

REAL.

We need your help, God! (Psalm 44:26)

Do you know what's really happening here, God? (Psalm 40:17)

PRESENT.

Light my way, step-by-step, God! (Psalm 119:105)

I trust you are here to help me, God. (Psalm 28:7)

GOD.

You are the only way that works, God. (Psalm 16:11)

I see what you're doing, God: thank you! (Psalm 9:1)

Leader's Guide

General

Each of the daily passages is from the book of Psalms. The Psalms are full of “Real. Present. God.” material!

In each of the devotions and Bible studies (and the commissioning services) there are place marks for songs. You will need to choose those ahead of time.

These devotions and Bible studies are intended to:

- Help participants interact with God's Word; and
- Be tools for building the community of servants.

There is a rhythm to the morning devotions and the evening Bible studies. That is purposeful.

At each morning devotion, participants are asked to commit to one “Take Some Action” exercise. It is a tangible action they can take, with God's help, to live out the Gospel that day. In order for this step to be effective, it is important to check back on that in the evening Bible study.

It is important to focus on both the tasks that need to be accomplished by the team *and* the relationships on the team. Leaders for Servant Events need to take responsibility for helping the community form. If you don't do it, it is likely it won't happen.

The Pre-Event Bible Study follows the same pattern as the Evening Bible studies.

Encourage participants to use their own Bibles or Bible apps during the Evening Bible studies. One way to do that is to be sure that you are working out of yours!

Adults should participate in everything that kids participate in. Encourage any adults to share, act and study in the same way that kids do!

Morning Devotions

The responsive sentences are the same each morning.

Don't forget to help participants choose one “Take Some Action” commitment for each day.

In the morning, it is helpful for the Leader to be as chipper as possible 😊. You lead the way in setting the tone for the day, when participants could possibly be grouchy and tired.

Evening Bible Studies

These always include a sharing of highs, lows and either surprises or challenges from the day. Don't skip this important step, even though it may seem repetitive. It is a chance for participants to debrief the day. Experience shows that debriefing increases whatever joys happened in the day and lessens whatever challenges there were.

Don't forget to check in about the participants' experiences with their “Take Some Action” commitment from the morning devotion.

Commissioning Service

Have everyone seated in a large circle, if possible, for the Commissioning Service.

You will need paper and pens/pencils for each participant in the Commissioning Service.

You will need three readers for the Commissioning Service.

The Commissioning Service includes a time for sharing “regrets and appreciations.” Be ready to listen and to lead that discussion in a way that bears witness to God's work in the group during the Servant Event. Lots of great memories should be shared at this time.

The Commissioning Service can be found on page 15.

I trust you are here to help me, God.

—Psalm 28:7

Real. Present. God.



PRE-EVENT BIBLE STUDY

Warm-Up

Song: (4 min.)

Game: Animal Kingdom (10 min.)

No supplies needed.

Ask everyone to sit or stand in a circle. Ask each person to introduce themselves and say which of the following animals they most identify with: eagle, dolphin, lion, sparrow, whale, or unicorn (use fewer animals if you have less than 10 people). Then ask participants to group themselves according to the animals they chose (combine the two smallest groups if either has fewer than three members). Direct kids to answer the following three questions in their small groups:

- What is one thing all of you have experienced that many other people have not?
- What is one thing that all of you believe in?
- What is one thing all of you are afraid of?

Have volunteers share their groups' answers to the questions and share the unique experiences of their group members.

Present Condition (7 min.)

Find a partner, introduce yourselves, and share:

- One high for you from today
- One low for you from today
- One way you saw God at work today

Come back to the large group and share a few highlights from the pair conversations.

Digging In (15 min.)

Depending on the size of your group, it might be best to do the "digging in" section in small groups.

For our Servant Event Bible studies this year, we will be focusing on the idea that God is Real, that God is Present, and that God is God.

Share answers to the following question:

Which is the hardest for you to grasp or believe or trust:

- That God is Real?
- That God is Present?
- That God is God?

Hearing from the Word

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." —Psalm 46:1

Ask everyone to read the above passage together, out loud, twice.

