history and retold the stories of God's salvation. If God delivered His people, the Israelites, from the Egyptians, God would deliver him, too.

David didn't let fear control him. He trusted in God and listened to what God had to say. Even when he was afraid, David trusted God, did what God said, and encouraged other people to trust God, too.

PSALM 62:1-2, 5-8

For the choir director: according to Jeduthun. A psalm of David.

- ¹I am at rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.
- ² He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I will never be shaken.

•••

- ⁵ Rest in God alone, my soul, for my hope comes from him.
- ⁶ He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I will not be shaken.
- ⁷ My salvation and glory depend on God, my strong rock. My refuge is in God.
- Trust in him at all times, you people;
 pour out your hearts before him.
 God is our refuge. Selah

WORDS TO KNOW Selah — We've seen this word before! It means to pause. Take a deep breath. Hold it for 3 seconds. Then WHOOSH it out.

READ | WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Let's look for repeated words! What do you see? Mark your repeated words or sentences with a fun color and symbol, like a tiny mountain, a shooting star, or a castle tower.

The Bible often describes God with word pictures, or images. What are some images that describe God in Psalm 62:1–2, 5–8? Write or draw them below.
What does "trust" mean? Write down what you think of when you hear the word. Then look up the word in a dictionary and write the dictionary's definition below. How close were your thoughts to the dictionary's definition?
EXAMINE WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
What do you think "pour out your hearts" means?
Why does the psalmist say to trust God at all times?
Do you see any connections to the 7 Basic Truths? If so, circle the Basic Truth below.

APPLY | HOW WILL THE BIBLE CHANGE ME?

What would it looit below.	ok like for you to	o depend on Goo	l, who is our hop	e and strength?	Draw a picture	or write about

PRAY | WHAT CAN I SAY TO GOD?

At bedtime or a family devotion, pray Psalm 62:1–2 together. Ask your kid(s) to repeat each line after you.

God, we are at rest in You alone.

Our salvation comes from You.

You are our rock and our salvation.

You are our safe place.

We rest in You and will never be shaken.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Adventure

GOD IS OUR REFUGE

Supplies Needed

- · A cave
- · A notebook for recording observations
- · A pen or pencil for taking notes
- · Bottled water
- Snacks

Need ideas for where to find a beach in and around Austin? Here are six:

- 1. Inner Space Caverns
- 2. Cave Without a Name
- 3. Longhorn Caverns

Note: To do this activity at home, pitch a tent in the backyard or on a back patio or balcony. You can also build a fort with pillows, blankets, books, clothespins, and chairs. Hide out in the tent/fort and use the provided instructions.

Instructions

As you head to the cave, read Psalm 62:1–2 aloud:

¹ I am at rest in God alone;
 my salvation comes from him.
 ² He alone is my rock and my salvation,
 my stronghold; I will never be shaken.

Ask:

- Why is a cave a good shelter?
- How is God a good shelter?
- How can we turn to God, our shelter, when we are afraid?

Praise God for beaches and sand and for His thoughts, which dreamt up beaches for us to enjoy.

Activity

YOUNGER KIDS

TRUST IN GOD AT ALL TIMES ACTIVITY

Supplies Needed

- An open space, indoors or outdoors
- A smartphone and/or speaker
- A playlist with sounds from different seasons

- 1. Instruct everyone to stand at an arm's length from one another.
- 2. Say: I'm going to say the name of a season—spring, summer, fall, or winter—and play sounds associated with that season. Your job is to act out the season.
- 3. At the end of each season, have everyone say in unison: We can trust in God at all times!

OLDER KIDS

SCRIPTURE BANK

Supplies Needed

- Scripture Bank (final pages of this book)
- Pens or pencils

Instructions

Two options:

- 1. As a family, build a Scripture bank with verses about and stories of people trusting God.
- 2. Assign your older kid(s) the role of treasurer. Have them remember or look for verses about and stories of people trusting God. Ask them to share the treasures they find.

TRUST IN GOD GARDEN STONE CRAFT

Supplies Needed

- Plastic tablecloth or large pieces of paper
- Quick concrete mix
- Water
- Cooking spray
- A large mixing container (ideally, a 5-gallon bucket)
- Plastic plant saucers
- Mixing spoon
- Rubber gloves
- Decorations (seashells, rocks, glass crystals, mosaic tiles, etc.)
- · Thin wooden dowels or sticks

- 1. Set up a workstation in the backyard or garage or on a patio, balcony, or driveway. Lay down a plastic tablecloth or large pieces of paper to catch spills.
- 2. Mix the concrete, following the instructions from the concrete mix.
- 3. Prepare the molds. Spray the plastic plant saucers with the cooking spray.
- 4. Pour in the concrete. Level the surface. Shake the mold slightly to release any air bubbles and level the surface again.
- 5. Add decorations and designs.
- 6. Write a verse or the words "Trust God" onto the surface.
- 7. Let the stones dry for the necessary time, typically 48 hours.
- 8. Once dry, remove the stones from the molds.
- 9. Set the stones somewhere you'll see them often, such as a flowerbed, patio, or balcony.

