

A STUDY OF THE PSALMS  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MEETING LIFE PROBLEMS  
OF MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Religious Education

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## INTRODUCTION.

## INTRODUCTION.

The problem to be considered in this thesis is whether or not the Psalms may be suitable as a course of study for middle adolescent girls. In order to form a proper basis for judgment, the characteristics and needs of the girls will be studied, followed by a more detailed examination of the Psalms themselves. Such problems as these will be considered : the character values to be obtained from these songs, possible means of motivation, projects appealing to the girls' interests, and suggestive outlines to be used as guides in a course of this type.

Due to the lack of lesson materials suitable for study with girls of this age and to an inadequate conception of the difficulties middle adolescents have to face, the teacher frequently fails to meet her obligations to her class. This thesis will attempt to show one way of solving these questions through the use of the Psalms as the basis for class study.

The source material is taken from research done by leaders in the field of work with middle adolescents, combined with the author's ideas and research in the book of Psalms. Two bibliographies are included - (a) that used

by the writer in the development of the thesis, (b) a classified bibliography for the teacher who may use the course in a Sunday School or other organization.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRL.



## CHAPTER I.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRL.

The middle adolescent girl is living in the flood-tide of her life, the period when probably more than at any other season of life, all the vital forces which have been developing through the years of childhood reach their highest pitch. During this brief time of three to four years these forces will acquire the momentum and the direction which they will keep throughout the rest of her life. She is a person of intense emotions, puzzling contradictions, fierce and often radical convictions, rapidly changing moods, unfettered energy, - a seer of visions, a dreamer of dreams. To her friends she may be at the same time bewitching, provoking, baffling, altogether lovely. She is engaged in developing her permanent personality and in hewing out her own life, though usually working blindly and unconsciously.

## 1. Physical Characteristics.

Physically the middle adolescent girl has attained her full height and nearly the adult weight. There is a clean-cut figure and an easy physical poise. Though vigorous and exuberant, the power of endurance and of resistance to disease is not as high as in early adolescence, yet there is a new strength and energy. The

entire organism is being readjusted. Ease and grace of form and movement are noticeable.

## 2. Social Characteristics.

Due to conditions beyond her control, the middle adolescent girl may go to extremes in her social life. She may be aloof, self-centered, and prefer to be alone; or, she may allow herself to be completely dominated by her crowd, accepting their standards and judgments for every choice she makes. Between these extremes is the girl who, though a part of the group, forms her own opinions and judgments, finds great pleasure in the life of the group, and is a true companion. She is very attentive to the laws of social custom, its duties, and its privileges.

There is a growing interest in the boys of her age and older. She finds an increasing delight in their company. Social organizations make a great appeal. She must "belong", whether she does anything in the organization or not. She is greatly influenced by the opinion of the group of which she is a member. As a result many of her actions can be traced to the standards of the group whose sanction is of great importance to her.

Often jealousy may arise because of rivalry between her and her chums in their seeking for the interest and the attention of boys or mutual friends. Her friend-

ships are intimate, though they may be many and short-lived. She is beginning to see the personal worth and to feel the charm of human personality in a greater measure than ever before.

### 3. Intellectual Characteristics.

The middle adolescent girl is gaining new ideas and new viewpoints very rapidly. Consequently she is eager to give information of all sorts and expects to receive respectful attention. If this expected response is not given, she is certain that her confidante, whether parent, teacher, or friend, does not understand her. As a result she may conceal her real interests and aims, or become gloomy, morose, and an object of self-pity. At times she may become almost obsessed with a determination to reform her family and her surroundings. She frequently thinks she knows more than her mother, criticizes her father, gives advice to her grandparents, and feels able to decide all questions for the younger members of the family.<sup>1.</sup>

While the attempt to arrive at conclusions is not new, the power is vastly enlarged. The girl is increas-

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1. Cf. King : The High School Age. - p. 92

ing her power of sustained reasoning, her ability for vigorous debate, her interest in facts, and her efficiency in forming correct conclusions. There is an increase in the senses of discrimination, of sight, sound, touch, and taste which constitutes a physical basis for the developing power of judgment. Full mental capacity has been practically attained and she is reaching her maximum power of thinking and planning.<sup>1.</sup>

There is a noticeable strengthening of the desire for knowledge, the capacity to respond to logical system, the instinct for truth, and the control of imagery. At the same time the tendencies to imitate, and the disposition to be independent are developing together.

The adolescent girl is a dreamer, with longings for action which she cannot express even to herself.<sup>2.</sup> She is face to face with life and its problems, and feels a sense of mystery and inability to fathom all that she sees. However, she feels keenly the desire to be herself and has a deep, passionate interest in all things that touch the individual. As a result, she questions everything - traditions, beliefs, customs, authority, opinions of others.<sup>3.</sup> She does not see things in their true proportions and frequently lacks

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1. Cf. Stewart : A Study of Adolescent Development - p. 128

2. Cf. King : The High School Age - p. 92

3. Cf. Pringle : Adolescence and High School Problems -

mental perspective, hence her vigor of purpose often takes her beyond the bounds of convention and adult understanding. Her personal problems are of far greater interest than the world around her, yet there is a sharply accented sense of awareness of this world of reality in which she lives.

#### 4. Emotional Characteristics.

Middle adolescence is a period of deepening and enrichment of the emotional life. It is a time when "feeling" outruns reflection<sup>1.</sup>, when extremes of emotional experience are frequent, and when the emotional life is of greater quality and larger range than ever before. "Self-assertion and self-abasement alternate with each other"<sup>2.</sup> with puzzling abruptness and rapidity. Pride and vanity are subject to easy flattery and to equally easy injury. The girl's entire being is highly sensitive. Events which may seem trivial to outsiders have deep and lasting effects. She is often a fierce radical or an extreme conservative; frequently very gay, then suddenly bitterly melancholy. While her emotions are stronger and more refined than before, she usually wants to experiment with her new feelings. There is a keen desire for "thrills" and excitement.

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1. Tracy : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 58  
 2. Ibid : p. 58

There is a great love of the beautiful, a new appreciation of art, music, and poetry for its own sake. The beauties of nature appeal with great, new power.

At the same time the girl is seeking an ideal personality to whom she may surrender herself and whom she may use as her pattern for life. She forms her life ideals and bases her judgments upon this type of character which she has chosen.<sup>1.</sup> In conjunction with this copying of her ideal, are her yearnings, ambitions, and desires to achieve fame, do great things in the world, and be a figure of great influence. She desires these for what they bring to herself, but more that with them she may win the approval of the one whom she is following. One of her controlling instincts is this love of approbation.<sup>2.</sup> Her ideas of right and wrong are governed to a certain extent by the social standards of her associates. She is often easily controlled by suggestion and public opinion. Consequently she tends to live up to the ideals others have for her.

##### 5. Religious Characteristics.

Problems of religion enter much into the thought of the middle adolescent girl. Her studies in biology, history, and geology are likely to have brought many questions

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1. Cf. Hollingworth : The Psychology of the Adolescent -  
p. 178
  2. Cf. Pringle : Adolescence and High School Problems -  
p. 81

2

She is also filled with a new reverence and awe in the presence of the holy, coupled with an intense admiration for Christ, which may develop into a predominating love for Him. At this time in her life religion makes a definite, personal appeal. She has a deeper realization of the meaning and content of religion, and, if her doubts can be satisfactorily answered, she is eager to make religion her own. Under favorable conditions religion has a very important place in her life, for it satisfies her gropings for understanding of all experience. Her whole being is sensitive to the spiritual appeals of the Bible, the church and service. Religion is a personal matter. Jesus as Savior and Friend makes a challenging appeal to the best that is in her. Her religion is one of doing as well as one of believing.