Spend some time sharing:

- What does it mean to you that God is our refuge?
- What does it mean to you that God is our strength?
- What does the phrase "a very present help" mean to you? Can you say it in your own words?
- What kinds of "trouble" might we encounter on our Servant Event?
- What would it look like if our group took refuge and strength in God during our Servant Event?

Read the passage out loud together, again, twice! Read in pairs, facing each other.

Prayer (5 min.)

Close in prayer, asking God be your group's refuge and strength as you prepare for and go on your Servant Event.

This meeting would be a great time to develop a group covenant, as well.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

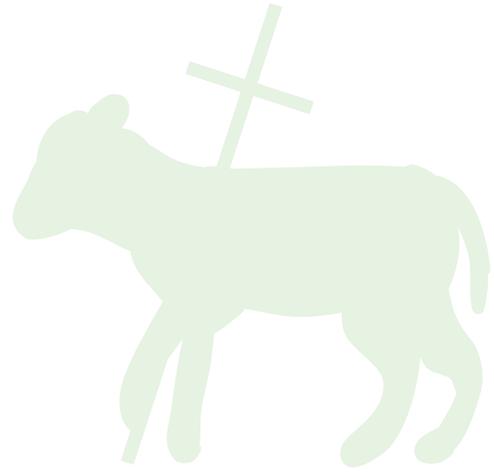
—Psalm 46:1

DAY ONE: Real.

♥ MORNING DEVOTION

We need your help, God!

“Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!” —Psalm 44:26



LEADER In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

GROUP Amen!

LEADER Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

GROUP **That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.** (Psalm 90:14)

LEADER Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;

GROUP **Yes, establish the work of our hands!** (Psalm 90:17)

ALL Amen.

Song

From God's Word

“Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love! —Psalm 44:26

Something to Ponder

Real life is broken and messy. Often, things don't go as they should. N.T. Wright said, “The Christian faith endorses the passion for justice which every human being knows, the longing to see things put to rights. And it claims that in Jesus, God himself has shared this passion and put it into effect, so that in the end all tears may be dried and the world may be filled with justice and joy.” Knowing Jesus wants things made right, we can be real and honest with Him and cry for help.

Share

- What, in your life, shows that real life is broken and messy?
- What gets in the way of crying out to God for help?

Take Some Action

In pairs or threes, knee-to-knee ... each one shares one 'servant heart in action' they will commit to for today.

Today I will commit to (pick one):

- Praying for someone I come in contact with today that I don't know;
- Telling someone specifically what I like about them; or
- Eating something that is good for my body.

In the same pair or three, knee-to-knee, pray this prayer aloud together:

Dear Jesus, real life is broken and messy. We ask You to come to our help today because of Your deep love for us. Show us how we can share deep love today. Amen.

BIBLE STUDY

We need your help, God!

“Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!” —Psalm 44:26

Warm-Up

Song: (4 min.)

Game: “Up Jenkins” (10 min.)

Supplies needed: one quarter for each table.

Divide into two teams. Teams sit on the opposite sides of a long table. Each team elects a captain. The game begins with one team secretly passing a quarter back and forth among its players underneath the table. When the captain of the opposing team says, “Up Jenkins!” all the players on the quarter-passing team close their fists, lift their arms, and place their elbows on the table. In one of the fists, of course, is the quarter. Then the opposing captain says, “Down Jenkins!” and all the players simultaneously slam their hands down on the table. If it's done well, the other team won't be able to hear the quarter.

DAY ONE: Real.

BIBLE STUDY, *continued*

The object then is for the guessing team to eliminate all the hands that do not have the quarter, leaving at last the one hand with the quarter under it. So the opposing captain chooses people to lift a hand, one hand at a time. The team with the quarter can respond to the captain only; lifting a hand in response to anyone else on the opposing team means the forfeiture of the quarter. One of the goals of the opposing team, therefore, is to persuade people to lift their hands in response to someone other than their captain. If the opposing team's captain successfully lifts all the hands except the one covering the quarter, his or her team wins and takes possession of the quarter. If, however, the captain uncovers the quarter before the last hand, the quarter-passing team retains possession and a new round begins.

Once the kids get the hang of it, they'll develop all sorts of strategies — how to make your hand “look guilty” when you don't have the quarter, etc.

Present Condition (7 min.)

