

Psalms of Wonder

Uses for Home & Places of Worship

A psalm is a song that we sing to God.

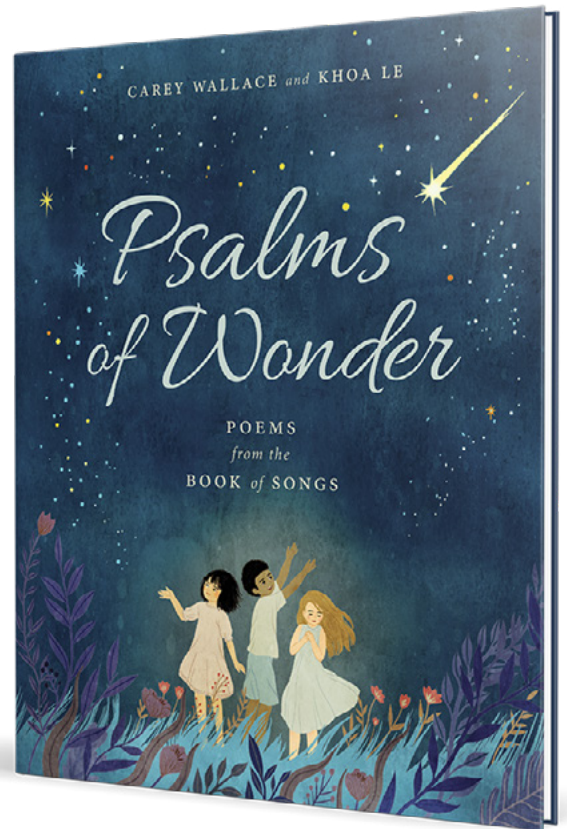
Psalms have music within them, filled with rhyme and rhythm. Can you feel it? They are a way people living long ago, and people still today, express many different feelings to God. The psalms are often used in communal worship, but also may be used for group or personal study and devotion or at home with a family group composed of different ages. The ideas in this guide provide a number of ways you can use *Psalms of Wonder* both at home and in multiple group settings.

The at-home section of this guide is intentionally designed as a single page (p. 2) so that you can email or print this page to share with families reading *Psalms of Wonder* at home. Visit www.flyawaybooks.com/resources to download the at-home activities as a single-page file.

The remaining pages contain ideas for group study for multiple age ranges and devotional practices for adults.

We've also provided art for use in the settings described in this guide. For any other use, please contact rights@flyawaybooks.com. You can access these images by [clicking here](#). When you click this link, a webpage will open and a .zip file will begin downloading.

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Using *Psalms of Wonder* at Home



Read the Psalm Aloud

The psalms communicate emotion and story, not information. When you read a psalm, take your time, allowing pauses at the end of lines and at each punctuation mark. Let your heart really hear what the writer is saying and think about how you connect with those emotions. Read aloud together with one voice or take turns, alternating sentences.

Wonder Together

After reading through the psalm, choose one or more of the questions below to discuss together.

- How does this psalm make you feel?
- When have you wanted to sing or pray these words?
- What word or phrase stands out for you today? Why?

Continue contemplating the psalm by looking at the art surrounding the words and talking about one or more of the following questions.

- How can you imagine yourself in this picture?
- How does the art make you feel? ([Download a .zip file of select art from the book.](#))
- If you were going to illustrate this psalm, what would you put in the picture?

