

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.'

