
Forward

This book contains lessons from the Book of Psalms. These lessons will encourage your students to think more deeply about the things of God. As they read and study the Psalms, they will notice the praise given to God, not only for what He does—His creation, His blessings, His forgiveness—but also for who He is—loving, just, faithful, forgiving, patient. And they will be challenged to praise and worship God with new passion and deeper conviction.

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositionally. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from

a curriculum book, it validates God's Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children's Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is available from my website: <https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God's glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

Sheila Scroggins

Sheila has had over 35 years' experience in teaching children and has several other lesson series available. You may contact her by eMail at: ccuv-ChildrensMinistry@usa.net for more information.

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Teaching Schedule

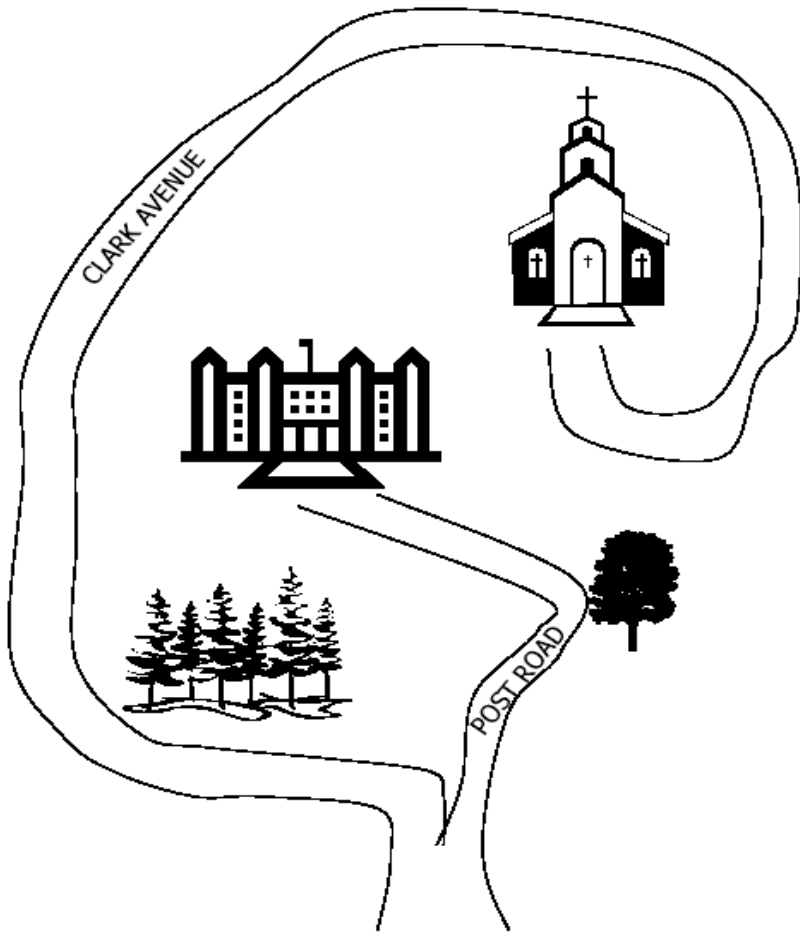
Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		The Way of Righteousness (Psalm 1)	<i>For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction. (Psalm 1:6)</i>
		David Confesses His Sin (2 Samuel, Psalm 51, Psalm 32)	<i>You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you. (Psalm 86:5)</i>
		David is Rewarded for Not Getting Even (Psalm 57; 1 Samuel 24)	<i>Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. (Romans 12:19) Or Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. (Romans 12:17)</i>
		Guard Your Heart (Psalm 73)	<i>So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Galatians 6:9)</i>
		God is Able to Protect Me (Psalm 91)	<i>Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)</i>
		How To Worship God, God's Way (Psalm 103)	<i>Give to the Lord the glory he deserves! (1 Chronicles 16:29)</i>
		The Value of God's Word (Psalm 119)	<i>Your instructions are more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver. (Psalm 119:72)</i>
		God's Personal Concern For You (Psalm 139)	<i>Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous. (Psalm 139:14)</i>
		Great is the Lord! (Psalm 145)	<i>Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)</i>

The Way of Righteousness

(Psalm 1)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Teacher, draw a simple map on the board showing a road that splits into two roads, Clark Avenue leading to the church and Post Road leading to the school. Then lead the children in a discussion:]



What are all the different kinds of paths you have traveled in your life? (Walked a garden path or a sidewalk, driven a highway, ridden your bike on a “bike path,” hiked a trail into the forest.) How do you think that walking down a path in the woods might be like your life? [Teacher, connect the physical paths we tread in life to the spiritual paths we must also choose.]

Some people think there are many paths to God, but Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6) Let me explain...

- How many roads are on this map? (Two, Clark Avenue and Post Road.)
- Where does Clark Avenue go? (To the church.)
- Where does Post Road go? (To the school.)
- Can you get to the school by going on Clark Avenue? (No.)
- Can you get to the church by going on Post Road? (No.)

Suppose you thought that the road to the right – Post Road – would go to the church because the church is on the right. Would you be correct? (No!) Post Road only goes to the school. It doesn’t make any difference if you *think* that the road goes to the church; the road goes to the school no matter what you think. You could try to get to the church by Post Road, but you would not get there.

The Bible also talks about two roads we can take through life. Each road has a destination, a place where it leads, just like Clark Avenue goes to one place and Post Road goes to another place. The Bible tells us that there is only one way to get to Heaven and that is by way of Jesus.

Today we are going to study Psalm 1 which is full of word pictures. Word pictures paint ideas in your mind and help you to see things more clearly. For example, if I said, “It was darker than the inside of a cow” you’d know I was saying that it was completely and totally without any light at all. That is a word picture.

Psalm 1 describes the two paths of life that you can take in life and compares the life of the faithful person to the life of the faithless person.

Opening Prayer

Father, there are really only two paths in life, the path to eternal life with You and the path to destruction. Please help us to learn how to make wise choices in life so that we might stay on the path to heaven. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction. (Psalm 1:6)

Lesson

Every day you are faced with choices. You can choose to do things God's way, or you can choose to ignore God and do things your own way. There's God's way of obedience or Satan's way of rebellion against God.

The psalmist begins by praising the joys of those who refuse to listen and follow the advice of people who do not love God.

Psalm 1:1

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.

Mockers are people that make fun of or tease others. The psalmist is talking about people who make fun of God.

Notice the progression here. First, he *follows* the advice of someone from the wrong crowd, then he *stands around* with them, and finally he *joins* in with them. Oh, you may not start out wanting to hang out with the wrong kids at school, but if you don't watch out, you'll be right in the middle of them.

The friends that we have can have a huge influence on us. If our friends don't consider the things of God important, we could be tempted to feel that way, too. If we don't feel that the things of the Lord are important, it is just the same as mocking God ourselves. Do your friends build up your faith in God? Or, do they tear it down? True friends help you draw closer to God.

The more we allow people who mock God to influence us, the more we separate ourselves from our source of real life. We must have contact with unbelievers if we are to witness to them, but we must not join in or imitate their ungodly behavior. If you want the joy of the Lord, make friends with those who love God and His Word.

The psalmist goes on to say that God blesses people who study his Word and try to obey Him.

Psalm 1:2

But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.

The "*law of the Lord*" is referring to all of Scripture—the whole Bible. The more we know God's Word, the more we will depend on Him to guide every thought that we have, every word that we speak, and action that we do.

You can learn how to follow God by meditating on His Word. *Meditating* means spending time reading and thinking about what you have read. It's like chewing on the word just as a cow chews its cud before swallowing it. When you read God's word, don't just read the words and then put your Bible away. Ask God to show you the lesson He wants to teach you. Ask Him how you should change so you're living as He wants. Maybe there is a sin He wants you to confess. Maybe He wants you to think in new ways about a particular person or situation.

If you want to follow God more closely, you must know what He says. Knowing God's Word and meditating upon it are the first steps towards applying it to your everyday life. The Psalmist says that the person who delights in God's Word is full of joy.

Then he compares a person like this to healthy, fruit bearing trees with strong roots.

Psalm 1:3

They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

Godly people are described as “*trees planted along the riverbank.*” A tree is one of the most important plants God created. Can you think of reasons trees are important? Trees provide food and shade for people and an ideal place for birds and animals to live. We also use wood from trees to build things, to make paper, to burn to keep warm and for cooking.

Why is it good for a tree to be planted along the river? It can get plenty of water to drink. Did you know that Jesus said that anyone who believes in Him would receive *Living Water* (John 7:39)? That is a word picture that describes the Holy Spirit. God fills us with the Spirit, Who refreshes our souls and comforts us with the knowledge of His love and care.

A tree that is planted by water gets strong roots that make it sturdy in the face of violent storms. Once the roots are firmly in the ground, it will not easily wither.

In the same way, people who are planted in God’s Word will not easily “*wither*” when the storms of life come. They will be able to produce spiritual fruit. This does not mean that people who put their trust in God will never have difficulties or failures. There is no guarantee that we will always be healthy, wealthy, or happy. What it means is this: when we apply God’s wisdom, our lives will bear good fruit and we will receive God’s approval.

Just as a tree soaks up water and bears luscious fruit, we also are to soak up God’s Word, and allow it to produce thoughts, words, and actions that will honor God. To achieve anything worthwhile, we must have God’s Word in our heart. The more we delight in God’s Word the more fruitful we will be. We grow like well-watered, fruitful trees. [Teacher, discuss what it means to have a “*fruitful*” life.]

In contrast, those who don’t trust and obey God have meaningless lives that blow away like dust.

Psalm 1:4

But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.

Just in case you are not clear about the difference between the righteous and the unrighteous, the psalmist spends the next few verses giving us a clear description of the ungodly.

Unlike the righteous, the ungodly cannot be compared to a tree. Instead, the psalmist compares him to chaff.

Chaff is the outer shell (or husk) that must be removed to get at the valuable kernels of grain inside. Chaff is removed by a process called threshing and winnowing. After the plants are cut, they are crushed, and then the pieces are thrown into the air. Chaff is very light and is carried away by even the slightest wind, while the good grain falls back to the earth.

Chaff is a symbol of a faithless life that drifts along without direction. Good grain is a symbol of a faithful life that can be used by God.

Psalm 1:5

They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly.

There is going to be a day of Judgment at the end of time. On that day, the wicked will perish, but the Lord watches over the righteous.

