

Wonder: Week 1 (March 13)

Story: The Great Family

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-10 (Teach me your paths)

More Food for Thought: Godly Play & The Importance of Stories

This week we offer food for thought on the importance of stories from Godly Play founder and Episcopal Priest, Jerome Berryman:

“Children love to hear and tell stories. Stories are where all of us, children and adults Together, find our identity, our family. In stories we challenge the messages of the powers-that be—greed, poverty, powerlessness—that rob us of relationships and meaning. Through story we also invite one another to give meaning to our world and ultimately to our lives. In research done in Houston, one common factor found in at-risk youth was that they had no stories. Sharing stories and fully entering into them is how we mature. Telling and actively listening to stories is more important than it seems. To carry stories within us is to become wisdom-bearers, God-bearers, like Mary herself. The elders of a community tell their stories, and children find meaning in those stories and relationships with those elders. Perhaps the best way to sum up many of the possibilities and limitations of narratives and language itself is to tell a story about your family right now.”

Godly Play & Wondering

This week we offer food for thought on the importance of “wondering questions” from Godly Play founder and Episcopal Priest, Jerome Berryman:

“At the conclusion of most Godly Play presentations, the storyteller invites the children to wonder together about the lesson. Each kind of Godly Play presentation (sacred stories, parables and liturgical actions) has its own type of wondering questions:

- *Sacred stories are stories that invite us to claim our identity as one of God’s People. An important wondering question for sacred stories is, “I wonder where you are in this story, or what part of this story is about you?”*
- *Parables are brief narratives that challenge our everyday view of life. An important wondering question for parables is, “I wonder what this seed (pearl, tree, etc.) could really be?”*
- *Liturgical action presentations invite us to integrate our life with the worship of the Christian people. An important wondering question for liturgical actions is, “I wonder if you have ever come close to this color (water, light, etc.) in church?”*

DINNER CONVERSATION STARTER: Introduce yourself and share a story about a trip you’ve taken, or a move you’ve made from one home to another OR tell a story about the birth of a baby in your family

Wonder: Week 2 (March 20)

Story: The Parable of the Sower

Psalm: Psalm 118:1-24

More Food for thought: Godly Play & the nature of Parables

This week we offer food for thought on the nature of parables from Godly Play founder and Episcopal Priest, Jerome Berryman:

“ A number of Godly Play lessons explore parables. Parables stimulate our sense of creativity. In parables, we enter with wonder to live the question. Parables question our everyday view of life. They wake us up to see in life what we have not seen before. Parables question the status quo, the order imposed by tradition, power or class. That is why Jesus’ parables often got him into trouble, and why Christians ever since have sometimes redefined parables in ways that only comfort us rather than challenge us by disrupting our comfortable worldviews. We can sum up the startling quality of parables with a laugh: “Ha, ha!” Jesus’ parables can make us laugh aloud as they turn our accepted worldviews upside down.”

DINNER CONVERSATION STARTER: Introduce yourself and tell a story about gardening, farming, or nature from your life OR tell a story about a disappointment and a (perhaps surprising) success in your life.

Wonder: Week 3 (March 27)

Story: The Exile and Return **Psalm: Psalm 22:1-22**

More Food for thought: Godly Play & Sacred Stories

This year St. Mark's Wednesday night Lenten program (aka "Wonder") invites people of all ages to encounter God through the practice of Godly Play. This week we offer food for thought on the nature of Sacred Stories from Godly Play founder and Episcopal Priest, Jerome Berryman:

"Sacred stories stimulate our sense of Christian unity and provide raw material for the development of a coherent, mature sense of Christian identity. In sacred stories, we tell the story of God's People to invite children to become part of that story. The story of God and God's People is almost like playing the game of Hide-and- Seek with God. God calls people into relationship, who then respond by trying to connect with what they experience as an Elusive Presence. Both words of this phrase are significant: we cannot fully capture our experience of God in any story or rite—yet it is God's presence that invites us endlessly to follow what glimpses we find. The very existence of the game communicates to us the existence of a divine Player. This game is played for the pleasure of its playing and not to win or lose, which would end the game. As we seek and find, we could sum up our story with the word Aha! Another glimpse!"

