



Psalms Leadership Development Ideas

This resource is a sampling of ideas a Servants Team could use for leadership development times, including trainings and retreats, focused on the study of Psalms.

The Psalms teach us how to draw near to God, modeling a life of thanksgiving toward, communion with, and dependence on Him. Servants Teams may use any of the ideas below or develop their own if they would like to conduct Psalms-focused leadership development times.

Planning Helps

- As you plan for leadership development as a Servants Team, pray and discuss the spiritual, relational, and ongoing role equipping needs for those in Leaders Council.
- While there is not lesson specific guidance, these helps are designed to be used throughout the lessons within five themed groupings and can be spread out over multiple weeks. These ideas shared can also assist in planning of Annual Leaders Council Training and/or a Leaders Retreat.
- As you work through each lesson, note topics that can be utilized for leadership development, possibly concentrating on these three options:
 - **Personalize the truth** sections located at the end of each lesson commentary.
 - *Apply the truth* sections at the end of the questions.
 - *For personal thought* questions scattered throughout each lesson.

Implementation Helps

Each of the Psalms thematic groupings below contain the following elements:

- Scripture
 - Use suggested Scripture(s) to direct leaders' hearts and actions toward Him.
 - Consider:
 - Having different leaders read the suggested Scriptures.
 - Handing out sticky notes with references to look up verses or printed out passages.
 - Sending Scripture in advance.
- Discussion
 - Encourage reflection, conversation, and growth by using suggested questions.
 - Consider dividing a larger Leaders Council into smaller groups for discussion and then share highlights from small group discussions with the larger group.
- Activity
 - Encourage further discussion and provide opportunities to apply what is being learned through interactive options.
- Shepherding toward transformation
 - Increase leaders' confidence in God as He grows them as leaders. Challenge leaders to intentionally apply these lessons as they shepherd those in their care.
- Suggested FISHER resources:
 - Consider using FISHER resources related to the five themes that may assist in planning leadership development times. These resources may be helpful but are not required.

Lessons 1–6: Gateway to the Psalms

Trusting the Good Shepherd

- Scripture
 - Psalm 23
 - John 10:11–15
- Discussion
 - For God to be the shepherd of His people is one thing, but for God to be our personal shepherd is something quite amazing. How has God personally shepherded you in the last few weeks?
 - From Psalm 23, why is it important that the sheep trust the Shepherd?
 - Describe how you see the following attributes of God in Psalm 23.
 - Compassionate Provider
 - Comforting Deliverer
 - Competent Guide
 - Caring Overseer
 - Cherished Master
 - Relational shepherding is shepherding with the purpose of developing a relationship that is personal, intentional, trusting, and warm.
 - From Psalm 23 and John 10:11–15, how do you see shepherding as relational?
- Activity
 - Introduce the leaders to the *Psalms Featured Course Playlist* (available in the *Psalms Media Toolkit*) and encourage them to focus on one of the following songs:
 - Psalm 23
 - Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Me
 - Salmo 23 (for Spanish speakers)
 - Still Waters
 - Shepherd
 - Consider writing and mailing a personal note of affirmation and encouragement to each individual person you shepherd. Printable cards are available in the Psalms Media toolkit.
- Shepherding toward transformation
 - Review Psalm 23. Have you recently witnessed in CBS an action of shepherding that is reflected in this psalm?
 - If so, which one? What spiritual or relational fruit has been borne of this action?
 - How is relational shepherding in CBS deliberate, purposeful, and personal?
 - What are the costs of relational shepherding? What are the benefits?
 - How are you practicing relational shepherding as the class year begins?
 - What are 2–3 actions you can take this year as you focus on relational shepherding?
- Suggested FISHER resources:
 - *A Gospel Lens*
 - *Building Meaningful Connections*
 - *Creating Community*
 - *Know Well the Condition of Your Flock*
 - *Leading and Following*
 - *Importance of Relationships*
 - *What Do the Sheep Need*

Lessons 7–12: Defining a Faithful Life

A Faithful Response to Hurt and Injustice

- Scripture
 - Psalm 37:1–3a
 - Isaiah 53:7
 - Romans 12:17–21
- Discussion
 - When you are hurt by others, what tends to be your natural response? How might this contrast with Jesus's response found in Isaiah 53:7?
 - What have you learned from Psalm 37:1–3 and Romans 12:17–21 about dealing with those who wrong us?
 - What are the benefits of going to God for His counsel, and waiting for Him to act when we deal with injustice or pain?
 - How might God use conflict to grow us in dependence on Him and in holiness?
 - When have you treated an enemy as Jesus commanded and experienced peace and/or restoration?
- Shepherding toward transformation
 - Think of a relationship in which you currently feel wronged, or a Community Bible Study class participant who is causing you grief. In what ways could you love and pray for this person?
 - How might God use you as a conduit to help those you shepherd experience peace or restoration?
 - Pair up and pray for each other, also giving thanks to God for working all things together for good, even our hurts.

