
Psalms: Let's Talk

This Grace@Home Let's Talk Guide provides discussion questions and activities that you may use to facilitate conversations about God and His Word in your home. The focus is on those chapters that are most likely to promote meaningful conversations for all ages of family members.

Psalms 19

Watch the YouTube video of Third Day singing "God of Wonders" here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CBNE25rtnE>

Then read Psalm 19. Go around in a circle and have each family member name a different item of God's creation. How many revolutions can you make before someone repeats an item? Thank God for the wonderful world He created!

Questions:

1. What declares the glory of God? How? For you personally, what in nature makes you think of God's wonder?
2. Is there any place or any thing in the universe that doesn't have God's "thumbprint" on it? What verse tells you that?
3. What is more valuable than gold and sweeter than honey? Why? Does your life reflect this attitude?
4. What does verse 14 mean? What does this look like in our lives?

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is one of the most familiar Bible passages. Have each family member read (if appropriate) and act out a verse. Or for the older crowd, turn this psalm into a "mad lib."

Questions:

1. What does He make us lie down in? We're not sheep, so what does that mean for us?
2. What comforts the psalmist? What can we do when we become scared or worried?
3. Have you ever had a time when you completely relied on God? Please share with each other.
4. David wrote this while he was a shepherd. If you were to write a song to God and had to complete the phrase "The Lord is my..." what would you say and why?

Psalm 34

Give everyone a handful of candy hearts or some heart-related items. Put a bowl on the table. Let each person share at least one blessing they have received from the Lord and try to throw the heart into the bowl. Then go around the table again and have each family member share one thing that they are thankful for concerning the person on their right before throwing another heart in the bowl. Continue until you run out of hearts or family members.

Questions:

1. What are some of the things that David says he will do or tells others to do? What is one thing he says that you can apply this week?
2. What are some things that David says the Lord does? Which of these comforts you the most today?
3. From what should we keep our tongue?
4. Does this psalm say that if we are good we will escape any trouble? What does it say? How can you praise God in the good times and bad? Which is easier? Why?

Psalm 37

Questions:

1. Who should we "rest in" and what should we do while resting? Is this easy for you? Why or why not?
2. What happens to the steps of a good man? Will he ever fall? What will God do in the midst of this? Can anyone in your family give an example of this happening?
3. Name a time when you have had to trust in God and wait on Him. How hard was it to put your faith in someone other than yourself?
4. This is a great chapter with many action verbs. Go through the psalm again and write down the action verbs at the start of several verses. Which one can you concentrate on applying today?

Psalm 40

David was a man in touch with his emotions and exhibits a wide range of them in the Psalms. However, at some point in his psalms, David shows that regardless of what he is feeling, he will choose to trust God. Play a game of charades and see if your family can guess the emotion you are portraying.

Questions:

1. Where did David proclaim the good news of righteousness?
2. What attributes of God will preserve David?
3. Look back through the passage and list some of the emotions David might have had while writing this psalm. Act out a verse or two with strong emotions. Do you talk to God when you have strong emotions? Do you think He wants you to?
4. Discuss with your family a time when you have been bold in telling someone about God. Were you nervous about what they would think or say to you? What happened?

Psalm 42

Discuss a time when you have been waiting for someone to be with you; maybe a relative or friend that was going to visit. How did it feel while you had to wait?

Questions:

1. What has been his food day and night (remember: this is a guy talking)?
2. If you were to rewrite the first verse in the illustrations or language of today, what would you say?
3. What pieces of advice does David give himself after acknowledging how he was down in the dumps? What would be an example of actually doing this?
4. Have you ever had a time when you were going through a hard time and needed God? How did you talk to God? What did you chose to do? Did He help you? If so, how?

Psalm 46

Watch the video "Be Still and Know" by Steven Curtis Chapman here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgaHaioAjyg>

Now read Psalm 46 and compare the words in each of these songs. Which ones are the same?

Questions:

1. According to verse one, what is our God to us? Can you think of a time in your life where He was that to you?
2. What are some of the pictures this psalmist paints about God's strength? Do you think God can be that strong in your life? How [what hints does the psalmist give us]?
3. What can you do in your life today to be still and know He is God? Close your eyes and be still for one minute as you think about God. Was that difficult to do?
4. What distraction can you eliminate from your life for at least a few minutes a day to remember that God is God and nothing else should take His place?

