



Songs unpacked



Volume 29

Imagine if your group lived out the message of each song you sang.

These resources are designed to help you do that.

For each song there is a:

Song lyric focus

Exploring the rich language used in one of the lines of the song.

Leader's guide Warm-up

Giving background information and a creative way to prepare your singers' voices.

Bible verse Prayer Thought

Short devotionals based on the song lyric. Why not ask a young person to lead this - they may even wish to write their own.

Activity

A quick easy game or exercise with minimal equipment needed.

Personal challenge

For individual spiritual growth - revisit these each week, so they become a faith habit.

Group challenge

To empower your group to make a difference.

Contents:

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One thing

Leader's guide

Deputy Songster Leader Emma Davis, from Chatham Corps, has written a song to remind us that, in whatever situations we find ourselves day by day, we can count on God being beside us. The verses should be smooth and lyrical, with a punchy and rhythmic (although not quicker) chorus.

**God is with us,
Alleluia!**

Warm-up

To practise the transition between the vocal styles required in this piece, try singing two rising and falling arpeggios (C-E-G-E-C) on three Italian vowel sounds 'Ee-Eh-Ah-Eh-Ee'; the first in a smooth style, with the abdominal breathing muscles engaged constantly, immediately followed by short notes, each accented with a 'kick' from those same breathing muscles.

Prayer

Dear Jesus,

We want to thank you for being with us every day. You are with us when things are good and stay with us when things are bad.

Please help us, even when we can't physically see you, to trust that you will always be by our side. Amen.

Bible verse

'Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.'

Isaiah 41:10 NLT

★ Activity

Guess Who?

Equipment: blindfold

Set up two chairs facing each other. Ask a volunteer to sit on one of the chairs and put a blindfold on them. Once you are satisfied that they can't see, another volunteer can sit opposite them. The blindfolded volunteer must not know who this is before the game begins, so make your selection secretly.

The blindfolded volunteer can then ask questions to the rest of the group to try and guess who the person is. The blindfolded person has to try and work out who is sitting opposite them.

Just because we can't see something doesn't mean it's not there.

⚠ Thought

The song emphasises that God is with us always. But has anyone seen God walking around their house? Or around the playground? Probably not – but that doesn't mean he isn't there. We need to learn to trust and know God is there, even when we can't physically see him.

God has made us all a promise in Isaiah 41:10. He says that even in the things we don't know, even when things are difficult, we don't need to be afraid because he is with us and we can depend on him to help us with anything.

🚩 Personal challenge

The opening line of this song is 'Each day begins an empty page'. Why not start a new notebook or diary writing down:

Today was ...

I had to make a choice about ...

God helped me by ...

Tomorrow, I need God to ...

Keep it for as many days as you can, so you can see and trust that 'God is with us, Alleluia!'

👥 Group challenge

Why not organise a coffee morning or a similar event as a group that can bring people together?

This can be a great opportunity to sing and tell other people about God. It might also be a great opportunity to fundraise to help others in your community who may need God's support through you – homelessness, refugee support, nursing homes, and corps outreach programmes. These might be people you never meet, but nevertheless they will be grateful for your support.



Gentle arms of Jesus

Leader's guide

Flora Larsson's lyrics may already be familiar as they are regularly used in our meetings when dedicating a new child back to God. The composer Sharon Robinson, however, is new to our publications. This beautiful setting will require good breath control and a lyrical style. This song will work just as well in unison as with the written vocal harmony.

Bible verse

'You are my hiding-place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.'

Psalms 32:7-8

Let them walk your way

Warm-up

Plan where to breathe in the phrases of each verse to make sense of the lyrics. Then have the group practise speaking each verse in rhythm, but without pitches, so they can concentrate on when they are going to breathe.

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Thank you for the many blessings in our lives. Thank you for guiding us as we try to bring your light and goodness into the world. We are sorry for the times we fall short of this goodness, letting unkindness and stubbornness win. Give us the courage to follow where you lead and protect us as we go. Amen.

Activity

The group should spread out in an open space, and the leader should issue two commands: 'WALK' and 'STOP'. After some time, swap the meaning of these commands. When ready, introduce two new commands: 'HIDE' (everyone ducks down and covers their face) and 'CLAP'. After some play, swap the meaning of the last two commands, 'HIDE' and 'CLAP', and continue playing.

