

- 6 *Psalm 130*
Can you share a time when you cried out to God
'out of the depths' (v.1)? How did you feel at the time?
Did you sense that God heard your prayers?
What were the results?
- 7 *1 Thessalonians 1*
St. Paul offers a lot of encouragement to his readers.
Can you recall a time when being encouraged by those in
leadership (whether in church or at work) has made a big
difference to you?
Are you a good encourager yourself?
- 8 *1 Thessalonians 4*
Paul argues that Christians should take their moral standards
from God's word, not from contemporary society (vv.1-8).
How is this especially challenging for Christians today?
- 9 *Psalm 133*
"How good and pleasant it is when brothers (and sisters)
live together in unity" (v.1).
We are all different! For a church community to be united,
though, can all joining together in a common act of worship,
at least occasionally, cut through all that might divide us?
- 10 *2 Thessalonians 1-3*
What principles can we learn from this letter for dealing with
issues and conflicts that might surface in our church today?

Closing Prayer

*As usual, light a candle and silently reflect on your discussion.
Meditate for a while on God's greatness, God's goodness and
God's grace, as discussed in the notes to Psalm 135.
Close by saying together the Grace.*

SACRED

Group Resources

Month 35

Opening Prayer

God, what kind of world is this
that the adult people are going to leave for us children?
There is fighting everywhere
and they tell us we live in a time of peace.
You are the only one who can help us, Lord,
give us a new world in which we can be happy,
in which we can have friends
and work together for a good future.
A world in which there will not be any cruel people
who seek to destroy us and our world in so many ways.
Amen.

(A Liberian child)

General Question

- 1 Have you experienced the Spirit speaking to you this month through the Bible passages you've read in unexpected ways, even if they are seemingly well outside the original context or meaning of that passage?
(see the notes for day 18 as an example of this).

Activity

The notes on *Psalms 133* include an illustration from a Benedictine monastery aimed at fostering a deep sense of unity among the monks. In sharing the Peace, a crucifix is kissed and then passed from one to another, so reminding them that the peace they offer is the Peace of Christ.

Try this today. Have ready a cross or crucifix. Stand up. Be quiet for a few moments and then say together these (or similar) words: "We meet in Christ's name and we share his Peace." Then lightly kiss the cross, pass it to the next person, and say "Peace be with you." When everyone has done this, sit down, and share what it was like.

Further Ideas

Please do not attempt to discuss all these ideas, but quickly glance through them all and pick out just a few as the mood takes the group.

- 1 *1 Chronicles 17*
The word of God came to Nathan in the night.
Why do you think it came at night?
Have you ever experienced this?
And have you found the four characteristics of God's voice listed in the notes to be true for you?
- 2 *1 Chronicles 18-20 (and a lot of the Old Testament!)*
Three frameworks for thinking about going to war:
a separation of church and state; just war theory, pacifism.
What do you think of these three ways of thinking? Which do *you* lean towards in terms of their application today?
- 3 *1 Chronicles 21*
David pays the full market price for the threshing-floor that would become the site of his altar (v.24).
'We cannot cheat God in our giving.' Discuss.
- 4 *1 Chronicles 27*
The chapter mentions, almost in passing, Hushai the Arkite as being the king's friend (v.33). Do you have close friends with whom you can share absolutely anything?
How many such people do you know?
- 5 *Psalms 128*
Do you feel that you belong to a wider church than just the local one you attend? What helps this outlook?

Have you ever been to a Christian festival, or gone on a 'pilgrimage' journey to a sacred place?
Describe what this experience was like for you.