



preparing

I wonder if you are a hummer or a singer? My dad used to hum as he'd putter about his day and my mom – if the song was right – would belt out a harmony that even in my memory is the sweetest sound I've ever heard! The music we make, or the songs we hear in our heads, are like bits of conversation back and forth – from our hearts to God and back again. Isn't it extraordinary that the most perfect parent in the world LOVES to talk – and sing – to US. And that our heavenly Father LOVES it when we sing back to him, too.

***The Lord your God is with you.
He is the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you.
In his love he will no longer punish you.
Instead, he will sing for joy because of you. (Zephaniah 3:17)***

settling and listening

You might want to have this conversation while at home or in the car or any time that you hear that still small voice cheering you on.

If at home and if you make it a practice at home to set aside a special time and place, consider laying out a cloth and lighting a candle as you say

LEADER: Come, let us draw near to God.

PEOPLE: And God will draw near to us.

Prayer leader can pray. ***“Come, Holy Spirit. As we make space for you, open our ears to hear. Open our mind to understand. Stir our heart. Help us to know and love you more. Amen.”***

If the nudge to speak comes at a time when you are out and about, just go for it! The Holy Spirit will give you what you need.

Let’s pause for one whole minute to just listen. I wonder what you’ll hear? Take time to notice all that is around you – and it will be ideal if you are able to be outside! :)

Did you hear the birds singing? I just love hearing the birds sing! Don’t you? I imagine the Lord’s delight as he hears them, too!

Psalm 148 is all about praising God. Kind of like birds singing. Listen to this!

Invite a kid or grownup to read Psalm 148.

A reading from Psalm 148.

1 Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord from the heavens.

Praise him in the heavens above.

2 Praise him, all his angels.

Praise him, all his angels in heaven.

3 Praise him, sun and moon.

Praise him, all you shining stars.

4 Praise him, you highest heavens.

Praise him, you waters above the skies.

5 Let all of them praise the name of the Lord,
because at his command they were created.

6 He established them for ever and ever.

He gave them laws they will always have to obey.

7 Praise the Lord from the earth,

you great sea creatures and all the deepest parts of the ocean.

8 Praise him, lightning and hail, snow and clouds.

Praise him, you stormy winds that obey him.

9 Praise him, all you mountains and hills.

Praise him, all you fruit trees and cedar trees.
10 Praise him, all you wild animals and cattle.
Praise him, you small creatures and flying birds.
11 Praise him, you kings of the earth and all nations.
Praise him, all you princes and rulers on earth.
12 Praise him, young men and women.
Praise him, old men and children.
13 Let them praise the name of the Lord.
His name alone is honored.
His glory is higher than the earth and the heavens.
14 He has given his people a strong king.
All his faithful people praise him for that gift.
All the people of Israel are close to his heart.
Praise the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

I wonder how YOU praise God? Do you – like the birds do – sing his praise?

Did you know that birds will often sing to talk to each other? That they will chirp and others like them will chirp in response? Like the birds, we, too, can call out to talk to God. Listen to what King David says in Psalm 17 as he calls to God for help.

Invite a kid or grownup to read Psalm 17.

A reading from Psalm 17:6-9.

6 My God, I call out to you because you will answer me.
Listen to me. Hear my prayer.
7 Show me the wonders of your great love.
By using your great power,
you save those who go to you for safety from their enemies.
8 Take good care of me, just as you would take care of your own eyes.
Hide me in the shadow of your wings.
9 Save me from the sinful people who want to destroy me.
Save me from my deadly enemies who are all around me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Did you hear that phrase, 'Hide me in the shadow of your wings.'? I wonder what King David means by that? I wonder what that picture of being hidden in the shadow of God's wings shows you about who God is? About how he rescues and protects?

Now let's listen to how God responds to us when we call to him. I wonder what that will make you think about?

Invite a kid or grownup to read Zephaniah 3:14-17.

A reading from Zephaniah 3:14-17.

14 People of Zion, sing!

Israel, shout loudly!

People of Jerusalem, be glad!

Let your hearts be full of joy.

15 The Lord has stopped punishing you.

He has made your enemies turn away from you.

The Lord is the King of Israel.

He is with you.

You will never again be afraid

that others will harm you.

16 The time is coming when people will say to Jerusalem,

"Zion, don't be afraid.

Don't give up.

17 The Lord your God is with you.

He is the Mighty Warrior who saves.

He will take great delight in you.

In his love he will no longer punish you.

Instead, he will sing for joy because of you."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder what you think it means that the Lord is the Mighty Warrior who saves and that he sings for joy?

Summarize with this:

The Lord is amazing – a creator worthy of our praise.

He is trustworthy to call to for help.

He protects and saves.

He delights in us and sings for joy because of us.

As I hear the birds sing, I'll be reminded of:

how I can sing my praise to the Lord

how I can fly to him so that he can care for me

how he sings with joy over me as one who is forgiven and loved

Thanks be to God!

praying

Seal your time and conversation by giving thanks to God by saying together the Lord's Prayer or singing the Doxology.