Psalm 49

How many details do you know about your great, great grandparents' lives? Share some old family stories. It is human nature to want to be remembered forever by humanity, but the reality is only God remembers all the details of all our lives. We should put the focus of our lives on pleasing Him rather than making a name for ourselves.

Questions:

1. What good is it to trust in your wealth? Can the amount of money you have affect whether or not you are going to heaven?
2. What does God say happens to our riches when we die? If that is true, how much time should we spend trying to get wealthy?
3. Who only redeems us?
4. Do you know people who are wealthy but are not happy? Do you know people who don't have many possessions but are content and even happy? Why do you think that is? Are you content with what you have?

Psalm 51

Watch this video of the song "Create in me a Clean Heart" by 7th Harmony here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p006tMMqh0I>

David wrote Psalm 51 after Nathan the prophet confronted him about his sins (2Sam 12).

Questions

1. What does David say about his sin/iniquity/transgression? Does he try to make excuses at all?
2. What does David ask God to create in him? What does that look like in our lives?
3. When you sin, do you ask God for forgiveness? Why is it important to ask God to forgive us?
4. What does God desire more than sacrifices? How do we do that practically? What kind of heart do you have? If appropriate, take some time to write your own psalm of repentance or draw a picture.

Psalm 56

Gather a plastic bottle, paper, and crayons/markers/pens before you begin. Ask each family member to write a list or draw a picture of any fears they may have. Discuss with the family members what they drew or wrote and pray for those items. Then put all those pieces of paper into a bottle and give it over to God.

Questions:

1. Where does God put our tears? What do you think about that? God is certainly detail-oriented!
2. What phrase is repeated in this psalm? Where else in our society have you heard or seen a phrase similar to this?
3. David wrote this psalm after being captured by the Philistines; most people would be afraid in his shoes. How does he turn his fear to God?
4. When you are scared who do you usually talk to?

Psalm 63

Eat a bag of potato chips or something salty while you read today's lesson, but don't drink anything. When you are done, share how thirsty you are. David thirsted for God more than you thirst for a drink right now. End with sharing a favorite drink, thanking God that He wants to know us.

Questions:

1. Who will the psalmist lift his hands to?
2. Do you ever think about God when you are lying in bed at night? Try talking to Him as you wait to fall asleep.
3. Have you ever craved something so much that you had to have it right now? Do you feel like you crave God in that way?
4. How could you rewrite verse one replacing thirst with saying you want to know God more than you want...(example: a double chocolate fudge brownie). Then pray that you really would desire to know God more than anything else.

Psalm 65

As a family, go to a park or take a nature walk. Imagine if God hadn't made colors or sounds or everything was in the shape of a triangle. How different (and boring) the world would be! Give each family member a chance to praise God for his/her favorite part of creation.

Questions:

1. What do our sins (iniquities) do to us? How does God handle them?
2. Make a list of all the things you learn about God from this chapter.
3. David was a shepherd and spent a lot of time outside so he wrote about the works of God in nature. How can you see God when you are inside your house, school, or work?
4. If you were to write a two sentence psalm of praise to God, what would you say?

Psalm 66

Watch the video "Shout to the Lord" from Hillsong

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdcE887WCLE>

Then read Psalm 66. What do you think the songwriters were feeling when they wrote this song/psalm? Have you ever felt this way?

Questions:

1. What kind of shout should we make to the Lord?
2. Who will worship the Lord? Have you ever been as excited about God as you have been at a concert or sporting event? Why should we be more excited about God? Why is it sometimes difficult to praise Him?
3. What are some of God's awesome works listed in this psalm?
4. Should we praise God only for the good things in our life or for the bad things too? How do you praise God for the bad?

Psalm 69

David asks for help from God in this Psalm. As a family, see if you can remember any specific Bible events in which David was in trouble and reached out to God. What was happening to David at that time? Did God help David? How?

Questions:

1. What are some of the emotions David had in this Psalm?
2. Why is David upset?
3. Despite his feelings, what choices does David make in this Psalm? What is your favorite verse in this Psalm? Why?
4. Have you had a time when you have needed God and felt alone? What happened?