Psalm 1:6

For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

There are only two paths of life before us—God’s way of obedience or the way of rebellion and destruction. Be sure to choose God’s path because the path you choose determines how you will spend eternity.

Once we accept Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, we can never be happy or blessed by living sinful lives. True happiness comes as we daily meditate on God’s Word and apply it to our lives. Each day you should read at least one verse of scripture. Then ask God to open

your spiritual eyes and ears so that you might be able to get the deeper meaning and understanding of what the words mean for you personally. God's Word is perfect and is able to give you wisdom, joy, and guidance on your journey through life.

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to choose to follow the path of righteousness. Give us the power and wisdom that we need to choose to follow You in all our ways. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

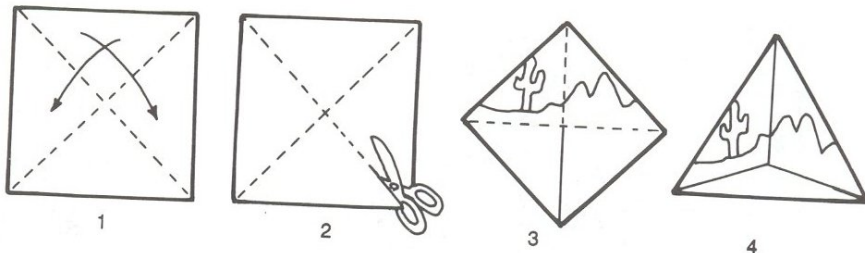
Triarama

Triaramas are a three-dimensional way for students to display what they have learned.



Materials:

- Construction paper (9" x 9")
- Construction paper scraps
- Markers
- Glue
- Scissors
- Other decorations



Directions:

1. Fold the top right corner of the square down to the lower left corner. Repeat with the opposite corners.
2. Open and cut one fold line to the center of the square.
3. Draw a background scene on half the square as shown.
4. Overlap the two bottom triangles and glue.
5. Add stand-up parts to complete the three-dimensional scene.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. (vv.1-2) How does Psalm 1 describe a godly person? What does he avoid? What does he love to think about? (He does not follow the advice of ungodly people and he loves God's word.)
2. (vv. 1, 4) How does Psalm 1 describe the ungodly person? (They are wicked, sinners, mockers, worthless)
3. (v. 1) Have you ever been given ungodly advice? Advice that if you followed it would disobey God's Word?
4. (v. 1) How can we be full of joy in our Christian walk? (Don't follow the advice of the ungodly and delight in God's Word.)
5. (v. 2a) What do godly people delight in? (God's word.)
6. (v. 2b) How does a godly person show they delight in God's word? (They read and obey it.)
7. (v. 2) What does it mean to meditate on the law of God? (Spending time reading and thinking about what you have read. It's like chewing on the word just as a cow chews its cud before swallowing it.)
8. (v. 3) How is a godly person like a "tree"? (Their lives are fruitful, they never wither, they prosper in all they do.)

9. (v. 3) What does it mean to have a spiritually fruitful life? (You are encouraging others to get to know God and to live lives that are pleasing to God.)
10. (v. 4) Why does Psalm 1 describe an ungodly person as worthless chaff? (A person who does not live a spiritually fruitful life – that is, he is drawn toward ungodly friends and does not have a desire to read and study the Word of God -- is not useful to God.)
11. (v. 4) What happens to chaff? (It blows away in the wind.)
12. Why is it important to choose godly friends? (They will help you stand strong in Jesus.)
13. (v. 1) Have you ever chosen to follow the advice of the wicked?
14. How can you get a greater hunger for God's Word? How can you make His Word a greater part of your life? (Spend time thinking about what God's word means.)
15. (v. 5) What will happen to all people who do not believe in the Lord on Judgment Day? (They will be condemned.)
16. What will happen to those who trust and obey God on Judgment Day? (They will be brought into the Kingdom of Heaven.)
17. (v. 6) Where does the path of the wicked lead? (Everlasting separation from God in Hell)

David Confesses His Sin

(2 Samuel, Psalm 51, Psalm 32)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever done wrong and tried to cover it up? How did you feel? Perhaps later you admitted what you had done; maybe someone found out and they forgave you. How did you feel then?

Today we are going to learn what King David learned: we have a merciful God.

Opening Prayer

Father, You desire that we are honest. Help us to learn to come to you quickly so that we can have clean hearts before you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you. (Psalm 86:5)

Lesson

Does anyone know what the difference is between grace and mercy? Grace is getting what you don't deserve; mercy is NOT getting what you *do* deserve! Grace is unmerited favor; God showers you with His grace by giving you blessings upon blessings even though you haven't really earned them. And, on the other hand, He doesn't punish you for your sins, even though you deserve to be punished. That is His mercy.

Today we are going to learn about a time that King David sinned and he tried to cover it up. But, God, because He is all-knowing and sees everything, knew all about David's sin. And because God is merciful, He forced David to confess His sin, and then, even though David did

some very bad things, God was merciful to him and even called David the apple of His eye.

David believed in God and loved Him very much. Even as a shepherd boy, he composed many beautiful songs of praise to God.

Psalm 9:1-2

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.

God's plan since before the foundations of the world was to send Jesus into the world through the family line of David. So God made a promise to David,

2 Samuel 7:16

Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.

This caused David, the king of Israel, to praise God.

2 Samuel 7:18-19

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and prayed, "Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And now, Sovereign Lord, in addition to everything else, you speak of giving your servant a lasting dynasty! Do you deal with everyone this way, O Sovereign Lord?"

David was in awe of God. He gave God all the credit for making him, a mere shepherd, the King of Israel. And now God was promising to give his family a lasting dynasty! David was humble and thankful to God.

2 Samuel 7:22

How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you!

But even though David loved God, there was a time when he committed a terrible sin.

[Teacher, since David's sin involved adultery and murder, use wisdom in presenting it. This lesson has been designed so that, if you are teaching very young children, you may avoid naming David's sin entirely.]

2 Samuel 11 tells of a time when David slept with another man's wife. And when she found out that she was expecting a baby, David arranged to have her husband killed in battle so that he could marry her.

Now David knew God's laws. He knew that God's Seventh Commandment was you must not commit adultery. What that means is that once you are married, you need to stay true to your husband or wife. God expects husbands and wives to be faithful to each other. David was a married man, and Bathsheba was a married woman, but they were not married to each other. So when they spent the night together, they sinned against God.

You become a believer in God by accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior. Does that mean that you will no longer sin? No! Believers should want very badly not to sin, but even so, they *will* do wrong from time to time. Believers sin, and David was not exception. David sinned even though he was a believer in God.

David knew he had sinned and he tried to cover it up instead of confessing it to God. Have you ever done that? [Teacher, relate a personal example.]

- Perhaps, when your mom sent you to the store, you only gave back part of the change, keeping the rest for yourself. Maybe you thought you deserved that money because you'd been helping around the house.
- Perhaps you borrowed your brother's bike without permission. While racing with your friend, you wrecked it. Instead of telling your brother the truth, you returned his bike and pretended not to know what happened. Maybe you thought all the favors you'd done for him in the past made up for this wrong.

You might think you can make your sin go away by covering it up with the many good things you do, but covering up your wrong doesn't make it go away.

David thought if he ordered Bathsheba's husband to the front line of the battle and he got killed, that no one would know he sent him there. But our God is an all-seeing, all-knowing God.

The Bible warns you about choosing to cover your sin instead of confessing it.

Proverbs 28:13

People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.

To confess your sins means to admit your sin, agree with God that it is wrong and be willing to turn from it. You need to confess your sin to God and tell the truth to those you've wronged. Only God can take your sin away and He will.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

If you have accepted God's free gift of salvation, you can be sure that God will forgive your sins when you confess them to Him. But David tried to cover his sin instead of confessing it to God.

David was miserable for a long time.

Psalm 51:1-4

Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say and your judgment against me is just.

Why was David so miserable? He had a guilty conscience because he had not confessed his sin. That is the same reason you are unhappy when you sin. But God loves you and wants you to be happy. You will be when you have a clean conscience by confessing your sin.

David needed help to admit to his sin and deal with it. God sent a prophet named Nathan to lovingly help David deal with his sin the right way. God spoke through Nathan, saying...

2 Samuel 12:7-9

Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man! The Lord, the God of Israel, says: I anointed you king of Israel and saved you from the power of Saul. I gave you your master's house and his wives and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much more. Why, then, have you despised the word of the Lord and done this horrible deed? For you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and stolen his wife.

David found it very difficult to admit that he had done wrong. God didn't want David to go on feeling miserable, so He faithfully used Nathan to make David be honest about his sin. Once David was willing to face what he had done, he was able to confess it to God.

God helps you to see where you have sinned, too, by giving you your conscience, His Word, and people like Nathan to point out your wrong to you. The people God uses may be your parents, your pastor, your Sunday school teacher, a school teacher, or a friend. Once you see where you are wrong, then with God's help, you can confess your sin to God; and you can be sure that when you do, God will forgive you.

It is only God's grace that enables us to admit our sin and be willing to turn from it. Through Nathan, God was helping David to see what he needed to do.

David listened to Nathan and admitted his sin. He knew that his sin had hurt God more than anyone else. Often your sin will hurt others, too, besides God. How might taking your brother's bike or keeping your mother's change hurt God? How might it hurt your family? When

you are tempted to sin, you should think about how your actions will make God feel and how others might be hurt if you give in to temptation.

David prayed, confessing his sin and asking God to forgive him.

Psalm 51:7-12

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

David not only wanted God to forgive him his sin, he wanted God to change him so that he wouldn't do the same thing again.

Psalm 51:14

Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.

David had peace and joy again, and he praised God.

Psalm 32:1-5

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

You cannot have true peace inside until you admit that you are a sinner and that you need the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin. God hates sin even more than we do. God hates sin so much that He sent His own perfect Son to die on a cross to destroy sin.

God's Words says that *the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.* (1 John 3:8b) Jesus gave His precious blood for you and for me and for everyone

Romans 5:8 says, *But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

When you sin, you need to confess it to God right away. Have you ever allowed a sin to stay in your heart and mind without confessing it to God? Why do you think you did that? What happened? How did you feel? You will not have peace inside until you have a clean conscience.

Do you ever play down the importance of your sin saying to yourself that it's not a big deal? Do you ever make excuses for your sin? (*"Well, everybody does that!" "It was just a little white lie!" "People on TV say that word all the time!"*)

All sin deserves death. God says that *the wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23). Wages is what you have coming to you at the end of the day for all that you have done.

