



# ADULT GUIDE

En la escuela de los Salmos / At Psalms School

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# Introduction

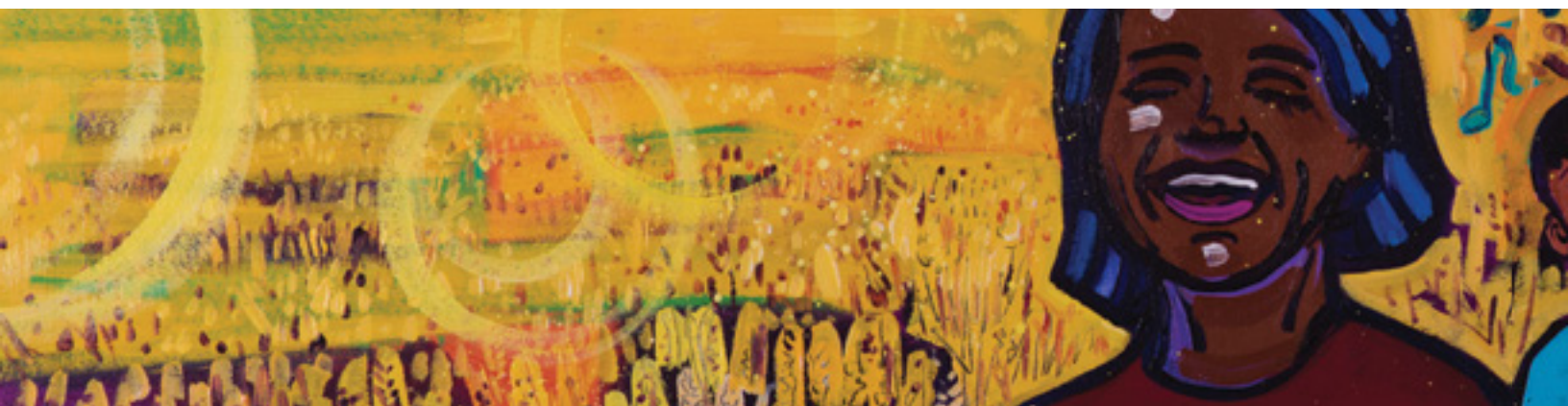
Robert J. Keeley, Laura Keeley, Flo Paris Oakes

## Welcome to the Adult Guide for *At Psalms School*

*At Psalms School* has a lot happening on every page! It includes things that we can learn about the psalms, about worship, and about ourselves. There is so much to unpack that we thought adults could use a little help to get as much out of it as possible. There are not a lot of words on each page, so it would be possible to read the book quickly and miss important things. In addition, the psalms have a lot to teach us about worship.

So the three of us spent time with each page, talked about the pictures, about the psalms that are listed on the bottom of the page, about the icons in the upper right and left corners, and about how adults and children could interact with all of those things in a thoughtful way.

We know each of you and the children you might be reading this book with come to this book with different experiences. Because of this, all the questions and activities are simply suggestions—ways to help you think more deeply about what is on each page. Feel free to pick and choose from the suggested questions and activities. Our goal is the same as the authors': to see what the psalms and our corporate worship teach us about our relationship with God.





We can imagine spending time with each page, perhaps one page a day when doing devotions with children. To assist in that we use these categories:

- **For Adults to Notice** includes notes to help readers look more deeply and to provide background for adults as they read this book with children.
- **Things to Wonder About** provides different sets of questions and statements for younger children, middle children, and older children. Pick and choose the questions and statements you think work best. For the children you're reading with, questions outside of their age range may be appropriate.
- **Try This** has activities that can add a different way to experience the ideas on each page.
- **Church Connections** includes statements and questions to help you and your children think about how churches do these things in worship.

A few other things to notice:

- The small icons in the small squares in the upper corners of each page show a posture that communicates the idea of each page. Consider using the postures during your family prayer time or devotions.
- Consider reading in their entirety the psalms listed at the bottom of each page.
- Early editions of the book did not have page numbers, so we reference the first words on each page instead of page numbers.





# Psalms teach us to get ready to listen to and talk with God.

## For Adults to Notice

- The people are gathered under a bird's wings, symbolizing God gathering people to hear God's story. The people quiet themselves, getting ready to hear from God.
- The sky is yellow and orange, which can signify heat, whereas the coloring beneath the wings is blue and green and can signify reprieve and rest.
- There are circles that could signify the presence of the Holy Trinity. Notice the circles in each picture as you go through the book.
- The psalm verses on the bottom of the page emphasize gathering, stillness, and safety.

