

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
FALL 2024

The **Teacher's Guide**
QUARTERLY

SEP-OCT-NOV
SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION



WORSHIP IN THE COVENANT COMMUNITY

THE COMBINED TEACHER'S GUIDE

FALL QUARTER 2024

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • NOVEMBER

Christian Education Department
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The Teacher's Guide - LFS: Lesson 1 - September 1, 2024

Liberating Faith Studies Lessons
Fall Quarter: September – November 2024

Prepared by Rev. Lionel Merritt

ABRAM BUILDS AN ALTAR AT MAMRE

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 12–13

Focus Scripture: Genesis 13:8-18

Key Verse: So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. Genesis 13:18

Key Terms

- **Sacred** – Dedicated to God; set aside for worship or service to God.
- **Avarice** – Great greed or covetousness.
- **Sacrament** – A religious ceremony or ritual regarded as imparting spiritual value/grace.
- **Equitable** – Fair and unbiased to the parties.
- **Rituals** – Religious (or solemn) ceremonies made up of a series or set of prescribed actions.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain the context of Abraham's worship with regard to altars.
2. Desire the spiritual maturity that develops through acknowledging God's activity in our lives.
3. Practice a worshipful response in recognition of God's presence and activity in the threshold moments in their lives.

Teaching Strategies

The strategies below will reinforce the key principles in the lesson.

1. Share stories of property disputes that resulted in bringing families closer (or not). What was most helpful, or disruptive, to the families in settling the dispute? Compare these stories with how Abraham approached the dispute with Lot.
2. Review the covenant with Abraham and identify the threats to God's promises to Abraham. What does this experience tell us about how God's promises may be fulfilled in our lives?
3. Review the history of altars in the Middle East and their meanings for worship. See britannica.com/topic/altar.
4. Consider the meaning of altars in your church's faith tradition. When has the altar held importance in your memory of a particular event (baptism, marriage, conversion, etc.)?
5. Ask the class to comment on the reverence people attached to the altar in previous generations. Compare that level of respect for the altar to what we see in churches today.

Resources: Preparation for this lesson is easy. Wikipedia has an excellent write-up on the history of altars and how people regard them in various religions. You can use that information (or similar) to compare and contrast the structure and use of altars in our churches with those in other branches of Christianity and other religions.

LFS: Lesson 2 — September 8, 2024

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

Lesson Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-53

Focus Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-24, 37-39, 46, 48-50a (end with “committed against you”)

Key Verses: “Whatever prayer, whatever plea there is from any individual or from all your people Israel, all knowing the sufferings of their own hearts so that they stretch out their hands toward this house; then hear in heaven your dwelling place.” 1 Kings 8:38-39a

Key Terms

- **Covenant** – An agreement between parties with duties and benefits for each party.
- **Pestilences** – Epidemic (pandemic) outbreak of fatal diseases.
- **Exiles** – People barred/prevented from returning to their own country.
- **Petition** – A serious appeal to a higher authority for relief or favor in a matter.
- **Judaism** – The religion of the native Hebrews characterized by Old Testament laws.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the structure and movement of Solomon’s prayer at the temple dedication.
2. Find confidence in God’s presence in favorable and unfavorable life circumstances.
3. Identify a past time of God’s faithfulness as an assurance of God’s

continuing favor.

Teaching Strategies

Use the strategies below to reinforce the key points in the lesson.

1. Offer an architectural or archaeological analysis of a drawing or blueprint for Solomon's Temple. Discuss with the class how the structure of the temple reflected its intended use.
2. Invite the class to identify and comment on the structure and key themes in Solomon's prayer of dedication. To what extent is this structure and themes still relevant today?
3. Using index cards, ask learners to paraphrase the seven petitions and discuss how the paraphrases deepen a connection to Solomon's worship experience. You may see overlaps with the preceding exercise. However, note that the aim here is to encourage the participants to express the petitions in their own words which helps them to own the petitions.
4. Invite learners to identify past events (whether good or bad) that proved God's faithfulness to them, and which now assures them of the Lord's faithfulness in the future.
5. Discuss the purpose of confessing sin during the worship service. In this discussion, address why people may be reluctant to participate in public confessions.

Resources: For this lesson, it may be useful to read "The Order for the Dedication of a Church" in *The Liturgy of the AME Church*. Try to identify the focus of the dedication and compare it with themes addressed in Solomon's dedication prayer. Let this guide you in identifying which features are timeless and which features are cultural.

LFS: Lesson 3 — September 15, 2024

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 19:1-34

Focus Scripture: 2 Kings 19:14-20, 29-31

Key Verse: “So now, O Lord our God, save us, I pray you, from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.” 2 Kings 19:19

Key Terms

- **Worldview** – Mental image or concept of a person, thing, or event which influences how we see events involving that person or thing.
- **Intermediary** – A person or process which acts as a link (go-between) between two or more parties.
- **Profile** – Literally, a person's face especially from a side view. Figuratively, a mental image of a person, thing, or event that represents that person, thing, or event.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish Hezekiah's response to God from that of other Old Testament kings.
2. Value prayer in the face of a crisis.
3. Journal, email, or text as a form of worshipful, reverent, honest prayer at a time of crisis.

Teaching Strategies

Reinforce key aspects of the lesson with these strategies.

1. Review the events that led up to Hezekiah's prayer. The preceding chapter (chapter 18) sets the background. Do you see anything in

Hezekiah's character that explains why he managed the threat in the way he did?

2. There is a saying that prayer changes things and this idea suggests that we motivate God to action through our prayers. Does prayer bring God in line with our desires or does prayer put us in line with God's will? What Bible references can we find to support our position on this matter?
3. Invite the class to share occasions when they faced serious threats and how they dealt with the situation. What role, if any, did prayer play in their responses?
4. Without a doubt, when faced with challenging situations we assess the physical and economic (money) resources we have available to meet the looming challenge. Discuss whether this is the right way for a believer to gauge his or her capacity to meet a challenge. How much weight should we give to spiritual resources?
5. Give a brief presentation on the development of Israel's view of Yahweh, from a regional deity akin to the gods of neighboring peoples to the cosmic perspective, "You are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth" (v. 15). On what was the cosmic perspective based?

Resources: A useful and readily available resource on Hezekiah's prayer is "What can we learn from King Hezekiah's Prayer (2 Kings 19:14-19)?" on <https://endofthematter.com/>. This article takes us through the dynamics and power of prayer and why Hezekiah would have received God's favorable response.

LFS: Lesson 4 — September 22, 2024

JOSIAH CELEBRATES PASSOVER

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34:1–35:19

Focus Scripture: 2 Chronicles 35:1-6, 16-19

Key Verse: Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem; they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2 Chronicles 35:1

Key Terms

- **Seder Meal** – The traditional meal the Jews eat at Passover.
- **Emulate** – To copy or imitate.
- **Ghana** – A country in West Africa
- **Atrocities** – Extremely wicked and cruel acts.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate Josiah's renewal of the Passover observance in terms of significance for Israel's ongoing relationship with God.
2. Notice interior distractions that compromise obedience to God.
3. Create a plan to renew/revitalize neglected spiritual practices.

Teaching Strategies

Use these exercises for reinforcement.

1. Compare the renewals of the Passover celebration under Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30:1-26) and Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:1-19). List the distractions and sinful practices that made renewal necessary. Then suggest parallels from our lives that can compromise our obedience.
2. Review the reason for the Passover's institution in the Exodus

from Egypt. Then compare the two accounts of Josiah's Passover celebration (here and in 2 Kings 23) to evaluate his attempt at renewing the observance of this ritual among God's people. Ask the class to comment on what stands out to them.

3. Contrast two approaches to the Passover. First, look at the early simple family feast. Then review Josiah's centralized religious festival, which was to become the central feast of the year. How did both approaches contribute to helping the people remember God's covenant?
4. Invite a costumed actor to portray Josiah and offer a monologue imagining his emotional response to the recovery of Passover. In doing this, remember Josiah was reviving a ritual he considered central to the people's relationship with God. There must be passion in the enactment.
5. List spiritual rituals and practices that tend to get neglected or overlooked today. Choose one and plan a group celebration to revitalize it.

Resources: To get into the intricacies of the Passover celebrations consider the article "What Is Passover (Pesach)?" at https://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/871715/jewish/What-Is-Passover-Pesach.htm.

You can use interesting aspects from the article as part of your introduction by asking the question, "Do you know...?"

LFS: Lesson 5 — September 29, 2024

MOSES AND MIRIAM LEAD THE PEOPLE IN PRAISE

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 14:21-31; 15:1-21

Focus Scripture: Exodus 15:1-3, 11-13, 17-18, 20-21

Key Verse: The prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. Exodus 15:20

Key Terms

- **Zealot** – A person who demands strict obeying of principles or teachings.
- **Bondage** – Enslavement of any kind (physical, economic, social).
- **Indomitable** – Cannot be controlled or defeated.
- **Stratification** – Putting people in social classes.
- **Transcends** – To rise above normal limits.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Trace the historical elements within Moses' and Miriam's celebratory songs of praise.
2. Keep faith whether facing a difficult situation or celebrating a victory.
3. Create a timeline noting God's answers to prayer across the history of the local church.

Teaching Strategies

1. Edwin Hawkins's song "Oh Happy Day" depicts the celebration people feel when they appreciate the crossing over from the death

of sin to life in Christ. Invite the class to give scenes of “Happy Days.”

2. In their songs, both Moses and Miriam seem to glory in the drowning of the Egyptians. Discuss with the class how those actions seem to conflict with the advice in Proverbs 24:17: *Do not rejoice when your enemy falls.*
3. Some people have concerns about the appropriateness of certain modes of celebrating in the church. Discuss when and how dancing, drumming, singing, laughing, and smiling may be appropriate in the church, and when they may be offensive. To what extent should the “worldly way” of dancing and singing influence our acts of celebrating in corporate praise and worship?
4. Ask a learner to teach a simple dance to the group. Imagine Miriam’s celebration of joy in today’s culture.
5. As a follow-up to the movie mentioned under **Resources**, or as an alternative, review the video “Overview: Exodus 1 – 19” at bibleproject.com and set today’s text in its literary/historical context.
6. Create a timeline noting God’s answers to prayer across your local church’s history and how the church celebrated God’s responses.
7. Name women in leadership roles and the reasons they command respect.

Resources: For a great visual account of the Red Sea crossing, we recommend a quick view of Cecil B. DeMille’s *The Ten Commandments*. It is not necessary to watch the entire movie. You can focus on the scenes just before and after the Red Sea crossing.

As you watch this reenactment, try to feel the emotions of fear that gripped God's people as they saw only a choice of drowning in the sea or a cruel slaughtering by the Egyptians. Then contrast that with the relief the Israelites felt standing safely on the other side of the sea watching the Egyptians drown.

LFS: Lesson 6 — October 6, 2024

PRAYERS OF REPENTANCE AND CONFESSiON

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 11

Focus Scripture: Psalm 51:1-4,10-12, 15-17

Key Verse: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

Key Terms

- **Extrapolate** – Extend to a conclusion; extend to apply.
- **Propensity** – A natural tendency to behave in a certain way.
- **Predisposes** – Inclined to a particular attitude (or disposition).
- **Restitution** – Returning to its rightful owner a thing taken/stolen.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Interpret Psalm 51 through the lens of King David's experience of repentance and forgiveness.
2. Confess personal and corporate sins that require repentance.
3. Adapt David's psalm as a personal model of repentance.

Teaching Strategies

1. Invite the learners to tell a story of their experience of asking for and/or receiving forgiveness. Do not push anyone to give embarrassing details. But ask them to share why receiving forgiveness was important to them.
2. Then flip the script. Ask participants to give instances where they

granted or withheld forgiveness. Invite them to give the motivation behind their actions.

3. The Bible teaches that for God there is only one unforgivable sin. Discuss with the class whether it is the same for people. Are there offenses for which people will offer no forgiveness, even if they are Christians?
4. Review the hymnal for versions of Psalm 51 and other hymns about forgiveness, such as “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy.” Examine the lyrics in the hymns and note how they express the confession and repentance of David.
5. Consider the notion that David’s sin broke down the protection that God offered Jerusalem. Discuss with the class if and how our sins can damage God’s protection for our families and/or our communities.

Resources: For a more in-depth look at Psalm 51 consider the commentary at the website *Explaining the Book* (<http://explainingthebook.com>). The opening commentary sets the explanation of the verses in this neat context: “The Bible tells us that sin is deceitful. And with its deception, it can harden us. But every once in a while – or hopefully sooner than that – God breaks in on our lives and helps us recognize the gravity of our sin.” – A good summation of our struggle with sin and God’s intervention.

LFS: Lesson 7 — October 13, 2024

A PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 22; Daniel 3

Focus Scripture: Psalm 22:1-11

Key Verse: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? Psalm 22:1

Key Terms

- **Propensity** – An often intense inclination or preference.
- **Intrigue** – Something that stirs curiosity or mystery.
- **Skeptics** – People who doubt; disbelievers.
- **Assimilate** – To merge in or blend into a situation.
- **Harassment** – Applying pressure or fear to force compliance/acceptance.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Draw parallels between the psalmist's experience and what is happening in the world today.
2. Rely on the Lord's help in times of struggle.
3. Identify an area of struggle and offer a prayer for God's help or rescue.

Teaching Strategies

Use the below exercises to reinforce the key points of the lesson.

1. Compare the language of suffering in the psalm with David's travails when he was fleeing from Saul (1 Samuel 19–30) or Absalom (2 Samuel 15–17). In each case concentrate on the

intensity of the suffering and despair. What conclusion about David's love for God can you draw from these accounts?

2. Make a case for David affirming God as the "Holy One" while experiencing the anguish of suffering. Note that this notion runs counter to a widely held belief that the goodness of God is seen only in times of "blessings" and "prosperity" when pleasing things are happening.
3. Discuss the significance of recalling God's past deliverances during a tragedy. Is there merit in the saying, "If he did it before, he can do it again"?
4. Name ways people suffer as they protest racial inequality, climate, and economic disparities. On what issues do we fail to courageously confront our society?
5. Sing this hymn based on Psalm 22, "All Ye That Fear Jehovah's Name." Reflect on how the lyrics encourage us as believers to proclaim God's praises and assure us of his deliverance in times of trouble. Consider how well the lyrics reflect the sentiments in the Psalm.

Resources: On Psalm 22, Martin Luther said the following: "This is a kind of gem among the Psalms and is peculiarly excellent and remarkable. It contains those deep, sublime, and heavy sufferings of Christ, when agonizing in the midst of the terrors and pangs of divine wrath and death which surpass all human thought and comprehension" (Martin Luther, cited in Charles Spurgeon). Try to grasp the heavy despair David communicated in the Psalm. The Matthew Henry commentary may be useful in this regard.

LFS: Lesson 8 — October 20, 2024

PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 25; Daniel 6:10-28

Focus Scripture: Isaiah 25:1-10a

Key Verse: On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. Isaiah 25:6.

Key Terms

- **Sway** – Gentle or subtle influence.
- **Breach** – Breaking or failure to observe standards or laws.
- **Personified** – Represented by human characteristics.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Connect Isaiah's historical context to his specific assurances of God's faithfulness.
2. Remain hopeful in God's future deliverance based on God's past actions.
3. Write a personal testimony to God's faithfulness.

Teaching Strategies

The following exercises will help to achieve the lesson goals:

1. Write a personal testimony or song of thanksgiving to God's faithfulness. In keeping with the tone of the text, highlight the size of the threat, and the glorious nature of the relief or deliverance for which you are grateful.
2. Discuss the topic, "The world suffers because people refuse to look to God." How are you encouraged knowing that all nations will worship ("fear") God (v. 3) one day? Invite the class to share what

this prophecy means to their faith.

3. Feasts have special significance in scripture. Compare Isaiah 25's feast with Psalm 23 (a banquet in the presence of enemies) and Matthew 22 (the wedding banquet). Ask the class to identify common features about the people who participate in those feasts.
4. The idea of God's defeat of death we should not restrict only to the afterlife and end-times. Discuss the idea as it relates to the removal of the "shroud" that covers us and the fear and pain that get in the way of God's promised abundant life. This type of application moves the concept of liberation from death into all facets of life: social, political, economic, and spiritual.

