

LESSON 5

I CAN PRAISE GOD WITH A JOYFUL HEART

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is Worthy of Praise**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 63; 108**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Throughout the Psalms, David expresses that God is worthy of praise. He models that no matter our circumstances, we can praise God with a joyful heart!**WORD OF WONDER:** How God made me is amazing and wonderful. —from Psalm 139:14

- Play Stations:
 - Musical Instruments
 - Building Praise Towers
 - I Can Praise God with a Joyful Heart Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: All Day, Every Day
- Word of Wonder: From Psalm 139:14
- Craft: Paper Plate Tambourines
- Circle Time: Name That Sound
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship:
 - God's Big Story
 - Connecting the Wonder Truth
 - Prayer and Blessing
 - Responding in Worship: When Can We Praise God?
- Game: Freeze Dance





LESSON 5 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is Worthy of Praise

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 63; 108

WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 139:14

Have you had a wilderness experience?

When my family moved to our “new” house, we had a bug problem. The home had been vacant for months; spiders and insects were all too glad to take up residence. You can predict the reactions of my children.

I eradicated the bugs and cleaned the cobwebs, but I also thought the family needed a camping trip. See, I figured if we were out in nature—where the kids would see lots of bugs—maybe they would overcome their phobia. Unfortunately, our excursion did not have the desired effect.

David’s wilderness experience had more serious challenges. In the Judean desert, he had to locate water and forage for food. Even though David was God’s anointed king, he had to run from people who wanted him dead. He could have accused God of deserting him.

Yet even in the wild, David recognized God’s provision. Perhaps while observing a winged eagle sheltering its young, David compares himself to the eaglets under a protective wing (Psalm 63:7). As you prepare for teaching this week, I invite you to read Psalms 63 and 108. Ask yourself, “Do I ever find it difficult to give praise to God?” Perhaps the next time you are in the wilderness—physically or otherwise—you might remind yourself that God is worthy of praise, no matter the circumstances.

—Jason Hitchcock

Theology Editor and Ministry Volunteer

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LESSON 5 **FOR LEADERS**
I CAN PRAISE GOD WITH A JOYFUL HEART

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Israel's King David is attributed with writing Psalms 63 and 108, which are among the 73 psalms he is believed to have penned. Throughout the psalms, David praised God in a variety of ways—calling to God for help, bringing Him his questions, and offering Him praise.

WHAT?

David had many enemies who wanted to kill him, and he spent a good part of his life fleeing from those who wanted to take his life. Both Psalm 63 and Psalm 108 speak of how God helped and delivered David from his enemies.

WHERE?

David wrote Psalm 63 when he was in the Desert of Judah. David spent a lot of time in the Judean wilderness—as a boy when he was fleeing from Saul, the king who wanted him dead—and when he was fleeing from his own son, Absalom.

WHEN?

Because David is mentioned as the king in Psalm 63 (v. 11), it is thought that David wrote this psalm when running from his son. Absalom was attempting to take the throne from David, and David and those loyal to him had to flee (2 Samuel 15–19).

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

David wrote Psalm 63 in the wilderness of Judah, likely while fleeing from his son Absalom. In that desolate place, he sought God's strength and praised Him. Centuries later, the Spirit led Jesus into the *erēmos*—a lonely wilderness—where, like David, He looked to the Father for sustaining strength.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 5 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is Worthy of Praise

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 63; 108

WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 139:14

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: various musical instruments or noisemakers (such as dry beans in a plastic egg or bells), connecting blocks, coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [I Can Praise God with a Joyful Heart Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Musical Instruments

Set up: Set out various musical instruments or other items that make noise (such as something kids can bang on like a drum, dry beans in a plastic egg or container that they can shake, etc.).

Play: Invite kids to use the instruments independently and together as a group. Encourage them to play a beautiful song.

Play Station: Building Praise Towers

Set up: Set out connecting blocks.

Play: Let the kids play with the connecting blocks and encourage them to build towers of praise. As they work, tell them Psalm 108:4–5 says that God's love is so great, it's higher than the heavens—it reaches to the skies! We can praise God up to the sky. Encourage the kids to build tall towers that reach up high as they talk about why we can praise God.

Play Station: I Can Praise God with a Joyful Heart Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print a copy of the coloring sheet for each kid and set out coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw something that makes them feel joyful.

Curiosity Activity: All Day, Every Day

SUPPLIES: items used daily (such as a toothbrush, hairbrush, plate, eating utensils, cell phone, shower loofah, TV remote, school box or backpack, pillow)

Leader Tip: Instead of bringing in supplies, you can also show pictures of these items or act out the activities and make a game of getting kids to guess what you're doing.

Greet kids warmly and invite them to gather in front of you. When kids are seated and ready, hold up the first item that corresponds with something you do in the morning (such as a hairbrush or toothbrush).