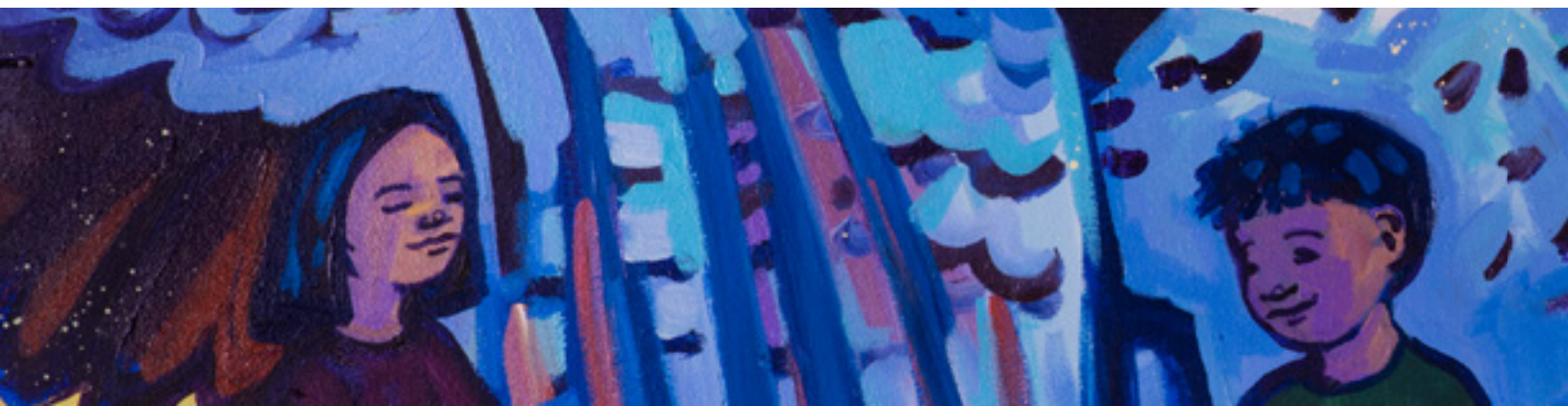
## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- See the people gathered together. Whom do you gather with?
- What is surrounding the people who are gathered together?
- There are different colors beneath the wings and around the wings. I wonder why?
- Look at the drawing of a person in the little box in the upper right corner. Is there a person in the picture on this page in a similar position? Move your body into the same position.

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- How do you think the people in this picture feel? How would you feel if you were there?
- I wonder if the people are getting ready to listen to God. How can you tell?
- How do you listen to God? Does it matter if you are inside or outside when you talk to God?
- Look at the verses on the bottom of the page. Pick the verse that you think fits the picture the best.





#### OLDER CHILDREN

- Google the words “eagle’s wings.” I wonder why the references are about shelter and songs and not about an eagle’s wings (their size, the number of feathers, etc.).
- The three verses at the bottom of the page create three different pictures. Read just the verbs. Repeat them out loud. Repeat them in a whisper. I wonder which way is more effective in getting at the meaning of the words.

#### Try This

- Finger paint a response to one of the questions. How do you listen to God?
- Gather outside. Maybe you will see a bird like the bird in the picture. What can its wings remind us of? (God is ready to meet us whenever we want to talk to him.)
- Read the verses at the bottom of the page. What words would you use to summarize these verses?
- Listen to the song “[Be Still and Know](#)” by Steven Curtis Chapman.

#### Church Connection

- At church we gather together and get ready to hear from God. Some people shut their eyes; some people keep their eyes open. What do you do in church to get ready to listen to God? Watch how others get ready.
- Some people get dressed up to go to church. This is one way to get ready. I wonder what you do to prepare to listen to God at church.







# Psalms teach us to hear God's invitation to listen to and talk with God.

## For Adults to Notice

- The people are all leaning, symbolizing a posture of listening.
- There is a shepherd leading the sheep like God leads us into worship.
- The yellow wisps on the right side of the page all seem to emanate from the shepherd.
- God invites us to both listen to him and talk with him.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- The sheep are all in a line. What do you think they're doing?
- Who do you think is at the front of the row of sheep?
- Why do you think all the people are leaning?
- The shepherd appears to be calling to the people. I wonder what he is saying.

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- God invites us to listen to what God says. What do you think God says when we listen?
- The psalms listed at the bottom of the page talk about us listening to God. Describe a special time or place where you listen to God.

### OLDER CHILDREN

- Psalm 95:7 says, "We are the sheep belonging to God's flock." How are people like sheep?
- Sometimes God speaks to us through other people, sometimes when we are outdoors, sometimes in church. How have you heard God's voice?