1. Cf. Hollingworth : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 161 - ff.
2. Cf. Brooks : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 340
3. Cf. Moore : Senior Method in the Church School - p. 98

SUMMARY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE  
MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRL.

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PHYSICAL :

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Full height and weight  
Physical poise  
New strength and energy

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SOCIAL :

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Social tendencies prominent  
Social organization  
Interest in boys  
Influenced by public opinion  
Friendships many and short-lived

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INTELLECTUAL :

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Tendency to insist upon own judgment  
Increased mental and sensory powers  
Increased interest in learning  
Increased sense of independence  
Dreamer  
Doubts and questions

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EMOTIONAL :

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Deepened and enriched emotional life  
Extremes of feeling  
Period of emotional thrills



Sensitive to appeals of all beauty  
 High idealism  
 Controlled by suggestion

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RELIGIOUS :

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Doubts and conflicting beliefs  
 New appreciation of Christ  
 New understanding of religion  
 Response to service appeals

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CHAPTER II.

THE NEEDS OF THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRL.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE NEEDS OF THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRL.

It matters tremendously for the middle adolescent girl's future what habits of action and thought she now drifts into or consciously adopts. She must feel that now more than ever before she can take a direct hand in shaping her own development. She must learn to see that she will have no greater, finer test for her courage and her ability than to face and overcome those dispositions which will continually interfere with her struggle for the high ideals which now grip her with such force.<sup>1.</sup>

## 1. Physical Needs.

The girl needs physical exercises which will fix the habits of carriage and training in the care of the body. She should have an abundance of wholesome, useful activities to meet the desires brought by her new sense of strength and energy. Outdoor sports such as hiking, swimming, and tennis are of great value, not only for health of body but for health of mind.

## 2. Social Needs.

An important task for the leader of adolescent girls

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1. Cf. King : The High School Age - p. 116

is to provide suitable opportunities for membership in clubs or other organized groups where the girl may work and play with other girls and with boys. She will find in these contacts the chance to learn group loyalty, yet keep her own individuality and power of independent thought and action. In addition to club work, the girl should have many wholesome, vigorous, and engrossing recreational activities.<sup>1.</sup> Through these she may learn to build her own standards of action so that she will not be so easily led by public opinion.

She needs to develop through her social relationships the traits of initiative, self-reliance, self-confidence, and leadership. Since this is the time when she is experimenting in the field of friendship, she should be helped to understand the meaning of friendship and to make her own tests of character, conduct, social distinction, and personal value, so that the friends whom she chooses may be worth having. In the forming of her friendships the sacredness of personality and all other Christian ideals must be safeguarded.<sup>2.</sup> In addition to these she needs to realize that she has the task of developing her own personality through unselfish acts and social conduct.

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1. Cf. Brooks : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 439

2. Cf. Moore : Senior Method in the Church School -  
p. 209

### 3. Intellectual Needs.

The middle adolescent girl should be encouraged to inquire, to investigate, and to sift the problems and materials she has before her. <sup>1.</sup> In making discoveries for herself, she builds bases for judgments and opinions of value. If she is to form correct conclusions, she must have a variety of interests and a breadth of experience from which to gather her data. It is necessary that prejudices, half-truths, and personal bias be avoided and that she realize the limits of her knowledge and seek for more. She needs training in finding the most valuable facts, in collecting and weighing evidence. If her life is to be of value she must know, desire, and love the truth, and make it the basis of her thought and action. She should learn to give to the problems of her life a critical, impartial, open-minded consideration. Her powers of reason need to be exercised, disciplined, and brought under her own control.

In order to acquire the necessary basis of knowledge, <sup>2.</sup> the girl a sympathetic understanding of the past. Through the realization of the struggles, problems, and solutions made by others, she may find the key to her own. An appreciation of her heritage is necessary to the balanced standard for her own life. She should have the privilege of

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1. Cf. Tracy : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 209

2. Cf. Brooks : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 324

making her own decisions, accompanied by the requirement of carrying them out to their logical conclusions.

Self-expression of her literary abilities in poetry, art and letters, or diaries should be encouraged. Since she is frequently a dreamer, she needs worthy material upon which to base her dreams. Such material is to be found in the field of literature into which she should be guided. "Biography, history and fiction are among the most important means of character formation that can be placed in the adolescent's way." 1.

As many contacts as possible should be made with fine homes, Christian people, truly great men and women, foreign boys and girls, industrial conditions, and local problems. She should make the best of every opportunity to become acquainted with nature in all its variety of form and interest. Such a breadth of experience is necessary if her dreams of home, service, and happiness are actually to materialize.

The girl has a right to expect sincere answers to her questions. To her these questions are serious, and she needs the utmost sympathy and frankness on the part of her confidante so that she will not become afraid to express her problems and to discuss them with some one who can help her. Loss of confidence or failure to find answers

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1. Hollingworth : The Psychology of the Adolescent -  
p.- 179

to vital problems are terrifying things to the middle<sup>1.</sup> adolescent girl. She needs to question and think things through till she reaches a solid basis in experience.

#### 4. Emotional Needs.

Since middle adolescence is the period of the flood-tide of emotions, the girl needs as wide a range of self-expression as possible. A few definite home duties, some real tasks of service for others, some needs to be filled, interesting work, plenty of outdoor exercise and recreation are all necessary safety-valves and exhaust pipes for her abounding energies and surging emotions. A variety of new experiences should be provided so that her craving for "thrills" is diverted into safe channels. Emotional control is necessary to protect her from the dangers into which her internal turmoil might lead her. She needs to form the habit of carefully analyzing a situation to see its true significance, thus robbing it of any undesirable emotional aspects.<sup>2.</sup> In utilizing means of control, she should be placed more and more under the responsibility of self-direction and personal decision. At this time especially, she needs the wise guidance and sympathetic cooperation of parents and teachers so that she may come to recognize, accept, and put into practice in her habits, attitudes, and ideals, the best rules for playing the game of daily living.

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1. Cf. Stewart : A Study of Adolescent Development - p. 134  
 2. Cf. Brooks : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 222

As far as possible her love of the beautiful should be encouraged. Opportunities to study nature, trips to museums, chances to hear great musicians, operas, orchestras, great choruses should be considered a part of each girl's experience. Of greater importance, however, is training to see the beauty in the hum-drum experiences of every-day life, so that she may master the art of happy daily living.

During middle adolescence there is special need of providing worthy models from history, fiction, and living persons. In her search for her idea of self she is forced to build upon the materials at hand.<sup>1.</sup> Her ideals should be of the highest, so her choice of models is very important. Her surrender of self to the one she idealized is complete and often tragic. Wise guidance should be given so that she will intelligently select traits worthy of imitation from the lives of all with whom she associates and with equal intelligence reject all traits which will not lead her to a finer character.

##### 5. Religious Needs.

Due to the doubts and conflicting beliefs which often trouble the middle adolescent girl, she needs a

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1. Cf. Hollingworth : The Psychology of the Adolescent -  
p. 178



knowledge of the actual teachings of the Bible, its answers to her questions , its solutions to her problems. She does not need to know what others have told her about its teachings as much as she needs to find and know its truths for herself.

In considering these needs, Moore says,

"To love God supremely is youth's greatest religious need. One of the most difficult attitudes to acquire and one that carries over into every field of activity is that of right evaluation - the disposition to put God first. "What would God have me do?" is the question that youth should ask over and over again. Youth needs to acquire a practical working knowledge and appreciation of God and of his duty as a child of God. In Mark 12:29, 30 is given the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Without instruction and training in the interpretation and meaning of these duties and the practice of them in daily life, these boys and girls will likely be troubled with confused opinions and perplexing problems of conduct." 1.

The girl needs to become acquainted with the life and character of Christ, for in Him she will find the only safe model for her life and the highest goal for her ideals. If she has never accepted Him as her Savior, the opportunity should be given.