Bonus: An Acrostic Psalm

Have you ever been so excited that you danced, jumped up and down, or raced around a yard? Did all of your words try to come out of your mouth all at once? Maybe you felt like Agnes with her unicorn—IT'S SO FLUFFY!!!

That's what Psalm 119, all 176 verses of it, is like. The writer was so happy about God's instructions that he had to find a way to share the goodness and happiness with everyone. To help their words come out in the right order, they chose something called an *acrostic*.

An acrostic is a special kind of psalm. In an acrostic, each section of a psalm starts with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, from the first letter to the last. (Hebrew doesn't translate very well into English, but it'd be like if you tried to write a poem using the English alphabet. Each of your 26 sections would need to start with the next letter of the alphabet, starting with "A" and going through "Z.")

It's not easy to write an acrostic in English or Hebrew. But the challenge tells us something important: God's words are worthy of our effort and our praise. We can spend our whole lives praising God for who He is and how good His words are.

PSALM 119:1-8

- ¹ How happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk according to the LORD's instruction!
- ² Happy are those who keep his decrees and seek him with all their heart.
- ³ They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways.
- ⁴ You have commanded that your precepts be diligently kept.
- ⁵ If only my ways were committed to keeping your statutes!
- ⁶ Then I would not be ashamed when I think about all your commands.
- ⁷ I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous judgments.
- ⁸ I will keep your statutes; never abandon me.

READ | WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Time to look for repeated words! Grab some different colored pens, pencils, or crayons and use them to mark the repeated sets of words.

Look for the word "if" and put a box around it. What does the psalmist say will happen if he commits himself to the LORD's instructions?
Psalm 119 uses different words to mean the same thing as "instruction" (verse 1). How many words can you find in these eight verses that mean "instruction"?
EXAMINE WHAT DOES IT MEAN? What does it mean to do something "diligently"?
Why do you think the psalmist feels ashamed?
Do you see any connections to the 7 Basic Truths? If so, circle the Basic Truth below.

APPLY | HOW WILL THE BIBLE CHANGE ME?

Have you ever felt ashamed for not following God's instruction? What was that like? Draw or write about it below.
PRAY WHAT CAN I SAY TO GOD?
Thank and praise God for His words. To get started, use the prompts below.

Thank and praise God for His words. To get started, use the prompts belo

Heavenly Father, Your words are _______.

Thank You!

When I don't follow Your words perfectly,
remind me ______.

Thank You for Jesus, who ______.

I want to follow Your instruction. Will You half and

I want to follow Your instruction. Will You help me? In Jesus' name, amen.

Adventure

SCAVENGER HUNT

Supplies Needed

- · Note cards or small slips of paper
- · Pens or pencils
- A box or large envelope, any size
- Brightly colored paper or wrapping paper
- Tape

Two options:

- 1. Instead of sending your kid(s) on a scavenger hunt for a treasure box, hide the Scripture verses around your home. (If hiding the verses outdoors, you may want to put the verses in envelopes, Ziploc bags, or plastic eggs.)
- 2. Use the treasure box, but use "hot," "warm," "cold," "freezing," and similar words to help your kid(s) find it.

Instructions

Prepare ahead of time:

- 1. Write the eight verses from Psalm 119:1–8 on separate cards or slips of paper. (If your kids can write, they can help write the verses with you.)
- 2. Deposit the cards in the box or envelope.
- 3. Wrap the box or envelope with paper.
- 4. Write on it, "God's words are better than gold or silver" (Psalm 119:72).

Note: This next step should be completed without your kid(s) present.

- 1. Hide the treasure box.
- 2. Write 8–15 clues for your home, park, or neighborhood.
- 3. The first clue should start the hunt; the last clue should lead to the "treasure box."

Now for the adventure:

- 1. Give your kid(s) the first clue.
- 2. Instruct them to read the clue carefully to figure it out and follow its instructions to the subsequent clues, ultimately ending with the treasure box.
- 3. Open the treasure box.
- 4. Read the verses and talk about how they are treasures that lead us to God.