### Try This

- If you can, find a quiet spot outside away from traffic and listen carefully for a few minutes. What do you hear? Talk about how this experience might be different in summer than in winter.
- Listen to “[The Song of Blessing](#)” by Sarah Groves.
- Sing or listen to the hymn “[This is My Father’s World](#),” sung here by Amy Grant. Count how often you hear words about sounds or about listening.
- Listen to the song “[The Lord Is My Shepherd](#)” by Cedarhurst Kids.

### Church Connection

- Often at the beginning of a worship service, we sing or speak about God inviting us to worship. What words would you use to invite people into worship?
- Sometimes we hear God’s voice through the voice of the pastor. Sometimes it is in the voice of another person in the congregation. Sometimes it is in the words of a song. When do you hear God’s voice in worship?





# Psalms teach us to sing praise to God.

## For Adults to Notice

- The yellow circles are among the people. They could symbolize the people's praises going up to God.
- The people's hands are raised, but notice the other elements of creation represented as well: ground, grass, sea, mountains, sky, sun, moon, stars, insects, animals, and people. Even the birds seem to be "lifting their hands" with their wings. All creation is praising God!
- Singing is one way we talk to God. All the people say the same thing. Listen at church to sound of all the voices talking as one to God.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- I wonder what the people in this picture are doing. How do the people feel? Can you move like they are moving?
- I wonder why they are raising their hands all together.
- Look at the butterfly's wings and the bird's wings. They are outstretched. Do they remind you of anything else in the picture? Does it remind you of another picture in the book?

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- One verse at the bottom of the page says, "Lift up your hands in the temple." I wonder if a temple could be outside.
- I wonder what it means that the yellow circles are moving with the people.
- There is a bird with an open beak and some music notes nearby. Could the bird be singing? What do you suppose it is singing?
- Talk about a song you might sing to God.







#### OLDER CHILDREN

- What do the circles represent to you?
- How do the psalms at the bottom of the page describe the picture? Talk about other words that describe the picture.

#### Try This

- Find an open space where you can dance and sing (perhaps using shakers and tambourines as well) and listen/sing/dance to “[Sing](#)” by Ellie Holcomb.
- Listen to the song (above) and finger paint a response.
- Listen to “[Hallelujah](#)” by Rain for Roots.
- Listen to or sing “[Santo, Santo, Santo](#)” as sung by [a men’s group](#) or [a choir](#).
- There is a lot of movement in this picture! Move like the people do. Move like the animals do.
- Print out the music for “[All Creatures of Our God and King](#).” Draw a picture on the paper.

#### Church Connection

- I wonder if you have ever noticed a time at church when people raise their hands. Is there music? Are they singing? Do you ever hear the people singing God’s name?
- Talk about your favorite songs from church. Talk about your favorite songs from home or in the car. Are they the same songs? Would any of those songs fit with this picture?





# Psalms teach us to remember good things God has done.

## For Adults to Notice

WOW. These pages are full of stories about God and his people.

- There are pictures representing seven stories:
  - The Israelites crossing the Red Sea (Ex. 14)
  - Abraham sacrificing Isaac (Gen. 22:1–15)
  - Joseph’s coat of many colors (Gen. 37:3–4)
  - The Israelites following the cloud in the desert (Ex. 13:21)
  - Moses and the burning bush (Ex. 3)
  - Abraham under the stars (Gen. 15:5)
  - Jacob’s ladder (Gen. 28:10–22)
- This picture is also one big story, from Abraham, who was promised many descendants, to the story of God leading the people out of Egypt and protecting the people of Israel in the wilderness with a cloud.
- As you look at the stories with small children, be careful with the small picture of Abraham sacrificing Isaac. That story could be upsetting for young children, so it might be good to emphasize God giving the ram to Abraham for the sacrifice.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- Touch all the places there is water on these pages. I wonder why water is so many places in this picture.
- There are two groups of people in the picture. Talk about what you think they are doing.
- Do these pictures remind you of any Bible stories? Which ones?
- Look at the small picture in the top right corner. I wonder if there is someone in the big picture moving in the same way. Can you put your body in that position?





#### **MIDDLE CHILDREN**

- Tell the stories you know and see in the pictures on this page.
- Remember and tell each other one good thing that God has done in the picture.
- Remember and tell each other one good thing that God has done in your life.
- Can you think of other Bible stories that could be in this picture?

#### **OLDER CHILDREN**

- Remembering what God has done in Scripture helps us to see God in our lives. Describe how you see God in each of these stories.
- Is there a time when you remember seeing or hearing something good that God has done for you or your family?
- Ask some of the adults in your life about how God has taken care of them.

#### **Try This**

- Draw one of the stories in this picture.
- Can you make a list of the stories and put them in order? Which story happened first? Which story happened last?
- Look for these stories in a Bible with pictures.
- Look at family photos together and tell each other stories about those pictures.

