**Psalm 119**

**God’s Word Matters**

**Scripture:** Psalm 119 (select verses)

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 119:105*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"*

**Introduction to Psalms:**

Important questions to establish context and background of any book of the Bible.

1. **What?:** The book of Psalms is the longest book of the Bible with 150 individual psalms or “songs/hymns” that focus on God in praise and adoration.Some of them are very personal reflecting prayers and thoughts of the author toward God. Parts of this book have been used for worship songs throughout all of history.
2. **Who?:** Almost half of the Psalms were written by King David and the rest have various authors (Moses, Solomon, etc.). Some, including Psalm 119, do not have the author listed, but many experts believe David is the author of this Psalm also.
3. **When?:** The Psalms were individually written over a period of 1000 years in Israel’s history. Most experts believe they were compiled and organized shortly after the Babylonian captivity ended in 537 BC.
4. **Why?:** While there is not a single human author writing with a unique purpose, God has shown us in the Psalms that we can bring all of our feelings before Him and that He hears and understands. The Psalms encourage us to cry out to God in worship and prayer in every circumstance. The book of Psalms is also the OT book most quoted by Jesus and contains several amazing prophecies pointing to Him as the coming Savior!

**Psalm 119 Message:** The profound message of Psalm 119 is the clarity, sufficiency, and authority of the word of God. This is the longest chapter of the Bible and almost every verse of this Psalm has something virtuous to offer about God’s word. These verses use different terms to describe God’s word (law, testimony, ways, precepts, statutes, commandments, etc.)

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of “the Hand”, Word Search of different terms for God’s Word, “Make it Real” flashlight activity, Discussion Questions for 3rd – 5th.

Craft for 1st & 2nd: Lantern

**Starter Activity:** Telephone Game--Select 5-10 kids to come up and stand in a circle. You will then give the first kid the phrase “Lightning McQueen likes lemon lollipops”. He will then very quietly whisper it into his neighbor’s ear. That kid will do the same to his neighbor until it has gone full circle. Then we will all get a good laugh when we hear the final phrase that sounded nothing like the original.

Q: Was God’s Word given to us like this….one person telling another, telling another, and so on? **No!** But a lot of people use this as an excuse not to read the Bible claiming it has been corrupted over time. But the reality is that we have remarkable evidence demonstrating that God’s word is reliable and can be trusted. (i.e. Dead Sea Scrolls see below)

Q: Who likes treasure hunts? Ever heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls? They were ancient copies of almost all of the OT (including Psalm 119) that were found in a cave. Guess what: the text they found that is over 2000 years old is the same as what we have today over 2000 years later! That is a long time and it shows that God can be trusted to preserve his word accurately.

**Bible Study: (we are going to read a few verses and then focus on illustration)**

Have your class all blindly open up their Bibles to the middle. Chances are several of them will open up to Psalm 119 as it is right in the middle!

Read each verse and then ask the following questions:

 Ps. 119:1-2:

 Q: How is a person blessed?

 A: Walking in God’s word, keeping His word, **and seeking/loving Him**!

Ps. 119:9:

 Q: How can a young person stay on the right path?

 A: By knowing God’s word and following it.

 Ps. 119:21:

 Q: What do the proud and cursed do?

 A: They ignore God’s word.

 Ps. 119:155:

 Q: What is the danger of not seeking God’s statutes (word)?

 A: Salvation will be far from us.

 Ps. 119:160:

 Q: Is anything in God’s Word false?

 A: No! The entirety is true! (Jesus says this also in John 17:17)

 Ps. 119:162:

 Q: What is to be our treasure?

 A: We should thank and praise the Lord for His word.

Do you think God wants us to be reading, learning, and living by His word?

**Illustration: The Hand**

Someone once taught me this “hand” illustration and I think it is an excellent tool to help kids remember why God’s word is trustworthy. The world out there does all it can to cast suspicion and doubt upon God’s word, but this should provide them with a defense when their friends dump on the Bible or make fun of them for taking the Bible seriously.