Have you ever struggled with the sense that your sin is so great you could never be fully forgiven? God says there is no sin so big and so bad that you can't bring it to God, confess it and be cleansed from it.

Even though God knows all about the bad things we've thought and said and done, God loves us so much that he's always willing to forgive us. Remember 1 John 1:9.

When you are having your prayer time this week, ask God to show you any sins that you have not confessed. Don't be surprised when God brings to your mind some wrong things that happened a long time ago, things that you had forgotten about. You may be tempted to listen to Satan who will tell you to ignore them or to try to cover them up by making an excuse. Resist that temptation. Instead, tell God what you have done and ask Him to forgive you. Claim His promise of 1 John 1:9 that He will forgive you when you confess your sins to Him.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your great mercy and forgiveness! We love You, O Lord! Help us to show Your kind of love towards others. Help us to show mercy and forgiveness to others, even when they don't deserve it. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Soap Cross

Hold up a bar of soap and ask the children what it is used for. Yes, it is used to clean away the dirt. In today's lesson we learned about asking God to clean away the sin in our lives so we can live with him in Heaven. This craft will help to remind us that Jesus died on the cross to cleanse us from our sins.



What you need: A bar of Ivory Soap for each crafter (other brands do not work as well), a plastic picnic knife, a toothpick. Have a few extra bars on hand in case the soap breaks during carving.

What you do: Draw an outline of a cross on the soap. Make the cross bars approximately 1-1/2" wide. Whittle away the soap a little bit at a time. DO NOT attempt to cut all the way through at one time. Cut slowly and carefully, otherwise the soap will break apart. Once the cross is carved, place it under running water and smooth out the edges. Scrape the name "Ivory" off the soap. Using a toothpick, carve a heart at the center, or write, "JESUS" across and down the center. (Place the middle letter "S" in Jesus at the center of the cross.)

Game Center

Clean Heart

Set Up: Designate a large playing area. If possible cordon off the play area into the shape of a heart. Fill the 'heart' with items of various sizes and shapes to represent sin (i.e., cones, scarves, cups, rolled up newspaper, boxes, etc.) Establish a start line 15'-30' away from the point of the 'heart'.

How To Play: Divide players into teams. (No more than 5 players per team) Tell the players the playing area represents a heart (a life) filled with sin. Have the teams line up at the start line. At "Go," the first player on each team must run into the heart and remove one "sin." Then run back to his or her team line to drop the "sin" off and tag the next player in line. The next player takes his or her turn. Play continues like this until all the 'sins' are removed.

How To Win: The team with the most "sins" removed from the heart is the winning team.

After the Game Discussion: All those items we collected represented the sins in our lives. Some were big 'sins' and some were small 'sins'. We sometimes look at our own sins as big and small sins, too. Telling a lie or being unkind, we might consider to be a small sin, verses stealing something or killing someone. Those we would think of as big sins! However, God doesn't measure sin like that. God tells us that ALL sin is wrong and that ALL sins, big and small, separate us from his holy presence, and deserve to be punished. The only way we can rid ourselves of sin is to trust in Jesus to save us and forgive us. Jesus died in our place to take the punishment that we deserve for sinning. When we believe Jesus did that for us, and we ask him to forgive us, we are forgiven, and our hearts are cleansed.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. How was David feeling when he wrote this psalm?
2. What would you say to God if you sinned?
3. In verse 4, why did David say to God, "Your judgment against me is just"? (He didn't think he deserved God's forgiveness.)
4. In verse 1, what basis did David appeal to God for mercy and forgiveness? (God's unfailing love.)
5. What effect did David's guilt have on him?
 - In verse 3: (It haunted him day and night.)
 - In verse 8: (He had lost his joy.)
6. What do we learn about sin from these verses?
 - In verse 4: (It is against God.)
 - In verse 5: (We are born sinners.)
7. Why do you think it's important that we see our sin as being committed against God? (verse 4)

David is Rewarded for Not Getting Even

(Psalm 57; 1 Samuel 24)

Pre Session Warm Up

Have you ever been so upset with someone that you wanted to get even? Maybe a friend did something to you that embarrassed you in front of others; maybe someone said things about you that weren't true. It is easy to want to get even when someone does mean things to you, isn't it? The Bible tells of a time when David was badly mistreated by someone. What do you suppose he did when his chance came to get even?

Today we are going to study a psalm that David wrote during the time he had to run for his life from King Saul, who wanted to kill David.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we want our lives to bring You honor in every thing that we think, everything that we say, everything that we do. Show us how You handled it when You were treated unfairly. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. (Romans 12:19)

Or

Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. (Romans 12:17)

Lesson

After Joshua died, the children of Israel had no strong leaders. For 200 years they were ruled by Judges. Then the people demanded that God give them a king. So God had Samuel, the last judge, appoint Saul to be the king of Israel.

Saul started out as a good king. But after awhile he became full of

pride. He got to the point that he wasn't as interested in obeying God as he used to be. He seemed to want to do everything his own way instead of God's way.

Because Saul disobeyed God, God told Samuel to appoint David, a young shepherd boy, as the king. But because David was still only a boy, it would be years before he actually took the throne from Saul.

Meanwhile God used David, a shepherd boy, to kill the big, mean giant, Goliath. Does anyone remember how David killed Goliath? David shot him with his sling shot! And, it only took one stone!

After David's victory over Goliath, King Saul asked David to move into the palace and live with him and his family. It gave Saul such joy to hear David play his harp and sing praise songs to the Lord. There, in the king's household, David became one of Saul most loyal and helpful servants.

Then one time, there was a war between the Israelites and the Philistines. And David became an important war hero. When they came back from battle, there was a big parade. All the soldiers marched through town and all the people cheered loudest for David.

Let's read about it:

1 Samuel 18:6-11

When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals. This was their song: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!" This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

The very next day a tormenting spirit from God overwhelmed Saul, and he began to rave in his house like a madman. David was playing the harp, as he did each day. But Saul had a spear in his hand, and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to the wall. But David escaped him twice.

Saul became insanely jealous of David's popularity with the people. He became so jealous, in fact, that he wanted to murder David.

So, David had to leave the palace, and run for his life.

Then, David lived a very hard life. He slept in the forest or caves in the

mountains. Wherever we went, Saul chased after him and who ever helped David was in terrible trouble.

1 Samuel 24:1-2

After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David had gone into the wilderness of Engedi. So Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men near the rocks of the wild goats.

As David was hiding in a cave, he wrote this beautiful song to the Lord:

Psalm 57:1-2

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy! I look to You for protection. I will hide beneath the shadow of Your wings until the danger passes by. I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill His purpose for me.

Because he was in great danger, David cried out to God for protection. He knew that God was far stronger than his enemies. He had confidence in the Lord.

Psalm 57:3-4

He will send help from heaven to rescue me, disgracing those who hound me. My God will send forth His unfailing love and faithfulness. I am surrounded by fierce lions who greedily devour human prey—whose teeth pierce like spears and arrows, and whose tongues cut like swords.

To David Saul seemed like a ferocious lion whose bared teeth are as sharp as spears and arrows. He knew that Saul would tear him to pieces if he had a chance.

David hid in a cave. There is certainly nothing wrong with trying to stay away from people that are trying to mistreat us. In fact, that is what God wants you to do. If someone tries to harm you, you need to run and hide from them.

While David was hiding in the cave, something exciting happened.

1 Samuel 24:3-4

At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were

hiding farther back in that very cave! "Now's your opportunity!" David's men whispered to him. "Today the LORD is telling you, 'I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.'" So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.

Saul walked right into the very cave that David and his men were in! This was David's chance to get Saul. David's men wanted to attack him right there and then. But even though Saul wanted to kill David; David did NOT want to hurt Saul. Quiet as a shadow, David slipped up to Saul, took out his knife, but instead of killing him, David just cut a piece off of Saul's robe.

Wow! Could you do that? If you had just spent the last few years of your life running and hiding from someone that was out to kill you, what would you do if that very person walked right into your cave?

When someone is being mean to you, it's easy to want to get even and be mean right back, isn't it? But David knew that wouldn't please God. David showed respect for Saul. After all, Saul was the King of Israel.

He let Saul leave the cave unharmed.

Have you ever been hurt by someone that you trusted? Maybe someone wrongly accused you. How do you feel when others are unfair to you? Have you ever wanted to get even with someone for hurting you?

When someone has wronged you, the natural response is to want to get even. God hates our desires for revenge because it shows we do not trust Him to take care of the situation.

God wants to help you control your anger. You can trust Him to handle the situation. Otherwise your anger will control you and cause you to do foolish things. God is pleased when you refuse to get even with your enemies. God has promised that He will deal with those who wrong you.

David had an important decision to make about getting even. But, rather than taking revenge, he chose to let God deal with his enemy.

After cutting off a piece of King Saul's robe, David felt guilty.

1 Samuel 24:5-6

But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul's robe. "The LORD knows I shouldn't have done that to my lord the king," he said to his men. "The LORD forbid that I should do this to my lord the king and attack the LORD's anointed one, for the LORD Himself has chosen him."

As soon as David cut that piece of Saul's robe off, he realized he was wrong. He knew it was better to trust God than to get even. David knew that when we sin, we separate ourselves from God.

Isaiah 59:2

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, He has turned away and will not listen anymore.

Thankfully, God sent Jesus to pay for your sin and mine by giving His blood on the cross. He didn't deserve to be punished for us, but He did it so our sins could be forgiven. Jesus died and came back to life again so that you could become His child by believing on Him and asking Him to be your Savior. God wants you to know Him. David knew God and wanted to do the right thing.

David respectfully told Saul that he was trusting God:

1 Samuel 24:8-13

David came out and shouted after him, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked around, David bowed low before him. Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you? This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn't true. For the LORD placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, 'I will never harm the king—he is the LORD's anointed one.' Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. This proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me. "May the LORD judge between us. Perhaps the LORD will punish you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you. As that old proverb says, 'From evil people come evil deeds.' So you can be sure I will never harm you.

God helped David know what he should do. Instead of getting even,

David spoke kindly to his enemy. He told Saul he was leaving matters with God.