Resources: A wonderful way to prepare for this lesson is to read the related scriptures and commentaries on the *Great Tribulation* and the *New Heaven and Earth* in Revelation. Note that God's great judgment which the prophets saw was not a vengeful act. It was a natural outflow of God's faithfulness, and it was just. Further, the judgment cleared the way for the ushering in of the glorious reign of God. Be prepared to answer queries on why the loving God must be so cruel in judgment.

LFS: Lesson 9 — October 27, 2024

TRUST IN GOD ALONE

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 62

Focus Scripture: Psalm 62:1-12

Key Verse: For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. Psalm 62:5

Key Terms

- **Paradoxically** – Referring to a statement or situation which links two competing ideas.
- **Purists** – People who insist on absolute obedience or application to a law or standard.
- **Neuroscientific** – Science or studies relating to the brain and nervous system.
- **Neurobiology** – The biology (make-up and function) of the nervous system.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Review the role of stillness and silence in defining Israel's relationship with Yahweh.
2. Experience the calm that comes from knowing God as a source of peace and protection.
3. Recall an experience where turning to God in silence brought greater peace than turning to alternative sources of solitude.

Teaching Strategies

These exercises will help the class to reach the lesson goals stated above.

1. In Psalm 62 the writer hinted at major societal evils that we still

see today: assaults, lies, cursing, hypocrisy, materialism, meanness, and people trying to topple one another. Discuss how waiting on the Lord can help to address these ills.

2. Research how stillness and silence reflect Israel's relationship to Yahweh. Note that it is in silence that believers show proper respect for and attention to learn God's will and purpose. Stillness echoes the Sabbath rest, which witnesses to Israel's dependence on God rather than on human strength and endeavor. Exodus 14:14 and Psalm 46:10 are great references for this exercise.
3. Invite the class to reflect on the significance of escaping the modern world's noise. Prompt them to name times when they sought silence and let them describe the experience.
4. Locate the chant version of Psalm 62 by Robert Batastini. For this, you can use https://hymnary.org/tune/rest_in_god_alone_rest_in_god_batastini. Select a leader and ask the leader to sing the verses while the group sings the refrain. Discuss how the music captures the mood of the psalm.

Resources: Prepare for this teaching by getting a firm grip on the concept of waiting on the Lord. Bible Study Tools (www.biblestudytools.com) has an interesting article, "What Does 'Wait on the Lord' Mean?" It is a useful read.

LFS: Lesson 10 — November 3, 2024

CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S SHEPHERDING

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 23; John 10:11-14

Focus Scripture: Psalm 23

Key Verse: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days

of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. Psalm 23:6

Key Terms

- **Metaphor** – A figure of speech where a thing or action represents another thing.
- **Depiction** – A graphic representation of something; to paint a verbal picture.
- **Hermeneutics** – The study of the principles of interpretation (of Bible text).
- **Existential** – Matters about (human) existence.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Apply the attributes of a shepherd to God's care for them in 2024.
2. Adopt the psalmist's sense of security in knowing God as a shepherd.
3. Create a scenario in which you could experience God's "leading beside still waters" and "restoring my soul."

Teaching Strategies

Use the below exercises/strategies to reinforce the key points of the lesson.

1. Because we are so familiar with Psalm 23, our reference to it can be casual and bland. Read and sing hymn versions of Psalm 23. Pay close attention to the picture it paints and comment on the emotional connections to the psalm and the hymn settings.
2. Prepare a presentation on the ancient practice of sheepherding and the reasons why it serves as a compelling metaphor for the covenant relationship between God and God's people. Invite the class to comment on the age-old notion that kings were the

shepherds of their people. What factors would help to distinguish good kings from bad kings?

3. Discuss how the metaphors of a shepherd, travel companion, and host brighten the character of God. Consider how the metaphors address human conditions and the need for guidance. Further, consider how we get such guidance today.
4. Invite the class to discuss why and in what respects our souls may need restoring, and what steps we can take to do this restoration. Can we restore our souls by ourselves?
5. Connect God's words to Moses in Exodus 3 ("Say to the Israelites, 'I Am' has sent me to you.") to Jesus' use of the Greek phrase *Ego eimi*, "I am." What is the theological significance of Jesus' use of the words?

Resources: To get a good look at the shepherd in Bible times read "Shepherd life; the care of sheep and goats" from the website *Excerpts from Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* by Fred H. Wight ([//www.ancient-hebrew.org/manners/shepherd-life-the-care-of-sheep-and-goats.htm](http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/manners/shepherd-life-the-care-of-sheep-and-goats.htm)). Relate the duties of the shepherd from the article to the care we desire from God.

LFS: Lesson 11 — November 10, 2024

SONGS OF PRAISE

Lesson Scripture: Psalms 146–150

Focus Scripture: Psalms 146, 150

Key Verse: I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long. Psalm 146:2

Key Terms

- **Spontaneous** – From a sudden inner or natural impulse or urging.
- **Indiscriminately** – Not showing regard for people's (status) or circumstances.
- **Intrigue** – Secretive (deceptive) plans and actions.
- **Frequency** – How often something occurs.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Validate the virtues or character qualities the psalmist ascribes to God.
2. Identify with the psalmist's sense of God's personal care and concern for all God has created.
3. Name the ways that God's care for them is reflected in those who give spiritual leadership in their congregation.

Teaching Strategies

The following exercises will help us to reach the goals stated above.

1. To put the set Psalms (146-150) in their literary and historical context, watch “How to Read the Bible: The Book of Psalms” at

bibleproject.com. Use this historical context to understand the framing of the Psalms and the images they convey.

2. List the virtues or qualities Psalms 146 and 150 ascribe to God. Research and link the qualities with familiar stories in the Old Testament. Also, consider how we relate to these qualities today.
3. As believers, our ultimate allegiance we reserve for God. With this in mind, discuss the tension between Psalm 146:3-4's warning against giving our ultimate allegiance to any human or institution, and the concept of allegiance to political parties or countries which nationalist politicians advocate. In the discussion, include the tension between serving God and Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22).
4. Describe the psalmist's sense of God's personal care and concern for all God has created.
5. Invite the class to discuss ways people express this care in their church's worship and outreach ministries. Give careful focus to the ways that your congregation reflects God's care for the poor. Further, consider in what ways does your church praise God for calling you to do justice in a world of inequality, oppression, and suffering?
6. Search your church's hymnbook for hymns based on Psalms 146 and 150. Invite the class to sing these. Then using them as guides, prompt the class to give praises to God in their own expressions.

Resources: To prepare for this lesson get familiar with the different Hebrew words for *praise* and their significance: *Yadar*, *Halal*, *Zamar*, *Barak*, and *Shabach*. The one we are most familiar with is *Halal* which literally means to go foolish over God. That is the praise the psalmist is referring to in the set text.

LFS: Lesson 12 — November 17, 2024

A SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 100

Focus Scripture: Psalm 100

Key Verse: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name. Psalm 100:4

Key Terms

- **Zambia** – A country in southern Africa with a population of around 19 million people.
- **Inauguration** – The official start of the authority of an official or administration.
- **Linguistic** – Relating to language (the features of a language).

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Validate the psalmist's reasons for grateful praise.
2. Personalize God's care for them based on God's acts of faithfulness in Israel's salvation history.
3. Interpret a song or hymn of thanksgiving that celebrates God's faithfulness.

Teaching Strategies

These exercises will assist your efforts in teaching the lesson effectively.

1. Take a good look at what happens during your church worship services. Consider the emotions associated with the worship depicted in Psalm 100. Consider to what extent you see in your church services the emotions associated with the Psalm. Do you

see people entering the presence of God with dynamic praise, singing, gladness, and devotion?

2. Prompt the learners to share things or experiences for which they are thankful. Using those things and experiences as the focus, encourage them to draft hymns, songs, or Psalms to thank God.
3. Lead the class in analyzing the Psalm. Ask them to identify its three calls, three affirmations, three invitations, and three assertions. Do they attach any significance to these sets of three?
4. Invite people who are willing to share any personal story of liberation or justice. Ask the participants to point out how the story demonstrates God's care for them. What elements in the story do they associate with God's faithfulness and steadfast love?
5. Note the connection between creation (v. 3) and the temple (v. 4) in the Psalm. Watch "Temple" at bibleproject.com to gain a broad understanding of this connection.

Resources: To get a good familiarity with the mystique surrounding the *hallelujah* praise see the full *Los Angeles Times* article mentioned in the **Case Study** session of the lesson. Go to the class with an understanding of what makes "The Hallelujah Praise" special.

LFS: Lesson 13 — November 24, 2024

GOD'S PROMISED PRESENCE

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 139

Focus Scripture: Psalm 139:1-12

Key Verse: O Lord, you have searched me and known me. Psalm 139:1

Key Terms

- **Omniscience** – The divine trait of knowing all things; perfect (complete) always.
- **Attested** – Serves as clear evidence.
- **Consecutive** – Following one after the other.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Compare the psalmist's conviction that God knows persons intimately with their own experience of God.
2. Nurture a confident awareness of being known and valued by God.
3. Design a practice of gratitude that could cultivate an intimate and trusting relationship with God.

Teaching Strategies

The following exercises help to achieve the lesson goals.

1. As humans we yearn to receive love and acceptance from others. With this in mind, invite the learners to name someone who has loved and accepted them just as they were. How is this like the way the Psalm talks about God knowing and loving us?
2. Present a word study of the Hebrew verb *yadá*, “to know.”

Uncover the various dimensions of the meaning of the word. Does this study broaden your understanding of the word?

3. Invite learners to compare their individual experiences with God with the psalmist's conviction that God knows persons intimately and cares for them accordingly. Quiz those who shared in this exercise. Based on their experiences, can they agree with the psalmist's assertions?
4. Discuss with the class the idea that every person is fearfully and wonderfully made by God. For those who agree, ask them to explain how they see this in themselves and the people around them. By extension, probe from where people get their idea of beauty (wonderfulness).
5. Discuss with the class this notion. If God has already examined us and knows us (v. 1), why should we still ask God to examine and know us again (v. 23)?

Resources: This lesson swings heavily on the omniscience of God and its implications. Therefore, read all you can on that subject and its implications. One article you may find useful is "What Does It Mean That God Is Omnisicent?" at <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/god/all-knowing-god.html> on christianity.com.

The Teacher's Guide - SR: Lesson 1 – September 1, 2024

Senior Student Lessons

Fall Quarter: September – November 2024

Prepared by Rev. Faith Waters

ABRAM BUILDS AN ALTAR AT MAMRE

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 12–13

Focus Scripture: Genesis 13:8-18

Key Verse: So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. Genesis 13:18

Words to Know

- **Strife** – Contention, quarreling.
- **Kindred** – The family to which one belongs.
- **Breadth** – The distance or measurement from side to side of something; width.
- **Altar** – The central place of worship, such as a table, stones, or a mount, on which a sacrifice was made to God.
- **Zoar** – Pronounced: ZO - er.
- **Sodom** – Pronounced: SAH - duhm.
- **Gomorrah** – Pronounced: guh - MAWR - uh.
- **Mamre** – Pronounced: MAM - ree.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explore Abram's practice of building altars to worship God.
2. Preserve personal God moments by creating reminders.

3. Designate a sacred space to commune with and offer thanks to God.

Teaching Strategies

1. God's people used altars to offer sacrifices, to commune with God, and to commemorate special encounters with God. Altars consisted of rough stones and dirt. They remained in place for many years so other Israelites could be reminded of God's protection and promises.
2. Abram traveled to Egypt during the famine because it had an abundance of food and good land for his flocks.
3. Abram, Sarai, and Lot traveled from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan by way of Haran. They followed the rivers to avoid crossing the desert. Have the class trace their trip on a map.
4. Lot took the best share of the land even though it meant living near Sodom, a city known for its sin.
5. Be sensitive towards those who have had altars in their homes that were not set aside for worshipping God.
6. Be sensitive towards those who have experienced trauma and abuse. They may not have positive memories.
7. It is Labor Day weekend in the U.S.

Resources: Paper, map

SR: Lesson 2 — September 8, 2024

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

Lesson Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-53

Focus Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-24, 37-39, 46, 48-50a (end with “committed against you”)

Key Verses: “Whatever prayer, whatever plea there is from any individual or from all your people Israel, all knowing the suffering of their own hearts so that they stretch out their hands toward this house; then hear in heaven your dwelling place.” 1 Kings 8:38-39a

Words to Know

- **Covenant** – An agreement between two parties, such as God and Abram.
- **Steadfast** – Dutifully firm and unwavering.
- **Besiege** – To surround with armed forces to compel surrender.
- **Altar** – The central place of worship, such as a table, stones, or a mount, on which a sacrifice was made to God.
- **Render** – To give, impart, restore.
- **Repent** – Feel sorry for the sins you have committed and regret doing them.
- **Transgressions** – Sins.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the daily need to grow in a closer relationship with God.
2. Desire to build more Christlike qualities.
3. Incorporate daily spiritual disciplines that will lead to a transformed

life with God.

Teaching Strategies

1. Explain to the class the key elements of prayer.
2. Discuss other methods of spiritually growing besides prayer (personal retreats; Bible study (individual and corporate); community service; journaling; fasting; etc.).
3. Allow time for the class to witness about God's promises being fulfilled in their lives.
4. Examine Psalm 51 as a model prayer of confession and repentance.
5. Plan a prayer walk with the class one day after worship service and invite others to join the group. Pray for neighbors; schools; police; government officials; hospitals; the elderly; businesses; etc.
6. Be considerate towards individuals who find it difficult to forgive those who have caused them harm.
7. The normal position for public prayer was to stand and to stretch out the hands (1 Kings 8:22; Psalm 134:2; 1 Timothy 2:8). Solomon also kneeled, facing the altar before standing to bless the people (1 Kings 8:54-55).
8. The temple has been built, and the ark of the covenant placed in the Holy of Holies ("inner sanctuary," v. 6). "A cloud filled the house of the Lord" (v. 10), a sign of God's presence (v. 11). Solomon prays, praising God for covenant faithfulness through the Mosaic covenant (Deuteronomy 4:39; 7:9) and connecting it to the dynastic promise given to David (2 Samuel 7:11b-16).

SR: Lesson 3 — September 15, 2024

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 19:1-34

Focus Scripture: 2 Kings 19:14-20, 29-31

Key Verse: So now, O Lord our God, save us, I pray you, from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone. 2 Kings 19:19

Words to Know

- **Enthroned** – To install a monarch on a throne during a ceremony to mark the beginning of their rule.
- **Cherubim** – Flying creatures which seem to have been used as guards in the Old Testament.
- **Remnant** – Those left in Judah who will participate in the future unfolding of God's redemptive program.
- **Hezekiah** – Pronounced: heh - zeh - KAI - uh.
- **Sennacherib** – Pronounced: se - NAK - er - ihb.
- **Assyria** – Pronounced: a - SIHR - ee - uh.
- **Amoz** – Pronounced: AY - muhz.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Examine Hezekiah's response to the threats he received.
2. Appreciate the hope that prayer gives Christians.
3. Seek comfort and support from trustworthy sources.

Teaching Strategies

1. In preparation for class, gather resources to give to those who need professional help.

2. Reinforce the necessity for regular prayer and support.
3. After Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, cherubim were placed as guards of the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:24). Golden cherubim faced each other in a kneeling position in the Holy of Holies. They symbolized Jehovah's presence amid the people (Exo. 25:18-20; 37:7-9). They were fifteen feet high and were overlaid with gold in the Solomonic temple (1 Kgs. 6:22-28).
4. In his prayer, and probably facing the ark of the covenant (the throne of God), Hezekiah models the type of kingship that the Lord intended for his people, namely, as vice-regent for Yahweh, the true king. Hezekiah appeals to Yahweh to deliver Jerusalem so that Yahweh's glory will be seen among the nations (1 Kings 8:42; 1 Samuel 17:46), which was Yahweh's purpose in establishing Israel (2 Samuel 7:23; Psalm 67:1-2; cf. Isaiah 26:18). Hezekiah reminds Yahweh of that purpose. Earlier, in Exodus 32, Moses persuades Yahweh to forgo destroying Israel using a similar tactic.
5. Yahweh responds to Hezekiah's prayer through the prophet Isaiah, who announces the certain defeat of the Assyrian army and restoration of the land of Judah.
6. Discuss the elements of prayer contained in Hezekiah's prayer.

