

God's Family Sings Psalms

Objective: The students will be able to state that David loved God and showed his love to God by writing songs called Psalms.

For the Catechist

Keeping with the theme this year, "God Is Love," this lesson shows the students that God's love is returned by his people, with David serving as a model. The students are invited to return God's love with words of praise. The Book of Psalms is the focal point of the lesson. Many but not all of the Psalms are attributed to David, the King of Israel. The book is dated from the year 1000 BC.

David. David's rise from shepherd to king with all the colorful and memorable stories of his deeds and escapes from death are recorded in the two Old Testament books of Samuel. David is the son of Jesse, a descendant of Judah of the twelve tribes of Israel. From his lineage Jesus will come forth.

Psalms. One of the most beloved books of the Bible, Psalms, is used as a personal prayer book for many and as the song book and prayer book of the Church. The Book of Psalms is poetry, and is widely used in the liturgy.

Liturgical Use. The Church uses all 150 Psalms in the services of the hours during the liturgical year. The beautiful poetic words, rhythm and images have made the phrases of Psalms memorable and often-quoted. The Divine Liturgy uses phrases from the Psalms in many of the hymns, and notably in the antiphons (Psalms 91(92), 92 (93), and 94(95). [Note: Beginning with Psalm 9, each psalm has two numbers: one indicating the Hebrew version and the other pointing to the Greek version.]

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted.)

Liturgical Worship

"As we begin to read the Old Testament, we will notice the many different literary genres or methods used by the biblical authors: historical narration, law, oracle,

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: Beginning prayers from "Holy God" to "All Holy Trinity," and/or Paschal Troparion.

Introduction: Discussion on praising God; and the story of David.

Read Text Aloud: Ask questions noted on following pages as text is being read

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

•*Basic 1:* We Sing David's Songs

•*Basic 2:* David Wrote Psalms to God

•*Group:* "Our Psalms" Poster

•*Craft:* "Psalm" Wall Hanging

Closing: Beginning Prayers from "Holy God" to "All-Holy Trinity" and/or "Paschal Troparion"

Come Bless the Lord Icon:

Packet I: Packet II:

Teaching Pics

poetry, didactic story, apocalyptic literature and others. Each literary form has a special significance and was chosen by the writer to express certain aspects of the divine reality that had been revealed to him" (*LLI* 19).

"Authentic Christian life integrates correct teaching, proper liturgical expression, profound emotion and mutual love. Faith in God cannot be merely detached intellectual assent, but is meant to be an affair of the heart. Our approach to liturgical worship, then, should be one of piety: a heartfelt giving of ourselves to God through the experience of the divine services" (*LLII* 96).

Liturgical Expression

"A basic dimension of liturgical piety involves an ability to express, through communal words and gestures, our relationship to God, which is both deeply personal yet rooted in the Tradition. To be fully human requires communication. We realize that something would be very wrong with a person who never spoke to another either by words or signs. As rational beings we use words to convey meaning, ideas, feelings and emotions, our desires and loves, and our perception of the beauty we see in the world around us. Often we find that our own words are not sufficient to express those aspects of our deepest selves which we seek to share with one another. This is when humans invariably turn to ritual" (*LLII* 96).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

We have been saying the first part of the Beginning or Trisagion Prayers for this unit. Let's come to the icon corner and begin with the sign of the cross.

[If Pascha has occurred, modify the following appropriately. As the children enter the room, greet them with "Christ is risen!" Help them to respond, "Indeed He is risen!"] *Last Sunday we celebrated the most important observance of the year—who knows its name? (Pascha) Our prayer for this unit is the Paschal hymn, "Christ is risen." Let's go to the icon corner and get ready to pray. [Sing or say the translation for your jurisdiction.]*

Introduction

How many of you know the word "alleluia"? "Alleluia" means "Praise God." We praise God, just like we bow to God, because He is great and good to us. Saying "Alleluia" is a way of praising God. We'll learn more praises of God today. First, let me tell you something about the Bible. We've learned stories from the Bible this year. One book of the Bible doesn't have stories. Instead it has poems and songs written to God. Do you love God? David did. David loved God and wrote special songs to God. Do you ever sing songs to God? We ALL sing songs of praise to God during the Divine Liturgy! Before we learn about David's songs, let me tell you the story of David.

