

Praise you like I should



Bible Reference:
Psalm 103

Psalm 103 is one of the Bible's great songs of praise. In this session the young people will explore David's call to praise God with all that he is and discover the many reasons he gives for worship. As they reflect on God's character, faithfulness and love, they will consider what it means to make praise a regular part of their everyday lives.

You will need:

- Psalm 103 handout
- Paper and coloured pens



Beat

Say:

Back in the 1990s, a music video went the 1990s equivalent of viral when it showed a fictional dance troupe surprising onlookers outside a Los Angeles theatre. The song was 'Praise You' by Fatboy Slim. The video was filmed using handheld cameras and captured the genuine reactions of the crowd as they watched the Torrance Community Dance Group perform.

Watch:

Fatboy Slim - 'Praise You' (Official Video) (3:49)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruAi4VBoBSM

Ask:

- How do you think you would have reacted if you had been one of the people watching that performance?
- Which dance move from the clip are you most likely to incorporate into your repertoire?
- Why do you think the performance attracted so much attention?

Say:

The song and music video were used frequently at Christian youth events. Although it was not written as a worship song, many Christians connected with the idea of giving praise and celebrating something bigger than themselves.

Ask:

- Why do you think this song resonated with Christians so much?
- What secular songs can you think of that are regularly used in a church setting?
- What Christian songs can you think of that have crossed over into the mainstream charts?

Examples:

- 'Shackles (Praise You)' – Mary Mary
- 'You Say' – Lauren Daigle
- (back in 1985) 'Amazing Grace' – Judy Collins

Say:

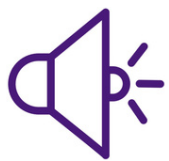
Today our session is filled with praise. As we explore Psalm 103 together, we'll discover why praise sits at the heart of the Psalms and what it means to direct our attention towards God. Hopefully you will feel compelled to burst into dance at some point during the session. If not, we'll just focus on Psalm 103 instead!



Bridge

Ask:

What is your favourite praise song? Why do you love it so much?



Amplify

Ask:

When it comes to your faith, are you more of a complainer or a praiser?

Say:

Within our churches we can sometimes focus a little too much on ourselves, when our praise is meant to be directed towards God.

Watch:

Wrong Worship (3:20)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJp98hoqy5I

Ask:

- What kinds of behaviours were highlighted in this clip?
- Do you recognise any of them in your own faith or within your church?

Say:

The aim of watching this clip is not to be judgemental, but to highlight that we often make praise and worship about us rather than about God. Many heated discussions have come about from disagreements about what our praise and worship should look and sound like in our denomination. The clip highlights that God is the one worthy of our praise and should be the focus when we spend time praising together.

Our psalm for today reiterates this idea and reminds us, as followers of God, to come to him with total focus and a heart full of praise.

Leader's notes:

Read Psalm 103 together. Give each member of the group a copy of the psalm. Encourage them to listen carefully for the reasons David gives for praising God and the different characteristics of God that are highlighted throughout the passage.

Leader's notes:

Give each member of the group a piece of paper and provide coloured pens or felt-tips. Using words and phrases from the psalm, ask them to create a praise picture, spider diagram or mind map. It is up to them how they represent the psalm, but the aim is to draw out the characteristics of God and learn how to praise from the psalmist David.

Encourage the young people to discuss the content of the psalm as they work.

Ask:

- What characteristics of God stand out to you the most?
- What reasons for praise does David give in this psalm?
- Which words, phrases or images capture your attention? Why?
- What do you learn about God from Psalm 103?

Leader's notes:

Once the group have had enough time, invite them to share their creations with one another. Their praise pictures, spider diagrams or mind maps will be helpful during the next part of the session.





Bridge

Ask:

What is your response to the following quote?

‘We would worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction.’ – Harry Ironside



Sound Check

Say:

Psalm 103 reminds us of the importance of praising God both individually and together as a community of believers. Throughout the psalm, David calls people to remember who God is and all that he has done.

Today your challenge is to plan a praise event for your church, youth group or community. Praising God is not about making ourselves feel better or creating a particular atmosphere. It is about shifting the focus away from ourselves and towards the God we love. Psalm 103 reminds us that God deserves our praise in every season and circumstance.

Ask:

- What would be the purpose of your praise event?
- Who would you invite?
- What activities, songs or creative elements would you include?
- How could you encourage people of different ages and backgrounds to participate?
- What themes from Psalm 103 would you want people to remember?
- How could you help people focus on God rather than themselves?

Leader's notes:

This event will be specific to your congregation and community. Encourage the young people to think practically about what would be needed to make it happen. They may want to consider who they would need to contact, what resources they would need, how responsibilities could be shared, and how they would keep the focus on praising God throughout the event.

Say:

Psalm 103 reminds us that praise can take many different forms, but its focus remains the same. Whether through music, prayer, creativity, testimony or acts of service, praise directs our attention towards God and all that he has done.

**Bridge****Ask:**

What would it look like for praise to become part of your everyday life, not just something that happens at church or at special events?

**Selah****Say:**

Throughout Psalm 103, David reminds us of who God is and all that he has done. His response is simple: praise the Lord.

Leader's notes: Share a time of praise and worship together as a group using Shane and Shane's version of Psalm 103. You may need to listen to the song more than once, but spend time learning the song and praising God together. You may also want to use this song at your praise event.

Watch:

'Sing Hallelujah (Psalm 103)' | Kingdom Kids feat. Shane & Shane (3:33)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsZaa3_uGug

Ask:

In what ways can you incorporate praise to God into your everyday life?

Leader's notes:

Encourage the young people to reflect on the reasons for praise they discovered in Psalm 103 and to spend a few moments thanking God for who he is and all that he has done. Bring the session to a close in prayer.

**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 Psalm 103 teaches us about praising God?

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.

Psalms 103

¹ Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
² Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits –
³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.

⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
⁸ the Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.

⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbour his anger for ever;
¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from
us.

¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear
him;
¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.
¹⁵ The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
¹⁶ the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.

¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting
the Lord's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's
children –

¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.

¹⁹ The Lord has established his throne in
heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.

²⁰ Praise the Lord, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.

²¹ Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.

²² Praise the Lord, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

