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THE USE OF THE PSALMS IN THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
OF THE INTERMEDIATE

By

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## INTRODUCTION



# THE USE OF THE PSALMS IN THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF THE INTERMEDIATE

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Statement of the Problem

The problem to be considered in this thesis is whether or not the Psalms are suitable for use with the Intermediate. Although it is one of the richest books in the Old Testament and one of the best loved, it seems to be one of the least studied. In speaking to those who have grown up in churches which use the Psalms for singing, to the exclusion of other hymns, the author finds that, although this training has instilled within them a love for these inspired bits of poetry, it has given them little insight into the meanings, teachings, and spiritual values to be found there.

In looking through courses of study approved by the International Council of Religious Education and by inquiring at the religious bookstores of our major denominations, the author finds practically nothing written on the Psalms for the use of the Intermediate age.

Except for memorization of certain Psalms that is done by the children of our Bible schools or those familiar passages often read with little thought given as to meaning, in the worship services of our church schools or our

young people's meetings, this seems to be a much neglected book.

The problem here will be to determine whether this neglect of the Psalms is justified or whether, as the author believes, we have been denying our young people the privilege of using this great book to the fullest.

### B. Delimitation of the Subject

The use made of the Psalms would of necessity vary with the age group considered. Children cannot appreciate the Psalms as fully as those who have begun to do independent thinking and have come face to face with problems to which they want answers.

It would be impossible, however, to include all young people and adults in this one study which will cover not only the values to be found in studying the Psalms, but also their use in worship, both personal and public, in fellowship, service and in personal commitment to God through Christ.

This study shall, therefore, be limited to a consideration of the use of the Psalms in the Christian education of the Intermediate--or the early adolescent age.

### C. Significance of the Problem

The Book of the Psalms is a record of the personal experience of the ages. In it every human problem is met.

Yet its message is universal as well as personal. The Intermediate needs not only to come to understand himself and to be able to solve his own problems, but to see and appreciate the problems of others as well. A realization of the character of God and of the ways in which He deals with men, as shown in the Psalms, would be of great help to the Intermediate in understanding God, others and himself.

These boys and girls are a neglected group in our churches, often thought of as the trouble makers and misfits; because leaders do not understand them, they are all too often left to their own devices. Until quite recently, materials for this age group have been scarce and even now, much that is available is not appropriate. More consideration needs to be given them.

Because this is a crucial time for him, the Intermediate needs special help and understanding. He is more eager, teachable, and energetic at this age than at any other and the training and knowledge and love of the Lord and His ways that he obtains at this time will not only help to determine his own future, but also the futures of the Church and of the world.

#### D. Method of Procedure

To deal adequately with this problem, one must first consider the nature of the Intermediate. A study of the physical, mental, emotional and social natures of this

age group will be made along with a study of the religious nature. In the light of this background, the specific religious needs of the Intermediate will be studied in relation to the Psalms themselves to show that they can meet those needs. That being established, suggestions for the use of the Psalms in the Christian education of the Intermediate in the areas of study, worship, fellowship, service and personal commitment will be given, followed by a suggested program for the use of the Psalms with the Intermediate in the Vacation Church School.

#### E. Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study will include material taken from research done by leaders of the Intermediate--both in the field of psychology and religion, material gleaned from works written on the Psalms and studies on the values of poetry, combined with the author's own ideas and research in the Book of Psalms. The American Revised Edition of the Bible will be used throughout.

CHAPTER I  
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS BASIC TO UNDERSTANDING  
THE INTERMEDIATE

## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS BASIC TO UNDERSTANDING THE INTERMEDIATE

#### A. Introduction

Just inside the border of that Land of In-Between known as Adolescence where one is no longer a child and yet one has not attained adulthood, lives a creature who has become known by the term Intermediate. The intermediate age is a crucial time of life--a time when habits of living that will color all the rest of his existence are being formed, but because many leaders do not understand the nature and needs of this group, it has become neglected.

A study of the general characteristics of the Intermediate should not only aid in understanding these boys and girls, but should provide a basis for determining their needs and suggest ways of meeting them. It should also lay the foundation for an evaluation of any materials to be used with the Intermediate. Therefore, in this chapter, the general characteristics of the Intermediate will be set forth as a basis on which to judge the Psalms for use with this group.

#### B. Physical Characteristics

Since physical characteristics are the most obvious, they shall receive first consideration. The

Intermediate is 12-14 years of age--the age of puberty--and is usually found in the junior high school, grades 7-9. The intermediate age is a period of rapid growth, the girls generally maturing more rapidly than the boys of the same age, but no definite statement can be made to characterize the Intermediate's growth for there is such a variety at this stage.

The skeletal system grows rapidly, changing markedly in size, shape and proportion. Muscular growth sometimes lags behind a little causing so-called "growing pains" and the clumsiness and inaccuracy of motion that is characteristic of this age.

Because of improper exercise and breathing at this time, there may be a tendency to respiratory disease, poor posture, anemia, etc. In fact, during this period many ailments may make their appearance, but on the other hand, these boys and girls show wonderful vitality and resistance powers.<sup>1</sup>

Many factors are at work to produce variations in growth and so it is not surprising that we find marked individual differences. These differences often prove to be a source of embarrassment to the Intermediate. The girls are prone to develop queer eating habits and may be

. . . . .

1. Pechstein, L. A. and McGregor, A. L., Psychology of the Junior High School Pupil, pp. 32, 33 .

troubled with poor complexions. The boys also have this trouble, but their chief worry is the change in voice that takes place at this time.

Because of unbounded energy, sports and other activities are popular with the Intermediate. He is very conscious of self and his physical abilities and if he does not measure up to the standard set by his particular group, he may either seek approval in other activities or he may withdraw from his friends.

### C. Mental Characteristics

Early adolescence may be properly thought to terminate with the maturity of general intelligence,<sup>2</sup> so the normal Intermediate may be said to be approaching this state. We find the Intermediate mentally alert. He is not always willing, as he may have been in childhood, to accept everything given him by the adult. Because he has not yet learned to think deeply, he may become impatient with those who do. Because of his great curiosity to know about everything, he does not dig very deeply at any one spot. He is very much interested in a study of nature, in photography, mechanics, and in studying heroes in all fields. The boys enjoy books of mystery and adventure, while the girls are beginning to be interested in love stories.

This is a period of awakening--a period of

. . . . .

2. Pechstein, L. A. and McGregor, A. L., op. cit., p. 267.



questioning. Doubts may rise in his mind and he cannot always draw the proper conclusions. He is jealous of his independence and yet he wants and needs the security of his childhood; he needs someone who can give him the answers.

His habits of study are not often the best. The boy or girl who has done very well in school until this time may suddenly start to get low grades. He may be satisfied to just "get by." This is greatly due to the many readjustments that must be made and is often a passing thing.

The Intermediate is often impulsive and blunt in his opinions and yet his very indecision at this time makes him plastic and teachable. He wants to know what he should do and although he often seems to be heedless of many things --instruction and appearance alike--it is amazing what knowledge he does gain, for he is a keen observer. The teacher will find him both frank and open-minded. He will, however, often accept the opinion of the gang rather than do much independent thinking on problems that may arise.

#### D. Emotional Characteristics

Emotionally, many adjustments must be made in the Intermediate's life and these should be turned to the proper channels, for the attachments and ideals formed here are extremely important in guiding both his present and future actions.

The Intermediate is very sensitive and idealistic, wanting to give his enthusiastic loyalty to something noble and beyond himself.

To the Intermediate boy or girl, "seeing is believing." He is more aware than ever before of what is going on about him. He is a great imitator and is greatly affected if his current hero "lets him down."

The Intermediate is very much concerned with himself. He has not shaken off that characteristic of his childhood, although his horizons are broadening. He is likely to become introspective, to be self-centered and self-seeking. He may become too self-conscious and try to escape the many new things that seem to be forced upon him or he may go to the opposite extreme and assume an air of bravado which he does not really feel. He may turn to music, art and poetry to express his emotions. Feelings of fear and inadequacy at this time may give the Christian leader an opportunity to turn his thoughts to Christ.

His chief interest seems to be in establishing himself as an adult person. He is likely to resent control but is sometimes grateful for it.

The Intermediate still desires and needs the affection of his parents, but he does not want any public demonstration of this. The boy, especially, is afraid he will be accused of being "tied to his mother's apron strings." The Intermediate needs the assurance that someone loves and

cares for him, if he himself is to develop a stable emotional life. The boy or girl who lacks this affection in his home has a great longing for it, which may be satisfied by the sympathetic leader of youth as he shows him the love of God and God's desire to be his friend.

Present satisfactions are very important to the Intermediate. He is likely to think that if he works hard enough, he can get anything he wants out of life. To him happiness may be associated with superficial pleasures and it is only as he matures that the deeper meaning of true happiness becomes evident to him.

But we find that the boy or girl of intermediate age, in spite of his natural self-interest, also shows sympathy for the weak, a desire to join others in a good cause and often a desire to reform others.

The Intermediate dreams of success, popularity and leadership and sets up as his ideal those men and women in all fields of endeavor who have achieved these things.

#### E. Social Characteristics

The Intermediate boy and girl is becoming more and more aware of his place in society and his duty toward it. He looks at things through new eyes. His family becomes people and a new awareness of the economic and social status of the family comes to him. New responsibilities, which he often shirks, are placed upon him. He desires to

maintain his independence and be really grown up. He is willing to take his place in any cooperative family project if he feels that his adult status is being properly recognized. He likes to be consulted about family decisions. He does not like to be managed.

The ease with which he gets along with others depends a great deal on his home and school environments and the previous training he has received. If he is used to working with others, it will stand him in good stead now.

Clubs and outdoor group games hold his interest and he longs to excel in some type of activity that he may have the approval of his fellows. It is extremely important to him that he gain satisfactory social status and in informal group activities, he learns the techniques of getting along with other people.

The Intermediate must be just like his friends and do whatever they do. The great crime is to be different and many times he really suffers when he is not able to conform to the pattern set up by the group.

The Intermediate wants to build friendships. At this time interest is aroused in the opposite sex and manifests itself in the way they avoid each other. The girls become more interested in clothes and personal appearance than do the boys of the same age. Both are likely to think love-making is silly and marriage is too far away to absorb their interest. They are, however, developing a social

consciousness and like to do things together within their own groups.

These young people are shifting from free and informal activities to those that are more organized. The Intermediate wants to run his own activities and to show his independence. He is impatient with restrictions that he has not made for himself. Democratic self-government appeals to him greatly, especially if he knows that there is a sympathetic adult standing by to help out if he should get into difficulty.

#### F. Religious Characteristics

As we have said, the Intermediate is beginning to question all things and his religion is no exception to this. The child's religion is the product of his environment. He has accepted without question what has been taught him, but along with the desire for adequacy in all things, comes the desire for an adequate religious faith that will meet personal needs.

The Intermediate, before this time, may have thought of God only as a being like man, but with super-human powers. Heaven may have been thought of as a city with streets of gold where all good boys and girls go when they die. Prayer may have been a sort of "open sesame" to things that he desired, and the Bible may have been an honored book, but one that was little understood--or perhaps

he had not given much thought to the subject.

As has been said, environment dictates what the religious experience of the Intermediate has been up to this time. Some have grown up without religious training of any sort; others have had the benefit of such training in home and church. All religious training does not bring the desired results. Some children who have the most dogmatic teaching when younger, suffer the greatest doubts in adolescence.

Many young people take religion for granted, a small percentage scoff, others are openly indifferent, a small group have a traditional interest, a still smaller group have a great social passion which is to them religion, and a few are deeply devoted to Christianity.<sup>3</sup> The Intermediate usually has a strong religious tendency that can be directed into the right channels by the wise and understanding adult. He wants to analyze ideas that are presented to him and to form his own convictions.

Because he is naturally idealistic, the majesty of Christ and His teachings are inspiring to the Intermediate. Nature, art and poetry have a great effect upon his religious thinking. The early Adolescent, in his groping, often suffers loneliness and wants a friend, and Christ can be that friend.

. . . . .

3. Burkhart, Roy A., Understanding Youth, p. 38.

Adolescent religion must be vital or it will be discarded. Questioning and conversion are the two chief characteristics of the adolescent religious experience.

Religious training in the home from childhood makes any necessary readjustment easier and more natural. The Adolescent who has had this advantage, may not experience any sudden awakening, but conversion is almost always preceded by a certain amount of emotional conflict which, without proper direction, except for the grace of God, may die out. Moral doubts about God's kindness and justice may drive some away from Him. A feeling of inadequacy or guilt may bring others to a time of decision and peace.