DINNER CONVERSATION STARTER: Introduce yourself and share a story about being lost (or far from home) OR tell a story about "homecoming" from your life.

Wonder: Week 4 (April 3)

Story: Baptism

Psalm: Psalm 19

More Food for Thought : Godly Play & Liturgical Actions

This week we offer food for thought on Liturgical Action Stories from Godly Play founder and Episcopal Priest, Jerome Berryman:

“A few Godly Play lessons explore liturgical actions. Liturgical actions help integrate our sense of identity (given through sacred stories), of the creative process (given through parables), and of the unspoken presence of God (given through silence). In liturgical actions, we mark life, time and space, so children can know the Holy. As in the great liturgical actions of the whole Church, Godly Play liturgical actions evoke a wholehearted aesthetic appreciation of “Ahh...” Godly Play lessons are not the liturgy itself. Neither are Godly Play lessons simply talking about the liturgy. That kind of scholarly approach would not invite children to enter deeply into the offered experience. Instead, Godly Play liturgical action lessons present a kind of language-learning. Children can learn how liturgy works and have an appropriate place to practice the language and actions of liturgy, so they can enter more fully into the worship experience of their church.”

DINNER CONVERSATION STARTER: Introduce yourself and share a story from your life that involves water.

Wonder: Week 5 (April 10)

Story: The Parable of the Good Shepherd

Psalm: Psalm 107:1-32

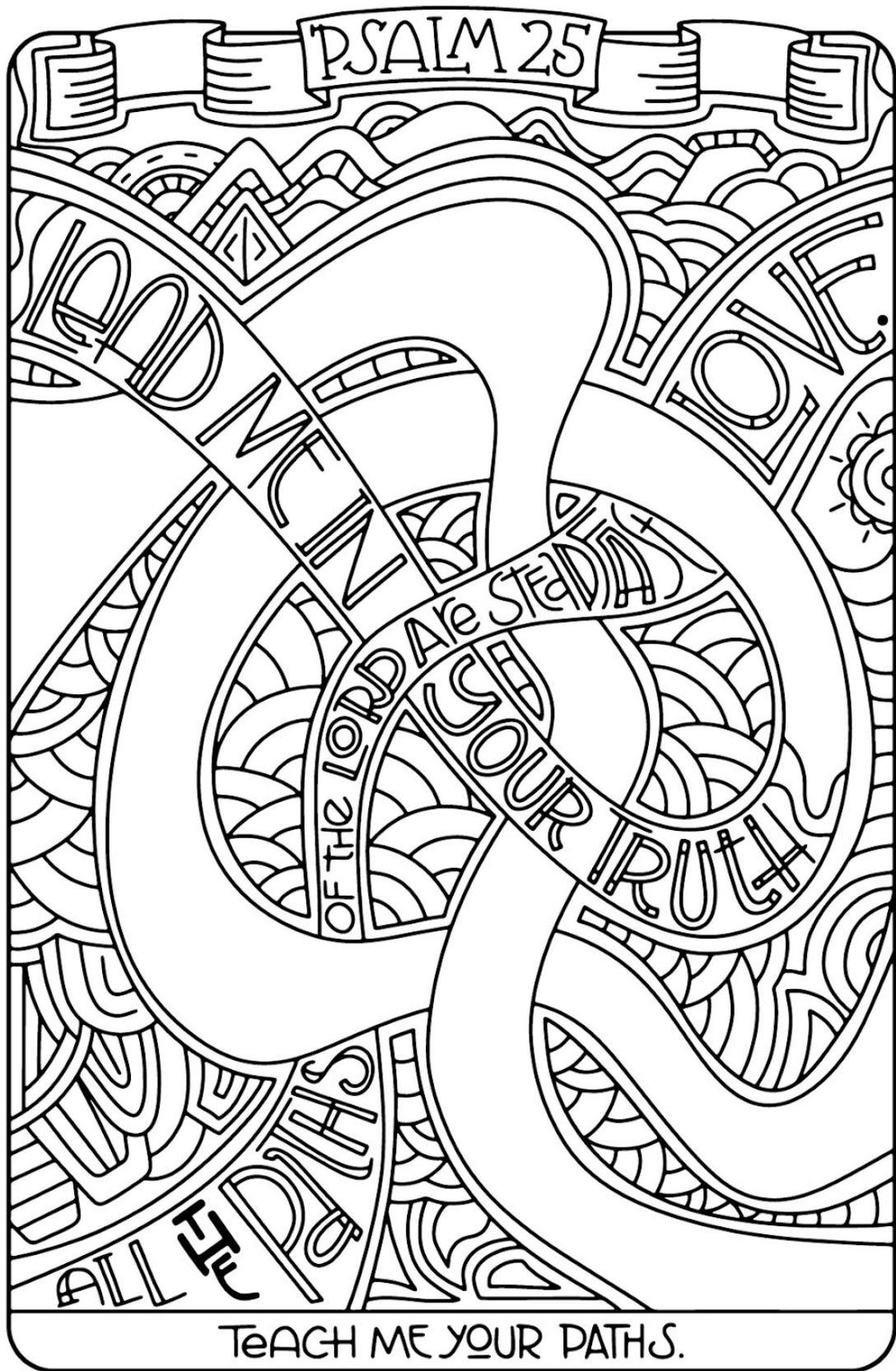
More Food for thought: Godly Play & Monastic and Scholastic Uses of Story