Through an understanding of religion and its values  
2.  
should come the desire to worship. The girl should have her share in planning and executing the services of worship. She needs also to see its values in her private life.

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1. Moore : Senior Method in the Church School - p. 100

2. Cf. Brooks : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 532

At the time when her ideals are so high, she should be given a vision of the wealth of the fields of service which lies before her, so that she may choose for herself where her greatest interests and activities shall be directed. She should see the noble and worthy challenge of the Christian life and realize that for some it presents the call to full time Christian service; for others the call to intelligent, earnest, effective vocations and avocations with the consecration of leisure time.<sup>1.</sup>

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1. Cf. Stewart : A Study of Adolescent Development - p. 187

SUMMARY OF THE NEEDS OF THE  
MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRL.

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PHYSICAL :

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Exercise  
Training in bodily care  
Wholesome activities  
Sports

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SOCIAL :

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Suitable clubs  
Variety of social relationships and  
responsibilities  
Understanding of meaning of friendship  
Understanding of personal responsibility

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INTELLECTUAL :

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Encouragement in use of mental powers  
Variety of interests as basis for  
judgments  
Standards of living and judgments  
Knowledge of the past  
Opportunities for self-expression  
Sincere consideration of problems

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EMOTIONAL :

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Wide range of self-expression  
Variety of new experiences  
Habits of analysis  
Responsibility for self-direction and  
self-control  
Wise guidance  
Opportunity to satisfy love of beauty  
Worthy models

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RELIGIOUS :

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Knowledge of teachings of Bible  
Supreme love for God  
Opportunity to know and accept Christ  
Privileges of worship  
Vision of fields of service

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CHAPTER III.

THE SUITABILITY OF THE PSALMS AS A COURSE FOR  
MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

## CHAPTER III.

THE SUITABILITY OF THE PSALMS AS A COURSE FOR  
MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

## A. Needs of the girl which are met by the Psalms.

The Sunday School courses of the past and of the present have been ineffective in the lives of many adolescents because the lessons were not adapted to meet their needs. This failure to meet vital needs has never been entirely the fault of the lesson courses, for the personality of the teacher may make or mar a class. However, one of the great criticisms of adolescent girls against the Sunday School is that its teaching materials are not meeting the problems of their daily lives. Probably there is no single course that can meet all needs satisfactorily, but it is felt that a course in Psalms may meet many of the girl's needs in a very satisfactory way.

## 1. The need for suitable models and standards of living.

" In his tentative and often very painful groping toward the formulation of his idea of self, the boy or girl seems cues from the environment, and tries to infer what kind of a person he or she is from the way others behave toward him or her. Guiding lines are caught from adults in the vicinity, from reading, and from pictures.

Models are adopted. Emulation becomes one of the characteristic attitudes of youth.

The choice of models is a very important element in this development of the self. The high school age is marked by active devotion to ideals and by the conscious selection of traits to imitate. It is during this period, therefore, that there is special need of providing models, historic characters, characters in fiction and living persons of desirable qualities. Instead of the idolatrous adoption of one model, whether of fictitious hero, or of teacher or parent, the ultimate imitation should take the form of intelligent selection and approval of traits and principles. " 1.

Through a study of the Psalms the girl will be able to select and set up for herself these standards which she so greatly needs. In her seeking for standards of character and conduct, she should be led to the Psalms in which such ideals are prominent, for example : The Psalm of the Blessed Man (1), The Gentleman Psalm (15), The King of Glory Psalm (24), The Magistrate Psalm (101), The Good Samaritan Psalm (112). In these she will find many points for her standard. 2. The one who is pictured as receiving the

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1. Hollingworth : The Psychology of the Adolescent - p. 178

2. Dean Stanley :

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ?" The answer is remarkable, as expressing in language so clear that a child may understand it, the great doctrine that the only service, the only character which can be thought worthy of such a habitation, is that which conforms itself to the laws of truth, honesty, humility, justice, love. Three thousand years have passed, Jerusalem has fallen, the Jewish monarchy and priesthood and ritual and religion have perished; but the words of David still remain, with hardly an exception, the rule by which all wise and good men would measure the worth and value of men, the greatness and strength of nations".

Watt and M'Fadyen - The Psalms - p.46.

blessings of God walks uprightly, does not gossip, is true to his friends, honors those who fear God, has a clean life and a pureheart, is truthful and humble, opposes slander and pride, sees and indulges in no base thing, is gracious, merciful, charitable toward others, has no fellowship with those who live false and evil lives, knows through experience the blessedness of fellowship with those who know God and with God Himself and obeys His will. In her study of these and other Psalms she will not only find the standards for which she seeks, but will find that for the one who lives by these standards there are certain definite results. There is repeatedly the idea of blessedness or happiness, a sense of being in the right, a note of security in the midst of trouble, a glimpse of fruitfulness in the future, an ability to leave one's perplexities with God. If she uses the Psalms as a basis for her standard, she will find that her religion is an every-day affair, not one to be left behind when she appears in public. In the Psalms the emphasis is on one's life, not feelings or ideas or plans, but actual, practical doing.

## 2. Answers to her questions.

Through a study of the Psalms the girl will find an answer to her perplexing questions. Probably the question which comes to middle adolescents most frequently



is that concerning God. "What is He like ? Is He real ? Is He kindly ? Is He cruel ? " Almost every Psalm gives some answer to this great question,<sup>1.</sup> but Psalms 90 and 100 give more than some others. He is a protector at all times, under all circumstances, from all kinds of harm. He is the giver of all the blessings of life, and no life is truly happy without Him. He is Holy and loving. His love and protection is the key to life's<sup>2.</sup> problems. He does not keep hard experiences away but gives the strength to pass through them. He cares deeply for each individual life. He punishes evil and rewards right. He never forsakes those who trust in Him. He is her Rock, Her Creator, her Judge, her ever-present Help and Comfort. He is like a father. These are but a few of the great pictures of God to be found in the Psalms.

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1. Hastings - "The chief service which the Psalms have rendered to the religion of the world is the preservation of the idea of the living God, without any impairing of his absolute and inconceivable glory. ----- No sacred book of any nation has solved this fundamental problem of all religion, how to preserve at the same time the infinity and the personality of God, as has the Psalter. "

Hastings - Bible Dictionary - v. IV - p. 157

2. Benjamin Franklin -

"The longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid ? 'EXcept the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' "

1787 - before the Convention assembled to frame the Constitution of the United States.

Morgan - The Psalms as Daily Companions - p. 149

When the girl has found the answer to this question, she will find that in this great answer lies the solution of her other questions.

### 3. Knowledge of the past as aid in character formation.

Hollingworth says, "Biography, history and fiction are among the most important means of character formation that can be placed in the adolescent's way."<sup>1.</sup> Here again the Psalms meet a real need.<sup>2.</sup> They come out of some of the world's richest store of history and biography. The historical Psalms have for their background the experiences of the Hebrew race, their failures, their successes, their human perversities, their deliverances. Through a study of several of the Psalms in this group, for example the 78th, 105th and 106th, the girl can see for herself the reasons for those experiences - failures due to lack of faith, disobedience, forgetting God, self-will, rebellion, unbelief, ingratitude. In contrast to the willful people is the great loving Father forgiving again and again, rescuing them time after time from the results of their own

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1. Hollingworth : The Psychology of the Adolescent - p. 179

2. Kirkpatrick -

" History supplies its lessons of God's goodness and man's ingratitude, thrown into the easily remembered form of didactic poetry. The recollection of the past is a warning for the present, the support of faith in the hour of trial, the ground of comfort in the times of calamity."