Find a partner and share:

- One high for you from today
- One low for you from today
- One way you saw God at work today

Come back to the large group and share a few highlights from the pair conversations.

Digging In (15 min.)

Depending on the size of your group, it might be best to do the “digging in” section in small groups.

Share answers to the following questions:

- What helps you come to Jesus in prayer “just as you are”? Or do you not do that? If not, why?
- Why do you think some people live a life of pretending they have it all together?

Hearing from the Word

“And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, ‘It is a ghost!’ and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’ And Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to

Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’” —Matthew 14:25–31

Spend some time sharing about asking for God's help in connection with this passage:

- What words and phrases in this passage show the real-life fear and anxiety of Peter and the other disciples?
- Share a time when you were terrified.
- Why do you think that Jesus told Peter to get out of the boat?
- Look for the word “immediately” in verse 27 and in verse 31. What does that tell you about Jesus' rescue activity in our lives?
- What might we see/hear/experience this week that could cause us to cry out to God for help?
- We don't have to wait until we're “drowning” to ask for help from God. How can we make it a more regular practice?
- How is serving this week a way of pointing to Jesus' rescue activity for the people we are serving?
- Find a partner and sit/stand face-to-face. Take turns reading the Bible passage for today to each other and personalizing it with your partner's name:

Rise up; come to (Partner's Name)'s help! Redeem (Partner's Name) for the sake of your steadfast love!
—Psalm 44:26

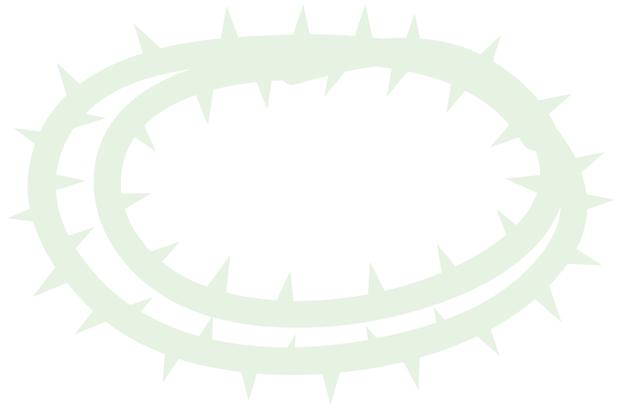
Prayer (5 min.)

Spend some time in prayer, asking God for His help to have a willing heart for service this week. Remember to pray for loved ones back home.

Perhaps do a “check-in” on your “**Take Some Action**” commitments from the morning:

- Praying for someone I come in contact with today that I don't know;
- Telling someone specifically what I like about them; or
- Eating something that is good for my body.

DAY TWO: Real.



♥ MORNING DEVOTION

Do you know what's really happening here, God?

"As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!" —Psalm 40:17

LEADER In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

GROUP Amen!

LEADER Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

GROUP That we may rejoice and be glad all our days. *(Psalm 90:14)*

LEADER Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;

GROUP Yes, establish the work of our hands! *(Psalm 90:17)*

ALL Amen.

Song

From God's Word

"As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!" —Psalm 40:17

Something to Ponder

Real life is broken and messy. Because Jesus is real, we can be real with Him about what we see inside ourselves and around us, too. In his hymn "My Song is Love Unknown" (LSB 430), Samuel Crossman writes:

My song is love unknown,
My Savior's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
O who am I,
That for my sake
My Lord should take
Frail flesh, and die?

What a wonderful thing to know that even though we are poor and needy, God has His mind on us. He is our help.

Share

- What's the difference between saying "Jesus helps us" and "Jesus IS our help"?
- Why are we tempted to pretend we are OK when we're not?

Take Some Action

In pairs or threes, knee-to-knee ... each one shares one 'servant heart in action' they will commit to for today.

Today I will commit to (pick one):

- Praying before I fall asleep tonight;
- Praying for someone back home; or
- Praying with someone else.

In the same pair or three, knee-to-knee, pray this prayer aloud together:

Dear Jesus, real life is broken and messy. Help us to be honest with You in prayer. Show us where we can love others in Your name today. Amen.

BIBLE STUDY

Do you know what's really happening here, God?

"As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!" —Psalm 40:17

Warm-Up

Song: (4 min.)

