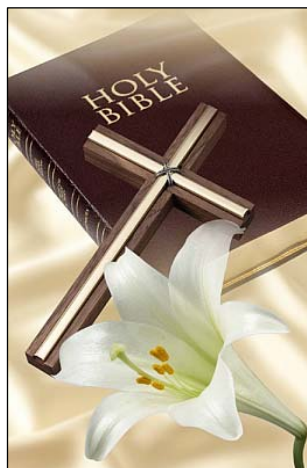


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The Salvation Army

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OFFICE OF THE WORLD PRESIDENT
OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

New Year Message 2009
From the World President of Women's Ministries

Dear Sisters in Christ,

New Year Message for 2009 'EVERY TRIBE AND EVERY NATION'

Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus! We thank God for the unity in Christ which binds us together as women from every part of God's world. At the same time, we recognise that there are still many people who have not heard the Good News of the Gospel.

I would therefore like to share with you our Women's Ministries theme for 2009, which is '*every tribe and every language*' (Revelation 7:9). This thought was placed in my heart particularly during the All-India Women's Leadership Seminar in India last year. I knew God was speaking to me about a theme for 2009. You are welcome to take up the theme if you feel you should. Otherwise, just let it open your eyes and ears – and your hearts – in the coming year.

Let us:

- **Reach out**
with the language of love to communities who are still un-reached
- **Listen**
to the heart cries of those around us
- **Translate**
our teaching into the language of the people
- **Overcome the barriers**
of culture or mistrust that hinder the spreading of God's word
- **Communicate the Good News**
of Jesus wherever we go

With love in Christ, and warm greetings for 2009,

Helen Clifton

Helen Clifton
Commissioner
World President of Women's Ministries





Dear Friends,

Greetings to you each one from Commissioner Linda Bond and me. It is a pleasure to be working alongside Commissioner Linda and we are very pleased to welcome her to our territory.

Since returning home I have really enjoyed being able to re-connect with so many of you and look forward to further opportunities to visit your Division and Corps.

One of my favourite books in the Bible is the Psalms. At several important stages of my journey, the Psalms have made a great impact and brought confirmation in situations when important decisions have been made. I remember when we were appointed to the UK that God gave me a promise that He would watch over my daughters. When asked to go to Papua New Guinea, again God's word in Psalm 121 became a reality and a promise that I held firmly to and saw fulfilled.

The Psalms are favoured by many people and I am sure you will have a favourite. When we visited the Holy Land, I recall the tour guide reciting Psalm 121 to the group as we sat on the stairs outside the temple wall in Jerusalem. The guide was pointing to the hills around Jerusalem and told us that the psalmist would have looked often to the hills but affirmed his help came from the Lord.

As we read the Psalms we share in the experiences of the author and identify with him in his experiences – ups and downs – times of depression and times of praise and exaltation. The Psalms provide guidance, assurance, comfort, hope and encouragement.

This is the first edition of our new format for the resource manual and I am grateful to those who submitted articles for this edition. The inspiration for the theme came from Captain Fran Everitt who had prepared the material on Psalm 23 and I acknowledge her significant contribution to this edition of the manual.

As you use these resources "Living with the Psalms", I pray they will be helpful for you in your ministry to women.

May the God of all grace strengthen you within.

In Christ

Jan

Jan Condon
Lt. Colonel
Territorial Secretary for Women's Ministries

Women's Ministry Territorial Project 2009 MYANMAR



You can help answer prayers by providing:

Health / Medical care costs for women in dire economic situations

Opportunities to fund and establish new programmes for women in villages
eg. health care, nutrition, playgroup, literacy, budgetting, craft & cooking classes

Projects to rebuild in cyclone ravaged areas
eg. counselling, evangelism, sanitation and clean water projects

Equipping and training of health workers
(for your information - this is to train health workers to use their skills in Chin State - near Bangladesh)



Australia Eastern Territory

Captivated

by the word



“Hearing from God”

Weekend 13th - 15th February, 2009
The Collaroy Centre
Day 21st February, 2009
Sydney Congress Hall

**International Guest Speaker:
Major Gwen Cox**

and Commissioner Linda Bond

The Salvation Army
Australia Eastern Territory
(formerly Women's Bible Convention)

1 army mission | 2020



doing whatever it takes

To see

- **A territory marked by prayer and holiness**
- **Our whole territory in every place, involved in evangelism**
- **Corps healthy and multiplying**
- **Our people equipped and empowered to serve the world**
- **The territory passionate about bringing children to Jesus**
- **Youth trained and sent out to frontline mission**
- **Significant increase of new soldiers and officers**

And we will be a Salvation Army

Knowing who we are,

Showing who we are

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23
Captain Fran Everitt

Ask anyone to name the best known and most popular of the Old Testament Psalms, and the answer will undoubtedly be Psalm 23. The Shepherd's Psalm.

Psalm 23 A psalm of David.

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

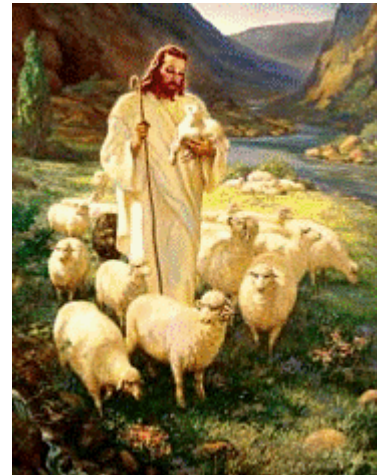
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.



***He will feed his flock like a shepherd
He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding
them close to his heart.
Isaiah 40:11a***

For the decorations each month, I used all the books I have on Psalm 23, plus fluffy toys, the banners (on the CD), pictures, posters, whatever you have handy. For the 'rest' week I brought in a comfortable lounge chair with quilt & pillows & I lead most of the time, from the chair!!



***The King of Love my Shepherd is
Whose goodness faileth never
I nothing lack if I am his
And he is mine forever***

The Salvation Army Song Book 53

Each month there is a meeting plan along with ideas, resources, quizzes (all the answers to the quizzes are in the back of the main resource on the CD), handouts, bookmarks, prayer lists, etc available on the resource CD to use as you see the need, but be sure to remember to add your own prayer points before printing prayer lists!

You can use it all each month, or pick and choose. There are some things in the handouts each month, which are not in the main resource. It's up to you to personalise it for your own use. Sometimes the songs fit the theme, other times I chose them because the members like them—for no other reason. You may have other songs that fit the theme—or other ideas—if you do, let me know!

I also asked the members to bring anything that was associated with the theme to share— e.g. holiday snaps (rest), stories of God's provision (supply), whatever they thought was applicable! There were many other ideas, songs, poems etc... that were used, but this resource is a basic outline for you to add to if needed—there just wasn't enough room to include everything!!

When printing handouts etc. off the resource CD, you will need to check that the fonts are available, if not, you will need to adjust the handout before printing.

Have fun with it—we did!
May The Shepherd bless you abundantly!

FEBRUARY

The Lord is my Shepherd—That's Relationship!

Welcome & Introduction to Theme

Song iworship DVD (C): Lord I lift your name on high
(I'm so glad you're in my life – relationship)

Reading Psalm 23—that's relationship
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR FEB

Prayer Time *each month hand out prayer list*
SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR FEB

Name Quiz **SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR FEB**

Meaning of Names (look up meanings of names for those at Home League) - read paragraph 'our names are strongly linked' from Feb Handout

Song iWorship DVD (C): He knows my name

Devotional thoughts - The Lord is my Shepherd
SEE CD/ IN MAIN RESOURCE UNDER FEB

Sharing – Psalm 23—what it has meant to me...
(Bring items or reflect)

I shall not want – That's supply!

Song iWorship DVD (A): Shout to the Lord
(...nothing compares to the promise I have in you)
This is a reminder that He supplies all our needs. Not our wants but our needs!

Poem -

My cup has overflowed

I've never made a fortune,
And it's probably too late now.
But I don't worry about that much,
I'm happy anyhow
And I go along life's way,
I'm reaping better than I sowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer,
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Haven't got a lot of riches,
And sometimes the going's tough
But I've got loving ones all around me,
And that makes me rich enough.
I thank God for his blessings,
And the mercies He's bestowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer,
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong,
My faith wore somewhat thin.
But all at once the dark clouds broke,
And the sun peeped through again.

So Lord, help me not to gripe,
About the tough rows I have hoed.
I'm drinking from my saucer,
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage,
When the way grows steep and rough.
I'll not ask for other blessings,
I'm already blessed enough.

And may I never be too busy,
To help others bear their loads.
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer,
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Author unknown

Reading

Jesus teaches about worry - Matthew 6:25-33
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR FEB

Closing prayer and benediction



MARCH

He makes me to lie down in green pastures—
That's Rest!

Welcome



Our shepherd knows the 'green pastures' that will restore us. We will reach these places only by following him obediently.

Song Worship DVD (D): 'Hear our Praises'

Reading Psalm 23—The Message version
SEE CD/BOOKMARK FOR MAR

Prayer time SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Song As the deer pants for the water (SIS 460)

Devotional thoughts—condense as needed
SEE CD/MAIN RESOURCE

Quiz River quiz (rivers/beach—places of rest and refreshment) **SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR MAR**

Sharing favourite places of rest / holiday places etc...
what do you do to 'rest'?

Word 'Rest' (roll call)

Announcements

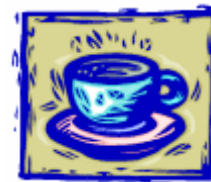


Devotions from 'Simple Living for Busy People (The Truth about Work) page 122'

Song 'Still' from Hillsong 'Hope' Album (Track 6)
(Also *Sydney Staff Songsters* Album)

Reading

God is aware of the complexities and stress-filled circumstances that you face in your life. God cares. He cares so much that he has provided many natural foods that will strengthen and renew body and mind and help you relax and recoup your energy. One of my personal favourites - a cup of tea! For centuries, tea has been the drink of choice for princes and paupers, wise men and fools, aristocrats and commoners. All have treasured it for its calming, relaxing qualities. When you find yourself feeling the stress, boil the water, steep the tea and sit for a moment, allowing yourself the incredible benefits of a simple cup of tea.



Final thoughts:

- ⇒ Rest renews and restore your body, soul and spirit.
- ⇒ Spiritual rest comes from spending time with God.
- ⇒ Rest gives you an opportunity to remove the static from your busy mind and focus on the voice of God.
- ⇒ God made rest an important element following the work of creation by resting on the seventh day as an example for us.

Closing prayer and benediction

APRIL

**He leads me beside the still waters—
That's Refreshment!
He restores my soul—That's Healing!**

Welcome & Announcements & Intro Theme

Song: iWorship DVD (A) He has made me glad

Poem (Also in April Handout on CD)

He Leads Me

In pastures green? No, not always
Sometimes he who knows best
In kindness leads me in weary ways
Where heavy shadows be;
Out of the sunshine warm and soft and bright,
Out of the sunshine into the darkest night.
I often would yield to sorrow and to fright
Only for this: I know he holds my hand.
So, whether led in green, or desert land
I trust, although I cannot understand.
He leads me

Beside still waters? No, not always so.
Often the heavy tempests around me blow,
And over my soul the waves and billows go.
But when the storm beats wildest, and I cry
Aloud for help. The Master stands by
And whispers to my soul: "Lo, it is I."
Above the tempest wild I hear him say:
"beyond the darkness lies the perfect day;
In every path of yours I lead the way."
So whether on the hilltops, high and fair
I dwell, or in the sunless valleys where
The shadows lie—what matter? He is there.
He gives to me no helpless, broken reed,
But here his own hand, sufficient for my need.

So where he leads me I can safely go.
And in the blest hereafter I shall know
Why in his wisdom he has led me so.

*Taken from 'Reflections'
Compiled by Norma Broad*

Prayer time SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Reading 'He leads me beside the still waters'
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR APRIL

Quiz By the way
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR APRIL

Song SASB 397 TB 586
When we walk with the Lord

Sharing Times you have felt God's
leading/healing/refreshing

Hand out this month's bookmark
SEE CD/BOOKMARK FOR APRIL

Devotions

He restores my soul - That's Healing!

God doesn't reform; he restores. He doesn't camouflage the old; he restores the new. The Master Builder will pull out the original plan and restore it. He will restore the energy. He will restore the hope. He will restore the soul. Life is a jungle! But when our Shepherd appears, everything changes.

Our loneliness diminishes, because we have fellowship with him. Our despair decreases, because we have his vision. Our confusion begins to lift, because we have his direction.

We haven't left the jungle - it hasn't changed, but we have! Our Shepherd comes to restore our soul... He restores our soul and brings healing to our lives - by giving us himself.

Song SASB 768 TB 715
Leaning on the everlasting arms

Closing prayer and benediction



MAY

**He leads me in paths of righteousness—
That's Guidance!**



Welcome & Announcements & Theme

Song iWorship DVD (A)
All hail the power of Jesus name

Reading (Also bookmark for May)
Psalm 23 - The Lord is my lantern
SEE CD FOR BOOKMARK FOR MAY

Prayer time SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Quiz Do you know the meanings of these sayings to do with feet? **SEE CD/MAIN RESOURCE FOR MAY**

1. On a shoestring
2. To be in someone else's shoes
3. To be given the boot
4. Footloose and fancy free
5. To boot
6. To pad the hoof
7. To put one's best foot forward
8. To put one's foot in it
9. To show a clean pair of heels
10. Walk of life
11. When the boot's on the other foot

Sharing Testimony

Quiz Fun with feet
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR MAY

Roll call - word 'guide/guidance'

Song Have faith in God: Geoff Bullock
(The heavens shall declare Track 2)

Oh Lord you lead me, by the still waters
Quietly restoring my soul
You speak words of wisdom,
the promise of glory,
the power of the presence of God.

Have faith in God, let your hope rest on
the faith he has placed in your heart.
Never give up, never let go of the faith
he has placed in your heart.

Oh Lord you guide me,
through all the darkness,
turning my night into day.
You'll never leave me;
never forsake me,
the power of the presence of God.

Have faith in God
© Geoff Bullock 1993 Word Music

Devotions 'he leads me along...'
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR MAY

Song iWorship DVD (D) God will make a way



For his name's sake—That's Purpose!

Reading For his name's sake
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR MAY

Closing prayer and benediction

JUNE

Yea, though I walk through the valley of death—That's testing!

Welcome & Announcements

Song: iWorship DVD (D) God will make a way

Reading Psalm 23 (Also bookmark for June)
(A programmers Psalm)

SEE CD / BOOKMARK FOR JUNE

Prayer time: SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Quiz Winter time Word Quiz
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR JUNE

Sharing: Testimony/s

I will fear no evil—That's protection!

Roll call - word 'Protect'



Reading A letter to you from your King and Protector
SEE CD/ ALSO IN HANDOUT FOR JUNE

I am your shield of protection. Many times you wonder where I am in the midst of the battle that rages around you. You feel abandoned on the battle-field. Don't be afraid and don't lose faith. I am here, and I am always victorious. I will protect you, but you must trust me. Sometimes I will lead you to shelter for safety and restoration. Other times I will ask you to join me on the front line in the heat of the battle. The truth is, I can kill any giant that threatens your life, but, just like David the shepherd boy, it's up to you to march forward, pick up the stones, and face your giant. I love to prove my strength when the odds are the greatest and hope is the smallest. I am truly your shelter and deliverer - I will protect you no matter where you are.

©From His Princess - love letters from your King

Song SASB 754 TB 299

Simply trusting every day

Simply trusting every day,
Trusting through a stormy way,
Even when my faith is small,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

*Trusting as the moments fly,
Trusting as the days go by
Trusting Him whate'er befall,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.*

Brightly does His Spirit shine,
Into this poor heart of mine,
While he leads I need not fall,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Singing, if my way be clear,
Praying if my path be drear,
If in danger for Him call,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Reading 'I will fear no evil'. (Max Lucado)

"I will fear no evil." How could David make such a claim? Because he knew where to look. "you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Rather than turn to the other sheep, David turned to the Shepherd. Rather than stare at the problems, he stared at the rod and staff. Because he knew where to look. David was able to say, "I will fear no evil." Don't measure the size of the mountain; talk to the one who can move it. Instead of carrying the world on your shoulders, talk to the One who holds the universe on his.

(Max Lucado—Safe in the Shepherd's Arms)

Closing prayer



JULY

**You are with me—
That's Faithfulness!**

Welcome & Announcements



Prayer time

SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Reading 'You are with me...That's Faithfulness'
(Also in Handout for July on CD)

'You are with me...' That's faithfulness!

Message version: 'When you walk at my side, your
trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.'

During summer 'drives' there are many dangers that
the shepherd is aware of: rampaging rivers in flood;
avalanches; rock slides; predators; storms. During
this time the flock is entirely alone with the shepherd.

They rely on him for everything. Sheep are thin-
skinned creatures, easily susceptible to cold,
pneumonia and respiratory complications. For the
sheep, because the Shepherd is on the journey, they
don't have to be afraid, they are secure in the
knowledge that he will take care of them.

**

You are with me. Yes, you, Lord, are in heaven. Yes,
you rule the universe. Yes, you sit upon the stars and
make your home in the deep. But yes, yes, yes, you
are with me. The Creator of the Universe is with me.

The Lord is with me. You may be facing death, but
you aren't facing death alone; the Lord is with you.

You may be facing marital struggles or
unemployment, but you aren't alone; the Lord is with
you. What ever you are facing - you are not alone.

(Max Lucado—Safe in the Shepherd's Arms)

Song

Creator King
(Don Moen DVD)

Bible Verses

SEE CD/ HANDOUT FOR JULY

Quiz: The Name Game

SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR JULY

1. In the old rhyme "sticks and stones may
break your bones...." what will never hurt
you?
2. Can you recall two nursery rhymes about
boys called Jack?
3. How many shortened versions of the name
'Elizabeth' can you come up with?
4. Give the names of three British kings.
5. For what do the letters a.k.a stand?
6. In the old song, what was the name of the
lady with the 'light brown hair'?
7. What was the stage name of Helen Porter
Mitchell?
8. Winston Leonard were the first two names of
this famous British Prime Minister. What
were his last two names?
9. Which Australian politician had the nickname
'the little digger'?
10. Which Australian opera singer had the
nickname "La Stupenda"?
11. Which famous Australian sportsman was
known as 'The Don'?
12. What was the stage name of Australian
comedian Harry van der Sluys?