Kirkpatrick - The Book of Psalms - p. xii

deliberate waywardness, punishing them in order to teach them to see His better way for them, and never forsaking them even when they forsook Him. She will learn to know Moses who is one of the world's greatest characters, and consciously or unconsciously see new standards for her own ideals. Through a study of some of the great songs of David she will come in contact with Israel's greatest king, thus learning the lessons he learned of the temptations and consequences of sin and the meaning of forgiveness. She cannot help but enter into his life through his songs, his prayers, his cries of anguish, and his odes of thanksgiving and gratitude as he expressed them in his own Psalms; for example, The Psalm of the Cry in the Night (3), God my Shield (7), The Confessor Psalm (32), The Penitent (51), and others. Through this vision of her heritage of history the girl is enabled to draw definite guiding principles for the shaping of her own life and character.

#### 4. Love of Beauty.

Probably no other book in the Bible can meet the girl's love of beauty so completely as the Psalms. From the literary standpoint they constitute the world's greatest collection of poetry. The Psalms of the Sons of

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L. Watt and M'Fadyen -

"Milton's demand that poetry should be 'simple, sensuous, and passionate' finds satisfaction fully in the Psalms, in their visual and visional clarity, their grace of simplicity, and the flame-like effluence of the heart's emotions"

Watt and M'Fadyen - The Psalms - p. 11

Korah ( 42 - 49, 84, 85, 87, 88 ) have been chosen as the most exquisite poetry in all Hebrew literature.<sup>1.</sup> The girl will revel in the beauty of their word pictures, their descriptions and their depths of emotion. She will be interested in them as songs and in discovering their musical settings, some of which are still used today. To the girl who loves nature the Psalms have a particular appeal. The beauty which she herself has seen will find its equal and be often made more beautiful when she studies the Psalms of the Midnight (8), of the Sunrise (19), of the Harvest (65), of the World (104), of the Seasons (147), and of the Chorus of All Nature (148). One of the psychological principles of Religious Education is that "All beauty is really a manifestation of the perfection of God."<sup>2.</sup> In viewing God through the beauty of poetry, music, and nature in the Psalms and in her experiences, the girl is finding part of the answer to her search for truth.<sup>3.</sup>

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1. Thomas C. Murray -

"They exhibit a daintiness of workmanship, and delicate sensibility of the niceties of meter which place them side by side with the lyrics of Pindar or Horace."

Morgan : The Psalms as Daily Companions - p. 15

2. Horne : The Psychological Principles of Education - p. 335

3. Gladstone -

"In the book of the Psalms there is the whole music of the heart when touched by the hand of the Maker, in all its tones that whisper or that swell, for every hope and fear, for every joy and pang, for every form of strength and languor, of disquietude and rest. All the wonders of Greek civilization heaped together are less wonderful than in the simple book of Psalms."

Morgan : The Psalms as Daily Companions - p. 10

## 5. Worthy patterns embodying her highest ideals.

Along with the girl's need for definite standards of conduct and character, for answers to the big questions of her life, for beauty, for God, comes the equally great need for an ideal pattern for her own life. At this time in her life especially "personality captivates and enthralls. Human personalities absorb attention and interest. In a still deeper and loftier sense, the outstanding religion of youth is an intense love for the personality of the Savior." 1.

Through each Psalm she has studied has run the sense of the presence of God - His character, His relation to men, their relation to Him. Her appreciation and understanding of God is not complete without a knowledge of His greatest manifestation of His love for men in the gift of His only Son. The ability of the Psalms to meet this need may have been a matter of doubt to some. However, the basic truths of Christ's life and purpose are found in those Psalms, commonly known as the Messianic Psalms, especially Psalms such as the Psalms of the Nations' Rage (2), of the Forsaken One (22), of the Righteous King (72), of the Covenant (89), and of Melchizedek (110). Through a study of the individual Psalms, - their meaning, emotions, descriptions, relations to Christ's life as given in the Gospels, 2. and

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1. Tracy : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 79

2. Deissmann -

"Christ had a rich prayer life. A Son of Israel, He had grown up in the atmosphere of the Psalter."

"He lives so much in the Psalter that He cries to His God in the words of the Psalms when the anguish of death chokes His own words."

Deissmann - The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul - p. 48, 50.

their picture of the reign of the righteous King as the climax, the girl will have a very clear and gripping vision of Christ. His physical, mental, and spiritual suffering may be even more real to her than had she studied only the Gospels. She can scarcely fail to realize His ability to meet her needs completely.

#### 6. Emphasis on daily living and service.

Standards of character and conduct, answers to problems, abundance of beauty, adequate understanding of God, a vision of Christ - all are of little avail if not put into actual practice in the girl's life. As has been said above, the Psalms is a practical book.<sup>1.</sup> The Psalmist believed in doing as well as thinking and feeling. If the girl is to get the full value from her study in the Psalms, she must adopt this standard too. The Psalms carry the business of practicing right doing in daily living to its obvious conclusions. The girl should see the social needs and help as far as possible. (Note the attitude of the Psalms on such subjects and problems as unjust judges (58), the poor and needy (37, 109), slander and gossip (15, 101), the

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#### 1. Luther -

"This book is, in my judgment, of a different character from the other books. For in the rest we are taught both by word and by example what we ought to do; this not only teaches, but imparts both the method and the practice with which to fulfil the word and copy the example."

Perowne : The Book of Psalms - p. 23

problem of the prosperity of the wicked (37, 73) ). The Psalmist teaches that his vision was world-wide, hers should be also. The Psalmist believes that a knowledge of God necessitates a purity of life and definiteness of service. A tree is known by its fruits. The girl needs the same definite goal for her own life. A study of Psalms should make such a definite result a matter of voluntary decision and a vital purpose.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUITABILITY OF THE PSALMS AS A COURSE FOR  
MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

(Cont.)



## CHAPTER IV.

THE SUITABILITY OF THE PSALMS AS A COURSE FOR  
MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

(Cont.)

## B. Character values to be derived from a course in Psalms.

A course of study may be a total failure and a sheer waste of time if it can produce no abiding values in character and life. The girl's future depends greatly upon her having a foundation of such sturdy nature that the experiences of life will increase her usefulness and ability. Therefore, any proposed series of lessons should be tested in the light of its character values.

## 1. Purposive Study.

One greatly needed value which should ~~come~~ come to the girl in her study of Psalms is purposive study. At this time in her life she is keenly aware of her intellectual vigor. She is learning to apply her mental energy to problems involving reason and judgment. She is capable of thinking things through from their beginning to the conclusion. She needs definite goals, workable materials and variety of subjects. The Psalms provide the materials and the subjects, her ~~own~~ own questions and longings make the necessary incentives, her studies lead her through various

ways to the highest of goals.

## 2. High Ideals.

A very important part of character formation is the building of ideals which shall become guide posts of life.

"Ideals ----- possess several significant functions. In the first place they keep life steady. --- Ideals are like the mariner's compass, they perform their function rather steadily. In the second place, ideals are standards of action. When an individual is debating about methods of controlling a situation, he subjects his methods of measurement in terms of ideals and discards or accepts them on that basis." 1.

"In a very real sense our ideals dominate our actions. Before the action is begun, we plan it by giving consideration to our ideals, and after the action is performed, we measure it by comparison with our ideals. Ideals are thus the tools we use in measuring our actions." 2.

"The qualities that are combined in each man's ideal, the qualities he admires or loves, are, then, a matter of great importance, ---- for if they be defective or perverted, the character, no matter how strong, how firmly integrated, must be defective and perverted." 3.

In her study of the Psalms the girl has been aided in this choice of qualities for her ideals. She has found in the Psalms ideals for her own life - purity, love, right living, courage and fortitude in suffering, obedience, kindness and mercy. Most of all she has come in contact with the ideal persons - God and Christ. She is able to form for herself a worthy ideal based upon characters who are the greatest in all history.