A long time before Jesus Christ, David lived in Bethlehem. David's father was named Jesse. David was in charge of watching the family's sheep. What do we call a person who watches sheep? (Shepherd) David played his harp when he watched the flocks. Do you know what a harp is? (A stringed musical instrument) One day a messenger came from King Saul and asked that David come to play music for the king. David went. The music made the king feel better. David stayed in the king's service.

One day when Israel was at war with the Philistines, David was sent to bring food to his brothers who were fighting. One of the Philistines, Goliath, was a giant man. He shouted to the Israelites, "Send someone to fight just me!" David heard this. He asked the king if he could fight the giant. The king was upset because David was just a youth. David said, "To protect my flock of sheep, I have fought both a bear and a lion. Let me try." David and Goliath met on the battlefield. David took a stone from his bag, put it in a sling and hurled it at the head of Goliath. It struck him between the eyes and Goliath fell. David ran to Goliath, took his sword, and cut off his head. The Philistines fled. Israel was saved. David later became the King of Israel (adapted from 1 Sam 16-17).

Let's read about some of the words David sang to God. Tell me if you recognize any of them.

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God's Family Sings Psalms

God's family worships God. We worship God in many ways. We bow to God. We bow to God because He made us. We also sing praises to God. We sing praises to God because He is great.

A long time before Jesus was born, God's people were ruled by King David



He loved God.
He played the harp.
He wrote many songs of praise.
David's songs are called psalms.

Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type). See "Reading of Text" in Lesson 1 for use of the Vocabulary Visual Aid.

David's songs are called psalms.

What is the name of the person who loved God very much? (King David) What instrument did he play? (Harp) What are David's songs called? (Psalms) Let's say that together. . . "psalms". There is a whole book in the Bible called Psalms. It is filled with songs to God by David and other people who loved God. [Hold up Bible and show Book of Psalms.]

We still sing David's songs.
We sing "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

We praise God's name when we sing. "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" We sing...



**"Praise the Lord from the heavens!
Alleluia!"**

One time David had to ask forgiveness of God. He had sinned terribly. He wrote, "Have mercy upon me, O God ... Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."

"Praise the Lord from the heavens! Alleluia!"

What are some of God's wonders in creation that you would want to praise Him for?

... cleanse me from my sin.

Where have you heard this? (In the Beginning Prayers.) David asked God to have mercy on him. We ask for God's mercy all the time during the Divine Liturgy. We say, "Lord, have mercy."

David had sinned terribly. In his words he asked God to take away his sin, just like we ask God to forgive us. David felt dirty when he sinned. What did he ask God to do? (Wash me thoroughly.) Many people feel that David's words speak what is in their heart when they have sinned.

What would you say in a song to God?

[Allow responses. Be prepared to offer your own thoughts.]

Let's review: Who is the person we learned about today? (David) What did he do to show his love for God? (He wrote psalms.) Do we ever say the words David wrote? (Yes) What is one example? ("Blessed be the name of the Lord," "Alleluia," and "Have mercy upon me . . .")

David was sorry for his sin.
He wanted to be made clean again.
He knew that when we sin we turn away from God.
He wanted to be in the presence of God again, so he wrote:
"Do not cast me away from Your presence."



David loved God.
David wrote many songs to God.
What would you say in a song to God?