Song

SASB 33 TB 657
Great is thy faithfulness

Sharing Testimonies

Tell of God's faithfulness to you

Roll call - word 'Faithfulness'

Reading 'When I see a flock of sheep'

SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR JULY

Song iWorship DVD (C) He knows my name

**Your rod and your staff, they comfort me –
That's Discipline!**

Reading Your rod and your staff, they comfort me...
- That's Discipline!

SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR JULY

Closing Prayer



AUGUST

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies – That's Hope!



Welcome & Announcements

Song SASB 334 TB 681
I serve a risen Saviour
(The hope of all who seek him)

Prayer time SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Reading (Also in August Handout)
Hope makes a difference

- Hope looks for the good in people instead of harping on the worst in them
- Hope opens doors when despair closes them
- Hope discovers what can be done instead of grumbling about what's not being done or cannot be done
- Hope draws its power from a deep trust in God and the basic goodness of humankind
- Hope 'lights a candle' instead of 'cursing the darkness'
- Hope regards problems, small or large, as opportunities
- Hope cherishes no illusions, nor does it yield to cynicism

Source unknown

Roll call - word 'Hope'

Announcements

Quiz Can you name the young of these animals (no connection to theme!!)

Can you name the young of the following creatures?

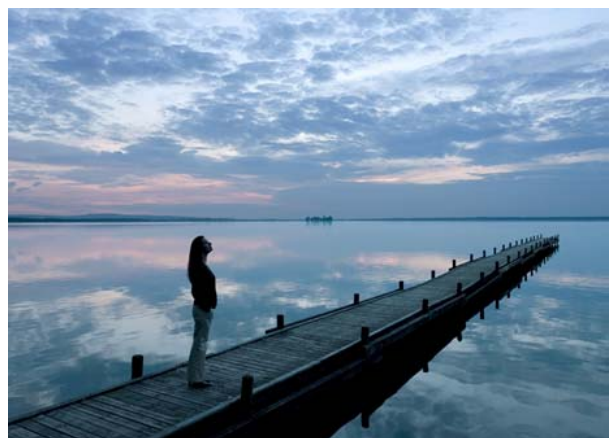
Cat	Swan
Lion	Kangaroo
Cow	Frog
Sheep	Pigeon
Deer	Seal
Duck	Elephant
Hen	Fish
Goose	Whale
Dog	Goat
Horse	Pig

Reading Channel 23 (August bookmark)
SEE CD FOR BOOKMARK FOR AUGUST

Devotions

Changing Channels (from 'Simple living for you')

Song iWorship DVD (A) Shout to the Lord



Closing Prayer

SEPTEMBER

You anoint my head with oil –
That's consecration!
My cup overflows – That's blessing!



Welcome & Theme

Song

SASB 579 TB 591:
He giveth more grace

Prayer SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Devotional SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR SEPT

Roll call - word 'Consecrate/ tion'

Announcements

Quiz – (Also in Sept Handout) A Good job well done!

1. Draws up plans for buildings
2. Designs buildings
3. Investigates crime
4. Flies an aircraft
5. Studies the stars
6. Conducts sales by bidding
7. Makes hats
8. Conveys sick or injured to hospital
9. Prescribes glasses
10. Dispenses medication
11. Drives cattle over long distances
12. Makes or mends clothing
13. Takes shorthand
14. Delivers the mail
15. Examines and keeps business books



Sharing What it means to me to be a Christian

Humour

THE RIGHT EXAMPLE—OOPS!!

(From an email)

A man was being tail-gated by a stressed-out woman on a busy street. Suddenly, the traffic light turned yellow just in front of him. The man did the right thing stopping at the line even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tail-gating woman hit the roof—and the horn—yelling in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection. As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands in the air.

He took her to the police station where she was searched, finger printed and photographed and placed in a holding cell.

After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, and yelling at the guy in front of you. I noticed the 'Choose Life' number plate holder, the 'What would Jesus do' bumper sticker, the 'Follow me to Sunday School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian 'fish' emblem on the boot.

Naturally, I assumed it was a stolen car!

Handout

SEE CD FOR BOOKMARK FOR SEPT

Devotions: SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR SEPT

Song

(I give you my heart)
Shout to the Lord
Shout to the Lord CD Disc 1 Track 10

Prayer to conclude

OCTOBER

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life – That's blessing!**



Welcome & Theme

Reading 'Implicit Confidence'
SEE CD/MAIN RESOURCE FOR OCT

Goodness & Mercy

His Goodness— The Lord's provision, love,
presence and blessing for us

His Mercy—as sinners we need his mercy and
forgiveness—each and every day

*Every day let us look up to our Lord for the blessed
ministry of his goodness and
mercy that is showered on us*

Song SIS 46
Surely goodness and mercy shall
follow me

Prayer time SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Sharing How have you been blessed in the
past/present?

Announcements

Song
Come thou fount of every blessing iWorship DVD (F)

Roll call - word 'Blessing'

Quiz – All about Crime!

1. If a person says they were elsewhere when a crime is committed what would that 'elsewhere' be classed as?
2. Sherlock Holmes, the famous detective created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had an assistant, what was his name?
3. To what crime does the word homicide refer?
4. How many thieves were there in the story of Ali Baba?
5. In the Dickens novel 'Oliver Twist' what was the name of the old man who trained boys to be pick pockets?
6. Where are the following prisons located? Long Bay Gaol, Dartmoor Prison, Pentridge Prison.
7. Which female author is known as the 'Queen of Crime'?
8. Name two of her novels.
9. Name Agatha Christie's world famous play which is the longest West End stage production in history.
10. Name two presidents of the USA who died at the hands of an assassin.
11. Who is 007?
12. Who created 007?
13. Antonio Agostino was convicted of one of Australia's most puzzling murders. By what name was the case known?
14. What was Guy Fawkes crime?

Question: If Christianity were a crime—would there be enough evidence to convict you if you were arrested?

Handout: (Bookmark for October)
SEE CD /BOOKMARK FOR OCT

Devotions The Lord is my Shepherd – is he yours?
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR OCT

Song SASB 396 TB 202
Count your blessings

Benediction



NOVEMBER

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord.....That's security!

Welcome & Theme

Song iWorship DVD – I will enter his gates

Prayer time SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Roll call - word 'Security'

Announcements

Sharing How does God offer you security in your life?

Quiz – 'Home sweet Home'

ALSO SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR NOV

1. 'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam' is the first line of a well known song. What is it?
2. What is the name of the Governor General's Canberra residence?
3. What is the basement or storage area under a building or house called?
4. What is the main house on a Spanish ranch or farm called?
5. What is the London address of the British Prime Minister?
6. What home is now a feature in the Fitzroy Gardens in Melbourne?
7. What is the official residence and headquarters of an ambassador called?
8. Where does the President of the USA reside in Washington?
9. What is the Prime Minister's residence in Canberra called?
10. What was the name of Scarlett O'Hara's home in 'Gone with the Wind'?
11. What is the country residence of the British Prime Minister called?
12. What is the Prime Minister's Sydney residence called?
13. In Emily Bronte's novel what was the name of the house on the moors where Heathcliff lived?
14. What national event in Australia gave its name to houses built about 1901?
15. What is a Swiss mountain cottage called?

Song HLSB 30
Home is home, however lowly
(Tune – what a friend)

Humour use own or reading: A Trail Guide's Psalm 23
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR NOV

Devotions use own choice and hand out bookmark at this time

SEE CD/ BOOKMARK FOR NOV

Song available on Don Moen CD

Psalm 23 — Don Moen

Jesus my Shepherd and only Provider,
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside the still water
He restores my soul,
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me
All the days of my life
And I will dwell in his house forever, until the end
of time

Jesus my Shepherd and only Provider
You make me lie down in green pastures
You lead me beside the still water, You restore my
soul
Though I walk through the valley of shadows
I will not be afraid, your rod and staff are my only
comfort
And you'll be with me always

You prepare a table before me,
In the presence of my enemies
And you anoint my head with oil, and my cup
overflows
My cup overflows with your love, with your love.

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Music



Prayer to conclude

DECEMBER

FOREVER! – That's Eternity!

Welcome & Theme

Song SASB 85 TB 552:
O come all ye faithful

Prayer time SEE CD FOR PRAYER LIST FOR MONTH

Dictionary definitions of 'Forever' – the hope we have of eternal life!

Everlastingly, permanently, always, eternally, immortally, until the end of time, Until Doomsday, until the Day of Judgment, on and on, ever, perpetually, always, evermore, in perpetuity, world without end

saecula saeculorum (Latin), lastingly, interminably, enduringly, unchangingly, durably, ever and again, indestructibly, endlessly, infinitely, forevermore, aye, for good, for good and all, till hell freezes over*, for keeps*, from the cradle to the grave, for life,

For always, for eternity, without cease, now and forever, in all ages, till death do us part. For eternity; for always; endlessly, at all times; always

Roll call - word: 'Forever'

Announcements

Song (suggestions) 'Come on ring those bells'
Or other carol



Quiz – All about bells' - The 'Ding Dong' Quiz
SEE CD/HANDOUT FOR DEC

1. In the song 'Jingle Bells', how many horses pulled the sleigh?
2. What do we call the tongue of the bell?
3. Give three or more flowers with 'bell' in their names.
4. Who wrote 'for whom the bell tolls'?
5. In athletics what does the ringing of a bell mean?
6. What do we call a bell tower, especially of a church?
7. In Independence Park in Philadelphia, USA, there is a large historic bell. Can you name it, and why is it unusual?
8. Who is a 'bell-hop'?
9. What name was given to trousers once worn by sailors?
10. What was the name of the fairy in Peter Pan?
11. Name the Scottish scientist who invented the telephone.
12. What does the colloquialism 'that rings a bell' mean?
13. What is the name of the bell in the Westminster clock tower?
14. In the nursery rhyme 'Oranges and Lemons', six sets of bells are mentioned, how many can you remember?

Song iWorship DVD (A): We all bow down

Reading (Also in December Handout)

The Lord is the designer of my life

The Lord is the designer of my life
He alone decides what the finished canvas shall reveal
He selects the colours for quiet, grey or sunny days
He adds shadows to give perspective to my life
His use of the brush reminds me that
He is the master artist
He selects the details that will give dimension to my life
I follow daily the pattern that He is working out
He takes dark hues of the valley's deep
And lightens them with His presence
I feed on the overwhelming beauty that He creates for me
My joy is complete in His presence and my soul sings
Hallelujah, throughout eternity!

Paraphrase of the 23rd Psalm
From a bookmark by Captain Megan Couchman

Song: iWorship DVD - I can only imagine

Prayer & Benediction

FRUIT BEARING

Psalm 1

Major Denise Parkinson

Home League meeting could include:

Décor

- Orange or Lemon Tree (potted Plant)
- Table displaying perfume bottles
- Basket of perfume samples (if possible)

Introductory activity

Have each lady finish this sentence "I delight in"
e.g. a day out shopping, reading a good novel, Vocal Solo or Video tape playing "Wouldn't it be lovely" from My Fair Lady.

Bible Reading Psalm 1

Four ladies to read

1st Reader v 1

2nd Reader v 2-3

3rd Reader v 4-5

4th Reader v 6

Testimony of answered prayer

Questions (please tick) SEE CD FOR SHEET

In groups or individually.

Introduction

This Psalm is full of lessons and images that God wants us to learn from. He has painted pictures for us. Some are easy for us to see; others perhaps need us to think about them a little longer.

I have chosen to look at Verse two of this Psalm as a discussion that could be incorporated into a morning/evening on prayer.

I have also planned a Home League meeting around it should you choose to use it that way.

These questions can either be used as part of a small group discussion or as an individual time of contemplation.

1 How regularly do you spend meditating on God's Word? (Apart from Church services)

Once a week
Once a month
Every Day
Seldom

2 How long on average would a meditation session last?

5 minutes
30 minutes
Over an hour
n/a

3 Where do you usually meditate?

In the garden
In the lounge
In your own bedroom
Other (please specify)

4 What time of the day do you find it most helpful to set aside?

First thing in the morning
Last thing at night
Both morning and night
Other (please specify)

5 Do you find other aids to meditation helpful?

(candles, music, flowers)

If so what?

6 Does this time of meditation require discipline for you or does it come naturally?

7 Is it necessary to have a set time each day with God? Discuss

"To delight in" means to find great pleasure in.

The Psalmist says

His delight is in the law of the Lord and on His law He meditates day and night.

The word meditate means *Exercise the mind in (esp. religious) contemplation. Focus on a subject in this manner Plan mentally; design*

(Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary)

Conclusion

Read 2 Corinthians 2 v 14-15

The aroma of Christ can only be on us if we have first spent time with Christ.

Illustration: Even with the smoking ban there are outside areas where we visit the patrons of hotels. When I come home I am the aroma of smokers to my family.

We are to be to others *the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ.* v14 We cannot spread His fragrance unless we have been with Him. When we have spent time with Him, this will to be evident *among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.* V15

People were attracted to Christ because of His goodness, His righteousness, His aroma. He was an attractive person. People couldn't get enough of Him. They flocked to Him. We are to be the Aroma of Christ to others, in our homes, streets, churches workplaces. We will smell good and others will be blessed.

Read again Psalm 1 v 3

Another result of *meditating on Gods law day and night* will be fruitfulness. Not only will we be spiritually nourished ourselves but we will be able to feed others by the fruit we bear.

We will not wither, be burnt out or dried up Christians but flourishing like a gum tree along a permanent river side. We cannot go wrong.

Poem SEE CD

Share where appropriate

Comment on poet's experience.

Songs

Song 623	O to be like Thee
Tune 735	Morning has broken
Source 47	Be still for the Presence of the Lord

Closing Song SASB 615 Mid all the traffic
Hand out sample of perfume or let them spray themselves before leaving

Benediction

Enjoy the fragrance of Christ with you,
Go and spread the Fragrance of Christ with others.

GOD OUR CREATOR

Psalm 8

Captain Jenny Hall

This can be used as either a Home League or adapted a little for a Women's Fellowship Night

Read Psalm 8

Have you ever stopped to think how awesome our God is? Have you ever stumbled upon an amazingly beautiful scenic view and became overwhelmed by the sheer majesty of our God who created everything including the stunning view before you. David did and in Psalm 8 David expresses through his poetry how majestic God is through His self revelation in His creation. David most likely was inspired to write about the majesty of God when he gazed upon the evening sky studded with stars - you know the kind of clear night that makes every star look like a glistening diamond in the sky and David exclaimed, "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens." Psalm 8:1

For David on this occasion the night sky became "The WOW Factor" that brought him to the realisation that our God is an awesome majestic God.

Ask the ladies attending the meeting the following question allowing each member to contribute.

Of all God's creations what is the one that leaves you most in awe of God our Creator? What are the things that make you go WOW. Offer suggestions such as, the mountains, seas, waves, sky (Day or Night), flowers, lakes and rivers, etc.

The Seven Natural Wonders of the World speak of the God who created them, their beauty give us an insight in to just how creative our God is, when we look at their form and structure and their sheer beauty we can not help but find ourselves in awe of God.

The following is a list of The Seven Natural Wonders of the World,
Grand Canyon
Great Barrier Reef
Harbour of Rio de Janeiro
Mount Everest
Aurora
Parícutin volcano
Victoria Falls

Suggestion

If at all possible try to obtain pictures of the seven wonders and utilise them in powerpoint displays making them easier for people to see.

What does this Psalm teach us about our place in God's creation and in God's heart?

The same God who created such beauty in the Seven Wonders of the World and in all of the other beautiful sights and objects that we see also created us, God created us just the way He wanted us to be. You can now read the following rewritten passage to enforce this fact.

Proverbs 8:22-34
Before all of God's creation
The Lord had formed me

From the very beginning of time
I was there beside thee
Before the mountains were formed
I was brought forth
While yet there was no land
I was with the Lord
When He created everything
The heavens, the sea and the sky
The earth, and all who live in it
I was His daily delight
Blessed are you that listen
Those that keep my ways
Do not neglect instruction
But receive God's wisdom today

© By M.S.Lowndes

<http://www.heavensinspirations.com/scripture-poetry.html>

Ask the members if they ever look at other people and become unhappy with how they look. Do they wish that God had created them to look different? Or to be different to what they are?

We often see little value in ourselves but God sees us as we could or can be. Often other people see more in us than we do. To express this point find cut out dolls and clothes on the internet and print them (I used <http://familycrafts.about.com/od/paperdolls/tp/paperdolls.htm>). When everyone arrives at the meeting take a photograph of their face and print them out and cut out the face and glue onto the doll's head. Hand out the dolls to someone other than whose face appears on the doll and ask them to dress them up. (I was a little concerned how this activity would go down but this was a fun activity and all who attended the Home League on that day had more than their share of laughs doing this activity). Then glue the dressed doll onto an A4 sheet of paper that has the poem "You are who you are for a reason" printed on it. Then get everyone to write an affirmation on the sheet as well. (I also laminated the sheets of paper after they were written on also so that they could be kept).

Read the following rewritten passage as an assurance that God is our creator and that you are very intentional not just some mistake.

Psalm 139:13-16

For you did knit me together
In the womb, before my birth
And I will confess and praise you
For wonderful are your works
My frame was not hidden from you
As in secret I was being formed
Like a beautiful embroidery
Woven before I was born
Your eyes saw my substance
Without form in the depths
And in your book my life was recorded
Before I ever took breath

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<http://www.heavensinspirations.com/scripture-poetry.html>

The two passages written by M.S Lowndes may be used and reproduced as long as nothing is changed within them and as long as they are not used and sold.