Intimacy With God

- Scripture
 - Psalm 139:1–4
 - Psalm 139:23–24
 - Jeremiah 17:9–10
 - Matthew 15:17–20a
- Discussion
 - How are you both encouraged and challenged to know that God knows you even better than you know yourself as described in the verses from Psalm 139?
 - Why is God interested in your heart?
 - What tends to keep you from connecting with the Lord about your true feelings?
 - How can reflecting on your daily thoughts and words help you develop a greater awareness of the state of your heart?
- Activity
 - Heart Conversations with God—take a few minutes to answer five questions on paper:
 - What are you excited about?
 - What are you angry about?
 - Have your words been building others up or tearing them down?
 - What are you sad about?
 - What are you anxious about?

- If comfortable, share one or two of your answers with the group.
- Discuss how asking yourself these questions periodically can help you in your heart conversations with God.
- Shepherding toward transformation
 - How might God grow you as a leader as you perform more regular “heart examinations”? What practices or disciplines might help?
 - What servant leadership opportunities are lost if we continually suppress negative or sinful thoughts?
 - How can you encourage those you shepherd to develop greater intimacy with God?
 - Close by praising the God who truly knows you, loves you, and is leading you in the way everlasting. Ask Him to help you grow in intimacy with Him and those you serve.
- Suggested FISHER resources:
 - *Memorizing Scripture*
 - *Mid-Year Thoughts for Core Leaders*
 - *Mid-Year Thoughts for NextGen Leaders*
 - *Spiritual Focus for the New Year*
 - *Transformed Lives Through the Word of God*
 - *Trusting in God’s Provision*
 - *Workroom of God’s Grace*

Lessons 13–18: Confidence in God

Cast Your Burdens on the Lord

- Scripture
 - Psalm 55: 4–5, 22
 - 1 Peter 5:7
- Discussion
 - David shared his deep anguish with the Lord. Are you tempted to share your burdens with your friends and family before going to God?
 - What does it look like for you to share your burdens with God?
 - Share a time when you cast your burdens on the Lord. How did He sustain you?
- Activity
 - Share a current burden that you are being challenged to cast on the Lord with the person next to you, or in a journal.
 - With other leaders discuss what Scripture could be used to pray over this burden.
 - Write the Scripture on a piece of paper.
 - Pray this Scripture either individually, or with the person next to you.
 - Continue to pray this Scripture daily.
- Shepherding toward transformation
 - How can you encourage those you shepherd to cast their burdens on the Lord?
 - What specific Scriptures might you pray over the burdens of those you shepherd?
- Suggested FISHER resources:
 - *Praying Scripture*
 - *Transparency*

Be Intentional in Remembering

- Scripture
 - Psalm 71:8, 17–19
- Discussion
 - Psalms Volume 1, page 175: “When the Psalmists were feeling overwhelmed, they set their minds on recalling how God had cared for them in the past and the mighty ways in which He had worked.” Take the time to share a past “God victory” with the person next to you, or with the group.
 - In Psalm 71:17-19, the Psalmist charges the reader to proclaim God’s wondrous deeds to the next generation. Why is this an important command to obey?
 - Consider who God is calling you to share this victory with. Pray and ask for the opportunity and the courage to share with this person.
- Activity
 - Have leaders share a scripture which has sustained them during a difficult time. Encourage them to share it with a partner or in the larger group.
 - Gather these scriptures and compile a list to share with each leader.
 - A.W. Tozer wrote, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978). With this quotation in mind:
 - Encourage leaders to list character traits of God.
 - Have them reflect:
 - Who is God to them.
 - Is there is a character trait of God they struggle to appreciate? Why?
 - Give leaders time to pray and ask God to reveal this attribute of Himself to them in new ways.
 - Take time to share with others.
- Shepherding toward transformation
 - Difficult circumstances can often discourage us in our calling from God. From past experience of God's help, how can you encourage the people you shepherd to fix their eyes on God, and not their circumstances?
 - Consider sharing a time that you were discouraged as a leader yet remained faithful to your calling despite the difficult circumstances.
- Suggested FISHER resources:
 - *ABC's of Praise*
 - *Celebrating and Giving Thanks*
 - *Gratitude*
 - *Persevering and Finishing Strong*
 - *Trusting in God's Provision*