Engage with the Psalm

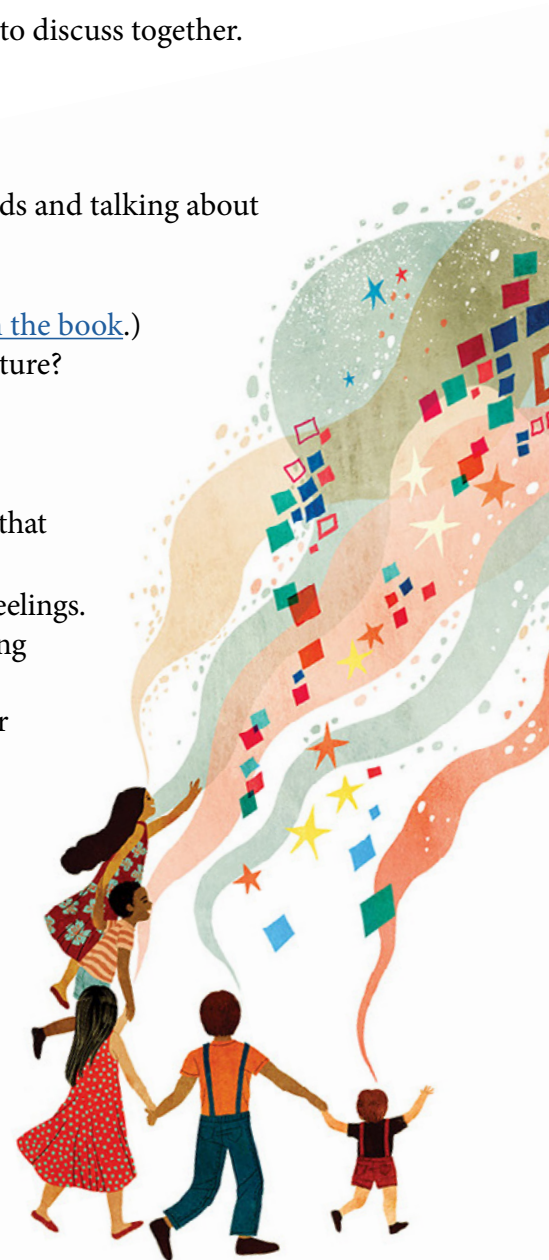
Choose a word or phrase from the psalm that interests you today. Engage with that phrase through one of the following activities as a family or alone.

- Use art supplies and draw, color, paint, or sculpt words, a scene, or your feelings.
- Move your body—dance, create motions, or go for a walk while repeating your phrase from the psalm.
- Create a rhythm or melody. Sing a song, play an instrument, or use your body to make music.
- Sit quietly and meditate using your chosen word or phrase.
- Do an internet image or video search for the psalm number and “art” or “song” and discover the ways people have expressed this psalm.
- Write your own poem, prayer, or song to God.

Pray for the Gift of Psalms

Give thanks to God for this psalm. Use the following prayer, or one of your own choosing.

Thank you, God for this psalm. Thank you for the feelings expressed by the psalmist that are our feelings too. Thank you for hearing our feelings of joy or pain, praise or anger, confidence or fear. We are grateful that we can bring our whole selves to you and you love us just the way we are. Amen.



Using *Psalms of Wonder* in Youth & Adult Bible Study



Invite each person in the group to choose a psalm and lead the study for that session.

Have the leader use the following process with the group:

- Begin by sharing why you chose that particular psalm.
- Read the psalm aloud. This may be done by an individual, in unison, or alternating sentences. Remember that the psalms communicate emotion and story, not information. When you read a psalm, take your time, allowing pauses at the end of lines and at each punctuation mark. Let your heart really hear what the writer is saying and think about how you connect with those emotions.
- Engage the participants in conversation using the following questions:
 - In the book *Psalms of Wonder*, this psalm is called a “Psalm of [name of theme].” Why do you think it is in this category?
 - Consider the words of the psalm and the illustrations on the page. Where do you see yourself in this psalm? Why?
 - What excites you in this psalm?
 - What challenges you in this psalm?
 - How do the visual images fit, or not, with the way you hear the psalm? ([Download a .zip file of select art from the book.](#))
 - What do you wonder about or want to know more about?
 - What will this psalm move you to think, feel, do, or be?
- Close with a time of prayer. Either ask for prayer requests that have arisen from the study of this psalm, invite people to pray silently sharing with God what is in their hearts, or pray a prayer of your own choosing. Close the time of prayer by thanking God for the psalm and for loving everyone just as they are, all the time!

