

ANSWER GUIDE

PSALMS I



LITTLE ROCK SCRIPTURE STUDY

*A ministry of the Diocese of Little Rock
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Psalms 117, 33, 104, 8, 19

1. Each person's experience will be different. This question allows the group members to touch briefly on their own understandings of prayer as the group begins a study of the psalms (which is itself a kind of prayer book).
2. The author of the commentary, John Craghan, helps us see that prayer causes us to interiorize and reflect, allows us to adopt different stances (e.g., awe, wonder, thanksgiving, pain, frustration), opens us to our personal needs and those of others, helps us to think the thoughts of God, and empowers us to interact with our technological age.
3. The psalms deal with universal situations and emotional responses that are common throughout history and across cultures. Both the ancient Israelites and modern Christians are identified as people in covenant with God; this covenant is the basis of prayer and undergirds the honesty found in the psalms.
4. Acknowledging our dependence on God helps us to let go of our egos and reminds us of God's power, authority, and care. These realities naturally open us to express praise of God.
5. God's care for Israel gives witness to the nurturing character of God and becomes an invitation to others to take notice and join in praising God.
6. There are many settings in which we become aware of God's mercy/loving-kindness and faithfulness/loyalty: within family life or at work, during an illness or in recovery, in conversations with others, and so forth. Discussion might surface specific instances where individuals became conscious of God's care.
7. God's word is the instrument of creation and evidence of God's power and loving care. Such power and love evoke awe (or "fear"), leading naturally to praise. The passages cross-referenced support this description.
8. The group discussion may focus on international danger or financial insecurity, or any number of issues where legitimate fears make it difficult to trust in something other than military or political might.

9. Allow time for discussion. When even a few group members are able to describe such times, it helps to open others to recognize how the words of Scripture come alive in their own lives.
10. With phrases about God being clothed in splendor, spreading the heavens like a tent, traveling on the clouds as a chariot, and covering the earth with a watery garment, listeners and readers are given a way to appreciate God's work in creation. Imagery such as this often addresses us at a deeper level than a more literal accounting might.
11. Since water is a source of life and regeneration, it has an obvious connection to its use in baptism and renewal of baptismal promises, the cleansing ritual before the eucharistic prayer at Mass, cleaning the vessels, and so on.
12. If we are aware that we are bound to all creation and responsible to care for the earth, then our actions can reflect God's care for all creation. Your group may want to offer examples of recycling programs at the parish, community gardens, or similar efforts.
13. Allow time for group members to share their remembrances.
14. Responses will vary. This kind of honest struggle is the stuff of prayerful consideration.
15. Jesus uses the passage about praise coming from the mouths of babes to contrast the innocent praise of believers with the presumed sophistication of those who doubt.
16. Rather than praising the Semitic god, who pitches a tent and sleeps with the sun before sending it out, the people of Israel adapt the hymn to praise their God who sends out the sun within the heavens.
17. a) God's law is perfect, trustworthy, right, clear, pure, true, and just.
b) Many people, especially in childhood, experience any law (even God's) as restrictive. However, if understood as intended, as God's wise instruction and care for his people, the law can be experienced as perfect, trustworthy, right, clear, pure, true, and just.
18. Responses will vary and could give rise to some fun and open discussion about why the particular choices were made.