#### **Church Connection**

- In church we remember the way God did good things for people in the Bible, but also the way God has done good things for us. Talk about times in church when we talk about what God has done for us.
- What do you use water for at home? Do we ever use water in church?
- Does your church have stained glass windows? Do the pictures tell stories from the Bible?







# Psalms teach us to say, “Forgive me, Lord.”

## For Adults to Notice

- The person standing in the river is a reminder that water washes us and that we are baptized in water.
- The water flows into the river and forms circles in the water. In this book circles often could represent the presence of God.
- Psalm 51 specifically uses the idea of washing.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- Touch all the water on these pages. Water is very useful. Talk about how you use water every day. Where do you think the water is coming from?
- What do you think the girl in the picture is doing?
- Have you seen a baptism in church? Have you been baptized? Why do you think the church uses water to baptize people?

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- What is the pattern on the girl’s dress? Why do you think the artist might have chosen to do that?
- What are some words you could use to ask for forgiveness from God? Say them out loud to the people around you now.

### OLDER CHILDREN

- People can be mean to each other. You have probably noticed when someone is mean to you. I wonder if you have ever been mean. Describe a time when you asked for forgiveness for hurting someone.





- Talk about how each of the three verses from psalms in the lower corners of the page are represented in the picture.
- We don't like to think that we sin, but we all do. Show the posture you could take to say, "Forgive me, Lord." Is it similar to the picture in the upper right corner?

### Try This

- For younger children: Read the first Bible verse on the bottom of the page. Use water to wash your hands. As the water runs over your hands, talk about how the dirt is washed away. Your hands are clean. I wonder how God washes away sin.
- For older children: Read Psalm 51. This is a psalm of David asking for forgiveness. I wonder if there is anything in that psalm that surprises you.
- Make a poster featuring one of the psalm verses at the bottom of the page. Consider making the most important word stand out or giving each word a different color. Here is [an example](#) of how someone has written a verse with different colors and sizes of letters.

### Church Connection

- In church this week, listen for the words "forgive," "confess," "sorry," and "sins." How many times did you hear those words?
- When we think about what we have done wrong, we are sad. But at the same time, we know that God forgives us. That makes us glad. Is it hard to feel both sad and glad at the same time?





# Psalms teach us to cry, “Why, Lord, do these bad things happen?”

## For Adults to Notice

- Psalms, even psalms of lament, are for every age. Psalms of lament give language to the longings of even the smallest child.
- Notice that the lions are present but subdued. Think about a time when you were sad or afraid but still felt God’s presence.
- Think about what the dark lines could mean to you: Confusion? Darkness? Separation? We know nothing can separate us from God, but often it feels that way.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- Look at the boy’s face. I wonder how he feels. I wonder what it would feel like to be surrounded by lions.
- What words would you use to tell God that you are afraid?
- Have you cried out for an adult after having a bad dream in the night? Talk about how that felt.

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- The lions are prowling, but they aren’t attacking. I wonder why.
- Talk about a time when you felt sad or scared.

### OLDER CHILDREN

- Psalm 13:2 on the bottom of the page says, “How long must my heart be sad day after day?” What sort of thing might cause such a deep sadness in people?
- What do the dark squiggles in the picture make you think about? Why do you think the artist drew dark lines on the boy’s shirt?







### Try This

- Listen to “[O Lord, Hear My Prayer](#),” a song from the Taizé community. Does it sound like crying out to you?
- There are many events on the news that make people ask God why bad things happen. There are also things in our lives that make us ask of God, “Will I be sad day after day?” (Ps. 13:2). Make a list of things from the world and from your life that you could bring to God. Put the list on your bulletin board or refrigerator and pray for them every day for one week.

### Church Connection

- We sometimes call crying out to God “lament.” Are there times in church when you lament?
- When bad things happen, like accidents or sickness, we sometimes ask God why. Have you heard a prayer like this in church? Talk about that.





# **Psalms teach us to believe God's promise: "I forgive you, and I love you."**

## **For Adults to Notice**

- God has blessed us with many promises. Perhaps the most important one is the promise of his forgiveness and his love.
- The two pages have similar backgrounds, but there is a huge contrast between leaving sin and being forgiven.
- The dry bones on the left side of the page are a reference to Ezekiel 37, in which God reveals a valley of dry bones to the prophet Ezekiel and asks if the bones can live. God then causes them to become reanimated.
- Notice the small rainbow at the top of the right side of the page reminding us that God promised never to destroy the world with a flood again.

## **Things to Wonder About**

### **YOUNGER CHILDREN**

- Is that tree healthy? How can you tell?
- God says he loves us. How do you show important people in your life that you love them? How do you show love to God?