This week we offer food for thought on different ways to engage sacred texts from Godly Play founder and Episcopal Priest, Jerome Berryman:

“At the heart of most Godly Play sessions is the telling of the story. Story is one of the most ancient and elemental forms of knowing. In the West, beginning in the 17th century, story as a way of knowing was eclipsed by the technique of knowing that we call science. But story is not a diversion or simply entertainment, but a unique way of knowing, as valid as science though different in its usefulness.

There are two primary ways of using scripture stories: monastic and scholastic. The monastic approach, known as lectio divina (holy reading), emphasizes reading as meditation and prayer. The reader seeks an intuitive understanding, to savor the aesthetic value of the words and, ultimately, to encounter God. This monastic approach to stories is similar to the way we begin in Godly Play. The scholastic approach emphasizes reading as an act of questioning and testing. The reader comes to the text to seek logical understanding, grow in knowledge and analyze for ideas and theories. As children approach their teens, this more analytical approach develops in Godly Play, too. In Godly Play, you will notice the integration and appropriate use of these two ways of knowing in each presentation.”

DINNER CONVERSATION STARTER: Introduce yourself and share a story about a time you were in danger.



Week 1: Psalm 25:1-10
Teach me your Paths

- 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; *
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

- 2 Let none who look to you be put to shame; *
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.

- 3 Show me your ways, O LORD, *
and teach me your paths.

- 4 Lead me in your truth and teach me, *
for you are the God of my salvation
in you have I trusted all the day long.

- 5 Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, *
for they are from everlasting.