View the pictorial movie and ask yourself "how should I respond to a loving, creating God?"

SEE CD

PRAYER

GOD OUR CREATOR IS NEVER SILENT

Psalm 19
Captain Jenny Hall

This meeting is designed to be used as a prayer evening for women's fellowship.

Most of us struggle to hear God at times and some of us all the time. We struggle with self image issues and sometimes we just do not feel all that loved which leads us to feel insecure. This evening is designed to let every woman know that God created but not only did he create but He created us because He loved us. God wants us to recognize him through His creation and for us to get to know Him by His creation.

The idea is to divide a room up into different stations that will bring the women into a place where they can not only encounter God but where they can discover what God is like, and what God thinks of them and in turn find their self worth in God.

Introduction

Read Psalm 19

Song sing a song that reflects God our creator and His relationship with us such as "He knows my name".

Then read introduction. (Add to it or make it your own in what ever way you choose, as this is just a suggested introduction).

SEE CD FOR STATION INSTRUCTIONS AND HANDOUTS

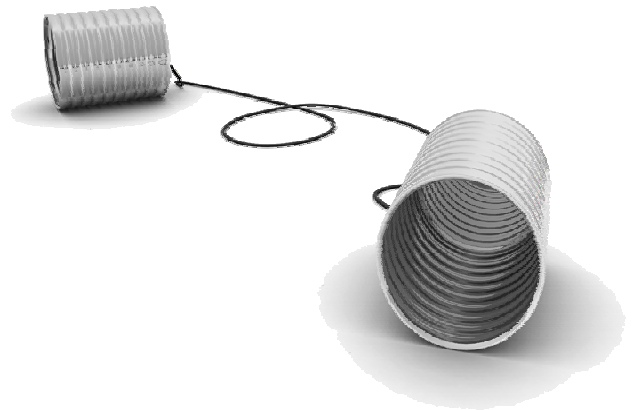
Introduction - God is closer than we think. He reveals Himself to us in and through His creation. And His creation speaks for Him in many different ways. God's voice is never silent. In every situation that we face whether they are bad times or good times God is speaking. The question is not if God speaks – the question really should be do we know how to hear Him Speak? The difficulty we all face as Christians is learning how to comprehend the different languages of the Holy Spirit. What we need is a desire to hear from God and willing ears to listen to God's revelations to us. God often speaks without using words as we know them and in ways that we may not recognise easily and sometimes we don't even see meaning in them. So we are here tonight to not only ask how does God communicate with us, but to also ask what it is that God wants to tell us. We are here also to find out why He wants to even have anything to do with us at all. After all who are we anyway?

Give women instructions to move from station to station in their own time following each stations directions.

Station 1 God revealing Himself to us in Nature

Place pictures of beautiful scenes around a section of the room, pictures of scenery, including water, mountains, flowers, animals and day and night skies.

You could also use a PowerPoint presentation displaying these pictures. Also place printed postcard size cards with Psalm 19:1-4 and a picture on them. **SEE CD**. You could also have soft music playing in the background or nature music. Place directions sheet on the wall.



Station 2 God revealing Himself in Human Nature

Place directions sheet on wall in this area which describes the Fruit of the Spirit and their counterparts. Place around postcards with the space to write their confessions on. **See CD**. Also have a ceramic urn or plate which the women can burn pieces of paper on. As well as matches nearby the urn.

Station 3 God's Greatest revelation of Himself through His Son Jesus Christ.

Place around this station images and perhaps props that remind us that Christ is Divine and that Christ was God revealing Himself to us. Also that remind us of the sacrifice Christ made for us. Such as a cross or perhaps even a nativity scene that reminds us that God became human in order that we as humans could know God more fully through His Son and in order that we could be saved. Be as creative as you like. Place instruction sheet on the wall also.

Station 4 Why God chose to reveal Himself to us

This station is probably going to have the greatest impact on the women of all the stations. When a person is so overwhelmed by the enormity of God's love for them it can affect people differently. Be ready to support the women as they need. There is a web site called <http://fathersloveletter.com/index.html>, from this site you can download many formats of the "Fathers Love Letter". The audio has the greatest impact but it would be helpful to also have the printout of the letter for the women to take home with them.

You could include a prayer ministry time after this station or a sharing time or you could just allow the women to leave quietly to go home and reflect.

GOD MY LIGHT AND SALVATION

- WEIGHT

Psalm 27

Captain Nicole Viles

Psalm 27:14 KJV

This Home League is a play on words. The spiritual point of the morning is "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and he will strengthen your heart."

However, this Home League is an opportunity to tackle the problem of obesity and the links to diabetes and heart disease uses the play on words to do so.

Introduction

Introduce the theme of the morning "Weight". Discuss that weight is not something that we like to talk about because our weight is a very visible thing, and for many people their weight and the way that they look can affect how they feel about themselves.

Add some humour mocking women's obsession with weight. "How is it that a 50gram block of chocolate can put 2 kilograms on your bottom!" "A minute on the lips, a lifetime on the hips!"

Then link it by saying how our weight can influence our health, and so while we laugh and at times cry about it, the Bible does say that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and so we need to take care of them. And we'll start off by looking at how much we know.

Health Quiz

Construct a health quiz for the ladies (you can find health facts on the internet) Use questions that will serve to educate ladies.

For example: What is a kilojoule? Does a heart tick mean the product is low in salt; low in fat; low in sugar; all of the above? Is it better to carry excess weight around your hips or tummy? Should you have a pap smear test every 1, 2, or 3 years? A lady who has never been married does not need to have Pap Smear tests – true or false?

Have a health professional along to elaborate as each answer is given.

Note: Don't use lollies for prizes!!! Perhaps use fruit and vegies for a bit of fun.

Game

Pick the best option - Have a selection of foods in pairs.

For example: an apple and a piece of watermelon; a low fat sausage and a fatty chop; a glass of high sugar juice and a diet soft drink; a piece of low fat cheese and a piece of full fat cream cheese (Again, try and use this educationally and choose foods that are common mistakes people make)

Get the ladies to write down which they think is the best option for their health. Again, have the health professional explain why things are the better option as each answer is given.

Song

His Banner Over Me Is love

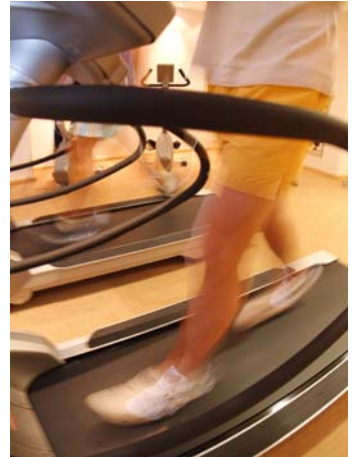
Use this song to joyfully praise the Lord and make a pun of the verse, "He brought me to his banqueting table."

Health Presentation

Have the health professional give a short talk on keeping your heart healthy, diabetes and exercise for the mature person.

Let's Get Physical

Have an upbeat song that the Home Leaguers like played on a CD and while it is played have a corporate exercise session! Tailor it to the abilities and needs of your group. If your group is particularly elderly, perhaps invite an occupational therapist to come from a nursing home to lead them in exercises they can do from the comfort of their chairs. But most importantly – make this fun and a time where everyone laughs hard!



Message

The Bible has a lot to say on wait. Read Psalm 27:14 making the point of your play on words.

Point out the fact that 'wait' in Scripture can be interchangeable with 'trust'. God wants us to be patient, trusting in him, waiting on him.

God wants us to wait patiently. "Wait on the Lord God wants us to wait expectantly. "Be of good courage"

And the result of waiting is that in the midst of our waiting, God will strengthen our hearts. He will encourage us and use the waiting to build our hope.

Prayer

Song

In your heart of hearts are you a trifle weary (If you want it, It's yours)

Give the ladies a funny reminder to take with them of the verse for the day. (Check your local Christian bookshop. They are filled with funny weight related sayings that you can use).

GOD MY LIGHT AND SALVATION

- PERSPECTIVE

Psalm 27

Captain Nicole Viles

Introduction

The way we look at things greatly affects our experience of things.

Back in the 'good old days' a piece of rope meant a good days fun for a child. They could make a swing out of it by tying it to a tree, make a lasso for a game of Cowboys and Indians, they could throw it around their friend's waist to turn their friend into a horse to ride, or use it as a skipping rope. But for today's child, they often think that without some video games and a room full of toys life is over!

This can be turned around too. For today's teenager an earring in their nose they feel looks fantastic – in fact an earring in almost any part of their body they feel looks fantastic! But to the older person, a piece of metal in the nose was something reserved only for bulls!

Our perspective, or the way that we look at things greatly affects our experience of that thing - our feelings about it. What's the old saying, "One man's trash is another man's treasure!" That's what we're going to think about today.

Song Count your blessings

Prayer

Optical Illusion Game

Find some optical illusions (Google on the Internet is great!) and present them as a quiz. For example – a 4x4 grid of dots and ask "how many squares can be made from these dots.

Give prizes out of little maze games that can be found in the child's party section of any supermarket or department store.

An Inspirational Story

Share with the ladies an inspirational story of how someone's perspective or attitude changed a situation. Athletes from the Paralympics or Australian Story can be a great place to look. The Watoto Children's Choir has inspirational stories of children on its website. Use a DVD if appropriate.

Brainteaser Quiz

Have another quiz of lateral thinking brainteasers. (See the internet or your local library will have books of them)



For example: A man lived on the 12th floor of apartments. Every day he would catch the lift to go down his building on his way to work. But on sunny days on his way home he would take the stairs to get to his apartment, but on rainy days he would catch the lift. Why?

Answer: He was a dwarf and couldn't reach the 12 button in the elevator. On rainy days however he had his umbrella and used it to push the button.

Ask someone to come out and present them with a full size phone book and tell them to tear it in half. (It can be

done by opening the book and tearing it in half down the spine.)

Present the ladies with a ½ glass of milk and ask them to touch the inside bottom of the glass without touching the milk. (They have to drink the milk first.)

The Story of the Emperor Penguin

Begin by asking the ladies to raise their hands as to what they would prefer:

Tea or coffee
biscuits or cake
the city or the country
a thriller or a romance
classical music or contemporary
summer or winter

Use this as a link to telling the story of the Emperor Penguin and the ritual they go through to reproduce each year. If a DVD is appropriate, The March of The Penguins shows this beautifully in a short clip. The point is that for most of us the Antarctic and the lengths that the penguin go to is horrendous, frightening even, but to the penguin it is a wonderfully natural part of life.

Song How Great Thou Art

Scripture Reading Psalm 27

Use a variety of ladies to creatively share the reading of this Psalm.

Chorus Turn your eyes upon Jesus

Message

We've been talking about perspective and fear is another thing that has to do with perspective.

Illustrate by referring to how a child can be scared of a dark room but when the light is turned on, the fear goes.

Illustrate how sometimes a new parent can think that a normal cough is something much more. But from the perspective of experience, this can change.

Psalm 27 tells us in so many ways that God is the light that can take away our fear. That whatever we experience in life, when we focus on God we discover that we have nothing to fear because he is:

All powerful v1 "Our salvation and stronghold"
All loving v10 "The Lord will receive me"

Conclude by asking the ladies to think about what scares them. Have them write it down privately on a piece of paper. Re- read Psalm 27

Time of Prayer

Have someone pray generally for those things the ladies have written down, and then specific prayer for any other concerns that are known.

Song I'm in his hands or
The Lord's My Shepherd

As the ladies leave, have a cross with a basket at the door. Ask them to place their piece of paper with their fear written on it in the basket, then place in their hands a reminder of Psalm 27:1 – a bookmark, magnet or something creative like a cake of soap with a tag saying, "Wash away your worries because God is on your side!"

GOD MY STRENGTH

PSALM 29

Major Ros Walker

BODY:

Guest: Body builder or Fitness professional who can update on the benefits of weight training/exercise for general well-being.

A quick hand out of healthy foods which can assist in building physical strength. Have food available for people to 'try and taste'.

MIND: An encouragement to women to be strong. Strong in what they believe, strong in their concepts of themselves, and strong in their rights as women. Encourage women to buy a really nice magazine eg. Notebook or Real Living and try something new – a recipe, a colour scheme for their bedrooms, light some candles. Or, ask around if people have some old but new magazines which they have read and finished with and give out as a gift. Many women cannot afford magazines these days - don't take things for granted.



This psalm was thought to originally have been written to describe the god Baal. And sometimes people have thought of thunderstorms as the work of the gods. But, even when we know the scientific reasoning behind the storm, the awesome power of a thunderstorm can still be overwhelming and makes us realise how small we are. But, with that, comes the realisation of how BIG God is. A great encouragement for us is Psalm 29: 11 (Good NEWS)
'The Lord gives strength to his people and blesses them with peace'.

SOUL:

Sharing: the storm – the strength

This is an opportunity to open up and share briefly, a time when life was incredibly difficult - share how or whom they found strength in.

The bible is always a source of strength. In this Psalm a description is given of the power of God which the psalmist graciously compares to a storm for us. Storms are usually loved or hated. Thunder and lightning frighten some people whilst they can excite others. Lightning, for instance is a giant spark leaping between a cloud and earth. The temperature that this spark reaches is 30,000 degrees C (55,000 Degrees F). This causes the air to expand at powerful speed and it is the explosion of hot air along the lightning's path that we hear as thunder. We try and work out how far the lightning is away by counting the seconds before we hear the thunder. Sound travels slower than light – about one-third of a kilometre (one-fifth of a mile) for each second we count, or three seconds for each kilometre. (Five seconds for each mile).

Music Use some lyrics from older songs and new ones, describing the strength we can find in our God.

You can buy CD's with the music sound running through them – play in background for effect!

PowerPoint Some incredible images taken in a fierce thunderstorm over Sydney in 2007. (*Find on internet.*) Have on screen as you give your little talk!

GOD MY REFUGE

Psalms 34

Captain Karen Saunders

Songs SASB 9 - Jehovah is my strength *Tune 228*
SASB 341 - In the love of Jesus *Tune 760*
SASB 645 - What a friend we have *Tune 451*

Bible Reading Psalm 34
try reading a few different translations

Games SEE CD
⇒ Match the residence of these shelters

⇒ How many places of Refuge (Protection) can you name?

Poem: My life is in Your Hands - Kathy Troccoli
SEE CD

Devotional
Bible Reading: Psalm 34:8

"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him."

Refuge is a shelter, a place of protection, someone we can confide in and be safe.
For someone to be a refuge we have to trust them.

Who do you trust?

Do you rely on your friends, family, neighbours, yourself?
Or do you trust in God?

Depending on who we trust we can have tragedy or hope.

First we will look at the foolishness and tragedy of misplaced trust, and then I want to give you the comfort of God's Word which tells us, **"Blessed is the man (or woman) who takes refuge in Him (God)."**

First, let us see the tragedy of misplaced trust:

1. In the days of Noah there were many people who trusted that the days of pleasure which they were enjoying would last forever. They laughed at and ridiculed Noah, who was very much alone in his trust in the Lord who had said a great flood was going to come. Consider the humiliation and foolishness those mockers must have felt as the waters rose around them, and they found their trust had been badly misplaced - they perished from the face of the earth.

2. Or let us consider the giant soldier of the Philistine army, Goliath, who laughed as he saw puny David the teenage-rock-thrower approaching unarmed. How shocked he must have been to realize that all his armour and mighty strength were useless to him, as David's stone flew and hit its mark. Goliath had trusted that he could whip anyone the Israelites had to offer, and he probably could have. But, David trusted in the Lord, he found his refuge in the one true God, and Goliath was no match for God.

3. There was a man that Jesus described as a rich man who had a really good, full harvest. He trusted in himself and decided that he had it pretty good, and so he decided to tear down his old barns and build new ones to hold all his wonderful wealth of harvest. How the words of the Lord must have burned in his soul when he heard: "You

fool - this night shall your soul be required of you." He hadn't thought about that!

How foolish, how tragic - to misplace our trust!
No matter what your problems - physical, emotional and financial:
Do you keep it inside and try to work it out yourself?
Do you go to your spouse first for advice?
Do you seek the counsel of a neighbour or friend as the first source of wisdom?
Do you commiserate with other people as if God doesn't know or care? Too often, we do not trust our safe refuge - God. We have all been guilty of misplaced trust!
We need to learn that we cannot trust God TOO MUCH and ourselves TOO LITTLE.

We need to **"Taste and See that the Lord is good."**
(Psalm 34:8)

When we come, and taste, and see, then we will be filled with joy, for we will find comfort in these words:
"Blessed is the man (or woman) who takes refuge in Him (God)."

1. While wicked men mocked and jeered, poor old Noah kept working and doing what God had told him to do. Finally, he completed the ark, to the last detail, and when the rains came and flooded the earth, Noah and those with him who put their trust in the Lord were the only ones who were saved.

2. Young David could hardly move when he put King Saul's armour on, so he put down that earthly armour and put his trust in the Lord to defend him against all danger. He picked out his stones, prayed, and his trust was rewarded with victory over Goliath.

3. The rich man with the full barns did not trust in God, but the lowly, desperate thief who hung next to Jesus on the Cross did, just in time before he died, and the thief received a reward far greater than any treasure on earth - his treasure was in heaven - "Where you treasure is," Jesus says, "Your heart will be also."

"Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him."
(Psalm 34:8)

Has God ever failed anyone who trusted in Him?
He saved Noah from the flood.
He saved David from Goliath.
He sent His only Son to this world, to suffer and die for all of us.

He holds out to you and every human being, the sure promise of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.
You, too, can take refuge in him, you can trust him.
He will bless you.
He wants to bless you.
He is ready to bless you.
As the words of our Psalm say: "Taste and see that the Lord is good."
Do not let any of the problems of this world - physical, emotional or financial, or whatever they might be - cause you to lose your trust in the refuge of the Lord.-

Don't make the tragic mistake of misplacing your trust.
But above all things trust in the Lord.

Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man (or woman) who takes refuge in Him (God).

GOD MY REFUGE

Psalm 34- Bible study
Captain Karen Saunders

The word Refuge, as written in the Bible, means a shelter, a place of protection, someone to confide in, or a place to flee to. (*The New Strong's complete Dictionary of Bible Words – James Strong*).

This Bible Study is a study of Psalm 34, where the psalmist experiences life accompanied by suffering, yet finds God's promise and provision of refuge in his hardship.

Psalm 34 Background Information

The words written to introduce this Psalm are a little mysterious. It is most likely related to 1 Samuel 21:13, but the king in that story is named Achish, whereas in the preface the man named is Abimelech, which is the priest David went to see earlier on in 1 Samuel 21:1-9.

But whatever the meaning of the preface, Psalm 34 is a song of thanksgiving. The psalmist's purpose for writing it is to express his praise to God in the way that he has been delivered from trouble. He uses his own experience of deliverance to invite others to turn to God as well.

This Psalm was most probably used originally in the synagogue where worshipers could reflect on their worries and cares, receive teaching, and give praise to God for His salvation and refuge.

Read Psalm 34:1-3

The psalmist's opening statements make it clear that they live in dependence on God, He is their refuge. Their praise is personal and directed towards God, but it is also intended to invite others to join in and exalt God as well.

1. Think of some ways you can show others who don't know Him, that He is a God of refuge.

Discuss

Read Psalm 34:4-7

2. Whose experiences is the psalmist alluding to?

Answer: The author himself (v. 4) and to other members in the audience (v.6)

3. What happens to those who look to God for refuge?

Answer: They are radiant (v. 5), God hears them, saves them (v.6), and delivers them (v.7)

4. What is your understanding of 'The angel of the Lord' (v. 7)

Discuss. (Suggest – the Lord Himself, a messenger of the Lord, may be anticipating Jesus continual presence with us (Matthew 28:20).)

Read Psalm 34:8-10

The psalmist encourages us to seek the Lord, because He provides for all man's needs.

5. When the psalmist encourages us to 'taste and see' – what is he meaning?

Discuss. (Suggest – taste is used figuratively as 'perceive', suggesting us to try it out for ourselves.)

6. When we do 'taste and see' what will we find?

Answer: That the Lord is good.

7. What does it mean to 'fear the Lord'?

Answer: Fearing God usually suggests reverence for, trust in, and dependence on God.

Read Psalm 34:11-14

8. What is the psalmist going to teach his 'children' (students)?

Answer: The fear of the Lord.

9. What does the psalmist tell us we should do if we love life?

Answer: Keep from speaking lies, turn from evil and do good, seek peace.

Read Psalm 34:15-22

10. Verses 15-16 seem to suggest that the righteous earn life, while the evildoers are punished. But what do we learn from verses 17 to 19 about the life of the righteous?

Answer: The righteous have plenty of troubles about which to cry to God, faithfulness to God will mean anything but a carefree life.

11. What comfort can you gain from verse 18?

Share. (The good news is that God is with 'the broken-hearted' and 'crushed in spirit'. Meaning that God can be experienced in the midst of our suffering.)

Summary

It is obvious that the psalmist experiences life in the midst of his suffering. His faith is the kind that the apostle Paul spoke of in Romans 8:31-39, reaching the conclusion that nothing 'will be able to separate us from the love of God'. This is testimony to God's grace at work in us – the boast is not in ourselves, but in the Lord.

God does not promise to remove our difficulties, but He is our Refuge and will be with us to see us through them.

References

The New Interpreter's Bible commentary on Psalms. Abingdon Press, Nashville. 1996.
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GOD MY FORGIVER

Psalm 51
Fay Foster

The American writer and ex-lawyer Chuck Colson tells the story about a Mrs. Washington who, during a graduation ceremony for inmates completing a Prison Fellowship program, swept to the stage to wrap her arms around a graduating inmate, declaring "this young man is my adopted son." Everyone had tears in their eyes for they knew that this young man was behind bars for the murder of Mrs. Washington's daughter. *

During the Second World War, the Dutch watchmaker Corrie Ten Boom and her father and sister helped to protect Jews and others from the Nazis who were trying to exterminate them. But the Nazis found out about these activities, and Corrie's whole family was arrested

They were first taken to a Dutch prison, where Corrie's father died ten days later. Her brother Willem also died in the prison.

Then Corrie and her sister Betsie were moved to a concentration camp in Holland, and finally to the Ravensbruck concentration camp in Germany. In the camps the women were barely fed, worked all day every day in physical labour, and were very badly treated. Corrie saw her sister Betsie beaten by a guard, and from that point on Corrie hated the guards.

The move to Ravensbruck was in September 1944. A few weeks later, Betsie died in the camp. Before she died, Betsie told Corrie, "There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still."

Two months later, on December 28 1944, Corrie was released from the camp. She later found out that her release had been a clerical error. A week after her release, all the women prisoners her age in the camp were killed.

After the war, Corrie Ten Boom returned to the Netherlands to set up rehabilitation centres for people who had been in the camps. She returned to Germany in 1946, and traveled the world as a public speaker, appearing in over sixty countries, during which time she wrote many books.

When Corrie and Betsie first arrived at the Ravensbruck camp, they and the other new women were forced to strip and shower, while male guards watched and laughed.

After the war, Corrie met up with one of these hated guards again. She tells the story of this meeting in her autobiography, "The Hiding Place".

"It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, a former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing centre at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there – the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain-blanching face. He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. "How grateful I am for your message,

Fraulein." He said. "To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!" His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile; I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I prayed, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself. "

These stories, of Corrie Ten Boom and Mrs Washington, are stories of superhuman forgiveness.

There are many other stories like this ...

There is Kay, who was raised by a father who would take his wife and five children to church on Sunday morning, molest his two daughters on Sunday afternoon, then go back to church at night. When her father later became paralysed from cancer, Kay took him into her home and cared for him. He died in her arms. **

There is Norman Kember, who at the age of 74 travelled to Iraq with a Christian peace organisation, was almost immediately taken hostage, along with three of his companions. By the time he was rescued nearly four months later, one of his companions had been murdered. Kember has never felt any animosity towards his captors, and now writes and preaches about forgiveness. ***

There is Rachel Koshi, whose husband was fatally stabbed when an intruder broke into their house in the middle of the night. ***

The amazing thing about all these people is that they were all able to forgive the person who had hurt them. As Rachel Koshi later wrote, "By God's grace I had lived up to the motto I had adopted: 'I will forgive so that I may live.'"

How were these people able to forgive?

They had experienced God's forgiveness, and God gave them the understanding and the power to forgive others.

The psalmist David wrote in Psalm 51, verses 1 & 2: "Have mercy on me, O God, According to your unfailing love; According to your great compassion. Wash away all my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin."

See, God's forgiveness is not about how good we are, it's about how good God is. He forgives because He is love, absolute love that never fails. He forgives according to His great compassion, which means, His loving mercy.

He will wash away all our wrongness – that's what iniquity means – and cleanse us from our sin.

When we ask God for forgiveness, a process begins in us. In Psalm 51, verses 9 & 10, David writes:

"Hide your face from my sins
And blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit in me."

When we come to Jesus, ask His forgiveness and invite Him into our lives, He chooses to overlook all our wrongness, and he starts the process of creating a pure heart in us.



Exercise Some people see God as like this
(Use whiteboard and choose someone in the room as your example – words in italics below to go on whiteboard) e.g.:

Christine

In out

Christine comes to God and says, "Jesus, I am sorry for my sins, and I want to be in your family." So she's in.

In out
X

Christine tells a lie. That's it, she's out.

In out
X

Christine asks forgiveness again. She's in again.

In out
X

Oh-oh, she had an argument with her mother. he's out!

In out
X

But that's not how it is. We are not in God's family when we're being good, and out when we slip up.

When God adopts us into His family, that's it! He does it because **He** is good, not because we are. He has forgiven us **forever** – every sin we will ever commit is covered by the blood of Jesus.

But wait, there's more! Not only does He adopt us into His family and keep us there, but... let's look at Psalm 51 verse 10 again.

"Create in me a pure heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit in me."

God doesn't just adopt us, He changes us. Instantly He makes us a new creation, but then for the rest of our lives he continues to create clean hearts in us, and to renew steadfast spirits in us.

That means He makes us able to be more consistent in the way we follow Him. **We** don't do that, **He** does. He knows that we're going to slip up – but He also changes us so that our falls are less frequent.

Let's look again at Psalm 51, to see how David responds to God's forgiveness. In verse 13 He says:

"Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
And sinners will turn back to you."

... and in verse 15 he says:

"O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth will declare your praise."

So here's our response to God's forgiveness. We tell other people about Him, and we give Him our gratitude and our praise. That's what He wants from us. He does the rest!

(Invite ladies to ask God to keep on creating a clean heart in them, and making them more consistent followers of Jesus.)

Song Finish with a song of thanks and praise

References

* (**The Power of Forgiveness** as published in *The Godly Business Woman magazine's* Jan/Feb 2002 issue. © copyright 2002 by Lynette J. Hoy, NCC, LCPC)

** www.heinvites.org/story.php3/0144.html

*** www.theforgivenessproject.com/readersstories

THE SHAPE OF THE CROSS:

AN EASTER MEDITATION

Psalm 51

Fay Foster

What would you say is the central symbol of Easter?

The cross of Jesus

Let's look today at the shape of that cross, because it has significance for how we appropriate or claim for ourselves the meaning of the cross.

So what do we see when we look at this cross... or this one? (*Have several crosses of various colours and sizes*) What can we say about its shape?

There is one beam going up and down – and one going across. Borrowing the language of maths, the cross has a **vertical axis** (the up and down beam) and a **horizontal axis** (the one going across).

The vertical axis represents the relationship between God (up) and us (down). We receive God's forgiveness and we give back our worship.

The horizontal axis represents our relationships with other people. We forgive as God has forgiven us. We receive forgiveness from other people.

Here are some Scripture verses that talk about forgiveness (hand them out or lay them out on a table).

Could you each take a verse and read it out, then pin it on the cross. Where you pin it will depend on what you think the verse is about. If it's about God forgiving us, pin it on the vertical beam of the cross. If it's about us forgiving others, or them forgiving us, pin it on the horizontal beam.

God's forgiveness – vertical axis:

Luke 15:18-20	Exodus 34:6b-7a
Psalm 32:5	Psalm 51:1-2
Psalm 51:7	Psalm 51:9
Isaiah 38:17b	

Human forgiveness – horizontal axis:

Note to leader: As these verses are read, point out that these verses talk about both horizontal and vertical forgiveness, so they should be pinned at the intersection of the two beams. There is no mention of human forgiveness without God's forgiveness being mentioned as well.



So God says in His word that we are to forgive others as He has forgiven us. He also says that we will be dealt with harshly unless we forgive others. Perhaps we can't really forgive others unless we've known God's forgiveness. It's obviously very important to God that we forgive each other.

What does it mean to forgive someone?

SEE CD FOR HANDOUT SHEET

Here is one definition:

"Forgiveness is freeing up and putting to better use the energy once consumed by holding grudges, harbouring resentments, and nursing unhealed wounds ourselves."

Sidney & Suzanne Simon - www.wisdomquotes.com

So how do we go about forgiving someone?

1. Feel the pain

We need to know what we're forgiving!

2. Decide that it's not going to warp your life

It's my choice to free my life of the burden of unforgiveness.

3. Ask forgiveness for any fault of yours in what happened

Most of our problems with other people are two-way, to at least some extent!

4. Give the person a clean slate

What does that mean? I take it to mean that if we encounter that person again, we treat them as though they did not owe us anything. We give up our right to revenge. And we don't see the world as owing us something because we've been hurt. BUT we don't have to put ourselves in the way of more abuse. We keep ourselves and those we love safe, but we live free of the belief that someone has to repay us in some way for what we have suffered.

5. Repay good for evil in the world

Sometimes it's not wise to try to make the relationship right with the person who has hurt us. But we can do good to other people. Instead of becoming bitter we become better people, and the world is better for our contribution.

Will you decide to forgive the people who have hurt you?

Think today about someone you need to forgive. Would you take these five steps to forgiving them? Feel the pain – know what you are going to forgive them for; decide that it's time to stop resisting forgiveness; it's time to live free of that burden. Ask God's forgiveness for any wrongdoing on your part in that relationship; decide that from now on you will think of that person as not owing you anything. Work out how you will pay back good instead of bad into the world. If you feel you can't take all of those steps today, that's OK. Keep talking to God about the people you need to forgive, and ask Him to show you how to do this. *Would anyone like to share what has happened for them today?*

GOD MY REST

Psalm 62
Major Joanne Slater

Introduction

We live in a very busy and troubled world. We have become a very busy and troubled people. We do get a lot done, but without realizing it we have become slaves to the doing and have neglected the being. Many of us today suffer from Spiritual and Physical tiredness.

"Come unto me" Jesus says and I will give you rest. But often we will respond – looking at our watches and the list of things that have to be done and say – Thanks for the offer Jesus but really I have too much to do.

We would not choose lives that are frantic and constantly on the go. If we take time to think about it we would choose lives of peace and tranquillity. We would like our lives to represent something different. Something that others who are around us may enjoy is a life that is marked by the Grace of God. Today we will look at how we can find Rest in God alone.

Preparation

Have the Meeting area well prepared so that there is not too much clutter – bringing a sense of quietness as the ladies arrive - in a warm, reflective way with light instrumental music playing in the background. Decorate using items that will add to the atmosphere – for example candles, water fountain, plants, reflective books, cross, fabric and candles. If there is a separate room - set it up as a busy table with a clock on it, list of things to do, programmes, anything that will give the busy atmosphere. This then will allow the ladies to move from one atmosphere to another.



Suggested Songs

Still - Reuben Morgan.

Jesus, Name above all Names –
Naida Hearn (Happiness and Harmony.)

The Lord's my Shepherd. Scottish Psalter.
(The Salvation Army Song Book.)

Sharing Time

Have the ladies share what they do to find rest.

Scripture

Psalm 62



Devotions

It can be a very difficult thing to admit that we do get exhausted. We have discussed ways in which we find rest. Some of those may be –

Taking time out to do something we find relaxing such as Gardening, Quilting, Teddy Bear Making, Cross Stitching, Reading, Retail Therapy. Having a good sleep. Walking, Having a Holiday.

Sometimes though more often than not we still feel tired – we do not feel rested.

Rested not only relates to our physical needs but more importantly it relates to our Spiritual needs.

In Psalm 62: 1 David says "My Soul finds rest in God alone." He is saying "I am at rest in God alone." David describes simply tranquillity – a peace that he has in God.

Our culture today seeks out the perfect rest. So much of the activities of people today centre around the attempts of becoming wealthy so that one can rest. Sadly our society believes that rest can only be found in immense wealth.

But we can tell that wealth does not bring rest. Do you know of anyone who is resting because of their wealth? Wealth does not bring rest. Wealth brings the difficulties of trying to maintain that wealth and the standard of living it brings.

Real rest is found in God alone. David does not find rest in His possessions or his Royalty.

David declares that God alone is his rock, his salvation, and his stronghold. Because of these three things, David will never be shaken.

As David did have rest in God alone all we have to do as Jesus says to us "Come unto me – and I will give you rest."

In finding that rest our lives will demonstrate something different, something better to those around us.

We need to give ourselves permission to take a long soak in the Healing waters of the Spirit.

OUR COMPASSIONATE GOD

Psalm 86
Denise McCabe

Topic Make a call to God

Décor: For your display have as many types of telephones as you can get—new or old—including answering machines, mobiles, phone books, and a lap-top if possible.



Welcome/Prayer

Opening Song HLSB 25 - Great is thy faithfulness.

Bible Reading Psalm 86. NIV Bible As this is a long reading you might like to have two people share the reading.

Poem It's Me Again God -

*Remember me, God? I come every day
Just to talk with you Lord, and to learn how to pray
You make me feel welcome, You reach out your
hand
I need never explain, for You understand
I come to You frightened, and burdened with care
So lonely and lost and so filled with despair
And suddenly Lord, I'm no longer afraid
My burden is lighter and the dark shadows fade
Oh God what a comfort to know that You care
And to know when I seek You, You will always be
there!*

Helen Steiner Rice

Chorus Time 26 - My Lord knows the way
30 - Praise Him with melody

A Brief History of the Telephone

On March 10th 1876 Alexander Graham Bell transmitted the first words ever spoken by telephone. The call was made from one room to another, and the words were "come here, Mr Watson, I want you". Shortly after came the founding of the Bell Telephone Company. The first telephone exchange was installed in 1877 in Connecticut, and the first exchange outside the USA was built in London in 1879. The coin-operated pay phone was patented in Hartford in 1889. The first rotary dial telephone was developed in 1923 in France. The mobile telephone was first introduced in to New York City police cars in 1924. The first touch-tone system was installed in exchanges in 1941, and became available to home phones by the early 1960's. In 1978 Bell Laboratories began testing a mobile telephone system, and the cell phone became available in USA in 1983.

Did you know that it took the telephone 75 years and television 13 years to acquire 50 million users? It took the internet only 5 years to achieve the same. Today, more than 500 million people around the world are connected to the internet.

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Devotional

Making calls to people on the phone has certainly changed over the years. Modern day technology has enabled us to talk to anyone anywhere in the world with great ease. We don't even have to talk to the person involved, we can send text messages on our mobiles, we can leave messages, we can have others leave messages for us via voicemail etc. We can 'speak' to people via email on our computers. We can even see the person we are talking to by having web-cam on our computers, or by having video calling on our mobile phones.

It is all so easy and is so available. The down side is that the personal element of talking to someone is replaced by text messaging and emails etc. In the busyness of our lives now, we often choose the faster, less time consuming means of communication by sending messages or emails. After all, it is quicker than actually talking to someone on the phone! What about the frustration of not being able to speak to a real live person when making a business call on the phone? After listening to a myriad of choices, and pressing several option buttons you may finally get through to who you want, or you may then be lucky enough to be put on hold!

