

LESSON 4

GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God's Love Is Faithful**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 103; 136**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Psalms 103 and 136 express deep gratitude to God for His faithful love—His compassion, grace, patience, and presence. These songs help God's people remember who God is and that His faithful love goes on forever!**WORD OF WONDER:** You created the deepest parts of my being. You put me together inside my mother's body. How you made me is amazing and wonderful. I praise you for that. What you have done is wonderful. I know that very well. —Psalm 139:13–14

- Welcome Question: Who or what can you always depend on?
- Curiosity Questions
- Word of Wonder Activity
- God's Big Story
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- LARGE GROUP
- Elementary Responding in Worship: Faithful Love Comics
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Faithfulness Wall



INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God's Love Is Faithful

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103; 136

WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 139:13–14

With the deployment of the James Webb Space Telescope, humans have seen farther into the past than ever before. In unmatched clarity, we observe glimpses of galaxies and star clusters more ancient and numerous than our minds had grasped. The early images are simply dripping with distant galaxies, each one containing untold billions of stars, and many of these points of light show a corner of the universe so distant that it has taken longer than we can fathom for the photons to even reach our instruments.

This spectrum of radiation traversed incomprehensible reaches to meet ... us.

If alive today, the writer of Psalm 136 would observe this and say that the Lord prepared a universe of unfathomed enormity, that His faithful love continues forever.

The God who coils galaxies is not too important to love and care for people. As the psalmist also claims, God redeemed Israel from slavery and gave Israel a new story. I invite you to read Psalm 136, and perhaps you can think of how God did this for you. How has God's mighty hand and powerful arm reshaped your story? Consider finding an image of God's creation, one which leaves you awestruck, as you pray.

In my prayers, I ask, "Could the God who created a universe remain patient with me?" The created universe proclaims, "God has shown limitless patience, limitless vision, and limitless attention." "And," I ask, "will God be faithful to me in the challenges ahead?" The psalmist answers, "Always. Always. Always."

—Jason Hitchcock

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Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Psalm 103 is attributed to David, but Psalm 136 doesn't list an author. Yet the main "who" of both of these psalms is God—He is praised and extolled for His great works throughout these praise songs.

WHAT?

Psalms 103 and 136 spend the majority of the song poems praising God for His goodness, faithfulness, and compassion. Psalm 136 is likely a praise song with a worship leader reciting truths about God and the congregation responding with "His love endures forever!"

WHERE?

Both Psalms 103 and 136 talk about the exodus from Egypt, where God's people were enslaved by the pharaoh. God stepped in and rescued His people from their slavery, sending signs and wonders and parting the Red Sea!

WHEN?

Psalm 136 is the final psalm in the "song of ascents" or the "Great Hallel." People likely sang them as they walked up to Jerusalem during the great yearly feasts of Tabernacles, Passover, and Pentecost. These psalms would remind them of God's faithfulness.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

God is always faithful. He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve—He forgives us and keeps His promises. Long after the psalms were written, God showed His faithful love by sending Jesus. As Paul writes, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

LESSON 4 **ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN**

Small Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God's Love Is Faithful

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103; 136

WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 139:13–14

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

Games & Activities Guide

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

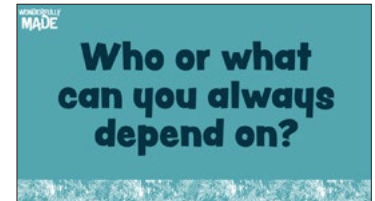
As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "**I'm curious..**" before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **How do you know you can depend on a person or thing? What do they do that shows you they are faithful?**
- **Would you describe God as faithful? Why or why not?**



Leader Tip: If kids will be engaging in the “Faithfulness Wall” preteen worship response activity during Identity, be sure to keep the kids’ drawings up on the wall throughout the lesson.

Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Word of Wonder Activity

WORD OF WONDER

You created the deepest parts of my being. You put me together inside my mother's body.
How you made me is amazing and wonderful. I praise you for that. What you have done
is wonderful. I know that very well.

— Psalm 139:13–14 (NIRV)

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

In the Word of Wonder for the Wonderfully Made series, David—who was a shepherd, king, and poet—talks about the amazing way God created each one of us! Let's say the verse together.