Sometimes it can be confusing to know what path God wants us to take, but if we focus and allow ourselves to listen to God, he will make it clear.

Thought

Psalm 32:8 goes on to say that God acts as a teacher and counsellor who will lovingly keep us on the right track and away from harm.

Think about the life of a newborn baby: they require constant attention, often crying out for help as this is the only thing they know they can do. As they grow older, they will be taught and guided as they learn how to speak and act.

As Christians, we are a bit like newborn babies for our whole lives! We rely on God to teach and guide us. We need help to choose the right ways. We need protection and strength, love and comfort. Thankfully, God loves us so much that he will always be there to keep teaching us.

Personal challenge

This song is about giving thanks to God for a young life and asking him to protect and guide them throughout their life. Think about somebody you know of any age – from church, school or family – and pray these words over their name: 'Lord Jesus, let walk your way.'

Group challenge

Let's spend some time praying for each other

Arrange your group into a line of age order, then join together to make a circle so that the youngest is next to the oldest. Following the personal challenge, take turns to pray for the person standing to your left and right by laying a hand on their shoulder and saying in unison, 'Lord Jesus, let them walk your way.'

He made them all

Leader's guide

David Elliott has set these very familiar words in a fun calypso style. You will need to split into three groups for the independent vocal lines in the chorus. Balance the voices carefully in the first chorus as these lines are introduced one by one, so that each new entry is clearly heard.

The Lord God made them all

Warm-up

Learning to have confidence in our voices is important. Why not try practising a simple song or nursery rhyme as a round to encourage vocal independence. For example, 'Row, row, row your boat', 'Three blind mice, or 'Frère Jacques'.

Prayer

Dear Almighty God,
Thank you for the bright and beautiful creation that you have given to us to live in. Sometimes we take its beauty for granted. We are sorry for the times that we have not cared for it in the way that we should. Please teach us how to enjoy and care for the world in the best way. Amen.

Bible verse

'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.'

John 1:3

★ Activity

Pictionary

Equipment: Pens and paper

Split the group into two teams. Each group should nominate one person to draw for the team, while everyone else must guess what they are drawing. The leader has to whisper a word to the person drawing. Each word will be part of God's creation mentioned in the song (flowers, birds, mountains, rivers and sunset). As the person is drawing the word the leaders have given them, other members of the team call out suggestions. The first team to guess all five words wins.

God's creation is beautiful. It is our duty to care for and respect everything he has given to us.

⚠ Thought

Have you ever seen something in creation that made you go 'Wow'? Share any experiences within the group.

In the Bible, it tells us that God made all things and that he made them to be good. That includes everything from the smallest flower to the biggest mountain, from the darkest night to the brightest sunset, from the birds in the sky to the fish in the sea. It also includes you and me.

🚩 Personal challenge

Look at the last verse of the song. This part of the song challenges us not only to look at our Almighty God's creation but also to tell others about it. God has created the world for everyone. This week try and point out something beautiful in God's creation to one person. For example, 'Wow, look at the sunset tonight! Isn't God so creative.' or 'This flower is so beautiful. I love how God cares for it just like he cares for you and me.'

👥 Group challenge

How often do you stop and take time to admire God's creation?

This week, have everyone take a photo of something beautiful that they see. This could be one of the examples in the song or something different. Put them all together in a PowerPoint presentation. This can be projected when you sing this song as part of worship.

A waltz of praise

*All my days,
I will praise*

Leader's guide

This lively song from Edward Mylechreest is sure to capture the imagination. The lyrics remind us to praise the Lord however we can, at all times and in all situations.

Warm-up

There are plenty of words to fit into this song. Before tackling them, stretch and increase blood-flow to the lips and face muscles using some exercises, for example repeating the words 'sticky toffee' for 45 seconds. Use these along with some tongue-twisters, for example, 'Red lorry, yellow lorry, red lorry, yellow lorry' or 'A proper cup of coffee from a proper copper coffee pot', either spoken or sung, to ensure the singers are aware of the importance of good diction.

Prayer

Take turns around the group to say different things you are thankful for. Finish this sentence: 'I am thankful to God for ...'. Examples might include family, friends, pets or food.