SR: Lesson 4 — September 22, 2024

JOSIAH CELEBRATES PASSOVER

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34:1–35:19

Focus Scripture: 2 Chronicles 35:1-6, 16-19

Key Verse: Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem; they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2 Chronicles 35:1

Words to Know

- **Passover** – A festival that commemorates the passing over or sparing of the Hebrews in Egypt when God killed all the firstborn of the Egyptians.
- **Priests** – A representative order of the people to God, who offered prayers, thanksgivings, and sacrifices.
- **Holy** – Sacred, set apart for the worship of God.
- **Ancestral** – Belonging to, inherited from, or signifying an ancestor or ancestors.
- **Sanctify** – To dedicate, purify, make holy.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate Josiah's renewal of the Passover observance in terms of significance for Israel's commitment and relationship with God.
2. Obey God's commands and always keep spiritual commitments.
3. Create a plan to initiate new commitments and renew neglected spiritual commitments.

Teaching Strategies

1. Bake or purchase unleavened bread (Matzo) to share with the

class. Some in the class may be allergic or sensitive to certain foods.

2. With the permission and leadership of the pastor, re-create the Passover feast. Purchase food and drinks to celebrate with the class. Some in the class may be allergic or sensitive to certain foods.
3. Discuss the traditional celebrations of the AME Church and how they connect us with the rich history of the church.
4. Discuss family traditions that are still important today and for future generations.
5. Both accounts of Josiah's reign (2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34:1–35:19) deal with three different aspects of his reform: (1) the removal of foreign religions (Kings depicts it in great detail, while Chronicles summarizes it); (2) the discovery of the Book of the Law and the covenant renewal that followed (the two histories are quite similar); and (3) the celebration of Passover (the account is greatly expanded in 2 Chronicles 35:1-19, while only alluded to in 2 Kings 23:21-23).
6. The powerful in society, the king, his leaders, and particularly powerful Levites (2 Chronicles 35:7-9) provided the thousands of animals necessary for the sacrifice and feast. The peasants ate from the bounty of the king and the temple.

Resources: Unleavened bread (Matzo), Passover food and drinks

SR: Lesson 5 — September 29, 2024

MOSES AND MIRIAM LEAD THE PEOPLE IN PRAISE

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 14:21-31; 15:1-21

Focus Scripture: Exodus 15:1-3, 11-13, 17-18, 20-21

Key Verse: The prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. Exodus 15:20

Words to Know

- **Exalt** – To think or speak very highly of God.
- **Majesty** – The stateliness and dignity of God; the greatness of God.
- **Congealed** – To come together to produce a result.
- **Splendor** – A magnificent appearance.
- **Reign** – To rule as king or queen.
- **Gloriously** – Honorable, exalted.

Unit 2, Songs of the Old Testament, looks at various songs Israel used in worship and prayer. While we may not know the melody of their songs, we can get a sense of the mood embedded in the lyrics and what they felt in the presence of God's power and goodness. Lesson 5 notes the deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh at the Red Sea, and the song Miriam led in response. Lesson 6 considers Psalm 51, usually regarded as David's prayer of confession following his adultery with Bathsheba and the slaying of her husband Uriah in battle; children hear the background story of the death of Uriah. In Lesson 7, a plea for deliverance is considered through Psalm 22. At the same time, children study the rescue of Daniel's friends at a time when they might have prayed this psalm. Lesson 8 takes us to the first part of Isaiah 25, a song of praise for deliverance from

oppression; children hear about Daniel's miraculous rescue from a den of lions. The final session of the unit (Lesson 9) looks at Psalm 62, a song of trust in God.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify the elements of celebration within Moses' and Miriam's songs of praise.
2. Celebrate God's marvelous works as an act of worship.
3. Create a litany or prayer of praise for personal and corporate worship.

Teaching Strategies

1. View the video on the *Bible Project* about Exodus as a foundation for the lesson and in preparation for the class.
2. Be sensitive towards those who do not believe the parting of the Red Sea occurred. It may take time for some to grow in their faith.
3. Compare and contrast two Christian songs. (One incorporates the Gospel, but the other may not mention God.) Discuss why we must be wise when listening to music.
4. Search online for tips to create musical instruments and then gather items. Some examples: <https://youtu.be/7sUNXA4NYKI?si=e5weanvVQ92QRaem> or https://youtu.be/M_M2xJC6WLk?si=BDOPeTQ0c7BHHhXM.
5. Miriam is the first woman in the Old Testament to be called a prophet. She is a spiritual and political leader for the children of Israel (Micah 6:4). God's deliverance upsets patriarchal norms.
6. Since tambourines were immediately available to them as they celebrated, the Hebrews likely crafted them in bondage. The many generations of oppression had not destroyed their creative

impulse, so the women danced, sang, and played their instruments to praise God for their deliverance.

Resources: Materials to make instruments, tambourines

SR: Lesson 6 — October 6, 2024

PRAYERS OF REPENTANCE AND CONFESSiON

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 11

Focus Scripture: Psalm 51:1-4, 10-12, 15-17

Key Verse: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

Words to Know

- **Mercy** – Compassion or forgiveness shown by God toward sinners.
- **Steadfast Love** – A faithful devotion that is a reliable support.
- **Transgressions** – Any acts that violate God's commands.
- **Iniquity** – Immoral or grossly unfair behavior.
- **Hyssop** – A wild shrub whose twigs were used for sprinkling in ancient Jewish rites of purification, the leaves used for herbal medicine.
- **Contrite** – Feeling or expressing remorse.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that David's confession and repentance were acts of worship.
2. Adapt the words of the Psalms to personalize our confession and repentance.
3. Confess and repent of sins silently during corporate worship service.

Teaching Strategies

1. Discuss the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer that is an act of worship.
2. Discuss the grace and mercy of God.
3. Discuss Bishop Tutu's teachings on love and forgiveness after additional research.
4. Use *The AME Hymnal* to find two hymns based on the theme of forgiveness. Sing the hymns as class opens.
5. Be sensitive when teaching about “forgiveness” in situations where youth may have been abused or mistreated by a trusted adult or caregiver.
6. Hyssop, also known as marjoram, is a plant with leaves that can hold liquids. It was used to cleanse those who were ceremonially unclean by dipping the leaves in water and sprinkling the water over those who were unclean (Leviticus 14:4; Numbers 19:18). Bring a sample of hyssop to class if it is available in your local store.
7. The Holy Spirit fills the lives of believers (51:11; Numbers 27:18; Isaiah 63:10-11, 14; Micah 3:8; Haggai 2:5; Zechariah 7:12). David did not want God's Spirit to leave him the way it had left Saul (1 Samuel 16:14).
8. Sacrifice was to be accompanied by a repentant heart (51:17). God delights in proper sacrifices, those offered with a broken and contrite heart (51:19).

Resources: Hyssop

SR: Lesson 7 — October 13, 2024

A PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 22; Daniel 3

Focus Scripture: Psalm 22:1-11

Key Verse: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? Psalm 22:1

Words to Know

- **Forsaken** – To feel deserted, abandoned.
- **Holy** – Sacred, consecrated.
- **Shame** – A painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior.
- **Scorned** – To express ridicule or mockery towards another.
- **Despised** – To make someone feel worthless, dishonored, pushed aside.
- **Delights** – Take pleasure.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that despite our hardship, we can still worship and trust God.
2. Be confident that God has the power to deliver us.
3. Testify of God's deliverance in the past and now.

Teaching Strategies

1. Discuss current issues surrounding racial equality, poverty, health disparities, etc. Ask the class: "Does Psalm 22 give us hope on these issues?"

2. Allow time for a discussion on ways to get support when enduring suffering.
3. Be sensitive towards those who may feel so despondent they may have suicidal thoughts. Have them speak with the pastor. Also in the U.S., there is a national suicide prevention number - #988. Provide the mental health phone number that offers help in your local area.
4. Refer to Daniel 3 for the video of God's ability to deliver and protect the three Hebrew men even when they were threatened with the possibility of death.
5. Psalm 22 expresses our ultimate anxiety – being abandoned by God (vs. 1-2, 11). Yet even when we blame God for our grief-stricken condition (vs. 6-9a), we ask God to rescue us and promise that “in the midst of the congregation I will praise you” (v. 22b).

Resources: Paper, poster board, colored markers

SR: Lesson 8 — October 20, 2024

PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 25; Daniel 6:10-28

Focus Scripture: Isaiah 25:1-10a

Key Verse: On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. Isaiah 25:6

Words to Know

- **Exalt** – To lift, to elevate God.
- **Glorify** – To magnify God.
- **Refuge** – A condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or trouble.
- **Subdued** – To be conquered.
- **Shroud** – To cover or envelop, to conceal from view.
- **Disgrace** – A loss of reputation or respect because of a dishonorable action.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Learn from Daniel and the prophet Isaiah about God's faithfulness and deliverance from evil.
2. Affirm in our hearts and minds that God is faithful and can deliver us.
3. Create a mime or praise dance to display our gratitude to God for our liberation and deliverance.

Teaching Strategies

1. If time is short, tell the class to view the video later and note if the

themes are similar to Isaiah 25. Discuss it next week before beginning the new lesson.

2. In Isaiah 24:1–25:12, God judges the earth and provides a great feast on Mount Zion for all peoples who recognize his lordship. Royalty and people of means sponsored banquets to honor victories and special occasions. The gods also did this, especially when one of them was enthroned. Though these banquets were for the gods, the people would join in the feasting when the enthronement was celebrated annually.
3. “All peoples” (in vs. 6-7) does not include everyone. Those who continue to defy God in their “pride” and “struggle” (v. 11; NIV “cleverness”) will not feel God’s hand of deliverance. Instead, they will “be brought down, laid low, cast to the ground, even to the dust” (v. 12).
4. Daniel 6:19-23 describes innocence by ordeal. “Ordeal” describes a legal situation in which the accused is placed in the hand of a god, using a mechanism that puts the accused in jeopardy. If the deity intervenes to protect the accused from harm, the verdict is innocent. Most trials by ordeal in the ancient Near East involved dangers such as water, fire, or poison. When the accused is exposed to these threats, they are assumed guilty until their god saves them. Daniel’s God saved him.

SR:Lesson 9 — October 27, 2024

TRUST IN GOD ALONE

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 62

Focus Scripture: Psalm 62

Key Verse: For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. Psalm 62:5

Words to Know

- **Fortress** – A large, fortified place, stronghold.
- **Assail** – To violently attack a person.
- **Tottering** – Feeble or unsteady; shaking or swaying.
- **Refuge** – A condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or trouble.
- **Delusion** – Strong beliefs in something that is not true.
- **Extortion** – The practice of obtaining money, through force or threats.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify why David urged trust in God alone.
2. Appreciate times of stillness and silence in God's presence.
3. Practice stillness and silence during times of distress.

Teaching Strategies

1. Let the class search on the Internet for a “fortress” and discuss its purpose.
2. Alternative Opening: Bring the Jenga game to class and set it up. Let the youth take turns until the blocks fall. Say, “If we build our lives upon wealth, power, and prestige, it will collapse just like this

game. Our lives must be built on faith in God, who is our rock, fortress, and salvation.”

3. Discuss how Psalm 62 captures the tone of our times – assaults, lies, cursing, hypocrisy, materialism, meanness, and everyone trying to topple someone else.
4. Discuss how a solid rock represents how strong God’s power is overall.
5. Silence shows proper respect and attention to learning God’s will and purpose. Stillness echoes the Sabbath rest, which witnesses Israel’s dependence on God rather than on human strength and endeavor (Exodus 14:14 and Psalm 46:10).
6. The psalm is composed of three parts (vs. 3-4, 5-8, 9-10), framed by a confession of finding rest in God (vs. 1-2) and the reason for such trust (vs. 11-12).
7. The phrase “waits in silence” (v. 1) translates a Hebrew word for motionless waiting, stillness. The stillness of the whole being (“soul”: *nephesh* refers to the human being in totality, mind, body, and spirit) indicates the psalmist’s trust and confidence (Exodus 14:14; Psalm 46:10). The psalmist’s confidence is bolstered by remembering God’s “power” and “steadfast love” (vs. 11-12). God’s deliverance is an act of love. The covenant God will reward those who trust in God; in this instance, reward equals being saved from enemies.

Resources: Jenga game, rock

SR: Lesson 10 — November 3, 2024

CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S SHEPHERDING

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 23; John 10:11-14

Focus Scripture: Psalm 23

Key Verse: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. Psalm 23:6

Words to Know

- **Shepherd** – One that herds and cares for a flock or flocks of sheep.
- **Comfort** – To give soothing solace or consolation.
- **Anoint** – To pour oil upon someone.
- **Mercy** – Compassion or forgiveness shown by God toward sinners.

In Unit 3, Psalms of Thanksgiving and Praise, the lessons look at four songs from the Hebrew psalter (fitting the U.S. calendar in its season of thanksgiving). In Lesson 10, we look at Psalm 23, supplemented with John's affirmation about Jesus as the good shepherd. Background for Lesson 11 is Psalms 146–150 with 146 and 150 the songs for emphasis. Lesson 12 examines Psalm 100, a summons to all people to praise God. The final session, Lesson 13, marks the beginning of Advent with a look at Psalm 139, a reminder of the intimate relationship God shares with humanity.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Compare the characteristics of a shepherd to God's care for us.
2. Recognize God is a trustworthy shepherd.
3. Fast and pray for guidance from God.

Teaching Strategies

1. November is the month in the U.S. that Thanksgiving is celebrated.
2. In preparation for class, view the video and take note of the points stressed by the speaker.
3. Explain the purpose of a rod and staff for the shepherd.
4. Sheep grazed on the lush grass produced by spring rains (23:2). In the summer and autumn, they fed on weeds and stubble left over from harvest. Like camels, sheep can go long periods without water and then drink as much as 2.5 gallons. Unlike goats, sheep are wholly dependent on the shepherd to find pasture and water for them. Shepherds also provided shelter, medication, and aid in birthing.
5. Discuss who the shepherd is in the local church. Ask, “Does the shepherd exhibit the characteristics of a good shepherd?”
6. Phrases such as “prepare a table” and “anoint my head with oil” indicate practices of hospitality. Offering food to an enemy would have established the right relationship between the host and the guest. Yahweh as shepherd-king extends protection to those who dine with him (2 Samuel 9:7; 2 Kings 25:27-30). Olive oil could be used to treat dry or cracked skin and would be offered to visitors. The psalmist is refreshed by entering God’s hospitable presence.
7. In John 10:1-18, God was Israel’s chief shepherd, which corresponds to John’s message about Jesus. Israel’s leaders are here associated with former leaders of Israel who were condemned as exploitive shepherds (Jeremiah 23:1-2; Ezekiel 34:2-6, 8). Because the human shepherds of Israel failed to care

for the sheep properly, God promised to shepherd the people (Ezekiel 34:11-17). The good shepherd lays down his life to protect the sheep, who often suffer at the hands of thieves, robbers, and wolves.

SR: Lesson 11 — November 10, 2024

SONGS OF PRAISE

Lesson Scripture: Psalms 146–150

Focus Scripture: Psalms 146; 150

Key Verse: I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long. Psalm 146:2

Words to Know

- **Praise** – To give thanks.
- **Hope** – The expectation and the desire for the thing expected.
- **Justice** – That which is right.
- **Firmament** – The pure expanse which envelops the earth.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

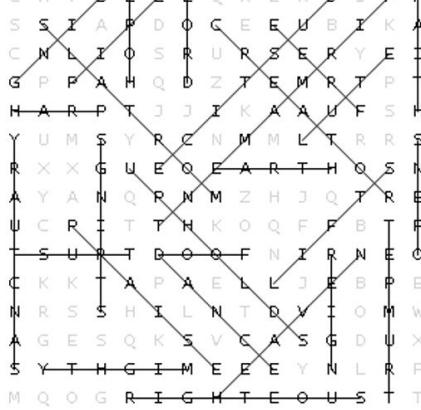
1. Define the character qualities the psalmist ascribes to God.
2. Feel in awe of God's character.
3. Replicate God's character through service to others.

Teaching Strategies

1. Be sensitive towards those who come from other faith communities where loudly praising God was not a part of worship.
2. Discuss developing a reverence of God and all things sacred.
3. Read Psalms 146 through 150 before class.
4. Some may be enduring a period of trials, so they do not feel like praising God.
5. One evidence of God's kingdom is to “(open) the eyes of the blind” (146:8). In Isaiah, the servant is instrumental in mediating this

blessing (Isaiah 42:7; cf. Isaiah 29:18; 35:5). Jesus draws attention to his healing of the blind as a sign that he is the servant representing God's kingdom (Matthew 11:5).