"Given an ideal of character, more or less worthy, more or less lofty, more or less refined, more or less

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1. Charters : The Teaching of Ideals - p. 23

2. Ibid - p. 37

3. McDougall : Character and the Conduct of Life - p. 162

suited to his particular needs, and given a strong and persistent desire to realize that ideal in his own person, the youth is well set on the road to become a man of fine character." 1.

Surely the girl could find no higher ideals any where than those to be found in the Psalms.

### 3. Strength of Personality.

The girl is engaged in developing her permanent personality. She will not have completed her task till after maturity is reached, but she is now shaping the main lines of her new self. Through contact with the Psalms and through the choosing of ideals for herself based upon the Psalms, she is laying a firm foundation for strong character. In her study she will find strong personalities which will influence her own, ones which she may well copy. Since her ideals and her ideal patterns of life must be chosen out of her own experience, she may learn much from Moses, David, the Hebrew people, the singers of Israel, from God and Christ as the Psalmist pictures them. Through the act of molding her own character and the consciousness that she alone is responsible for what her future character is to be, she is able to choose her ideals more wisely and live them with greater determination and strength of purpose.

"Two things, then, are essential to strong moral character, over and above appropriate moral sentiments: namely, first, the conscious assemblage of admired qualities in an ideal of character, with some stable estimate

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1. McDougall : Character and the Conduct of Life - p. 88

of their relative values; secondly, a strong and sensitive self-respect which perpetually renews and sustains the effort to realize those qualities in one's own conduct and character." 1.

#### 4. Standards of action developed into habits of life.

One of the greatest character values coming from the girl's study should be the standards which the Psalms give for her own life,<sup>2.</sup> her relationship to others, her basis of judgment of others. The ultimate test will be her own conduct. After having spent several weeks studying the Psalms and building her standards of action, the results should be worked out through persistent practice. If her ideals are to become a part of her life, if her personality is to develop as it should, if her standards are to become her actual mode of living, habit formation is necessary. Habit formation demands the continual performance of actions which exemplify the desired ideals in very specific situations. In the words of the Psalms themselves she must "walk uprightly," "work righteousness", "speak the truth" from her heart, "slander not", "do no evil" to her

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1. McDougall : Character and the Conduct of Life - p. 95

2. Athanasius -

"He who genuinely studies all that is written in this book of Divine inspiration may gather, as out of a Paradise, that which is serviceable for his own need. ---- They seem to me to be a kind of mirror for everyone who sings them, in which he observes the motions of the soul, and as he observes them gives utterance to them."

Kirkpatrick : The Book of Psalms - ciii

friends, take up no reproach against her neighbor, be intolerant of wrong, thoughtful of the weak. She "that doeth these things shall never be moved." <sup>1.</sup> Integrity of life is her strength and her test.

#### 5. Strengthened religious life.

The study of the Psalms should contribute much to the girl's religious life, both in knowledge of the meaning and value of religious forms and in the actual use of them herself. <sup>2.</sup> Worship has a prominent place in the Psalms. She should learn what worship means, to whom it is and is not given, what type of person may worship, where one may worship, how, and when. <sup>3.</sup> As she studies, she should discover that true worship is not the mere following of a ritual, though a ritual may be used, that it is a matter of homage from the depths of one's heart. In order to worship herself

#### 1. Psalm 15.

#### 2. Kirkpatrick -

"The Psalter has been through all the centuries and will ever continue to be the one unique and inexhaustible treasury of devotion for the individual and for the church. Through its guidance the soul learns to commune with God: it supplies the fitting language for worship."

Kirkpatrick : The Book of Psalms - p. xii

#### 3. James Gilmour of Mongolia -

"When I feel I cannot make headway in devotion, I open at the Psalms and push out in my canoe, and let myself be carried along in the stream of devotion which flows through the whole book. The current always sets toward God, and in most places is strong and deep. These old men ! - they beat us hollow with all our New Testament, and all our devotional aids and manuals."

Morgan : The Psalms as Daily Companions - p. 122

she needs to know why the Psalmist worshipped and to see whether she has the same reasons which should lead her to worship. She should learn that worship is an experience of communion coming from a very real recognition of her inadequacy and need in contrast to God's great power and strength. An understanding of the Psalmist's worship will be of little value until the girl herself sees through eyes like his and really worships also.

Prayer is another element in the Psalms which may mean much to the girl's religious life. The Psalmist's prayers are always addressed to God, his prayers found answers, sometimes immediately, at other times delayed, often coming in forms which the Psalmist did not expect. These prayers include elements of adoration, much thanksgiving, confession, petitions for self and for others.<sup>1.</sup> Through a study of the background of some of these prayers, for example, David's prayers after the death of Uriah and his marriage with Bathsheba (32, 51), the girl will realize how vital a place prayer had in the lives of the writers of the Psalms. Through this realization should come a development of her own prayers and prayer life, with

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1. Watt and M'Fadyen -

"The emotion of the God-seeking soul is set before us in the Psalms, and the measure and method of the utterance of devotion. No man can pray like the man to whom the Psalms are an intimate possession. There is no where else so truly found a companion of the Devout Life. "

Watt and M'Fadyen : The Psalms - p.11

a new reliance and trust in God, and the poise of mind and heart which such an experience brings.

Another value which this study should bring is a deeper understanding of the character of God Himself - His intimate connection with human lives, His nearness, His love, above all His holiness.<sup>1.</sup> The girl needs a vision of God in order that she may have a vision of herself. She needs the steadying knowledge of the fact that back of the universe is such a God - perfect, holy, true. Such a conviction is necessary if she is to be able to meet the sordid, disappointing, heartbreaking side of life without being crushed by it.

Athearn says that "honesty, truthfulness, industry and the other essential virtues of the moral life can be taught until they control conduct so completely that men and women will not yield to any temptation to depart from the paths of moral rectitude." 2.

In the Psalms the girl can find all these "essential virtues" as they have been lived out in lives of the writers. Their values are apparent. The great general principles of conduct are clearly given, but they are largely wasted unless she applies them to her own specific problems of daily living. If she links with her standards and ideals a personal devotion to God Himself, she has found a unifying force for all that is highest and best in her nature.<sup>3.</sup>

1. McFadyen -

"More persistently than any other book in the Bible does the Psalter bring home to us the overwhelming sense of the reality and the personality of God."

McFadyen : The Messages of the Psalmists - p. 5

2. Athearn : Character Building in a Democracy - p. 32

3. Cf. Brooks : The Psychology of Adolescence - p. 342

CHAPTER V.

SUGGESTED MODES OF PROCEDURE FOR A COURSE IN PSALMS  
FOR MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.



## CHAPTER V.

SUGGESTED MODES OF PROCEDURE FOR A COURSE IN PSALMS  
FOR MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

## A. Means of Motivation and Projects.

When considering the amount of material available for a course in Psalms, it seems that there is far more than could ever be used. This is true. However from the abundance of material at hand, the teacher may choose that which is most adaptable to her own class of girls. Due to the fact that conditions vary in different communities, a variety of suggestions will be given in this chapter and the one following in order that the teacher may see the possibilities in the field and then build her program to meet the needs of her girls. Before she can lead others into a love of and appreciation for the Psalms, the teacher must have attained a love for them herself. She cannot kindle other fires till the fire in her own heart has been lit. Therefore, it is suggested that she have her material well in hand and her work well organized before she meets her class for the first lesson. The following ideas are but suggestions from which the leader of a group of girls may work out

her own plans. Many of these suggestions may be carried over into programs in the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, the Epworth League, the World Wide Guild, in clubs or other related organizations, so that the girl's work in her Sunday School class is correlated with her work in other phases of her life.