If you belong to Jesus, God is pleased when you refuse to get even with your enemies. Instead of getting even, He wants you to trust Him to handle the situation in His own way and time. God may not deal with your enemies the way you think He should. He may even ask you to show kindness to those who have hurt you. But regardless of how God responds, we can know that He is always fair and right. He will perfectly judge your enemy. God says, "Don't try to get even." If punishment is needed, He will take care of it.

Romans 12:19

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.

When someone hurts you and you are tempted to take revenge, ask God to help you calm down. Then thank God that He will take care of this situation in the best way. Ask God to give you His love in your heart for the person who has wronged you. David allowed God to put love and respect in his heart for King Saul, and he trusted God to help him know what to do.

God delivered David by sending Saul home and David gave God all the glory.

Let's read the rest of this beautiful prayer that David wrote to God:

Psalm 57:5-6

Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens! May Your glory shine over all the earth. My enemies have set a trap for me. I am weary from distress. They have dug a deep pit in my path, but they themselves have fallen into it.

All of David's men had seen the wonderful power of God to deal with their enemy, and they gave God glory for it. They saw the value of not getting even, and letting God deal with their enemy. And David was happy with his decision. He knew he had done the right thing by letting God judge those who hated him rather than getting even himself. David joyfully sang praise to God.

Psalm 57:7-11

My heart is confident in You, O God; my heart is confident. No wonder I can sing Your praises! Wake up, my heart! Wake up, O lyre and harp! I will wake the dawn with my song. I will thank You, Lord, among all the people. I will sing Your praises among the nations. For Your unfailing love is as high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens. May Your glory shine over all the earth.

David had learned that he didn't need to get even. Neither do you. You can pray and trust God to deal with those who have hurt you. If you belong to Jesus, God is pleased when you refuse to get even with your enemies.

This week when you are tempted to get even, remember Romans 12:19. Talk to God about that person and He will give you the power to lay down your angry feelings. Thank Him for taking care of the situation in the best way. Ask Him to give you His love for the person who's hurt you.

Closing Prayer

Father, forgive us when we let our angry feelings just fly. Help us to take control of our anger and to trust that You will take care of every situation in our lives. We want our lives to bring Your name glory and we want others to know that You are a God of love and grace. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities**Activity Center**

Act out 1 Samuel 24. Choose a David and a Saul. Have the remainder of the children be David's men in the cave.

Or, ask the students: Have you ever been bullied? Is there someone who is always picking on you? Have you ever been hurt by someone that you trusted? Maybe a friend did something to you that embarrassed you in front of others; maybe someone said things about

you that weren't true. How do you feel when others do wrong things to you? Did you ever try to get even?

Have them get into small groups and come up with a scenario from life where one child treats the other one unfairly. Then have them act out how they would handle that situation.

Craft Corner**Kindness Cards**

Supplies: blank index cards and art supplies such as markers, glitter pens, stamps, and stickers

Ask kids to think of kind actions they could do for people. For example, they could bring in an elderly neighbor's mail or newspaper, or they could help with the dishes on a day it's not their chore.

Help kids write or draw their ideas on the index cards and allow them to decorate the cards. Then encourage kids to give the cards to the recipients they thought of. (Be sure to tell kids to get their parents' permission before approaching a neighbor.)

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. Where was David when he prayed this prayer in Psalm 57? (A Cave)
2. Why was David in the cave? (He was running for his life from King Saul.)
3. What would be someone's natural reaction to David's circumstances? (To fight back; get revenge)
4. What did David do when he was faced with this trial?
 - a. Verse 1: He looked to God for protection
 - b. Verse 2: He cried out to God
 - c. Verse 7: He had confidence in God
 - d. Verse 9: He thanked God & sang praises to Him
5. What do verses 5 and 11 say was most important to David during this trial? (That God would be exalted and glorified.)
6. Why is it important to remember that God is "exalted"? How should knowing that God is "above the highest heavens" affect our view of our problems? (It helps us to remember that He is bigger than our problems and that He can fix them.)
7. How did David's response to the trial demonstrate faith? (He trusted that God would take care of the situation.)
8. Re-read verses 9-10. How can the way we handle trouble and trials become a testimony to those who do not know God? (It shows other that God is trustworthy.)
9. Have you ever been bullied? Is there someone who is always picking on you? Did you ever try to get even?
10. When you try to get even, what does that say about your faith in God? (It is lacking!)

Guard Your Heart

(Psalm 73)

Pre Session Warm Up

Have you ever envied non-believers? Have you ever been discontent with your life? Have you ever thought, “It doesn’t pay to do right? Why should I tell the truth and get in trouble when my friend can lie and get by with it?” Who is it that puts thoughts like that into your mind? It is Satan, isn’t it! But you are not the only one who has had those thoughts. Asaph had them, too, and he wrote about them in Psalm 73.

Today we’re going to learn that we need to guard our hearts from discouragement.

Opening Prayer

Lord, sometimes when we look at other people in the world it seems like they are living a higher standard of life. Their houses look bigger, their toys look like more fun, or their clothes look more stylish than ours. But, when we look at You, Lord Jesus, we realize that You are all we need. Help us not to desire anything else in this life except You! Help us to be truly thankful for all that you have given us and all that you have done for us in our lives. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Galatians 6:9)

Lesson

We see in the title of this Psalm, that it is not written by David. It was written by Asaph, a musician that provided music for worship during David’s time.

Asaph realized that God was good to those who obeyed Him.

Psalm 73:1-2

Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure. But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone.

Yet Asaph almost gave up living for God because it didn’t seem to be working for him. He looked around and noticed that those who were not followers of God seemed to be better off than he was.

Psalm 73:3

For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness.

Asaph became envious because it seemed that God treated bad people better than God treated him.

Psalm 73:4-7

They seem to live such painless lives; their bodies are so healthy and strong. They don't have troubles like other people; they're not plagued with problems like everyone else. They wear pride like a jeweled necklace and clothe themselves with cruelty. These fat cats have everything their hearts could ever wish for!

It seemed that non-believers were living better lives than the believers. It seemed that they had care free lives and that they had better health and didn’t seem to have as many troubles as he did. Life was going so well for them that they even became puffed up with pride and were often cruel to other people. They didn’t even try to cover their pride, but displayed it as boldly as someone would display a fine gold chain or nice clothes. Many of them had more money than they could ever want or use.

Asaph realized these people were blessed even though they were wicked, and it just didn’t seem fair to him.

Psalm 73: 8-12

They scoff and speak only evil; in their pride they seek to crush others. They boast against the very heavens, and their words strut throughout the earth. And so the people are dismayed and confused, drinking in all their words. "What does God know?" they ask. "Does the Most High even know what's happening?" Look at these wicked people—enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply.

They were not just indifferent to people who were trying to live a life that was pleasing to God; they were truly wicked. They made fun of those who tried to do right. They even laughed about God. They took advantage of others and said, “How can God know what I’m doing? He doesn’t know anything.” Yet these people kept getting richer. They seemed to have it better than he did even though he tried his best to be kind to others and obey God.

Asaph was discouraged, but refused to hurt others by voicing his doubts.

Psalm 73:13-15

Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason? I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain. If I had really spoken this way to others, I would have been a traitor to Your people.

Asaph thought perhaps it didn’t pay to live for God. In fact, he thought that maybe it was useless to stay away from wrong and resist temptation.

Even though you are a Christian, you may think, as Asaph did, that it doesn’t make any difference if you do right or not. Others do wrong and get by with it, yet you do right and it seems God is continually punishing you. “This isn’t fair!” you say. Asaph didn’t dare tell anyone his thoughts because he didn’t want to be a bad influence on others.

Have you ever had secret doubts about whether or not it pays to be honest? Say you got a “D” on your test. Have you ever thought that you could have cheated like one of your friends and gotten an “A”?

Or, it may seem unfair when you pay for something in a store while others just steal it. Satan uses such doubts to get us to quit obeying God. But you need to remember that doing right is always worthwhile. Even though you can’t always see the value of it right away, at some point God will reward your efforts.

Galatians 6:9-10

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. Therefore, whenever we

have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

But Asaph hadn’t come to understand that yet.

Asaph was miserable inside, struggling to decide what he should do.

Psalm 73:16

So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is!

Asaph went to God with his questions.

Psalm 73:17

Then I went into Your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked.

Asaph did the thing all of us should do. Though he felt he couldn’t talk to anyone else about his doubts, he knew he could talk to God about them. So he did. Then he began to see things the way God sees them. There may be times when you feel as if you don’t have anyone who can really understand the frustration you feel about what is fair and what isn’t. But God understands and cares about you very much.

1 Peter 5:7

Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.

No matter what others may do, God wants you, as His child, to remember that doing right is always worthwhile. When it seems easier to cheat on a test or steal something from a store, talk to the Lord about how you feel. He understands and will give you the strength to do what is right. Then in His time He will reward your obedience to Him. Ask God to help you begin to see things the way He sees them. When Asaph talked to the Lord, he began to realize it was better to do what was right than to be like those who despised.

God showed Asaph that later he’d be glad he had chosen to do right.

Psalm 73:18-19

Truly, You put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction. In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors.

Understanding this, Asaph felt guilty for having doubted God.

Psalm 73:20-23

When You arise, O Lord, You will laugh at their silly ideas as a person laughs at dreams in the morning. Then I realized that my heart was bitter, and I was all torn up inside. I was so foolish and ignorant—I must have seemed like a senseless animal to You. Yet I still belong to You; You hold my right hand.

The Bible tells us that he felt foolish and stupid. Often we feel the same when we realize that we have sinned. But Asaph realized that God still loved him and was willing to forgive him. God loves you and will forgive you, too. God has already paid for your sin by sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross. Jesus is the One who loved us and died to wash us from our sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5b). Because Jesus came to life again, He will hear you when you ask Him to save you. If you have never asked Him to do that, ask Him today. Then you will belong to God. Asaph belonged to God, and his doubts did not change the way God felt toward him.

Asaph realized that he had God's own presence and help to do right.

Psalm 73:24

You guide me with Your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny.

Finally, Asaph decided that doing right really is worthwhile; he saw that his relationship with God was his most valuable possession.

Psalm 73:25

Whom have I in heaven but You? I desire You more than anything on earth.

Asaph learned that God would help him with his frustrations. Is there a desire in your heart like Asaph's? His greatest desire on Earth was to find God's purposes for him in life.

Psalm 73:26

My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; He is mine forever.

He decided that he would share with others all the wonderful things that learned by coming to God with his secret questions.