Using your hand, you will give 6 reasons why the Bible is trustworthy/special and not just any ordinary religious book. You might be thinking, “I only have 5 fingers”, but you will see. You will start with your pinky finger and move your way across your hand:

**#1 Pinky Finger:** The word “pinky” is to remind you of the word “prophecy” (both start with the letter “p”). The Bible has many, many prophecies that have already been fulfilled. Some examples just about Jesus alone:

* Daniel 9:24-27 -> Predicted 483 years until the Messiah (Jesus) would come
* Micah 5:2 -> Predicted that the Messiah (Jesus) would be born in Bethlehem
* Isaiah 7:14 -> Predicted that the Messiah (Jesus) would born of a virgin
* Isaiah 53: -> Predicted how the Messiah (Jesus) would suffer/die for people’s sins

*These and many, many other fulfilled prophecies remind us that the Bible is special and from God for “He indeed knows the end from the beginning.” (Isaiah 46:10)*

**#2 Ring Finger:** The ring is a symbol of unity. (If you are married you can point to the ring on your finger!). When you consider how the human authors of each book of the Bible span thousands of years as well as different languages and cultures, you realize only God could inspire them all in such a way to put together a wholly unified book with a common message and theme. *This reminds us that the Bible is special and from God.*

**#3 Big Finger (don’t say middle finger!):** The Bible answers the “big” questions of life. Questions that everybody asks: What happens after I die? Where did evil come from? Does my life have meaning? Etc. Only God, who created all things and knows the ultimate answers to these questions, could give us a book that unlocks and answers these “big” questions that everybody asks at some point in life. *This reminds us that the Bible is special and from God.*

**#4 Pointer Finger (or index finger):** The Bible points back into history with amazing accuracy and precision. The stories in the Bible are not fairy tales made up (like Disney stories), but are real accounts about real people, real places, and real situations. Do you believe George Washington is the first president of our nation? In the same way, you should believe what the Bible has to say about Jesus because it is recorded as real history! *This reminds us that the Bible is special and from God.*

**#5 Thumb pointed up:** The Bible is a book that has changed people’s lives for the better for thousands of years. People who were lost in their sin or thought they had no hope will tell you that after they started reading and believing what the Bible has to say about them and what God has done, they were completely changed and transformed. Consider sharing your own testimony on how God has used His word to change you! *These real-life testimonies remind us that the Bible is special and from God.*

**#6 The Fist:** Finally, the fist represents how the Bible has remained with us despite how much the world has hated it and the enemies of God have tried to destroy it or keep it from getting into the hands of people. If this book was just a book of fairy tales written by men, it would have been destroyed or forgotten long ago. Yet, this book has survived every attack the enemy has brought against it. *This reminds us that the Bible is special and from God.*

**Flashlight Activity for classroom (WARNING: don’t do if you think kids will get scared!):**

Teachers: Get a flashlight ready. Turn off the lights in the classroom and let the darkness sink in for a few moments before turning on the flashlight. Ask what happens when we try to walk in the dark? We stub our toe, we bonk into the wall, etc. Then shine the flashlight on your Bible and read our memory verse out loud (Ps. 119:105). Explain how God’s Word shows us how we should live and walk and that without it we couldn’t see. Then turn the light back on.

**Teachers: Consider sharing with your students some of your habits that you have established to be consistently in God’s word. Be honest! :D**

**Discussion Questions:**

Now that we have some good reasons to take the Bible seriously, let’s go back to Psalm 119 in classroom and discuss some actions we can take home with us.

Ps. 119:11:

 Q: Is it good to memorize God’s word?

 Ps. 119:25 and 28:

 Q: What should I do when I am scared or feeling down?

 Ps. 119:42:

Q: How can you know what to say to your friend who doesn’t know Jesus?

 Ps. 119:50:

 Q: What can I do when life is hard?

 Ps. 119:103:

 Q: Should we love God’s word more than chocolate?

If God’s Word is a “light to our path and a lamp to our feet” (v. 105), we must spend time reading it and learning from it. When can you find time to read God’s word either by yourself or with your parents or grandparents?