The Intermediate, for the most part, has a strong sense of justice. He sees the difference between precept and example and he is not easily fooled by adults who teach one thing and live another.

These boys and girls may seem to be the hardest to deal with in the Church. The Intermediate is not dependable, he may be inattentive and cause trouble, he may not want to attend the church services. He is too old for the Juniors and the Seniors do not want him, so, unless there are enough others of his age group to do things together and unless he has interested and intelligent leaders, he may drift away. His natural alertness and curiosity to know about everything will guarantee wholehearted response to the proper teaching. This is the time that he is most

ready to give his loyalty to Christ and leaders should take advantage of it. This is especially urgent when we consider that 5/6 of all decisions for Christ are made before 21, 1/12 of all decisions are made between 21 and 25, and after 30 there is just one chance in a thousand that the individual will accept Him.<sup>4</sup>

#### G. Summary and Conclusions

The intermediate age is not, as many seem to think, a hopeless period in the Adolescent's life, but a period of great advance along all lines. Nothing radically new or unnatural enters his experience. These things are simply products of the experiences of pre-adolescence--seen in a new light, to be sure. Most of his behavior can be explained when his background and present environment is clearly seen. This is not a period when he entirely "puts away childish things" but a period wherein he attempts to use these tools that he has in new ways, as new and broader situations are presented to him.

He is looking for something big to which he can give his loyalty and he needs a cause that is adequate and satisfying, that will supply opportunity for fellowship, self-expression, and purposeful activity, that is worthy of his highest devotion, that will make the most of all his

. . . . .

4. Rudisill, Earl S., The Intimate Problems of Youth, p. 176.



undeveloped possibilities, that will crystallize all his desires and longings, that will build desirable character and will give a pattern and purpose to all of life, that will develop understanding and judgement in dealing with others, that will bring real and lasting happiness and will give him the answer to his many questions.

CHAPTER II

EVALUATION OF THE PSALMS

IN MEETING THE RELIGIOUS NEEDS OF THE INTERMEDIATE

## CHAPTER II

### EVALUATION OF THE PSALMS IN MEETING THE RELIGIOUS NEEDS OF THE INTERMEDIATE

#### A. Introduction

As the Intermediate seeks to establish himself as an adult person, life suddenly becomes for him full of contradictions. Someone has said the Intermediate's greatest need is for organization. He is alert, curious, full of vitality and eager for something to challenge him to action, and yet he is untried and feels his own inadequacy. He has great ideals and wants to live up to them, but does not know exactly how to do it. He is groping around for some solid bit of rock on which he may rest his feet.

These characteristics make him especially teachable. He will be learning, for he is seeking. What he learns, whether for good or bad, is the responsibility of his parents, teachers, leaders, and friends.

The International Council of Religious Education and other leaders of youth have set up goals for the Intermediate that they feel are adequate to meet his needs. The author feels that these are good and necessary, but that others might be added to round out Intermediate experience.

This chapter will seek to set forth the needs of the Intermediate in relation to his religious concepts and experience, in relation to his expression of those concepts

and in relation to making choices. An evaluation of the Psalms will then be made in an effort to determine whether or not this great Book can be used effectively in meeting these needs.

## B. The Religious Needs of the Intermediate

### 1. In Relation to Religious Concepts and Experience

The first consideration shall be those specifically religious concepts and related experience that should be characteristic of the intermediate age.

#### a. Of God

Lucille Desjardins puts the following objective first in her list for Intermediates:

"A growing realization of God as Father, a developing faith in his unique power, infallible wisdom and perfect love, and a growing sense of friendship with him."<sup>1</sup>

This surely should be the Intermediate's idea of God, taking the place of his former childlike ideas. He needs a knowledge of the true character of God that will wipe away any intellectual doubts he might have as to His kindness and justice and he must learn to trust Him.

Along with his growing concept of God, the Father, the Intermediate should gain a new conception of Jesus Christ that will lead to his personal acceptance of Him as Savior,

. . . . .

1. Desjardins, Lucille, Teaching Intermediates, p. 18.

Lord, Example, and Friend. The Intermediate wants and needs a great friend, just as he needs a living faith and understanding of God.

He should also develop a realization of the Holy Spirit as a Person of the Godhead, distinct from the Father and the Son, the One who gives life, who will dwell within him to guide and teach and to bring forth from his life the "fruit of the Spirit."

b. Of Sin and Forgiveness

The Intermediate should realize his responsibility to God and himself to lead a pure life, or as the International Council of Religious Education puts it he needs

"A growing understanding of the meaning of right and wrong as related to daily conduct and to fellowship with God and man."<sup>2</sup>

He should be given the assurance that God does forgive the penitent sinner and be taught how to restore himself to fellowship with Him.

c. Of Death and Immortality

Death and immortality will find a place in the religious thinking of the Intermediate and he should be helped to understand death as merely the gateway from one life to another--not a thing to be dreaded--and immortality, as a reality that he may possess here and now through acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior.

. . . . .

2. International Council of Religious Education, The Curriculum Guide, Book III, p. 54.

d. Of the Bible

The Bible should become to him not only a well loved book, but one in which he sees God revealed through Christ. He should develop an understanding and appreciation of Old and New Testament teachings, seeing in them the plans and purposes of God and finding there the solutions to his problems and guidance for everyday living.

2. In Relation to the Expression of Those Concepts

a. In Worship

In expressing his religious concepts, worship is of the utmost importance. The Intermediate who has these religious concepts will naturally have a desire to give expression to his feelings. In this he needs guidance and training both for his personal devotional life and for participation in group worship. The fortunate Intermediate will have grown up in a home where he had training and help in expressing himself acceptably to God and in having fellowship with Him alone and with others, but many do not have this advantage. He needs to be able to lay hold of this great resource of worship. As Book III of the Curriculum Guide puts it, he needs:

"A meaningful and vital experience of personal prayer in place of childhood habit."

"A growing appreciation of the unique religious experiences possible in the home; and growing ability and willingness to encourage home worship and to

share religious experiences and problems with others in the home circle."<sup>3</sup>

b. In the Church

The Intermediate needs to realize the values of joining with others in worship in the church and to be led to express his personal devotion to Christ by making public his confession of Him and joining the church of his choice, that he might be strengthened in his faith and encourage others. The Curriculum Guide states, he needs:

"An understanding of the meaning of the church, involving its function in relating God to all of human life and in relating its members in Christian fellowship; its organization, purposes, and practices; membership in the church and whole-hearted loyalty to it; desire and ability to share in its program and to enter into its work and fellowship; and an increasing consciousness of unity as among various Christian groups in experience, purpose and program."<sup>4</sup>

This involves seeing and answering the need for service along many lines and is the thing the Intermediate is eager for because of his idealism, his boundless energy, and his many growing interests.

c. In Leadership

Closely related to this expressing of his religious concepts in the church is the matter of leadership training.<sup>5</sup> In this he needs both opportunity and guidance.

. . . . .

3. The International Curriculum Guide, Book III, p. 54.

4. Ibid., p. 54.

5. Ibid., p. 54.

d. In Stewardship

Another important objective as stated by the International Council on Religious Education, which is an expression of Intermediate religious concepts, would be his need for:

"An understanding of the place and meaning of giving in Christian living and habits of personal giving of self and substance which will include a sharing in the church's giving program."<sup>6</sup>

As he learns to share, he should be developing the desire to help in spreading the Gospel to all mankind regardless of class or color.

As God becomes more of a reality to him and as he realizes His presence more and more in all of life, his horizons should broaden and proper attitudes toward all peoples--family, friends, and all others--should result in a growing feeling of responsibility in social, economic, and political matters and in some expression of that feeling.

3. In Relation to Making Choices and Solving Problems

a. Sources of Help

The Intermediate feels definite needs at this time in relation to making choices about many things. His impulsiveness and eagerness to attain independence sometimes gets him into trouble because he lacks self-control and is not wholly adequate to make choices wisely.<sup>7</sup> The Intermediate

. . . . .

6. The International Curriculum Guide, Book III, p. 54.

7. Ante, p. 8.



who has taken God into his life through Christ and who is allowing Him to permeate all of life, has a basis for making choices. The one who has learned to turn to God in prayer has a great resource in time of indecision and he who knows how to use his Bible as a guidebook of faith and practice, has another great source of help. But the ability to use these resources effectively does not come all at once. It is a growing thing and sometimes seems a long and discouraging process, especially if the proper help and guidance and encouragement from parents, teachers, and friends is not available.<sup>8</sup>

b. Setting Up Standards

The Intermediate who has the proper concept of God and His holiness will also see sin in its proper light and he will know it cannot be pleasing to Him.<sup>9</sup> He will however, need help in resisting temptation and in setting up standards of right and wrong as a basis for making choices in everyday living.<sup>10</sup> There will be many choices for him to make--choices of friends, choices of activities, choices of conduct--some extremely important to him and to others, each choice doing its bit to build his personality and to determine further conduct.

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8. Ante, pp. 13, 14.

9. Ante, p. 14.

10. Ante, p. 8.

### c. Satisfaction

The Intermediate needs to feel pride in the fact that he is, of his own free will, choosing to cooperate with God.<sup>11</sup> He should have a desire to seek Christian goals. These wise choices will become more and more easy to make as he comes to see the true place of his religion in his life. He will see many things in their proper perspective so that his own selfish interests will gradually give way to greater interests that will bring more lasting satisfaction.<sup>12</sup>

He needs to have difficult decisions to make, so that he will depend on God, so that he will learn to trust Him for all things and so that his faith will be strengthened. As he is growing in all other things, so he must grow spiritually. Certainly one manifestation of spiritual growth will be his increasing ability to make wise choices independently.

### C. The Value of the Psalms in Meeting Intermediate Needs

#### 1. In Relation to Religious Concepts and Experience

##### a. God, the Father

Religion consists both of God seeking man and man's response out of his need to God. Both are found in

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11. Ante, pp. 10 and 12.

12. Ante, p. 10.

the Psalms.

"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my  
heart said unto thee,  
Thy face, Jehovah, will I seek."<sup>13</sup>

The Intermediate has a great longing for God as did the Psalmist, and religion, as expressed in the Psalms, appeals to him for as Tracy says, "The religion of childhood is natural, that of youth is personal, and that of maturity is doctrinal."<sup>14</sup> The Psalms will mean much to the Intermediate as he gets to know them, because they are not a theological treatise, nor are they a doctrinal statement, which he cannot appreciate, but they are the personal testimonies of many writers to what God by His works, His words and in His personal fellowship has proved Himself to be. They have experienced this God and these words come from their hearts. The very fact that these lyric gems have been preserved and loved and used for so many centuries shows that the picture of God that they set forth, must be a true one, for it strikes a chord in the human heart.

"They accept God and do not need to prove Him."<sup>15</sup>

Because of the concepts of God as seen in the Psalms and the great pictures of God's workings in nature and in human life found there, the Intermediate will become filled with wonder and awe. Here is something far

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13. Psalm 27:8.

14. Tracy, Frederick, Psychology of Adolescents, p. 188.

15. Stirling, John, Editor, The Study Bible, p. 16.

beyond him and his experience. His soul is especially responsive to the beauty and mystery of what he finds there and he will want to respond in reverence and worship to the God who is so great and does such wondrous things.<sup>16</sup>

The Psalmists found God to be a Father; they had faith in His unique power, infallible wisdom and perfect love and they saw His workings in all of nature and human life.<sup>17</sup>

L. M. Watt says:

"So long as man knows God or seeks to know Him, so long will the Psalms be loved and used, and so long as the human heart praises God, so long will it find itself in the climbing way."<sup>18</sup>

The Psalter is full of praise to God for His works and His attributes, a study of which would prove helpful, not only to the Intermediate, but to anyone seeking to know God.

The Psalms teach that man originated from God, is dependant on God, and subsists for God. They show Him as Creator, Preserver, Deliverer, Living King and Ruler, and Righteous Judge; One who is compassionate and has forgiveness for the penitent.<sup>19</sup>

The pictures of God as given by the various writers of the Psalms are very concrete and vivid. Just as the child's ideas about God grow as he gets older, so did

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16. Ante, p. 13.