Dear Father God,

We praise you. We are thankful for everything you have given us, including (use a few examples the group just mentioned). May we never forget how favoured and blessed we are. Amen.

Bible verse

'Sing to the Lord,
praise his name;
proclaim his salvation
day after day.'

Psalms 96:2

Activity

One member of the group starts by saying, 'I woke up this morning and I ... (something starting with the letter 'a', eg) ate an apple.' The next group member must repeat what the previous person said and then add an activity beginning with the letter 'b' – for example, 'I woke up this morning, and I ate an apple and brushed my hair.' Keep going around the group following the next letter of the alphabet until someone forgets or time runs out.

Throughout each of these activities in the morning and the rest of the day, we should praise the Lord for all he has given us.

Thought

Praise is often connected to other words, such as thankfulness and admiration. Some days it feels easier to praise God than other days. As the song tells us, even on the days when things are making us feel down, we can still praise him.

The Bible is filled with stories of people who continued praising God even when they were struggling. One of these stories is about a man called Job. He was a very fortunate man until it was all taken away. He lost his money, family and wealth. Despite all his losses, Job continued to celebrate God's goodness. We are very fortunate to have so much. This can include simple things like having access to running water, a bed to sleep in, and family and friends who care for us. It is important for us to praise God and never take anything he gives us for granted.

Personal challenge

Every day, start your day by thanking God. Write on a sticky note, 'All my days, I will praise.' When you get home, put the note in an obvious place. This could be next to your bed or on the kitchen fridge. Every time you see this note stop and thank God for something he has given to you.

Group challenge

Remember to share with others everything you are thankful for.

While you are singing this song, remember all the things you are thankful to God for. Ask the corps leader if it is possible during worship as a group to share a few of the things you are grateful for before singing this song.



A heart like thine

*Spread thy light
wherever I may go*

Leader's guide

Another new contributor to this book, Colin Fisher, has provided a joyful setting of some older words by George Galloway Jackson. Good communication is vital when singing, so try to encourage the singers to engage with the individual meaning of each phrase and portray that in the way they sing.

Warm-up

It will be worth spending time making sure that individual words or phrases in this song are fully understood by members of the group. Go through each line and have a dictionary on hand (or get them to use their phones) for them to look up anything they are unsure of.

Prayer

Father,
Thank you for loving me.
Forgive me for the times
when I get distracted and do
not focus enough on my
relationship with you. Please
help me to learn to be more
like you and shine your light
in this world so that others
may be drawn into a
relationship with you. Amen.

Bible verse

'Finally, brothers and sisters,
whatever is true, whatever is
noble, whatever is right,
whatever is pure, whatever is
lovely, whatever is admirable – if
anything is excellent or
praiseworthy – think about such
things.'

Philippians 4:8

Activity

Words of kindness

Equipment: paper and pens

Give each member of the group an A4 sheet of paper. Say, at the bottom of the sheet of paper, write your name. Then pass your piece of paper to the person on your left. Starting at the top of the page, this person writes something positive about the named child (eg You are a great singer, a loving person etc). Once they have finished the encouragement, fold it over and pass it to the next person on your left. Continue until you get your original page back.

God wants us to be kind to one another, and this starts with our group.

Thought

When we look at the world around us, we can see it is full of darkness and fear. We believe God created the world, and he made it perfect. But humans have caused the world to feel like a dark place where the goodness of God is hidden. However, when you turn on a light, the darkness fades away, making everything feel easier.

God wants us to spread his light wherever we go. The more we listen, talk to God and read the Bible, the more we learn to reflect God's goodness. Spreading God's love brightens up the dark world we live in.

Personal challenge

Take a moment. Think and pray ...

Pray for yourself. Open up to God and ask him to show you how to be more like him.

Pray for the leaders and other members of your church. Ask God to encourage them to continue their work in being the light of God in your local community.

Pray for the wider mission of The Salvation Army and other Christians. Pray that we will remain focused on spreading God's love and light.

Group challenge

How can we spread God's light to the people around us?

Equipment: sticky notes

Give every person a sticky note. Take time to think of the people you know who are struggling. Write a message of encouragement or prayer to someone who needs to know about God at this time. At your next practice, discuss any positive feedback you have had from spreading God's light.