Game: Team Slalom (10 min.)

No supplies needed.

Form two teams. Have the members of each team form a circle with members standing sideways and an arm's length apart. Instruct team members to place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them, lean forward, and arch their backs to form bridges.

DAY TWO: Real.

BIBLE STUDY, *continued*

Then, on your signal, have a member of each team step out of the circle, weave in and out of all the bridges in the circle and return to his or her original position. As soon as the first person returns, the next person in line may leave and slalom around the circle. Continue until everyone on the team has run through the slalom. The first team to finish wins.

Present Condition (7 min.)

Find a partner and share:

- One high for you from today
- One low for you from today
- One way you saw God at work today

Come back to the large group and share a few highlights from the pair conversations.

Digging In (15 min.)

Depending on the size of your group, it might be best to do the “digging in” section in small groups.

Share answers to the following questions:

- What do people you know hold on to, when life is broken and messy?
- How about you: What gets you through the hard times?

Hearing from the Word

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.” —Psalm 46:1–7

Spend some time sharing about asking for God’s help in connection with this passage:

- How would you define the word “refuge”?
- Consider the phrase, “Therefore we will not fear...” On what, according to this passage, should we base our courage?
- The writer of this Psalm paints a pretty bleak picture of some circumstances: “the earth gives way”; “the mountains ... moved into the heart of the sea”; “waters roar and foam”; “mountains tremble.” EVEN THEN we have a safe place to hide. Do you know of any circumstances that seem to be too tough for God?
- How is your experience this week helping you take refuge in God?
- Do you believe that God has you in His thoughts? How does that help when times are rough?
- Find a partner and sit/stand face-to-face. Take turns reading the Bible passage for today to each other and personalizing it with your partner’s name:

As for (Partner’s Name), she/he is poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for (Partner’s Name). You are (Partner’s Name)’s help and (Partner’s name)’s deliverer; do not delay, O my God! —Psalm 40:17

Prayer (5 min.)

Spend some time in prayer, asking God for His help to have a willing heart for service this week. Remember to pray for loved ones back home.

Perhaps do a “check-in” on your **“Take Some Action”** commitments from the morning:

- Praying before I fall asleep tonight;
- Praying for someone back home; or
- Praying with someone else.

DAY THREE: Present.

♥ MORNING DEVOTION

Light my way, step-by-step, God!

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
—Psalm 119:105



LEADER In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

GROUP Amen!

LEADER Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

GROUP **That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.** (Psalm 90:14)

LEADER Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;

GROUP **Yes, establish the work of our hands!** (Psalm 90:17)

ALL Amen.

- Memorizing a Bible verse; or
- Giving away a snack or drink to someone who needs it.

In the same pair or three, knee-to-knee, pray this prayer aloud together:

Dear Jesus, Your presence is our refuge and strength, no matter what. Help us to hold onto Your promises as we serve others today. Amen.

Song

From God’s Word

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
—Psalm 119:105

Something to Ponder

One of the best ways that God is present to us is in His Word, the Bible. Martin Luther said, “The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.” The idea is that God is most present to us when His Word lives in our hearts and minds. Returning our thoughts to God’s Word often makes His presence real in every circumstance of life.

Share

- Is there a Bible verse that you hold onto? What is it?
- How is God’s Word a light and a lamp?

Take Some Action

In pairs or threes, knee-to-knee ... each one shares one ‘servant heart in action’ they will commit to for today.

Today I will commit to (pick one):

- Asking God to help me not to judge those I am serving;

BIBLE STUDY

Light my way, step-by-step, God!

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
—Psalm 119:105

Warm-Up

Song: (4 min.)

Game: Copycat

Form a circle. One at a time, have kids each perform an action for the rest of the group to copy. Anyone who can’t or won’t copy the action must leave the circle. The object of the game is to be the last person left in the circle—so encourage kids to choose actions that not everyone can do (such as touching your tongue to your nose).

Present Condition (7 min.)

Find a partner and share:

- One high for you from today
- One low for you from today
- One way you saw God at work today

Come back to the large group and share a few highlights from the pair conversations.

DAY THREE: Present.

BIBLE STUDY, *continued*

Digging In (15 min.)

