



MIND

session page

Thanksgiving & Service

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 | Session 9.18

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Context

Begin by asking:

- How has music or poetry helped you in your faith?
- What hymns or songs have you found particularly meaningful or helpful?
- What role does art, like music and poetry, play in our faith?
- How does art help us learn and understand things about God in a different way?
- How do they help us express emotions to God that we sometimes find hard to express?

Content

Read Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19, then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- What do you think was going on in the Psalmist's life that might have prompted this kind of song?
- While it's easy to look for theology in this psalm – to try to understand God better – focus first on the feelings. What emotions does the Psalmist express?
- Why is gratitude an important part of our growth in faith?
- This isn't just expression of gratitude in words – how else does the psalmist express his gratitude?
- What is surprising about the depth of promises the psalmist makes (verse 16 for example)?
- Even though it's not common today to offer one's life and service to someone else, what does this kind of gesture say about the lengths to which we might express gratitude?
- Why is repayment – even if it's impossible – considered to be an important part of gratitude?
- Verse 15 has caused controversy in the past, so how do you understand this verse and why?

Closure

Continue by asking:

- At what time in your life have you ever had this kind of gratitude to God?
- Why might people think that we should recite or sing these kinds of psalms or other songs, only when they are meaningful for us at the moment?
- This poem/song was preserved for generations of future worshipers to use to express their own gratitude to God. How might we preserve our own feelings and expressions of faith so that they could help others in their own journey?
- How else could we convey our story in a way that helps others worship?

Close with prayer.

Writer: Jon Parks



CURRENT

session page

Thanksgiving & Service

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 | Session 9.18

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
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- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Context

Share the [Tasty Fish video](#) and ask:

- What are some elements of this video that people might find to be either funny or un-funny and why?
- When have you or someone you know undergone a potentially traumatic event and how did you deal with it?
- In what ways do such events affect our relationship with God and why?
- What kinds of things do we expect of someone who God has gotten through a bad time and why?

Content

Read [Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- Understanding that this psalm is a person's response to God, what do you think is the story behind it and why?
- What does the text indicate might have been the writer's relationship to God before and after the event that led to its writing?
- What do you think the writer means in verse 15, when talking about the "preciousness" of death?
- Why do you think the psalmist's mother is mentioned in verse 16?
- What contemporary music or stories are you familiar with that might parallel the message of this psalm and in what way do they do this?

Closure

Review together the [Omaze Campaigns Page](#) and ask:

- Which of these contests (current or past) would you most like to win and why?
- Which cause most compelled you and why?
- Why do you think so many well-known people are willing to participate in so many causes, even if they don't seem to get a lot of personal attention from having done so?
- What is a personal cause for which you'd like people to hold one of these kinds of contests?
- For what kinds of things in your life are you hoping God will intervene, and how might you act if God does it?
- How might we show our gratitude to God through the way we respond to other people's needs?

Pray together to end the session.



MYSTIC
session page

Thanksgiving & Service

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 | Session 9.18

Before the Session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Materials needed: Paper and pens for each person
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Context

Read aloud [Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19](#) then share the Bible Background Video

In today's session, the group will share in exploring those things for which they are truly grateful and compose words of response to God's gifts to them.

Reflection

Distribute paper and pens to each person and encourage everyone to list all the things they are grateful for in three categories: people, places, and things. Encourage them to use the full amount of time and also be as specific as possible as they make their lists. (For instance, instead of just writing "mom" – write "Mom's way of giving advice with no strings attached.") After about fifteen minutes, Invite the group to silently share their lists with God and thank God for what is on their paper, taking time to carefully reflect on every item.

After about ten minutes of reflection, invite the participants to each write their own gratitude psalm. When they have completed this process, as time allows, Have volunteers share their psalms out loud with the group, then close the time by simply saying "Amen."

Writer: Joy Yee



MEDIA
session page

Thanksgiving & Service

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 | Session 9.18

Before the Session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Context

Play the [Vanilla milkshake video](#) and ask:

- At what points have you noticed that the whole world is misinformed and that you just cannot keep your mouth shut anymore?
- How do you typically handle that?
- What do you think of Jeanne's solution for the milkshakes?
- What did the fast food worker learn in her story?
- How can you understand life when you want vanilla and they only sell chocolate?
- How can you be the "older person" helping others through times of difficulty?
- How do you know when to speak up and when to be quiet in times of struggles?

Content

Read [Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like:

- How confident does the psalmist sound about God's love and on what does the psalmist base this?
- How traumatic do the events sound described in verse 3?
- How horrible do they sound if you were without modern medical practices as the writer would have been?
- What type of prayer does it sound like was prayed in a time of distress?
- How does the writer express thanksgiving back to God?
- What does the writer commit to continue doing for God?
- Why do you the writer repeats the point that he will fulfill the obligation to God and make offerings to God?