Psalm 73:27-28

Those who desert Him will perish, for You destroy those who abandon You. But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things You do.

Will you choose to do the right thing this week—even when others are doing wrong? Sometimes you will be tempted to think it isn't worth it to do right. When Satan temps you with those foolish thoughts, remember Galatians 6:9 and say it to yourself. At the moment, it may seem better to do wrong as others do. But doing right is always worthwhile. God is pleased when His children obey Him. You will receive special good things that He has planned for you in this life as well as future rewards in heaven. Talk to the Lord about your struggles to obey. Thank Him that He is with you, and ask Him to give you His strength to keep doing what is right.

When life is over, people will be very glad they have accepted Jesus as their Savior. If they haven't, they will wish very much that they had. Now is the time for you to make that very important decision.

John 1:12

But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God.

Closing Prayer

Father, guard our hearts from being discontent with our lives. Please help us not to look with envy on other people. Help us realize that You are our greatest gift. We are truly thankful for everything that You have provided for us in our lives. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Guard Your Heart

(Proverbs 4:23: Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.)

Object of the Game: To guard your own heart, while trying to capture others.

Give each child a cut out heart about 4" wide with their name on it. Have them tape it to the middle of their back.

Provide boundaries for the game, either a large circle they must stay within, or a room with walls that are not cluttered or blocked with stuff. (So they can stand at the edge to protect their back, but DON'T suggest this, or they all will.)

Spread them out evenly throughout the game area, at least arm's length apart from each other. Explain that on 'GO!' they are to Guard Their Hearts while trying to collect as many of the other players' hearts as possible. Say, "When time is up, I will say STOP (or blow whistle) and we will see how many hearts some of you have collected." Explain that they cannot grab, turn, push or even touch the other players or they are immediately 'out' and lose. They can only grab the hearts of other players. Notice: You do NOT say that those who have collected the most hearts will 'win', only that you will see who has collected a lot. Most will assume that is the object of the game, even though the name of the game is "Guard Your Heart" and you said the object was to do just that. Most of the kids, if not all, who have managed to collect several, will have lost their own! Those who 'Guarded Your Heart' probably collected none or few of the others.

You can determine when the game is over by watching - be sure to stop while a few still have their heart. When the game is over, announce that the **winners are those who still have their heart**, regardless of how many (and if any) hearts they collected.

Do not award prizes, as the game is a lesson, whose point will make every kid a winner. There will be some cries of confusion, or 'unfair' so awarding candy or other prizes will only reinforce those negative feelings and distract them from the point.

Why we played this game

Your 'heart' is the part of you that loves and enjoys life. There are a lot of people and things in this world that are after your heart. There are also a lot of things that we chase after, but just like in this game, when chasing those things, we lose our own heart in the process.

There are some people in this world that while guarding their heart, look like they are missing out on getting a lot of things, but the truth is, they haven't lost anything, they had it to start with - and in the long run, they will be the happier ones!

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion:

1. What was the problem Asaph had in this psalm? (Worldliness.)
2. What caused Asaph to doubt the goodness of God? (It didn't seem fair.)
3. This psalm suggests three major stages in Asaph's thinking. The progression is indicated by his use of pronouns.
 - (vv. 3-12) How many times do the words *they*, *their*, or *them* appear? Who is the object of Asaph's focus in these verses? What is the result? (He's focusing on other people.)
 - (vv 13-22) How many times do the words *I*, *me*, and *my* appear? Who is the object of Asaph's focus? What is the result? (His focus is on himself.)
 - (vv. 23-28) Count every use of the words *You* and *Your* (Thee/Thy KJV). Who is the object of Asaph's focus? What is the result? (His focus is on God.)

4. (vv. 2, 21-22) What does Asaph experience when he compares himself to the unbelievers? (Almost lost his footing; realized he was bitter.)
5. What verse is the turning point in Asaph's struggle? Where was he finally able to get the proper perspective on his struggle? (When he went into the sanctuary of the Lord.)
6. (vv. 23-26) What blessings did Asaph have that unbelievers will never have? (A glorious destiny.)
7. (v. 28) How does nearness to God help us maintain a proper perspective on the seemingly trouble-free lives of many people who do not walk with God? ("God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God." Matt 5:8)
8. Why is it so harmful for us to compare ourselves to others? (v. 3, you envy them.)
9. (v. 15) In the midst of his doubts, why did Asaph determine not to tell others about his struggles? (He didn't want to stumble others.)
10. (vv 17-19) What do the children of the Lord have to look forward to? (God is just.)
11. Have you ever struggled with the feeling that it doesn't pay to obey God, like Asaph did? Describe the circumstances that made you feel that way.
12. Have you ever told anyone else about your doubts? Do you think that could cause other believers to doubt the goodness of God? (Remember, your words can either encourage others to have more faith or give them reason to doubt the goodness of God.)

God is Able to Protect Me

(Psalm 91)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Can anyone share about a time that God protected them in a fearful situation? [Teacher, share with the children a personal story in which God protected you in a fearful situation.] God doesn't protect just adults; He protects boy and girls, too.

What are some things kids your age worry about? (Getting a good grade on a math exam. Making the team at soccer tryouts.) What kind of troubles might kids your age face? When are some times someone might need to depend on God's help and protection? (When they are in danger. When they are uncertain about the future. When others might tease them for doing something they believe in.)

God has promised to protect us. This does not mean that you will never get hurt, but it does mean that God is always able to care for you. Sometimes God allows things to happen to us that we think are bad, but God uses them for our good.

Today we will learn about God's wonderful protection.

Opening Prayer

Father, You are our Great Protector. Help us to really know that we don't have to worry or fret about things that happen to us in life. Help us to always remember that You are always there for us, even in most scary times. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

Lesson

Open your Bibles to Psalm 91. We are not exactly sure who wrote this praise song to God. Some think it might have been Moses. Whoever it was, he uses a lot word pictures to help you understand what he's trying to explain.

Psalm 91:1

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Here Moses speaks of people living in the "shadow" of God. The Bible tells us that God is spirit. He obviously does not cast a shadow, like a shade tree. Have you ever had to work out in the blazing hot sun? Isn't it a relief to come into the shade? Here Moses is using a word picture to describe how we can find spiritual rest by being "in Christ."

You are "in Christ" if you believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead so that your sin can be forgiven. When you do that, God says you are clean and pure in His sight because He sees you as "in Christ."

It's like taking a piece of paper all covered with marks and placing it inside your Bible. Now all you can see is your Bible. You can't see the dirty piece of paper. In the same way, when you accept that Jesus took your punishment on the cross – when you believe that what Jesus did on the cross satisfied God's need to punish all sin – then God no longer see you as guilty before Him. He only sees Jesus' righteousness because you are "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17; Hebrews 13:5-6). He is our place of shelter and safety from the wrath of God against sin.

Psalm 91:2

This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him.

Do you have a favorite hiding place? In Bible times, people hid from danger in caves. God is our hiding place, our place of shelter. If you are "in Christ" then God will protect you from eternal death.

Being “in Christ” is our place of safety.

Psalm 91:3

For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease.

Moses knew that Satan often tries to destroy God’s people. Have you ever caught a mouse in a mouse trap? Satan will try to catch you in his trap, in just the same way. He will set the trap and then put something tempting in it – not a piece of cheese, but a temptation to sin. Maybe he will tempt you to covet something that belongs to someone else, something you’ve seen other kids have or something you’ve seen advertised on TV that wouldn’t be good for you. God said that you are not to covet. It’s one of the Ten Commandments. But Satan wants you to covet things you don’t have.

What other kinds of traps does Satan try to catch us in? (Sin of all sorts: lying, slandering, jealousy, coveting, and, disease.)

1 Peter 5:8

Stay Alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil, He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Satan is the great destroyer. But God is able to protect you in every situation no matter what Satan may try to do. You may face some scary situation, perhaps when you are home alone or when you have to be some place in the dark. At those times you should remind yourself that God is always able to protect you.

However, when bad things happen, remember that God still has everything under control. Even though we can’t always understand why hard times come into our lives, nothing happens to you and me except what God knows is best. Moses had learned this lesson well by seeing what God did to protect the Israelites in Egypt.

David knew this, too.

Psalm 18:2

The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.

Now Moses uses another word picture to explain that God is our great protector.

Psalm 91:4

He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection.

Now obviously God does not have feathers! Moses is saying that if you are “in Christ” you are as safe as a little chick that hides under the wings of its mother.

This verse also assures you that you will be just as safe as a soldier wearing armor and standing behind a big strong metal shield because God always keeps His promises.

Psalm 91:5-6

Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday.

God is protecting you night and day. Have you ever had “night terrors” or nightmares? You can have peace in these dreadful situations; remember that God is with you and powerful enough to do anything.

Let’s skip down to verse 11 and 12 to see how God protects us.

Psalm 91:11-12

For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.

God sends His angels to protect you wherever you go. Did you know that children have guardian angels?

Matthew 18:10

Beware that you don't look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father.

God assured the children of Israel that He would protect them as they made their journey to the Promised Land.

Exodus 23:20

"See, I am sending an Angel before you to protect you on your journey and lead you safely to the place I have prepared for you.

Angels are servants of God sent to take care of us.

Hebrews 1:14

Angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation.

Daniel experienced that. The king had passed a law that no one was to pray to any god except to him. But, Daniel refused to obey that law. So, the king threw him into a den of lions. And God honored Daniel for his faithfulness to Him. While Daniel was in the den of lions, God sent His angel to shut the lion's mouths so they would not hurt him.

Daniel 6:22

My God sent his angel to shut the lion's mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

God can keep you safe from dangerous things like mean dogs and spiders and snakes, too.

Psalm 91:13

You will trample upon lions and cobras; you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet!

This verse promises that God can protect you from a lion or a snake. These animals are word pictures to help you understand that God will protect you from the strongest, meanest, and most frightening of situations. Of course, you need to be wise and not foolishly put yourself into dangerous situations to see if God will protect you.

God adds His promise that He is able to deliver those who love Him.

Psalm 91:14

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name.

God knows that the greatest need we all have is to be saved from the judgment of our sins (Romans 6:23). If you call on God and ask Him to forgive you, He will save you.

Psalm 91:15-16

When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation.

God promises to help you when you call on Him in times of trouble.

However at times God, in His wisdom, may allow things that seem bad to happen. He promises to use even these situations for your good (Romans 8:28). Whatever happens, God is able to protect you.

