

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:** 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: When have you been so excited about something that you couldn't stop thinking about it?
- Curiosity Questions
- Elementary Multisensory Activity: Desert Delights
- Preteen Multisensory Activity: Oasis
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation and Worship
- God's Big Story: Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Elementary Responding in Worship: Praise Stations
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Psalms to God
- Blessing Your Kids



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: Psalm 139:13–14

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

Contributor to Wonder Ink

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.

LESSON 5 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Small Group

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: 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 ...

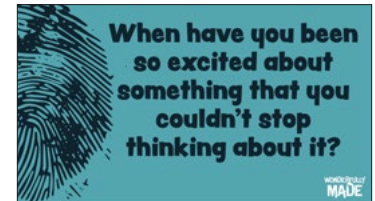
Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

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:

- **What would it be like to live in a desert? What would you find to eat? What would you find to drink?**
- **Can you think of a time when you were really, really thirsty and needed something to drink? Tell us about it!**



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), cardstock (1 per 2 kids), scissors (prep only), colored pencils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Amazing and Wonderful Sheet \(1 per 2 kids\)](#)

Ahead of time, print one copy of the Amazing and Wonderful Sheet onto cardstock for every two kids. Cut the two halves on each sheet apart.

Our Word of Wonder for the Wonderfully Made series is Psalm 139:13–14.

Let's say the verses together. Open your Bible to Psalm 139:13–14. Read Psalm 139:13–14 a few times together.

Pass out an Amazing and Wonderful Sheet to each kid. Then have kids trace their left hand or foot around “How You made me” and their right hand or foot around “is amazing and wonderful.” When they're finished, have them write their names at the bottom of the page next to “Love,” like they're finishing a letter to God. Challenge kids who finish early to trace a more difficult body part, like their nose, onto the back of their sheet. It's OK if this activity becomes a little silly—God created us to be silly sometimes!



Leader Tip: Invite preteens to trace a hand or foot onto cardstock and copy the verse inside it.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

The book of Psalms is a collection of song poems, many of them written by King David. Psalm 63 is a song that King David wrote while he was in the wilderness, far from home and going through a really difficult time. Even though David was surrounded by uncertainty, he chose to focus on God instead of his problems. He describes wanting God the way someone in a dry desert wants water. David remembers God's faithfulness, praises Him, and finds peace because he knows God is always with him. As you read, pay attention to the different ways David describes his relationship with God and think about what it means to seek God with your whole heart.

Encourage kids to help each other find the correct passages in their Bibles. [Psalm 63:1–8 together.](#)

Elementary Questions

- **Why does David want to give God praise?** (Possible answers: God made David wonderfully, God has helped and rescued David, God is faithful and loving.)
- **Name some of the different ways that David liked to praise God.** (Possible answers: singing and music, dancing, writing psalms (song-poems) of prayer and praise, telling others about how amazing God is, remembering the things God has done for him, etc.)
- **How do you like to praise God?**
- **How do you praise God when you're happy? Sad? Scared?** (Possible answers: We can thank Him for things, remember what He has done in the past for us and others, pray and tell Him how we feel and ask for His help, singing and music, poetry, remember that He is good even if we're not feeling good.)
- **David praised God with a joyful heart. Do you think praising God with a joyful heart takes practice, or can you easily do it? Explain your answer.**

David believed that God is worthy of praise, and we do too. Just like David, we can praise God with a joyful heart. Let's take time to talk to God in prayer, thanking and praising Him for His faithfulness.

Preteen Questions

- **List the ways that David enjoyed praising God. What other ways are there to praise God?** (Possible answers: singing and music, dancing, writing psalms (song-poems) of prayer and praise, telling others about how amazing God is, remembering the things God has done for him, etc. We can also be honest with Him about how we're feeling, praise Him through art, worship Him through our actions in how we treat people and live each day, etc.)
- **Why do you think David wanted God more than a drink of water when he was in the desert?** (David knew that God was the One who gave him life and helped him and that only God can satisfy.)
- **When is it easiest for you to praise God? When is it the most difficult to praise God?**
- **How do you praise God when you're happy? Sad? Scared?** (Possible answers: We can thank Him for things, remember what He has done in the past for us and others, pray and tell Him how we feel and ask for His help, singing and music, poetry, remember that He is good even if we're not feeling good.)
- **Do you think David ever felt silly praising God? Do you ever feel silly when you're praising God? Why or why not?**
- **David praised God with a joyful heart. Do you think praising God with a joyful heart takes practice, or does it come easily? Why?**

God's love for us is higher than the heavens and more than we can imagine! God is always with us, especially in difficult time , and He is always worthy of our praise. Let's take time today to praise God in prayer.