17. Intra, p. 18.

18. Watt, L. M. in Stirling, Op. cit., p. 1.

19. Cf. Butler, J. Glentworth, The Bible-Work, The Old Testament, Vol. IV, p. 12.

Israel's conception of God grew as He revealed Himself to them. The Intermediate who is just growing out of his anthropomorphic ideas of God will readily understand these elements in the Psalms. He will also find symbols such as, "rock," "tower," "shield," "sun," "under the shadow of the Almighty," and these will have a meaning for him at this age that they did not have for him as a child.

The Psalms present God as the Supreme Being, yet as the Loving Father; as having righteousness, yet as also having wondrous mercy.

b. God, the Son

As J. M. Powis Smith says,

"From so genuinely human and intimately personal an idea of God [as that found in the Psalms] it was but a short step to the acceptance of Jesus as the actual Son of God."<sup>20</sup>

The Psalms, having been written before the birth of Christ, do not give a clear picture of Him, for to none of the psalmists was this revealed. However, they do, to some extent, foreshadow Him. They are not a narrative of His life, it is true, but they do declare His works, His humiliation, His glory, the spiritual agonies of His death, the glorious issues of His resurrection, His wrestlings with the powers of darkness, and His ultimate triumph.<sup>21</sup>

Many passages in the Psalms point to Christ. The

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20. Smith, J. M. Powis, The Religion of the Psalms, pp. 156, 157.

21. Cf. Butler, Op. cit., p. 21.

Messianic Hope was always highest in times of national oppression, but could not be expressed too clearly by the psalmists when outward respect must be shown to ruling powers. Often the very language of poetry itself obscures meaning for readers of another age, but one thing is certain --the Messiah was the hope of Israel and that hope was all that kept her from utter despair in times of calamity.

The Intermediate can be led to see Christ in the Psalms as the One in whom he, as well as the Israelites, may have hope. He can see Him as King, he can to some extent appreciate His character and His sufferings for a sinful world.<sup>22</sup>

Wordsworth has said, "The Psalter was the Hymn-book and Prayer Book of Christ." Would this Book which was so much a part of the life of the Savior not give to the Intermediate a more intimate picture of Him?

#### c. God, the Holy Spirit

That the writers of the Psalms were inspired by the Holy Spirit as were the writers of the rest of the Scriptures is surely evident, both from internal evidence and from the experience of believers in using them through the ages. In the Psalms, He is mentioned as the agent of creation. "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit and they are created."<sup>23</sup> He is shown to be omnipresent in Psalm 139:7

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22. Cf. Psalms 2, 72, 22.

23. Psalm 104:30.

--these being attributes of God--and as dwelling within the child of God in Psalm 51:11. While this picture is by no means complete, these concepts of the Holy Spirit are important for the Intermediate.

#### d. Sin and Forgiveness

Sin in the Psalms is presented as an awful crime of which man is guilty. It is forgetfulness of God and abandonment of Him; it leads to moral degradation and brings God's judgement, but God's mercy and grace are always accessible to the penitent. The psalmists show that sin is not only outward, but is also inward. The results of sin are clearly presented.<sup>24</sup>

The great penitential psalms, especially 51 and 32, take the reader with them into the very experience of the writer. The Intermediate can more easily understand the experience of another than he could a doctrinal explanation of sin, penitence, and forgiveness. In these psalms the Intermediate can see the misery of unconfessed sin and the joy of restored fellowship with God.

#### e. Death and Immortality

Such passages as Psalm 17:5, "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with beholding thy form," and Psalm 49:15, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will

. . . . .

24. Cf. Butler, Op. cit., p. 13.

receive me," might be interpreted to refer to life after death. Surely there is an expression of trust in God to take care of His people in all things that is of value for instruction from the Psalms. As Dr. Watt says:

"They give the soul a broadening view of His vastness and of His guiding contact with life's questions, an opening vista of immortality."<sup>25</sup>

f. The Bible

"Literature, especially poetry, is probably our most powerful agent for rousing, sensitizing and energizing our sense of beauty in all things.

"Souls for many centuries have hungered for the beauty of holiness as well as for its truth and righteousness."<sup>26</sup>

An appreciation of God's word, both as effective in life and as great literature, can certainly be stimulated in the Intermediate by wise use of the Psalms. As Hooker says, "What is there necessary for man to know which the Psalms are not able to teach?"<sup>27</sup> He can certainly find the answers to his problems in this Book if he is taught how to make use of its many resources. Psalm 19:7 puts it this way, "The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple." Psalms such as 119 that deal with the values of God's Word, have grown out of deep meditation and reveal a great love that is a testimony to all people of its worth.

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25. Stirling, Op. cit. p. 14.

26. Osgood, Charles C., Poetry as a Means of Grace, p. 18.

27. Stirling, Op. cit., p. 18.



The Psalms are great literature. The fact of their survival is proof enough. They have been sung by the Church throughout the ages; they have been used in homes and schools and in the midst of daily work; they have even been used in camps and in times of battle; not to mention their use in daily life.<sup>28</sup> Their use will help the Intermediate to appreciate the Bible as a whole as they see the relation of the Psalms to the rest of the Book. The Psalms are, as Luther said, the Bible in miniature and are quoted often in the New Testament.

The Intermediate's appreciation of other religious literature and music will grow as he sees the results of the influence of the Psalms on great authors, poets and playwrights and upon the great composers. What a thrill it will be to him to recognize quotations in Shakespeare, Byron or Longfellow or portions of the text of some great musical work such as Haydn's "Creation," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," or Handel's "Messiah," as coming from the Psalms.

The Psalms have the universality of truth found in all great poetry. Their lyric quality, to which the human heart readily responds, is one of the secrets of their popularity, which makes them appeal to young people.

Poetry appeals to the sensitive nature of the Intermediate. In using religious poetry effectively with

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28. Cf. Morgan, Charles H., The Psalms as Daily Companions, pp. 142-152.

early adolescents, that must be chosen which is understandable, sincere, earnest, interesting, stimulating, full of action, wholesome, well-balanced in emphasis, positive and suggestive rather than negative and dogmatic. It should express highest ideals and noblest purposes; it should be personal and practical; it should guide and stimulate worship, reveal the beautiful and should portray the reality of Jesus and the Father and their influence in life.<sup>29</sup> It would be difficult to find religious poetry that would better meet these standards than that found in the Psalms. It must be recognized, of course, that some Psalms are more suited to this age group and for specific use with the Intermediate than are others, but what better source can he find in his attempt to build proper religious concepts?

## 2. In Relation to the Expression of Those Concepts

### a. In Worship

The chief use of the Psalms has been in worship. Butler says they are the "great Handbook of Devotion for both covenants."<sup>30</sup> The Psalms were probably collected for this purpose. They encourage public worship, suggesting the use of various rites, songs, musical instruments, attendance in God's House, the expression of praise and

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29. Cf. Bradley, Julia J., A Selection of the Religious Poetry for the Christian Education of Early Adolescents, pp. 55 and 56.

30. Cf. Butler, Op. cit., p. 15.

thanksgiving. They advocate a sacrifice as the expression of consecration of self to God, but repudiate any insincerity or hypocrisy.<sup>31</sup> The Psalms also encourage private devotion to God. As has been said, the Intermediate needs guidance in expressing his religious concepts acceptably. "No man can pray like the man to whom the Psalms are an intimate possession."<sup>32</sup> The Psalms not only take one into the Holy Place with the writer as he reveals his experience with God, but they give the reader words to say as he himself approaches God in the same way. This "Handbook of Devotion" has within it a vast wealth of source material for calls to worship, prayers, hymns, responses, choric speech, benedictions, meditations, talks, etc. If rightly used, the Psalms will stimulate creativity on the part of the Intermediate in using them in planning worship services and in his own expression of devotion to God in the church and home. The Psalms give assurance of God's readiness to hear His children and to help in trouble. They give that sense of security that the Intermediate needs.

b. In the Church

The psalmists bear personal testimony to God's goodness and saving grace and advocate that all join together in worship and praise of God. They recognize God's

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31. Cf. Butler, Op. cit., p. 15.

32. Stirling, Op. cit., p. 14.

workings in all of life and man's responsibility to Him and to his fellowmen in service. The nation as well as the individual is appealed to. The Intermediate who is being called upon to express his loyalty to God in Christ, can appreciate these elements in the Psalms.

c. In Leadership

The Intermediate may get training in leadership as he uses this great book, in planning and carrying out various activities in the church. This will help to develop in him that sense of independence and the confidence he longs for.

d. In Stewardship

Giving of self to God and aiding the needy are other valuable emphases in the Psalms for the Intermediate as well as that of telling all people of God's goodness and teaching them His ways. These are great causes to which he can dedicate himself and thus feel his partnership and cooperation with God.

3. In Relation to Making Choices and Solving Problems

a. Sources of Help

The Psalms provide sources of help for the Intermediate who is learning to make wise choices. In them he can see the patient God of history who shows His people time and time again the choices that they should make, who chastens them as a father when they do wrong, and who is ready to forgive the penitent wrongdoers. He can see that

the psalmists turn to God in prayer whenever they have a problem to face. He can see that they receive help. The Intermediate has the same resource.

Besides God's help in prayer the Psalms give the Intermediate help through instruction. If he is guided in his study of the Psalms, he will see a relationship between some of the problems dealt with there and his own. Does it really pay to be good? How can he have any fun if he doesn't do the things the gang does? Aren't money and social standing the important things after all? The ethical psalms<sup>33</sup> and those dealing with the problem of evil<sup>34</sup> would be a help in solving these problems and helping him to make wise choices.

If the Intermediate is impatient with his family because they do not realize his "adult status" or if family relations have become a bit strained or if he does not realize the value of having godly parents, he can be helped to see in what respect the psalmists hold family life and the blessedness of the peace and security that is possible.<sup>35</sup>

#### b. Setting Up Standards

According to the Psalms, the ideal man is generous, sympathetic, just, merciful, truthful, pure of heart, firm in his faith and convictions, a seeker after the will

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33. The Ethical Psalms, 1, 15, 24, 101, 112.

34. Psalms 37 and 73.

35. Cf. Psalms 127, 128, 131, 133.

of God in all things, a loyal citizen, a lover of family and country. These are standards which the Intermediate should be setting up for himself.

The Psalms show God's standards for holy living and give instructions in how to lead the kind of life He expects of His people. The Intermediate in his uncertainty and indecision needs the basis of judgement that the Psalms can provide. He will need help in discovering these standards and in making them apply to his own life. He will not be able to appropriate at once all that the Psalms can teach, but as he grows in the Christian life and learns to lean more and more on God, that he might know His will for his life, he will learn the lessons that the Psalms have to teach.

#### c. Satisfaction

The Psalms clearly set forth the blessedness of the righteous man as opposed to the unhappy lot of the wicked.<sup>36</sup> They show the blessedness of fellowship with God<sup>37</sup> that comes when man is living in right relationship with Him. They not only show the value of the individual's choosing for God but also its value for the nation. If the Intermediate who is at this time forming the habits which will mold all of his life can see and will heed these lessons that the Psalms can teach, he will gain in emotional stability,

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36. Cf. Psalm 1.

37. Cf. Psalm 32.

he will be building a fine Christian character, his life will have a purpose, he will see things in their proper perspective as he comes to look at them through God's eyes.

#### D. Limitations in the Use of the Psalms with Intermediates

##### 1. Introduction

No one book of the Bible is sufficient to meet all human need. If it were, there would be no use for the other sixty-five. God's revelation to His people was slow and gradual, culminating in His full revelation in Christ. As Behrends has said of the Hebrew religion in the Psalms:

"It needed confinement for its development and maturity, but it requires now no other quality than that which the universal tone of Christianity supplies. The philosophy of history is here, sin provokes judgement and judgement clears the way for repentance and redemption. Thus the Gospel beats within the bosom of the law and the fair city of God emerges from the smoke and confusion of the world's long and bitter discipline."<sup>38</sup>

In using the Psalms with Intermediates, the Hebrew background must first be made clear, then this great book must be studied in the light of New Testament truth. As Oetinger says,

"There is no essential New Testament truth that is not contained in the Psalms, if not in its unfolded sense, at least in the spirit."<sup>39</sup>

. . . . .

38. Butler, Op. cit., p. 13.

39. Ibid., p. 22.

God revealed everything in His good time.