We are so fortunate that we have a God who is available to us 24 hours a day. We have a direct line to God, through prayer, and He will not put us on hold or direct us elsewhere.

In our reading in Psalm 86 David says "hear my prayer on Lord, listen to my cry for mercy. In the day of my trouble I will call to you, AND YOU WILL ANSWER ME". He is absolutely confident that when he calls to God, He will not only hear him, But He will answer him.

In vs. 3 David asks God for mercy "for I call to You all day long". And in vs. 5 he gives praise to God by saying "you are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you".

The whole Psalm is a prayer from David asking God for help. In his need David prays to the Lord, because out of His kindness, love and compassion God answers prayer. Just like David we have access to God, to call to Him and to place our needs before Him. He will hear us, He will listen to us, and He will meet our needs according to His will for us.

Let us endeavour every day to spend time with our Lord, our God of compassion, praising Him for all that He is, and pouring out our needs and the needs of others to Him.

The line is always open!

Song HLSB 45 - I need Thee.

Closing Prayer

GOD OF GOODNESS & BLESSING-

ALL HIS BENEFITS

Psalm 103:1-5

Lyn Gilmore, Gosford Corps

Introduction According to the dictionary a "benefit is an act of kindness, a favour. Proceeds to a charity."

In our country we have a lot of benefits – including Centrelink Benefits. The Australian Government have a website on the computer, which tells me about all the Centrelink Benefits that are available. There are Aged Pension, Disability Pension and Youth Allowance, to name a few. Did you know the Government recently provided 21 one-off grants to a range of community organisations that provide frail older people with emergency meals, shelter and clothing and with services that encourage and support social re-engagement. (1 July 2008)

Song Song 2 - A Wonderful Saviour
Tune 537 – He Hideth my Soul
(Find God's benefits in the words of this song)

Opening Prayer

Benefits of modern day living – have a display of small appliances, cake mixes and modern tools or pictures of same. Ask ladies to share how they feel about the benefits that come from these appliances.

Employee Benefits – in America might include relocation assistance, medical retirement benefits and some fringe benefits. In the UK employee benefits are categorised by three terms: flexible, voluntary and core benefits. There are fringe benefits, health and medical benefits and the list goes on!

Game From the word benefits – see how many benefits you can think of in your own life e.g.

Bed
Electricity
Nice Home
Entertainment
Family, friends
Internet, income
Toothbrush, telephone, TV
Shopping

Or see how many words you can make from the word **benefits**

Song Song 115 – There Shall Be Showers of Blessing
Tune 456 – Showers of Blessing

(Point out that God's blessings to us are some of the benefits He gives us)

Did you know that there is a computer company called Google who believe their employees have a right to special work benefits? These include first class dining facilities, gyms, laundry rooms, massage rooms, haircuts, carwashes, dry cleaning, commuting busses – just about anything a hard working employee might want.

Ask a couple of ladies to share what they feel are some of the benefits to Home League.
This would be a good time to enrol a new member to Home League

Devotional Talk

God gave us life – life is the first benefit. Being aware of what comes with that life is the second benefit – which we can see, hear, taste, smell and feel.

That which God provides constantly sustains us; Air to breathe, water to drink, diverse supply of food to eat. These are all benefits from the Hand of God.

The story is told of a young Irishman who once sought to purchase a boat fare to America, where he hoped to immigrate. From his years of savings, he discovered he had enough to pay for the fare, but not enough to pay for his meals aboard the ship. However, he was determined to seek the opportunity for a new life. He booked his passage and managed to scrape some money together for a meagre bag of cheese and stale bread to carry him through his long journey.

One evening during the first two weeks at sea, the Captain was walking the deck when he noticed the Irishman sitting near the bow eating his cheese and bread. "Why aren't you in the gallery eating supper with the other passengers?" asked the Captain. The Irishman replied, "I regret sir that I only had sufficient funds to buy passage, but not enough to pay for meals. The captain looked at him curiously and said, "son didn't you know that when you bought your ticket that your meals were included with your fare?"

Just as the Irishman didn't realise that his meals were a benefit paid for the price of his ticket, many people are unaware that one of the benefits of being a follower of Jesus is that He has paid for our ticket into Heaven by dying on the cross for our sins.

Listen to what the Psalmist lists as the benefits from the Lord.

Read Psalm 103:1-5

David's praise focused on God's glorious acts. It is easy to complain about life; but David's list in this Psalm gives us many benefits for which to praise God: -

His Forgiveness,	Healing,	Redemption,
Loving Kindness,	Patience,	Providence,
Righteousness,	Justice,	Grace,
Tender Mercies.		

We receive all of these, without deserving any of them. No matter how difficult your life's journey, you can always count your blessings, past, present and future. When you feel you have nothing for which to praise God, read David's list.

We have a faithful God from whose hand we are constantly blessed.

Opportunity could be given for members to come forward and light a candle or just raise their hand, if they would like to accept Jesus into their hearts, or renew their commitment to God, while the final song is sung.

Song Song 25 – Great is Thy Faithfulness
Tune 675

OR

Song 80 – O Lord my God
Tune 544 – How Great Thou Art

GOD OF GOODNESS & BLESSING- ALL HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE Psalm 103:6-10 Major Lea Palmer, Gosford Corps

Theme It's not fair!

Décor: Scales representing Judicial System. Judges Wig and Black gown . Gavel. Bible. National flag. Wooden chair representing judges chair. This meeting could be adapted to an Evening Fellowship. Could set up a jury to debate a fictitious case or one that has never been solved or the wise ruling of Solomon in 1Kings 3:16-28. Information on many unsolved cases is easy to find on Google.

Welcome

Song HLSB 6 – Be Glad in the Lord and Rejoice
Tune 492 – Be glad in the Lord

History of Australian Law

Prior to 1788 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribal groups had their own laws which were passed down by word of mouth. After 1788 Great Britain set up British Governors to govern the 6 Australian colonies using British Law.

As time progressed the colonies were allowed to govern themselves and pass their own laws. Any Australian law that conflicted with British law was void of any legal effect until 1939 (Federal) and 1986 (State)

AUSTRALIAN LAW SYSTEM IS DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS -

Parliament – the body that makes the Laws or Acts

Executive Government – The body which implements administers and enforces the law: this includes the Public Service.

Courts (Judicial Power) – the body which interprets and applies the Law

AUSTRALIA HAS TWO TYPES OF LAW –

Statue Law and Common Law:

Statute Law – Laws made it Federal, State and Territory Parliament. The bill is introduced into Parliament by a minister. It is debated and passed by Lower and Upper houses of Parliament. Finally the bill is given royal assent which is signed by the representative of the Queen for a Federal Bill and the Governor for a State Bill.

Common Law – Courts implement and apply the laws made by Parliament and make decisions where those laws are unclear or where there are no relevant Statue Laws.

Judges decisions are recorded in Law Reports. These laws set precedents which are added to the Common Law (Judge made law). A Judge deciding a similar case today must apply the reasoning used in the precedents made in higher courts.

Common Law is flexible and adaptable but does not always yield clear cut black and white answers to our dilemmas. Each case much be decided on its own facts.

LAWS AND OUR LEGAL SYSTEM
www.rurallaw.org

Prayer

Encourage ladies to pray prayers of thanks to our Just and Fair God.

Competition How well do you know the legal system?
SEE CD

Song HLSB 12 - Come, let us all unite to sing
Tune 333 – God is love

Bible Reading Psalm 103:6-10

Competition Notorious Criminals
SEE CD

Song HLSB 90 – Search me oh God
Tune 152 – Search me oh God

Message

It's not fair! How many times as a child did you utter these words? As the youngest of five I muttered them once or twice in my growing up years. How often as an adult have you thought or said: **it's not fair?** Why all this grief? Why all this pain and suffering? Why all this financial stress? Why all this hard work? Why do others seem to get away with murder, yet I can't even tread on an ant without bringing the wrath of some folks down on my head. As the song 'Charlie Brown' asks – "Why is every body always picking on me?"

Why does everybody else's lawn appear far greener than mine when they don't appear to mow it or lovingly tend theirs as I do mine? **It's just not fair!**

Why do all my friends seem to have the perfect children and family unit? **It's just not fair!**

I could throw a Pity Party. I know I would have lots of guests all thinking the same thoughts. **It's not fair!** It would be so easy to give in to the prevailing symptoms of PLOMS – Poor Little Old Me Syndrome! We all want our share in life. We all want what we feel is owed to us or due to us or is right for us. We often vehemently demand our rights.

In this 21st century there is a lot of focus on "Human Rights" – what is right for the individual. Unfortunately at times these rights do not always line up with Biblical aspect of right and wrong – righteousness and sin.

Psalm 103:6 reminds us that: **"The Lord gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly"**. God is a God of Righteousness and Justice for us all for all time. We may feel at times that the Court System fails us and has got it all wrong. But the Righteousness of God reminds us that He will always do what is morally good, right and correct for us. We may feel that through the Court System justice is not always served, and at times that appears to be true; His word will never change.

In fact Psalm 103:10 reminds us that God is so good that He does not punish us for all our wrongs or treat us as we often deserve. How fair is that? He does not reward us as we deserve with death, but instead He offers us life. Life with extras, life in all its fullness (John 10:10)

It is no use looking to family, friends, or the community to give you a fair trial – to right the wrong – or to understand the hurts – or to punish those who have inflicted the hurt. God is the only one who can reveal the wrongs, right the wrongs, and forgive the wrongs (1 John 1:9)

Next time you think "It's not fair!" remember the love, goodness, forgiveness and fairness of God our Heavenly Father.

Closing Prayer

GOD OF GOODNESS & BLESSING- ALL HIS LOVE Psalm 103:11-22 Captain Dorothy Hope, Gosford Corps

Décor – a picture of the world and the Father's love.

Songs Suggested Songs 119. 72. 65. 117.
Home League song book

Participation

Action songs: It's love that makes the world go round.
It's a small world.

Encourage ladies to share how God's love has helped them.

Poem Ask a member to read poem

REACH OUT IN LOVE

Reach out in love
and you'll show that you care
If you help to fill a need,
it will show that you're aware,
We've so much to share if we really care,
So much love to give, so much life to live.
Reach out in love,
And you'll truly show you care.

There are children in the world
those who have no food to eat,
Tattered rags upon their backs
broken sandals on their feet.
When we thank our Lord for the gifts He gives
Do we ever think how our sisters live?

There are children who know fear.
Those who cannot safely sleep.
They have no one close at hand
who will hold them when they weep,
Can we learn not to cry when our way goes wrong?
Can we help these children to sing our song?

There are others nearer still
who will never read or write.
There are those whose
loneliness will awaken them at night.
Can we share with them all the love we know?
Can we offer them a new chance to grow?

Reach out in love
and you'll show that you care.
If you help to fill a need,
it will show that you're aware.
We've so much to share if we really care,
So much love to give, so much life to live.
Reach out in love.
And you'll truly show you care!

[Girl Guides of Canada]

Prayer Song Let there be peace on earth.

Bible Reading Psalm 103: 11-22

Quiz Questions and Answers

LOVERS IN THE BIBLE

Adam	Eve
Sarah	Abraham
Boaz	Ruth

David	Bathsheba
Samson	Delilah
Mary	Joseph
Zechariah	Elizabeth
Jacob	Rachel
Rebekah	Isaac
Esther	King Xerxes

Handout - SEE CD FOR BOOKMARK

Each member to receive a book mark of "WITH HIS LOVE"

Message - God is Love

When the scriptures say "God is love" they aren't telling us that God is some warm fuzzy feeling of love. The writers who penned the scripture weren't saying in that our limited form of human love we will find God. Not at all—in fact, when we read that God is love in the Bible, we mean that God is the very definition of love itself. There is no such thing as love without God. As hard as we might try we cannot define love outside of knowing God.

God is the creator of all things, and by His very nature, He is love. God says love is unconditional and sacrificial, and it's not based on feelings: so love is not an "intense affection" Based on familial or personal ties." To understand what true love is and to be able to truly love others, we must know God, and we can do this through a close personal relationship with Him. We can have that close relationship with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ, who was God's sacrifice of love for us.

The Bible tells us that "*God is love*" [1 John 8:4]. But how can we even begin to understand that truth? There are many passages in the Bible that gives us God's definition of love; the most well known verse is John 3:16. "*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*"

So one way God defines love is in the act of giving. However, what God gave [or should we say "who" God gave"] was not a mere gift wrapped present; God sacrificed His only Son so that we, who put our faith in His Son, will not spend eternity separated from Him. This is an amazing love.

God does not love us because we're loveable or because we make Him feel good: He loves us because He is love. He created us to have a loving relationship with Him, and He sacrificed His own Son [who also willingly died for us] to restore that relationship.

The very definition of love begins with God, and the very definition of God begins with love. Love is more than His character; it is the essence of His being. And the miracle, the wonder of it, is God poured out that love, poured out Himself, for you!

Before you ever breathed, spoke your first word, took your first step, He loved you. Why? Because you are His unique creation, the work of His hands. He made you in His own image, and He loves you as deeply as He loves Jesus.

Don't run from God's love, run to it! He left the decision in your hands when He gave you free will. Now He waits for you to return to His love.

Jesus did not come to make God's love possible but to make God's love visible.

Author Unknown

All songs used by permission from the Girl Guides song book.

GOD'S WORD

Psalm 119

Lt. Col Jan Condon

Introduction

In his Treasury of David, Charles Spurgeon lists eight marks of true love for God's Word.

- 1) Reverence for the authority of God's Word.
- 2) Admiration for its holiness.
- 3) Jealousy for its honour.
- 4) Respect for all that it says.
- 5) Diligence in the study of it.
- 6) Eager desire to obey it.
- 7) Readiness to praise it.
- 8) Great desire to share it with others.

Ask some women to share on the following things the Psalmist says about God's Word in Psalm 119

It is his delight, v. 16.
He finds wonderful things in it, v. 18.
It is like music to him, v. 54.
It is better than silver or gold, v. 72.
It is like finding great treasure, v. 162.

Alternate sharing – their favourite verse of Scripture

Songs SASB 653 - How firm a foundation
SASB 652 - Holy Bible, book Divine
SASB 658 - Thy Word is like a garden
Choruses that contain verses of Scripture

Ask the women to buy a Bible for someone else and take it to a Social services centre, community services centre, prison or Salvo store to be distributed

Message

When the psalmist wrote Psalm 119, he used the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet as his guide and he ended up writing 22 eight-verse stanzas, one for each letter of the alphabet.

This is the longest Psalm in the Bible and its message is one of praise to God for His Word. Almost every verse in the Psalm refers to the Bible and the writer uses many different words to add variety to the Psalm about God's Word – words such as: - law, testimonies, judgments, precepts, statutes, commandments, ordinances, promises and word.

These words are all used when speaking about God's spoken and written revelation. They call us to praise God for the gift of his Word.

Psalm 119 teaches us 3 things about God's Word

I. It is God's Word

The first thing we learn from this verse is that we are dealing with God's Word. The psalmist calls it "your Word." Notice it is not plural but singular. So every word in the Bible is God's "word" to us.

Salvationists believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

God's Word is so essential to instruct us how to live our daily lives. There are places in the Bible that we may not understand or fully explain but this does not take away from the fact that it is God's Word and we trust Him and His word.

The Bible is the word of God and Christians needs to read it, believe it and obey it.

II. It is God's Settled Word

In an unsettled world, we need something that is settled and secure. High rise buildings must have a firm foundation way below the surface of ground level. They must go deep to go high.

God's Word is like that – it goes deep and high and even though there are many troubles in the world, God's Word is secure. Nothing that happens on earth can change God's Word in heaven. God's truth can never be changed throughout the generations and we believe it as a whole.

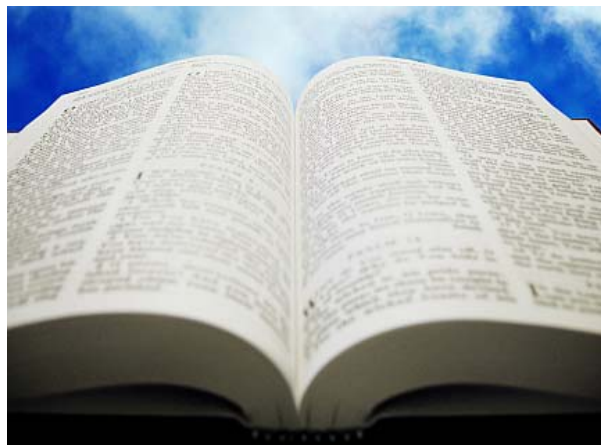
III. It is God's Eternal Word

The word eternal translated "forever" is the Hebrew word *olam* and means "everlasting, perpetual, forevermore, unending." It's a word that specifies that there is no beginning and no ending of something. It continues forever.

If God's Word is eternal then it has been and always will be true. God does not have to use the delete button because His Words stand true always.

We can trust the Word of God. It is a firm foundation for life

The psalmist gives us his theme in verse 97 (ESV): "Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day."



GOD'S WORD IS A TREASURE:

Bible Study
Psalm 119:9-16
Lt. Col Jan Condon

We need to read, know and apply God's Word in our daily life so we can make wise choices and bring Glory to God.

When God's word is treasured we see this in

1. A Passion for Purity – vs. 9 - 11

"How can a young man stay pure?".....The Message - "live a clean life"

- Discuss the intoxication of passions
- Struggle to be pure in thoughts and actions

The Psalmist suggests that the person who treasures God's Word and applies it to daily life has a passion for purity.

The Message – "carefully reading the map of your Word"

NIV – "Living according to your word"

- Not sufficient to desire to live a pure life
- Exposure to God's Word is not sufficient – one further step.

Vs 10 teaches that our passion must be God himself.

"I seek you with all of my heart"

But our heart can be restless and wander, so our safety is in God.

Vs 10 "don't let me miss the road signs you've posted" TM

"Do not let me stray"..... NIV

Only God can keep us on the right track – His word and the strength and guidance it gives keeps us pure and true.