Depending on the size of your group, it might be best to do the “digging in” section in small groups.

Share answers to the following questions:

- What does it mean when someone is “fully present”?
- What kinds of things distract you from being “fully present” while you are here?

Hearing from the Word

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ...

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” —John 1:1–5, 14

Spend some time sharing about compassionate service in connection with this passage:

God’s is powerfully present in His Son, Jesus. Jesus is God in flesh.

John tells us that Jesus was God in flesh, the eternal Word taking on human form. And Jesus is still present with us now. We learn about Jesus from the Bible, and He is present for us in Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

- How do Jesus’ forgiveness and promises, given to us in Word and Sacrament, bear fruit in our lives of service?
- Why do you think John refers to Jesus as “the Word”?
- What does it mean to you that our God is PRESENT in Jesus and in the Bible and in the Sacraments?
- How can you be more aware of Jesus’ presence with you today?
- How is participating in a Servant Event practicing a “presence” ministry?
- Find a partner and sit/stand face-to-face. Take turns reading the Bible passage for today to each other and personalizing it with your partner’s name:
Your word is a lamp to (Partner’s Name)’s feet and a light to (Partner’s Name)’s path. —Psalm 119:105

Prayer (5 min.)

Spend some time in prayer, asking God for His help to have a willing heart for service this week. Remember to pray for loved ones back home.

Perhaps do a “check-in” on your “**Take Some Action**” commitments from the morning:

- Asking God to help me not to judge those I am serving;
- Memorizing a Bible verse; or
- Giving away a snack or drink to someone who needs it.

DAY FOUR: Present.



♥ MORNING DEVOTION

I trust you are here to help me, God.

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.” —Psalm 28:7

LEADER In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

GROUP Amen!

LEADER Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

GROUP **That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.** (Psalm 90:14)

LEADER Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;

GROUP **Yes, establish the work of our hands!** (Psalm 90:17)

ALL Amen.

Today I will commit to (pick one):

- Doing one thing that I would normally be nervous or afraid to do, asking God for courage;
- Noticing someone else’s bravery and thanking them for their example; or
- Talking to someone that I wouldn’t normally talk to.

In the same pair or three, knee-to-knee, pray this prayer aloud together:

Dear Jesus, Your presence is our refuge and strength, no matter what. Help us to hold onto Your promises as we serve others today. Amen.

Song

From God’s Word

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.” —Psalm 28:7

Something to Ponder

Our God cannot be contained — and He chooses to be present with us. He invites us to trust Him for His help. C.S. Lewis said, “We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him. He walks everywhere incognito.”

Our sinful nature makes us think we know what is going on. We attempt take life’s situations into our own hands. We stumble and fall when we forget God is there to lead us. God is present. You are safe.

Share

- What can make it hard to trust God with your life?
- Where have you seen God’s faithfulness this week?

Take Some Action

In pairs or threes, knee-to-knee ... each one shares one ‘servant heart in action’ they will commit to for today.

BIBLE STUDY

I trust you are here to help me, God.

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.” —Psalm 28:7

Warm-Up

Song: (4 min.)

Game: Instant Replays

Supplies: a phone with a camera.

Form teams of four. Place four chairs in a line at one end of the room. Choose a team to create the first “people sculpture.” Then have everyone else look away from the team or close their eyes.

Allow one minute for the people-sculpture team to arrange themselves in any way they choose on the chairs (including where each person sits or stands, where they place their arms and legs, and what expressions they wear). Once they’re arranged, have everyone else turn and look at the sculpture for exactly fifteen seconds. During the time, take a photo of the people sculpture. At the end of fifteen seconds, call time and have everyone turn back around so they can’t see the sculpture.

DAY FOUR: Present.

BIBLE STUDY, *continued*

Allow the people-sculpture team to rearrange themselves in any way they choose (changing seats, position of legs and arms, expressions, and so on). After one minute, have everyone else turn around and work together to arrange the sculpture back to its original form.

When they think they have it (or after about 3 minutes), call time and compare the current sculpture with the photograph and see how they did. Give each team a chance to be the sculpture.

Present Condition (7 min.)

Find a partner and share:

- One high for you from today
- One surprise for you from today
- One way you saw God at work today

Come back to the large group and share a few highlights from the pair conversations.