6. All the Psalms in this section (Psalms 146–150), each of which begins and ends with “Praise the Lord” – *hallelu* is the plural imperative of the verb *hallel* (“to praise”), and *jah* (or *yah*) is shorthand for the personal name of God: Yahweh – reiterate themes from the rest of the Psalter.
7. The Psalter concludes with a universal call to praise, an ideal woven throughout the book (2:10-12; 22:27; 33:8; 48:10; 67:3, 5, 7; 97:1; 98:4-9; 99:1-3; 100:1; 103:20-22; 113:3; 117:1, 2; 145:21; 148:1-14).
8. Answer to Word Search:



SR: Lesson 12 — November 17, 2024

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 100

Focus Scripture: Psalm 100

Key Verse: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name. Psalm 100:4

Words to Know

- **Worship** – Honor and respect shown to God.
- **Joyful** – Exceedingly glad.
- **Steadfast** – Firm and unwavering.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the necessity of expressing thanksgiving towards God.
2. Aspire to always give God praise and thanksgiving.
3. Sing a song that offers praise and thanksgiving to God.

Teaching Strategies

1. Psalm 100 is a joyful call to thanks and praise. It has two sections (vs. 1-3; 4-5), each giving a call to and a reason for praise. The Psalm celebrates the Lord's creation of his people (v. 3) and his care for his people (v. 5). Psalms 95 and 100 form a bracket around the sustained praise of the Lord as King (Psalms 96–99).
2. “Us” (v. 3) likely refers to God’s “people” and “sheep.” Yahweh brought forth the nation of Israel (95:6; 149:2; Deuteronomy 32:6, 15, 18); Israel belonged to the Lord. The imperative “know” signifies acknowledgment or confession. The people confess him

as their covenant Lord, their only true God. They also acknowledge their accountability to him and their privileged position. The Lord, in turn, cares for them as their shepherd (74:1; 79:13; 95:7; Jeremiah 23:1; Ezekiel 34:31).

3. The temple (100:4) featured a fenced, outer courtyard, which surrounded the tabernacle (Exodus 27:9-19). The tabernacle was a tent that consisted of two rooms, the “holy place” (an entry court) and the “most holy place,” where the ark (the footstool of God’s throne) was set (Exodus 25:10–22; 26:30–34). The more permanent temple built by Solomon followed this basic design, but it was integrated into a more massive citadel structure (1 Kings 6:1-38; cf. Solomon’s palace, 1 Kings 7:9-12). The temple was viewed as Yahweh’s palace. Its architecture featured walls, gates, and courtyards, as would the citadel or palace complex of any king. It replicated what could be found in the ancient world.
4. Be sensitive towards those who do not have material possessions and so it is hard to be thankful.
5. Use *The AMEC Hymnal* to search for praise songs to sing during personal devotions.

SR: Lesson 13 — November 24, 2024

GOD'S PROMISED PRESENCE

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 139

Focus Scripture: Psalm 139:1-12

Key Verse: O Lord, you have searched me and known me. Psalm 139:1

Words to Know

- **Discern** – To distinguish between; to perceive.
- **Acquainted** – To make known.
- **Sheol** – Translates to mean “hell,” a place of the dead.
- **Attain** – To reach or succeed.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe what it means to be intimately known by God.
2. Feel the love and acceptance of God.
3. Practice gratitude in daily living.

Teaching Strategies

1. This Sunday is the beginning of Advent. Advent is a season observed in most Christian denominations as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the nativity of Christ at Christmas and the return of Christ at the second coming. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year for the Christian faith. Every week a candle is lit representing a theme which is accompanied by scriptures and song. The weekly themes are: 1) Hope; 2) Peace; 3) Joy; 4) Love; and 5) Christ.
2. It was common in the ancient world to claim that gods and kings

knew everything, without limits. In Psalm 139, Yahweh's knowing is judicial; he is the judge who has all the information for judging the psalmist's case wisely and fairly.

3. "Where can I flee from your presence?" (v. 7) is reminiscent of the meditations of Job. It is a hymn of praise to the God who knows "me." Be attentive, however, to the fact that while the psalmist's relationship with God is profoundly personal, it is never private. The Psalms were always used in the community's worship, not individual worship.

Resources: Advent wreath, candles

The Teacher's Guide - INT: Lesson 1 - September 1, 2024

Fall Quarter: September–November 2024

Intermediate Lessons

Prepared by Dr. Kabrina Bass

ABRAHAM BUILDS AN ALTAR AT MAMRE

Leaders Set Examples for Others

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 12–13

Focus Scripture: Genesis 13:8-18

Key Verse: So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. Genesis 13:18

Vocabulary

- **Generosity** – The spirit of sharing or giving. Example: Abram's willingness to let Lot choose the land he desires.
- **Abram** – The central character of the passage, later known as Abraham, considered the patriarch of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- **Lot** – Abram's nephew, who accompanies him to Canaan.
- **Faith** – An example: Abram's trust in God's promises, even in times of uncertainty.
- **Canaan** – The promised land given to Abram by God.
- **Tent** – Symbolizing Abram's temporary dwelling and his nomadic lifestyle.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Survey the ancient practice of building altars and offering God our

worship.

2. Create reminders to mark the significant God-moments in our lives.
3. Build an altar or other place of remembrance for use in offering gratitude to God.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive at the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. Welcome everyone to the new fall quarter. Unit 1 focuses on how leaders set worship examples as we follow Abram, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Share the unifying principle of today's lesson, **"How do we honor such opportunities with solemnity and gratefulness?** Abram built altars to mark those occasions on which God called him to greater faithfulness."

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: **Invite:** Participants to share anything they know about a family reunion. **Ask:** What makes a family reunion important? What do you learn from attending a family reunion? (Everyone doesn't have a family reunion, so take time to research "family reunion" and share details with families who don't have reunions.) **Introduce:** Today's lesson is about Abraham's faithfulness in building an altar to the Lord.

Bible Story: **Ask:** For volunteers to read the scripture. You'll need three volunteers: Abram, Lot, and the narrator. **Explain:** God's promises to Abram and later Abraham were typically followed by Abraham's separation from someplace or someone: in Genesis, 12:1-9, Abraham, separated from his home (11:31; 12:1), traveled

the land of Canaan, received it as a promise, and built an altar in response to God's promise. Similarly, after Lot separated to Sodom (13:9, 11, 14), Abraham traveled to the land of Canaan, received it a second time as a promise, and built an altar in response. Finally, in Genesis 22, Abraham showed his willingness to be separated from his son Isaac on an altar and then received the promise a third time. **Explain:** An altar is a structure on which offerings are made to a god. The Hebrew word for altar is *mizbeah* (to slaughter) and in Greek *thusiasterion* (a place of sacrifice). Altars are places of exchange, communication, and influence. Today, the altar still marks the place of change.

Life Application: Discuss: Abram's journey through his conflict with Lot. Abram made peace a priority. **Talk** about the altar as a place where people share or seek God. **Discuss** a time when God has kept a promise. **Invite** participants to consider a time they have prayed at the altar and God delivered. **Encourage** youth to consider each day before they get up, lifting their eyes to the ceiling in the act of acknowledgment for God's provisions.

Alternative

Explain: The appendix is a guide to discuss the importance of trust, obedience, and God's promises. **Invite:** participants to reflect through the handout and guide them through the questions. Allow time for individuals to reflect on each question.

Resources:

Video: Mamre: <https://youtu.be/wFWn1-GjI9M>

Abraham's Journey: https://youtu.be/_7-UexPTm08

Abram and Lot Separate: <https://youtu.be/C9e98jGt-gg>

Review: YouTube videos before class

APPENDICES 01 – TRUST - OBEDIENCE - GOD'S PROMISES

Family Tree

Summary

Explain: The lesson is about family. Families are complex and they experience conflict. Abram and Lot were no different. The resolution to their dispute was to part ways, each going their way. **Discuss:** There are times when families have conflicts. **Invite** youth to draw their family tree in any way they want. After they have completed their tree, invite them to identify where family conflicts exist.

Closing Devotions: **Invite:** Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouths. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round-robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for sharing your truth." **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite** participants to share in the closing devotion.

INT: Lesson 2 — September 8, 2024

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

Dedicating Our Future

Lesson Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-53

Focus Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-24, 37-39, 46, 48-50a

Key Verses: “Whatever prayer, whatever plea there is from any individual or from all your people Israel, all knowing the suffering of their own hearts so that they stretch out their hands toward this house; then hear in heaven your dwelling place.” 1 Kings 8:38-39a

Vocabulary

- **Solomon** – The king of Israel known for his wisdom and for building the first temple in Jerusalem.
- **Temple** – The sacred place where God’s presence was believed to dwell among the Israelites.
- **Dedication** – The act of consecrating something to divine service or purpose.
- **Covenant** – The solemn agreement between God and the Israelites, often involving promises and obligations.
- **Forgiveness** – God’s act of pardoning sins and granting reconciliation to those who repent.
- **Mercy** – God’s compassionate treatment of sinners who do not deserve it.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate student’s need for continued spiritual growth, whether they face good times or bad.

2. Desire to develop a more Christlike character.
3. Identify and commit to a spiritual discipline that will lead to more faithful living.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive at the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. Share the unifying principle of today's lesson, "**How can we keep a proper perspective during and after such events?**" At the worship dedication of the temple, Solomon called on God to hear and heed the Israelites' future prayers. **Explain:** The lesson reveals Solomon's worshipful awareness of people's tendency to sin.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Solomon is a great king of Israel. He has completed the building of the temple and invited everyone to the celebration.

Discuss: The importance of creating a plan. Solomon planned with the Lord the building of the temple with every detail. Solomon dedicated the temple and each of us should be prepared to dedicate our future to the Lord. **Explain:** Solomon prayed, and his prayers instructed Israel to dedicate their lives, future, and the temple to God.

Bible Story: **Invite** volunteers to read the scriptures. Alternate between young men and women reading the scripture. **Explain:** The temple has been built, and the Ark of the Covenant placed in the Holy of Holies ("inner sanctuary," v. 6). "A cloud filled the house of the Lord" (v. 10), a sign of God's presence (v. 11). Solomon prays, praising God for covenant faithfulness through the Mosaic covenant

(Deuteronomy 4:39; 7:9) and connecting it to the dynastic promise given to David (2 Samuel 7:11b-16). **Explain:** The prayer includes seven petitions asking the Lord to hear his people when they pray toward the temple: (1) when they sin against a neighbor (vs. 31-32); (2) when they suffer defeat (vs. 33-34); (3) when there is drought (vs. 35-36); (4) when there is famine (vs. 37-40); (5) when they go to battle (vs. 44-45); (6) when the foreigner prays toward the temple (vs. 41-43); and (7) that the Lord will hear the Lord's exiled people and grant them compassion when they repent and pray toward the temple (vs. 46-53).

Life Application: Discuss: why Solomon and the people needed to trust God. Remind the participants why Solomon had built the temple. Israel had battled many nations and now they needed a place to worship God. King David could not build the temple because of his bad choices, so God chose Solomon. **Discuss:** The importance of prayer and praise in relationship to God. Invite youth to create a *Seven Prayer Journal* and discover related scriptures of promises. **Talk** about Solomon's seven prayers – each prayer directed the people and their worship with God.

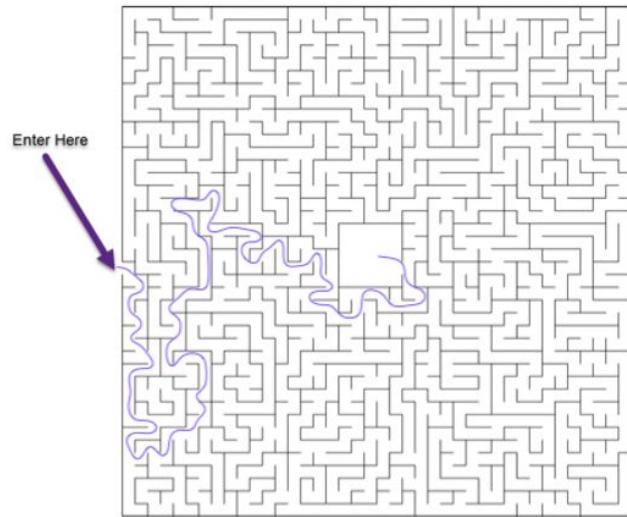
Alternative

Explain: Solomon prayed for the temple before it was built. He had a plan. Each of us should have a plan for our future. Use the "Planning Your Future" handout in the student guide to think about your future. Allow time for students to complete the guide.

Summary: Solomon teaches us the importance of recognizing God's greatness, seeking his forgiveness, and trusting in his mercy. He demonstrates that true dedication involves a humble acknowledgment of one's shortcomings and a sincere desire to seek

God's guidance in all aspects of life. **Invite** participants to consider the questions from the lesson. Allow time for students to reflect on the questions and consider their answers.

Closing Devotions: **Invite** participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouths. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round-robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for sharing your truth." **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.



Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Video: Solomon's Temple: <https://youtu.be/Xt6lQ Ae8ues>

Why the temple Is Important: <https://youtu.be/wTnq6l3vUbU>

Introduction to Solomon: <https://youtu.be/2bnFxAIRTxE>

Animated Story – Solomon's Temple: <https://youtu.be/2n0N6iE3n30>

Review: YouTube videos before class

INT: Lesson 3 — September 15, 2024

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

Lay It Down

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 19:1-34

Focus Scripture: 2 Kings 19:14-20, 29-31

Key Verse: “So now, O Lord our God, save us, I pray you, from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.” 2 Kings 19:19

Vocabulary

- **Hezekiah** – The king of Judah who sought to reform and bring religious revival to his kingdom.
- **Assyrian Army** – The formidable military force threatening Jerusalem.
- **Sennacherib** – The king of Assyria who reigned from about 720 BC to 683 BC.
- **Deliverance** – God's act of rescuing his people from danger or oppression.
- **Trust** – Reliance on God's strength and faithfulness.
- **Salvation** – Deliverance from harm or evil, often attributed to God.
- **Prophecy** – Divine revelation or prediction of future events, often delivered through prophets.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Apply Hezekiah's prayer as a model for holding on to hope even when all seems lost.

2. Feel encouraged by prayer during trials and difficulties.
3. Identify sources of Christian support that bring encouragement and hope.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive to the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. **Share** the unifying principle of today's lesson, "What can people do when all seems lost?" In a time of crisis, Hezekiah turned to worshipful prayer and was heard. Explain the lesson; it shows us Hezekiah's prayerful realization of what's most important: the Lord alone is God.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: We encounter moments in life where things don't seem to be fair and good people experience dreadful things. In the time of crisis, we learn that God is the true source of deliverance. In today's lesson, King Hezekiah prays to God in a time of crisis, surrounded by his enemies. **Discuss:** What are some ways we respond when we are faced with difficulties? **Ask:** What type of "coping" skills have you developed when handling tricky situations. **Share:** Coping skills you are aware of that the participants may not have mentioned (Do a puzzle, write a poem, call a friend, hug a pillow, etc....).

Bible Story: Ask: Participants if anyone likes poetry. If you have someone who has an interest in poetry, invite them to read vs. 29-31; if not, request two volunteers. The volunteers will read 2 Kings 19:20 and 2 Kings 19:29-31. The teacher will read Hezekiah's prayer (2 Kings 19:14-19). Prior to class the teacher will secure a piece of

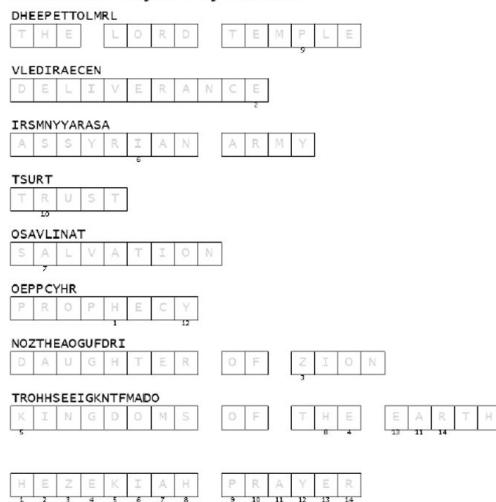
paper (blank sheet of paper). The teacher begins reading the scripture by taking the piece of paper out and reading the scripture while looking at the paper. Spread the paper in front of the teacher as if it is being spread before the Lord. Then the teacher reads Hezekiah's prayer starting at verse 15. **Explain:** Hezekiah appeals to God to deliver Jerusalem so that God's glory will be seen among the nations (1 Kings 8:42; 1 Samuel 17:46), which was the purpose in establishing Israel (2 Samuel 7:23; Psalm 67:1-2; cf. Isaiah 26:18). Hezekiah reminds God of that purpose. **Ask:** Participants to read 2 Kings 19:20 and ask that they focus on the phrase "I have heard." Pause a moment and ask, what does that mean to you? How can the phrase "I have heard" coming from God provide comfort in times of troubles? Allow participants time to respond. **Discuss:** Who do we rely on for godly advice and wisdom? **Allow** participants time to consider and solicit their responses. If there is no answer, share your answer and go to the next person to your left. Invite each participant to share. **Share:** We all can rely on different people for advice and wisdom, yet God is the best source.