Lessons 19–24: The Steadfast Love of the Lord

Embrace God's Faithful Love

- Scripture
 - Psalm 86
 - Psalm 103
 - Psalm 118:4–8
 - Psalm 136
 - Lamentations 3:22–26
- Discussion
 - What do we learn about the steadfast love of the Lord in Psalm 103, Psalm 118:4–8, and Lamentations 3:22–26?
 - What promises do you see in these verses?
 - What is our response to this kind of love?
 - Have leaders share a time when they have experienced God as their very present help in times of trouble (Psalm 46).
 - What did they learn about God?
 - What did they learn about themselves?
 - Defining steadfast, some synonyms for steadfast include:

standing firm	unwavering	resolute in purpose	loyal
faithful	constant	abiding	enduring

 - What words would you add to this list?
 - How do these words reinforce what we know to be true about God's character and His sovereignty?
 - How does recognizing the steadfast love of the Lord grow and increase our faith?
- Activity
 - A shared reading of Psalm 136
 - Have the group read Psalm 136 aloud to each other.
 - Encourage leaders to note the phrases and examples of the Lord's steadfast love that stood out to them.
 - Take time to share examples of the Lord's steadfast love in our own lives that were especially meaningful and why?
 - How does knowing God's love is steadfast encourage you as you face opposition, illness, and/or unexpected circumstances?
- Shepherding toward transformation
 - Psalm 86 models for us how we can pray when we feel frustrated, betrayed, rejected, stuck, or desperate.
 - What can you learn about prayer from this Psalm?
 - How can you apply what you've learned as you pray for your own situation and for the situations of those you shepherd?
 - The commentary for Lesson 20 shares that “Pain tests our faithfulness to God as nothing else does.”
 - Take time to discuss the challenges leaders face as they shepherd people who are suffering, even while at times suffering themselves.

- What are some strategies you can implement as you walk alongside someone who is experiencing deep pain?
 - Share specific ways you can pray for one another as you shepherd through these hard places.
- Suggested FISHER resources:
 - *Life Giving Leader*
 - *Praying Scripture*
 - *Shepherding Through Grief*
 - *Spiritual Warfare*
 - *Trusting in God's Provision*
 - *Workroom of God's Grace*

Lessons 25–30: The Lord Reigns

Praise Our Lord and King

- Scripture
 - Psalm 34
 - Psalm 40
 - Psalm 96
 - Psalm 98
 - Psalm 150
- Discussion
 - Have leaders list and share the things that make them feel disconnected, unprotected, and distant from God.
 - Discuss what have you learned about God from Psalm 34 and 40 that could give you fresh confidence in His care for you.
 - Many of the Psalms declare God's Kingship and authority.
 - Where in your life do you need to commit afresh to the Lord in order to allow Him to reign?
 - What are some steps you can take to do this?
 - Review Psalm 150. How does this Psalm, and our study of Psalms over the class year, affect the way you view and worship God?
- Activity
 - This time of the class year is often one of reflection. Select one of the Psalms you've studied and work on committing all or a portion of the Psalm to memory. Share with other leaders.
 - Remembering Stones
 - Supplies
 - Small rocks/large stones, one for each leader.
 - Permanent markers.
 - Ask leaders to remember how God has answered a prayer, met a specific need, or intervened in their lives this class year.
 - Ask each leader to write a few words about the prayer, need, or intervention on one side of the stone.
 - On the other side of the stone have them write the name or characteristic of God they learned about Him through this experience.

- The Psalms are filled with praise. Spend time together as leaders praising God through praying the Psalms back to Him, offering praise and singing.
- Shepherding toward transformation
 - In these last weeks as you shepherd those in your care toward transformation, how can you reinforce truths about God that they have been learning?
 - Discuss how you as leaders can encourage intentional reflection and sharing at the end of the class year.
 - Think about those you shepherd. Which specific Psalm might you choose to pray for each one as you end the class year?
- Suggested FISHER resources:
 - *Celebrating and Giving Thanks*
 - *Connecting Through Prayer*
 - *Excellence*
 - *Identity in Christ*
 - *Memorizing Scripture*
 - *Persevering and Finishing Strong*
 - *Praying Scripture*