Digging In (15 min.)

Depending on the size of your group, it might be best to do the “digging in” section in small groups.

- Who is someone you trust and why?
- What makes it hard to trust God?

Hearing from the Word

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” —Philippians 2:1–7

Spend some time sharing about how God is present to us through other people in this passage:

- One of the ways God is present to us is through other people. What is one way God has been present to you this week through another person?
- Look at the ways Paul is encouraging us to treat others in the passage above. What do you think he means by:
 - “being of the same mind”?
 - “having the same love”?

■ What examples of “counting others more significant than yourselves” have you seen this week?

■ How would you describe the way you get your mind around the idea that Jesus — God’s Son — came as a **servant**? What does that mean to you?

■ How does this idea — that you are loved completely by Jesus in this way — help you to trust him?

■ Find a partner and sit/stand face-to-face. Take turns reading the Bible passage for today to each other and personalizing it with your partner’s name:

The Lord is (Partner’s Name)’s strength and (Partner’s Name)’s shield; in him (Partner’s Name)’s heart trusts, and (Partner’s Name) is helped; (Partner’s Name)’s heart exults, and with (Partner’s Name)’s song (Partner’s Name) gives thanks to him. —Psalm 28:7

Prayer (5 min.)

Spend some time in prayer, asking God for His help to have a willing heart for service this week. Remember to pray for loved ones back home.

Perhaps do a “check-in” on your **“Take Some Action”** commitments from the morning:

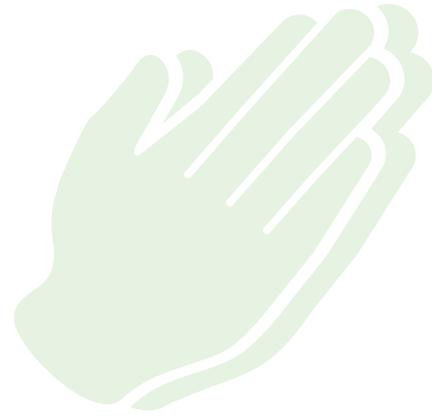
- Doing one thing that I would normally be nervous or afraid to do, asking God for courage;
- Noticing someone else’s bravery and thanking them for their example; or
- Talking to someone that I wouldn’t normally talk to.

DAY FIVE: God.

♥ MORNING DEVOTION

You are the only way that works, God.

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” —Psalm 16:11



LEADER In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

GROUP Amen!

LEADER Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

GROUP That we may rejoice and be glad all our days. (Psalm 90:14)

LEADER Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;

GROUP Yes, establish the work of our hands! (Psalm 90:17)

ALL Amen.

Today I will commit to (pick one):

- Admitting a mistake, out loud, to someone else;
- Watching for and pointing out evidence of God’s power; or
- Telling the truth about how I’m feeling or what I’m thinking about today.

In the same pair or three, knee-to-knee, pray this prayer aloud together:

Dear Jesus, You are all-powerful, and yet You love me. Help me to live in that love and share it with others today. Amen.

Song

From God’s Word

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” —Psalm 16:11

Something to Ponder

Our God IS God. He is the one-and-only. He is powerful beyond what we can understand. And, at the very same time, He is personal. He knows each of us by name and as our Creator, knows exactly what makes us “tick.” What Augustine wrote makes sense, then: “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is **restless** until it finds its rest in thee.” When we respond to the Holy Spirit’s call to come home to Jesus, we find our rest and our joy. It’s where we were meant to be!

Share

- Where do you see evidence of God’s power?
- Where do you see evidence that God knows you personally?

Take Some Action

In pairs or threes, knee-to-knee ... each one shares one ‘servant heart in action’ they will commit to for today.

BIBLE STUDY

You are the only way that works, God.

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” —Psalm 16:11

Warm-Up

Song: (4 min.)

Game: Cliff, Climber, Ground (10 min.)

No supplies needed.

Divide into pairs and teach the following variation on “Rock, Paper, Scissors”: Cliff, Climber Ground.