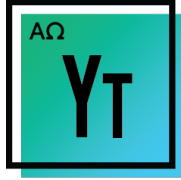
Closure

Play the [Guardian Angel movie clip](#) and ask:

- What type of prayers or vows have you made to God over the years and how have they worked out?
- What have you learned in life about your promises and thanksgiving to God?
- What have you learned about times of turmoil?
- Which person could you better relate to more in that movie clip and why?
- When you lose someone to death, how do you cope?
- What can you learn from the Psalm 116 to help you with that?
- In what ways can our own experiences with times of trouble help someone else?

Close in prayer.

Writer: Jon Self



YOUTH
session page

Thanksgiving & Service

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 | Session 9.18

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Prepare a large tic-tac-toe board on one end of your meeting space and provide a couple of beanbags or other safe items to throw. (See Content)
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.
- Use the social media prompts on this session's webpage to help youth begin engaging the session them ahead of their gathering.
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Intro

Play the [Katina's song](#) and ask:

- What lyrics in this song spoke to you the most and why?
- How often do you usually spend time thanking God?
- Why do we take God's blessings for granted sometimes?

Context

On one end of your meeting space create a large tic-tac-toe board on the floor that is as large as your space allows. Form two teams and have them gather about ten to twenty feet away, behind a line that the teams cannot cross. Give each team a bean bag, tennis ball, or something else that can be thrown at the tic-tac-toe board. Tell the players that they will need to alternate team members for this activity as if they were in a relay race, so they need to work out an order and make sure everyone on their team remembers it before starting. Have one team begin by throwing their bean bag toward the board, and use colored paper or some other means to identify which square the bag initially landed in. If someone misses the board, do not mark any square. The second team will then throw their object, and again, mark its landing using a different color than the first team. If a team throws their bag and it lands in a square occupied by the other team, the other team loses their claim to that square and it becomes neutral again for any team to hit with their bean bag. Play each game until a team has three squares in a row as in regular tic-tac-toe, and play as many games as your time allows, then ask.

- What was your strategy to win this game?
- How did you have to work as a team to make that happen?
- What would have happened if someone didn't care about the team, but only about themselves and why?
- In what ways are we called to care about others and not just ourselves?
- What does it look like when someone is not interested in serving others?

Content

Read [Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19](#) and watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask your group:

- What do you think the author was going through in the first four verses?
- How did God save him?
- How do these things cause the author to become devoted to God?
- In what ways have we tried to repay God like the author desires in verse 12?
- How do you think God wants to be repaid and why?
- What is significant about the author praising and thanking God in public?

Closure

Show the ["Get Down" video](#) and ask:

- One line in this song is "This valley is so low, I can barely see the sun." When could that have described something you've gone through?
- How do you express your gratitude when God pulls you through a difficult time?
- How would you respond to someone who was claimed appreciation for God's blessings, yet did not have any desire to bless other people and why?
- What are some practical things we can do to thank God by serving others in our community?

Close this session in prayer.

Writer: Don Breeden



MIX
session page

Thanksgiving & Service

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 | Session 9.18

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
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Context (From the Current Session Page)

Share the [Tasty Fish video](#) and ask:

- What are some elements of this video that people might find to be either funny or un-funny and why?
- When have you or someone you know undergone a potentially traumatic event and how did you deal with it?
- In what ways do such events affect our relationship with God and why?
- What kinds of things do we expect of someone who God has gotten through a bad time and why?

Content (From the Mind Session Page)

Read [Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19](#), then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- What do you think was going on in the Psalmist's life that might have prompted this kind of song?
- While it's easy to look for theology in this psalm – to try to understand God better – focus first on the feelings. What emotions does the Psalmist express?
- Why is gratitude an important part of our growth in faith?
- This isn't just expression of gratitude in words – how else does the psalmist express his gratitude?
- What is surprising about the depth of promises the psalmist makes (verse 16 for example)?
- Even though it's not common today to offer one's life and service to someone else, what does this kind of gesture say about the lengths to which we might express gratitude?
- Why is repayment – even if it's impossible – considered to be an important part of gratitude?
- Verse 15 has caused controversy in the past, so how do you understand this verse and why?

Closure (from the Media Session page)

Play the [Guardian Angel movie clip](#) and ask:

- What type of prayers or vows have you made to God over the years and how have they worked out?
- What have you learned in life about your promises and thanksgiving to God?
- What have you learned about times of turmoil?
- Which person could you better relate to more in that movie clip and why?
- When you lose someone to death, how do you cope?
- What can you learn from the Psalm 116 to help you with that?
- In what ways can our own experiences with times of trouble help someone else?

Close in prayer.