Additional Activity Options:

- Do an internet video search for music by entering the Psalm number and “song” or “songs with lyrics” (e.g., Psalm 19 song with lyrics). Sing, listen to, and/or explore a song or hymn related to the particular psalm.
- Invite participants to choose a sentence or two of the psalm and make it their own by memorizing it. To help memorizing the section of the psalm, suggest that they:
 - illustrate it
 - write it down, emphasizing key words in different colors or sizes
 - create movement to go with the lines of the psalm
 - walk with it, saying a word at each step
 - use it as a breath prayer, inhaling on one part of the sentence and exhaling on the next part



Using *Psalms of Wonder* in Bible Study with Children



Have the leader choose a psalm to explore for each session. Then use the following process with the group:

- Read the psalm aloud. This may be done by the leader, an individual, or alternating sentences with volunteers. Remember that the psalms communicate emotion and story, not information. When you read a psalm, take your time, allowing pauses at the end of lines and at each punctuation mark. Let your heart really hear what the writer is saying and think about how you connect with those emotions.
- Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:
 - In the book *Psalms of Wonder*, this psalm is called a “Psalm of [name of theme].” Why do you think it is in this category?
 - What words or phrases paint a picture for you or do you see in your imagination?
 - What excites you in this psalm?
 - What challenges you in this psalm?
 - What do you see in the picture that is with this psalm? Why do you think the artist used this picture or these colors to illustrate this psalm? What might you do differently? ([Download a .zip file of select art from the book.](#))
 - Where do you feel this psalm in your body? Move or pose your body to show how it makes you feel.
 - What do you wonder about or want to know more about?
- Close with prayer. Invite the children to talk with God in prayer as a response to the psalm. Suggest that they think about the feelings they heard in the psalm and what they might want to tell God about their own feelings. Close the time of prayer by thanking God for the psalm and for loving everyone just as they are, all the time!

Additional Activity Options:

- Music: Do an internet video search for music by entering the Psalm number and “song,” “songs with lyrics,” or “songs for children with lyrics” (e.g., Psalm 19 song with lyrics). Sing, listen to, and/or explore a song or hymn related to the particular psalm.
- Art: Invite the children to paint, color, or sculpt an image or picture that comes to mind as they hear or think about this psalm. For group activity, provide construction paper and have the children rip the paper and glue it to a large piece of paper to create a group mural.
- Movement: Invite the children to create movement or motions that goes with the lines of the psalm. It may be expressive of the words or the feelings evoked.
- Memorization: Invite the children to choose a sentence or two of the psalm and make it their own by memorizing it. To help memorizing the section of the psalm, suggest that they:
 - illustrate it
 - write it down, emphasizing key words in different colors or sizes
 - create movement to go with the lines of the psalm
 - walk with it, saying a word at each step
 - use it as a breath prayer, inhaling on one part of the sentence and exhaling on the next part

Using *Psalms of Wonder* as a Devotional



Using elements of *lectio divina* (reading with God) and *visio divina* (seeing with God), choose a psalm as a personal or group devotional. Use the following steps:

- Slowly read the psalm aloud, even if it is just for personal devotion. Hearing the rhythm and rhyme, the sentence structure, and the lyricism of the words can be enlightening. The ears may hear something the eyes rush over.
- Ponder the following questions:
 - What word or phrase stood out for you?
 - What in the illustration caught your attention? ([Download a .zip file of select art from the book.](#))
 - How do the words and image speak to one another for you? Were they in concert or disjointed? What feelings did they evoke in you?
 - What do you think God might be saying to you at this time?
- Pray the words that stood out for you. Walk with them, breathe them in and out, or sit silently with them.
- Give thanks to God for this psalm, for your engagement with it, and for loving you always, at all times.

In the coming days or week:

- Listen for the words you chose from the psalm in the world around you.
- Look for the images from your chosen psalm in the world around you through color, shape, pattern, or repetition.
- Reflect on what you hear and see. Write about or draw your thoughts and/or discuss them with another person.

Lent Devotional

A personal or group devotional may be used at any time, but the season of Lent is ideal for personal reflection. Traditionally Lent is counted as 40 days, not counting Sundays.

In *Psalms of Wonder*, there are 39 pages with psalms, sometimes splitting a longer psalm into two pages. Begin your Lenten devotional period by reading the Introduction on day one, then focusing on one page at a time. When a psalm is split into two pages, you may choose to read each page separately, or read the full psalm two days in a row. On Sundays, take time to use one or more of the reflection activities above for the psalm that most struck you that week.