### **MIDDLE CHILDREN**

- Stand like the people in the picture. How do you think they feel? What position would you put your body in that says, "I Believe"?
- The artist put a reference to one of God's promises in the picture. Can you find it?
- Sometimes artists will tell the same idea in more than one way. What do you see close to the tree?





#### OLDER CHILDREN

- I wonder if it is always easy to believe God's promise or if it is sometimes hard to do.
- Talk about a time when you have forgiven someone or when someone else forgave you.
- If God forgives our sins and is full of tender love for us, how should we think about ourselves?

#### Try This

- God loves us and forgives us. How would you stand in a way that shows you are forgiven and loved?
- This picture has yellow circles on it. Draw a picture of yourself standing, then add circles. What do the circles mean to you?
- Sing "[Jesus Loves Me](#)."
- Write the words "God forgives me and God loves me" on a piece of paper. Write the words again and again. Ask your family and friends to write the words on the paper too. Write them so many times that the paper is filled with those words. Hang it in your bedroom or put it on your refrigerator to remember everyone that also believes with you.

#### Church Connection

- Sometimes in church after we confess our sins, we hear God say, "I forgive you." This can be words from the pastor, a reading from Scripture, or a song. This week in church, listen and see if you can hear God saying that to you.







# Psalms teach us to say, “Thank you, Lord.”

## For Adults to Notice

- This picture shows many things for which we are thankful.
- The woman holding the bread could just be serving bread, but she could also be leading a communion celebration.
- The icon and the people in the picture show someone whose hands are ready to receive.
- Psalm 105:1 connects thankfulness to praise.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- This picture has many things to be thankful for in it. What do you see?
- Why do you think there is rain in the picture? Are you thankful for rain?
- Why do you think there are yellow circles around the people?

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- I wonder how we can show God that we are thankful.
- Name three things you are thankful to God for.

### OLDER CHILDREN

- One of the psalms in the lower corners of the page tells us to “announce who God is.” What do you think that means?
- All the things in the picture come from nature. I wonder if we get other things from God too.
- Being thankful can be shown by actions. What are some ways you show that you are thankful to God?





### Try This

- Begin a list of things you're thankful for. Add at least one thing to the list every day for one week. Read the list together and give thanks to God.
- Listen to the song "[God Makes Everything](#)" by Rain for Roots.
- Listen to the song "[In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful](#)," a song from the Taizé community. Here it is in Spanish: "[El Señor es mi fortaleza](#)."

### Church Connection

- When do we say "thank you" in church? Do we do it in song? Do we ever say the words in a prayer?
- How is giving money like saying "thank you"?
- Are there other ways of saying "thank you" to God without speaking words?





# Psalms teach us to listen to God's word.

## For Adults to Notice

- The circles are on much of the page, from the stream, to the tree, to the sun. God's presence is there among those gathered.
- In this picture, the pears represent God's words to us. They are sweet, they are satisfying, and they are for all people.
- The tree planted by the stream is flourishing and bearing fruit; when we delight in God's law, there is spiritual growth and flourishing.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- Look at the girl eating the fruit. I wonder what it tastes like.
- How do you feel when you eat a sweet piece of fruit? Could God's words bring joy to you in the same way?
- The tree is growing by a stream of water. Not only is the tree growing, but it is overflowing with good fruit. I wonder what would happen to the tree if it did not have water.

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- Psalm 1:2-3 tells us that whoever delights in God's law is like a tree planted by streams of water. I wonder what that means.
- Psalm 119:103 says, "Your words are very sweet to my taste!" The psalm writer is talking about God's words, but I wonder how words can be sweet. Does this mean that we really eat words

### OLDER CHILDREN

- After you listen to God's word, what do you do so that you can remember it?
- When you listen to God's word, does it ever change what you do or how you think?







### Try This

- If weather permits, find a nice spot outside where you can sit—perhaps on a blanket or on the grass—and share a picnic of sweet-tasting fruits and foods and refreshing water. Discuss the different fruits: What do they taste like? Are they sweet? How does the cool water feel as you drink it? Listen—can you hear the any birds chirping? Can you hear the wind as it blows? God gave us these gifts to enjoy. Read Psalm 119:103—God’s words are sweet gifts!
- Listen to this [reading of Psalm 1](#). (Click on the little picture of a speaker just above and to the right of the printed psalm.) Memorize Psalm 1.

### Church Connection

- I wonder if you have ever seen people listening at church? What do their bodies look like while they listen? You might sit on a carpet square or at a table, or you might sit on a chair or a pew. You might even stand while you hear God’s Word. Do you feel ready to listen to God’s words when you are at church?