Vs 11 – it must be treasured deep in our hearts so it will govern and control us and keep us from indulging in reckless passion.

2. A Yearning for study – vs. 12 – 14

When God's word is treasured so deeply in our hearts we develop an insatiable yearning or passion to study and read it.

The Psalmist asks God to teach him more - "Train me in your ways of wise living" TM V 12

Vs 13 suggests the more we know, apply and treasure God's word then we cannot be silent but want to share the truths with others. V13.

Share an insight recently discovered from God's Word

The opportunity to share the riches of God's Word brings encouragement and blessing to others. We must arrive at a place where we value and treasure God's Word more than materialistic wealth. V. 14

Think over Are we as excited about the riches of God's Word as we are about our Bank Account and possessions?

There can be no value placed on the teaching from God's Word in areas such as: -

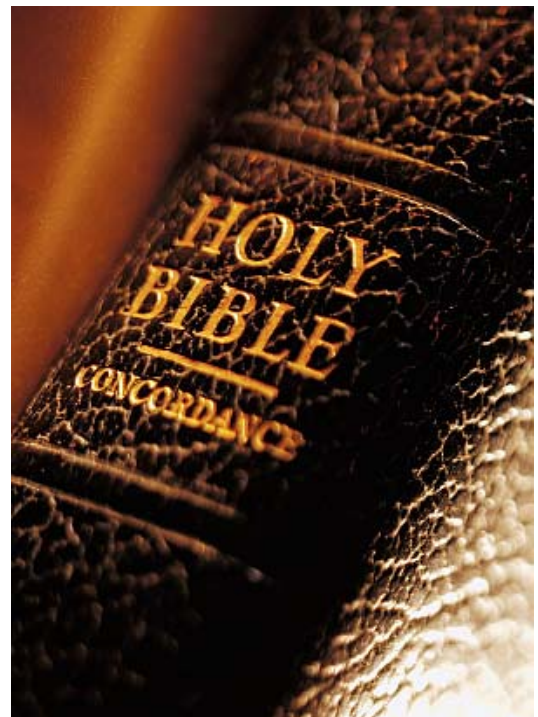
1. insights and wisdom to protect marriage
2. clear direction on how to raise children
3. hope of eternal life and forgiveness of sin
4. knowing God's peace in times of trouble and trauma

God's Word is an invaluable treasure

3. A commitment to God's ways vs. 15 - 16

God's word is so valuable and powerful we need to meditate upon it v.15

"I attentively watch how you've done it" TM.



Share a time when a decision you have made was based on Scripture.

God's Word is so valuable it needs to be the basis for our entire decision making – not an after thought. To those who treasure God's Word it is never dull or boring but vibrant, life giving and nourishing. They care about what God says and don't see God's Word as an intrusion in their life.

It also means we delight in God's Word and do not neglect it. When we see God's Word as a treasure it is precious and constantly brought to mind and treasured in the heart.

WHY READ GOD'S WORD?

- 1. To know God and understand Him.**
The Scripture progressively reveals the character, plan, purpose and will of God.
How will we know Him, if we don't read the Word? Psalm 119 has many references to God's Word and the necessity of reading it and applying it. God's Word is described in many different terms in this Psalm e.g. Laws, decrees, precepts etc. **Make a list of them.**
- 2. To truly know ourselves and God's plan for us.**
James 1: 21 – 25 challenges us to really get into the Word to see ourselves as we truly are.
- 3. To give wisdom and guidance in decision making.**
Psalms and Proverbs specifically give wise counsel.
We need to know God's laws and standards for living - in order to make the right choices and positive reactions to circumstances.
- 4. To help overcome temptation.**
Scriptures give both preventative and corrective words to help in time of temptation.
It warns us of the kinds of temptation we are likely to face, the process of the temptation and how to deal with it.
Ephesians 6: 10 – 18 James 1: 12 – 17
- 5. To enable us to have godly values and perspective.**
We constantly need to renew our minds - Romans 12: 2 so that our thinking and behaviour aligns with God's will.
- 6. To nourish and assist growth.**
The Bible was not just written for information but our transformation.
2 Timothy 3: 16 – 17
The Bible is the inspired Word of God, but for it to have an impact on our lives, we need to respond to it, imbibe it and meditate upon it for growth to occur.
A dynamic relationship with the truth of God's Word provides Spiritual nourishment to grow in His likeness.



STEPS IN READING GOD'S WORD

1. Set a goal for what you want to read and target a realistic completion date. If you decide to read the Bible in a year, you can choose one of the available reading schemes or formulate your own. It is usually desirable to include daily input from more than one portion of Scripture in your reading plan.
2. In *Enjoy Your Bible*, Irving L. Jensen has suggested a method that will help you actively interact with the text as you go along:

READ:

- (1) **Read aloud.** This is especially helpful in devotional literature like the Psalms.
- (2) **Read carefully.** Don't be mechanical; try to be alert and observant.
- (3) **Read repeatedly.** Additional readings will give you greater insight into a passage.
- (4) **Read peripherally.** As you read a text, think about its context.

REFLECT:

- (1) **Reflect purposefully.** As you reflect upon the passage you are reading or have just completed, do it with the clear purpose of knowing God better and becoming more conformed to the image of His Son.
- (2) **Reflect imaginatively.** Actively use your mind's eye to visualize the situation and put yourself in it.
- (3) **Reflect humbly.** Never take the Bible for granted; remember that you are privileged to reflect upon the revelation of the living God.
- (4) **Reflect prayerfully.** Personalize your reading by communicating with God about the truth you derive from it.
- (5) **Reflect patiently.** Reflection takes time and concentration. Include this in the time you have allotted for your reading.

RECORD:

When an important verse, thought, or application emerges from the text, jot it down so that you can retain it and refer to it in the future.

RESPOND:

- (1) **Respond with confession.** When the Word exposes an area of sin in your attitudes or actions, quickly respond by acknowledging it so that you will continue to walk in the light.
- (2) **Respond with faith.** Stand upon the truth of what you are reading.
- (3) **Respond with obedience.** Resolve to take the truth you have just seen and put it into practice during the remainder of the day.

www.bible.org

GOD MY PROTECTOR

Psalm 121
Captain Kerry Spall

Décor

- protective wear/items : sunglasses, sunscreen, hats, umbrellas, gloves
- pictures of mountains, picture of Jerusalem

Group discussion/Guest Speaker

The group could discuss their journeys to a mountain region or a guest speaker could be invited to talk about a trek they have made.

Suggested songs/chorus'

SASB chorus 26 "Travel along in the sunshine"
SASB Song 892 "Sing the wondrous love of Jesus"
SASB Song 710 "A wonderful Saviour is Jesus, my Lord"
SASB Song 766 "To the hills I lift my eyes"
Song "His eye is on the sparrow"
Hillsong chorus "Hear our praises"

Educational Segment

This could focus on protection for skin/eyes with information from The Cancer Council or local optometrist.

See website: www.sightforlife.net

For information on protecting our eyes

Competition

1. In what country is Mount Kilimanjaro?
2. What is the tallest mountain in the world?
3. What is this mountains height?
4. Name the highest mountain in Pakistan
5. Name the highest mountain in Japan
6. What is Australia's highest mountain?
7. On which mountain did Noah's Ark rest?
8. Where did Moses receive the 10 commandments?
9. Name the highest mountain in New Zealand
10. Name the mountain range in western North America?

Answers:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Tanzania | 2. Everest | 3. 8,848m |
| 4. K-2 | 5. Mt Fuji | 6. Kosciusko |
| 7. Mt Ararat | 8. Mt Sinai | 9. Mt Cook |
| 10. Rocky Mountains | | |

Bible Reading Psalm 121

Devotion

This psalm is in a group of psalms 120 to 134 that are known as the 'Pilgrim Psalms' or 'Songs of Ascent' which were sung by the Jews travelling (and ascending) on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the annual feasts. Many people today recite Psalm 121 at the beginning of a journey and this psalm has become known as the 'Traveller's Psalm', reminding those who love God of His powerful providential protection. The author is unknown, though some scholars suggest Hezekiah.

The psalm begins with the words "I lift my eyes to the hills, where does my help come from?" As the pilgrims climbed the Judean hills they would lift their eyes to their maker of heaven and earth. The pagan shrines in the region were built on hill tops, known as the "high places", however, the temple of God in Jerusalem whilst in the hills, was not at the highest point.

The journey for the pilgrims was a hazardous one, with rough roads to travel and the risk of being attacked by bandits/robbers. They would set out on this journey leaving their homes without anyone to care for their belongings. Yet the pilgrims are reminded that their God will keep an eye on the path they travel, He will be their shade from the sunlight and moonlight and He will keep them from harm (some translations use the word 'evil'). The word 'keeper' in Hebrew is the same as the word 'eyelid' and so God's people could be confident that they were within His protection just as the eyelid protects the eye.

Illustration: the story has been told of a believer, Frederick Nolan, who was fleeing from his enemies during a time of persecution in North Africa. Pursued over a hill and through a valley with no place to hide, he fell exhausted into a cave, expecting to be caught. Awaiting his death, he saw a spider weaving a web. Within minutes, the spider had woven a beautiful web across the mouth of the cave. The man's enemies arrived, but on seeing the unbroken web, assumed it was impossible for him to have entered the cave. Later, Frederick exclaimed "Where God is, a spider's web is like a wall. Where God is not, a wall is like a spider's web". Few things offer security to believers more than awareness that God will use His overcoming power to protect them.



Today as we journey with God there could be many things that would cause us to have fears or insecurities, yet here we find in God's word, a psalm that speaks of our God who does not sleep, who watches over us, and keeps us from evil. We are secure in God's hands. We can have such confidence in God that nothing will shake it. God will give you strength to persevere on the journey to our heavenly city in the knowledge of His protection.

Closing Prayer

*"Prayer is the burden of a sigh
The falling of a tear
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near"*

Dear God, help us to trust in your power to deliver us from unseen dangers and unanticipated threats to our security. Help us to live openly, without fear. Deliver us from evil and guide us on our journey. You are our refuge, our protector. We offer You our lives in Jesus Name.

ALL KNOWING GOD

Psalm 139

Major Debbie Hindle

Songs to choose from:

SASB 48	God's love to me is wonderful
P&W 834	He Knows My Name - Tommy Walker © 1994 Tommy Walker. Admin in Australasia by Copy Care Services
P&W 901	Your Love - Jud Field & Carl Laurens © Judson Field & Carl Laurens
Vocal HC 100	Psalm 139 - Rebecca St James © 1996 Bibbitsong Music/BMI. (Admin by ICG) Up in the Mix/BMI (Admin by EMI)

Activities

- Coffee and Dessert Night
- Getting to know all about you activity: Have a questionnaire on the women in your group, e.g. the lady with the most grandchildren, or where does Mary's oldest son live etc. OR
- Ladies bring a photo of themselves as a child or a baby. The photos are displayed and the other ladies try and match the photo with the person.

Devotions God knows us intimately and He cares The Ironing Story

I want to share with you something that happened to me that taught me how interested God is in us.

It was a very busy time in our life. We were at Tuggerah Lakes; the new corps building was underway. The congregation was growing. The programme of the corps had increased. To cope with all this activity and busy-ness I would not get stressed out about the ironing piling up. Most days I would iron what we needed for the day first thing in the morning.

On this particular day I was actually ready to go to Silver Threads - early – yes a miracle. So I thought the best use of this hour would be to iron some clothes. So I set about ironing clothes that would hang up in the cupboard, the clothes we didn't wear often. My thinking was well I would be a little bit ahead then.

God communicates with us in many ways – through His Word, the Bible; through other people; through that thought in our minds; and sometimes He may speak directly to us.

This particular day as I started ironing the Lord said, 'iron tomorrow's clothes.' Being the obedient child that I was.... Not....I argued with God. You know how it is - most of us have had argued with God about something at some time. I wanted to be a bit ahead with the ironing so I was going to iron the clothes we don't wear very much and I told God so.

Quite plainly He said, 'Iron tomorrow's clothes.' Again I argued. This happened 3 times until I realised that God wanted me to iron tomorrow's clothes. So finally I did and the day continued pretty normally after that.

The next day when we woke up the power was off to the house, in fact to the whole area. It was then that I realised just how interested God is in my life and just how much He knows about my life.

HE IS FAMILIAR WITH ALL MY WAYS, He knows when I sit and when I stand, He knows me intimately and He cares what happens to me. God knows and He cares.

Story 1

Elijah and the Ravens (1 Kings 17)

- No rain for a few years.
- God leads Elijah to the Kerith Ravine – protection and provision.
- Ravens look after him.

God knows Elijah's situation and he cares for him.

Story 2

Chloe's story.

Chloe was born in 1999 and diagnosed with Infant Marfan's Syndrome. Symptoms included bad connecting tissues – her left eye was like a googly button eye.

She had heart problems and had open heart surgery before she was 1 - lanky long features – no strength in lower legs so she walked on her knees - plus a whole lot more.

At the age of 1 month she was given 12 months to live – one of her life threatening problems was an Aneurysm in the aorta near where it goes into the heart.

Her parents, Merv & Sandra decided on surgery to give her a chance at a longer life. So they took her to Sydney for the surgery while we and the corps folk prayed in Brisbane.

Later that night we got a phone call to say that Chloe was not doing well after surgery. Later again that night we received the phone call to tell us that Chloe had passed away at 1.30am age 3years and 45 days.

Merv and Sandra could have walked away from their faith at that point. It had been very hard for them. They had an older son and Chloe's twin that they had to care for as well through out this time. What kept them? The comfort, love and support God showed them through their church family. God knew what was happening in their life and God cared...this time through others.

The lessons for us

With confidence I can say to you.

- Mothers with concerns for your children.
- Women facing broken family relationships.
- Ladies finding it difficult to make ends meet.
- Women who seemed to have lost that spiritual deepness.

God knows and He cares. We can bring all these situations and more to Him. He will help us through.

Application

Let me conclude with this story –

Zarephath Widow and Elijah (1 Kings 17: 7ff)

- Elijah's brook dries up. God knows and He cares,
- God commands a widow to help Elijah – what was God thinking?
- Her last meal.
- She obeys – flour and oil never runs out.
- God provided not only for Elijah but also the Zarephath widow and her son. – God knows and He cares.

We can bring any situation to God, large – life threatening, or small – what may seem trivial to some people. He knows and He cares. He knows your name. He knows you completely, He sees each tear that falls, He hears you when you call.

Ministry Time P&W 834 – He Knows my name.

GOD KNOWS AND HE CARES

(Mothers Day)

Psalm 139

Captain Christine Atkinson

Song HLSB 53 – I will sing the wondrous story

Prayer

Bible Reading Psalm 139:1-12

Suggestion search Psalm 139 on www.youtube.com a musical video will come up titled Psalm 139 (English) download and save video to play during bible reading.

Praise and thanksgiving prayers

Suggestions: on a white board or sheet of cardboard make a list of praise and thanksgiving prayers - try and get everyone to contribute! Assurance from verse 5 & 6a "You hem me in behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me..."

Poem (A Mothers Day & Love theme)

Song HLSB 111 - There is a name I long to hear.

Activity Jumble some words on envelopes about Mothers Day. When solved, come and get corresponding envelope (dots or flowers etc.) with a verse from Psalm 139. A verse of promise to take home

DVD - I Worship C "He knows my name"

Bible Reading Psalm 139:13-24

Exercise Take a bucket of balls (Children's plastic air filled balls) place them on a parachute or in baskets or containers around the room and with music *playing*. Encourage each woman to take a ball and pray for a person in their family or a troubling or difficult situation. Have a Large container placed at the foot of a cross ready and with each ball picked up, encourage the women to place it in at the foot of the cross. Encourage the women to also pray for themselves and place it at the foot of the cross. The idea being we are bringing our families and concerns to Jesus - *Remember He knows all about us...He made us.*



Some thoughts for Psalm 139

What do you think when you hear the words "O Lord you have searched me and you know me"... In fact this whole Psalm is letting us know that God knows what we want to say; before it is on our lips he knows when we sit and when we rise. It even goes so far as to talk about trying to hide from God – "where can we go...." God is everywhere. If we have a relationship with God, through His Spirit, then these words are an amazing comfort to us. We are thrilled to think that no matter where we go or what happens to us, God is there to help us through.

This Psalm is a life Psalm. It can help us and encourage us every day of our lives no matter what is happening.

However we need to realise that not everyone is excited about the fact that God is watching them. Not everyone chooses to have a relationship with God and so they are not very interested in his concern for them and some would like to take radical measures to get away and stay away, from anything even remotely religious, or God focussed.

So here we have two groups of people.

1. The group that love this relationship and
2. the group that don't

So the solution is clear if God could just look after the people in relationship with Him and leave the others alone then surely we would all be better off.

In verse 19 even the Psalmist says "If only you would slay the wicked" We say to ourselves it isn't fair when bad things happen to good people we could start a movement. "Lets get rid of the baddies" Then life would be good for everyone. But before we get carried away with our own warped opinions it doesn't take long to realise that God is love, and life doesn't work like that.

Firstly not all non believers are bad people. Dr Alan Harley said in a recent Brengle Institute "Some people are more loving by nature than some are by Grace". When God looks at an individual He sees what could be in their lives and in their hearts and He loves them whether they love Him or not. We all know that good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people.

Secondly for those of us who chose to follow Jesus it is a great message of love that we know in the midst of very anxious times when sadness and distress come, God is with us. Even the darkness of a crisis cannot hide us from God. V12 "even the darkness will not be dark in you."

Thirdly...We pray for those who don't know what they are missing, when they are away from the love of the Lord, and trying to survive life without Him.

I trust today that you have taken the opportunity in the light of this amazing Psalm to pray for your families, your concerns, your hurts, and may the love of God spoken about in Psalm 139 be an enormous blessing to you today.

Song HLSB 41 - I must have the Saviour with me.