#### L. Means of Motivation.

The first lesson is an important one, for it will either increase or kill the interest which the girls have in any new subject. It is very unlikely that the girls have ever studied the Psalms, so a rapid survey of the Psalms as a book may prove interesting. A bird's eye view of the Psalms would include their number, their divisions, their use in the temple, services, their historical importance, followed by the girl's naming the most familiar ones and deciding what it is that has made these particular Psalms such favorites.

A familiar Psalm, such as the 23rd, might be chosen for direct study for the first lesson, as a sample of what the following lessons would bring. In such a study the girls might discover for themselves some of the interesting things in the Psalms - what it shows of shepherd life, its ideas about God, the personal element in it, its value to the girl herself. The background of eastern shepherd life should be given in such a way that the beauty

and meaning of the Psalm speaks for itself. This might be done ~~through~~ an account of eastern customs given by the teacher, or through the reading of some story, such as "The Song of our Syrian Guest" by William Allen Knight.

It may be considered advisable to plunge the girls into a study of some Psalm which is entirely new to them. Either Psalm 56 or Psalm 57 is likely to be unknown. Both have splendid points of interest. Each is based upon a great experience in the life of David when he was in danger of capture and death. The historical situation for each is given in I Samuel, so that the girls may find the story for themselves, and reconstruct the background out of which came these urgent cries for help. It will be of interest to them to note David's danger, fear, pleas, in contrast to his faith in God's ability and willingness to deliver him, then his true thanksgiving for the answer to his prayer.

The girls will be more interested if they have copies of the Psalms of their own which they may mark freely. Usually they prefer the little ten cent copies of the book which are small enough to be carried in their purses. In these they may write any notes they choose to take, use different colored pencils for tracing ideas through various Psalms, etc.

Each girl should choose a name for every Psalm she

studies. The name should be one that will bring back the leading ideas of that Psalm whenever she recalls it.

In addition to naming the Psalms the girls will be interested in following certain ideas through the Psalms they study. They may do this by the use of colored pencils, as already suggested, or if note books are used, a few pages may be reserved for notes on various subjects. One interesting line of study is the subject of God as He is pictured in the Psalms - the titles and names given to Him, His attributes, His works, His relation to the world, with notations giving the place where these are found in the Psalms. Some girls will be interested in studying the striking figures of speech which the Psalmists use - their meaning in the life and customs of that time, their meaning in the Psalm itself. For example, the comparison of the sun to a bridegroom in Psalm 19 with its basis in the oriental marriage customs, the comparison of the wicked to the chaff in Psalm 1 and the eastern ways of harvesting grain, the comparison of the Israelites to a deceitful bow in Psalm 78 with the background of the making and use of weapons of warfare. All of the girls will find much interest in the Psalms' view of mankind and his relation to God, and the standards given for daily liv-

ing with one's self and with others. This line of study will be especially valuable to the girls who are building their own rules of life and bases of judgment at this time. These suggestions not only provide interesting motives for study, but also furnish bases for valuable class recitations and for individual work.

## 2. Individual Projects.

The middle adolescent girl likes to be unusual, to be different from others around her in some approved way. She is also eager to express her own personality in some thing which she may do. For these reasons individual projects often appeal to her, for through them she finds an interesting means of self-expression, as well as having the satisfaction of bringing results of her own work to class for others to see. Many interesting projects may be worked out in connection with the Psalms studied in class which may be of real value to the girl herself and to her associates. Any of these projects could be based on the Psalms used by the entire class and by that method no great amount of work would be involved outside of the class room. Each new lesson would bring new material and added interest for her own work.

The girl who likes history may be interested in working out the background of the Psalms which the group is

studying. In such a project she would get as much material as possible concerning the customs, country, people, etc. from the Psalm itself, then follow up these lines of approach in books at school and in her reading, using any material she might find in other parts of the Bible also.

The use of the Psalms in the world's history may appeal to some girl. In this study she would find out how many of the Jews<sup>1</sup> used the Psalms, the early Christians, the use of the Psalms in the times of great crisis in individual or national life, and which Psalms were favorites of great people. Some interesting examples of this are : Psalm 32 which was recited by Galileo every week for three years when he was in prison because of his new scientific discoveries; Psalm 37:5 was the text which sustained Livingstone at every turn of his course in his thirty years in Africa. He called these words his "guiding star", the secret of his life.<sup>1</sup> Psalm 73 was used by the early Christians for their morning worship as they met to pray at the beginning of each day, knowing that before nightfall they might be put to death by torture if they refused to renounce their belief in Christ. Such a study will lead the girl to consider what it was that made these Psalms so precious, and in that discovery she is well on the way to adopting the same belief for her own life.

The girl who has travelled at home or abroad may be

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1. Cf. Prothero : The Psalms in Human Life - p. 265

interested writing a travel-log of the Psalms, using the same method and style which she used in describing her journeys to her friends. This would include the places visited in the Psalms, their historical significance, the famous people who came from there, descriptions of the things she saw, the people and their customs. Such a project would result in a clear idea of the geographical background and life conditions upon which the Psalms are based.

The nature enthusiast will be interested in the bird, tree, star, and animal lore of the Psalms and might build a nature guide, carried out along the lines of her pocket manual or her bird chart for a year. In this she would include the different birds, flowers, trees, stars, and animals which she has seen on her field trips through the Psalms, with a few notes as to where she saw them, their habitat or natural positions and customs, and the special use which the Psalmist makes of them. If she chose, she might include notes on archeology and geology which have a bearing on the Psalms, and about which she would have some general knowledge from school work. She may be surprised at the variety of such material in the Psalms, for in addition to general classifications, such as "birds of the heavens", "moon and stars", she will find conies, storks, quails, wild goats, young lions, cedars, firs, and many more. In such a project her attention should be called to other portions of the Bible in which nature plays

a prominent part, especially Job and Jeremiah.

The musician will find a wide range for her hobby in Psalms. She might build her own hymn book in which she notes especially the Psalms which were used as temple and festival songs and the way they were sung antiphonally. She will be interested in finding the meaning of the musical directions given at the beginning of many Psalms, in finding the use of orchestras and choirs, in the work and duties of the "Chief Musician" who was the conductor of the temple choirs. Also there is the subject of the most famous metrical versions of the Psalms with their ancient and modern tunes, some of which are sung today. The history of Luther's use of Psalm 46 in his hymn, "Ein feste Burg", of Addison's use of Psalm 19 in "The Spacious Firmament on High", and other similar arrangements of Psalms in modern versions will appeal to her. In addition to this, she should be encouraged to try her hand at writing her own metrical version of her favorite Psalms. In doing this if she keeps the main ideas of the Psalm which she is re-writing, she will gain a valuable knowledge of those particular Psalms which will not be soon forgotten.

The girl who is interested in literature and in writing should have this same opportunity of putting her favorite Psalms into a metrical version of her own. She may write them in the form of rhyme, or try her skill by composing them in blank verse. She does such work in school



frequently, so that it will not be a new idea. If done with the Psalms and kept true to the context, she will know those Psalms thoroughly. In addition to turning the Psalms into modern poetical forms, she may find much profit in a little study of Hebrew poetry and in finding how it is like and unlike what she knows as poetry. She might find much pleasure and profit in writing a Psalm of her own, based upon some experience and expressing her thoughts as the Psalmist has done. If she desired to do such a piece of work, she would find suggestive ideas in the psalms written by Henry VanDyke in his book, "Out-of-doors in the Holy Land."

The girl who is working with children or in some other phase of church work may find it very helpful to build her own Book of Worship, based on the Psalms. This might be used by the class as well. It could include notes on the meaning of worship, prayer, praise, as she has found them in the Psalms, suggestions for daily devotional reading, one or more prayer Psalms, the best Psalms of praise. She could work out a brief worship service for her class, her children's work, or the worship period for the Sunday School service. In this work she might get valuable suggestions from others in the class who are working on the musical, historical, and literary studies on the Psalms. In connection with her work with children, she might also work out a few illustrated Psalms to use in their worship services or class work.