Open your Bible to Psalm 139:13–14. If possible, display the Word of Wonder Slide or watch the [Elementary Word of Wonder Video](#). Read Psalm 139:13–14 together.

Invite your small group to create movements, or choreography, for the various phrases in today's Word of Wonder. Movement and emotion help cement memory—this activity helps kids to do both!

Start by reading Psalm 139:13–14 aloud three times. Then work on the movements and rehearse them at least eight times. Kids will do movements as you read the passage, so they don't need to learn the words, just the movements. (Don't worry: The movements will help kids learn the Word of Wonder and make it stick!)

After each small group has the movements nailed, invite them to team up with another small group and compare how each group put the words to memorable movements and how their faces show emotion. If all the kids in your ministry are together in one group, invite them to share their movements with the leaders.

Leader Tip: If your kids have already learned Word of Wonder motions, that's OK. They'll engage with the words in a fresh way as they create their own movements today.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

The writers of the book of Psalms in our Bible wrote song poems praising God's faithful love. Consider writing today's Bible passage references on the whiteboard: Psalm 103:8 and Psalm 136:1–9, 11–14, 26. Then encourage kids to find the passages by checking the Table of Contents or flipping directly to Psalm 103:8.

Explain that one meaning of the word Amen is "That's true." Tell kids you'll pause after each verse you read aloud, so together they can say, "Amen," because everything you'll read is true! Read Psalm 103:8 and Psalm 136:1–9, 11–14, 26 while kids follow along.

Elementary Questions

- Psalm 103:8 says God is kind. Then in Psalm 136, the writer says God is good. What do you think it means to be kind? What does it mean to be good?
- How is God good or kind to you?
- The writer of Psalm 136 tells about the great things God has done. What are some of the great things he tells about? (Possible answers: God created everything—the heavens, earth, sun, moon, stars; God rescued His people; God sent plagues to Egypt; God parted the Red Sea.)
- What's something God has done that you think is great?
- God loves you. How do you feel about God?
- David wrote Psalm 103 to share that God is loving and wonderful. How do you share about God's love?

God's love for you will never end—it's faithful no matter what! Let's talk with God in prayer now and thank Him for His love.

Leader Tip: The questions are meant to be a starting place. Pick questions from the elementary or preteen sets that you think will help spark meaningful conversations with your kids.

Preteen Questions

- The author who wrote Psalm 136 said God is good. How do you see God's goodness?
- The writers of Psalm 103 and 136 described many ways that God is strong, powerful, and loving. Which verse from those we read today stands out to you? (Look back at Psalm 103:8 and Psalm 136:1–9, 11–14, 26 with the kids.)
- Do you think of God as kind? Why or why not?
- Sometimes God shows us His love through other people. Who has shown God's love to you? How did they do it?
- David wrote Psalm 103 to share that God is loving and wonderful. What does it look like to reflect God's love at school? At home?

A sad truth is that some of what people consider “love” is temporary. Some people claim to love us only if we're doing the right things, saying the right things, or helping them somehow. But God's love is faithful—it's part of who God is, and it doesn't depend on what we say or do. Let's talk with God in prayer and thank Him for His unconditional love.

Make It Inclusive: Some kids may have been hurt by a parent or caregiver whose role is to love them unconditionally. Trusting a kind God whose love is faithful is especially difficult for kids who have experienced this type of deep hurt. You get to model the faithful love of the Father simply by remaining present and patient with them.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to go to the Faithfulness Wall (from Curiosity) and to place a hand on their drawing. Ask kids to thank God for what they drew, but to also praise God for being greater and far more faithful. Then invite kids to form pairs and pray for one another's coming week.

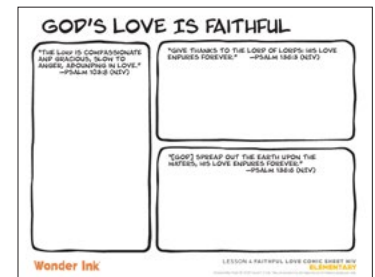
Elementary Responding in Worship: Faithful Love Comics

SUPPLIES: coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Faithful Love Comic Sheet NIV \(1 per kid\)](#), [Wonderfully Made Elementary Spotify playlist](#) (optional)

Ahead of time, print a copy of the Faithful Love Comic Sheet NIV or NIV for each kid. Use two-sided printing and flip on the short edge.