- **Cliff:** arms held straight up
- **Climber:** One fist on hip, the other fist held out in front.
- **Ground:** both arms held straight out to the sides
- **Cliff beats ground** (rises above it)
- **Climber beats cliff** (climbs it)
- **Ground beats climber** (by squashing the climber after a fall)

Once you’ve practiced it a bit, have a play-off and get to a final winner (best two out of three each round).

DAY FIVE: God.

BIBLE STUDY, *continued*

Present Condition (7 min.)

Find a partner and share:

- One high for you from today
- One challenge for you from today
- One way you saw God at work today

Come back to the large group and share a few highlights from the pair conversations.

Digging In (15 min.)

Depending on the size of your group, it might be best to do the “digging in” section in small groups.

- Who is someone in your life that you know is “for you”?
- What is the best text message you got today?

Hearing from the Word

“And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’ And they told him, ‘John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.’ And he asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered him, ‘You are the Christ.’” —Mark 8:27–29

Spend some time sharing about how Jesus is all-powerful and all-personal in this passage:

- What stands out to you in this encounter between Jesus and His disciples?
- Can you describe who some of your friends would say Jesus is?

- When Jesus asks, “Who do YOU say that I am?” (a very personal question), Peter answers with “the Christ,” which meant that he believed that Jesus was the long-promised Messiah, come to rescue the world. How would you answer Jesus’ question?
- How does reminding yourself that Jesus is both all-powerful and all-personal change the way you live?
- Find a partner and sit/stand face-to-face. Take turns reading the Bible passage for today to each other and personalizing it with your partner’s name:
You make known to (Partner’s Name) the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. —Psalm 16:11

Prayer (5 min.)

Spend some time in prayer, asking God for His help to have a willing heart for service this week. Remember to pray for loved ones back home.

Perhaps do a “check-in” on your “**Take Some Action**” commitments from the morning:

- Admitting a mistake, out loud, to someone else;
- Watching for and pointing out evidence of God’s power; or
- Telling the truth about how I’m feeling or what I’m thinking about today.

DAY SIX: God.

MORNING DEVOTION

I see what you're doing, God: thank you!

"I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds." —Psalm 9:1

LEADER In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

GROUP Amen!

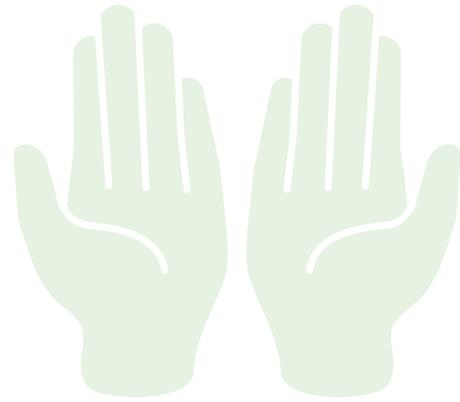
LEADER Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

GROUP That we may rejoice and be glad all our days. (Psalm 90:14)

LEADER Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;

GROUP Yes, establish the work of our hands! (Psalm 90:17)

ALL Amen.



Today I will commit to (pick one):

- Writing down five things I am grateful for;
- Thanking at least three people for something; or
- Praying on my own.

In the same pair or three, knee-to-knee, pray this prayer aloud together:

Dear Heavenly Father, there are so many things to thank You for. Help me to live with a grateful heart today. Amen.

Song

From God's Word

"I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds." —Psalm 9:1

Something to Ponder

Giving thanks for something always points to the giver. When we spend time focusing on what we are grateful for, we acknowledge that the good things in our life come from God, our all-present and all-powerful and all-personal God who gives us every good thing.

Martin Luther wrote, "We cannot give God anything; for everything is already His, and all we have comes from Him. We can only give Him praise, thanks and honor."

Today, we focus on what God has done and we say, "Thank you!"

Share

- How can expressing gratitude change your mindset?
- Name one thing your grateful for already this morning.

Take Some Action

In pairs or threes, knee-to-knee ... each one shares one 'servant heart in action' they will commit to for today.

BIBLE STUDY

I see what you're doing, God: thank you!

"I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds." —Psalm 9:1

Warm-Up

Song: (4 min.)

"Lord, I Lift Your Name on High," by Rick Founds ("Singing Saints" #19, CPH 2001)

Game: Caterpillar Race (10 min.)