Life Application: Invite: Participants to reflect on how they respond to challenges in their life. Do they trust in God's power to overcome obstacles, or do they rely solely on their own strength? PAUSE and allow participants to ponder the question. **Ask:** Participants to consider the times when God has intervened and delivered them from adversity. How did that time deepen their trust in sovereignty and seek God's guidance in all circumstances?

Alternative

Invite participants to use the puzzle to get to the mystery answer.

Hezekiah Prayer: Lay It Down



Summary: Invite: Participants to share their summary of today's lesson. Allow 1-2 volunteers to share how they would summarize today's lesson. **Discuss:** How can we apply Hezekiah's approach to seeking Christian support in our modern context? Hezekiah's prayer demonstrates the power of seeking God in times of trouble. How can we cultivate a consistent and fervent prayer life, both individually and corporately, to navigate challenges and experience God's peace and guidance in our lives today?

Closing Devotions: **Invite:** Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for sharing your truth." **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Video: Assyria and King Hezekiah: <https://youtu.be/dnLEz3bcU8A>

Animated Story of Hezekiah: https://youtu.be/4psaEnJ8_is

Bible Project – The Book of Kings: <https://youtu.be/bVFW3wbi9pk>

Animated Story of 2 Kings 19: https://youtu.be/igSxPaW0o_Q

Coping Skills: [Coping Skills Toolbox:
https://www.bcb.org/cms/lib/AL01901374/Centricity/Domain/1760/Coping%20Skills%20Toolkit.pdf](https://www.bcb.org/cms/lib/AL01901374/Centricity/Domain/1760/Coping%20Skills%20Toolkit.pdf)

Review: YouTube videos before class

INT: Lesson 4 — September 22, 2024

JOSIAH CELEBRATES PASSOVER

Celebrating the Past

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 22-23, 2 Chronicles 34:1-35:19

Focus Scripture: 2 Chronicles 35:1-6, 16-19

Key Verse: Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem; they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2 Chronicles 35:1

Vocabulary

- **Josiah** – The righteous king of Judah who initiated religious reforms and revival.
- **Passover** – The Jewish festival commemorating the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, marked by the sacrifice of a lamb and the consumption of unleavened bread.
- **Sacrifice** – Offering made to God as an act of worship or atonement for sins.
- **Priest** – Religious leader responsible for performing rituals and offering sacrifices in the temple.
- **Worship** – Reverent devotion and adoration directed towards God.
- **Instructions** – Guidelines or commands given for carrying out specific tasks or rituals.
- **Reformation** – Process of making changes to improve religious practices and adherence to God's laws.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Interpret the nature of Josiah's commitment to God and explain how he led Israel to do the same.
2. Nurture a desire to keep their commitments as Christ's followers.
3. Define their spiritual commitments and to engage in renewing or establishing those commitments.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive to the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. Explain how the lessons demonstrate the importance of spiritual leadership, as evidenced through Josiah's call to bring back the people to the right worship as prescribed in the "Book of the Covenant."

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participant to the lesson. **Instruct** participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. **Invite** the participants to share one tradition their family celebrates (birthdays, holidays, etc....). Some can have the same tradition in their families; duplicate answers are okay. **Explain:** The Passover as a traditional celebration.

Bible Story: **Invite** participants to read the scriptures. **Inform** the participants that each will read one verse and depending on the size of the class, some may read two or more verses. **Remind** participants that God's Word is a living word and to read with consideration of the writer. **Explain:** Josiah is incredibly young when he begins his reign following the assassination of Amon (2 Chronicles 33:24). Josiah reigned for 31 years (641/40 to 609 BCE). During this time, Judah began to experience newfound freedom,

which played a role in the vast array of reforms enacted by Josiah. His changes took place in three periods: his 8th year (ca. 633 BCE; 34:3); his 12th year (ca. 629 BCE; 34:3); and his 18th year (ca. 623 BCE; 34:8). The prophetic ministries of Zephaniah and Jeremiah support Josiah's reforms. **Explain:** The Jews began to return to Jerusalem without a Davidic king or Solomon's Temple when 2 Chronicles was written. 2 Chronicles reminds the Jews that God's people are defined by faithful worship of the one true God. The book concludes with God's faithful provision through Cyrus, the king of Persia. He organized the return of the exiles to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple of the Lord.

Life Application: **Ask:** Participants what are some spiritual commitments they have made. Share one of your spiritual commitments (daily prayer, daily scripture reading, fasting annually, participating in at least one outreach activity annually). **Discuss:** What steps can be taken to renew our spiritual commitments when we haven't been as committed? How can you incorporate prayer, studying the Bible, and serving others into your daily life to deepen your relationship with God? Allow participants time to ponder and respond to the questions. Silence is welcome to allow time to think critically. **Discuss:** How does King Josiah's leadership in restoring true worship among the Israelites inspire you to lead others in honoring God's covenant today?

Alternative

Invite: Participants to use the activity sheet to create a storyboard about a family, community, or church celebration. **Option:** As a class, complete a church celebration calendar.

Summary: Remind: Participants of Josiah's age and commitment to

restore the people's worship back to God by reminding them of the past and how God delivered. **Discuss:** What are some challenges or issues we face in our local community? Allow participants time to share (1-2 minutes per person). Pause to allow time to consider the question. **Discuss:** How can we draw inspiration from King Josiah's dedication to God to address contemporary challenges or issues within our own communities? What practical strategies can we implement to promote spiritual renewal and faithfulness among our peers and neighbors?

Closing Devotions: **Invite:** Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for sharing your truth." **Encourage** participant to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Animated Story: <https://youtu.be/zbOLxBHhvKA>

Animated Story Passover: <https://youtu.be/sB4CWFLwlUM>

Review: YouTube videos before class

Information: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Josiah-in-the-Bible.html>

INT: Lesson 5 — September 29, 2024

MOSES AND MIRIAM LEAD THE PEOPLE IN PRAISE

Throw Your Hands Up!

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 14:21-31; 15:1-21

Focus Scripture: Exodus 15:1-3, 11-13, 17-18, 20-21

Key Verse: The prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. Exodus 15:20

Vocabulary

- **Song** – Musical expression of joy, gratitude, or celebration.
- **Wilderness** – Desolate or uninhabited area, often symbolizing a period of trial or testing.
- **Miriam** – Sister of Moses and Aaron, who led the women in song and dance after the crossing of the Red Sea.
- **Tambourine** – Percussion instrument often used in celebratory music and dance.
- **Horse and Rider** – Symbolic imagery representing the might and power of the enemy.
- **Strength** – Physical, emotional, or spiritual power.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify elements of celebration that can also be acts of worship.
2. Value times of celebration as acts of worship.
3. Create a liturgy, song, or prayer for use in personal or corporate

worship.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive to the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. Introduce the new lesson unit and title to the participants. **Share:** Unit 2 introduces the songs of the Old Testament which focuses on the various songs of Israel used in worship and prayer. These songs of praise celebrate deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh and David's prayer of confession; the psalmist's plea for deliverance is toward Isaiah; another is a song of praise for deliverance from oppression and the last lesson is a song of trust. **Explain:** The lesson notes the deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh at the Red Sea, and the song Miriam led in response.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participant to the lesson. **Instruct** participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. **Invite** the participants to share one song they sing when they celebrate. **Explain:** There are times in life when we face great challenges and when we get past those tough times, it is a call to celebrate. **Share** the unifying principle of today's lesson, "We all desire to explore the world on our own terms. What do we do when what we find falls short of our expectations?" **Explain:** The lesson today invites each of us to consider, "What ways can we celebrate the victories in our lives?" Moses and Miriam led the people with praises in song for God's victory in the lives of the Israelites. Israel has come out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea on dry land, so they CELEBRATE!

Bible Story: Ask: For three volunteers to read today's lesson. Inform participants that the lesson is a song of praise. If no

volunteers, read the scriptures together as a class. **Explain:** The “Song at the Sea” (Exodus 15:1-18) celebrates Yahweh’s victory over the Egyptians at the Red Sea and looks to the future establishment of God’s sanctuary on the earth. Miriam is the first woman in the Old Testament to be called a prophet. She is a spiritual and political leader for the children of Israel (Micah 6:4). God’s deliverance upsets patriarchal norms.

Life Application: Remind: Participants that celebration was part of the biblical story. Worship is the height of Christian celebration. **Discuss:** What are some of your favorite songs in church and why? Allow 3-5 minutes for discussion. Thank participants for sharing their songs of worship and praise. **Discuss:** How might you integrate moments of celebration and worship into your everyday routines, drawing from the lessons of Exodus 15:1-18 to deepen your connection with God?

Alternative

Using the activity sheet, invite participants to choose an image and write a poem or song based on the image chosen.

Summary: Invite participants to share their summary of the lesson. **Discuss:** How could we express our gratitude and praise to God in unique and meaningful ways? Allow participants to share their thoughts and thank them for their participation.

Closing Devotions: Invite: Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouths. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today’s lesson. Use the round-robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, “Thank you for

sharing your truth.” **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Animated Story – Miriam: <https://youtu.be/pyGaackM35I>

Bible Project – Exodus: <https://youtu.be/0uf-PgW7rqE>

Tambourine Player: <https://youtube.com/shorts/hSztuhvqsWQ>

Review: YouTube Videos before class

Teacher Tips: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/10-creative-ways-to-explore-a-bible-passage>

INT: Lesson 6 — October 6, 2024

PRAYERS OF REPENTANCE AND CONFESSiON

Turning 180

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 11

Focus Scripture: Psalm 51:1-4, 10-12, 15-17

Key Verse: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

Vocabulary

- **Sin** – Wrongful actions or thoughts that separate individuals from God.
- **Mercy** – Compassionate treatment or forgiveness shown toward someone who deserves punishment.
- **Cleanse** – Purify or rid of impurities, often used in a spiritual sense.
- **Renewal** – Restoration or transformation of something to a better or fresher state.
- **Heart** – Symbolic center of emotions, thoughts, and intentions.
- **Confession** – Admission or acknowledgment of wrongdoing or sin.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Consider how confession and repentance are acts of worship.
2. Personalize the Psalms and use them as a model of personal confession and repentance.

3. Engage in the act of repentance and confession in a time of corporate worship

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive to the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. Share the unifying principle of today's lesson, **When we have wronged others, how do we make amends for our actions and words?** When David's sinful actions caused harm to others, he repented and found forgiveness in the Lord. **Explain:** The lesson considers Psalm 51, usually regarded as David's prayer of confession following his adultery with Bathsheba and the slaying of her husband Uriah in battle; children hear the background story of the death of Uriah.

Teacher Note: *The quarter lessons come from the Psalms; this quarter, review the Bible Project on the Psalms to become familiar with the structure of the Psalms and their purposes.*

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participants to the lesson, instruct participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. Invite the participants to share one song they sing when they celebrate.

Explain: As human beings, we are subject to making poor choices. Some of our choices are intentional and others are by circumstance, yet we are accountable for all our actions. Often, we say, "I made a mistake" but imagine if we saw our mistakes as a way of making it instead of us creating it. **Encourage** participants to think about a time when they made a poor choice. **Invite** them to consider if they have taken responsibility for their choice. **Explain:** Today's lesson is about a poor choice made by King David and his prayer for

repentance and forgiveness from God.

Bible Story: Invite participants to read the scripture silently. **Explain:** The Psalm is familiar to many people. If it's your first time reading Psalm 51, see what we can learn about God from the scripture. If you've read it before and have heard others talk about, teach, or preach about Psalm 51, as you read, find something you've never seen before. **Allow** participants time to read the scripture. **Invite:** Participants to read the scriptures together. **Discuss:** What did you discover while reading the scriptures? **Explain:** The Hebrew word *chesed* is the Old Testament's favorite way of characterizing God. *Chesed* is most frequently translated "loving-kindness," and is repeated with such frequency throughout the Old Testament that it must surely rank as highest among God's attributes. It conveys a love so relentless that God's propensity to forgive our offenses measures on a scale a thousand times greater than God's inclination to punish (Deuteronomy 5:9-10). It is this extravagantly merciful God whom David poignantly encounters and praises in Psalm 51.

Life Application: Discuss the difference between a 180-degree turn and a 360-degree turn. **Explain:** 180-degree turn would take you in a different direction and not back to the same place in which you started, which a 360-degree turn does. **Discuss:** How can David's experience teach us about owning our mistakes/poor choices? *Allow time for participants to explore the question.* **Discuss:** How do we demonstrate our trust in God's mercy and grace to cleanse and renew us? **Share:** Our sin can make us feel distant from God. Sit in a sanctuary and/or place of worship and ask God to "renew a steadfast spirit" within you.

Alternative

Using the activity sheet, invite participants to create an acrostic for Grace. **Explain:** An acrostic is a poem in which the letters of the words create a poem. **Share:** An example of just words that can be used to demonstrate “GRACE.”

Summary: Invite participants to share their summary of the lesson. **Discuss:** How can we, like David, create a prayer that expresses our repentance to God and increase our connection to God? If participants use prayer, read scripture, or other “canned” answer, invite them to go deeper. “What will you do differently in your ‘prayer,’ ‘reading scripture,’ or ‘....’” *Allow participants to share their thoughts and thank them for their participation.* **Share:** David asked God to forgive and renew him. He solicits God to “clean his heart.” **Invite:** Participants to confess and repent to God; it’s personal and they can experience the clean heart David spoke of in the scripture.

Closing Devotions: **Invite:** Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today’s lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, “Thank you for sharing your truth.” **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Bible Project: The Psalms: <https://youtu.be/j9phNEaPrv8>

Bible Project: The Book of Psalms: https://youtu.be/dpny22k_7uk

David’s Prayer: <https://youtu.be/BzNlfPOhnTk>

Opening Devotion: https://youtu.be/lXV3YOquf_4

Chesed as Love: https://youtu.be/UfbyFLgs_NM

Psalm 51 explained: <https://youtu.be/5wNctWBJnsU>

Review: YouTube videos before class

Craft Ideas: <https://youtu.be/fb7-pmgSdjI>

INT: Lesson 7 — October 13, 2024

A PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE

On the Lookout

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 22; Daniel 3

Focus Scripture: Psalm 22:1-11

Key Verse: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? Psalm 22:1

Vocabulary

- **Abandonment** – Feeling deserted or left alone, especially by God or others.
- **Distress** – Extreme anxiety, sorrow, or pain.
- **Trust** – Reliance on someone or something for support or assistance.
- **Cries** – Loud calls for help or assistance.
- **Rescue** – Act of saving someone from harm or danger.
- **Confidence** – Trust or faith in someone or something.
- **Mockery** – Ridicule or scornful treatment directed towards someone.
- **Trustworthy** – Reliable or deserving of trust.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Make connections between worshipping and trusting God in times of hardship.
2. Find assurance of God's deliverance in times of difficulty.

3. Design a group worship service that acknowledges God as a help in times of trouble.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive to the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. Share the unifying principle of today's lesson. People may feel desperate or alone amid tragic circumstances. What can calm their feelings? Calling on God for help gives a sense of release and bolsters hope for divine rescue. **Explain:** The lesson is a plea for deliverance as considered through Psalm 22.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participants to the lesson; instruct participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. Invite the participants to share one song they sing when they celebrate. **Explain:** There are times when life is extremely difficult, and we may ponder who can we turn to or who can we trust in these situations. Today's lesson will call us to ponder who we can turn to for help.