Today we learned from the book of Psalms that God's love is both faithful and forever. That means He loves you today, not just in the past or some distant future. And that He will continue to love you forever, no matter what! Let's spend some time responding to Bible verses that describe God's faithful love by creating comic strips.



Give each kid a copy of the Faithful Love Comic Sheet and set out coloring utensils. Each box on the sheet includes a caption that comes from Psalm 103 or 136. Read the caption next to the first box and invite kids to draw a picture of what they imagine as they listen to the verse. After about one minute, read the next caption as kids draw a picture in the second box. Continue through all seven captions, giving kids time to draw each one.

For your reference, the seven captions are these verses from Psalms: 103:8; 136:3; 136:6; 136:8–9; 136:11, 13; 136:26.

As you read the verses and kids draw, consider playing music from the [Wonderfully Made Elementary Spotify playlist](#) softly in the background. When kids are finished, invite them to share their drawings with one another.

Make It Inclusive: Provide a variety of coloring utensils to benefit kids of varying fine motor skill abilities. For example, markers require less muscle strength/pressure than crayons or colored pencils. If possible, also have simple adaptive tools on hand, such as pencil grips.

Preteen Responding in Worship: Faithfulness Wall

SUPPLIES: Bibles (3 or more), paper (1 sheet per kid), pencils (1 per kid), Faithfulness Wall from Curiosity, painter's or masking tape, highlighter (optional), whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Near the end of this worship response time, two confident readers will lead the group in a responsive Bible reading. They will read the first half of each verse of Psalm 136:1–9, 11–14, 26, and the rest of the group will repeat the refrain, “His faithful love continues forever” at the end of each verse. Consider highlighting these verses in Bibles for your two readers or printing them on paper and highlighting them ahead of time.

Gather the kids together near the Faithfulness Wall (from Curiosity). Invite two confident readers to be your readers later in this experience. Distribute paper and pencils. **God's love is both faithful and forever. That means He loves you today, not just in the past or some distant future. And that He will continue to love you forever, no matter what! How do you see God's love expressed to you? Let's take time to sketch our answers to that question. When your sketches are finished, you'll tape them onto the Faithfulness Wall directly over the sketch you made earlier. This will symbolize that nothing and no one, no matter how wonderful and dependable they are, is more faithful than God and His love for us.**

Give kids time to draw their answers to the question, “How do you see God's love expressed to you?” Consider writing the question on the whiteboard for kids to reference. If needed, get kids started with a few ideas. For example, they might see God's love expressed to them through creation—a beautiful sunset or a giant tree, through the love and care of a friend or family member, or through God's words in the Bible.

As kids finish their sketches, they can come to the Faithfulness Wall and tape it over their previous sketches, which showed someone or something they can always depend on. Keep control of the tape—only a little is needed per sketch. Having strips already torn and at the ready will speed things up.

Play songs from the [Wonderfully Made Elementary Spotify playlist](#) softly in the background as kids sketch.

When kids have completed their art and taped it to the Faithfulness Wall, gather them in front of the wall and ask your two readers to read aloud the first half of each verse in Psalm 136:1–9, 11–14, 26. Ask all kids to repeat together the responsive refrain, “His faithful love continues forever,” after each verse. Lead the refrains yourself. When done, read aloud Psalm 103:8 and then lead kids in prayer:

God, Your love is faithful. You're faithful—in all ways, at all times, to all people. Thank You for letting us count on You without fail. We want to love You like You love us, with our whole hearts. Hear us as we silently tell You what we love about You.

Pause 15 seconds for kids to pray silently, telling God what they love about Him.

Sharpen our awareness of You in our lives, God. Help us see You as You work in and through us.

Be with us as we look to be with You someday in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Make It Inclusive: Provide a variety of writing utensils to benefit kids of varying fine motor skill abilities. For example, markers require less muscle strength/pressure than pencils. If possible, also have simple adaptive tools on hand, such as pencil grips.