No supplies needed.

Form teams of equal size, 5–7 players. (If you have a small group, teams of 3 also work well). Have participants think up one syllable names for their teams. Then line teams up next to each other behind a starting line. Instruct team members to place their hands on the shoulders of the team members in front of them and race to a finish line according to the following rules of movement:

The first person in line may hop one step forward. Then the next person in line may hop one step forward. Continue down the line until the last person in line hops one step forward. After the last person hops, he or she must shout the team's name. Then the whole team may hop one step forward at the same time. Repeat this process to move the caterpillar along.

DAY SIX: God.

BIBLE STUDY, *continued*

Players must keep their hands in front of them at all times during the race.

Players may move forward only by hopping one step forward with both feet at once.

If a team breaks any of the above rules, it must return to the starting line and start again.

Present Condition (7 min.)

Find a partner and share:

- One high for you from today
- One challenge for you from today
- One way you saw God at work today

Come back to the large group and share a few highlights from the pair conversations.

Digging In (15 min.)

Depending on the size of your group, it might be best to do the “digging in” section in small groups.

- What, for you, gets in the way of being thankful?
- Share one thing you are thankful for about your family.

Hearing from the Word

“On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.’ When he saw them he said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, ‘Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’ And he said to him, ‘Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.’” —Luke 17:11–19

Spend some time sharing about how important it is to notice what Jesus is doing and give thanks in this passage:

- What stands out to you in this encounter between Jesus and the ten lepers?
- Do you have any ideas about why only one of the ten healed lepers would return and give thanks?
- What signs do you see of how very grateful the one leper was?
- What could this group do to encourage you to practice gratitude more regularly?
- The leper in this story was thankful because Jesus directly answered a prayer for healing. Is there a prayer that God has answered for you?
- Together, name at least 10 things to thank God for from this week.
- Find a partner and sit/stand face-to-face. Take turns reading the Bible passage for today to each other and personalizing it with your partner’s name:
(Partner’s Name) will give thanks to the Lord with his/her whole heart; (Partner’s Name) will recount all of your wonderful deeds. —Psalm 9:1

Prayer (5 min.)

Spend some time in prayer, thanking God for His help this week. Remember to pray for loved ones back home.

Perhaps do a “check-in” on your “**Take Some Action**” commitments from the morning:

- Writing down five things I am grateful for;
- Thanking at least three people for something; or
- Praying on my own.

REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

Commissioning Service



LEADER In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

GROUP Amen!

🎵 Song

LEADER We gather in the presence of Jesus, who came as a Servant, to thank Him for the chance to serve others in His name this week.

GROUP Thank You, Jesus!

LEADER As we prepare to return home, we remember that

GROUP God is Real.

READER 1 As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God! (*Psalms 40:17*)

GROUP God is Present.

Reader 2 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (*Psalms 119:105*)

GROUP God is God.

Reader 3 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (*Psalms 16:11*)

🎵 Song

If you have not already done so, distribute small pieces of paper and writing utensils to all participants.

LEADER Take a moment to reflect on your week. [*Pause for people to do so*]. Having reflected on God's work this week, take a moment to write down something that you would like to offer to God as you return home. Perhaps it is a way that you will serve Him in your family or your group of friends back home or in your church. Perhaps it is an attitude that you want to change as a result of this week or a relationship that you want to impact for Him, with His help. Write it down.

Time for reflection and writing.

🎵 Song

LEADER Please hang on to your piece of paper for a moment, while we share in the larger group. In every experience, we have both regrets (those things that we are sorry for or wish had not happened) and appreciations (those things and people that we are grateful to God for). Let's take a moment to share in the larger group some of our regrets and appreciations. You are also welcome to share what you are offering to God, today, if you'd like to.

🗨️ A Time of Sharing

LEADER Thank you for sharing. Now, as we sing, you are welcome to come forward and leave your offering on this table as a sign that you are responding to God's action in your life this week with an offering to Him.

🎵 Songs

🏠 Prayer Time

Including prayers of thanksgiving for the Servant Event as well as petitions for the return home to serve.

The Lord's Prayer

LEADER The Lord bless us as we return home accompanied by our Real. Present. God!

GROUP Amen!