

OCTOBER 18-24

FOR PARENTS

For the next three weeks, we will step away from the history books of the Bible. This week, we will read through some of the books that are known as Writings, then read some of Jesus' parables and connect them to the Psalms.

The writer of Ecclesiastes was a teacher who was full of surprises and unexpected sayings: one moment saying "enjoy life" and the next moment pointing out all of life's emptiness and lack of meaning. Ecclesiastes offers encouragement to follow God and keep God's commandments.

The book of Psalms is the hymnal and prayer book of ancient Israel. One hundred fifty songs were written thousands of years ago. They still sound good to those of us who have times in life when we are thankful, in trouble, threatened by enemies, sad, treated unfairly, afraid, mad at God, suffering, joyful, or awed by the wonders of creation.

The Psalms played an important role in the life and ministry of Jesus. Like scattered seeds, these sacred scriptural songs grew in Jesus, even as he grew in them. In the last moments of his life, wracked with

pain, he would call on the Psalms to provide comfort.

The book of Job is a drama that is full of challenging questions and unexpected answers. The cast of characters features Job, his family and friends, Satan, and God. During a conversation between God and Satan, Satan wonders: Is Job faithful simply because God has abundantly blessed him? The story is about Job's blessings being taken away. The remaining question: **Will Job remain faithful?**

KID CONNECTION

Children often have "big" emotions. The Psalms help us know God isn't disturbed by these dramatic emotions. Our role as parents and faith givers is to help children express their feelings in appropriate ways. Looking to the Psalms to see that God's people experienced these same feelings can be a faith-filled exercise and a great comfort.

REMEMBER 1 THING

Even when his whole world fell apart, Job didn't give up on God. God is bigger than our biggest problems.

READING PLAN

Day	Chapter Titles From <i>Read and Learn Bible</i> * <i>find story on website</i>	Scripture
10/18	A Time for Everything!*	Ecclesiastes 3:1-7
10/19	A Very Important Story	Psalms 22:27, 29-31*; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
10/20	The Lost Sheep	Psalms 23*; Luke 15:1-7
10/21	A Sinner Is Saved	Psalms 61:1-5;* Luke 19:1-10
10/22	Giving Up Really Isn't Easy *	Job 1-2
10/23	God Remembers Job *	Job 19; 38
Sunday	Job's Big Test	Job 38

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Instructions and discussion tips are available on the church website.

Choose one or more activities that will interest your family as you make this week's stories your own.

God the Creator

Celebrate God the Creator with artwork in the style of Van Gogh's painting called *Starry Night*.

Practice the Art of Confession

Supplies needed: sidewalk chalk and bucket of water, or chalkboard, chalk, and eraser.

Family members tell God the things they are sorry for and then symbolically wash them away as God's forgiveness is received.

Make a Card for a Friend.

Be a friend, as Job's friends stood with him in his time of trouble. Create and send a card or letter to someone you know to let them know you are thinking about them.

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God the Creator:

Supplies needed: dark paper, white or light-colored crayons or colored pencils.

In responding to Job's complaints that what Satan did to him was unfair, God asks Job "Do you know the laws of the heavens?" (Job 38: 30). In verse 32 God talks about creating the stars and setting them into constellations.

Invite your children to create a picture of the heavens that God created. Dark paper and light-colored crayons make a wonderful starry night picture. You might show family members an image of Van Gogh's painting called [*Starry Night*](#) as inspiration.

With older children, consider doing some stargazing away from city lights and finding some of the constellations that can be viewed in this season.

Practice the act of confession

Supplies needed: sidewalk chalk, bucket of water. Or chalkboard, chalk, and eraser.

In Job 42:1-5, Job repents for doubting and questioning God. To repent means to turn away from sin and to turn back to God. Each of us makes mistakes and needs to ask for forgiveness and turn back to walking with God (repentance).

Remind family members that Job asked God to forgive him when he complained and blamed God. Also remind family members that "God hates the sin, but God never stops loving us." (Question 13 Belonging to God: First Catechism, Question 13)

Invite family members to think of something they have done that separates them from God and for which they want to ask forgiveness. Write it in chalk on the sidewalk or on a chalk board. Say a prayer of confession. (God I'm sorry..., please forgive me.") then offer the Words of Affirmation: "In the Name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven." Then use the bucket of water or an eraser on the chalkboard to erase the writing -wiping out the "sin," just as God forgives us and offers us grace and mercy.

Make a card for a friend.

Job had friends who stood with him when he was lowest. Be a friend to someone and send them a card or letter to let them know you are thinking about them and praying for them. Need ideas of who might like a card? Check out the prayer list on our church website.