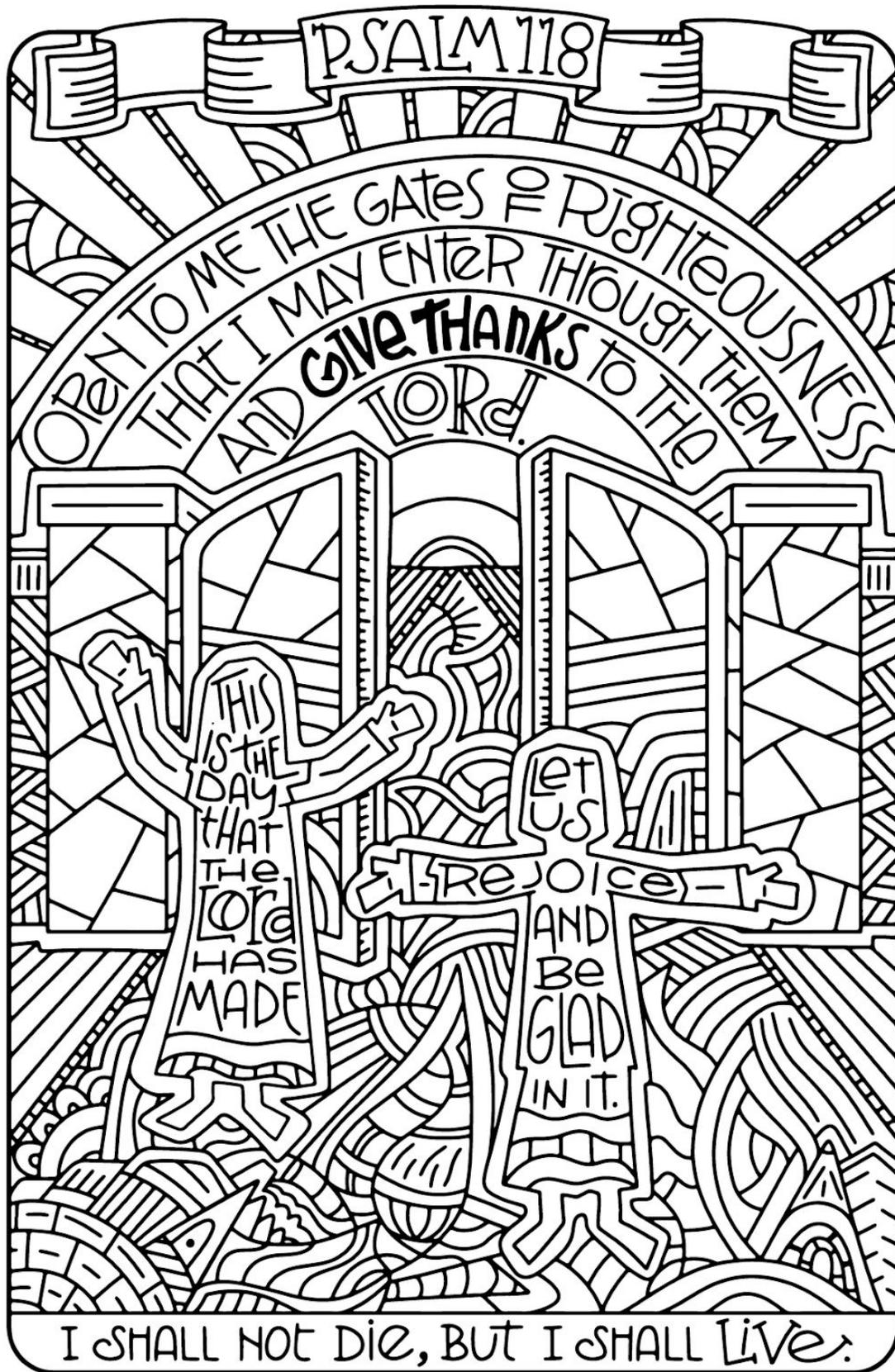
- 6 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; *
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

- 7 Gracious and upright is the LORD; *
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

- 8 He guides the humble in doing right *
and teaches his way to the lowly.

- 9 All the paths of the LORD are love and faithfulness *
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

- 10 For your Name's sake, O LORD, *
forgive my sin, for it is great.



Week 2: Psalm 118:1-24
I shall not die, but I shall live

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; *
his mercy endures for ever.

- 2 Let Israel now proclaim, *
"His mercy endures for ever."

- 3 Let the house of Aaron now proclaim, *
"His mercy endures for ever."

- 4 Let those who fear the LORD now proclaim, *
"His mercy endures for ever."

- 5 I called to the LORD in my distress; *
the LORD answered by setting me free.