## 2. The Hebrew Idea of God

Some have wrongly said that the Old Testament God is a God of wrath, not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>40</sup> Throughout the Psalms God is revealed as Creator and Preserver of His people. The Israelites did have a rather nationalistic idea of God--a danger that must be faced in teaching Intermediates. It must be realized that the Psalms are distinctly Hebrew. The writers were Hebrews and the experiences and topics mentioned therein must be interpreted in the light of this background as well as in the light of our New Testament teachings. Certainly in many of the Psalms, God is extolled as Creator of all and all are called upon to worship Him. His name is to be proclaimed to all the heathen and they shall fear Him.<sup>41</sup>

## 3. The Messianic Picture

The Messianic Psalms<sup>42</sup> interpreted aside from the New Testament, are likely to present a confusing picture to the Intermediate, for the Psalms present Him as the Anointed One, ruling victoriously, yet on the other hand He is shown as the Rejected Sufferer, but the two pictures are rarely presented in the same psalm. Some of the Psalms present

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40. Cf. Psalm 103:13.

41. Cf. Psalms 18:49, 96:3, 102:15.

42. The Messianic Psalms, 2, 18, 20, 21, 22, 40, 72, 89, 110, 118.



David or some other as a type of Christ. These pictures are at best incomplete, as any type of the perfect Christ would have to be and the analogy cannot be pushed too far.

#### 4. The Holy Spirit in the Psalms

No clear-cut picture of the person or work of the Holy Spirit is found in the Psalms, although His presence is surely felt by the reader.

#### 5. The Attitude of the Israelites Toward Others

While a beautiful picture of the forgiveness of God to the penitent sinner is given,<sup>43</sup> God's people do not seem to have that same spirit toward their enemies and very often call down God's wrath upon these people in a way that makes Christians shudder.<sup>44</sup> In dealing with this problem, the Hebrew background must again be taken into consideration and the Intermediate must be helped to understand the Hebrew attitude toward these people who were also enemies of God. Along this same line, the use of such verses as Psalm 144:1 might be questioned, "Blessed be Jehovah my rock, who teacheth my hand to war and my fingers to fight."

#### 6. The Note of Complaint and Suffering

Another objection to the use of the Psalms with the Intermediate is that complaint and suffering seem to

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43. Cf. Psalms 32, 51.

44. The Imprecatory Psalms, 35, 41, 56, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 109, 137.

make up so large a part of them. Suffering is presented as the result of sin and some psalms such as 22, 69, and 88, reveal a weariness, a sense of defeat and utter sorrow. The Intermediate has his troubles which seem big to him. The wise leader could help him to see that others before him have suffered and to see wherein they took courage. It might be well to use only those that end with a note of hope as even most of these do, for certainly the Christian religion is one of hope, joy, peace and victory.

#### 7. The Conception of Life After Death

To the psalmist, this life seems to be the important thing. Death is calamity.<sup>45</sup> Messianic hope replaced the hope of immortality and kept it in the background. The resurrection of national life and power was the hope of Israel. Premature death is the punishment of the wicked and length of days is the reward of the righteous.<sup>46</sup> In this the Psalms do not differ from the Old Testament as a whole. Rewards and punishments were looked for in this life. The psalmists did not wait for deferred hopes. Fellowship with God was the supreme good.<sup>47</sup>

#### 8. Difficulties in Structure and in Terms Used

The very structure of some of the Psalms themselves makes them difficult to use with the Intermediate.

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45. Cf. Psalms 69:15, 6:5, 119:175.

46. Cf. Psalms 9:17, 37:22, 55:23, 91:16, 118:17.

47. Cf. Smith, Op. cit., p. 101.

Some contain terms and references to history which would mean little to him without some explanation. While most of the Psalms are short and usable, a few are long and involved, lacking coherence and unity. Even these, however, may have portions which can be used.

#### E. Summary

To summarize, the Intermediate needs to know the three Persons of the Godhead as real and living personalities and to take a definite personal stand for Christ. He needs correct ideas about sin and forgiveness, death and immortality. He should have an understanding and appreciation of the whole Bible and be able to use it as a guidebook for his life.

These religious concepts should be expressed in worship and service, both personally and in cooperation with other Christians and in a feeling of responsibility to help satisfy both the spiritual and physical needs of others.

And finally, these concepts should form a basis for making choices in all areas of life that the Intermediate might grow into a fine, mature Christian, well pleasing to his Lord and to his fellow men.

The use of the Psalms for study, meditation and activity can for the most part meet Intermediate needs. They present an adequate conception of God, the Father, that the Intermediate can understand because they are a

record of personal experience rather than a theological treatise. The works and character of Christ are set forth in the Psalms and some attributes of the Holy Spirit may be seen in this Book.

In the Psalms the character of sin and its awful results are contrasted with the blessedness of the righteous life and God's grace to the penitent is made evident.

While the main emphasis of the Psalms is in the believer's trust in God for all of life, life after death is an emerging hope.

Being great literature, the Psalms can arouse in the Intermediate an appreciation and love for the Bible and other religious literature. He can find there the answers to his questions and problems; he can see their use in history and in contemporary life; he can see the universality of their truth; his heart will respond to the lyric quality of their music.

The great variety in the structure of the Psalms and in the subjects dealt with, make them very usable for the Intermediate in his expression of religious concepts. They offer a vast wealth of source material for use in public and private worship and other activities in church and home. Used wisely, they inspire the Intermediate to personal testimony and joining with others in expressing his religious feeling and in service to God and mankind.

A knowledge and understanding of the Psalms will

help the Intermediate in setting up standards for making wise choices in every realm of life and will aid in the development of fine Christian character.

It must be recognized that the Psalms have certain limitations which hinder their use with the Intermediate in some regards. The revelation of God in Christ was not yet manifest, the picture of the Messiah may be confusing, the person and work of the Holy Spirit are not clearly set forth. There are certain problems such as the imprecations, the limited conception of life after death and the picture of suffering as the result of sin that must be dealt with.

Then there are psalms which do not in their entirety lend themselves readily for use with the Intermediate, because of their subject, length or lack of coherence.

### CHAPTER III

#### SUGGESTED WAYS FOR USING THE PSALMS IN THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF THE INTERMEDIATE

### CHAPTER III

#### SUGGESTED WAYS FOR USING THE PSALMS IN THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF THE INTERMEDIATE

##### A. Introduction

General characteristics and religious needs of the Intermediate have been set forth as a basis for making a study of the Psalms to determine whether or not they would be of value for use with the Intermediate. Recognizing the worth of this Book of the Bible, the author will in this chapter suggest several ways in which the Psalms might be used in the Christian education of this age group.

First, general suggestions will be made for use in the various areas of his religious experience. This will be followed by a suggested program for the use of the Psalms with the Intermediate in a two weeks' session of the vacation church school. This unit of work does not pretend to be complete in every detail. It is hoped that it will show that a well-rounded course of study and activity for the Intermediate can be built around the Psalms and that it will give constructive guidance in the method of doing this.

A vacation church school unit was chosen, for the author feels, because of the opportunity for concentrated, continuous work and the freedom to experiment that

this summer program provides, that it is the most ideal set-up in which to try out a new unit of this kind.

#### B. In Study

In considering the use of the Psalms with the Intermediate, the actual study of the Book immediately comes to mind. There are many approaches to a study of the Psalms which could be made attractive to the Intermediate. The problem solving approach might be taken. Questions collected from the group could be made into a course of study. Questions concerning the character of God could be answered, especially from Psalms 90-100. Questions of an ethical nature could be answered by a study of Psalms 1, 15, 24, 101, and 112. Slander and gossip are dealt with in Psalms 15 and 101; unjust judges, in Psalm 58; and the problem of the seeming prosperity of the wicked, in Psalms 37 and 73. These Psalms can teach the Intermediate how God expects him to live and how He expects him to treat others.

How to worship is a question worthy of a complete course of study teaching the nature of the God we worship, the possibility of man's fellowship with Him, the types of prayer, how to pray, and how God answers prayer. If the teacher desires, these may be taught to give the rich background of the history of Hebrew worship, as well as to show contemporary use of the Psalms in worship.



A book-as-a-whole approach may be made in which the structure of the book, types of psalms, characters mentioned, Hebrew poetry and poets, usage, authors and occasion of writing might be considered.

A topical approach might be made by using the Nature Psalms, the Historical, Ethical, Penitential, Imprecatory, Problem of Evil, Messianic, Theocratic, Pilgrim and Hallelujah Psalms.

The project method might be used, perhaps in connection with one of the others. A study of the musical use of the Psalms would be most fruitful. Closely related to that would be a study of the use of the Psalms in the Second Temple. A group might study them in connection with the life of David, writing their own story, fitting in those Psalms that they feel are appropriate. Others might write original psalms or metrical versions of their favorites. Some might choose selections and set them to music. Some might investigate the references to nature. Some might make a book of worship, choosing suitable passages for the various parts of a formal service or for personal devotions. They might write prayers using the Psalms for inspiration. An outdoor vesper service might be planned, or the background story of a psalm might be written. One group might be interested in forming a speaking choir, another might prefer to use the Psalms for singing and examine the church hymnal to see how many of our humns were inspired by

the Psalms. There is a wealth of material here to stimulate creative activity that should be most interesting to the Intermediate.

If a group has been led to seek answers to their problems in the Psalms, the discussion method might be used to determine the results of their findings and to help them crystallize their ideas and draw the proper conclusions.

The wise leader will find help from the Psalms in doing personal counseling with the Intermediate, because of the many verses of assurance and God's loving care and mercy that they contain, as well as the instruction that they give.

The Psalms can give the Intermediate a knowledge of God and what He requires of man and also a knowledge of how, through continuous fellowship with Him he can gain strength to meet His requirements. He can gain appreciation and understanding of the Bible through the Psalms as well as a knowledge and appreciation of the past and a love of beauty. The wise leader will see that these things are made real to him and become a part of his life, for it is only in this way that he will learn.

#### C. In Worship

Training in worship, both public and personal, is essential for the Intermediate. How the Psalms may be

used for this training has been indicated to a certain extent in the above discussion. The Psalms show not only what true worship is, but they give excellent examples that can be followed. There are some beautiful examples<sup>1</sup> of prayer in the Psalms that can serve as models for the youth as he attempts to express himself acceptably.

Psalms 95:1-3, 106:1, and 117 as well as many other references, may be used as calls to worship. The Intermediate will enjoy finding his own materials and in so doing will become more familiar with the Book. He may be encouraged in his daily Bible reading as he is led to see the relation between the Psalms and the rest of the Bible and becomes interested in the whole of it.

#### D. In Fellowship

As the Intermediate has experience in planning and leading worship and becomes more familiar with his Bible, the adult church service will become more meaningful to him and he will appreciate more and more the fellowship he can have with other Christians. He will appreciate the church music more as he recognizes the texts of some of the choir anthems. Perhaps he will have the opportunity to join an intermediate choir and to take part in the singing of these himself. The fellowship he gets

. . . . .

1. Cf. Psalms 19, 27, 51, 90.

in doing things with others is very valuable to him. Singing or reading the Psalms with others in a church service warms and vitalizes the meaning and intensifies the emotional power of the composition.<sup>2</sup>

The Psalms can help the Intermediate to develop an understanding attitude toward the Jewish people as he studies Hebrew history and realizes that the Psalms were written by Jews and that they are still used and loved by them today. If possible have him visit the local synagogue to see how the Psalms are used. He can be helped to realize that all Christian groups can meet on common ground in the Psalms for the basic fundamentals of Christian experience are set forth here. The Intermediate who is likely to be too self-centered and critical of others can be helped greatly by the fellowship opportunities the Psalms offer.

#### E. In Service

The Intermediate needs to be doing things. The project method, as well as certain activities using the Psalms, has already been suggested, but it might be stressed again with special emphasis on the service that the Intermediate can render to others through his church.

The Psalms can give the incentive to service. In Psalm 112, God's goodness to man and His approval of the

. . . . .

2. Morgan, Op cit., p. 79.

man who aids the needy is set forth. The Psalmist, after praising and giving thanks to God for His many blessings, often states his intention to declare God's salvation to the heathen. The message of the Psalms is universal and can be an incentive to the Intermediate to aid in the spreading of the Gospel.

Interest in missions might be stimulated by a study of the Psalms that have meant much in the lives of the great missionaries of the cross.

The Intermediate might be interested in doing a little missionary project of his own. Attractive booklets, bearing messages of comfort from the Psalms, for shut-ins or larger scrapbooks for the children's department of the church school or for children in hospitals, illustrating some favorite such as Psalm 100, might be made.