# Psalms teach us to say, “God, we love you. We trust you.”

## For Adults to Notice

- Along with creation, two promises from God to us are represented on these pages:
  - God will be our shepherd and give us what we need (Ps. 23); and
  - The stars remind us of the promise to Abraham and that we are his descendants. (Gen. 15:5).
- The people are standing with their hands over their heart—a way to say “love” in sign language.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- What are the people saying with their hands?
- Can you count the stars on this page? Did you include the stars on the woman’s shirt?
- We often think that God loves us. I wonder if we say, “I love you, God.”

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- The picture looks like night. I wonder why the artist chose night.
- These pages are about how we love and trust God. Look at the verses from the psalms at the bottom of the page. What do you think they tell us about love and trust?
- There are at least two Bible stories referenced in this picture. Retell the stories.

### OLDER CHILDREN

- Read aloud the three verses in the lower corners of the page. Do you recognize any verse?
- The picture shows both the earth and people on the earth. Why do you think the artist showed it this way?
- “I trust you, God” is hard to remember and say. Talk about ways we can say, “I trust you, God.” (Hint: Look at the verses from Psalms at the bottom of the page.)





### Try This

- Find and read the stories of Abraham, the good shepherd, and creation in your Bible or Bible storybook.
- Try [folding paper into a star](#). Your stars could be hung in your room or placed on a bookshelf to remind you that, like Abraham, we trust God.
- Sing a song that says we love and trust God. Sing it when you go to bed and when you wake up again. Here is one example: "[I Love You, Lord](#)," sung here by Maranatha! Music.

### Church Connection

- Write the word “love” and “trust” on a piece of paper. Listen in church for the words “love” and “trust” in the words the pastor or the people say or in the songs we sing. Do you hear other words that mean love? Write them on your paper too.







# Psalms teach us to ask for God's help.

## For Adults to Notice

- This picture shows someone who seems to be all alone in the middle of an ocean. God seems to be nowhere. Of all the pictures in this book, this is the one that has the fewest things in it. That's on purpose. Children feel this way sometimes, and this picture might be a good opportunity for them to express these feelings. Remind them that, just as God is near us in the other pictures, God's with us even when we feel all alone.
- Notice the house on the rock, reminding us of the parable of the wise and foolish builders. (Matt. 7:24–27 and Luke 6:46–49).

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- To whom do you think the person is talking? What do you think she is saying? Do you think anyone hears her?
- The water surrounds the rock and the person. I wonder how she got there.

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- The person on the rock looks as if she is all alone. Do you ever feel like that?
- Look carefully and you'll see a drawing of a house on the rock. Why do you think a drawing is there?

### OLDER CHILDREN

- One of the psalms on the bottom of the page calls God a "rock of safety." If the rock reminds us of God, do we look at the picture in a different way?
- Being surrounded by rushing water is scary. What would you say to God in this situation? Read the responses from Psalms in the verses on the bottom of the page. How were your words different from the ones in the psalms?





### Try This

- Collect rocks and make a small pile of them. That pile can remind us of God being with us and how we can depend on God. The people of Israel would often make piles of stones to remember events. (One example is found in Joshua 4.) Every day this week, write on paper a prayer asking for help for someone who needs it. Roll it up and hide it under your rocks. After a week, take out the papers and see how many prayers have been answered.
- Take a walk outside. Look for the biggest rock and the smallest rock. Where is there a rock big enough to stand on?
- Listen to “[The Wise and Foolish Builder](#)” by Rain for Roots.
- Listen to the song “[Don’t Be Afraid](#)” by John Bell and Alison Adam.

### Church Connection

- Often when we ask for God’s help in church it is during a prayer. Talk about how we are not alone when we’re all praying for the same thing together. Do you think God listens better when more people are praying?





# Psalms teach us to offer our gifts to God.

## For Adults to Notice

- The circles are among the flowers, indicating God's pleasure in the offering.
- The people bring offerings of seeds, but it is God who grows the seeds into a garden, just as God takes our offerings, no matter how small, and turns them into something beautiful.
- Children and adults are bringing offerings to God.
- Psalms is a song book. Psalms are often in the voice of the people. This includes our praise, but also our sadness and sometimes even our anger. The psalms remind us that we can bring ourselves to God as we are.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- We can show God our thankfulness by bringing God offerings. I wonder what kind of offerings we can bring?
- What are the people in this picture bringing?
- Look at how their offerings of seeds have grown into a beautiful garden! I wonder who made the seeds grow.

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- I wonder what you can offer to God. Do you think God expects a big offering?
- Do you think anyone is too old or too young to bring an offering to God?

### OLDER CHILDREN

- In the three verses at the bottom of the page, two are written by people and one is written in God's voice. Do you hear the difference?
- Often we give our money to God as an offering. This page has no money pictured to offer as a gift. I wonder why.





