



# Different Genres



**Bible Reference:**  
Psalm 42 and others

The Psalms contain songs of praise, grief, thanksgiving, trust and wisdom. In this session the young people will explore the different genres found within the Psalms and discover how these ancient songs and poems express the full range of human emotion and experience. As they explore a variety of psalms together, they will discover that the Psalms give language for both celebration and struggle.

## You will need:

- Psalms Genres handout
- Coloured pens and highlighters



## Beat

### Say:

Music comes in many different genres. As you watch the clip, note down all the musical genres that are mentioned.

### Watch:

Trolls World Tour – Official Trailer – Universal Kids (2:59)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=yP86-TR6IME](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yP86-TR6IME)

**Ask:**

- What musical genres were mentioned in the clip?
- How do we know which genre a song fits into?
- What genre of music do you listen to the most?

**Say:**

Some songs fit neatly into one category, but others blur the lines between styles and create something unique. The song you're about to hear experienced a huge revival during 2022, but when it was first released, it sounded unlike anything people had heard before. It didn't fit neatly into a particular genre.

**Watch:**

Kate Bush – 'Running Up That Hill' – Official Music Video (4:55)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp43OdtAAkM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp43OdtAAkM)

**Ask:**

- What other songs can you think of that have either broken boundaries or don't fit neatly into a specific genre?
- Why do you think some songs are difficult to place into one category?

**Say:**

Today, as we continue our journey through the music and poetry of the Psalms, we'll discover the different 'genres' within the writing and how not all psalms fit neatly into the categories we have created.

**Bridge****Ask:**

- Why do we create categories or genres for music in the first place?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of trying to classify music in this way



## Amplify

### Say:

If you search online for different ‘types of psalms’, you’ll discover that there are lots of ways people categorise them. Some lists contain four or five categories, while others include many more, with themes such as repentance, royalty and wisdom.

These categories help us recognise the different emotions, experiences and themes found throughout the Psalms. But just like the musical genres we explored earlier, not every psalm fits neatly into one category.

Today we’re going to focus on five main genres found within the Psalms:

- Hymns of praise
- Laments
- Thanksgiving
- Wisdom
- Trust

### Leader’s notes:

Give out the Psalm Genres [KM1] handout or display a larger version for the whole group to see. Ask the young people to explore the psalms listed on the handout and decide which genre they think each psalm belongs to. They can work individually, in pairs or as a whole group.

Encourage the young people to underline words, phrases or verses that helped them make their decisions.

### Genres and psalms:

- Hymns of praise 🎉 – Psalms 113, 135, 146
- Lament 😞 – Psalms 3, 12, 17
- Thanksgiving 🙌 – Psalms 9, 92, 138
- Wisdom 🧐 – Psalms 1, 49, 112
- Trust 🤝 – Psalms 11, 16, 121



**Ask:**

- Which psalms were the easiest to categorise? Why?
- Which psalms could fit into more than one genre?
- Which words or phrases particularly stood out to you? Why?

**Say:**

Just like music, the Psalms express a huge range of emotions and experiences that people still relate to today. Whatever emotion or situation you are experiencing, you will usually find it reflected somewhere within the Psalms.

**Bridge****Ask:**

- Why do you think some psalms fit into more than one category?
- What does this suggest about trying to organise or label human experiences and emotions?

 **Sound Check****Ask:**

- What is one thing you have learned about God through reading the Psalms so far?
- What is one thing you've learned about yourself?

**Say:**

As we've explored the different genres within the Psalms, we've discovered that they express a huge range of emotions and experiences. They give people language for praise, grief, trust, celebration, fear and hope.

Bono, the lead singer of the band U2, has often spoken about the impact the Psalms have had on his faith and songwriting. In this clip he reflects on the honesty and authenticity found within the Psalms and why he thinks that matters.

**Watch:**

'Be Brutally Honest' – Bono & David Taylor: Beyond the Psalms (3:09)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VOQiX8zJmQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VOQiX8zJmQ)

**Ask:**

- What is your response to Bono's answers to the same questions you considered earlier: 'God listens; I don't listen enough'?
- Bono was asked, 'What is the one difficult or troubling thing the Psalms have required of you?' What was his reply?
- Why do you think he answered this way, and in what way do you relate to his response?
- Do you think our modern-day worship songs convey the same range of emotions contained within the Psalms? If so, how?
- Bono calls artists to express their honest emotions in their music. Many do, but why is it a challenging thing to do?
- In what ways do you find it difficult to be honest about where you are in your faith journey?
- If you were to write one line in a psalm that could convey your relationship with God honestly right now, what would that be?
- How would you share those feelings with someone else?
- How do you think it may encourage them to start a relationship with Jesus or move forward in their faith if you did?



## Bridge

**Ask:**

Share any Christian song or spoken word where you feel the artist is honest about their faith journey. What is appealing about their honesty?



## Selah

**Say:**

Today we have explored the different genres found within the Psalms and discovered how the Psalms express a wide range of emotions and experiences. Many psalms contain both struggle and hope, honesty and trust, grief and praise.

To bring the session to a close, we are going to reflect on the words of Psalm 42. These are words you may have heard before in songs and worship, but perhaps not in this translation.

**Leader's notes:**

Read The Message paraphrase of Psalm 42 together before playing the song. Encourage the young people to listen carefully to the mixture of emotions expressed throughout the psalm and to reflect quietly on any words or phrases that connect with them personally. Then, As the music plays, invite the young people to reflect quietly on the words of Psalm 42 and bring their own thoughts, emotions and prayers honestly before God. Bring the session to a close in prayer.

**Watch:**

Steffany Gretzinger – 'As the Deer' (Official Lyric Video) (5:05)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LthkibTzuj8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LthkibTzuj8)

## Coda

### **Say:**

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

### **Ask:**

- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is the one thing you have discovered about the Psalms that you didn't know before?

### **Leader's notes:**

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.



Explore the Psalms listed at the bottom of the handout, either individually or as a group, and decide which genre they fall into.

**Hymns of praise**



**Lament**



## **Psalms Genres**

**Thanksgiving**



**Wisdom**



**Trust**



1, 3, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 49, 92, 112, 113, 121, 135, 138, 146