



THE BODY OF
POETRY
AND PSALMS

Written by: Ben Brown

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Our Mission:

At Youth Ministry Conversations, we believe you know your group best. This means our resources look a little different than what you may have experienced in the past. We try and create a “buffet” of material so you can choose and pick what works best for your group. You will find ideas, instructions, and possibilities in this packet all related to the theme of “The Body of Poetry and Psalms.” How you use them, and how you structure your study is up to you. We hope you enjoy this resource and return in the future to check out other materials.

This Study:

From Shakespeare to pop music, poetry is all around us. The words, rhythms, and tunes of poetry and music help us give meaning to the many reactions and feelings of the teenage experience. The book of Psalms is a musical anthology of the emotions, songs, and hymns of David and other writers. In this study, students will engage with the psalmists’ emotions and feelings, and youth will have opportunities to engage with their own joys, fears, anxieties, and blessings.

Lessons Included:

Psalm 1: Blessing	Page 4
Psalm 61: Anxiety	Page 8
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Psalm 145: Praise	Page 17

Psalm 51: Newness

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Psalm 22: Anger

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Psalms 88 & 137: Grief

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The Writer:



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Psalm 1: Blessing

Focus: Did you know that it's likely that speaking kind words to plants makes them grow faster? Can you imagine what speaking kind words to people will do? The Psalms cover a variety of human experiences, including blessing. Sometimes we throw this word around. Some Christians will say they're "too blessed to be stressed." What does it mean to be blessed? Are some blessed and not others? Blessing is less about results, riches, or success and more about the way that we live our lives. Our blessing may not be calculated or visible to passers-by, but our blessing is in following God's way.

Scripture:

- Psalm 1

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Equipment needed to show a YouTube video to the group
- Decorations for "Arbor Day!"
 - Brown crate paper
 - Green, red, orange, and/or brown paper
 - Green streamers
 - Palm fronds
 - Scissors
 - Tape
 - Prizes
- "Make a Blessing, Be a Blessing" supplies
 - Pens
 - Paper
 - Envelopes

Background on Scripture and Topic:

Psalm 1 juxtaposes the way of the wicked and those that do not follow their way. Some translations start with the word “happy.” “Happy” can also mean “blessed.”

A “blessing” takes on multiple meanings in the vernacular of believers. Sometimes a blessing is a prayer. Sometimes people that help are a blessing. Other times, a coupon or a close parking space are also called a blessing. We even offer blessings when people sneeze.

Blessing is not something to take lightly. The opposite is cursing. Students should be reminded that they have an opportunity to offer blessings in walking in God’s way.

Parent Email Prompt:

At youth this week, we’ll be exploring what it means to be a blessing. The word “blessing” can sometimes get tossed around where it doesn’t belong. We feel blessed by a song at church. We also bless our food around the table. But what does it mean to be blessed? We’ll be exploring Psalm 1 and talking about how following God’s law blesses us.

Text Prompt the Night Before:

“Gesundheit” or “God bless you”! Too blessed to be stressed... Why do we go around blessing things and people? Do we really have the power to do that? Join us tomorrow as we start a new series on the Body of the Psalms.

Video:

Consider showing Rend Collective’s [“Counting Every Blessing”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6Y91axwxfI&start_radio=1&list=RDw6Y91axwxfI) video¹ to help introduce this session’s topic. Ask students to note what blessings are named in the song and the song’s overall message.

Prayer Time:

Sometimes we call a prayer a “blessing.” We bless our food before we eat. We bless a team about leave for a mission experience.

¹ Rend Collective, “Counting Every Blessing,” *YouTube*, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6Y91axwxfI&start_radio=1&list=RDw6Y91axwxfI (accessed May 10, 2019).

Have your group stand in a circle or offer a “popcorn”-styled prayer. Participants will name a blessing in their life: loving parents, clean clothes to wear, a youth group to meet with, food to eat, a car, a house, shoes to wear, etc. After each student offers their blessing, have the group say, “Thanks be to God.”

Game: Arbor Day!

Psalm 1:3 states, “They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all they do, they prosper.”² Do you have brown crate paper, green streamers, or maybe a bunch of palm fronds? Divide your large group into groups of 5-7 students each and have them decorate one of their members as a tree as a contest. You may want to offer prizes for the winning team.

Scripture Reading:

Have two students read Psalm 1.

Reader 1: Read Psalm 1: 1-3.

Reader 2: Read Psalm 1:4-6.

Large Group Discussion Questions:

- Psalm 1:2 says that our delight should be “in the law of the Lord.” Does the law make you happy?
- In the passage, what’s the difference between those who are “happy” or “blessed” and “the wicked”?
- This psalm suggests the righteous are firmer in their foundation, and the wicked blow away like chaff in the wind. Would you say that this true at your school? Why or why not?

Small Group Questions:

- What do you think a blessing is?
- When was a time that someone blessed you?
 - How do you think this connects to obeying God’s law?
 - Why would a focus on God’s law bring about blessings for people?

² All scripture citations are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

- In your experience, do you think those who follow God’s law “prosper in everything they do”? Why or why not?
- What sort of things can you do, even as a student, to be a blessing (not just to those who have blessed you)?

Small Group Activity: Make a Blessing, Be a Blessing

Have students write a note (a blessing) to someone who has blessed them. Encourage students to thank this individual and share a way that their blessing changed them. Encourage students to deliver this note to their intended recipient.

Tangible Item They Take: The blessing note from the previous activity

Remind Youth:

We are encouraged to focus on God’s law to be a blessing to others. The Ten Commandments, other laws from the Old Testament, and the way of Jesus are not just personal codes for us to follow, but they are the way that we can be a blessing to all people. Go, be blessed, and be a blessing.