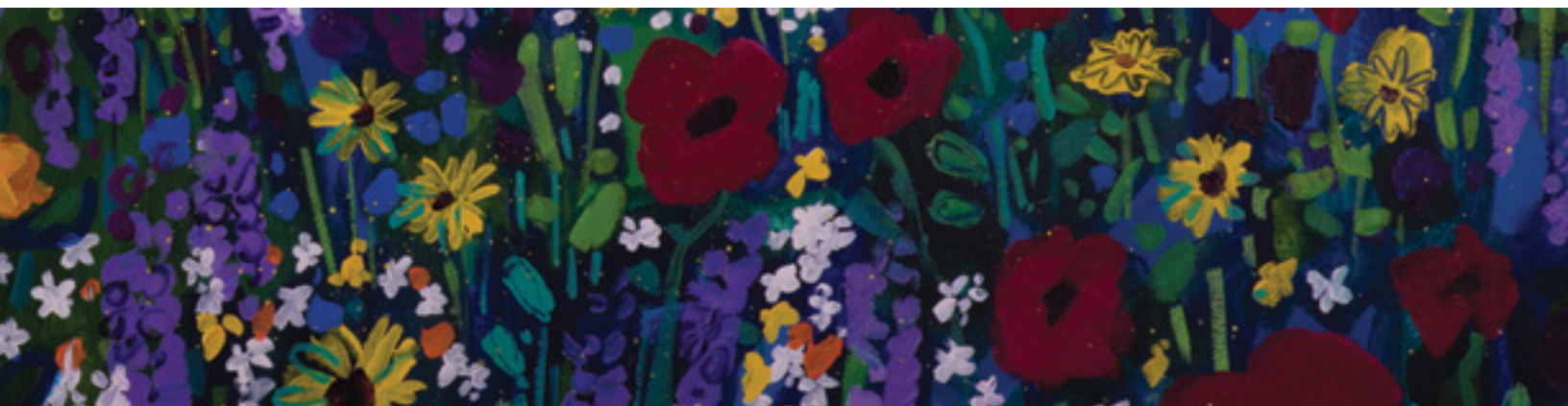


### Try This

- Take a small handful of sunflower seeds and walk around your yard. As you drop each seed onto the ground, offer praise to God for the things you are thankful for. Watch for these seeds to grow.
- Listen to the song “[We Are an Offering](#),” sung here by Chris Christian. What does the song say we offer to God?

### Church Connection

- Have you ever seen anyone bring offerings at church before? Maybe they put offerings of money into a basket, or maybe they offer their time to serve others in the church.
- Talk to a deacon or another adult at your church. Ask questions like “How much money does this church collect in one offering?” or “What happens to the money we give in church?” or “Who decides what happens to the money?”
- For four weeks, gather a group of five or more coins. Select the shiniest one to place in the offering plate at church.





# Psalms teach us to taste and see that God is good.

## For Adults to Notice

- The psalmist (probably David) wanted his people to experience God in as many ways possible when he wrote, “Taste and see that the LORD is good.” Images of grain and grapes remind modern Christians of communion and are prevalent in this picture. But the psalmist could not have intended that meaning because he wrote hundreds of years before Jesus gave us that sacrament. Perhaps the psalmist was referencing Passover. Be open to exploring other ways he could have meant the phrase.
- Psalm 16:5 (NIV) says God alone is “my portion and my cup.” The word “portion” there might refer to the inheritance that the priests received. All the other Israelite tribes received land, but the Levites did not. They received the Lord himself. The cup might refer to the cup of blessing, like the one that overflows in Psalm 23.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- What are the people eating? What do you like to eat?
- The first bite of something often tells you the whole thing is good. Can you think of a time when you had a first bite of something that was really good?
- This page is about noticing what God provides for us. How does God take care of you?

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- Do you remember the story of the people of Israel getting manna? Do you think they thought about God when they tasted the manna?
- Meals bring us together. Talk about an important meal that you have had that brought you closer to other people.





#### **OLDER CHILDREN**

- Talk about why you think God gave us a sacrament in which we actually eat and drink.
- Taste can mean to try or to sample. How might people taste that and see that God is good in that way?
- Read the verses from the book of Psalms at the bottom of the page. The third one talks about how God is a portion. What is a portion? What do you think the writer meant by “portion” and “cup” in this sentence?
- I wonder if we can taste and see only with food.

#### **Try This**

- Together, prepare some fruit or vegetables or bake brownies. Enjoy the tastes from God.

#### **Church Connection**

- We eat bread and drink grape juice in church together. It is a special time called communion or the Eucharist. What does that say about the relationship between us and God?
- We share in God’s feast. When do you feel like you have a feast from God?