Do any of you use one of these? What do we do with it? Allow kids to respond.

This reminds me that when I'm getting ready in the morning, I can praise God! We don't have to wait until Sunday to worship God. We don't have to wait until we're at church. We don't have to wait for a praise and worship song to come on. We can praise and worship God all day, every day—even when we're using these things! When I hold up each thing, you can shout out what we use it for, and then we're all going to say, "Praise God!" together because we can give God praise when we use all of these!

Hold up each item (or act out the activity and have kids guess) and then shout, "Praise God!" with the kids. Have kids take turns acting out other activities that they do each day, saying, "Praise God!" together at the end of the activity. **We can praise God while we do things in our daily lives—like feeding the dog, going to school, riding in the car, taking a bath, eating dinner, or playing with friends. We can tell God how awesome we think He is all the time! God is worthy of praise!**

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, toy microphones and musical instruments (optional)

WORD OF WONDER

How God made me is amazing and wonderful.

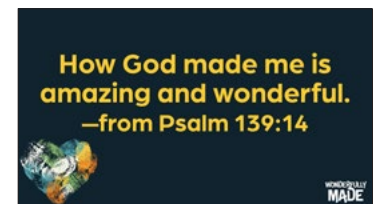
—from Psalm 139:14

Open your Bible to Psalm 139:14. Show kids where it is in your Bible. If they have Bibles with them, leaders can help kids look it up in their Bibles.

Our Word of Wonder for the Wonderfully Made series is from Psalm 139:14. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together. Practice the verse with the kids.

Our Word of Wonder was also written by David. David wrote this as a poem to God, much like our part of God's big story for today. David may have sung these words as a song to God!

Today we're learning about praising God for things He has done and created, and one of those things is us! God made us! David knew that too, so he wrote this song poem to praise God. Listen to me read the verse, and then we'll say it together a few times. Then we're going to make songs and sing them to each other, just like David might have done when he wrote this.



Say the verse slowly with the kids several times. Let them listen to an example of you (or another leader who might be more musically inclined!) singing the verse to them in any tune you choose. It doesn't have to be perfect to be beautiful!

Put kids in groups of four or five and encourage them to work with their group to create a song with the Word of Wonder. Let them take turns singing it together for the leaders or other groups. Be intentional to clap, cheer, and encourage each group's effort! For those who aren't comfortable singing, they can dance, clap, or use musical instruments if you have them.

David wrote and sang lots of praise songs to God that we can read today. We can sing David's songs to God, and we can make up our own any time we want. There is so much to be thankful for when we think about God. He's worthy of our joyful songs all the time!

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **HOW GOD**—Point up with both hands.
- **MADE ME**—Point to yourself with two thumbs.
- **IS AMAZING**—Put one arm out to your side for each word.
- **AND WONDERFUL**—Burst both arms up and out to the sides at the same time.
- **FROM PSALM 139:14**—Hold your hands open in front of you, as if holding a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **When you look around, what are some amazing things God made that make you want to praise Him?**
- **What are two things about yourself that you're thankful to God for?**

Craft: Paper Plate Tambourines

SUPPLIES: disposable plates (2 per kid, plus extras), hole punch (prep only), yarn or string (or ribbon), scissors (prep only), bells (about 5 per kid), coloring utensils, stickers (optional)

Leader Tip: Make a tambourine ahead of time to show the kids. To make it easier, each kid can make the craft with only one plate. Use the hole punch to make holes along the edge of the plate. Then tie string to bells and tie the strings to the holes in the plate.

Ahead of time, use a hole punch to make holes along the edges of plates, a few inches apart. Put two plates together, facing each other, and punch the holes with the plates together so the holes align. Then cut about five pieces of yarn or string for each kid (just long enough to tie the bells onto the plates). Set the bells and string on the extra plates (without holes) out for the kids.

Give each kid two plates and invite them to decorate the bottom of each plate using colored pencils or stickers.

We're learning in God's big story about how David praised God. David was so thankful to God that he wanted to sing to God! God is amazing and is worthy of praise. That means He deserves praise and celebration.



We're going to make our own tambourines that we can use to make a beautiful sound to worship and praise God, just like David did! When kids are done decorating the plates, help them line up the holes and put the string through the holes. Put a bell on the string before tying it. Each plate should have about five bells.

Show kids how to shake their tambourines against the palm of their hands to make the bells ring. **Those tambourines all look great! They look as good as they sound. Let's use them now to praise God! You can sing or cheer and shake your tambourine. God loves to hear any noise that we make to praise Him and tell Him He's awesome! You can take this home with you and use it to praise God any time you want. When you do, remember how we can praise God all the time because He's worthy of our praise.**

Circle Time: Name That Sound

SUPPLIES: various items that make noise (such as a party blower, bubble wrap, unsharpened pencils you can tap on a hard surface, a ball to bounce, a tray of paper clips, a stapler, keys on a key ring, a bag of chips to crinkle, etc.)