The girl who is practically minded, interested in seeing evidences of her work, and in getting a glimpse of the book as a whole, will be interested in making a chart of the Psalms. This would include for each Psalm the title, the author when given, the type, the leading idea, and any other material she might choose. The material, arrangement, and system of presentation would be left to the girl's own ingenuity to design.

This last project, in abbreviated form, might be used by the teacher and class as a whole in a review of the Psalms studied as a group in order to clinch the main ideas of the course.

CHAPTER VI.

SUGGESTED MODES OF PROCEDURE FOR A COURSE IN PSALMS  
FOR MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

(Cont.)

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SUGGESTED MODES OF PROCEDURE FOR A COURSE IN PSALMS  
FOR MIDDLE ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

(Cont.)

## B. Suggested Outlines for a Course in Psalms.

Two outlines are given in detail in order that the teacher may have some basis for planning her own course. Any outline needs to be adjusted to the teaching situation. It should be noted that the Psalms may be studied from many various angles ; for this reason the teacher will be able to adapt them to the needs of her group more readily than is often possible with Sunday School lesson materials.

## 1. God and the Individual.

## Lesson -

## A. God and the Individual - in Nature.

1. Psalm 8 - The Heavens.
2. Psalm 65 - The Harvest.
3. Psalm 19 - The Sunrise.
4. Psalm 104 - The Universe.

Lesson -

B. God and the Individual - in History.

5.) } Psalm 105 - Egypt.  
6.) }

7.) } Psalm 78 - Egypt to David.  
8.) }

9. Psalm 106 - Moses to the Captivity.

10. Psalm 137 - Babylon.

11. Psalm 74 - Destruction of Jerusalem.

12. Psalm 126 - Return from Captivity.

C. God and the Individual - in Christ.

13. Psalm 2 - The Son Appointed.

14. Psalm 89 - His Coming.

15. Psalm 22 - His Ministry.

16. Psalm 72 - His Reign.

D. God's Relation to the Individual.

17. Psalm 90 - Our Dwelling Place.

18. Psalm 91 - Our Refuge.

19. Psalm 96 - Our Judge.

20. Psalm 99 - Our God.

21. Psalm 46 - Our Help in Trouble.

22. Psalm 59 - Our High Tower in Danger.

23. Psalm 47 - Our King.

24. Psalm 48 - His City - Proof of His Greatness.

Lesson-

E. Relation of the Individual to God.

a) Attitude toward sin.

- 25. Psalm 51 - Penitence.
- 26. Psalm 32 - Confession.
- 27. Psalm 130 -Forgiveness.
- 28. Psalm 143 -Guidance.

b) Consistent Life.

- 29. Psalm 1 - Two Ways Contrasted.
- 30. Psalm 15 - Daily Life.
- 31. Psalm 101 -Perfect Heart.
- 32. Psalm 24 - God's Model.
- 33. Psalm 112 -Blessings of Such a Life.

c) Worship.

- 34. Psalm 97 - Basis.
- 35. Psalm 98 - A New Song.
- 36. Psalm 100 -Praise.
- 37. Psalm 84 - Place.
- 38. Psalm 145 -Person to be Worshipped.

d) Committal of Life.

- 39. Psalm 103 -Basis - the Fatherhood of God.
- 40. Psalm 139 -Basis - the Knowledge of and Wisdom of God.

In this outline one of the big problems of the girl's life has been followed through a logical order in the Psalms.

It will be noted that no effort has been made to designate certain lessons for special days, though the arrangement of the lessons is based on the order of the seasons to a certain extent. In many Sunday Schools the special occasions are celebrated by the school as a whole, and another lesson is used in the classes. In such cases this outline furnishes suggestions to meet this situation.

Two lessons have been reserved in the historical section so that the teacher and class may get the sweep of Hebrew history clearly in mind in order to understand the Psalms better. Perhaps the best way would be through the use of charts and maps combined with a telling of the most dramatic and vivid stories of that period. However, the teacher herself may decide whether or not two class sessions are necessary and substitute one or two additional historical Psalms if she wishes.

The titles are merely suggestive of ideas to be followed and do not cover the entire Psalm. It will be noticed that the same ideas are frequently repeated or elaborated in the Psalms. It is this element which contributes greatly to breadth of view and is especially helpful to the girls who are building up their own standards and ideals throughout this study.

## 2. Guide Posts for Christian Citizenship and Christian Living.

### Lesson -

#### Introductory Lessons.

1. Psalm 23.
2. Psalm 24.

#### A. National Life.

##### a) The Ideal Nation.

3. Psalm 9 - The Wicked Nation.
4. Psalm 89 - The Covenant Nation.

##### b) The Ideal Ruler.

5. Psalm 21 - The Joyous King.
6. Psalm 47 - The King of the Earth.
7. Psalm 72 - The Prince of Peace.

#### B. Civic Life.

##### a) The Ideal City.

8. Psalm 48 - The City of our God.
9. Psalm 122 - The City of Peace.

##### b) The Ideal Executive.

10. Psalm 101 -The Magistrate.
11. Psalm 146 -Jehovah's Example.



Lesson -

c) The Ideal Social Relationships.

- 12. Psalm 10 - The Helper of the Fatherless.
- 13. Psalm 41 - The Helper of the Poor.
- 14. Psalm 112 -The Upright.

C. Religious Life.

a) The True Basis - God.

1) What He Is.

- 15. Psalm 65 - The God of our Salvation.
- 16. Psalm 99 - Jehovah our God.

2) What He Has Done For The World.

- 17. Psalm 19 - In Nature.
- 18. Psalm 104 -In Creation and Preservation of Life.

3) What He Has Done For A Nation.

- 19. Psalm 105 -From Bondage to Deliverance.
- 20. Psalm 78 - From the Wilderness to a Kingdom.

b) True Worship.

1) Thanksgiving.

- 21. Psalm 111 -For Jehovah Himself.
- 22. Psalm 147 -For His Care in Daily Life.

Lesson -

2) Praise.

23. Psalm 95 - Worship before our Maker.

24. Psalm 103 -Worship because of His Love.

3) Meditation.

25. Psalm 63 - Things "Better than Life".

4) Prayer.

26. Psalm 86 - Supplication.

27. Psalm 141 -Petition - for Purity of Life.

28. Psalm 143 -Petition - for Deliverance.

D. Personal Life.

a) The Christian and Others.

29. Psalm 15 - Her Neighbors.

30. Psalm 109 -Her Enemies.

b) The Christian and her Problems.

1) Attitude toward Wrong Doing.

31. Psalm 37 - Fret not.

32. Psalm 73 - Refuge in the Sanctuary.

2)Attitude toward Sin.

33. Psalm 51 - Penitence.

34. Psalm 32 - Confession.

## Lesson -

## 3) Attitude toward Trouble and Disappointment.

35. Psalm 31 - God - Her House of Refuge.

36. Psalm 42 - God - Her Hope.

37. Psalm 118 - God - Her Strength and Song.

## C) The Christian and Her God.

38. Psalm 46 - Her Refuge.

39. Psalm 84 - Her Shield.

40. Psalm 91 - Her Abiding Place.

## Psalms For Special Days.

Psalms 100, 126 - Thanksgiving Day.

Psalms 89, 110 - Christmas Day.

Psalm 1 - New Year's Day.

Psalms 22, 130 - Easter.

In the introductory lessons the teacher will have the opportunity of presenting a well-known Psalm for study, followed by one less familiar to her group, thus giving the key to the general procedure for the following lessons. In these first two lessons it might be well for her to note particularly the devotional and worship materials

in these two Psalms, possibly working out a brief worship program with her girls. The titles for the Psalms in the remainder of the outline suggest the leading ideas which may be brought out in the studies of the course. However, these are not the only ideas in each Psalm, neither is each Psalm the only one dealing with the problems suggested.