Activity Tracks

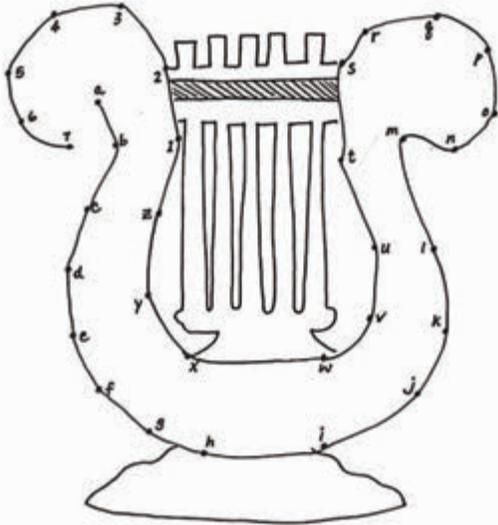
Basic 1: We Sing David's Psalms

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today we learned that David wrote songs to God because he loved God. Let's see how this worksheet will help us remember our lesson. Let's read the directions. [Begin with "a" and continue through the alphabet. After "p" is a lower case "q." When you finish the alphabet, begin with number 1. When you find "7" connect it to "a."]

We Sing David's Psalms

Connect the dots to complete the picture. Color the picture.



Basic 2: David Wrote Psalms To God

Materials: markers

Our worksheet has two parts. First, see if you can circle the answer to the questions about David from the two choices given at the end of each sentence. I'll read you the sentences if you need help. Next, David's words are beautiful because they help us paint pictures or images in our imaginations. Let's look at some of these words and make the pictures of which they remind us.

Group: "Our Psalm" Poster

Materials: poster board, markers, white paper, glue

*Today we learned that the Bible tells us about people who loved God. At the end of the lesson we tried to be like David by making up a song to God. I think God would be very happy with the words you chose, and I want our project today to be a poster with those words and any other words you want to add and some pictures to illustrate. [Choose one of the following ideas for completing the project.] On these sheets of paper, you can write your words to praise God and then illustrate them. We'll paste them onto the poster board, like a collage. **OR** Let's work together to think of words to praise God. I'll write them on the poster board, and then you can illustrate them on white paper. We'll paste your pictures beside the words.*

Craft: Psalm Wall Hanging

Materials: "Psalms" worksheet, markers, glue, 1" wide ribbon, paper dessert plates

People love the words of the Psalms. You can find them on plaques that hang. Today we'll make a wall-hanging by choosing words from three of David's Psalms. [Hold up sample.]

We'll paste the words at the bottom of a plate, and then use the middle of the plate to illustrate the words. Then we'll paste the plates to a ribbon to make the hanging. You can give it to your mother, father, or grandparents as a lovely gift

David Wrote Psalms to God

A. Circle the word that completes the sentence.

1. David was a shepherd and then a
2. David loved God and wrote songs to
3. David's songs are called
4. We hear David's words in the

- priest (king)
- Kate (God)
- psalms (rock)
- liturgy (market)



B. Draw a picture to illustrate some of these phrases from David's psalms.

1. "The Lord is my



(shepherd)

I shall not want"

2. "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my



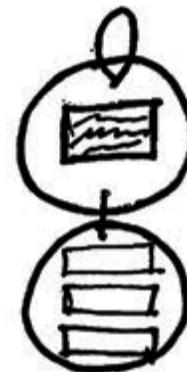
(heart)