This week when you are afraid, remember that you belong to God and that He is the strongest of all (Romans 8:38-39). No matter what comes into your life, even dangerous or frightening things, you can trust God to do what's best for you.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for being our Great Protector! Thank You that You are always watching out for us, even when we are unaware of Your presence. Thank You that we do not need to fear because You are always with us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

See coloring page at end of lesson

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. When are times kids your age might need to depend on God's help and protection? (When they are in danger. When they are uncertain about the future. When others might tease them for doing something they believe in.)
2. What is a word picture? (A way of describing something in an understandable way.)
3. When Moses says that we can find shelter or rest in the shadow of the Almighty, what is he trying to say? (We can find spiritual rest by being "in Christ.")
4. What does it mean to be "in Christ"? (When you believe that Jesus died on the cross, God no longer sees us as guilty before Him. He only see Jesus' righteousness.)
5. What does verse 2 say our hiding place is? Why? (God is our hiding place; He will protect us from eternal death.)
6. What kind of trap does Satan try to catch you in? (Sin of all sorts: lying, slandering, jealousy, coveting, etc.)
7. Why did Moses have peace in the midst of dreadful situations? (He knew that God was with him and powerful enough to do anything.)
8. What did Moses mean when he said that God would cover you with his wings? Is God like a chicken? (God will keep you just as safe as a baby chick is under its mother's wings.)
9. What did God send to protect Daniel when he was in the den of lions? (An angel.)
10. What are angels? (Servants of God; spirits sent to care for people.)
11. What is your greatest need? (To be saved from the judgment of our sins.)
12. How can you be saved? (Trust in what Jesus did for you on the cross.)
13. Does God always keep you from experiencing bad things? (No, in His wisdom, he may allow things that seem bad to happen. But, He promises to use even these situations for your good.)



How To Worship God, God's Way

(Psalm 103)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever been ungrateful to someone who has been kind and loving to you? Do you ever complain about anything? What kinds of things do you complain about in your life?

Sometimes we just have really bad days when nothing seems to go right. But, I think that it is far too easy for us to find fault in people and situations in life.

God wants us remember His goodness. He knows what is best for us and will turn even the worst situations around in our life for our good if we will just trust Him. Today we will learn about God's Goodness by studying Psalm 103.

Opening Prayer

Father, as we remember Your goodness today, may we just want to praise You with our whole being. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Give to the Lord the glory he deserves! (1 Chronicles 16:29)

Lesson

Last week we studied Psalm 139, a song written by a man named David that praises God for His greatness and personal concern for us. In this song, David marvels over the fact that God **knows everything**, He is **everywhere at all times**, and He **has all power** in heaven and earth.

David loved to praise God. He spent a lot of time worshiping God by singing songs to Him. Today we are going to study another one of David's songs, Psalm 103, which tells of God's goodness.

Psalm 103:1

*Let **all that I am** praise the Lord; **with my whole heart**, I will praise his holy name.*

What do you think it means to worship God with "all that I am" and "with my whole heart?"

Satan will try to get you to use your mind, your mouth, your eyes, and your ears, your heart, your hands, and your feet for anything except to honor God. But God gave you your body and mind so you could use them to worship Him.

How do you think you can use these different parts of your body to praise God?

- **Mind**—You can use your mind to think about God and His word. (Philippians 4:8)
- **Mouth**—You can use your mouth to praise Him by telling Him and others how wonderful He is. (Psalm 146:1-2) What are some wonderful things that God has done in your life that you praise Him for? [Teacher, allow some discussion.]
- **Eyes**—You can use your eyes to notice what He has made.
- **Ears**—You can use your ears to hear the beautiful sounds of His creation and to listen to others as they praise Him.
- **Heart**—You can use your heart to love Him for who He is and all that He has done.
- **Hands**—You can use your hands to play songs of praise on a musical instrument, write poems about His greatness, or draw pictures of what He's done for you.
- **Feet**—You can use your feet to take you places where you can praise Him publicly. Where are some places you could praise God to others? (Sunday school, family dinner table, school, etc.)

David urges us to give praise to the Lord with our whole being—with all that we are! 1 Chronicles 16:29 says, "Give to the Lord the glory he deserves!"

David lists off many blessing of the Lord that we can praise Him for: [Teacher, as you read the following verses, write the attributes on the board.]

Psalm 103:2-6

*Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He **forgives** all my sins and **heals** all my diseases. He **redeems me** from death and crowns me with **love and tender mercies**. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's! The Lord gives **righteousness and justice** to all who are treated unfairly.*

- Forgiveness (vr 3)
- Physical healing (vr 3)
- Protection from danger (vr 4)
- Love and tender mercies (vr 4)
- Daily provision (vr 5)
- Help when treated unfairly (vr 6)

Psalm 103:7-10

*He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel. The Lord is **compassionate** and **merciful, slow to get angry** and filled with unfailing love. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.*

- Compassionate and Merciful (vr 8)
- Patient (slow to anger) (vr 8)
- Forgiveness (vr 10)

Psalm 103:11-12

*For his **unfailing love** toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has **removed our sins** as far from us as the east is from the west.*

- Unfailing love (vr 11)
- Salvation (vr 12)

David was especially thankful for God's promise to forgive his sins. He understood what a wonderful blessing it is to be cleansed and forgiven.

It is because God wants to cleanse and forgive your sin that He sent Jesus to die on the cross. You can come to the Lord Jesus for salvation by simply admitting to Him that you are a sinner, asking Him to forgive you and then asking Him to save you and make you His child. God has promised that He will receive all who come to Him in this way (John 6:37b).

David believed in God's promise and was very glad for what God had done for him.

Psalm 103:13-14

*The Lord **is like a father** to his children, **tender and compassionate** to those who fear him. For He **knows how weak we are**; he remembers we are only dust.*

- Like a father (vr 13)
- Tender and compassionate (vr 13)
- Understands human weaknesses (vr 14)

Psalm 103:15-19

*Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die. The wind blows, and we are gone—as though we had never been there. But the **love of the Lord remains forever** with those who fear him. His **salvation** extends to the children's children of those who are faithful to*

*his covenant, and of those who obey his commandments! The Lord has made the heavens his throne; from there he **rules over everything**.*

- Everlasting love (vr 17)
- Salvation (vr 17)
- Supreme Ruler (vr 19)

When David thought about God's goodness, he couldn't help worshiping Him. To worship means to tell God how much you love and admire Him for who He is.

Psalm 103:20-22

Praise the Lord, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. Yes, praise the Lord, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will! Praise the Lord, everything he has created, everything in all his kingdom. Let all that I am praise the Lord.

As David was thinking about God's goodness, he was so filled with praise he felt unable to express himself. He called upon the angels and all the other created beings on earth to help him tell God how wonderful He is.

How can remembering that God is good help you in life? Sometimes God allows certain things to happen to you in life and you won't understand why.

Can you think of troublesome things that can happen to kids your age? (Parents get a divorce, parents lose their job, a friend dies, etc.)

When you are in a situation like this, why might it be hard for you to trust in God's goodness? You may think God is punishing you for doing something bad. That is NOT God's character! He loves you with an everlasting love. Why do you think He allows hard things to come into our lives? He wants to strengthen our faith in His goodness! He wants us to remember that His plans are always good, that He loves and cares for us and that He promises to help us and protect us.

If you remember that God is good all the time, it will help you trust that God has a good plan and purpose for everything that He allows into your life, even the bad stuff.

When David remembered God's goodness, he couldn't help but burst into praise and thanksgiving. And that's how it should be for us, too! 1 Chronicles 16:29 says, "Give to the Lord the glory he deserves!"

One way you worship God is to **praise Him**. Tell Him how much you appreciate His greatness and beauty and all that He does for you.

Another way to worship God is to **give Him thanks** for the things He has given you.

When you study God's Word, the Bible, you begin to learn how wonderful God really is. Only as you get to know God, will you be able to worship Him the way He deserves to be worshiped. Only then will you find the special joy God gives to those who know Him well.

We all need to take time regularly to worship God as David did. Look at all reasons we can praise Him. [Teacher, point to your list on the board.]

How awful it is to ignore Someone who has been so very kind and loving to you. Have you been ignoring His goodness to you? This week, set aside a time to get alone with God. Perhaps you can take a walk. Use your time alone to remember as much as you can of all you have learned about God. Think about what God has done for you and what He is like. Then think about how you can best worship Him. Talk to Him and tell Him how wonderful He is and how much you appreciate all He has done.

Let's pray one- or two-sentence praises to God in appreciation for who He is.

Closing Prayer

[Teacher, have the children say prayers of praise to God specifically for these attributes taught in this lesson.]

Father, You are so good to us! You are a loving, forgiving, compassionate God who has good plans for our lives. May we want to give You our whole life: our hearts, our minds, our lips. We want our lives to bring Your name all the glory that You deserve. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

God Appreciation

Make a list of the things you appreciate about God. [Teacher, suggest a few uncommon things that the children can be thankful for such as the fillings in their teeth, backyards to play in.]

Now as an act of worship to Him, choose some way to express your love for God's goodness.

- Write a praise song or a poem about His greatness.
- Draw a picture of what He's done for you or that shows His marvelous creation.
- Make a *Thank You* card and write a love note to Him in it telling God how much you appreciate His greatness and beauty or thanking Him for the things He has given you and all that He does for you.

Then, you can share your song, poem or picture with the rest of the class.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. What do you think it means to worship God with "all that I am" and "with my whole heart?"
2. How do you think you can use these different parts of your body to praise God?
 - **Mind** (You can use your mind to think about God and His word.)
 - **Mouth** (You can use your mouth to praise Him by telling Him and others how wonderful He is.)
 - **Eyes** (You can use your eyes to notice what He has made.)
 - **Ears** (You can use your ears to hear the beautiful sounds of His creation and to listen to others as they praise Him.)
 - **Heart** (You can use your heart to love Him for who He is and all that He has done.)
 - **Hands** (You can use your hands to play songs of praise on a musical instrument, write poems about His greatness, or draw pictures of what He's done for you.)
 - **Feet** (You can use your feet to take you places where you can praise Him publicly.)
3. What are some wonderful things that God has done in your life that you praise Him for?
4. Where are some places you could praise God to others? (Sunday school, family dinner table, school, etc.)
5. Have you been ignoring His goodness to you?
6. What are some good reasons to praise God?
7. What are some ways God shows His goodness? (He helps us know what to do and gives us wisdom when we ask for it.)