Before kids arrive, gather various items that make noise (but don't let the kids see the items ahead of time).

We're talking about making a joyful noise to God as we praise Him. We learned today about how David praised God. God's love and goodness are bigger than anything we can think of. God is great, and He's worthy of our praise. God deserves all our thanks for everything He has done. We can say, "Thank You, God!"

Let's listen for different noises and see how well you can decide what's making each noise! Do you think God loves to hear all the sounds of praise we make for Him? Allow the kids to respond.

Make It Inclusive: For kids who are hearing-impaired, act out the use of the item (like charades) so they can guess what it is.

Invite the kids to sit in a circle and set the supplies in the middle of the circle. Choose one kid to close her eyes. Then choose another kid to pick up an item from the middle, make noise with it, and put it back down. Allow the first kid to open her eyes, look at the items, and then guess which one she thinks it was. Repeat this with all the items so all kids get a turn. You can use the same items multiple times, if needed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Was it hard to figure out which item was making noise without seeing it?**
- **What's one of your favorite sounds, and why?**
- **What do you think is God's favorite sound?**
- **What were some different ways David praised God?** (David sang to God, made music with instruments, thanked God, remembered all that God had done for him, etc.)
- **Why did David want to praise God?** (God helped him and gave him strength; God had done amazing things; God helped him defeat Goliath and protected him when he was in danger, etc.)

- **When can we give our praise to God?** (Always! Any time of day, no matter what we're doing or where we are!)
- **Can we use other things besides our voices to praise God, and if so, what?** (instruments, dancing, things we do, how we treat other people, doing our best in daily tasks like school, chores, sports, music, etc.)
- **Should you praise God only when you're happy and things are going your way, or can you also praise God when you're having a bad day? Why?** (God deserves our praise always! Even when we're not happy or we're having a hard time, we can remember all the good things God has done. We can remember that God is good, and God is with us to help us, even when things are really hard. When things are good, we can thank Him for all the good things He has given us!)

God loves to hear our praise and hear how awesome He is, even if our singing isn't perfect or if our clapping is offbeat. He just cares that our hearts are thankful! We can also praise Him even if we're having a bad day or a hard time. We can ask for His help, and we can remember all that He has done for us, how good He is, and how He's always with us. We can praise God out loud with our words, in song, with clapping, or even silently in our heads. We can sing a song or say three words like this: God, You're awesome! It doesn't have to be long or fancy. What matters is that we're praising Him in our hearts.

Invite kids to practice sharing short prayers praising God.

Declaring God's Wonder

Show the Early Childhood Declaration Slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

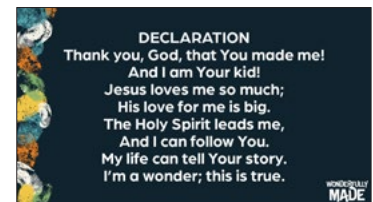
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for each kid here today. Help us focus on You so we can learn more about You and learn how and why we can worship You all day long! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn about how amazing God is and that we can worship and praise Him all day long. Let's worship God now by singing and dancing!

Play songs All of Me, Be a Light and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's start by hearing part of God's big story from the Bible. It's in the book of Psalms, which is right in the middle of the Bible, in the Old Testament.

Read the God's Big Story Script on the following page.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

A long time ago, God's people, the Israelites, had a king named David. Invite kids to pretend to put on a crown. **David wrote song poems called psalms. They're in the Bible. Lots of the psalms thank God for how good He is and for His love.**

David saw God do amazing things. God helped David be brave and defeat a giant warrior named Goliath. Allow kids to stand up and act out winning a battle. Then have them sit down again. **God kept David safe from wild animals and bad people. When David made mistakes and said he was sorry, God forgave him.** Have kids fold their hands and bow their heads like they're praying to God.

David was so thankful that he wanted to sing to God! God is amazing. God is worthy of praise. That means He deserves praise and celebration. Have kids shout, "Woo-hoo!"

One time, when David was in a hot, dusty desert, he wrote Psalm 63. David was so thirsty in the desert. Have kids fan themselves with their hands like they're hot. **David said that wanting to be close to God is like being really thirsty and wanting a drink of water.** Have kids pretend to drink from an imaginary cup in their hands and make a sipping sound. **God is the only one who can give us what we need.**

David wrote about God's amazing love and power. He said that he would praise God his whole life. David felt God's love. Have kids wrap their arms around themselves in a hug. **He wrote, "I will praise you as long as I live. I will call on your name when I lift up my hands in prayer"** (Psalm 63:4). **Praising God made David feel like he had just eaten his favorite food or a yummy meal!** Have kids rub their bellies and say, "Mmmm."