Prayer and Benediction

OUR COMPASSIONATE GOD

Psalm 143
Captain Petra Dorman

Décor

- * Light coloured tablecloths or materials around the place.
- * Lit candles... lots if possible.
- * Soft music as ladies enter to set the mood.

(These are to symbolise the grace and loving compassion of God ... the calmness and tenderness in our busy and chaotic lives)

Welcome

And remind the ladies that God is interested in every area of their lives and those they care about. Encourage them to bring some of their concerns to Him now via prayer.

Prayer requests/Prayer

This is a lovely time of coming together and showing the ladies that our God cares about every detail of their lives; His compassion reaching everyone. You might like to write these requests in a prayer book and then pray briefly for each one. This brings the ladies together in unity, sharing the journey of life.

Introduction to the theme

We see around us the candles, the soft colours and heard the soft music when we came in. These symbols remind us of 'Our Compassionate God' as found in Psalm 143. The gentleness the faithfulness and the amazing love that God gives us. When in the midst of our trials, when everything is pressing in on us... God shows us His compassion and the softness of the candles, colour and music is like God's gentle love washing over us and stilling our worried hearts.

Bible Reading Psalm 143

Perhaps ask someone before hand to read out this Psalm

Word Search Puzzle See CD

There are some beautiful attributes of God found in this Psalm ... can you find all ten of them?

Background

David wrote this Psalm in the midst of hopelessness and depression. He felt unable to pull himself out of his despair. He was being pursued by his enemies and he had become a broken man. David prayed in desperation, expressing his true feelings... He asked for God to answer him, to deliver him and to revive him. You see David believed in a BIG God so he prayed a big prayer, pleading God to act on his behalf. He knew that in God Himself, his crushed life will be restored and that the darkness will be dispelled. He trusted God and surrendered his will to Him.

Share Time

Ask the ladies if they remember a time when things were really tough and they went through a very difficult situation – and God was there for them – pulled them through and showed them His compassion and love?

Ask if anyone would feel comfortable sharing this with the rest of the group.

Devotions

Compassion is described as a 'profound human emotion prompted by the pain of others. More vigorous than empathy.' How much more does **God** extend that compassion to us? So undeserved – yet so freely given. In this Psalm David is clearly desperate for God to intervene, for God to show him the way to go. David remembers what God had done for him in the past, and realises his need for Him once again, thinking of his faithfulness, and yearning for His unfailing love. Like David, we too can come to God for help, knowing He is a compassionate God and we can trust Him to lead us in the right way. We can remember what He has done for us in the past and know that His steadfast love can carry us through whatever circumstances we face.

Song

HLSB 25 - Great is Thy faithfulness

Benediction

Finish with this encouraging letter from His Princess Book.

Play some soft music (without words) while reading this 'letter'. Invite the ladies to close their eyes and ask them to picture God saying these words especially to them.



'My Princess ... its okay to cry'

I see how hard you are trying to handle your heart, and I know you want to live a life without heartaches or pain. I'm asking you to take a step closer to your Father in heaven by crying out to Me when you hurt. Let me heal you. Remember My chosen, King David? He cried out to Me in his fears, disappointments, and sin, and I answered. You are also My chosen one, and you are my daughter So it's okay to cry. I don't expect you to pretend that pain is not real. It is truth and tears that will give you the freedom that I want you to know. Now let go of that part of your heart that only I can heal. Let your heavenly daddy hold you while you cry.

Love,

Your King who wipes away your tears

© HIS PRINCESS..Love letters from Your King by Sheri Rose Shepherd 2004 Multnomah gifts

DAD – I NEED SOME HELP!

Father the 'Fixer' (Fathers Day)

Psalm 143

Joan A. Jones H.L.S. Wagga Wagga Corps

All Scripture quoted from the Good News version

Songs

H.L.S.B 37 – If human Hearts
H.L.S.B 90 – Search me O. God
H.L.S.B 117 – This is my Father's
World

"Dad! Can you help me?".. I can't remember all the times I asked my father this during my childhood, when faced with some difficulty that appeared to be insurmountable. Now I hear my grandchildren asking the same question of **their** father (my son). Apparently, Dads should be able to fix **anything**. Sometimes I feel sorry for fathers... they are expected to be able to fix anything from a bruised knee to the latest "high-tech" gizmo on the market.

They have to be **brave** enough to face the **spookiest** things that go "bump" in the night, and be a walking encyclopaedia about the most obscure subjects! They have to be good **disciplinarians** and make tough decisions... yet not crush their children's' spirits; they must **protect** their children from harm, yet be liberal enough to allow them to spread their wings... then be **compassionate** and **forgiving** enough to pick up the pieces when the youthful dreams go "crash".



Poem

A Prayer for Father.

Mender of toys, leader of boys,
Changer of fuses, kisser of bruises.
Bless him, dear Lord.
Mover of couches, soother of "ouches",
Pounder of nails, teller of tales,
Reward him, O Lord.
Raker of leaves, cleaner of eaves,
Dryer of dishes, fulfiller of wishes,
Bless him, O Lord

(Jo Ann Heidbreder

H.L Digest, Sept. /Dec. 1984, Page 5)

Many a child having reached adulthood has looked back at his or her youthful struggles and realized that "Father knew best"! In **Psalm 143** (Good News version) King David seems to be doing this—he is in trouble and is crying to his Father, God, for help. He remembers what God has done in the past, and desperately wants to regain the closeness he once had with his heavenly Father! (Verses 5-6)

When you think of the word "father", what image does that bring to your mind?

I have a happy memory from my early childhood. We had just finished our evening meal, and I remember I climbed out of my chair and settled myself in my father's lap. As his strong arms wrapped around me I snuggled down and pretended to go to sleep, so that I would not have to move from that place of comfort and security.

I savour that memory, because later in life, my father was brought down by a debilitation and incurable disease. For a while he became an angry and unapproachable person, totally unlike the kind and good humoured man we remembered. Thankfully, before he died, he once more regained his former outgoing personality, and faith in God.

I realize that not everyone is blessed with a happy memory like mine. I know that for some, the word "father" conjures up an image of total indifference, or perhaps painful memories of fearful events and abuse. Has this perhaps made it difficult for you to envisage God as a "**loving**" and "**merciful**" father?

David obviously has happy memories of a "loving" Father, for he says in **verse 8** ... "Remind me each morning of your **constant love**, for I put my trust in you." Then he asks God to help him out... to "**show me the way** I should go." He goes on to ask God for His **protection**, and to "... **teach me** to do your will. Be **good to me** and **guide me** on a safe path." (Verse 10)

He obviously expects that God will indeed help him, because he remembers the happier times of their previous close relationship ... he asks for help ... "Because of your love for me." (Verse 12)

In these passages we can see some of the attributes ascribed to God as a Father... He is seen to ... love ... **kind ... protective ... teacher ... guide ... faithful** to His promises.

In **Psalm 103:13** we see a further description of God as a kind Father ... "As kind as a father is to his children, so kind is the Lord to those who honour Him. Verse 14 He knows what we are made of; He remembers that we are dust!"

Participation

Ask ladies to suggest what qualities they saw in their fathers then let's look at some qualities we could possibly ascribe to our **earthly** fathers... (Use whiteboard and ask for suggestions)

F ... faithful A good fixer ... fearless ... funny

A ... adaptable ... available ... always there

T ... thoughtful ... tender ... tough ... a teacher

H ... helpful ... honourable ... happy ... handyman

E ... encouraging ... energetic ... essential

R ... reliable ... realistic ... respected ... ready



Ask ladies to suggest what qualities they saw in their fathers they would wish passed on through their grandchildren.

Our earthly fathers may have (or had) some, or none, of these qualities ... but our heavenly Father has all of them, and does not change.

David came to God **already knowing** Him to be righteous and faithful, because of his past experiences of God's love. (Ps.143 v.1)

There are many verses in the Bible that speak of God's love for us and His faithfulness...

Psalms 25:8-10 tells us ... "Because the Lord is **righteous** and **good** He teaches sinners the path they should follow. Verse 9... He leads the humble in the right way and teaches them His will. Verse 10 ... With **faithfulness and love** He leads all who keep His covenant and obey His commands."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ... "Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **merciful Father**, the God from whom **all help** comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God."

Romans 8:38-39 ... "Nothing can separate us from **His love**: neither death nor future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the **love of God** which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Joshua 1:9 ... "Remember that I have commanded you to be determined and confident! Don't be afraid or discouraged, for I, the Lord your God, am with you wherever you go!"

We can trust our God to be a **loving and merciful** Father, **faithful** to His promise. Even if our earthly fathers left a lot to be desired in their dealings with us, we can trust our heavenly Father ... His Word does not change ... His love is eternal ... His faithfulness is forever. We can do no less than pray for the strength to follow His example.

Benediction

2 Thessalonians 2:16

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and in His grace gave us unfailing courage and a firm hope, encourage you and strengthen you to always do and say what is good."



GOD OF GOODNESS & BLESSING

Fellowship Day

Psalm 145

Lt. Col. Jan Condon

Preparation

Have a display of all different types of bags – paper, sandwich, gift, cosmetic, handbags etc – there are many

As each bag is mentioned in the meeting outline, have one on display e.g. Toilet bag, travel bag etc.

You may wish to present the women with a small gift in a bag

You could serve morning tea/lunch in a bag

Songs - choose songs that speak about God's blessings or goodness

Participation

Toilet bag game – provide a couple of cheap toilet rolls and ask everyone to take as many sheets as they will need – but at least 3. Do not say any more at this stage. When everyone has their paper, ask them to share one thing about themselves for each piece of paper taken.

Cosmetic Bag –

Lips – use only the lipstick of truth, sometimes expensive, always becoming

Eyes – drops of compassion used daily, eye shadow of understanding gives depth and beauty

Cheeks – tint softly with the rouge of dreams to give radiance to complexion

Voice – tune regularly with prayer. It will then be melodious

Nails – manicure carefully with readiness and buff with enthusiasm

Hands – rub in the cream of gentleness and keep handy the gloves of goodwill

Powder – humility is the best. It covers all blemishes of the ego.

Sweets bag – SEE COMPETITION ON CD

Travel bag – ask someone to share about a holiday or special trip they have taken – sing songs from other countries

Competition – food from other countries –
SEE COMPETITION ON CD

Shopping bag – “I went shopping and I bought...”

Choose a letter from the alphabet and a list of stores and all answers must begin with the chosen letter – E.g. the chosen letter is **P** - all answers must begin with P, then list different types of stores e.g. Supermarket, post office, chemist, electrical etc and products from these stores starting with the chosen letter.

Bag clean up - prize to the one with the least points – SEE CD

Mail bag – print letter from God (**SEE CD**) on nice paper and put in an envelope addressed to each member – tell them they must not open it until they get home

Devotions: choose one of the following -

a. Cleaning Bag – have cleaning items in bag and show for each line of devotions – enlarge on points

- Wash away the grit of selfishness (choose a detergent or washing powder)
- Sweep away the cobwebs of pride (broom or brush)
- Throw away the rags of regret (rags)
- Wipe away the dust of idleness (duster)
- Burn out the rust of neglect (rust remover)
- Destroy petty grievances (your suggestion)

Psalm 51 “Create within me a clean heart O God”

b. Lunch bag – use the story of Jesus feeding the 5 thousand

c. My bag of Goodies – prepare a short talk on Psalm 145 based on the blessings / good things God provides



Extra give each lady 2 tea bags to take home so they can share a cuppa with their neighbour in need or to invite someone to Home League/church

ON THE WAY TO CHRISTMAS

Major Heather Unicomb

Program Outline

God carried out His plan and got everyone in the right place at the right time. He still does. The ideas throughout this program are for the members to think about their journey through life and thank God that He has been with them through the ups and downs.

Preparation

1. Photos of some or all of your members.
See Photo Activity below
2. 2 maps – one of Australia and one of the world to be used for the Birthplace census. You could also use some coloured dot stickers.
3. Handouts out with the Bible Reading, Discussion points and Life Map.
4. Biro, coloured pencils for Life Map.

Songs about journeys

- Once in royal David's city
Verse 2 (Jesus' journey from earth to heaven.)
- As with gladness men of old
Verse 2 (Wise men joyful steps to that lowly manger bed)
- Christians Awake
Verse 3 (Baby Jesus from manger to the cross)

Photo Activity

Get together some photos of some or all of your members. These can be from a recent event or events taken throughout the year or borrowed from the individuals or specially taken beforehand by someone with a digital camera.

- Either put them in a PowerPoint slideshow or a wall display of photos with only part showing.
- Have only a small part of each picture showing at first, with the rest to be gradually revealed.
- Show each photo and get the members to guess who it is (pointing if they don't know the person's name).
- Gradually reveal more picture if necessary.
- When they have guessed, introduce that person.
- Alternatively, simply invite people to look at the complete photos.
- You could put some Christmas music on in the background while they do this.

Point out the variety in the people shown, reflecting the diversity in your group.

God has brought us together today. It is not a coincidence. It is a unique occasion – this exact group of people in this moment in time. How will God use this moment in our lives?

Pray

encouraging each person to thank God silently for those sitting next to them.

Participation

SEE CD FOR POWERPOINT

If you do not have PowerPoint display facilities the attached questions can be given verbally by the host.

1. Choose a Host.
2. 2 teams (4 or 5 in each team) stand facing each other on either side of the host.
3. Introduce yourselves.
4. A question will be asked.
5. There are 5 answers offered by member of the public in a survey (though yours is a fictitious survey).
6. The teams talk among themselves
7. The first person to raise their hand and offer a correct answer wins their team the chance to guess the rest of the answers.
8. Correct answers will either appear on the screen or will be confirmed verbally by the host.
9. If the playing team offers 3 incorrect answers, the other team is immediately offered a chance to provide a correct answer.
10. If they provide one, they win the round.



Q **Name the 5 worst things about travelling at Christmas.**

- A Traffic/ busy roads
- B Children asking "are we there yet"
- C Arguments in the car
- D Weather concerns
- E Boredom

Q **Name 5 people you associate with travel at Christmas**

- A Santa Claus
- B Rudolph the reindeer
- C Mary and Joseph
- D The wise men
- E The angels

Q **Name 5 modes of transport associated with Santa or the Nativity**

- A Santa's sleigh
- B Mary's donkey
- C The wise men's camel
- D Angel wings
- E Walking – the shepherds

*(The idea for this quiz came from Scripture Union
2007 – All-age Service)*

Conclude by mentioning how the questions and answers revealed the amount of travelling involved in the Christmas story.

Discussion

Think for a few minutes about journeys you have taken, or ones you'd like to take. Could be local or further away, but it should be a journey that has stuck in your mind because it was special, or be one that you'd like to make that would be special.

Share about these journeys.

Read Luke 2v1-7 a very memorable journey for Mary and Joseph

Sharing Time

COINCIDENCES – RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Have ready your 2 maps and coloured dot stickers.

Ask the members to share some coincidences that have happened during their life. Times when events that don't seem to have any connection, work together in a surprising way.

After any big accident there are always a few people who say "If I hadn't slept in and the then car broke down, I would have been on that train" or "two people may happen to meet once and end up marrying each other.

These verses from Luke 2v 1 to 7 are full of coincidences which ended up in a certain baby being born in exactly the right place at exactly the right time.

For many years, the Jews had been expecting God to send the Messiah – his special king. They knew the Messiah would be from the family of the great King David. 700 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Micah had said that the Messiah would be born in a town called Bethlehem (Micah 5-21) King David's home town.

Many events coincided to make this happen?

- Mary had been told that she was to have a baby who was God's Son and would be a king from David's family.
- She was going to marry Joseph who came from King David's family line.
- Just one problem – they lived in Nazareth, not Bethlehem.
What could get them to be in the right place at the right time? (A census)
- I'm going to carry out a **birthplace census**. Hands up if you were born locally.
- Ask for other places where people were born.
- Put the dots in the various places on your 2 maps.
- Under the orders of Roman Emperor Augustus everyone had to go to the home town of their family to be counted.
- Joseph, from David's family line, went to Bethlehem, taking Mary with him.
- Wise men following the star.
- Shepherds out in fields

God had carried out his plan and got everyone in the right place at the right time.

Jesus was at the heart of God's plan. The history of the Jewish people and the whims of the Roman authorities were both part of bringing it about. But they did not know about him, or recognise his importance. Many people today do not know about Jesus or realise that they need him.

God still works through events in our world and in our lives, whether they seem to be strange coincidences or just ordinary everyday life.

Life Map

SEE CD FOR CHRISTMAS HANDOUT

- Draw your own life –map (a curving line with symbols and words to show events that have led up to you being where you are today) This line may begin at birth and go up or down at particular points, some of which may be life incidents and some may be spiritual.
- Look again at your life Reflect on whether you were aware of God's presence and His love in both the good times and bad.

God's plans still include the whole world, but he is also at work in each of our lives. In easy and difficult times we can be positive. We need to stay faithful to God and keep looking for how he is at work. Look with fresh eyes for God's activity in your personal lives.

Thank God for his love and faithfulness in the past, and commit the future into his hands.

Suggestion: finish by singing 3rd verse of Away in a Manger as a prayer.

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray
Bless all the dear children
in thy tender care
And fit us for
Heaven to live
with thee
there.*



Extra Activity

Maybe you could take a group photo, and give to the ladies as a reminder to pray for each other.

WHOSE HANDS?

Captain Fran Everitt

Welcome and Announcements

Intro of theme

(Intro included – very simple can be used if needed)

God's Hands Bible verses on front of handout
(SEE CD & HANDOUT)

First Song SASB 732 - I'm in his hands TB 687

Opening Prayer Continue in prayer –

Read Helen Steiner Rice – No Prayer goes unheard
(SEE CD)
The praying hands story (SEE CD)

Crafty Hands

Share craft and stories

Craft competition (SEE CD)

The story of the tablecloth (SEE CD)

Poem

Whose Hands?

(SEE CD)

Devotions

INTRO

Do you remember the TV show 'Laverne and Shirley' – and how they always used to wear the sweaters with the letters 'L' for Laverne and S for Shirley?