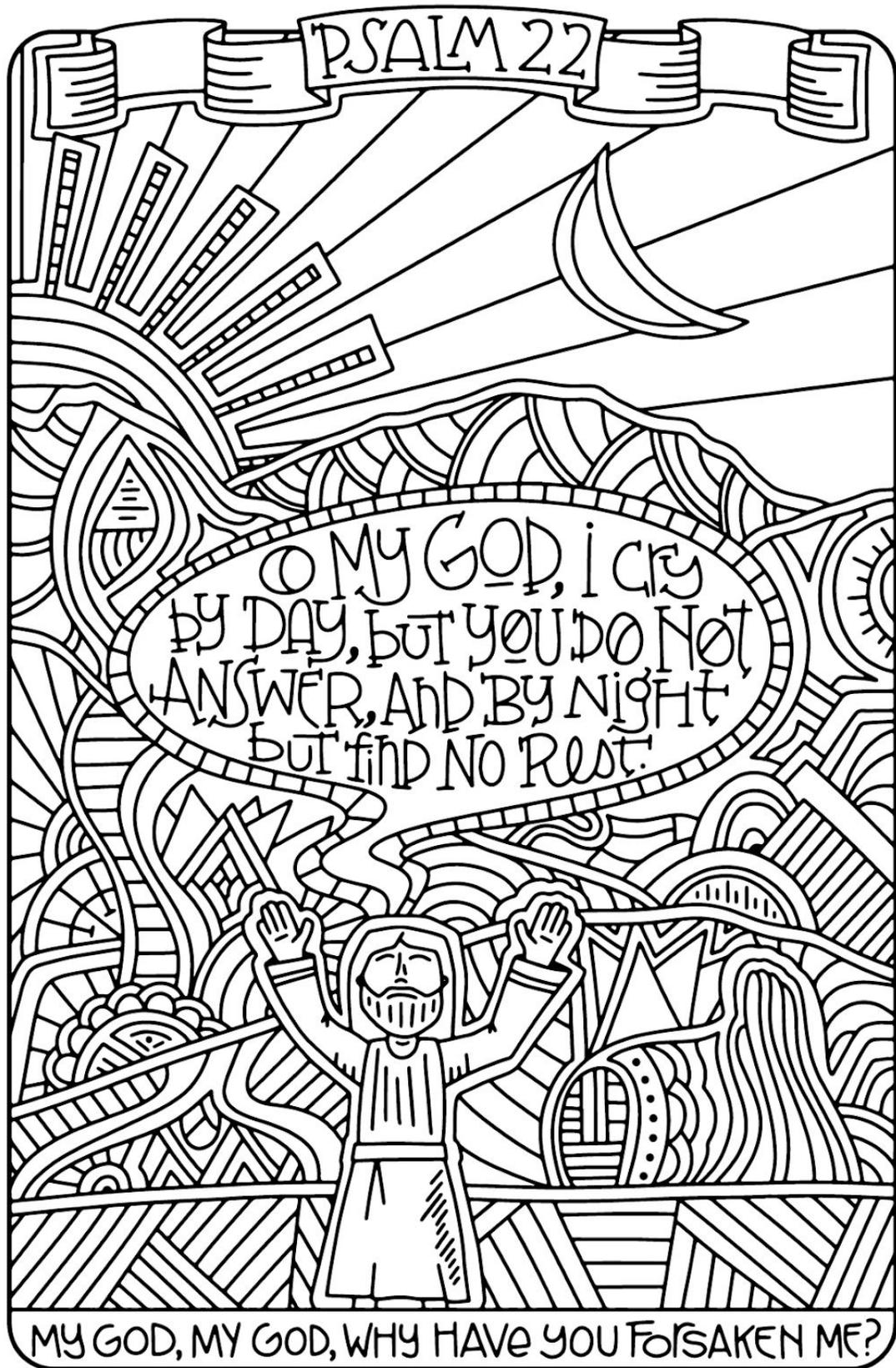
- 6 The LORD is at my side, therefore I will not fear; *
what can anyone do to me?

- 7 The LORD is at my side to help me; *
I will triumph over those who hate me.

- 8 It is better to rely on the LORD *
than to put any trust in flesh.
- 9 It is better to rely on the LORD *
than to put any trust in rulers.
- 10 All the ungodly encompass me; *
in the Name of the LORD I will repel them.
- 11 They hem me in, they hem me in on every side; *
in the name of the LORD I will repel them.
- 12 They swarm about me like bees; they blaze like a fire of thorns; *
in the name of the LORD I will repel them.
- 13 I was pressed so hard that I almost fell, *
but the LORD came to my help.
- 14 The LORD is my strength and my song, *
and he has become my salvation.
- 15 There is a sound of exultation and victory *
in the tents of the righteous:

- 16 "The right hand of the LORD has triumphed! *
the right hand of the LORD is exalted!
the right hand of the LORD has triumphed!"
- 17 I shall not die, but live, *
and declare the works of the LORD.
- 18 The LORD has punished me sorely, *
but he did not hand me over to death.
- 19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; *
I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the LORD.
- 20 "This is the gate of the LORD; *
he who is righteous may enter."
- 21 I will give thanks to you, for you answered me *
and have become my salvation.
- 22 The same stone which the builders rejected *
has become the chief cornerstone.
- 23 This is the LORD'S doing, *
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

24 On this day the LORD has acted; *
we will rejoice and be glad in it.



Week 3: Psalm 22:1-22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *
 and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?