Psalm 71

Give a sheet of blank paper to each member of the family and have them write their name on it. Rotate papers and write at least one word or phrase to describe that person. Rotate through so everyone has a chance to write at least once on each person's paper. Parents can write for the little ones. Just as every family relationship is unique, so each individual's connection with God is also unique. How do you uniquely know God?

Questions:

1. What does the psalmist ask God to be for him? What do you think that means?
2. From what does he ask God to deliver him?
3. Find three "You are..." phrases in this Psalm. Can you create your own "You are..." phrase to God?
4. What are some of the "do not's" that David asks? What kind of "do not" prayer would you like to ask God?

Psalm 77

Pick one person to read the psalm aloud. Then pick another person (or split up the psalm and take turns) to mime out the actions while it is being read. If you want to add a challenge, first gather a small bucket of random household items and challenge the "mime" to use as many of them as he can as props.

Questions:

1. What emotions is the psalmist feeling at the start? Why is it good that he is sharing these feelings with God? Do you share your heart like this to God?
2. At what point in the psalm does it seem like the psalmist changes his focus off of his circumstances? What is his new focus? How can you do this?
3. In our modern songs we usually have several verses but then come back and sing a repeated chorus between each verse that is the main theme of the song. If you were to pick two lines from this psalm as the chorus which would they be?
4. What do you choose to "remember" about God when problems arise in your life?

Psalm 86

Go the following website

<http://www.acoustica.com/sounds.htm>

Click on the different sounds. See who in your family can identify the most sounds. God hears not just our words but the heart behind them.

Questions:

1. When does the psalmist cry?
2. What are some of the action verbs that the psalmist uses in his requests to God? Pick one to pray back to God.
3. Are there any thoughts or any words said that God doesn't hear? How do you think God can hear all the voices on earth at once?
4. How can a person's actions glorify God's name? If it is your desire, ask God to help you glorify His name this week.

Psalm 88

Give each family member a piece of paper and some crayons/markers. As one person reads the psalm, have the rest of the family draw how they think the psalmist was feeling when he wrote this. Be creative: draw images, scribbles of different colors, or words. God wants us to be honest with how we are feeling; He can handle it.

Questions:

1. What is the psalmist's soul full of? Do you ever feel this way? If so, explain.
2. What has he stretched out daily to God? How do we do that?
3. Do you think God actually left Him alone? Why or why not? Have you ever reached out to God when you were feeling alone or in trouble? Did God comfort you or did He still feel far away?
4. The Psalms were sung to the congregation of Israel. How would this psalm help someone going through a hard time?

Psalm 91

Play hide and go seek as a family. Today we will read about the “secret place of the Most High.” Sounds like an epic hiding place!

Questions:

1. What physical picture of God’s refuge does the psalmist give in verses 3-4? How does that make you feel?
2. So where is the “secret place of the Most High?” Is it a literal place? Have you been there? If you were to draw it what might it look like?
3. There are three “Because you have...” phrases in this psalm. What are they?
4. Have you ever made these decisions? If not how can you practically do this? If so what promises can you claim from this psalm?

Psalm 96

Shoot baskets as a family. Before you take a shot, say one praise or thanksgiving to God. Or, you can play hot potato and the person left with the potato says the praise or thanksgiving.

Questions:

1. What are we to proclaim?
2. What can we sing or give to the Lord? How do we sing a new song? How do we keep it new?
3. What are some ways you can praise Him with your actions? With your thoughts?
4. Why should the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad? What event is still coming?

Psalm 104

Read Psalm 104. Be revived by the glory of God today!

Questions:

1. What does God make into His chariot? Doesn’t God sound like a super hero here?! If you have a young artist in the family, let them draw a cartoon super hero of God based on the description in this psalm.
2. Where do you imagine the psalmist was sitting when he wrote this?
3. Would you rather be in the mountains God has made for us or near the ocean? Why?
4. Have each family member say what is their favorite creation in the sky? On land? In the water? God is constantly bombarding us with His glory by the things He has made. Have you grown numb to His creation at all?

Psalm 110

Use instruments to praise God while reading the passage. Have fun and try to sing in different ways like rapping, country, or opera. Be creative and sing from the heart!