#### E. In Personal Commitment

The most important use that can be made of the Psalms with the Intermediate, is that which will lead him to commit his life to God through Christ by the acceptance of Him as personal Savior. The Psalms can certainly give the Intermediate a new conception of God and a greater love for Him. As has been said, the Psalms do not give a completely clear picture of Christ's redeeming work, but through a study of the Messianic Psalms, can come an interest in the study of the gospels that will clarify the picture

given there. He can be led to see that only through Christ can he have true fellowship with God and the power to lead a life which will measure up to the standards set for him in the Psalms.

The Psalms can be of great use to the Intermediate<sup>3</sup> in the continuing commitments of life. In school he must decide what shall be his course of action when others by cheating seem to be getting better marks than he. Does it pay to be good? The fellow with the most spending money seems to be the most popular. Is that fair?

During his summer vacation the Intermediate is faced with many decisions. Should he go off swimming with the gang on Sunday morning or should he be in Sunday school and church worshipping God with other Christians? Should he attend vacation church school? How may he wisely use his time? Should he get a job to help out the family exchequer or should he loaf around and expect his parents to furnish ample spending money? Choices of recreation must be made all year around.

Is the Intermediate old enough to run his own life now without being bossed around by his elders? What rights should he have at home? What attitudes should he have toward his brothers and sisters? What should be his attitudes toward others less fortunate than he?

. . . . .

3. Ante, pp. 22, 34.

These problems are very important to the Intermediate. He can be helped toward finding solutions to them in the Psalms. Each decision for the right will help to build toward fine Christian character.

G. A Suggested Program for the Use of the Psalms with the Intermediate in the Vacation Church School

1. Introduction to the Unit

As has been suggested, the Intermediate age is a crucial time. Now more than ever, the Intermediate needs the guidance and training he can get from Christian leaders, but unless he feels at home in his church, he will stay away. The vacation church school affords excellent opportunity to get close to him. The situation is more informal than the Sunday teaching session. The fact that there is more time available and that the whole unit can be taught in a period of two weeks, has definite advantages. The teacher can get to know each member of her class individually and as he comes to know her, the Intermediate will confide in her, providing he feels she is worthy of his trust. More learning will result because of the extra time that can be spent in putting this learning into practice through creative activity.

It is hoped that the following suggested program for the use of the Psalms with the Intermediate in the vacation church school might help the Intermediate develop

the proper religious concepts, express those concepts acceptably, and make them count in his daily living.

As is the case with any unit of work, much depends upon the teacher. It should be remembered that the Intermediate and his specific needs are more important than the content of the unit. The teacher should be his friend and guide, helping him to develop his potentialities. The material here presented should be used to that end.

Because there is a limit to available time, even in the vacation church school, the teacher will have to decide what in each lesson is most important to stress and build her lesson around that. All research and specific activities for the day should help to impress that on the mind of the pupil.

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Above all, the teacher should keep the primary aim of all true Christian education in mind--the acceptance of God in Christ for each individual and the growth and expression of that experience in all of life.

## 2. Suggested Outline for the Unit

Session I The Opening of Thy Word Giveth Light

II Our Fathers Have Told Us.

III Let Us Go Unto the House of Jehovah.

IV As For God His Way Is Perfect.

V The Heavens Declare the Glory of God.

VI God . . . A Very Present Help.



VII Who Shall Ascend Into the Hill of Jehovah?

VIII Lo, I Am Come!

IX Serve Jehovah With Gladness.

X Oh Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good.

### 3. To the Leader

The Intermediate boy or girl is eager, active, curious and especially teachable. Make the most of your opportunity. Remember that he is more important than the materials and plans that you have set up for his use. These things are but the means to an end--the end that he shall give himself to Christ and shall continue to grow in the Christian life. In the Psalms there is a wealth of material that can contribute to this goal--teaching material, worship material, material to inspire creative activity. Help to make these real and usable to him.

This unit should provide ample opportunity for training in how to plan and carry out activities. Do not dictate; be his friend and guide. The future Christian leaders of the church are in your hands. Guide them to take responsibility and to grow in character as they study and work and play with one another.

### 4. General Aims for the Unit

a. To help the Intermediate discover in the Psalms, what God is, how He works in His creation, and what He expects of man, that this knowledge might be an incentive to worship and serve Him.

b. To lead to an acceptance of Christ and a desire for His guidance in all of life.

c. To show the Intermediate that God speaks to him through the Bible and to help him use it as a guide-book of faith and life.

d. To give an appreciation of the Psalms as great and beautiful literature growing out of human experience.

e. To help the Intermediate use the Psalms in various purposeful activities.

f. To create in the Intermediate a desire to memorize some of the Psalms for use both in this unit and in life.

g. To give an appreciation of the Psalms as a source book of worship and to give training and practice in their use for this purpose.

##### 5. A Suggested Time Schedule

While it is not well to become a slave to a strict time schedule, the wise leader should keep a plan in mind so that the class can more readily accomplish that work that has been set up as a goal. Meeting the pupil's needs is of primary importance, and readjustments will have to be made to meet those needs.

Informal Opening Worship	15 minutes
Lesson	45 "
Recreation	20 "

Activities	45 minutes
Study and Research	35 "
Conference	15 "
Closing Worship	15 "

The informal opening worship should be a time for learning those things to be used in the final worship of the day and for discussing any related problems. The worship committee may take charge under the guidance of the leader and at the close, the committee for the next day may be chosen.

The lesson period should be directed by the teacher. Reports on research should be made at this time as a part of the lesson of the day and assignments given for the study and research period.

What is done during the recreation period depends upon the location of the church, the number of pupils, and the available space. Some leaders may prefer to practice the speaking choir at this time. Some active play, however, is desirable during a three hour session.

Purposeful activity is the aim of the next forty-five minutes. Every member of the class should be led to participate in this. Sufficient leadership and materials are most necessary if interest is to be maintained.

During the study and research period, work is prepared for the next day. Memory work may be learned at this time. Assignments should be kept as simple as possible without being so easy that they lose their challenge.

Because of limited time for this period, research materials should be readily available.

The conference period is a time for tying loose ends, checking on the work of the committees and answering questions that may have arisen. All work should be put away and the room should be in readiness for the closing worship.

The closing worship should be the high point of the day. The study of the Psalms and the active part the Intermediate has in planning and carrying out this service of worship should instill in him a reverence for God and a desire to honor Him. Let nothing mar or interrupt this time of help and inspiration.

#### 6. The Committee Plan

It is suggested that the Intermediates plan their own work as much as possible. It would be wise to have them choose their own student leader who would conduct the planning sessions.

Committees may be formed to take care of details such as the arrangement of the room, distribution of materials and the library.

A different committee should plan each day's worship so that all pupils have the benefit of this training.

Perhaps a special group should be chosen to plan for the closing session to which the class may want to invite their families and friends to share with them in the things they have gained from the unit.

Help the group analyze its own needs and to form such committees as will meet them. Also guide them in evaluating the work done so that improvement can be made where it is necessary.

#### 7. Memory Work

This unit is planned so that the pupils will be guided to choose their own memory work. The leader will, of course, have suggestions to make. Memorization will be motivated by the need to know various passages that they have chosen from the Psalms for use in the worship services and with the speaking choir. It may be that some will choose to learn other passages because of the appreciation they have gained for these great lyric gems. Because the Intermediate is capable of doing fine memory work and will enjoy it if properly motivated, it should not become a burden. See suggestions under Worship Materials and Choral Speech.

#### 8. The Library

Much of the work in this unit will be done through "research," both by individuals and committees.

While it is hoped that most of the desired information will be found in the Psalms themselves, a library is essential.

It will be valuable for the teacher to have a topical card index in which the students could find the

sources of material for the subjects which they are investigating. Both references in the Psalms and in other books can be listed. This file should aid the pupils in doing independent research and should be a time saving device for the teacher who will have much to do.

## 9. Suggested Activities

### a. Creative Writing

The Intermediate will write creatively if given the proper encouragement. The wise teacher will not try to force this or make it a requirement. She will not expect him to conform to patterns she may have set up. He will do his best work if he is encouraged to express his own individuality. A liking for this sort of thing must be cultivated in the pupil for it will be natural for him to imitate others. Outside approval is very important. If the teacher is his friend and shows that she appreciates what is done, the pupil will respond more readily. Try to find something to praise in each contribution. In that way the pupil will not only be encouraged to continue his efforts, but he will be learning what in them is good and work will improve.

Some Intermediates will need very little help while others who are not so original will appreciate suggestions. In writing a psalm of thanksgiving, a responsive

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4. Cf. Mearns, Hughes, Creative Power, p.34.

sentence such as, "We thank Thee, O God." may be chosen. A list of those things for which the pupil is thankful may then be made and these can be woven into a psalm similar in form to Psalm 136. Others may choose to follow the pattern of one of the shorter psalms such as the first. Another suggestion will be to rewrite one of the Psalms in the language of today, perhaps using rhyme. A nature hike may lead some to write original psalms.

In writing the story of a psalm, the student may choose one such as Psalm 142 and fit it into David's life. A suggestion is given in the title of the Psalm. "Maschil of David, when he was in the cave, a prayer." He might write an original story with a modern setting in which the Psalm would be appropriate.

#### b. Setting Psalms to Music

Many passages in the Psalms are appropriate for choral responses and, with a little encouragement, the Intermediate can be led to set these to simple tunes which can be used by the group in their worship. Fortunately, indeed, is the group which has a pianist capable of adding harmony to these simple melodies. The chief requisites are that the music be in keeping with the meaning and meter of the words. It should also be "singable," neither too high nor too low, nor too peculiar a rhythm. It is quite possible that the group as a whole may wish to choose a favorite verse as their theme, perhaps one from

Psalms 119, such as,

"Thy word have I laid up in my heart  
That I might not sin against thee."  
Psalms 119:11

or,

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet  
And a light unto my path."  
Psalms 119:105

which could be set to music by them.

#### c. Illustrating the Psalms

Some Intermediates may be interested in illustrating the Psalms. A worship center may be made using some art work inspired by a psalm as the dominant feature. A frieze or large scrapbook illustrating such Psalms as 8, 23, 100, 117, portions of 119 or 148. Perhaps these can be used in the lower departments of the church school or may be sent to children in the hospital.

#### d. Preparing a Book of Worship

There will be Intermediates who are incapable of creative work of the above type, who will need to be sharing in the activities of the group. Perhaps these will be interested in preparing a Book of Worship. Each day they will be planning and conducting their own worship and will be using the Psalms as their source book. It will be a valuable thing for them to collect their findings for future use. Perhaps the help of the church secretary can be enlisted so that these books can be mimeographed and distributed to the class. Contributions may be solicited



from the other activity groups. An attractive cover may be designed by one of those interested in art, the best choral responses and other verses set to music may be chosen, original psalms and a choice psalm story may be included as well as calls to worship, Scripture responses, hymns inspired by the Psalms and both original prayers and prayers from the Psalms. This is a large undertaking, but will be very worthwhile and will inspire all to do their best work.

e. Choral Speech

Some of the group, perhaps all of them, will enjoy forming a speaking choir. Some of the psalms such as the second, twenty-fourth, thirty-second, forty-sixth, ninety-first, and one-hundred fiftieth are easily adapted for use with such a group.

f. A Newspaper

In lessons four, five, and six it is suggested that the students set up a newspaper that will contain articles, stories and illustrations that will show what they have discovered God to be like from the Psalms. See those lessons for further instructions.

g. A Nature Hike

If possible to do so, have at least one activity outside the regular class time. A time of informal fellowship together will be especially rewarding to both teacher and pupils. A nature hike or a picnic climaxed by an outdoor vesper service with special emphasis on the Nature Psalms will appeal especially to the Intermediate.

