



PRAYER: PETITION / PRAISE / THANKSGIVING

Anything to photocopy? No

Here are the parts of this lesson:

- ◆ **French Charades** *role-play game*
- ◆ **Creative Teaching with the Psalms** *Bible study*

ROLE-PLAY GAME

FRENCH CHARADES

This version of Charades works best with older teens.

Divide into teams of five to seven people. Have the members of one team leave the room while the others think of a situation that can be acted out without words. Then bring in one person from the team that was sent out of the room. Explain the situation he or she will be acting out.

Now bring in a second person from that team. Without saying a word, Player 1 must act out the assigned plot for Player 2. Player 2 may or may not understand the charade, but she must subsequently act out the same situation for a third member of the team. Player 3 performs the charade for Player 4, and so on. The last person must guess the original story line.

Remember, all this is done in complete silence. Even the simplest charade can undergo a thorough metamorphosis after being passed down several times. If the last person cannot guess the charade, Player 1 should perform it again and let the last person guess once more.

Here are a couple of classic French Charade situations to spur your creativity.

- *You are a high school beauty pageant contestant, anxiously awaiting the announcement of the winner. Suddenly, you hear your name! You now step forward to receive your crown and roses. Then comes your victory walk down the aisle. As you proceed down the aisle, waving to the crowd, you encounter several misfortunes. First, you are allergic to roses so you begin to sneeze, but you keep on going, waving and sneezing to the crowd. Then, on the way back up the aisle, your high heel breaks and you finish the walk with one heel missing!*
- *You are a pregnant mama bird about to give birth! You must fly around the room gathering materials for your nest. Once you make your nest, you lay your egg. Then finish the charade by hatching the egg and finding a worm to feed your new baby.*

BIBLE STUDY

CREATIVE TEACHING WITH THE PSALMS

The Psalms can be effectively used for teaching the concepts of prayer and petition, praise and thanksgiving. They are also helpful in communicating to a group the grappling of individuals and the community of the faithful with the emotions of grief, despair, sorrow, love, hate, joy, and excitement.

Below are outlines for lessons on two types of psalms.

I. Complaint Psalms

A. Information

1. **Intention of complaints: to petition God to change or alleviate the situation.**
2. **Examples of the two types:**
 - Individual—Psalms 5, 6, 13, 22, 28, 38, 43, 54, 61
 - Community—Psalms 44, 74, 80, 83, 94
3. **Historical situations of the complaint: 1 Samuel 7, Jeremiah 14:1-9, 17-22.**
4. **Situations of the complainers: illness, defeat, persecution, oppression, discouragement, physical needs (childbearing, rain, food, etc.), sin.**
5. **Constituent parts of all complaints: (a) invocation, (b) complaint, (c) prayer for change. In some psalms**

there are two additional parts: (d) motivation for God to help, and (e) assurance of God's hearing.

6. An Example: Psalm 22

- a. Invocation (My God, my God)...22:1a
- b. Complaint (I cry...you do not answer)...1b-2
- c. Motivation (Our fathers trusted you)...3-5
- d. Complaint (Scorned by men)...6-8
- e. Motivation (You have been my God)...9-10
- f. Supplication (Be not far from me)...11
- g. Complaint (Many bulls encompass me)...12-18
- h. Supplication (Be not far off)...19-21
- i. Assurance of hearing and praise (He has heard, when he cried)...22-31

B. Group Activity

1. Have the group go over the parts of a complaint psalm; then have them divide the different parts of a particular psalm into its invocation, complaint, and supplication (and motivation and assurance of hearing if applicable).
2. Have them identify the different emotions and attitudes (despair, anger, sorrow, fear, dread disgust, etc.) and why the writer had reason to feel this way. Have them examine what the writer wanted God to do about his situation.
3. Have the group as a whole or in small groups share experiences in which they have had similar feelings and attitudes. Ask them how they responded to the situation, e.g., praying, asking for advice from friends, self-pity, etc.
4. Have each person in the group take 10 to 15 minutes to write a psalm of his own, and then share some of them with the whole group. It can be either a complaint of the community, i.e. one that affects your whole group, or Christians as a whole, or an individual complaint.

II. Psalms of Praise

A. Information

1. Intention of a hymn of praise: to praise God for who he is and what he has done; and to call others to praise him.
2. Examples: Psalms 19:1-6, 29, 30, 33, 47, 48, 65, 66, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 111, 113, 145-150.
3. Situations of the writers: Experience of deliverance from sickness, distress; thankfulness for God's helping the needy, for the gift of children, for the righteous, for his love, for his justice and mercy; and praise for creation, ad infinitum.
4. There is no specific form or any particular arrangement of the content in a psalm of praise.

B. Group Activity

1. Have the group identify the different moods of the psalm—joy, praise, relief, thanks, etc.—and the reasons the writer felt this way.
2. Have the group as a whole or in small groups share times when they have been thankful or wanted to praise God. Ask them to share what they did about it, e.g. shouted, prayed, told a friend, etc.
3. Have each one in the group write their own psalm of praise, and then read some of them to the whole group.

Remind the group that the criteria of a complaint or praise psalm is not first and foremost that it be wonderful poetry, but that it first of all is addressed to God from the heart, and not contrived. The results of really putting some thought into this are quite rewarding, and the group can come to some insights about the Psalms, themselves, and each other. *K.C. Hanson*