8. What is a way you can show you are thankful for the good things God does? (Say, "Thank You" to Him.)
9. When someone is having a hard time or is in a difficult situation, how might they feel about God? (They may feel that God doesn't love them anymore and that nothing good will ever happen to them again.)
10. When are some times we need to trust in God's goodness?

The Value of God's Word

(Psalm 119)

Pre-Session Warm Up

[Teacher, make a poster of Psalm 119:72, and place a Bible in a treasure chest. Have the children guess what the treasure is, giving the following clues: It's worth millions of dollars. You probably have one in your house. It's very useful, yet most people don't realize how valuable it is. It originally came from God.]

What is the treasure? (Have a child open the treasure chest.)

Why is God's Word the most valuable treasure in the entire universe? Because it tells us how we can belong to the God who made the universe and who loves us very much. It tells how to receive God's free gift of everlasting life so we can live with Him in heaven someday. The Bible is also filled with valuable treasures for our life here on earth.

The theme of Psalm 119 is God's Word is true and wonderful. The writer of this psalm speaks of the beauty of God's Word and how it helps us stay pure and to grow in faith. If we stay true to God's Word no matter how bad the world becomes we will have real happiness.

In describing the value of God's Word, the psalmist uses ten different terms for the Word of God. Almost every verse mentions God's Word. In all but 4 of the verses in this psalm he mentions at least one of these terms:

- **Law** – God's Word governs or directs our lives according to His will.
- **Testimony** – God's Word gives us evidence or proof; it is a witness or an acknowledgement of the truth.
- **Precepts** – God's Word gives particular instructions (orders or guidelines).
- **Statute** – God's Word is His decree or order. It has binding force and permanence.

- **Commandment** – God's Word is His directive. It possesses His authority.
- **Judgment** – God's Word is decisive; it is He ruling or ordinances (regulations).
- **Word** – The Bible is the last word on any subject! Every word is God-breathed; it is reliable. God has spoken, therefore it is true.
- **Way or Path** – God's Word shows us the way in which we should live our lives.

God's Word, the Bible, is the only sure guide for living a pure life.

Opening Prayer

Lord, Your Word is a light unto our paths. Thank You for inspiring the writers to write the books contained in our Bibles. Thank You for keeping it from corruption all through the ages. Teach us to value it and to use it. It is the only guide we can count on to show us the way to have a truly happy life. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

By His divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. (2 Peter 1:3)

Lesson

Our verse for today says that God's Word contains everything you need to know. Truly that was what the author of Psalm 119 believed.

God's Word will keep you from sin

Psalm 119:9-11

How can a young person stay pure? By obeying Your word.

I have tried hard to find You—don't let me wander from Your commands. I have hidden Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

We are drowning in a sea of ungodliness. Everywhere we look we find temptation to sin. It seems that almost everywhere you go there are people trying to destroy your belief in God and love for the Lord Jesus—friends at school, people on television, and sometimes even those in your own family. [Teacher, discuss...]

The author of this psalm asks a question that we all should think about: Where can you find the strength and wisdom to live a pure life, pleasing God in all you do? We cannot do this on our own. Is it even possible? Yes! If you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you can go to God's Word when you need help and encouragement.

Once you belong to God by receiving Jesus as your Savior, you need to store God's Word in your heart as a valuable treasure: read it thoughtfully, memorize it consistently and obey it wholeheartedly.

Hiding (or keeping) God's Word in our hearts will keep us from sinning. But memorizing Scripture alone will not keep us from sin; we must allow God's Word to guide everything we do. By remembering God's Word, you can keep every thought you have, every word you say, and everything that you do blameless before God. God's Word will keep you from sin.

God's Word can give you inner strength when you are sad

Psalm 119:28

I weep with sorrow; encourage me by Your word.

Have you ever been so sad inside that you couldn't stop the tears? Perhaps your dad forgot your birthday or your best friend at school betrayed you or someone you really cared about died. Maybe someone made fun of you because of the way you look, or maybe it seems you can never please your parents. No one else may know how deeply you hurt inside, but the sadness inside doesn't seem to go away.

What can you do when you "weep with sorrow"? If you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you can go to God's Word when you need help and encouragement. As you read, you will find promises that are valuable treasures. God will use them to give you strength

inside. As you claim His promises, God will replace your tears of sadness with His comfort and give you inner strength.

God's Word gives you hope

Psalm 119:43

Do not snatch Your word of truth from me, for Your regulations are my only hope.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful world to live in if everyone followed God's regulations? Someday we will live in a world like that when we get to Heaven! There will be no more tears or sorrow there!

Psalm 119:114

You are my refuge and my shield; Your word is my source of hope.

Even after you've received the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you will still have problems—times of suffering and hardship. But you can remember that God always keeps His promises, that will give you hope in times of suffering.

God's Word gives you comfort

Psalm 119:50

Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles.

Here the psalmist calls God's Word, His "promise." He is saying that it perks him up (or *revives* him) to remember that God always keeps His promises. It refreshes his soul and comforts him in this time of trouble. He knows that what God has said in His Word will remain the same. God will never change His mind.

God has accepted you because of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will always love and care for you. God's Word gives comfort during hard times.

God's Word guides you along life's path

Everyday we should read God's Word and look for the treasures God has for you. He has big nuggets of gold in His Word just waiting for you to find – words of wisdom and encouragement.

Psalm 119:72

Your instructions are more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver.

God's Word is not only like a valuable treasure, it's also like a treasure map, showing you how to find out what God wants you to do for Him. When you need to make a decision, God doesn't send angels with special messages or call long distance from heaven. Instead He has written us a letter of instruction that lights the path ahead—as you and I read and obey the Bible, God will show us step-by-step the right thing to do.

He will use His Word to show you if you've gotten off the path by making a wrong decision. And through His Word, God will show you how to avoid dangers on the path—falling into Satan's traps of sin. When you have a decision to make and you don't know what to do, you can go to God's Word for help and encouragement. God has promised to use His Word to guide you.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

To walk safely in the woods at night we need a light so we don't trip over tree roots or fall into holes. In this life, we walk through a dark forest of evil. But the Bible can be our light to show us the way ahead so we won't stumble as we walk. It is important for us to study the Bible so we will be able to see our way clear enough to stay on the right path of life.

Psalm 119:130

The teaching of Your word gives light, so even the simple can understand.

God has given us Ten Commandments—ten easy-to-understand rules for life that even a child can understand. God hasn't made it hard for us to please Him. (Do not have any gods but Me, Do not worship idols', Keep God's name holy, Set aside a special day for God, Honor your father and mother, Do not murder, Be true to your husband or wife, Do not steal, Do not lie, and Do not to want what others have.) God's Word gives you directions for how to live a godly life.

Psalm 119:133

Guide my steps by Your word, so I will not be overcome by evil.

God's Word gives you peace

Psalm 119:165

Those who love Your instructions have great peace and do not stumble.

God promises "great peace" to those who love the Bible. Many people today are trying to find peace—a quietness and calmness inside, but they're looking in the wrong places. Perhaps you know people who take drugs, drink alcohol, or smoke cigarettes to "calm their nerves." Others may think new toys or clothes will make them feel better inside. Can you think of other things people do to find peace? (For example, run away from home; watch hours of TV; think about suicide). Only God can give you true peace that lasts forever. As you show your love for God's Word by reading it each day, you will find the valuable treasure of peace.

Let's pray and thank God for the treasure of His Word.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for inspiring the authors of Your Word to write down Your plans and directions for our lives. Help us to love Your word and to value it as a treasure chest full of gold and silver. Help us to use Your Word as a light to show us the way to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Make a poster using all the terms for God's Word. Supply the kids with lots of various art supplies and poster board.

Game Center

Let It Shine!

(Psalm 119:105 -- Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path)

Before class hide a "treasure" (a toy or snack) in the room. Then turn the lights off and try to make it as dark as possible in the room. Then have the children try to find the "treasure." Kind of hard, isn't it? Try again, this time using a flashlight.

Life without God is like living in the dark. When you study the Bible, you can learn what God's Word says about the choices you have to make. It's like having a light in the darkness.

Or, use the following questions in a game or discussion of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What is it that almost every verse in Psalm 119 mentions? (God's Word.)
2. Why is the Bible such a great treasure? (It's God's Word. God speaks to us through His Word.)
3. What are some of the things that God tells us in His Word? (He loves us and will never leave us; He tells us how we can belong to the One who created the universe. It tells us about how we can receive God's free gift of everlasting life.)

4. How can we have real happiness in life? (If we stay true to God and His Word no matter how bad the world becomes.)
5. In describing the value of God's Word, the psalmist uses ten different terms for the Word of God. How many different ones can you name? (Law, Testimony, Precepts, Statutes, Commandments, Judgments, Word, Way or Path.)
6. Where can you find the strength and wisdom to live a pure life, pleasing God in all you do? (You can go to God's Word when you need help and encouragement.)
7. Why is it important to memorize God's Word? (Hiding God's Word in your hearts will keep you from sinning.)
8. What can you do when you are so sad inside that you can't top the tears? (Go to God's Word. You will find promises from God that will give you strength inside.)
9. What does it mean to meditate on God's Word? (To ponder, to think deeply about, to consider.)
10. What are some of God's promises that He makes to us in His Word? (God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives! Someday we will get to go to Heaven! God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins! We can have joy inside because we know that He keeps His promises!)
11. What revived the psalmists—what perked him up? (Knowing that God keeps His promises, He never changes His mind.)
12. Why is it important to study the Bible? (So we will be able to see our way clear enough to stay on the right path of life.)
13. How many of the Ten Commandments can you name? (Do not have any gods but Me, Do not worship idols, Keep God's name holy, Set aside a special day for God, Honor your father and mother, Do not murder, Be true to your husband or wife, Do not steal, Do not lie, and Do not to want what others have.)
14. What are some things people do to find "peace" in life? (drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, buy toys or clothes, watch hours of TV, etc.)

God's Personal Concern for You

(Psalm 139)

Pre-Session Warm Up

What is something about yourself that others may not know or see right away? Perhaps you have a hobby or a special talent. Each of us has unique things about ourselves that might not be so apparent to others.

Who is someone that knows you very well? How does it make you feel that he or she knows you so well? Some of our friends or family members may know us well enough to finish our sentences! But there is someone who even knows what we're thinking before we speak—God!