10. Materials

a. For Worship

Calls to Worship

Psalms 29:1 and 2; 92:1 and 2; 95:1-7; 96:1-4,9; 100;  
103:1 and 2; 117; 149:1

Offering Sentence

Psalms 96:8

Responsive Readings

Psalms 122, 136

Prayers

Psalms 51, 19:14, 119:18, 139:23 and 24

Psalm-Hymns

<u>Hymn</u>	<u>Psalm</u>
1. The Heavens Declare Thy Glory . . . . .	19
2. The Lord Is My Shepherd . . . . .	23
3. The King of Love My Shepherd Is . . . . .	23
4. All Glory Laud and Honor . . . . .	24
5. A Mighty Fortress Is Our God . . . . .	46
6. Our God, Our Help in Ages Past . . . . .	90
7. Come Thou Almighty King . . . . .	96
8. Joy to the World . . . . .	98
9. O Worship the King . . . . .	104
10. Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens Adore Him . . .	148
11. Angel Voices Ever Singing . . . . .	150

Psalms for Choral Speaking

Psalms 2, 24, 32, 46, 91, 150

b. For the Intermediate

The Holy Bible, American Standard Version, Thomas Nelson  
and Sons, New York, 1901

A church hymnal

Notebook

Paper

Materials for activities

c. For the Leader

Books

The Holy Bible, American Standard Version, Thomas Nelson  
and Sons, New York, 1901

\* Davis, John D., A Dictionary of the Bible, Westminster  
Press, Philadelphia, 1942

\* Cruden, Alexander, Cruden's Complete Concordance, John.  
C. Winston Co., Philadelphia, 1930

Kirkpatrick, A. F., The Book of Psalms, The University  
Press, Cambridge, 1927

\* Prothero, Rowland E., The Psalms in Human Life, E. P.  
Dutton Co., New York, 1903

\* Van Dyke, Henry, The Story of the Psalms, Charles  
Scribner and Sons, New York, 1913

Sheriden, Alma S., Teaching Intermediates in the Church  
School, Methodist Book Concern, 1928

Desjardins, Lucille, Teaching Intermediates, Judson  
Press, Philadelphia, 1940

Gates, O. S., Training Adolescents in Worship, General  
Sunday School Board, Nashville

Dewitt and Others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking,  
Expression Co., Boston, 1936

Gullan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, Methuen and Co., Ltd.,  
London

. . . . .

\* These books might be included in the class library.

### Poetry

Baker, Karle Wilson, "Good Company," from Blue Smoke  
Byron, Lord, "The Destruction of Sennacherib"  
Clark, Thomas Curtis, "The Search"  
Flint, Annie Johnson, "God's Promise"  
Hickok, Eliza M., "Prayer"  
Hoyland, J. S., "Self-Control"  
Oxenham, John, "The Way," from Bees in Amber  
Oxenham, John, "Thy Kingdom Come," from "Gentlemen--  
the King!"  
White, Hinton, "The World Is One"  
Wilcox, Ella Wheeler, "The Winds of Fate"

### Pictures

Copping, "Thou Art the Man"  
Newman, George A., The Prophet Nathan Before King David  
Schmalz, Herbert G., "By the Rivers of Babylon" (Psalm  
137)  
Taylor, W. L., "When I Consider Thy Heavens" (Psalm 8)  
"The Heavens Declare the Glory of God" (Psalm 19)  
"When I Meditate on Thee in the Night Watches"  
(Psalm 63)  
"He Shall Give His Angels Charge Over Thee" (Psalm  
91:10-12)  
"The Lord Is My Shepherd" (Psalm 23)  
"I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes to the Hills" (Psalm 121)  
Twiddle, O Come Let Us Worship (Psalm 95)

### 11. Leading Suggestions for Each Day's Study

## Session I

### The Opening of Thy Word Giveth Light (Psalm 119:130)

Aim: To make the Intermediate feel at home in the Psalms and to stimulate further interest in their use.

#### As the Pupils Arrive

Invite the early comers to help arrange the room, distribute hymnals, Bibles, pencils, rulers and notebooks. Suggest that they choose some of their favorite hymns for use at the informal opening worship.

#### Informal Opening Worship

Sing one or two stanzas of hymns the pupils have chosen. Introduce a psalm-hymn such as, "The Lord Is My Shepherd" for use in the closing worship. Also practice any response or prayer from the Psalms that may be desired for use at that time.

Point out various hymns that have been inspired by the Psalms. See if the pupils know of any examples. Stimulate an interest in comparing the hymnal they are using with the Book of Psalms. In the preface of the hymnal it may tell why it was compiled, on what basis the hymns were chosen and so forth; the hymnal may contain an index of composers and tunes; the hymns may be listed topically. Comparisons with the Psalms can be drawn that will make the Book seem more contemporary and usable to them. Allow them to suggest comparisons. If someone two-thousand years from now found one of our hymnals what would they be able to learn about us from it?

### The Lesson

Have the pupils open their Bibles to the Psalms. Help them to discover all they can about the Book, encouraging all contributions made. Observations they might make would include, the number of Psalms, (150); the authors, (David, Asaph, Sons of Korah, and other poets); the titles; the divisions, (5); the subjects dealt with; occasions for use; the doxologies at the end of each division; the longest, (119); and the shortest psalms, (117). The teacher can bring out these facts and others, by well directed questions. It would be helpful if she were to build a simple chart on the blackboard, using the information gleaned from the class and supplementing it when necessary to give a book-as-a-whole approach. Lead the group to see that this Book is a collection of Hebrew poetry. Point out some of the characteristics of the Psalms--their imagery, the names and attributes of God, their variety of subject, structure and use. Allow them to choose some of their favorite psalms and tell why they enjoy them. Point out that the Psalms are a record of personal experience. Discuss what brings forth great poetry today and help them see that the same types of experience brought forth this Hebrew poetry. David as a psalm writer might be discussed here with reference to some of the Psalm titles. Help them to see that the Book is especially remarkable because it has stood the test of time and has been loved and used down

through the ages. Give some examples of the use of the Psalms by great men. Henry Van Dyke says,

"With the music of the Psalms the shepherds and ploughmen cheered their toil in ancient Palestine; and to the same music the Gallic boatmen kept time as they rowed their barges against the swift current of the Rhone. A psalm supplied the daily grace with which the early Christians blessed their food; and the same psalm was repeated by the communicants as they went to the Lord's table. St. Chrysostom fleeing into exile; Martin Luther going to meet all possible devils at Worms; George Wishart facing the plague at Dundee; Wicliffe on his sick-bed . . . all stayed their hearts and renewed their courage with verses from the psalms. The Huguenots at Dieppe marched to victory chanting the sixty-eighth psalm; and the same stately war-song sounded over the field of Dunbar. It was a psalm that Alice Benden sang in the darkness of her Canterbury dungeon; and the lips of the Roman Paula, faintly moving in death, breathed their last sigh in the words of a psalm. The motto of England's proudest university is a verse from the Psalms; and a sentence from the same book is written above the loneliest grave on earth, among the snows of the Arctic circle. It was with the fifth verse of the thirty-first psalm that our Lord Jesus Christ commended his soul into the hands of God; and with the same words, St. Stephen, St. Polycarp, . . . Huss, Columbus, Luther, and Melancthon--yea, and many more saints of whom no man knoweth--have bid their farewell to earth and their welcome to heaven." 5

Ask for suggestions as to how the Psalms might be used. Lead them to see that they would be valuable for use in worship. Point out that many of the psalms are prayers. Ask them if they know or can find any verses that might be appropriate for calls to worship or prayers. Let them choose some of these suggestions for use in the worship service later.

. . . . .

5. Van Dyke, Henry, The Story of the Psalms, pp. 10,11.

6. Intra, p. 63.

# "OPENING" THE PSALMS Key Word- Praise

I

II

III

IV

V

Characteristics  
(List those suggested)

41

72/73

87/90

106/107

146-150

Doxology

Doxology

Doxology

Doxology

Doxology

Authors  
David

David  
Sons of Korah  
Solomon

David  
Asaph  
Sons of Korah  
Ethan

David  
Moses

David  
Solomon

Titles

For the Chief  
Musician  
Psalm

Michtam  
Song

Maschil

Prayer

Alphabet (119)  
Ascents

Pictures

(List those suggested)

See Psalms 1, 12, 23

45, 46, 57

78, 80

90, 91

115, 118, 148



The purpose of this session is not to give complete information about the Psalms, but rather to stimulate interest. Allow the pupils to dip in at various points; arouse their curiosity; keep the discussion on their level. Allow them to suggest possible activities and lines of "research" they would like to follow. Help them to see that a knowledge of the Hebrew background would be interesting and valuable as a basis for further study. Lead them to suggest topics for research.

Assignment (Divide the work among the group, if necessary)

1. Draw your own chart of the Psalms.
2. How much do you remember about the history of Israel? See if you can list in your notebooks, ten events that would tell the story from Abraham to the return from Babylon. Look in the card index under History of Israel for some hints. (References: Acts 7:1-53, II Chronicles 36: 11-23)
3. Do some investigating in Psalms 78, 105, 126, and 137. Look for names of people, places, and events. When might these Psalms have been written? How much time do they cover?

Recreation

The Intermediate enjoys outdoor games and doing things with others. Relays, Dodge Ball, Prisoner's Base, Red Light, and similar games are favorites. Encourage all to take part.

### Activities

At this first session, activities may be chosen and interest groups formed. Each group should have an adult leader if possible, so that the most may be made of the available time. See list of suggested activities on pages 59-62.

### The Study and Research Period

This is the time when the pupils may do their research for the next session. They will have to take time to become familiar with the card index system.<sup>7</sup> this first day and will need more help than at following sessions. A call to worship or prayer response for use at the closing service might be learned at this time.

### Conference

Election of officers and committees should be held at this first conference period. The class should decide what needs to be done to keep things running smoothly. These plans need not be permanent. Each day an evaluation of work done should be made so that any changes the group thinks are necessary may be made.

Hereafter, one adult leader may confer privately with the worship committee for the following day, but until after the second session, when the group is more organized and has gained more of an idea of how the worship service should be conducted, it is wiser for the teacher to take

. . . . .

7. Intra, p. 58.

charge, perhaps allowing students to assist.

Extra time will be needed for conference this first day if the activity group leaders are to report what their groups are doing. This should certainly be a part of the conference periods on subsequent days.

### Closing Worship

This first day the closing worship will be led by an adult and should be an example for the Intermediate. It is not necessary to follow a set form each day, but make certain that the worship is always a fitting climax to the day's activities.

The following simple procedure is suggested:

Music (perhaps a Psalm hymn)  
Silent Prayer  
Call to Worship  
Hymn of Praise  
Prayer (choral response from the Psalms)  
Scripture and Meditation (related to the Psalms)  
Hymn of Meditation  
Closing Prayer

It is suggested that as much material from the Psalms as possible be used in the worship service. This will, however, be an excellent time to introduce supplementary materials from the New Testament.

### Session II

Our Fathers Have Told Us  
(Psalm 78:3b)

Aim: To show the place of the Psalms in Hebrew history  
and that because of God's eternal goodness, nations

and individuals alike should repent of their waywardness and gladly obey Him.

Procedure

Use the same general procedure from day to day changing it to meet any special needs.

The Lesson

Has your father or perhaps your grandfather ever told you stories about what happened when he was young? Perhaps someone in your family fought in the last war or in World War I and he enjoys telling of his experiences. The history of our country contains many thrilling stories and we always enjoy hearing about them and about the great heroes that have made our country what it is today.

Someone has called Psalm 78 "A Child's History of Israel." Why is that a good title for the Psalm? (verses 4 and 5) What way did God provide that each generation should learn the great stories of Israel's past history?