People used to love wearing the sweaters with their initial on them – feelings of ownership and entitlement would be theirs as they wore the sweaters emblazoned with their personal initial.

On the front cover of your handout is the verse from Isaiah 49:16 'I have engraved you on the palms of my hands...' or from the NLT 'see I have written your name on my hand.'

This verse tells us that we hold an esteemed place of honour and distinction in God's heart...he proudly engraved us on the palms of his hands for all to see. He proclaims to the world that we are his cherished children... his prized possessions.

There are a couple of other 'hands' Bible verses on your handout as well....

Whose hands? Is our theme for today...so we are focussing on different types of 'hands' God's hands, and our own 'crafty' hands.

(Previously – ask ladies to bring craft items to share that they have made, telling how long etc.) This proved really positive – ladies shared patterns, gave tips to each other, and we even started making jumpers for sending over to African AIDS babies.

Message

In the book of John, Chapter 10, this whole chapter is dedicated to Jesus' description of himself as the Good Shepherd. Earlier in the chapter he talks about how he is the gate by which the sheep enter the fold, and he is the shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep, and he is the one who calls each of us by name and whose voice we hear and recognise. In the verses 27-30 it tells us:

27My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30I and the Father are one."

In the hand of God is our place of safety – our place to rest. No matter what happens in this frightening and uncertain world, we can be assured that the hand of God holds us fast. We have a Saviour who has taken up our iniquities, who knows us all by name, and by whose wounds we are healed. But the hand of God that holds us is not a perfect and unblemished hand, but a hand that still bears the wounds from the nails on the cross. As the Good Shepherd, God's hand is not only our foundation and strength, but our guiding force. The shepherd's job is to guide us so that we will follow in the right way. Knowing that we stand securely in God's hands, we can step out into the world in faith: to follow Jesus' teachings and his example of humility and love for all people. In chapter 13 of John's gospel, Jesus says that everyone will know you are my disciples if you have love for one another. Churches today are not for sitting on the premises but standing on the promises of God, hearing the Word, and being empowered by the Holy Spirit to help one another in this world. If we know where we stand in God, we can trust God to lead us by his hand. May we know the peace of being held in God's hands and may the strength we find there help us to reach out and be God's hands in the world.



Song The Power of your love (SEE CD/HANDOUT)

Prayer by Joe Seremane (SEE CD/HANDOUT)

Song

SASB 710 - A wonderful Saviour is Jesus TB 537

Benediction

NBC WOMEN

Major Wendy Staines

Editor's note: You may feel that this programme idea is worth considering for your Corps. It is shared for your information.

NBC Women - "speaking value and life into women". Based on Philippians 2:16 "You offer the teaching that gives life".

Approximately 4 years ago I was facilitating a small group for women. The problem was it was never small. We had around 18 - 20 women coming along. As I was seeking the Lord about the direction we should take, He gave me a picture of our auditorium, mid week full of women, worshipping together, sharing together and receiving teaching that would value them and speak life into them. I called together 4 other women each with different gifts, hospitality, administration/organisation, worship leading and cast the vision to them. It was so amazing that at that meeting two of the women confirmed that they too had had the same vision of what our ministry could be.

It became very evident that ministering to women was very unique and such a privilege, to be able to speak about things that concern women was a very freeing thing and hence brought value to them.

So in 2006 NBC Women was launched. The format of the morning was morning tea from 9.30 am to 10.am, and then we would gather everyone together and worship together. Even though it was just with a key board it was some of the most inspiring times of worship, hearing women's voices making such a beautiful sound. We have encouragement times, where we just open it up and women speak into each other - so incredibly amazing! Other times we have sharing/testimony. Then for 30 minutes we have teaching, either by myself, other team members or guest speaker. These times almost always ended with us ministering to each other. We have seen women grow as disciples, women saved.

One of the strong impressions that I had right from the beginning was that we needed to not only have an inward focus, but an outward focus as well. So every term we would work on a "love in Action". Some of the projects have been, sending little cuddly teddy bears to the orphan babies' hospital in Uganda. One of our girls took them over on her trip to Uganda, on her return we watched together footage of these precious babies in their cots cuddling the little teddy bears, there wasn't a dry eye in the house!

Another time we bought bracelets and sent them to women in Zimbabwe, again we saw footage of how the women in the village in Zimbabwe were so thrilled with their bracelets.

I have heard even a year later that one lady's beads had broken off her bracelet but she still wears just the wire!

We have packaged "pamper packs" for the women at Glen Haven, women's refuge, and each of us wrote a letter to the women, again wanting to value them as women.

One Christmas we wrote notes to the school teachers at our local primary school that our corps has adopted, speaking value and thanks into the teachers, telling them that we are grateful for the influence they are having on our community.

"Love in Action" continues to be a highlight for NBC Women.

Last year I felt a stirring again that it was time to re-evaluate, and I sensed the Holy Spirits leading to take NBC Women to a night program, because we constantly had women saying that they would love to come, but work or are uni etc, so February 2008 saw our first NBC Women nights! It is great! Our age group takes in young girls at Uni and school, young mums, single girls, through to some grandmas!

We also introduced a small group time this year, where after the teaching we break into small groups to discuss, share and pray for each other. This has brought a real sense of community. NBC Women's is primarily a discipleship event, and we have approximately 40 women attend.

One of the wonderful things that has happened in the last term is that we as women had been praying for the men at NBC and we felt another stirring that they also needed an NBC Men! So, this term we have embarked yet again on another change and that is one Tuesday fortnight is NBC Women, the next Tuesday fortnight is NBC Men. The men follow the same format and last week they had 27 men meet together! We are praising God for this, it's so great. Because as women, we desire that the men would be Godly leaders in our families and our church.



DEVOTIONAL PRAYER WALKING

Major Lynn Whittaker

Prayer walking is not a new way of praying, nor is it a contemporary way of praying. It is a different way of praying. Many of the ancient monasteries sometimes had complicated mazes or labyrinths which the monks and nuns used for pacing and meditation as they sought a closer relationship with God.

P. Grauer says this method of prayer walking is simple, 'because it involves mind, body and soul, and provides a truly holistic approach to prayer and meditation'. There are three basic elements to a prayer walk – walking, breathing and praying. While separately these are simple elements, put them together and the most profound things can happen.

The important thing to remember is that there is no wrong way to prayer-walk. How it is done and what is done will be as individual and unique as we each are.

BEGINNING THE PRAYER WALK

While it may seem common sense, make sure that you wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Dress according to the weather. If you are dressed comfortably then you will be able to keep focus on what you are doing rather than on what you are wearing.

When you first start prayer walking half-an-hour is a good time frame to begin with. The following is a guideline you may like to follow.

Take five minutes to focus your thoughts.

Meditate on Psalm 46:10 from *The Message* – "Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God"
Read Ephesians 3:16 – 21.

*Feel His presence,
Acknowledge His presence,
Thank Him for His gentleness of presence.*

Commit this time to God.

Become calm. Let go of all the thoughts, anxieties and tensions you have brought with you. Feel how good it is to be here. To have nothing to do. To just be.

Begin to live in the present moment. You don't have anything at all to do. You can take the time to allow something to happen to you but you have no expectations. If nothing seems to happen, that is alright.

Spend 20 minutes walking.

During this time of your walk consider using one of the suggestions for prayer below to pray, listen and meditate on God.

Finally, take five minutes to meditate on what has happened.

You may like to record your thoughts, feelings and insights into a journal if that is helpful to you.

Take time to process all that has happened for you during this special time apart.

These times can be adjusted as you become more proficient at it.

There are different types of prayer walks you can take and using the Psalms is helpful for prayer walking. They cover all aspects of our lives and contain a wealth of prayer subjects.

MEDITATIVE OR CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

Concentrate on a word or phrase that has spiritual significance for you e.g. hope, faith, love, Jesus loves me. Choose one that will meet your need right now and repeat it rhythmically as you walk. An example for meditative prayer can be found in Psalm 18:

*"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.
He is my shield and the horn of my salvation,
my stronghold"*

PRAISE WALKS

Similar to using the meditative prayer, take a verse of praise from the Psalms and repeat it as you walk and look around God's creation. Some examples are:

"Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live"
(Psalm 144)

*"Praise the Lord, all you nations.
Praise Him, all you people of the earth.
For He loves us with unfailing love;
the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.
Praise the Lord!"*
(Psalm 117)

*"Praise the Lord!
How good it is to sing praises to our God!"*
(Psalm 147)

AWARENESS WALKS

This type of walking is particularly useful for devotional walking as you become aware of your surroundings and yourself.

USING YOUR SENSES

We have all been blessed with senses – sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. As you walk engage all your senses to become aware of the world around.

Listen to every sound. What can you hear?
*People's voice...traffic...birds...your own breathing.
Talk to God about what you are hearing.*

Look around you...What do you see?
Take in your whole surroundings...look closely at the details...see with mind, eye and hand...be aware of the different colours...look at the shapes of all around you (clouds, trees, buildings, people, gardens, beauty and ugliness, light and shade)

Thank God for all the things you see.

Touch as many things as you can.

When did you last take time to feel the bark on a tree...the texture of bricks...feel the wind/sun/rain on your skin...feel the air as you breathe in and out...notice the sensations happening in your body? Marvel at God's creation.

Feel your arms, legs, hands, fingers, feet.

Feel the ground beneath your feet...the weight of objects you may pick up.

Taste nature.

Try chewing on a piece of grass or leaf. Perhaps this is something you have not done for a long time.

Smell the air. What can you smell?

Can you smell the earth, water, cooking smells?

This type of walking is slow and leisurely with frequent stopping and starting. Don't rush the walk, but slow down and take your time getting in touch with God through your senses. If you walk too fast you will not be able to take the time to concentrate on what is happening around you.

SELF-AWARENESS

Using Psalm 139, become aware of how special you are to God and how magnificently you are made. Reflect on how you are made. Your innermost parts and how each part works together to keep you alive and moving. This may seem elementary but how often do we take the time to think of how intricately we are made.

Read Psalm 139. You might like to do this several times before you walk.

As you walk become aware of how you move. Take time to notice how your muscles move, giving God praise and thanks for the ability to move. Become aware of your breathing. Feel each breath.

Be aware of what you are feeling. Is it cold, hot, windy, still?

Use this also as a time of praise for who you are and the purposes God has for you.

EXPLORING OUR EMOTIONS THROUGH THE PSALMS

There is a need for us to acknowledge that our feelings are God-given and it is in the Psalms that we most clearly see emotions expressed. King David, the author of many of the Psalms, was not afraid to tell God exactly how he was feeling. We need to know we serve a big God who created us – all of us, including our feelings. It is what we do with our feelings that can be either constructive or destructive. To express our emotions as we walk in communion with God can be extremely constructive.

Listed here are a compilation of feelings to contemplate and use for prayer as you walk. Read the selected passage then think on it and use it for prayer as you walk. These are only a 'taste' of relevant verses. As you search the Psalms you will find many more on each subject.

Gladness –

'Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs' (Psalm 100:2 NIV)

Joy –

'The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes' (Psalm 19:8 NIV)

Grief and Pain –

'I am bent over and racked with pain. All day long I walk around filled with grief' (Psalm 38:6 NLT)

Despair –

'He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along' (Psalm 40:2 NLT)

'From the depths of despair, O Lord, I call for your help' (Psalm 130:1 NLT)

Abandonment –

'How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?' (Psalm 13:1 NIV)

Mad/Anger –

We do not deny anger, but express it to God, in order to keep from expressing it to our enemies.

Many of us are not very good at dealing with anger constructively. Many Christians feel that they are sinning if they get angry. Remember though that even Jesus got angry on occasions (Matthew 21:12-17).

Before you begin make a list of what is making you angry. Walk fast, march, stomp, breathe deeply and blow it out forcefully.

Use this time of walking to express your anger in a way that is healthy for you and harmless to others. Share it all with God.

When you have finished walking take time to contemplate and become calm and leave the anger behind. One of the greatest benefits this type of walking gives is that it gives boundaries to a negative emotion. You are not covering it up and pretending that it doesn't exist but are allowing it to be fully expressed in a time and place that YOU allow.

*O LORD, shouldn't I hate those who hate you?
Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?
Yes, I hate them with total hatred,
for your enemies are my enemies.
(Psalm 139:21-22 NLT)*

Fear –

'Fear and trembling overwhelm me. I can't stop from shaking' (Psalm 55:5 NLT)

Anxiety –

'In my anxiety I cried out to you, "These people are all liars!"' (Psalm 116:11 NLT)

Guilt and Shame –

'My guilt overwhelms me—it is a burden too heavy to bear' (Psalm 38:4 NLT)

'You know of my shame, scorn, and disgrace. You see all that my enemies are doing' (Psalm 69:19 NLT)

Reverence / Trembling –

*'But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house; in **reverence** will I bow down toward your holy temple'*

(Psalm 5:7 NIV)

SOLUTION FOCUSED WALKING

We can use our walking time to pray about an issue that needs a solution. By concentrating on such an issue we can remove the normal distractions, offer it to God and gain a new perspective on the problem.

It helps us work towards resolving some of the difficult and painful issues that confront us.

*Show me the right path, O LORD;
point out the road for me to follow.
Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.
(Psalm 25: 4-5)*



THE THANKFUL WALK

Use this time to reflect on the many blessings that enrich our lives. Without being too glib, such a time can be useful to lift depression, worry and stress into positive energy. You can use this time to show thanks for the beauty of the world which your senses show you.

*'The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give **thanks** to him in song'*
(Psalm 28:7 NIV)

*'I give you thanks, O LORD, with all my heart;
I will sing your praises before the gods.
I bow before your holy Temple as I worship.
I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness;
for your promises are backed
by all the honour of your name.
As soon as I pray, you answer me;
you encourage me by giving me strength'* (Psalm 138:1-3 NLT)

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to take a prayer walk. Just go with God and whether you use words or not, spend this time basking in God's presence and revelation.



References

(Grauer, P. (1999),
PrayerWalking, <http://protestantism.about.com/religion/protestantism/li.../aa110299.htm?rnk=r3&terms=Prayer>

LECTIO DIVINA

Major Lynn Whittaker

Lectio Divina is a classic tradition of prayer dating back to the monastic rules of Benedict and Augustine. It was in the 12th century that a Carthusian Monk, Guigo II, wrote a book called 'The Monk's Ladder' in which the four steps of *lectio divina* (reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation) were formalised. (wikipedia.org)

Lectio Divina basically means 'divine reading'. *Lectio Divina* is a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures, which enables the Bible, the Word of God, to become a means of union with God. *Lectio Divina* can also be used with other sacred texts and inspirational writings.

The art of *lectio divina* begins with cultivating the ability to listen deeply, to hear 'with the ear of our hearts'. Listen with the still, small voice of God (1 Kings 19:12), the 'faint, murmuring sound' which is God's word for us.

In *lectio divina* we, too, heed that command and turn to the Scriptures, knowing that we must 'hear' (listen) to the voice of God, which often speaks very softly.

Like all prayer, we begin *lectio divina* by spending some time quietening down and becoming still. We ask God to open our hearts and make us receptive and ask for revelation and inspiration.

As stated earlier there are four steps to *lectio divina*.

The first step is lectio

Choose a passage of Scripture (or other reading) to use. The Psalms are an excellent choice for *lectio divina* because the thoughts and emotions expressed in them were not just relevant to a particular time in history but are those still experienced by people today. Psalms 119 and 139 are excellent passages to begin *lectio divina*.

In *lectio*, slowly read a short passage of scripture paying attention to any word or phrase that attracts your attention. Read it again and again until you are drawn to a specific portion of the passage. Linger over that phrase, letting it 'speak' to you. This is slow-motion reading, so don't rush it!

The second step is meditatio

Read the piece through again. This time, when a particular sentence or phrase or single word "lights up" or "rings a bell", stop reading. Resist the temptation to go on go on because something more "ah ha!" might be up ahead. (You can always use this piece another time to see what might be revealed to you later on in the text.) Try not to get caught up in spinning out reasons why this particular word or phrases has caught your attention. Practice being present to this particular word or phrase at this particular time.

Reflect on the meaning of this word or phrase. Enter into dialogue with this portion of the scripture. As the phrase engages you what memories, images, feelings, thoughts or connections with other passages arise for you? *Ruminatio* or rumination was the way the monks described this aspect of the process. It resembles the chewing process of a cow.

The third step in lectio divina is 'oratio'

The *oratio* is a conversation or prayer with the Divine. In this step we respond to God from the heart in our

own words and feelings of prayer in the light of what we have heard God.

This is the speaking part of the conversation. You may choose to respond verbally, pictorially, or in writing.

Step four in lectio divina is contemplatio

The best way of describing *contemplatio* is to remain quiet and still for a few moments after having spoken to God in prayer.

The monks called this "lap time with God."

In some traditions a fifth step is added. This step is called operatio

This step is seen as the necessary link between interior prayer and exterior action in our lives. There must be a real connection between our prayer life and our daily way of living.

Lectio Divina can also be used in a group setting.

The process for group *lectio divina* has the following steps:

1. Preparation

Prepare by centring yourself in God's presence. Breathe gently.

2. Reading

Have one person read the passage aloud twice, reading more slowly the second time.

Be aware of a phrase or word that attracts or invites your attention. Take turns speaking your phrase or word to the group...

3. Reflecting

Have another person read the passage again.

Pay attention to the image or feeling that arises from your phrase or word. Speak your image or feeling to the group...

4. Responding

Have a third person read the passage a fourth time.

Be aware of how you experience God around your image or feeling as it relates to your phrase or word.

Allow for extended time of listening and responding to your image, feeling, phrase or word. How is God present in and through this? You may sense God's reminder of being with you through a call, challenge or other impression. You may find it helpful to journal your feelings and thoughts.

Share your experience of God with the group...

5. Resting/Receiving

Provide extended silence to be alone with God. Leader concludes time by speaking Amen!

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