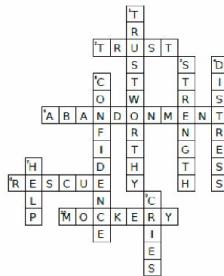
Bible Story: Invite: Participants to listen to the words of the scripture (if possible play the audio of the Bible – https://youtu.be/27M4ffnUzU?si=h_SD0Yls1auguFY2&t=8).

Discuss: What do you hear from the reading of the scripture? What emotions, feelings, or concerns? How does the writer see themselves? How does the writer see God? *Allow time for participants to ponder the questions.* **Explain:** Psalm 22 expresses our ultimate anxiety – being abandoned by God (vs. 1-2, 11). Some may even blame God for our grief-stricken condition (vs. 6-9a). Many of the Psalms allows the reader to hear the voice of the people

offering up prayers to God, whereas all other scripture assumes an audience listening to the voice of God. In the Psalms, we hear echoes of our own lived experience.

Life Application: Explain: Psalm 22's tone is of someone who feels as if they have been abandoned. **Discuss:** What do you think when someone else appears to have the "perfect life"? *Allow participants to ponder the questions. Allow for the silence.* How do you see God when others around you appear to be doing well but you, your family, or your community are not experiencing the same? Why is it difficult to wait on God when we are desperate for help? **Invite:** Participants to consider natural disasters and how the response for different communities varies. **Discuss:** How does it feel when different communities experience different responses? What can be some reasons people feel abandoned in situations like these?

Crossword Puzzle



Down:

1. Reliable or deserving of trust.
3. Physical, emotional, or spiritual power or resilience.
4. Extreme anxiety, sorrow, or pain.
5. Trust or faith in someone or something.
7. Assistance or support provided in times of need.
9. Loud calls for help or assistance.

Across:

2. Reliance on someone or something for support or assistance.
6. Feeling deserted or left alone, especially by God or others.
8. Act of saving someone from harm or danger.
10. Ridicule or scornful treatment directed towards someone.

Alternative

Invite the participants to use the ABANDONMENT word puzzle to unscramble the words created from *Abandonment*.

Abandonment

ABNNDAO	<u>ABANDON</u>
MANNODB	<u>BONDMAN</u>
DMNAETA	<u>MANDATE</u>
ONEMABD	<u>ABDOMEN</u>
BDTNEAO	<u>BATONED</u>
AABEOM	<u>AMOEBA</u>
ATNDOE	<u>ATONED</u>
DANNBE	<u>BANNED</u>
BNTEON	<u>BONNET</u>
EDOANT	<u>DONATE</u>
NODTEN	<u>TENDON</u>
OEBTDM	<u>TOMRED</u>
EBATA	<u>ABATE</u>
NAEMD	<u>AMEND</u>
DENTO	<u>NOTED</u>
NBTAO	<u>BATON</u>
MDNOA	<u>NOMAD</u>
ETOMN	<u>MOTEN</u>
ETMNA	<u>MEANT</u>

Summary: Share: David in the Psalm is looking for God in the time of troubles. David feels abandoned and cries out to God, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” David feels he’s surrounded by his enemies without any help. **Discuss:** Have there been times when you feel attacked by others? **Invite:** Participants to reflect on God’s hand on your life from the very beginning of your existence. **Discuss:** In what practical ways can we maintain our faith and reliance on God’s deliverance when we feel abandoned or attacked by peer pressure, academic stress, or societal expectations, drawing inspiration from David’s example?

Closing Devotions: **Invite:** Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today’s lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, “Thank you for sharing your truth.” **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with

their family and friends this week. **Share:** Psalm 22:26b-27a, “Those who seek the Lord will praise him – may your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord.” **Explain:** There’s a promise in Psalm 22 that participants may want to keep close to them. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Introduction of King David: <https://youtu.be/IQLAc3KV8SE>

Psalm 22 Read: <https://youtu.be/-27M4ffnUzU>

Kids – God and the Future: <https://youtu.be/35sFfEUxKQk>

Animated Story: Psalm 22: <https://youtu.be/a52J2HyzJS8> (Stop 1:18)

Review: YouTube videos before class

INT: Lesson 8 — October 20, 2024

PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE

Time to Praise

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 25; Daniel 6:10-28

Focus Scripture: Isaiah 25:1-10a

Key Verse: On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. Isaiah 25:6

Vocabulary

- **Feast** – A large, elaborate meal or celebration.
- **Praise** – Expression of admiration, gratitude, or worship towards God.
- **Rejoice** – Feelings of joy or happiness.
- **Veil** – Symbol of separation or concealment, often representing barriers between God and humanity.
- **Swallow** – To consume or overcome completely.
- **Tears** – Drops of liquid produced by the eyes, often associated with sorrow or pain.
- **Shame** – Feeling of embarrassment or guilt.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Connect Isaiah's historical context to his specific assurances of God's faithfulness.
2. Seek a heart in tune with God's faithfulness and deliverance.
3. Design an expression of praise to God for liberation and

deliverance.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive at the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. Share the unifying principle of today's lesson. People seek refuge during the stormy trials of life. *Who can encourage and support us in our distress?* God's promises and faithfulness can assure us that we will endure until the storm passes. **Explain:** The lesson takes us to the first part of Isaiah 25, a song of praise for deliverance from oppression; children hear about Daniel's miraculous rescue from a den of lions.

Teaching Strategies

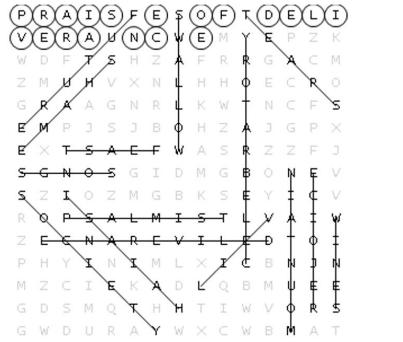
Introduction: Welcome participants to the lesson; instruct participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. Invite the participants to share one song they sing when they celebrate. **Explain:** Isaiah is one of four major prophets in the Bible. The difference between major and minor prophets is the length of the books. The book of Isaiah is one of the largest books of the Bible with 66 chapters. Isaiah encourages readers of God's faithfulness. God is faithful despite what we do, say, or think.

Bible Story: Explain: In Isaiah 24:1–25:12, God judges the earth and provides a great feast on Mount Zion for all peoples who recognize his lordship. Royalty and people of means sponsored banquets to honor victories and special occasions. The gods also did this, especially when one of them was enthroned. Though these banquets are for the gods, the people would join in the feasting when the enthronement was celebrated annually.

Life Application: Isaiah experienced many people demonstrating disobedience toward God. Isaiah saw individuals who should have been faithful to God display cruelty to others. Isaiah encourages people to be obedient and follow God faithfully. **Share:** We see injustice all around, school bullies, unfair treatment of different people because of their identities, and others. **Invite:** Participants to consider how they can express gratitude toward God for the faithfulness they have experienced and how can they demonstrate God's faithfulness toward others? Challenge youth to prepare a meal for their family this week. The theme of the meal is a celebration of God's faithfulness. *Allow participants time to consider the celebration and then ask them to create their menu.* **Discuss:** Participant's menu for the family celebration meal.

Hidden Message: Praise of Deliverance

Summary: **Share:** Trusting God means letting go of our worries knowing God has full control and has prepared each of us for our crisis. **Discuss:** What tragedy could happen in life to make someone turn from God? *Allow participants to ponder the question.* **Invite:** Participants to identify ways we can encourage someone or ourselves to seek God instead of turning from God in the times of tragedies. *Develop a list of things to do to help others (talking to them, run an errand or help them, bring them food or send them a gift card, etc....).* **Share:** Our community needs the voice of Isaiah today. **Discuss:** In what ways can we actively participate in bringing about justice and righteousness in our communities, echoing the themes of Isaiah in today's world?



celebratory	Deliverance	Feast
future	Isaiah	Mountain
Psalmist	Rejoice	Shame
Society	Songs	Swallow
Tears	Veil	wines

Hidden Message: **PRAISE OF DELIVERANCE**

Closing Devotions: Invite: Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for sharing your truth." **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

TEACHER ONLY: Review of Isaiah: <https://youtu.be/JJZ3q76hkig>

Bible Project: Isaiah: <https://youtu.be/d0A6Uchb1F8>

Trust God in Uncertain Times: <https://youtu.be/8ZNfmC8lTKg>

God Is Faithful: <https://youtu.be/WhZmcHsqC8s>

Empathetic Listening: Inside Out: <https://youtu.be/t685WM5R6aM>

Review: YouTube videos before class

INT: Lesson 9 — October 27, 2024

TRUST IN GOD ALONE

Silently Waiting

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 62

Focus Scripture: Psalm 62

Key Verse: For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. Psalm 62:5

Vocabulary

- **Silence** – Absence of noise or disturbance, often associated with stillness before God.
- **Hope** – Feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.
- **Power** – Strength, authority, or ability to influence or control.
- **Deceit** – Act of deceiving or misleading others, often with dishonesty or trickery.
- **Refuge** – Shelter or safe haven, especially in times of trouble or danger.
- **Rock** – Symbol of stability, strength, and reliability.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify the many ways God is the source of strength in times of trouble.
2. Experience God's comfort during times of stress.
3. Create a response of praise to God for use in times of distress.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive at the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. Explain that the lesson looks at Psalm 62, a song of trust in God.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participants to the lesson and inform them that they are to remain silent until the class begins. See *how long they remain quiet*. Once class starts, **Discuss:** When are times we need to practice being silent and still? Allow participants to share. **Explain:** There are times when the fast pace of life keeps us in a frenzy. Where can we find solitude and calm? In stillness and quiet, the psalmist finds God's salvation, hope, refuge, and deliverance. Psalm 62 reminds us of God as our rock, a solid foundation in which we cannot be shaken. **Invite** participants to share for about 1-2 minutes the highs and lows of their week.

Bible Story: **Invite** participants to read two verses at a time. Each person will have two verses to read and if additional verses remain after everyone has read, then start from the first person until all verses are read. *Instruct participants to pause for two seconds before the next person reads to reflect on the scripture read.* *Example: Read vs. 1-2 then pause, breathe, read vs. 3-4; continue through vs. 11-12.* **Explain:** Psalm 62 suggests a time when Saul's family threatened David. When threatened by enemies, the psalmist commits himself to God. The psalm is composed of three parts (vs. 3-4, 5-8, 9-10), framed by a confession of finding rest in God (vs. 1-2), and the reason for such trust (vs. 11-12). The psalmist calls on all godly people to trust God (vs. 8-10), moving from an individual, personal trust, to exhorting the congregation to do the same – “my

refuge" becomes "a refuge for us" (v. 8). **Discuss:** How does the imagery of God as a rock and fortress impact your understanding God's reliability? **Explain:** King David is attributed to the Psalm, and it was written as an expression of his trust in God in times of uncertainties.

Life Application: Invite the participants to share the first thing that comes to their mind when they think about a "ROCK." **Share:** Rocks are solid and typically hard. If a rock is in the ground, it is unmovable and will not shake under pressure. *If possible, discuss the Uluru Rock in Australia. See video in resources. If not, use another large rock formation that has a historic background and has lasted through time.* **Discuss:** How can we practically apply the concept of "waiting quietly" for God in our fast-paced culture? **Explain:** David trusted God and when life all around was out of order for David he knew God was still in control.

Alternative

Invite participants to consider the Uluru Rock and to write their favorite part of the Psalm.

Summary: King David waited patiently for God. The Psalm closes with "Power belongs to you, God, and with you, Lord, is unfailing love"; and, "You reward everyone according to what they have done." **Discuss:** In what ways can we actively cultivate trust in God's timing and faithfulness amidst the distractions and uncertainties of modern life?

Closing Devotions: **Invite:** Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's

lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, “Thank you for sharing your truth.” **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Animated Story Solid Foundation: https://youtu.be/zA_u8Lx8Th0

Uluru Rock: <https://youtu.be/LhCtQxedOwY>

Jesus of Nazareth, Prodigal: <https://youtu.be/14epxvU8XIA>

Review: YouTube videos before class

INT: Lesson 10 — November 3, 2024

CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S SHEPHERDING

Paved Road

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 23; John 10:11-14

Focus Scripture: Psalm 23

Key Verse: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. Psalm 23:6

Vocabulary

- **Shepherd** – One who guides and cares for a flock of sheep, symbolizing God's care, and guidance for his people.
- **Green Pastures** – Lush, fertile fields representing provision and sustenance provided by God.
- **Still Waters** – Calm, peaceful waters symbolizing God's rest and refreshment.
- **Restore** – To bring back to a previous or better condition; here, referring to God's restoration of the soul.
- **Presence** – Being near or in the company of God.
- **Enemies** – Those who oppose or harm, contrasted with God's protection and provision.
- **Anoint** – To consecrate or set apart for a special purpose, often symbolizing God's blessing and empowerment.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Suggest contemporary metaphors, like the Psalm's use of "shepherd," that convey a sense of God's guiding presence in our

lives.

2. Appreciate God as a trustworthy shepherd.
3. Develop a spiritual discipline that draws attention to God's guidance in one's life.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive at the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. In unit 3 are the Psalms of Thanksgiving and Praise. These lessons look at four songs from the Hebrew psalmist on the *Good Shepherd*, songs of praise, a call to all people to praise God, and the final lesson marks the beginning of Advent. Share the unifying principle of today's lesson, "We all desire to explore the world on our own terms. What do we do when what we find falls short of our expectations?" Explain how the lesson looks at Psalm 23, supplemented with John's affirmation (see John 10:11-14) about Jesus as the good shepherd.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participants to the lesson; instruct participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. Invite the participants to share one song they sing when they celebrate.

Explain: People seek out trustworthy guidance and direction in all of life's experiences. How do we find assurance that we are on a good path? The psalmist asserts that the Lord leads us just as a good shepherd leads and tends the sheep, and in John's Gospel Jesus identifies himself as a true shepherd.

Bible Story: Invite participants to form three groups. You can have them count 1-2-3 until everyone has a number, 1, 2, or 3. Invite the

groups to come together and position the groups in the meeting space. Assign the ones to verses 5-6; the twos to 3-4; and group three to 1-2. Challenge each group to divide Psalm 23 and recite it, from memory, creatively. **Discuss:** “What was difficult with the exercise – reciting, memorizing, or being creative?” **Explain:** Sheep grazed on the lush grass produced by spring rains (23:2). In the summer and autumn, they fed on weeds and stubble left over from harvest. Like camels, sheep can go extended periods without water and then drink as much as 2.5 gallons. Unlike goats, sheep are dependent on the shepherd to find pasture and water for them. Shepherds also provided shelter, medication, and aid in birthing. King Ammiditana (Babylon, 1683 – 1640 BCE) claims that the god “Ea” gave him the wisdom to shepherd his people, to provide them with beautiful pastures and watering places, and how to make them lie down in safe pastures. The rod was a club worn at the belt, while the staff was a walking implement that doubled as a weapon in a time of need (1 Samuel 17:35) and guided and controlled the sheep. **Invite** participants to compare Psalm 23 with John 10:1-18. **Explain:** God was Israel’s chief shepherd, which corresponds to John’s message about Jesus. Israel’s leaders are here associated with former leaders of Israel who were condemned as exploitive shepherds (Jeremiah 23:1-2; Ezekiel 34:2-6, 8). Because the human shepherds of Israel failed to care for the sheep properly, God promised to shepherd the people (Ezekiel 34:11-17). The good shepherd lays down his life to protect the sheep – thus suffering at the hands of the thieves, robbers, and wolves.

Life Application: Psalm 23 is considered a familiar psalm which many people learn as a small child. **Ask:** Who knew Psalm 23 prior

to today's lesson? **Discuss:** Why do we think many people would teach Psalm 23 to their children when they are young? Allow youth to ponder the questions and share their thoughts. **Invite** participants to consider, "How can we trust in the Good Shepherd to lead us through our own valleys? How can we seek comfort and guidance in God's presence?" **Ask:** Participants to share one example of a way to live out any parts of Psalm 23. **Encourage** participants to post a portion of this scripture every day on their social media platform.