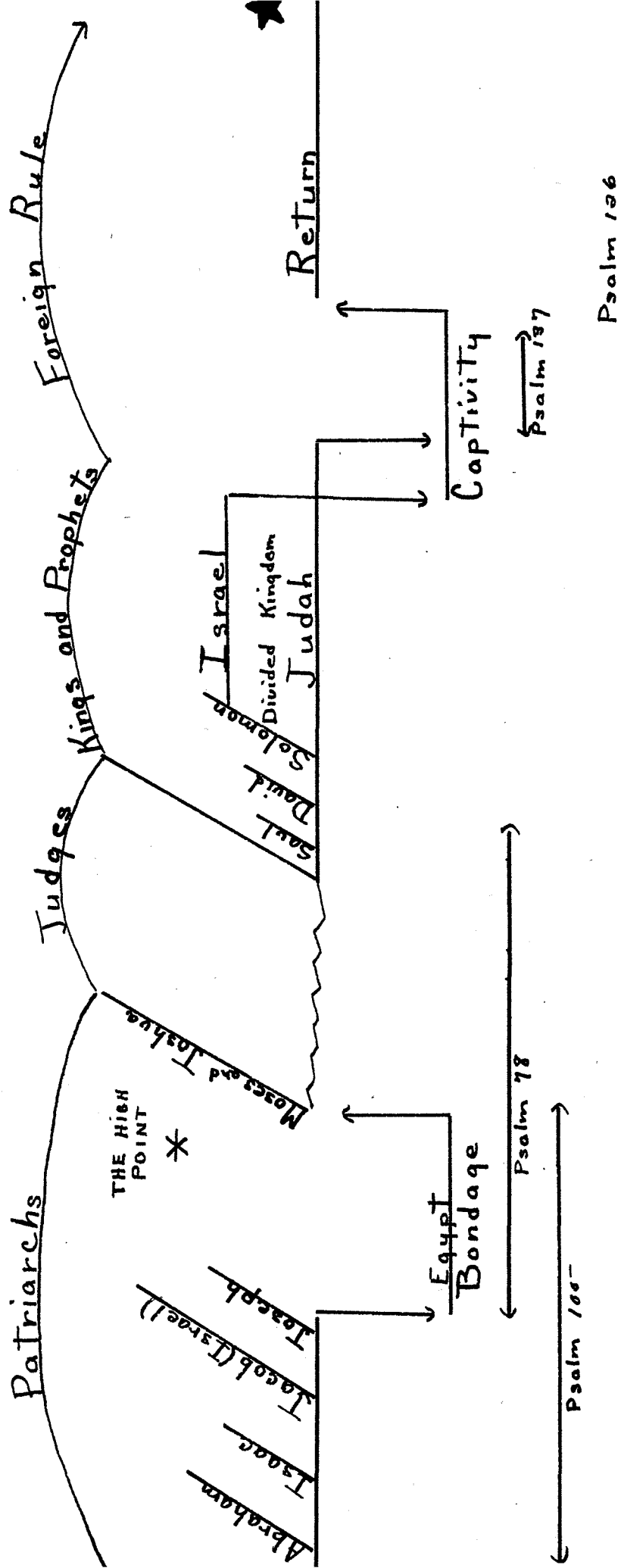
Just as our hearts are touched when we hear the Star-spangled Banner, so were the hearts of the Israelites touched as they heard the psalmists' stories of the past history of their nation. As they thought of the goodness of God, their King, they renewed their devotion to Him.

What places and events are mentioned in Psalm 78? How does the Psalm fit into the history of Israel? Have the class suggest from yesterday's study, events in Israel's history. Build up from these a simple chart such

as is shown on page 75. Get them to place Psalms 78, 105, 137, and 126 on this chart. First ask when and why they think these Psalms were written and how much time they covered. What events are mentioned most often in these Psalms? Lead them to see that the deliverance from bondage in Egypt seems to be the most important event in the history of Israel. Relate this to July fourth when we celebrate our Independence Day.

Get them to consider Israel's history as recorded in Psalm 78. Who was their leader? (God) What did He want of them? (v. 7) What did He do for them? (vv. 52-55) Israel has been called the "much-spanked child." When Israel failed to obey, what happened to her? (v. 33) In 78:38, what do we learn of God's kindness to His people in spite of the many times they failed Him? If you had been an Israelite would you have wanted to obey God? Why? Emphasize God's eternal goodness. Help them draw comparisons between Israel's history and our own. God has led various religious groups to our shores; we have been a "Christian nation." We have not always been faithful; we have had wars and various other disasters. What do you think God requires of our nation? He has greatly blessed and cared for us just as He blessed and cared for Israel. Israel continued to forget God and today they are scattered throughout the earth. What lesson should the history of Israel teach our country? Can a nation be Christian if the individuals are

# HISTORY OF ISRAEL



not? Point out individual responsibility. Point out God's continued love and goodness to us in spite of the many times we fail Him, as the chief reason why we should want to obey Him. Intermediates often need a lesson in obedience to parents, teachers, and other leaders. They can be appealed to on the basis that obedience is the natural response to goodness on the part of another.

### Assignment

Kipling once said,

"I have six faithful serving men;  
They taught me all I knew.  
Their names are What and Where and When  
And How and Why and Who."

Let us put these serving men to work for us and see if they can tell us something about the way in which the Hebrews worshipped.

Get volunteers to be each one of the serving men. Give the following references to help in their study:

What? Psalm 115  
Where? Psalm 122:1, Psalm 4:4  
When? Psalm 115:18, Psalm 5:1,2  
How? Psalm 96  
Why? Psalm 103:1-19  
Who? Psalm 103:20-22

It would also be interesting to do research along two other lines. Ask for volunteers to investigate the duties of the Levites, who were the priestly tribe, and the temple music. Suggest that they use the topical card index to obtain references.

References for duties of the Levites might include I Chronicles 23:3-5, 28-32. I Chronicles 25:1-8 and Psalm 150 give information about temple music. A Bible dictionary or encyclopedia would also prove helpful.

### Session III

Let Us Go Unto the House of Jehovah  
(Psalm 122:1b)

Aim: To show how the Hebrew worshipped God so as to give the Intermediate a sense of the spirit of worship, interest him in using the Psalms in worship and help him to worship more acceptably.

#### Lesson

"I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go unto the house of Jehovah." (Psalm 122:1)

So sang the pilgrims as they journeyed up to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. Can't you just see the throngs of people coming from all sections of the country? They would travel all day, some on foot, some on donkeys, and at night, they would camp out under the stars. As they gathered around the campfire, the fathers would tell the children great stories of God's goodness to Israel--stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of the deliverance from Egypt, of David and Solomon and how Solomon had built the first great temple at Jerusalem. They would probably tell of the Babylonian captivity and how God brought the people back to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the temple. (Recall lesson II)



Where in the New Testament do we have the story of such a trip to Jerusalem? (Luke 2:41-51) Jesus and his parents worshipped God faithfully. Hebrew boys were taught the psalms at home and at the synagogues and the families would gather on the rooftops to sing the psalms and worship God after the evening meal when the day's work was done.

We might wonder how the Hebrew people conducted their worship. From your research what did you discover about the temple music? (Call for reports at this time.) What did David say should be the duties of the Levites who were the priestly tribe? (from research in I Chronicles 23:3-5 and 23:28-32) The Hebrew had the ministers, choirs, and organists or musicians just as we do in our church services.

What do our six faithful serving men have to tell us about worship? Call for information gleaned in yesterday's study and research period. Fill in the outline on page 79, using as much as possible, the answers volunteered by the "serving men."

Let us consider what the Psalms have told us about worship. How joyously the Israelites expressed their worship to God! They recognized that their God was the one true living God. He had shown Himself to be worthy of all love and worship. Their thanksgiving for His eternal goodness and mercy to them poured forth from their hearts and

led them to call upon everyone to praise Him. This is the same God we worship today. He has been just as good to us and our hearts, too, should overflow with praise and thanksgiving.

Help the class to see parallels in the ways people worshipped God acceptably then and now. Point out that God desires public as well as personal worship. Show that the morning worship service in church contains the same elements set forth in Psalm 96. Ask what elements should be included in their closing worship each day. If there is time, call for examples of passages they have found in the Psalms that could be used in worship. They should keep a list of these in their notebooks for each one will have opportunity to plan and help carry out a worship service.

Our Six Faithful Serving Men Explain Worship

WHAT?	God, not idols (Psalm 115)	
WHERE?	In God's house (Psalm 122:1)	
	Privately (Psalm 4:4)	
WHEN?	Forever (Psalm 115:18)	
	Daily (Psalm 5:1 and 2)	
HOW?	Sing (Psalm 96:1)	Give glory (v. 7)
	Give reverence (v. 9)(prayers)	Bring offering (v. 8)
	Tell others (vv. 3,10)(sermon)	Be joyous (v. 11)
WHY?	For what God does	For what God is
	forgives	judge
	heals	merciful

redeems

gracious

crowns with lovingkindness  
and mercy

slow to anger

satisfies

abundant in  
loving-  
kindness

renews

father

judges righteously

ruler

makes known His ways

pitieth

(Psalm: 103:1-19)

knoweth

remembereth

WHO?

angels

hosts

ministers

works--earth and man

O my soul--myself

} heavens

(Psalm 103:20-22)

### Assignment

A newspaper reporter has to keep his eyes and ears open. He has to be alert and use every possible source to get the material for his assignments. Very often he has to interview many different people and consult written documents to get information about an important personage if it is impossible to interview that one himself.

Let us imagine that this is the city room of a large newspaper and that we are all reporters. The editor has assigned us the task of finding out everything we can about God. We know from the Psalms that the Hebrews were willing to put their trust in Him and to worship Him with

joyful hearts. Let us interview some of these psalmists and read their writings to see what we ourselves can discover about God. What will we want to find out about Him that will make a good article? (His character, His work, His dealings with men)

Suggest that the class elect an editor who will act as chairman and give his reporters assignments from Psalms 90-100. Help them to organize their findings and write up several newspaper articles on the character of God according to the psalmists. These may be read at the next session.

It will be helpful to the class for the teacher to have on hand several newspapers, clippings, and magazine articles as illustrative material to show them how to proceed.

#### Worship Suggestion

Divide the class into two groups for a responsive reading of Psalm 122.

<u>Verses</u>	<u>Group</u>
1,2	I
3-5	II
6-8	I
9	I and II

It would be well to practice this before using it in worship. Be sure they understand what would bring forth such a psalm. (The Hebrew's love for Jerusalem as the appointed place for the worship of God) This psalm might be used as an opening thought for the service.

Session IV

As For God, His Way Is Perfect  
(Psalm 18:30)

Aim: To help the Intermediate discover and appreciate the character of God as shown in the Psalms.

Lesson

Before we hear from our reporters, I should like to read to you a report from Israel's greatest king--a man whose word is worthy of our respect. Let us turn to Psalm 18:30-32.(Read) What is David's opinion of God?

List important characteristics on the board as they are mentioned. The following are included in Psalms 90-100:

Refuge	Teacher	Eternal	Glorious
Director	Savior	Faithful	Honorable
Establisher	King	Righteous	Worthy
Fortress	Creator	Majestic	Just
Ruler	Preserver	Strong	Exalted
Judge	Deliverer	True	Forgiving
Chastener	Shepherd	Holy	Merciful

On a large sheet of newsprint have the class set up a newspaper. The articles reported can be typed so that they are the proper width for a newspaper column. Pictures from magazines that might represent some phase of God's character could be used to illustrate the paper. Perhaps King David could be quoted.(Psalm 18:30-32) Fitting headlines should be made. Allow space for articles about God's work

and His dealings with men that will be written for the next two sessions. When they have finished with their study of God, they should have completed a worthwhile class project that will reveal His greatness and goodness to all who read it.

### Assignment

You reporters still have your assignments. Today let us see what we can find out about God's work. Psalm 104 has sometimes been called Creation's Story. Can you see why? What other Psalm that we have studied begins in a similar manner? (103) See what you can discover about God's work from this Psalm. Prepare your articles for our next session. The class may decide which of them should appear in the newspaper.

### Session V

#### The Heavens Declare the Glory of God (Psalm 19:1)

Aim: To help the Intermediate discover and appreciate  
God's work in this world as shown in the Psalms.

### Lesson

Today before hearing from our reporters on their discoveries about God's work, let us turn to Psalm 19 and read together the first six verses. This is a report left to us by an observer of long ago.

In the face of this great testimony, what reactions should we have? (reverence and awe) It would be well to help them think through the meaning of the Psalm. Point out the

imagery of the rising sun in verses five and six.

Turn the session over to the editor and allow him to call on his reporters for their findings. As these are being given, points similar to those listed below might be listed on the blackboard and included in the pupils' notebooks. If there is any question as to what a passage means, refer the class to their Bibles and help them decide the question from the Psalm itself.

Psalm 104    God's work

Verses 1-9    Creation of the earth--land and sea

10-12    Gives water for needs

13-15    Gives food

16-18    Gives homes

19-23    Ordained seasons--day and night

24-26    Created animals and fish

27-30    Cares for all His creation

Why does God's work as we can see it in nature make us want to put our trust in Him?

Close with the reading or reciting of Psalm 100. Refer especially to verse three. We should not only praise God for creating all the wonderful things we see around us and for taking care of them, but we should praise Him for making and caring for each one of us.

Assignment

From our interviews with the psalmists thus far, it has been impossible not to see examples of God's work in

history and in supplying the needs of everyday life, but our investigation has not given us all the information we want, so we should investigate further in order to discover how God deals with men.

In the card index you will find some references giving examples of the ways in which God cares for His people. There are many more examples in the Psalms. Why not do a little free lancing and see what you can find out?