Questions:

1. At what side does the Lord say to sit?
2. Who will our Lord judge?
3. What other passage does verse one refer to?
4. When we follow God, what will He make our enemies? How should that encourage us?

Psalm 115

While reading through Psalm 115, see how many body parts you notice. Every time you hear a body part mentioned in the passage point to the part and shout it out.

Questions:

1. What does God say He will bless?
2. How does the author describe idols? What does he mean by verse eight?
3. How is God different from an idol?
4. What is the Lord's? What has He given to men? How do you think we are doing with that?

Psalm 116

Find a thin straight line on the ground. Take turns trying to walk on it while your family stands on the right and left of you, shouting at you, and trying to get you to look to the side. Is it difficult to stay on the line? How can following God be like this?

Questions:

1. For what things does the psalmist thank God?
2. For what can you thank God?
3. What kind of emotions do you think the psalmist had when writing this? How do you know?
4. How could the death of one of His saints be precious to the Lord (vs. 15)? Is dying a bad thing in God's eyes? Why or why not?

Psalm 118

Have each family member share a mighty thing God has done in his/her life. If you want to be creative, put it in the form of a rhyming cheer.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to you and your family that "His mercy endures forever?"
2. Why is it better to trust in the Lord over putting your confidence in men and princes? What difficult situation are you in right now that you can ask God for help?
3. Why is being scared a silly idea if the Lord is on your side? Do you still get scared sometimes? Why?
4. Verse 24 is a decision on how the psalmist is going to live his day, no matter what happens. What does he decide to do? What would your day look like if you decided to live that way tomorrow?

Psalm 119:1-16, 97-104, 145-152

Almost every verse of Psalm 119 shares something that David loves about God's Word. What is one verse from today's reading you can memorize as a family? Try to memorize it before your dinner/meeting is over.

Questions:

1. What are some of the different words that David uses to describe God's Word?
2. How does God's Word clean us and keep us from sinning?
3. How can you more regularly read or memorize the Bible?
4. What are some of the things David does with God's Word? What times of the day does he think about it?

Psalm 121

Parents: tell your children about times that you cannot watch over them. Tell them what it means to you that God watches over them when you can't.

Questions:

1. From where does your help come? Have you ever asked God for help when you needed it? Why or why not?
2. When does God sleep? How does that make you feel?
3. What are some of the things that God will do for you? What is the one thing you need to do?
4. Can you think of a time when God has helped someone in the Bible? Can you think of a time when God has helped you?

Psalm 127

Parents: Share ways that your children are a blessing. For the "hands-on" learners, build a house out of Legos or blocks and share the "blessings" as you add pieces to the house. Let the kids share how the parents are a blessing to them too.

Questions:

1. What does the psalmist mean about God building a house or keeping a city safe when the people are doing the actual work?
2. Verse two says God gives us sleep as a gift. Parents and older kids: is there ever a time when God may want you to stop for the day but you can't let go? How do verses one and two connect? Can you share a time when you saw that work in your life?
3. In verse three, what does it say children are? From whom? What does that mean?
4. How is being a parent like being a warrior with arrows? What kind of training needs to happen to make the arrows fly straight and long?

Psalm 139

Take turns naming something that God knows about you that you don't even know.

Questions:

1. Where can you go to get away from God?
2. What does God know about your thoughts? How does that make you feel?
3. While you were still growing inside your mother, what did God know about your future?
4. What does the psalmist think about God's thoughts? What do you think about God's thoughts? What is something that God thinks?

Psalm 146

See if you can give a reason to praise God for each letter of the alphabet, from A-Z.

Also check out "Undignified" on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UV6fNwOzvG8>

How can you get over feeling too "dignified" to praise God?

Questions:

1. Who does the psalmist say is happy? Why?
2. In what things do you put your trust? How can you trust in God more?
3. What are some of the things that God does according to this psalm? Have you ever praised God for any of these things before? If so, what?
4. What does the last verse of the psalm mean to you?

Psalm 148

Act out or draw something mentioned in the psalm that praises God.

Questions:

1. How can nature praise God?
2. What piece of God's creation makes you think about God the most? Why?
3. Who do you know that has a life that just gives God glory? What is it about them that shows you this?
4. God's name alone is exalted. Does that seem true in today's society? What do you think that verse means?