# Psalms teach us to choose God's path.

## For Adults to Notice

- In the picture, the word of God literally lights the path.
- The forest could represent a number of things (grief, confusion, doubt, etc.), but Scripture brings clarity and wisdom to those places.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

- I wonder why the people are walking in the dark. Where are the people walking?
- Is there light in these pictures? Where is the light?

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- Have you ever had to find your way in the dark? What did that feel like?
- Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is like a lamp." The Bible doesn't literally glow. I wonder what Psalm 119:105 means?

### OLDER CHILDREN

- Psalm 19:8 at the bottom of the page says that God's commands "give light to our minds." How do God's commands give light to our minds?
- I wonder if there is a time in your life when you felt lost or confused. Did God's words help you? Have you ever had to choose between two (or more) paths?





### Try This

- Try making shadow puppets with your hands against a light-colored wall or a sheet. Notice the light, dark, and shadows.
- Set up a nighttime scavenger hunt. Turn off all the lights and give kids flashlights to look for hidden objects or clues.
- Look at the moon and stars and discuss the light they give. Does the moon change over time? Sometimes we can't see the moon or stars, but they are still there.
- Discuss with your kids times when you've had to make hard decisions and God's word brought clarity.

### Church Connection

- How does your congregation bring its focus to the word of God? Talk about different ways this can happen.
- Listen to the song "[Thy Word](#)" by Amy Grant.





# Psalms teach us to receive God's blessing.

## For Adults to Notice

- The people have their hands open as if they're about to receive something.
- Blessing can be a hard word to define. A blessing is not the same as a present. It can mean something for which one is grateful ("That gift was a real blessing!") or a pledge of support ("I asked for their blessing to marry their daughter.") or a prayer ("Will you say the blessing before we eat?"). In this context it means God's favor and protection. We receive God's blessing.

## Things to Wonder About

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

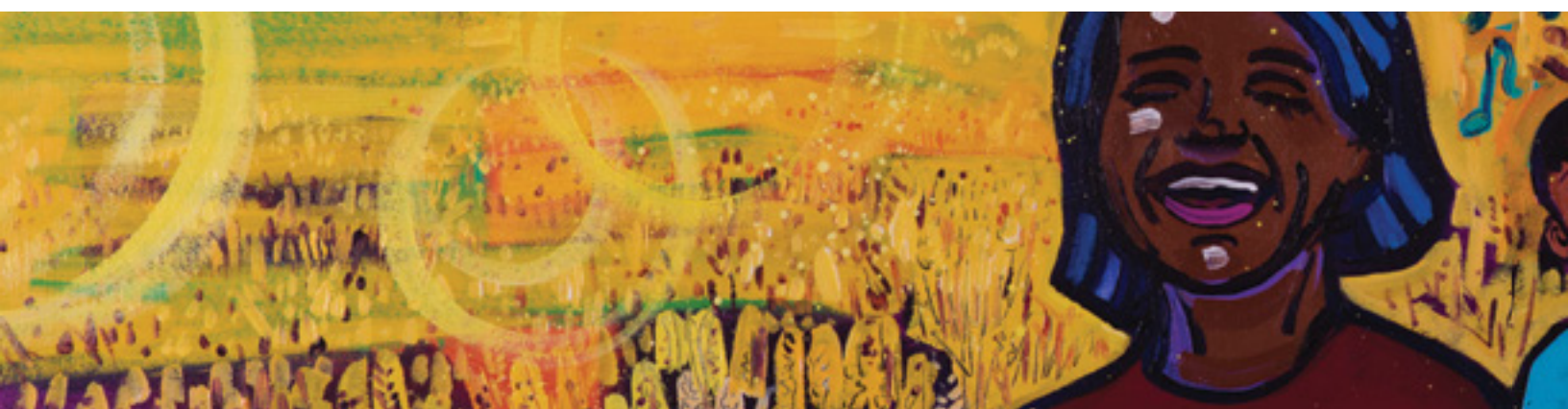
- Look at all the people! What do you think they're doing?
- I wonder how we receive words from God. Is that different from listening?

### MIDDLE CHILDREN

- How would you hold your hands to receive a blessing? How would you hold your hands to give a blessing?
- If the people are receiving a blessing, why are there music notes in the picture? I wonder where the music is coming from.

### OLDER CHILDREN

- A blessing often begins with the words "May the Lord . . .". What blessing would you like to receive? What blessing would you like to give?







### Try This

- Memorize the blessing God gave in Numbers 6:24–26 (NIV). “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.” These are words God gave to Moses to give to Aaron to use when he blessed the people of Israel.

### Church Connection

- Pastors often give a blessing at the beginning or the end of a worship service. When that happens, some people close their eyes, some look at the pastor, some hold their hands out, some fold their hands, and some bow their heads. Why do you think they do all of these different things?
- Listen to the song “[We Receive Your Blessing](#).”