Alternative

Use the "Shepherding Good Sheep" handout in the student guide. Allow participants to read the handout and answer the questions. Place participants in groups to discuss the questions as a group and invite each participant to share their answer with others. Encourage youth to use active listening skills, to share what they heard the other person share and seek clarity, correction, and confirmation for their paraphrasing of each other's answers. **Discuss:** What do we learn when we actively listen to one another?

Shepherding Good Sheep

The shepherd plays a vital role in the care and management of a flock of sheep. Their responsibilities encompass ensuring the well-being of the sheep by providing food, water, shelter, and necessary veterinary care. Additionally, shepherds protect the flock from predators, guide them to suitable grazing areas, and oversee breeding programs to improve genetic traits. They possess a deep understanding of sheep behavior, enabling them to efficiently handle and manage the flock. Record-keeping of vital information such as births, deaths, and vaccinations is also part of their duties. Overall, shepherds are integral to maintaining the health, productivity, and

sustainability of sheep farming.

Why do sheep need a shepherd?

What would happen if the flock were left alone?

Explain how knowing the role of the shepherd helps individuals understand Psalm 23 better?

Summary: **Share:** Relationships are difficult and complex. The relationship between a sheep and a shepherd is no different. Invite youth to close their eyes and share how shepherds are typically in large fields with sheep around them. The shepherd feeds, nurtures, talks to, and guides the sheep toward still waters. Invite youth to hear the stillness of the water, feel the green grass pastures, and imagine oil flowing from their head. Invite participants to take deep breaths. **Discuss:** What would it feel like to have someone care for you in the way a shepherd cares for sheep? Allow time to share. **Discuss:** What simple acts of kindness and empathy can we incorporate into our interactions with others, inspired by the caring nature of the *Good Shepherd*?

Closing Devotions: **Invite** participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for sharing your truth." **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Psalm 23: <https://youtu.be/GNR53IUt038>

John 10: https://youtu.be/uKtW_3yQXBw

Review: YouTube videos before class

Teacher Tips:

Public Reading Scripture: <https://youtu.be/BO1Y9XyWKTw?si=ONNBpgOSK2xnPpls>

Streetlights Bible: <https://www.streetlightsbible.com/>

INT: Lesson 11 — November 10, 2024

SONGS OF PRAISE

Who Can You Trust?

Lesson Scripture: Psalms 146–150

Focus Scripture: Psalms 146; 150

Key Verse: I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long. Psalm 146:2

Vocabulary

- **Justice** – Fair treatment and adherence to moral principles, often associated with God's righteous rule.
- **Orphan** – Child who has lost one or both parents.
- **Widow** – Woman whose spouse has died and has not remarried.
- **Freedom** – State of being free from constraints or oppression.
- **Oppression** – Prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or control.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explore examples of God's activity in each of the psalms as examples of God's character.
2. Connect with the psalmist's awe and discovery of God's character.
3. Identify and carry out an act of leadership in participant's church, school, or family that is consistent with God's character.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive at the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and

welcome them as well by name. Trust is a simple but complex word. It is difficult to trust others especially if you have experienced harm from someone in whom you trusted. Today's lesson is inviting us to ponder, "Who Can We Trust?" We are invited to explore Psalms 146–150 with 146 and 150 the songs for emphasis.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participants to the lesson; instruct participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. Invite the participants to share one song they sing when they celebrate.

Bible Story Invite: Participants to divide into two groups. Invite one group to read Psalm 150 and have them identify what makes the Psalm meaningful. Invite the other group to read Psalm 146 and identify the distinctive characteristics or qualities of God described by the psalmist. **Instruct** participants to read the scripture and collect the data for their Psalm; they will have 5 minutes to complete this task. Each group will return to the larger group and present their findings. Celebrate the participants' presentations and remind them of how the psalmist praised God. **Explain:** Praise is to be given everywhere (v. 1), for God's deeds and character (v. 2), and with any means available (vs. 3-5). It concludes with a universal call to praise (v. 6) that complements the individual's call to praise at the beginning of Psalm 146 ("my soul," v. 1). The words for "soul" in 146:1 and "breathe" in 150:6 are related to each other.

Life Application: Discuss: What can hinder individuals from blindly trusting current leaders of the world? What is the difference between respecting our leaders and trusting in our leaders? *Allow participants time to share their thoughts.* **Ask:** How do we see leadership differently when we think about serving others as modeled in the

Psalms? What can we do to show this kind of leadership?

Alternative

Select one or both handouts for participants to complete during the lesson.

Who Can We Trust	PRAISE
IRASPE	CREATION
AEHVNSE	HEAVEN
TRHAE	EARTH
LEGSNA	ANGELS
UOSNANMIT	MOUNTAINS
TESBSA	BEASTS
RLUSER	RULERS
MTUGDJEN	JUDGMENT
FIYRTFO	FORTIFY
CEPLUAEF	PEACEFUL
TSRAS	STARS
EVENROGSZ	SOVEREIGN
NEGSOIEATRN	GENERATIONS
KOMIDNG	KINGDOM
ALL	CREATION
CE	HEAVEN
PR	EARTH

HIDDEN MESSAGE: All creation is called to join in praise.

Summary: Share: We've been challenged to tune our hearts to the same frequency of praise and awe of the psalmist. We've seen how the psalmist invites us to join in the chorus of creation, to raise our voices and instruments in unison with all living beings, echoing the praise that resounds from the heavens to the earth. **Discuss:** How does thanking God in all situations, like the Psalms suggest, change the way we see tough times?

Closing Devotions: Invite: Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for

sharing your truth.” **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Video: Called and Chosen: <https://youtu.be/iJHfQgRI-hw>

Animated Story: <https://youtu.be/vlh36C0kFc>

Animated Story – Two Sons: <https://youtu.be/kfDfMZ6MTJs>

Jesus of Nazareth, Prodigal: <https://youtu.be/14epxvU8XIA>

Review: YouTube videos before class

INT: Lesson 12 — November 17, 2024

A SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Model of Gratitude

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 100

Focus Scripture: Psalm 100

Key Verse: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name. Psalm 100:4

Vocabulary

- **Praise** – Expression of admiration or approval, especially towards God.
- **Faithfulness** – Loyalty, trustworthiness, and consistency.
- **Generation** – A group of individuals born and living at the same time, often referring to successive age groups.
- **Shepherd** – One who tends to and cares for a flock of sheep, symbolizing God's care and guidance.
- **Sheep** – Domesticated animals often depicted as symbolic of God's people in the Bible, highlighting dependence and vulnerability.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Propose a rationale for how thanksgiving is important to the Christian life.
2. Earnestly desire to incorporate thanksgiving into the student's daily living.
3. Engage in public or private worship with offerings of thanksgiving for God's goodness.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive at the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. It is the season of thanksgiving. How do we show gratitude toward others? **Explain:** The lesson examines Psalm 100, a summons to all people to praise God.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participants to the lesson; instruct participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. Invite the participants to share one song they sing when they celebrate.

Explain: When we receive gifts and benefits, we like to show gratitude to our benefactor. To whom should we express our appreciation for life's graces? Psalm 100 is a joyful call to thanks and praise. It has two sections (vs. 1-3, 4-5), each giving a call to and a reason for praise. The psalm celebrates the Lord's creation of his people (v. 3) and his care for his people (v. 5). **Discuss:** How have you expressed your gratitude to God for the blessings you have received? How can we say, "Thank you" to God? **Explain:** In today's lesson, the psalmist expresses gratitude to God for everything.

Bible Story: *Use the music and motion video prior to class to teach the students Psalm 100.* **Remind:** Participants that we have studied the psalms. We know they are songs of praise to God. Today, we will attempt to sing Psalm 100 and use hand motions to place emphasis on the messages.

Alternative

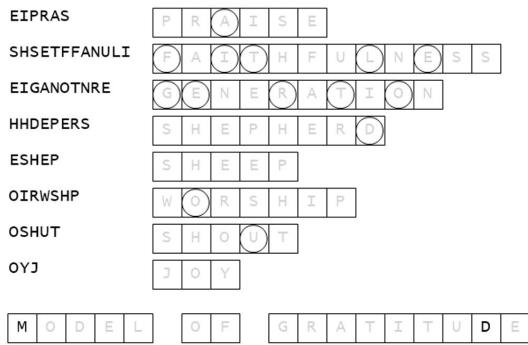
Use the sign language video to teach the youth to use sign language to learn Psalm 100. **Explain:** The opening invitation to "shout" and "worship" (vs. 1-2) is an invitation to celebrate the Lord's goodness

and to rest in the presence of the one “who made us.” It is an affirmation of the worshippers’ identity as God’s beloved and chosen people. The Psalm carries a note of intimacy (vs. 4-5) in that as worshippers we are invited into the gates and the courts of the Lord. We worship a God who is known to us by name, with our thankful praise arising from who God is (v. 5), good, unchanging, and faithful through all generations. (For further study see, *New Bible Commentary*. Copyright Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, Leicester, England, 1953, 1954, 1970, 1994.) **Discuss:** What did you read, sing, or hear from the scripture that caught your attention? Was there a word or phrase that grabbed your attention?

Life Application: Invite: Participants to make it a habit to demonstrate gratitude each day. Habits are formed by consistent practice. It’s important to recognize that habits are more than something we do; it is the cue we create that makes us do the thing we desire to practice. (See video on Form a Habit). **Discuss:** What are some habits you currently have? What’s your morning routine? (wake up, get out of bed, brush your teeth, take a shower/bath, eat breakfast....) Allow students time to share the current habits they have and then discuss: How can we make thanksgiving a part of our daily lives?

Alternative

Invite participants to complete the puzzle and decode the message.



Summary: Invite participants to summarize the lesson in their own words.

Ask: What are the key points in the lesson? What areas of Psalm 100 left you wondering or curious of the author's intent?

Discuss: How might we use social media and technology as tools for spreading thanksgiving and encouragement? Can we brainstorm creative ways to share gratitude with our friends and followers online, making a positive impact in our digital communities?

Closing Devotions: **Invite:** Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for sharing your truth." **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotion.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Video: The Psalm to Music and Motion:

https://youtu.be/BwR_kD6S1Bk

Teaching Psalm w/ Sign Language: <https://youtu.be/xtKfbwt990g>

Animated Story Presenting Psalm 100: <https://youtu.be/QQIP4nGK-1I>

About Thankfulness and Gratitude: <https://youtu.be/WMDl-VxaZP4?>

[si=4on6vlcjFvLa2w](#)

The Power of Gratitude: <https://youtu.be/75RjgtZ2tj0>

Forming a Habit: <https://youtu.be/SDyWftcMZgA>

Review: YouTube videos before class

INT: Lesson 13 — November 24, 2024

GOD'S PROMISED PRESENCE

He Sees Me

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 139

Focus Scripture: Psalm 139:1-12

Key Verse: O Lord, you have searched me and known me. Psalm 139:1

Vocabulary

- **Psalm** – Melody, instrumental music; a poem set to notes.
- **Understand** – To discern, consider.
- **Acquainted** – To be known, to be of use or service or profit or benefit.
- **Hedged** – To bind, besiege, confine, to shut up.
- **Ascend** – To go up.
- **Wing** – Extremity, edge, border, corner.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Examine the value of being known by God.
2. Deepen student's relationship with God.
3. Implement a practice of gratitude that supports their growth in discipleship.

Introduction

Welcome each person as they arrive at the study area. Greet each person by name and if you have a guest, ask for their name, and welcome them as well by name. **Explain:** We are in the final lesson of the quarter. We've journeyed a long distance exploring our

Worship in the Covenant Community. The lessons took us from Abraham to the people of Israel. We've read psalms attributed to King David, and we've seen patterns of worship reflect community life, from praising God's goodness and mercy to calling on God for help in times of crisis. Each of the three units revealed our *Covenant Community* with God through worship. The lessons reminded us that the psalms were always used in the community's worship, not individual worship. **Explain:** The lesson marks the beginning of Advent with a look at Psalm 139, a reminder of the intimate relationship God shares with humanity.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction: Welcome participants to the lesson; instruct participants that each will share for about 1-2 minutes. Invite the participants to share one song they sing when they celebrate. **Explain:** Advent is when believers began to reflect on the anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ which emphasizes God's intimate relationship shared with humanity. God seeks a close relationship with humanity and sent Jesus as the model of that relationship. Sarah is a reminder of God's closeness to each of us. Invite participants to read the introduction in the participant's guide.

Discuss: What moment have you experienced God's presence? Allow participants to share; if no one shares, ask, "Where in the Bible are there times shared when individuals experienced God's presence?" *Allow participants to share. (Three Hebrew boys in the furnace, Moses at the burning bush)* **Ask:** How did they feel when they felt God's presence?

Bible Story: **Invite** participants to read Psalm 139:1-12 together.

Discuss: What words from the scripture caught your attention?

What questions do you have after reading the scriptures? What do you think the author was experiencing when he wrote the Psalm?

Explain: “Psalm 139 is something of an exception in the Old Testament, speaking strongly and positively about the individual. Nevertheless, it acts as a foil to the modern obsession with privacy and the individual. While Psalm 139 is about the individual and has a very private feel to it, the Psalm is even more about the invasion of our privacy – by none other than God. This is a comforting Psalm in terms of God’s intimate knowledge of us and care for us. It is also a frightening Psalm because to be known so intimately is to be open to the other.”

(<http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/WebOTcomments/OrdinaryC/Content15Psalm139.html>. Accessed May 6, 2020.)

Life Application: Discuss: What does it feel like when someone is watching you? *Allow participants to share.* **Explain:** Being watched changes behavior. God sees everything. “You have searched me, Lord, and you know me...You are familiar with all my ways.” The reality is that we are being observed every day all the time. **Discuss:** How does this reality affect our decision-making? How does knowing God is watching everything we do change how we make choices? If it doesn’t change how you make choices, what does God’s watching you mean to you? **Explain:** There are times when many people would rather not have their privacy invaded. There is no privacy from God. There is no door you can close, no technology that can block the view and there is no place to hide from God.

Alternative

Use the *Gratitude Scavenger Hunt* to allow participants to spend time reflecting on the presence of God in all things. **Discuss:** What

did you discover during the scavenger hunt? Did anything surprise you about the prompts or your responses? How can you incorporate gratitude in your daily life?

Summary: Explain: Just as the psalmist acknowledges that there is nowhere we can go to escape from God's presence, we too can find comfort in knowing that God is always with us, guiding, comforting, and sustaining us through every moment of our lives. **Discuss:** How does the idea of God knowing you completely, as described in Psalm 139:1-12, make you feel? Does it bring comfort, curiosity, or a sense of vulnerability? Why do you think that is?

Closing Devotions: Invite: Participants to take deep breaths through their nostrils and out through their mouth. Take three deep breaths. **Invite** participants to share one takeaway from today's lesson. Use the round robin method to ask each participant for their takeaway. Thank each participant for their takeaway, "Thank you for sharing your truth." **Encourage** participants to share the lesson with their family and friends this week. **Invite:** Participants to share in the closing devotions.

God's Presence Word Search



X T W G M I U D T P Z C O Z S
O H M W X R B R P E Y J Q I P
M A S O P R E S E N C E E W R
N N G N J O M V C O M F O R T
I K U D G R A T I T U D E Y S
P F I E O C E Q T F W W A J O
R U D R I E P Y L K P G H F D
E L A J C R E A T O R E Q N A
S B N G M V S W X K Y D Z G W
E Q C D Z S R A I D N Y Q L X
N V E A L B L E S S I N G S M
T W C I O U M J S L V E K F J
N Q C H V X V Q A T I U P X K
T W Q M E R C M W M J R E S Y
L V C B C X U Z T C K P X H P

Omnipresent

Presence

Creator

Gratitude

Guidance

Comfort

Blessings

Thankful

Wonder

Love

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, Criss Cross, and Hidden Word Puzzles

Video: Hawthorne Effect: <https://youtu.be/o4XX90lqT6E>

TED Talk, Hawthorne Effect: <https://youtu.be/fw1N4ptQ8uk>

Tribl Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/Tribl/s>

Review: YouTube videos before class

The Teacher's Guide - JR: Lesson 1 - September 1, 2024

Fall Quarter: September–November 2024

Junior Lessons

Prepared by Monica C. Jones, Ph.D.

ABRAHAM HONORS GOD

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 12–13

Focus Scripture: Genesis 13:8-18

Key Verse: So Abram moved his tent...settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and...built an altar to the Lord. Genesis 13:18 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Abram and Abraham (ā'-bram and ā'-brah-ham)** – The faithful follower and man of God whose name was changed from Abram to Abraham.
- **Mamre (mam'ree)** – A place where Abram (Abraham) built his altar.

