

Week 1 Scripture

Psalm 77:1-15 (The Message)

I yell out to my God, I yell with all my might, I yell at the top of my lungs. He listens. I found myself in trouble and went looking for my Lord; my life was an open wound that wouldn't heal. When friends said, "Everything will turn out all right," I didn't believe a word they said.

I remember God — and shake my head. I bow my head — then wring my hands. I'm awake all night — not a wink of sleep; I can't even say what's bothering me. I go over the days one by one, I ponder the years gone by. I strum my lute all through the night, wondering how to get my life together. Will the Lord walk off and leave us for good? Will he never smile again? Is his love worn threadbare? Has his salvation promise burned out?

Has God forgotten his manners? Has he angrily stomped off and left us? "Just my luck," I said. "The High God retires just the moment I need him." Once again I'll go over what God has done, lay out on the table the ancient wonders; I'll ponder all the things you've accomplished, and give a long, loving look at your acts.

O God! Your way is holy! No god is great like God! You're the God who makes things happen; you showed everyone what you can do — You pulled your people out of the worst kind of trouble, rescued the children of Jacob and Joseph.



Supplies: Balloons

Week 1: Interactive Prayer Activity

The Book of Psalms is often called the Prayer Book of the Bible. In it, we find 150 prayers.

These prayers are where we can learn how to pray or use ourselves when we aren't sure what to say. According to Bible scholars, around 60 of the 150 Psalms can be categorized as prayers of lament. A lament is a way of expressing sadness, regret or complaint to God. Author Abby Norman explains, "Lament is part of a long, biblical, and holy tradition of telling God that you are not OK and that you certainly are not OK with the way the world works." The Psalms of Lament show us that it is ok for us to be honest with God about how we are feeling.

Read Psalm 77. Are there any phrases in this Psalm that surprise you? Are you surprised that the Psalm begins with "yelling at the top of my lungs"? Yelling at God is not the way we usually think about praying.

Do: Have each person blow up a balloon. Do not tie it off but just hold the balloon closed with your fingers. When you let go of your balloon, try screaming with your balloon: "God, please listen to me!" Find your balloon.

What is the author of this Psalm complaining about? Can you find several complaints? Have you ever complained to God? Blow your balloon up again, hold it closed. Think of something you want to complain about to God. When you let go of your balloon again you can either whisper or shout your complaint while your balloon "screams". Repeat as often as needed.

The psalmist doesn't spend the entire prayer complaining. Near the very end of the psalm he says, "Once again I'll go over what God has done." Find this line in the psalm and read from there to the end again. The psalmist decides to spend some time remembering all that God has done. Grab your balloon again. While you are blowing it up, think about the good God has done. This time when you let go of your balloons, tell God thank you for something God has done. Repeat several times.



****Save balloons (untied). They will be used for another activity.**