We have a creative God who has such power that all He had to do was speak our universe into existence. His word is so powerful that all he had to do was say, "Let there be light!" and there was light! Have you ever wondered how a great and powerful God could know and care about you the way your Mom and Dad do?

A long time ago, a man named David wrote a song telling about God's greatness and His personal concern for us.

Opening Prayer

Father, it is truly amazing that You know each of us so well that You can keep track of how many hairs we have on our heads! You have every tear we've ever shed in a bottle. You are a great and awesome God. I pray that today You will capture the hearts of the children in this class so that they will stand in awe of You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous. (Psalm 139:14)

Lesson

The Psalms are a collection of prayer and praise songs written mostly by David, the shepherd boy that killed the giant, Goliath. He wrote most of them while he was out tending the sheep. He would spend hours out in the field alone with the sheep, surrounded by God's creation. As David spent time thinking about God's creation, it prompted him to praise God. It helped him see God's power and greatness and gave him reason to thank Him. He was in awe of God!

The Psalms have been used for hundreds of years during worship services to sing praises to God. Even today, many of our praise songs use the Psalms in their lyrics.

In Psalm 139, David was praising God for being **all-knowing**.

Psalm 139:1-3

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do.

God knows everything—past, present, and future. He knows all about you—even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them.

Psalm 139:4-6

You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

It's comforting to know that God knows where you are at all times. He knows about every detail of your life. He knows the things you plan to do each day. He knows if you're going to have a test at school, or if you're going to see the doctor. He knows if you have an important sports activity coming up. And He sees you do your chores at home and He knows if you are doing your homework or not!

The things that happen to you in life are never a surprise to Him. He knows before you have an accident and He knows if you are about to receive a special gift!

Day and night God is aware of everything that happens to you. He knows what is in your heart, so He understands why you do certain things. God knows what words you are going to say before you even say them. How wonderful to know that your all-knowing God is personally concerned about you!

When David thought about the fact that God is all-knowing, he was amazed (perhaps even a little fearful) that's why he said in verse 6, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!"

Psalm 139:7-10

I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

Not only does God know everything; He is **everywhere at all times!**

Psalm 139:11-12

I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—but even in the darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

There is no place you can go to hide from God!

Perhaps there were times when David wanted to hide from God because he didn't want God to know about his sin. But, David knew that he could never hide from God. Maybe you, too, have wished that there was somewhere you could go so God wouldn't know where you are. That way you could do what you wanted without God finding out. But God always sees the sinful things you and I do.

We were born with a *want to* do things our own way instead of God's way. We call that sin (Isaiah 53:6). God says that we deserve to be punished for our sin. But, God came to earth to die on the cross for your sin and mine. He gave His life's blood so you could be forgiven (Revelation 1:5b). Jesus died for you because He loves you and you are very special to Him.

David realized that no matter where he went he couldn't hide from God. Even the darkness cannot hide you from God—you are never beyond His care. He is with us wherever we go. Even in the darkest times of your life, when nothing seems to be going right, God is right there with you.

What are some difficult times when you can remember that God is with you? [Teacher, discuss hard times at home and school, being alone, natural disasters, lightening & thunder storms, nightmares and so on.] Thank God that He is everywhere at all times!

Not only does God know everything and He is everywhere at all times, He also **has all power in heaven and earth.**

Psalm 139:13-14

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

By His power God created you in a special way and by His power God controls all the events of your life.

Psalm 139:15-16

You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

It is a comfort to know that God is all-powerful. Since there is nothing in the universe that is beyond God's control, He can use His power in your life. His power can control you on the inside. That is, He can help

you keep your temper under control, be patient, be content with what you have, or even speak up for God.

God's power also controls the circumstances around you. He can accomplish His plans for you. If you are willing to follow God's direction in your life, He will use His power to work out the details (in school, your future occupation, your marriage, and so on). Because God is personally concerned about you, He will use His power to do what is best for you.

David praised God for being all-powerful and for His loving thoughts toward him.

Psalm 136:17-18

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

With all this in his mind—knowing that God knows everything and He is everywhere at all times, and He has all power in heaven and earth—David asked God to show him where his thoughts, words or actions have been offensive to God.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

God is personally concerned about you! That gives us reason to praise Him for His greatness—He knows every aspect of your life, He is everywhere with you, and He has all power to control your life.

Closing Prayer

[Teacher, have the children say sentence prayers of praise to God specifically for the three attributes taught in this lesson.]

Father, thank You for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous. There is no place I can hide from you so, please, Lord, clean my heart so that everything that I think or say or do is pleasing in Your sight. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Self Portraits

Make life size self-portraits - Before class tape big pieces of butcher paper (paper used to cover bulletin boards) about 2 feet wide, one next to the other, on the wall. Write the memory verse on each sheet of paper. Have each child stand in front of the paper and outline his or her body onto the paper and then let them color it. When they are finished, roll them up, and tape them closed so they can take them home. If you have children in your class who are beginning to read, you can also have these children label the different body parts on their pictures. Write the different body parts on labels and then have the children place the appropriate label on each body part. Use words such as: head, hand, mouth, nose, ear, foot, etc.

Game Center

These two games help test how well we really know each other!

Happy Birthday

Divide group into teams of five or six students. At your signal, team members quickly arrange themselves in a line according to birth month order. Quickest team to arrange themselves in the correct order wins! Then have everyone sing *Happy Birthday* to the children who have birthdays in the current month.

Who's Shoes?

1. Children take off their shoes and put them in a big tub or box in the middle of the playing area. Mix them up. Divide the class into two teams. Teams line up shoulder-to-shoulder on opposite sides of the playing area. Assign numbers to students.
2. Call out two numbers. Students with those numbers from each team run to the shoe pile and collect as many shoes from their team as possible within three seconds. Call "Stop" when time is up. Students return to the teams with the shoes they've collected from the pile and distribute the shoes to the correct owners. Students return the unmatched shoes to the pile.
3. Team that got the most correct matches is the winner.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. What is something God knows about you that others may not know? (Teacher, share with children your own answer, and let children know they do not have to answer the question aloud.)
2. Read Psalm 139:14. King David wrote Psalm 139, praising God for making and knowing him. God knows everything about you and still loves you! What do you think it means that God knows everything about you?
3. What are some things that are easy to know about a person? (What color eyes they have. How tall they are.)
4. What are some things that are more difficult to know about a person? (Their thoughts. What they like or dislike. Their age.)

Great is the Lord!

(Psalm 145)

Pre Session Warm Up

Have you ever been bummed out? Have you ever felt lonely or scared? Have you ever had your feelings hurt and you just felt crushed in your spirit? What did you do? Where did you turn?

David turned to God. And that's what we should do. We're going to take a peek into David's heart as we ready and study through Psalm 145 and see how David handled discouragement.

Opening Prayer

Lord, You are amazing. You created the whole earth and everything in it and You keep the universe running in perfect order. And yet You still have time to think about me. Thank You that You are such an awesome God. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Lesson

David wrote most of the Psalms that we have in our Bible. Most of the songs David wrote are prayers of praise to God. When he would think about all that God had done, David just couldn't help himself. He would just burst out with heartfelt praise to God.

As you read Psalms, notice the praise given to God, not only for what He does—His creation, His blessings, His forgiveness—but also for who He is—loving, just, faithful, forgiving, patient. I am so thankful that God made sure these songs of praise were written down in our Bibles so that we can enjoy them, too. When I read the Psalms, I am caught up in David's passion and enthusiasm for the Lord and that encourages me to praise God, too.

Psalm 145 is one of my favorite praise songs written by David. And in it he praises God for many of His attributes. As we read through this psalm, let's see if we can list all the attributes of God David mentions.

One interesting thing about this song is if you could read it in the original language, you would see that each verse starts with the next letter in the alphabet. That would have been an easy way for people to memorize it.

David begins this song with a vow to praise God every day.

Psalm 145:1-2

I will exalt you, my God and King, and praise your name forever and ever. I will praise you every day; yes, I will praise you forever.

Next David praises God for His greatness.

Psalm 145:3-7

Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure his greatness. Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power. I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles. Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness. Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness.

David says that you can't measure God's greatness. He does wonderful and awesome works. Each generation should tell of God's greatness to the next. He is righteous and full of glorious splendor and majesty.

David then continues with praise for the Lord's attributes.

Psalm 145:8-10

The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. The Lord is good to everyone. He shows compassion on all his creation. All of your works will thank you, Lord, and your faithful followers will praise you.

He is gracious, compassionate, patient, and loving.

Next, David praises God for His everlasting kingdom.

Psalm 145:11-13

They will speak of the glory of your kingdom; they will give examples of your power. They will tell about your mighty deeds and about the majesty and glory of your reign. For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule throughout all generations. The Lord always keeps his promises; he is gracious in all he does.

David praises God for His power and His mercy and grace. He rules over an everlasting kingdom and He always keeps His promises.

Next David praises God for His provision.

Psalm 145:14-16

The Lord helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads. The eyes of all look to you in hope; you give them their food as they need it. When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.

Sometimes our burdens seem more than we can bear, and we wonder how we can go on. If you are bending under a burden and feel that you are about to fall, turn to God for help. He is ready to lift you up and bear your burden. He is the great burden bearer.

God opens His hand and satisfies every living thing! He is our source of all our daily needs.

Next, David praises God for His righteous ways.

Psalm 145:17-20

The lord is righteous in everything he does; he is filled with kindness. The Lord is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth. He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them. The Lord protects all those who love him, but he destroys the wicked.

David praises God for answering the cries of those who sincerely call upon Him. God is righteous and loving in all His ways; He remains near to those who call on Him; He hears our cries and saves us.

Then, David ends this song encouraging us all to praise the Lord.

Psalm 145:21

I will praise the Lord, and may everyone on earth bless his holy name forever and ever.

Just by reading one of David's psalms we are reminded of how great and awesome God is.

And when we think about all that God has done and does for us, what could be more natural than having outbursts of heartfelt praise, just like David? When you praise God it's a way to tell Him how much you admire Him and appreciate Him, and thank Him for all that He does for you.

In what ways have you recently praised God or told others all that he has done for you?

Closing Prayer

Father, help us to be like David and praise You in all of our circumstances, even when we're bummed out. You are an awesome and wonderful God, full of compassion and mercy. Help me to remember that You have a good plan for my life and that You only want what's best for me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Write a Psalm.