#### References

Psalm 103:17,18

Psalm 98:3b

Psalm 103:3

Psalm 103:13,14

Psalm 91:5,6,15

Psalm 68:19

Psalm 121:2,4

Psalm 73:24

#### Session VI

God . . . A Very Present Help  
(Psalm 46:1)

Aim: To help the Intermediate through this study in the Psalms to discover and appreciate how God cares for His people.

#### Lesson

We have had very favorable reports concerning what sort of person God is and what sort of work He does. Today our reporters are to tell us of the ways in which He



deals with mankind, especially those who do put their trust in Him. I should like to recall an incident that certainly would have made headlines in its day. It took place during the reign of the good king, Hezekiah. This incident very likely inspired the writing of Psalm 46.

Tell the story of the invasion of Sennacherib as found in II Kings 18:13-37. Use Psalm 46 in the story pointing out the confidence, the sense of God's presence and the certainty of God's care and protection that is found here. You may prefer to have them read the Biblical account, suggesting that they write their own story for the paper.

Again, have the editor call for the reports. The results of the investigation should be somewhat as follows:

God's Care

Psalm 103:17,18	Statement of God's care and those who shall benefit
Psalm 98:3b	Offers salvation to all
Psalm 103:3	Gives pardon and healing
Psalm 103:13, 14	Understanding like a father
Psalm 91:5,6	Takes away fear
Psalm 91:15	Answers prayer
Psalm 68:19	Daily bears our burdens
Psalm 121:2,4	Helps and keeps
Psalm 73:24	Gives guidance in this life and glory in the life to come

God cares for nations and we can see from the information given us by our reporters that He also cares for individuals. He is interested in you and me and He will take care of us day by day. David certainly found this to be true. Let us turn to Psalm 18. As ace reporters what do you observe about this Psalm? Why did David write it? What mood was he in? What does he say God has done for him? What speech pictures does he use? Is this good writing? Why? How does David feel about God? Do you know of anyone who has had a similar experience during this last war? Suggest that they either write up David's story or a modern instance of God's deliverance and care.

The teacher will want to refer especially to such verses as 6, 19, 25 and 26, 28, 29, 30-32, 35. This Psalm may also be found in its setting in II Samuel 22. I Samuel 23:25-28; 24:1-24; 30:8,15,25; and II Samuel 5:6-8 relate experiences in David's life which may have had bearing on this Psalm.

Help the class summarize the findings of the last three sessions. Be sure to bring out the facts that God is a supreme Being worthy of all awe and reverence, that He is intelligent and has a purpose in all that He does. Help them also to see that He wants to be a part of their everyday lives--their heavenly Father who loves and cares for them and wants them to love Him in return.

Assignment

Use the study and research period today to finish the newspaper, catch up on memory work, practice the speaking choir or do other necessary things looking forward to the closing session. The following arrangement of Psalm 46 for choral reading is suggested:

Verses	Participants
1	full group
2 and 3	low voices
4 and 5	high voices
6	low voices
7	full group
8 and 9	low voices
10	solo--low voice
11	full group

Session VII

Who Shall Ascend Into the Hill of Jehovah  
(Psalm 24:3)

Aim: To help the Intermediate discover from the Psalms,  
what God requires of man and to see that he in himself  
is not able to meet that requirement.

Lesson

As we consider what our God is like, we must say  
with the Psalmist,

"What is man that thou art mindful of him?  
And the son of man that thou visitest him?"  
Psalm 8:4

God, being just and righteous, has certain standards. We have been investigating Him. Now it is only fair that we allow Him to examine our lives. Who is worthy to stand before God? Let us imagine that we in this class are the whole world standing before the bar of justice. According to Psalm 96:13, who is the judge? What is the requirement of the law? (Psalm 24:3 and 4) What does this mean? (We must be pure within as well as in the things we do.) Turn to Psalm 15 for further light on this. What characteristics of the righteous man are mentioned here? What does Jesus say in Matthew 5:8? Are we righteous enough to meet all requirements of the law? Let us see.

In a court of justice, the defendant can either plead guilty or not guilty. If we are to represent all of mankind, half the class should plead not guilty and go through with the trial; the other half should throw themselves upon the mercy of the court. (Divide the class into two groups.) Have appropriate references listed to hand each group. Give them a little time to find these, helping them with their interpretation if need be. The following chart might show the simple procedure that the trials could take.

Group I	Group II
Plea: Not guilty	Plea: Guilty
Testimony: Psalm 36:1-4 against the wicked	Appeal: Psalm 139:1-4 Psalm 51:1-4

Verdict: Psalm 130:3

Confession: Psalm 32:3-5

Penalty: Psalm 34:21

Verdict: Psalm 32:6,7

You might refer to Luke 6:46-49, Jesus' parable of the two builders. Apply it to their own lives. These are two ways to build. Let them suggest choices they must make.

As a summary to the lesson have the class read Psalm 24:1-5, either in unison or in the following manner:

Verses 1 and 2 entire group

Verse 3 solo 1

Verse 4 solo 2

Verse 5 entire group

In closing read Psalm 139:23 and 24 in unison.

### Assignment

We have seen that we cannot meet God's requirements without His help. The psalmists were sure of this and often asked God for it. Today we know that anyone who accepts God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as his Saviour and seeks to follow Him will find pardon from past wrongs and power to lead a pure life. God had promised to send His Son long before Israel became a nation and they looked for Him to come and save them and to be their King. One very remarkable thing about the Psalms is that although they were written long before the coming of Christ, they tell us so much about Him and show that He was the great hope of Israel. The Psalms don't give us the story of His life--you know that from the New Testament--but they tell us much about His work here on earth.

Look up the Messianic Psalms in the card index and write down all the things in these Psalms that remind you of the Lord Jesus. Don't forget to use any cross references to the New Testament that may be given in your Bible. (Use especially Psalms 2, 22, 72, and 89. Explain that there are others.)

### Session VIII

Lo, I Am Come  
(Psalm 40:7)

Aim: To help the Intermediate discover the greatness of Christ in the Psalms so as to give him an incentive to accept and follow Him.

### Lesson

As a background, explain the Messianic hope and the place it had in the life of Israel. Explain that when things looked blackest, hope was greatest. You might read a few passages such as Genesis 22:16-18, Isaiah 9:6,7 and Micah 5:2-4. Read Luke 2:22-32. Ask what they think these passages mean. Help them to understand.

Using the information the class has gleaned from yesterday's study, discuss the following Psalms with them:

Psalm 2 The Anointed One, God's Son chosen to be King over the whole world

Psalm 89 The Promised One, Messiah, promised from the beginning of the world

Psalm 22 The Suffering One, Savior of the whole world

Psalm 72 The Reigning One, Righteous Ruler of  
the whole world

Lead the class to see in these psalms the greatness and majesty of Christ--the Chosen One of God, victorious over death. Here is a leader worthy to be followed. The Intermediate wants to dedicate himself to a great cause, so why not direct this desire into the proper channels? Lead him to accept this wonderful promised Messiah as his personal Savior and direct his energies into paths of service for Him.

Further Procedure

Check on all unfinished work. Help pupils plan so that they will not be too rushed the last session. It may be desirable to have special conferences with individuals or groups.

Session IX

Serve the Lord with Gladness  
(Psalm 100:2)

Aim: To help the Intermediate evaluate his experience in using the Psalms and to inspire him to action.

Lesson

Have the pupils open their Bibles to Psalm 100. Suggest that they pretend they have never seen this Psalm before and that they follow in their Bibles as you read it through and try to think what the Psalm is saying. What does the Psalm call upon us to do? (Serve and worship Him with joy, be thankful and praise Him) Why should we do this?

(Jehovah is God; He made us and we belong to Him; He is good, has lovingkindness and faithfulness.)

Discuss ways in which the Intermediate can serve God. Make this practical.

Lead the pupils to review their studies in the Psalms. What have they learned about the Book-as-a-whole, about God and how He wants us to worship Him, about the lesson in Hebrew history for us, about how God wants us to live and about His Son? What Psalms have been their favorites?

End the session with a challenging story telling of a young person's service for Christ.

#### Further Procedure

The rest of the session should be arranged so that activities can be finished, plans for tomorrow's session checked and anything that needs to be done for that may be attended to.

#### Session X

Oh Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good  
(Psalm 34:8)

Aim: To give the Intermediate an opportunity to share with others what the Psalms have meant to him.

#### Before the Guests Arrive

Allow time for last minute arrangement of creative work, arrangement of the room, distribution of hymn books and so forth. Check to see that each Intermediate knows just what he is to do in the program and to make the guests feel at home.



### Suggested Program

(The group should plan its own program in all details; however this program may offer helpful suggestions.)

Musical Prelude--based on selected psalm hymns

Call to Worship--Psalm 95:1-7 (from memory)

Psalm Hymn--O Worship the King (all join in)

### Prayer by an Intermediate

Prayer Response--from the Psalms sung by the group

Original Psalm Story of Psalm 46

Psalm 46--The Speaking Choir

Psalm Hymn--A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Talk by an Intermediate on some phase of the study

# Original Nature Psalm

Psalm Hymn--Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens Adore Him

The Worship Book--presented by an Intermediate and its  
compilation and use explained

The Work of Our Hands--creative activities explained by an Intermediate and an invitation given to the guests to examine the projects after the program

Psalm Hymn--The Lord Is My Shepherd

## Closing Prayer

## GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### A. Summary

This study has sought to show that the Psalms are usable in the Christian education of the Intermediate. A survey of the general characteristics of the intermediate age has been made as a background against which the religious needs of the Intermediate become more meaningful. It was seen that this age is not, as some seem to think, a hopeless period in the adolescent's experience, but a time of opportunity for the Christian leader, who by building on the past experience and the developing awareness of his own potentialities that the Intermediate has, can help make this time in his life bear fruit for eternity.

The Intermediate needs a religion that is vital and a part of every phase of his life. He needs proper religious concepts and to be able to express them acceptably, not only in the church but in his relations to others and in all of the decisions that he is learning to make.

A study of the Psalms has shown that they are usable in meeting the religious needs of the Intermediate. They present to him an understandable concept of God the Father as a real and living personality. In setting forth the work and character of Christ, they present a picture that should challenge the Intermediate to accept and follow Him. The awfulness of sin and the blessedness of the

the righteous life are contrasted and God's mercy to His penitent children is evident. The hope of immortality is here.

Appreciation and love for the Bible and the habit of turning to it for the solution of life's problems can be developed in the Intermediate by the use of the Psalms. The beauty of their music and the great variety of subject matter make them especially valuable to him in the expression of his religious concepts in worship and service and in the building of fine Christian character.

The Psalms having been written before the complete revelation of God, in Christ, must be presented to the Intermediate against their Hebrew background and taught in the light of New Testament truth. Some psalms will be more usable than others.

A variety of ways in which the Psalms may be used with the Intermediate in study, worship, fellowship, service, and personal commitment has been set forth in the previous chapter. Suggestions for a two weeks' vacation church school program using the Psalms with Intermediates have then been given. An attempt has been made in this to make the Psalms meaningful to the Intermediate in his everyday experience. The structure of the Book, its background and use in days gone by and in the present, the truth to be discovered about God and His workings in nature and with His people, standards for living, Christ in the Psalms and the challenge to accept

and follow Him and to express faith through action have been brought out in this unit of work. Suggestions for purposeful activity inspired by the Psalms have been given to make them live for him and to train the Intermediate to use them in many ways--for worship, devotional reading, inspiration and guidance--in the hope that they will continue to function in his life.

#### B. Conclusion

Except for pieces chosen here and there, the average Intermediate has very little appreciation of what the Psalms contain and what they can mean to him. This is not the fault of the Intermediate but rather of those who have been entrusted with the responsibility for his guidance. It may be due to the fact that Christian leaders today are not themselves familiar enough with the Psalms as a whole to present them to others. This great "Handbook of Devotion" has been neglected. In the rush of modern life the tendency has been to teach the obvious and to neglect that which will take more study and effort on the part of the teacher. Nothing, however, is more rewarding to the teacher himself than time spent in careful study and reflection upon God's Word, and the Psalms surely are very fertile soil.

The great men of God have been those who have lived close to Him and have sought His guidance in all things. Men such as Stephen, Polycarp, Huss, Luther, and Livingstone

have been great lovers of the Psalms, and surely they sprang readily to the lips of Our Lord. It certainly behooves Christian leaders of the Intermediate in this day to delve more deeply into the vast resources that the Psalms offer that they might enrich their own lives and that they might raise up after them a generation of youth who will recognize the worth of this Book as an inspiration and guide.

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