There is a large amount of collateral material in the Psalms which may be used to great advantage as background for the lesson, as devotional readings during the week or for special reports by members of the class. At this time the girl's ability to memorize is very great, therefore, it would be well to have each girl know some favorite Psalms, and to use this power as a means of making individual and public worship more effective and meaningful.

Attention has been given to providing lessons for special days - Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's , and Easter. When planning her own year's work, the teacher should note the time when these lessons come and arrange her outline accordingly.

No time has been set aside for review work. In addition to the use of charts, the last class session, or a special meeting of the class during the week, should be definitely designated as the time for the presentation and criticism of the individual work. Each girl should have the privilege of showing the class how she has studied the Psalms. The class will be the judges as to the accuracy and merit of the work. Some public recogni-

tion would greatly increase the girls' zeal and the parents' interest. This might be given in the form of an exhibition or typewritten copies of the finished projects might be put in a binder and given to the director, the pastor, or the church library. Such a concluding session would make a splendid review for the year's work.

Neither of the outlines given covers the entire year. Many Sunday Schools close for the summer. Nearly all which continue services have a very fluctuating attendance. For these reasons both courses have been planned only for the period when the students are expected to attend regularly. If a class desired to study the Psalms for the summer months, some of the suggested projects might be used. For example, they might center their attention upon the place and use of music in the Psalms - singing them, memorizing the metrical versions, etc., or they might make a study of the use of the Psalms in the lives of famous people, especially missionaries, thus getting a glimpse of the mission fields and life along with their study of the Bible. In these outlines only a third of the book of Psalms has been covered, hence if the girls desired to continue their study in the Psalms, there would still be a wealth of material from which to select problems for further work.

The Psalms reveal the depths and the heights of the experience of a man's soul with God. The middle adolescent girl is leading a life full of these same heights and depths.

In a study of these Psalms, it is hoped that she will find not only that others have faced and met problems similar to her own, but that she will find for herself the way to meet these problems, and in the building of her own standards, ideals, and bases for action she will be strengthening her character and developing her individual personality along lines leading to true womanhood and useful living.

CHAPTER VII.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

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### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

It is the purpose of this concluding chapter to discover what fundamental principles of education are operative in the proposed course in Psalms, and what vital needs of the middle adolescent girl may be met by these lessons. The principal laws of learning which guide in other fields outside the realm of religion should be found in courses within the field of religion also. If any series of lessons fails in educational values, it is of little permanent worth. If it does not meet the needs of those for whom it is planned, it is a waste of energy both on the part of the teacher and of the pupil.. The ultimate test of any study lies in these two problems - its educational values and its practical adaptability to life situations.

1. Educational principles to be found in the proposed course in Psalms.

The course in Psalms is but a means to an end. It is a way through which the girl may find definite guide posts to use in the building and perfecting of her personality. It is a mirror in which she may see the reflections of good and bad, with the attractiveness of the good reflected in a manner which will be a definite aid



to character development.

The course is adapted to the age of middle adolescence, is planned to fit the capacities of the girl and come within the range of her own experience. From this known experience it leads out through various channels into the realm of the unknown with the continual linking to daily life.

The course adapts itself to the entire educational process through its basis upon past learning, its use of varieties of approach and method, its preparation for the future problems and its application of the skills which the girl is using in her public school work.

The basis of this course is one of the finest and best of all the fields of literature and history. Without any question the Psalms are the Hebrews' most beautiful lyrics. They sum up the greatest lessons which the race learned through their long history of successes and failures. They present the highest ideals to be found in all literature.

The Psalms meet the needs of a natural, normal, religious experience. Their emphasis upon consistency of daily living is very prominent. They not only set up the standards for such a life but show the means of attaining it through constant communion with God.

In this course the individuality of each girl is given opportunity for full expression under the socializing stimulus provided by the suggested projects. Through this means

she learns to work with others, yet to make her own personal contribution apart from others.

The course provides definite, attainable goals toward which each girl may work. When goals are definitely stated, there is the impetus to attain them and to show her ability to follow a problem through to its correct conclusion. The fact that she has the opportunity to make a definite contribution to the knowledge of others as well as to her own provides a very real incentive to study.

Such a course sets up high standards of mastery in individual study. The working out of any of the suggested projects will demand a mastery of the chosen subject far beyond the usual requirements for an ordinary class recitation. The girl will know her Psalms thoroughly after she has studied them along some chosen line. The presentation of her project to her classmates who also know their Psalms will necessitate a high standard of accuracy if she is to win their approval.

## 2. Needs met by the proposed course in Psalms.

The course meets definite social needs. Through her study of the Psalms and the building of her own standards of character, the girl will come to a clear understanding of the meaning of friendship. Perhaps even more important than this understanding will be the guidance which the Psalms give for the choice of friends who will help and not

be a hindrance to her. Through the new vision of God will come a realization of her personal responsibility toward herself, toward others, and toward Him. She will have the chance to apply these standards in class through her work with her classmates, and to put them into actual practice in her clubs, church work and other contacts with those outside of the class room. Whenever possible the teacher should provide as many social contacts as possible for her girls, in parties, hikes, class meetings, etc., so that the girls may actually test out and practice the standards which have been set up in the class room.

The course meets the girl's intellectual needs. It provides wide range for the use of all her mental powers - for memory, judgment, reason, will, and others. Through the variety of materials she may find the basis for judgment for the problems of her life. The Psalms provide clear-cut standards of living which she can use for herself and as basis for her judgment of others. The values of history and the experiences of people in the past as portrayed in Psalms give actual examples from real life. These may play a large role in the formation of her ideals and her ideal personality. The breadth of material in the Psalms presents many solutions for her problems and answers to her questions and doubts.

The emotional needs of the girl are met by this course in many ways. The projects give a wide range for self-expression. In her search for materials for the studies

in nature, in literature, in museums, and in actual life she finds a variety of experiences which provide outlets for part of her abundant energy. Through these projects, her standards of action, her class work, and her contacts with others she will have the opportunity to develop the habit of analysis which will be of great value in every phase of her life. She will also realize that she alone is responsible for self-control and self-direction. The projects will give her a definite experience in this line of progress. At this time in her life the girl is in desperate need of wise guidance. Here again the Psalms may contribute materially through their high standards, vivid examples of right and wrong, and their emphasis on the fact that actions are bound to bring forth fruit. The girl's love of beauty may find greater satisfaction in the Psalms than in any other book of the Bible, for her love of poetry, music, and nature can be met by this great collection of songs and prayers.

The religious needs of the girl are also met. In her study of the historical Psalms she will come to know the Old Testament with much more understanding than before; through the study of the Messianic Psalms she will come to an appreciative knowledge of the Gospels. Out of her study cannot help but come a new, wonderful vision of God and a deepened love for Him. Hand in hand with this will be a new realization of the meaning of the cross and the suffering of Christ. Through such an experience the high idealism of

the girl will find its true Ideal and her love for Him will become more meaningful than ever before. In the building of worship programs and study of the meaning of worship the girl will come to worship truly in her own life and will be able to lead others in worship. Out of such a course should come the desire for service and the opportunity for action. The girl should realize that first of all her own life must measure up to the standards she holds for others, then it is her duty, privilege, and joy to bring others to the same heights of life and to the same understanding of life and the Giver of Life.

A study is not truly a study unless it becomes a part of one's life. The Psalms may shape the girl's character after the pattern of the Highest if she absorbs them into her own life and lives up to their standards daily.

And she shall be like a tree planted by the streams  
of water

That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,  
Whose leaf also doth not wither;

And whatsoever she doeth shall prosper. 1.

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1. Cf. Psalm 1.

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