

PSALMS & WISDOM LITERATURE



“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.”

— PSALM 23

FOCUS THIS WEEK

The Bible is full of good insight and deep practical advice. The Psalms are rich, deep, and beautiful expressions of life with God. The Bible’s wisdom literature provide depth, insight, power and valuable guidance. We need to be guided beyond our wants and desires. We can have a deeper dimension to our lives—a spiritual dimension—when we tap into the wisdom of the loving God of the universe. God is still speaking. Are you listening?



SHARE highs and lows to set the stage for a more open and meaningful discussion.



READ and highlight the theme verse, Psalm 23, then connect it to one or more of the following texts:

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Ecclesiastes 7:10
- Job 37:5
- Psalms 121



TALK about how the Bible reading might relate to today’s highs and lows. Supplement your discussion with some of the following.

A. IMAGES IN WORDS AND ART Take a look at the theme art. What do you see in the art? How might the art and the theme verse connect?

B. ROLE PLAY

1. A classmate is constantly playing music from a band that fills their lyrics with obscene language and violent, racist phrases. You ask them why they like the band and they say, “Hey, I like the music. The words are just words. They don’t affect me.” Respond.
2. A friend is angry at God. She prayed for her sick grandmother, but her grandmother died. She doesn’t know what to do with her anger. What do you say to her?

C. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. **What is music? Why do people use it to express emotions? Why do you think music plays such an important role in most worship traditions?** *Affirm all thoughtful answers. Music is sometimes thought of as poetry set to a tune. It can be descriptive, therapeutic, informative, etc. Music touches the soul in a way that text alone can't match.*
2. **Why do you think Christians still consult the wisdom of the Bible, even though it is thousands of years old?** *Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers. God's wisdom is ageless and, as it is written in the Scripture, is intended to benefit all believers.*
3. **Write a list of ten human emotions (love, anger, fear, etc.) Now look at your list. Which human emotions do you think are the most difficult to express to God? Why?** *Affirm all thoughtful answers.*

D. TERMS OF THE WEEK

Review these key terms and write definitions.

David: King of Israel from 1000 - 962 B.C. and author of many of the Psalms.

Hymn: A song of praise or thanksgiving.

Lament: A type of psalm used to express sadness or grief in which an individual seeks relief or healing.

Praise: Any expression, spoken or sung, of honor and worship toward God.

Psalm: One of the 150 songs of praise, lament and thanksgiving found in the book of the Bible of the same name.

Wisdom Literature: A term used for the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

E. QUOTATIONS

Ask youth to choose a quotation and share their thoughts and questions about it.

*Advice is what we ask
for when we already
know the answer but
wish we didn't.*
– Erica Jong

*Human knowledge must
be understood to be
loved, but divine
knowledge must be loved
to be understood.*

– Pascal

*The good Lord set definite
limits on people's wisdom,
but set no limits on their
stupidity—and that's just
not fair.*

– Konrad Adenauer

*I have no pleasure in
anyone who despises
music. It is no invention
of ours; it is a gift of
God.*

– Martin Luther

F. WRAP UP

Summarize the event with your group, assigning someone to share what you learned at closing.

- One new thing we learned today
- One thing we already knew that is worth repeating
- One thing we would like to know more about
- The highest highs and lowest lows which our group will bring to the closing prayer



PRAY

for one another. Praise and thank God for your highs. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you in your lows. Include your friend's highs and lows in your prayers. Is there something going on in the world that calls for prayer.



BLESS

one another by name. Face one another as you make the sign of the cross. Look them in the eyes and give them a smile. Ask for their blessing as well!