- 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *
 by night as well, but I find no rest.

- 3 Yet you are the Holy One, *
 enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

- 4 Our forefathers put their trust in you; *
 they trusted, and you delivered them.

- 5 They cried out to you and were delivered; *
 they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

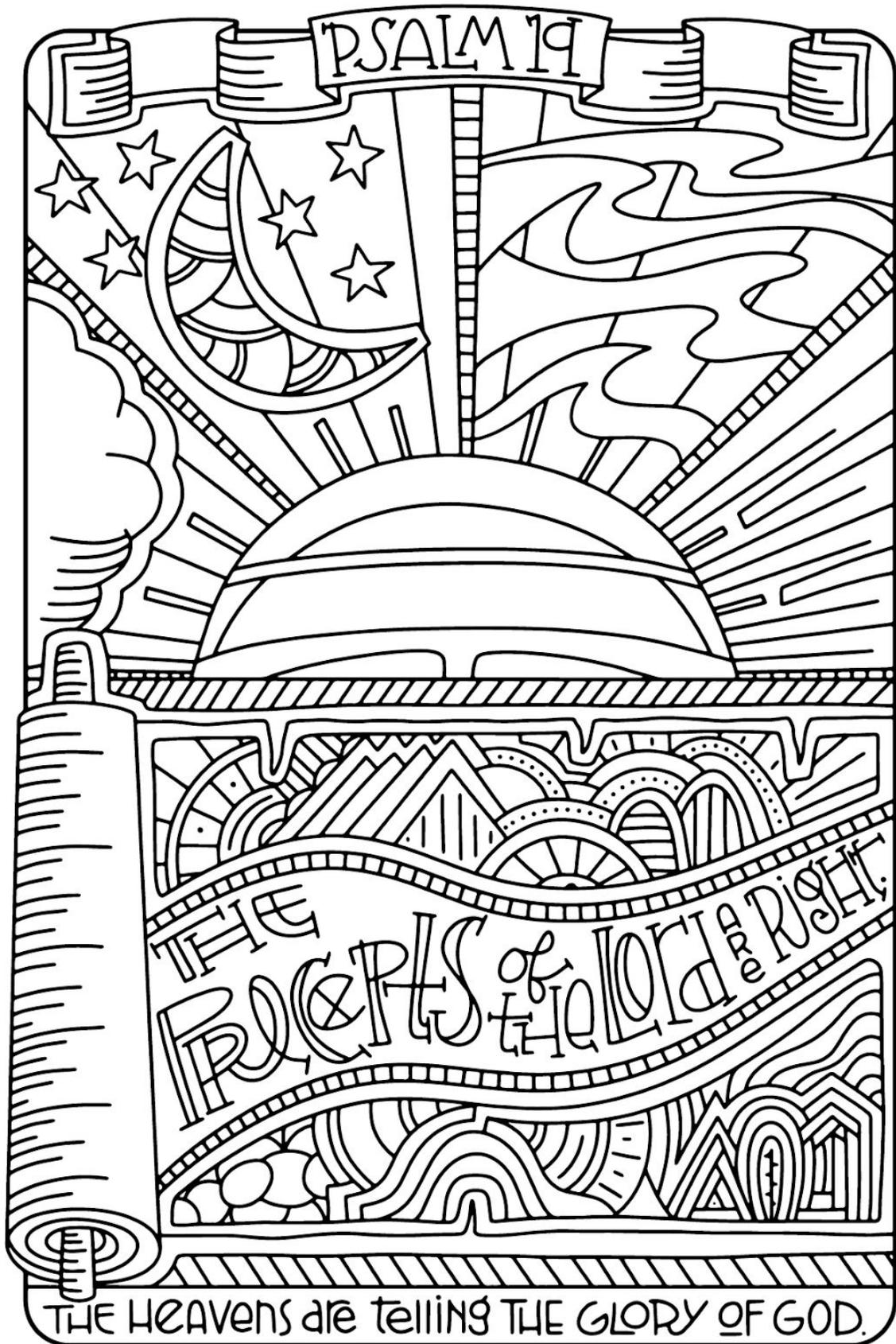
- 6 But as for me, I am a worm and no man, *
 scorned by all and despised by the people.