3. "The Lord is my



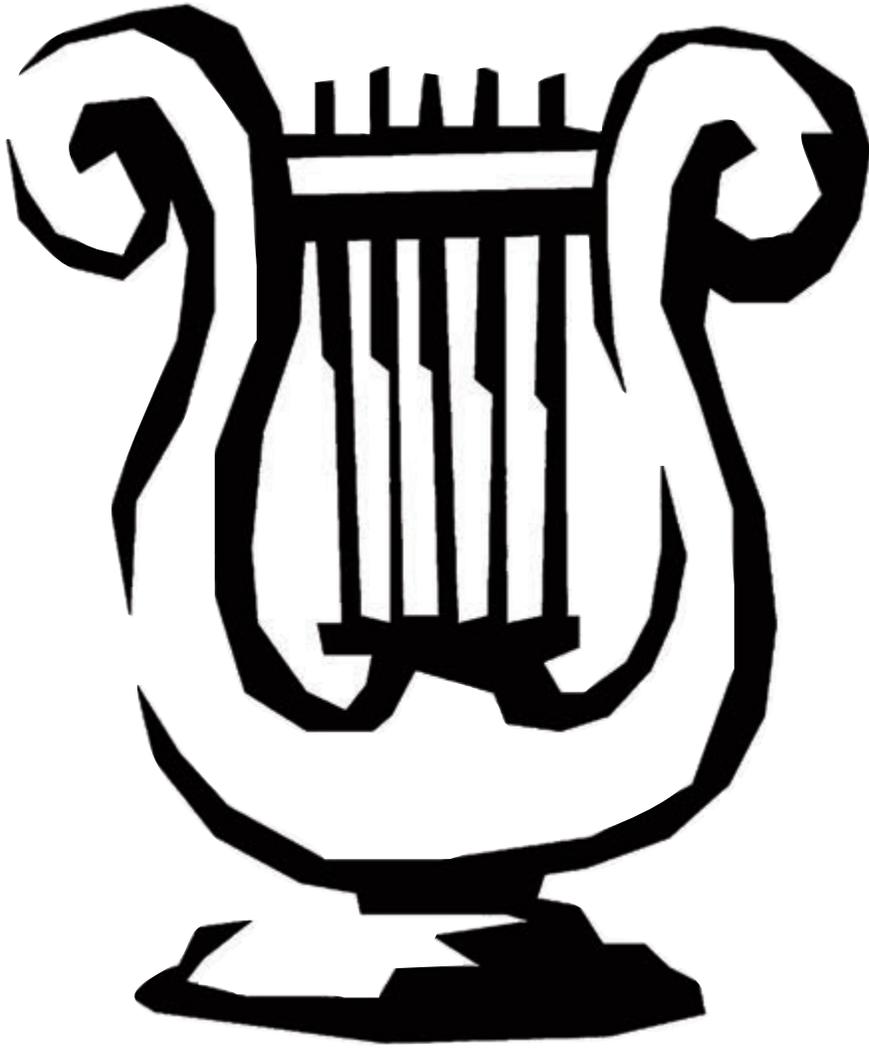
(light)

and my salvation."



Closing: *Let's go to the icon corner and get ready to pray. I bet we can say our prayer by heart now.* [Stand quietly for 20 seconds; then make the sign of the cross. Beginning prayers from "Holy God" to "All Holy Trinity " and/or Paschal Troparion.]

God bless you; have a good week!



harp

David Wrote Psalms to God

A. Circle the word that completes the sentence.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| 1. David was a shepherd and then a | priest | king |
| 2. David loved God and wrote songs to | Kate | God |
| 3. David's songs are called | psalms | rock |
| 4. We hear David's words in the | liturgy | market |



B. Draw a picture to illustrate some of the phrases from David's psalms.

1. "The Lord is my



(shepherd)

I shall not want"

2. "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my



(heart)

3. "The Lord is my



(light)

and my salvation.

**The Lord is my
shepherd, I shall not
want.**

Psalm 23

**The Lord is my
shepherd, I shall not
want.**

Psalm 23

**Blessed be the Lord,
my rock.**

Psalm 144

**Blessed be the Lord,
my rock.**

Psalm 144

**I will give thanks to you,
O Lord, with all my
heart.**

Psalm 9

**I will give thanks to you,
O Lord, with all my
heart.**

Psalm 9

**The Lord is my light,
and my salvation; whom
shall I fear?**

Psalm 27

**The Lord is my light,
and my salvation; whom
shall I fear?**

Psalm 27

**The Lord is my
shepherd, I shall not
want.**

Psalm 23

**The Lord is my
shepherd, I shall not
want.**

Psalm 23

**Blessed be the Lord,
my rock.**

Psalm 144

**Blessed be the Lord,
my rock.**

Psalm 144

**I will give thanks to you,
O Lord, with all my
heart.**

Psalm 9

**I will give thanks to you,
O Lord, with all my
heart.**

Psalm 9

**The Lord is my light,
and my salvation; whom
shall I fear?**

Psalm 27

**The Lord is my light,
and my salvation; whom
shall I fear?**

Psalm 27