Small Group Prayer Time

Remind your group that the Psalms were written as a way of praying to and praising God. Allow time for each kid to pick one word or phrase that describes who God is or something He has done for them. When your group is ready, invite each kid to take a turn saying the phrase listed below, ending with his own words. It's OK if some kids share the same words about God. You can close out your time by praying for each kid in your group and praising God for each one.

God, You are worthy of praise, because You _____.

Elementary Responding in Worship: Praise Stations

SUPPLIES: musical instruments, crepe paper (1 strip per kid), paper (1 sheet per kid), coloring utensils, pens, large plastic hoops (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Wonderfully Made Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, create four distinct stations: Instruments, Dancing, Writing and Drawing, and Singing.

Instruments Station: Place a variety of instruments for kids to choose from for praising God.

Dancing Station: Cut strips of crepe paper, 1 per kid, for kids to use during this station. Consider providing large plastic hoops for them to dance with. Make sure to provide plenty of space for this station.

Writing and Drawing Station: Set out paper and coloring utensils.

Singing Station: No supplies needed.

Today in God's big story, David praised God with a joyful heart because God is worthy of our praise. David knew that it was equally possible to praise God in a dry, scorched desert, in the tabernacle or place of worship, and on his bed at night. Why do you think this is true? Allow kids time to reflect and respond before continuing.

David joyfully praised God by raising his hands in the air, dancing, singing, playing instruments, and writing poetry. Today we'll praise God with joy like David did.

Using songs from the [Wonderfully Made Elementary Spotify playlist](#), kids will have the opportunity to praise God as music plays. Allow kids to choose their own method of praising God. Prior to turning on the music, explain to kids how they will show God praise at each station. After a song ends, encourage kids to move to a new station if they would like. After several minutes, invite kids back together and close in prayer.

Instruments Station: Remind kids that David liked to praise God using the harp and lyre (an ancient stringed instrument) but that God can be praised using any instrument. Invite kids to use the instruments to praise God.

Dancing Station: Invite kids to use the crepe paper streamers to wave above their heads as they dance.

Writing and Drawing Station: Invite kids to use paper and coloring utensils to create their own poetry, songs, or drawings to God. Explain that many of the words we sing in our worship songs today were written by David and can be found in the book of Psalms.

Singing Station: Invite kids to use their voices to praise God. Remind kids of David's words: "I will sing praise to you with my mouth" (Psalm 63:5).

Leader Tip: Kids may feel awkward and not initially comfortable participating. Encourage kids that one form of praise is listening to worship music and raising hands in the air or praying silently. More than anything else, praising God reflects what is in our hearts.

Preteen Responding in Worship: Psalms to God

SUPPLIES: writing utensils, coloring utensils, cushions or carpet squares (optional)

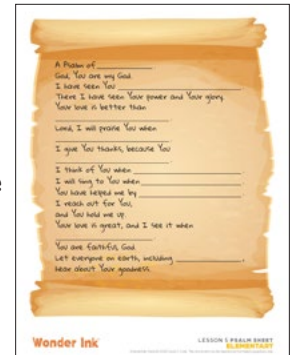
Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Psalm Sheet (1 per kid), songs from the [Wonderfully Made Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print a copy of the Psalm Sheet for each kid.

Display the Psalms to God Slide. **Today in God's big story, David praised God with a joyful heart because God is worthy of our praise. David knew that it was equally possible to praise God in a dry, scorched desert, in the tabernacle or place of worship, and on his bed at night. Why do you think this is true?**

Allow kids time to reflect and answer before continuing.

Many of the Psalms in the Bible were written by David. David wrote these psalms as song poems that were prayers to God. When we read them, we see David praying about what's happening in his life, asking for God's help, thanking and praising God, and remembering who God is and what He has done. Today we're going to write our own psalms to God.



Give each kid a Psalm Sheet and set out the writing and coloring utensils. Let kids spread out around the room to complete their own personal psalms to God. If desired, you can set out cushions or carpet squares to give comfortable spaces to sit on the floor. In the background, quietly play a selection of the songs suggested above from the [Wonderfully Made Elementary Spotify playlist](#). When kids are finished, fade the music and gather everyone together. Allow kids to share their psalms with the group if they would like.

Make It Inclusive: Some older kids may still struggle with reading and writing, and this can be a point of frustration or discouragement for them. If you have kids in your group who are not confident writers, let kids work in pairs or groups of three for this activity. Be sure there is a confident writer in each group who can serve as the group “scribe.”