- 7 All who see me laugh me to scorn; *
 they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

- 8 "He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him; *
let him rescue him, if he delights in him."
- 9 Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, *
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
- 10 I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; *
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.
- 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, *
and there is none to help.
- 12 Many young bulls encircle me; *
strong bulls of Bashan surround me.
- 13 They open wide their jaws at me, *
like a ravening and a roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; *
my heart within my breast is melting wax.

- 15 My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd;
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; *
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.
- 16 Packs of dogs close me in, and gangs of evildoers circle around me; *
they pierce my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.
- 17 They stare and gloat over me; *
they divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.
- 18 Be not far away, O LORD; *
you are my strength; hasten to help me.
- 19 Save me from the sword, *
my life from the power of the dog.
- 20 Save me from the lion's mouth, *
my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.
- 21 I will declare your Name to my brethren; *
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.
- 22 Praise the LORD, you that fear him; *
stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel

all you of Jacob's line, give glory.



Week 4: Psalm 19

The heavens are telling the glory of God

- The heavens declare the glory of God, *
- 1 and the firmament shows his handiwork.

 - 2 One day tells its tale to another, *
and one night imparts knowledge to another.

 - 3 Although they have no words or language, *
and their voices are not heard,

 - 4 Their sound has gone out into all lands, *
and their message to the ends of the world.

 - 5 In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; *
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

 - 6 It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens
and runs about to the end of it again; *
nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean and endures for ever; *
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, *
sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.
- 11 By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.
- 12 Who can tell how often he offends? *
cleanse me from my secret faults.
- 13 Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion over me; *
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable in your sight, *
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.



Week 5: Psalm 107:1-32
God's steadfast love endures forever

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, *
and his mercy endures for ever.

- 2 Let all those whom the LORD has redeemed proclaim *
that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.

- 3 He gathered them out of the lands; *
from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

- 4 Some wandered in desert wastes; *
they found no way to a city where they might dwell.

- 5 They were hungry and thirsty; *
their spirits languished within them.

- 6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, *
and he delivered them from their distress.

- 7 He put their feet on a straight path *
to go to a city where they might dwell.

- 8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy *
and the wonders he does for his children.
- 9 For he satisfies the thirsty *
and fills the hungry with good things.
- 10 Some sat in darkness and deep gloom, *
bound fast in misery and iron;
- 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God *
and despised the counsel of the Most High.
- 12 So he humbled their spirits with hard labor; *
they stumbled, and there was none to help.
- 13 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, *
and he delivered them from their distress.
- 14 He led them out of darkness and deep gloom *
and broke their bonds asunder.
- 15 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy *
and the wonders he does for his children.

- 16 For he shatters the doors of bronze *
and breaks in two the iron bars.
- 17 Some were fools and took to rebellious ways; *
they were afflicted because of their sins.
- 18 They abhorred all manner of food *
and drew near to death's door.
- 19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, *
and he delivered them from their distress.
- 20 He sent forth his word and healed them *
and saved them from the grave.
- 21 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy *
and the wonders he does for his children.
- 22 Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and tell of his acts with shouts of joy.
- 23 Some went down to the sea in ships *
and plied their trade in deep waters;

- 24 They beheld the works of the LORD *
and his wonders in the deep.
- 25 Then he spoke, and a stormy wind arose, *
which tossed high the waves of the sea.
- 26 They mounted up to the heavens and fell back to the depths; *
their hearts melted because of their peril.
- 27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards *
and were at their wits' end.
- 28 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, *
and he delivered them from their distress.
- 29 He stilled the storm to a whisper *
and quieted the waves of the sea.
- 30 Then were they glad because of the calm, *
and he brought them to the harbor they were bound for.
- 31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy *
and the wonders he does for his children.

32 Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people *
and praise him in the council of the elders.