Lions' jaws

**My God will
keep me safe**

Leader's guide

This fun and unique song features a cast, and this requires some willing volunteers with acting skills. It tells the story of Daniel in the lions' den and features a Narrator, King Darius, Daniel and a couple of Lions, with everyone singing the chorus.

Warm-up

Your actors will need a good sense of rhythm to ensure they do not rush ahead of the music.

Rehearse with them individually, speaking their parts with the accompaniment until you are confident that they know their lines well and can listen to the underlying music.

Bible verse

'Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.'

Psalm 16:1

Prayer

Dear Almighty God,
Thank you for always being with me even when I feel afraid. I know you are there to protect me. Please be with people around the world who are facing war, poverty and loneliness. Please help them to feel you are near and will keep them safe. Amen.

Activity

Trust Falls

Divide the group into pairs. One person in the pair will fall into the arms of their partner. The person falling should stand two or three steps in front of their partner and turn so they have their backs facing them. If anyone feels confident, challenge them to fall with their eyes closed. Swap over the person catching and falling so everyone gets a turn at both roles.

Ask the group whether they found trusting the other person easy or hard. In the Bible, Daniel trusted God to protect him from hungry lions and not get hurt. Sometimes life can be frightening, and we can feel unsure, but God is always there to catch us.

Thought

This song is based on the story of Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6). Daniel was a faithful man of God. When others, including the king, wanted him to stop praying, Daniel refused, and they threw him into a lions' den. Daniel was unafraid as he trusted God and knew he would be protected.

The story's importance remains true in everyday life. We always face scary things around us and fear that we are alone. God wants us to know we are safe, and he is with us whether we are facing exams, bullies, or lions!

Personal challenge

As soon as you feel afraid this week, pray just like Daniel did. Praying can be as simple as having a conversation with God. Talk to God, tell him your worries, and ask him to be near you. If you're feeling really brave, ask your family and friends if they are feeling frightened and would like you to pray for them too.

Group challenge

How can we remind others of God's love and protection?

Remember, God's love and protection is for everyone and we need to share this message. As a group, research a way of helping people in your local community or from around the world. This might include fundraising for people affected by war or poverty. Or you could send a card to a corps member going through a hard time as a reminder that you and God are there to support them.

Jesus loves even me

Leader's guide

This is a simple and catchy song from Derick Kane using familiar words by Philip Paul Bliss. Again, it can be successfully used as a unison song if preferred.

Bible verse

'For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.'

Romans 15:4

Wonderful things in the Bible I see

Warm-up

Singing is a full body experience. The freedom to move should be encouraged, as this helps reduce muscle tensions that can impede good singing technique. Why not practise a gentle sway while singing this song? This will increase engagement from both the singers and the listeners.

Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for your Scriptures that remind us of your love every day. Help me to learn more about the Bible and turn to your word both in times of praise and times of difficulty. I ask that the words I read may shape my words, my choices and my life every day. Amen.

Activity

Drawing Closer

Before the session begins, print a selection of the Drawing Closer* Bible verse colouring sheets. Give each member of the group a different Bible verse to colour. This can be completed during the activity time or at home and brought back to the next practice. Find somewhere in the building to create a beautiful display of all the pictures the group have coloured in, and title it 'Wonderful things in the Bible'.

*www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/drawing-closer-vol-2

Thought

It is easy to think that because the Bible was written so long ago it no longer holds any relevance today. This couldn't be further from the truth. As the Bible was being written, our names were on God's heart. He provided his Scripture for us today to be used as our map for our daily living. When we sing this song, remember that Jesus loves each of us and has used the Bible to communicate great stories of all the times he has been there.

Personal challenge

Try learning one Bible passage this week. This might be your favourite Bible verse or one of the suggestions below. See if you can learn a word or two a day, so that by the end of the week you can tell somebody else the Bible verse you have learned to encourage them on their faith journey. Here are some suggestions of Bible verses you could learn:

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Psalm 56:3
- John 3:16

Group challenge

Let's tell others about the Bible
Spend some time together talking about your favourite Bible story or verse and why it is a favourite.

What you may find is that everyone has lots of different answers. The song rightfully reminds us that the Bible is overflowing with wonderful stories and verses. The same God who created the Bible created each of us. He knows and loves us for who we are. Before singing this song as part of worship, ask your worship leader if the group can share some of their favourite Bible verses.