Activity

YOUNGER KIDS

STAY ON THE PATH HOPSCOTCH

Supplies Needed

· Chalk or painter's tape

Note: For hopscotch variations, visit https://www.parents.com/fun/activities/hopscotch/.

- 1. If outdoors, draw a hopscotch with chalk.
- 2. If indoors, draw a hopscotch with painter's tape. (Masking tape will work, too.)
- 3. If your kid(s) is new to hopscotch, follow the traditional rules of play. Hop on the individual squares, and jump on the paired squares.
- 4. If your kid(s) is familiar with hopscotch, increase the challenge by laying out the squares differently or requiring a different action for the squares. (For example, walking on the individual squares and dancing (delighting) on the paired squares.)
- 5. Talk about how God's Word gives instructions that help us stay on His path.

WITH MY WHOLE HEART MOSAIC CRAFT

Supplies Needed

- Construction paper
- Gluesticks

- 1. Draw a large heart on one piece of construction paper. Write, "Happy are those who keep God's decrees and seek Him with all their heart," underneath, above, or beside the heart.
- 2. Invite your kid(s) to choose two or three colors of paper and tear the paper into small pieces.
- 3. Glue the scraps of paper to the heart to make a "whole heart."
- 4. As a family, talk about what it means or looks like to seek God with all your heart.

OLDER KIDS

SCRIPTURE BANK

Supplies Needed

- Scripture Bank (final pages of this book)
- Pens or pencils

Instructions

Two options:

- 1. As a family, build a Scripture bank with verses about the goodness of God's Word.
- 2. Assign your older kid(s) the role of treasurer. Have them remember or look for verses about the goodness of God's Word. Ask them to share the treasures they find.

GOD'S INSTRUCTION ACROSTIC

Supplies Needed

- Lined paper
- Pen or pencil

Optional:

A timer

Instructions

Option 1:

- 1. Read Psalm 119:1-8 aloud.
- 2. Choose the word "instruction" or one of the words that means "instruction."
- 3. Write the chosen word **down** a piece of paper, one letter of the word per line.
- 4. On a separate piece of paper or in conversation, come up with as many words or phrases as possible that describe God's instruction **and** begin with the needed letters. (For example, if working with the word "instruction," you could say, "I need God's words every day, because they are **necessary** for...")
- 5. Then, write the words or phrases next to their corresponding letters.
- 6. Rearrange as needed, until the acrostic forms a complete thought.
- 7. Once finished, read the acrostic aloud and then hang it somewhere it'll be read often, such as a refrigerator, nightstand, or bathroom.

Option 2:

- 1. Read Psalm 119:1–8 aloud.
- 2. Choose the word "instruction" or one of the words that means "instruction."
- 3. Write the chosen word **down** a piece of paper, one letter of the word per line.
- 4. On slips of paper, write down words or phrases that describe God's instruction **and** begin with the needed letters. (You can use a timer with this step and the next one. If you do, set it for 3–5 minutes.)
- 5. Work together to arrange the slips of paper into an acrostic.
- 6. Read the final result aloud. (You can also write the final result down and hang it somewhere everyone will see it.)

Scripture Bank

As you find or think of other Scriptures related to the psalms you're reading, save them in this bank.

SCRIPTURE BANK						
WISDOM Psalm 1	LAMENT Psalm 89:46–52	THANKSGIVING Psalm 136:1–9	PRAISE Psalm 139:13–18	TRUST Psalm 62:1–2, 5–8	– Psalm 119:1–8	
What other verses do I know or have I found that teach me about how to live wisely?	What other verses do I know or have I found about sharing my feel- ings with God and other people?	What other verses do I know or have I found that remind me to be thankful or teach me about thankfulness?	What other verses do I know or have I found that praise God as Creator?	What other verses do I know or have I found that teach me to trust God at all times?	What other verses do I know or have I found about how good God's instructions are?	

SCRIPTURE BANK							
WISDOM Psalm 1	LAMENT Psalm 89:46-52	THANKSGIVING Psalm 136:1-9	PRAISE Psalm 139:13–18	TRUST Psalm 62:1–2, 5–8	– Psalm 119:1–8		
What other verses do I know or have I found that teach me about how to live wisely?	What other verses do I know or have I found about sharing my feel- ings with God and other people?	What other verses do I know or have I found that remind me to be thankful or teach me about thankfulness?	What other verses do I know or have I found that praise God as Creator?	What other verses do I know or have I found that teach me to trust God at all times?	What other verses do I know or have I found about how good God's instructions are?		

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