At night, David remembered how God helped him and cared for him. David held on to God, and God protected David with His power.

David wrote another song poem—Psalm 108. David was excited to sing to God and praise Him. David even woke up early in the morning to do it! Have kids fold their hands under their heads like they're sleeping, then wake up and say, "Praise God!" **He played instruments called the harp and the lyre to praise God. David wanted to worship God all day long!**

God is worthy of praise everywhere in the world. All people need to hear about our amazing God! David wrote, "LORD, I will praise you among the nations. I will sing about you among the people of the earth" (Psalm 108:3). Let kids share their best singing voices.

David said God's love is bigger than the sky. His goodness reaches everywhere in the world. Let kids reach with their arms toward the sky as high as they can. **God's love and goodness are bigger than anything we can think of. God is great, and He's worthy of our praise. God deserves all our thanks for everything He has done. We should say, "Thank You, God!"** Let kids join you to shout, "Thank You, God!"

David praised God with joy. God was faithful to David. God loved David and cared for him, and God kept His promises. God does the same for us. God loves us so much, just like He loved David. Let kids wrap their arms around themselves in a hug. **God made the whole world. God is over everything. His love is big** (let kids reach for the sky) **and He is always with us** (have kids point to

themselves). We should sing and say, “Thank You, God!” because He deserves all our thanks and praise. God is worthy of praise! Let kids join you in shouting, “God is worthy of praise!”

VIEW THE GOD’S BIG STORY VIDEO



Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God’s big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD IS WORTHY OF PRAISE. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story?** Allow kids to answer freely.

When David was in the desert, it was hot, dry, and lonely. But David looked to God, and God gave him strength and helped him. A long, long time later, Jesus also spent time in the desert. Jesus had a really hard time in the desert too. But Jesus also trusted God, and God helped Him and gave Him strength. Just like David and Jesus, when we have things that are hard, we can trust God to help us and give us strength too.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, being sure to praise and thank God for who He is and what He has created.

As we pray and talk to God, when I say, “praise,” clap your hands to show that you’re cheering to praise God.

God, we thank You and praise (clap) You for being so awesome! We praise (clap) You because You are faithful and good! Help us always remember to praise (clap) You throughout the day! We love You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: God did good work when He created each of you. He is good and worthy of our praise all the time. May you go with a heart of celebration and excitement, praising God often!

Responding in Worship: When Should We Praise God?

SUPPLIES: coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: When Should We Praise God? Sheet (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, print a copy of the When Should We Praise God? Sheet for each kid. Set out coloring utensils. Pass out the sheets to the kids. **This sheet shows lots of activities we might do each day. Color the pictures that show times we can praise God.**

Give kids time to color the scenarios and be available to answer any questions they might have about what's happening in each scene. **You all did a great job coloring! Now I have a question for you. What scenes showed things we can do while we praise God?** Allow the kids to respond. Then remind them that we can always praise God! **We can praise God when doing any of those things! Praising God doesn't just mean singing or making music. It's anything we do or say to show God how much we love Him and how amazing He is.**

We can praise God at all times! We don't have to wait until we're in church. We don't have to wait for a specific time before bed. It's good to worship, pray, and praise God at those times, but we can also praise God while we're riding in the car, on the playground at school, or eating breakfast! Our praise doesn't have to be long and fancy. It can be short and sweet. You can say a simple,

"God, thank You for the sunrise this morning!" or, "God, You're awesome!" We can praise God all the time because He's worthy of all our praise, all the time!



Game: Freeze Dance

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: upbeat music from the [Wonderfully Made Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)
Gather the kids in the middle of a big, open space. Have someone ready to cue the music and press pause.

David praised God with joy. God was faithful to David. God loved David and cared for him, and God kept His promises. God does the same for us. God loves us so much, like He loved David. We're going to play Freeze Dance! When you hear music playing, you can run around and dance, jump, and move. But as soon as the music stops, you must freeze. If I see anyone move, that person must do five jumping jacks to get back in the game! Ready, cue the music, and go!

Play music from the [Wonderfully Made Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) for the kids to sing and dance along to. Pause the music periodically for a few seconds at a time, and if any kids move after the music pauses, have them jump.

Make It Inclusive: Instead of having kids do jumping jacks to get back in the game, you could have them sit on the sidelines and help look for people who move when the music stops.

Let the music play for varying lengths of time. Be sure to model crazy dance moves for the kids while music is playing and while moving around the room! You can play as long as you like, or for as long as the kids are interested.

Those were some amazing dance moves! David danced for joy while he worshiped God. We can dance in praise of God too!