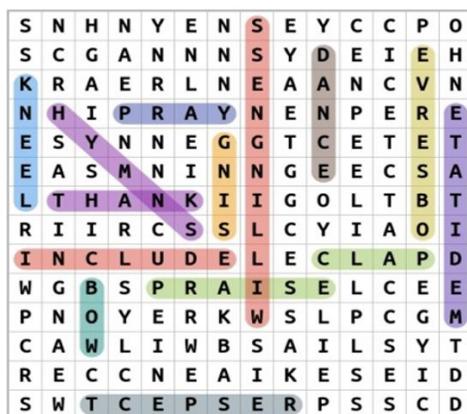
Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that loss is a part of life.
2. Understand that being obedient to God means making sacrifices.
3. Understand that there are different ways to honor God
4. Understand the connection between the Bible narrative of Abram's commitment and Keith's following his grandmother's teaching of prayer.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Stress the importance of being obedient and accepting life's disappointments.
2. Make the connection between Abram's obedience to God and Keith's story.
3. Stress obedience and giving honor to God in our everyday lives.
4. Puzzle solution:



Questions

1. What are some things that you have lost or some disappointments that you have had? Do you think prayer or loving God helped you or could have helped you through those times?
2. What are some of the words in the word search puzzle that you recognize? What are some whose definitions you may want to learn?

Resources: Bibles or Bible apps should be made available for each class to foster an interest in learning scripture; markers, colored pencils, and crayons

Note: There will be black-and-white coloring clipart in several lessons, some without specific directions. It may be a clever idea to have these on hand so that students may create their colored

pictures when appropriate.

JR: Lesson 2 — September 8, 2024

SOLOMON ASKS FOR GOD'S BLESSING

Lesson Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-53

Focus Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-24, 37-39a

Key Verses: "Whatever prayer,...from any individual or from all your people Israel,...knowing the sufferings of their own hearts...; then hear in heaven your dwelling place." 1 Kings 8:38-39a (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Solomon** – A very wise king of Israel who was the son of King David.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the need to be concerned about others.
2. Think of ways to assist others who are less fortunate.
3. Understand that God wants us to share.
4. Comprehend the parallels between Solomon's request for wisdom and the ability to take care of his people and Nancee's concern for her classmate.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Encourage learners to look for ways to help less privileged persons and others when they can.
2. Compare the story of Nancee's concern for her classmate and Solomon's concern for his people.

Questions

1. Why do you think King Solomon took time to pray for his people

and their protection? Do you think all kings were concerned like this?

2. What is a way that you could help someone at your school or in your community who may need assistance?
3. If there were an opportunity at your school to fundraise to help someone in need, would you be willing to lead or at least participate in that effort? Why or why not?

Resources: Music for “I Need You to Survive” – video or lyrics

JR: Lesson 3 — September 15, 2024

HEZEKIAH ASKS FOR GOD'S HELP

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 19

Focus Scripture: 2 Kings 19:14-20, 29-31

Key Verse: “So now, O Lord our God, save us, I pray you, from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.” 2 Kings 19:19 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Hezekiah (he-ze-kī-yah)** – A godly king of Judah who served with the prophet Isaiah.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Develop a concept of what the word *hero* means socially and spiritually.
2. Understand the prayer that Hezekiah offered to God and what it meant.
3. Visualize how heroes can come in the form of family, friends, or even strangers.
4. Understand and see God as our hero.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Stress the importance of looking at God's love as a part of God's hero relationship with us.
2. Focus on how prayer for others is a way to be a hero for them (it may be helpful to look at parallels between the prayer of Hezekiah and the prayer of Solomon from last week).

Questions

1. What is the name of a person who you know in your community or who you have learned about, who is a hero?
2. When you listen to the lyrics of this song, what are some of the lessons that they remind you of from today's story?
3. What is your definition of hero?

Resources: Video or recording of “Hero” by Mariah Carey

JR: Lesson 4 — September 22, 2024

KEEPING TRADITIONS

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34:1–35:19

Focus Scripture: 2 Chronicles 35:1-6, 16-19

Key Verse: Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem; they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2 Chronicles 35:1 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Josiah (joe-si'-ah)** – A king of Judah who tried to be obedient to God's law and commands.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Appreciate the importance of understanding other cultures.
2. Understand the significance of persons of authority still being obedient to God's law.
3. Make the connection between King Josiah's story and the story of Benjamin.
4. Make comparisons or see similarities between the holy days of Passover and Lent-Resurrection Day.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Stress how Josiah, as a godly king, was different from those who were not obedient.
2. Give attention to various holy days and celebrations that have elements in common, including Passover, Hanukkah, and so on, with celebrations such as Resurrection Day, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and so on.

3. Provide opportunities for learners to ask questions about the various holy days and celebrations while emphasizing the importance of tolerance and diversity.

Questions

1. Do you see at least one way that Passover has something in common with our celebration of *Resurrection Day*?
2. What did you learn about King Josiah?
3. After watching the video, what were some things that you learned?

Resources: Provide Bibles or Bible apps each week, pens, pencils, a video of the Passover or a book of the appropriate age level, music for the song, “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand”

JR: Lesson 5 — September 29, 2024

MIRIAM AND MOSES THANK GOD WITH THEIR SONGS

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 14:21-31; 15:1-21

Focus Scripture: Exodus 15:1-3, 11-13, 17-18, 20-21

Key Verse: The prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. Exodus 15:20 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Miriam** – The sister of Moses who led women in a worship and celebration song for God.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Appreciate the importance of music and self-expression to praise and worship God.
2. Explore the experience of playing or learning to play a tambourine.
3. Make the connection between the parallels of Miriam's processional and celebration and that of Melinda's parade and celebration.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Provide examples of ways to celebrate using music and creativity whether in worship or in a church school setting.
2. Examine the songs of praise by Moses and Miriam and look for ways to connect language with the experience of celebration.
3. Stress the commonalities between Miriam and Melinda in terms of

their intent to offer an expression of thanksgiving.

4. Encourage learners to play the tambourine or other instruments that they may like in actual music ministry experiences.

Questions

1. Have you ever played the tambourine or another instrument?
2. Do you think any instrument can be used to praise the Lord? Why or why not?
3. If you're not interested in playing an instrument, what are other ways that you can use your talent to worship the Lord?
4. What did you learn from the video?

Resources: The video link in the lesson is *Tambourine Tips* by Josh Jones; provide two to three tambourines sharing with smaller groups; covered tambourines may be easier for young people to play. Music instructors or choir directors may be able to assist.

JR: Lesson 6 — October 6, 2024

DAVID BEHAVES BADLY

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 11

Focus Scripture: 2 Samuel 11:14-17, 22-25, 27b-12:1a

Key Verses: But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, and the Lord sent Nathan to David. 2 Samuel 11:27b-12:1a (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **David** – A mighty king of God who sinned and made a terrible mistake; after repenting, God forgave him.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of repentance and admitting to doing wrong.
2. Realize the parallels between David's humility and that of Walter's in the story.
3. Understand that although there are repercussions and consequences for sin, it does not negate God's love for us.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Provide a definition that is age-appropriate for the concept of repentance.
2. Draw parallels between David and his confession and Walter's admission.
3. Stress the importance of admitting to a bad deed and Jesus' grace and offering of no condemnation.

Questions

1. Why do you think Nathan came to David to have this conversation?
2. How do you think Walter handled his apology to his mother?
3. Were you able to produce good questions and explanations for your skit?

Resources: Encourage learners to use words that are actions, reminding them that prayer is the first step but not the final one. Explore only those situations that are safe and manageable for the learner; if someone does not want to participate, encourage them to observe. This exercise is not meant to delve into emotional or psychological health issues, but simply to help learners develop confidence in the face of new and challenging experiences. The visit to the zoo may be one way to demonstrate this concept.

Alternative activity: Watch the movie *Akeelah and the Bee*; have a discussion after viewing the movie and spread it over a period of two weeks if necessary; it can be done during the weeks of the Hebrew boys and Daniel's stories.

JR: Lesson 7 — October 13, 2024

GOD DELIVERS US

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 3

Focus Scripture: Daniel 3:19-26

Key Verse: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” Daniel 3:26b (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Shadrach (Shad'-rack), Meshach (Me'-shack), Abednego (Ah-bed-ni-go)** – Three Hebrew boys who were friends of Daniel and were servants of the royal court. They were loyal to God.

Lesson Goals: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the kind of faith the Hebrew boys had in the face of death.
2. Draw parallels between the violence that children face today and the threat of death that the Hebrew boys faced from the king.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Focus on how children today must have faith as they go through threats of violence in schools.
2. Make the fiery furnace a viable example of how our faith can be tested.
3. Redefine faith as a tool to keep us strong in the face of physical harm.

Questions

1. How would you feel if you knew that someone had a gun in your school?
2. What words did you use to write your prayer?
3. What is something that you can do with your friends or family to feel safer?

Resources: Music or video for the song, “Our God Is an Awesome God” – choose your version; Helen Baylor is one.

Note: it may be important to allow learners to express their feelings about threats of violence in schools; if some of them have already experienced it, this lesson may be a trigger for fear. Be mindful of actual experiences and prayerfully use that to guide the discussion.

JR: Lesson 8 — October 20, 2024

GOD KEEPS DANIEL SAFE

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 25; Daniel 6:10-28

Focus Scripture: Daniel 6:16-23, 25-27

Key Verse: “My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; also before you, O king, I have done no wrong.” Daniel 6:22 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Daniel** – A powerful Hebrew who, while in exile, served the king of the land and refused to bow to him.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Reinforce in their minds the concept of faith in the face of violence or threats to their lives.
2. Connect Daniel and his situation to that of the Hebrew boys and their experience.
3. Visualize the possibility of overcoming their own fears.
4. Express words of faith to empower themselves.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Retell or review the story of the Hebrew boys to make connections between the two situations.
2. Use words that the learners have already chosen to reinforce the faith experience.
3. If a visit to the zoo takes place, discuss their reactions during the

visit and make parallels between the Daniel's story and the lion's den.

4. Examine various experiences that can cause fear and how to use prayer to fight those negative feelings.
5. Stress the power of prayer and the need to be honest and uninhibited with God.

Questions

1. Do you feel better now that you have visited the zoo and have seen animals that you may have been afraid of?
2. What do you think was similar between the story of the fiery furnace and the lion's den?
3. How do you feel about the prayer that you have written? Will you say this prayer each day or at least on a regular basis?

Resources: In planning a visit to the zoo, try to involve the learners in the process; if the visit is not feasible, then choose together the movie or video you would like to see.

JR: Lesson 9 — October 27, 2024

GOD'S GOT IT

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 62

Focus Scripture: Psalm 62:1-2, 5-8, 11-12

Key Verse: For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. Psalm 62:5 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Fortress** – A place of protection and safety; a word spoken about in the psalms.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand safety in different contexts.
2. Have a grasp of what the psalms mean to us as Christians.
3. See parallels between the biblical narrative and this week's story.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Explain the definition of feeling safe in various contexts and connect it to the word *fortress*.
2. Encourage creativity on the part of learners as they draw their “safe caves.”
3. Emphasize that feeling safe at home and at school is important, but prayer still is an effective weapon.
4. Introduce the psalms as a part of the Bible that gives us inspiration and instruction.

Questions

1. What is your definition of feeling safe? What makes you feel safe

at home or at school?

2. Do you know what the word *fortress* means now?
3. If you were to write a psalm about feeling safe and having God in your life, what might be some of the things you would say?
4. Would you like to share your safe cave with the class?

Resources: Supplies – markers, pencils and crayons, nature pictures of caves for guidance.

Note: Encourage learners to talk about their pictures and what they like about them.

JR: Lesson 10 — November 3, 2024

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 23; John 10:11-14

Focus Scripture: John 10:11-14

Key Verse: “I am the good shepherd.” John 10:14a (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Shepherd** – A person who takes care of sheep; in the Bible Jesus the Christ is considered the *Shepherd* of us all.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Appreciate the parallels between the 23rd Psalm and John 10.
2. Perceive the connection between the words of Jesus and the words of David.
3. Build on prior information regarding the psalms and their role in the Christian experience.
4. Value hymns of the church.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Stress the importance of reading the entire Bible and specifically the psalms as a part of meditation and prayer.
2. Emphasize how God spoke through David and used his words to connect with the coming of Christ.
3. Connect similar terms or expressions in the two texts.
4. Explain the word *shepherd* in the context of Old and New Testaments.

5. Introduce the hymn noted in the exercise and foster interest in the lyrics.

Questions

1. Do you see your parent or some other person as a shepherd in your life?
2. What do you think David means when he says, *The Lord is my shepherd?*
3. Did you understand the lyrics to this hymn? What do you think they mean?
4. Do you believe Jesus is your shepherd, too?

Resources: If possible, bring hymnals to class to share the song, "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us"; help the learners share the experience of using hymnals. If time permits, teach them the music.

JR: Lesson 11 — November 10, 2024

PRAISE THE LORD

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 146–150

Focus Scripture: Psalm 150

Key Verse: Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Psalm 150:6 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Psalm 150** – The last of the book of Psalms that talks about all living things praising the Lord.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of loving family and being receptive to different customs.
2. Being thankful for all things and concentrating on the blessings we have.
3. Feel comfortable or identify ways to encourage someone who is thinking negatively.
4. Celebrate life using a variety of approaches.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Focus on how to appreciate life and family even when we are not necessarily happy about a circumstance.
2. Use Thanksgiving to emphasize showing gratefulness to God in all things.
3. Utilize real life activities that bring enjoyment.

Questions

1. Have you ever felt like Tamika when having to visit your grandparents or another relative?
2. What are some different things that you can do to celebrate Thanksgiving with your family?
3. What song did you choose for your celebration? Did you work on a dance that you would like to share?
4. Do you have something to thank God for other than food, clothes, or other physical things?

Resources: Learners may need assistance with thinking of creative ways that are not expensive or complicated to celebrate; it may help to have some ideas already on hand. For those who choose to select a song they like and develop a dance, give time for them to share.

JR: Lesson 12 — November 17, 2024

A SONG OF PRAISE

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 100

Focus Scripture: Psalm 100

Key Verse: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name. Psalm 100:4 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Gates** – In the Bible, the opening or doors of a place of worship where people enter to offer praise to God.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define the word *gates* from the context of the biblical text.
2. Continue identifying ways to celebrate God and God's blessings.
3. Appreciate letter writing and journaling as an important part of our faith experience.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

(Give examples of how letters are used in everyday life to communicate important concerns)

1. Define *gates* and *access to worship* in a context that is age appropriate.
2. Encourage letter writing as an ongoing tool to stay connected with God.
3. Reiterate being thankful for all things and incorporate the theme of Thanksgiving as a time for doing so.

Questions

1. Do you understand how the word *gates* is used in this Psalm?
2. What do you like about the letter you wrote? How do you think God would feel about your letter?
3. What will you do this Thanksgiving to thank God for all your blessings?

Resources: Pencils, pens, crayons and markers, construction paper, poster board and other supplies for bulletin board decoration. (Encourage learners to participate in the decorating activity.)

JR: Lesson 13 — November 24, 2024

I KNOW YOU

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 139

Focus Scripture: Psalm 139:1-6

Key Verse: Oh Lord, you have searched me and known me. Psalm 139:1 (NRSV UE)

Word Power!!!

- **Everlasting** – Forever or eternal; something that never ends.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Celebrate the psalms as an expression of thanksgiving and hope.
2. Understand that God as creator understands us all.
3. Visualize the concept of infinity and eternity as expressed in the word *everlasting*.

Teaching Strategies

Emphasis

1. Review prior lessons on the psalms and similarities or parallels.
2. Encourage a sense of comfort in the knowledge that God knows and understands us and always will.
3. Explain what the word *everlasting* means, and its implications.
4. Describe collages and their uses.

Questions

1. What have you liked about the psalms in these past lessons?
2. If you had to describe God and what God means to you, what would you say?

3. What do you like most about your collage?
4. What is the most important lesson you have learned this quarter?

Resources: For this final class, allows students to have enough time to complete their collage, giving them the various supplies as needed. Some students can use the black and white coloring page of David to color and add to the collage. It may be helpful to show the class pictures of various collages or samples if they are available.