

## The spiritual practice of Lament

**Write a Psalm of Lament:** For parents, youth and older elementary age:

Let's talk about Lent. You may want to write the word LENT in your notebook. It is 40 days, plus Sundays, beginning with Ash Wednesday leading up to Easter Sunday. We spend time preparing our hearts to celebrate Jesus' Resurrection on Easter, the most important holiday for any Christian. For 40 days we do things to remind us how much we need Jesus to die for us and rise again. We fast. We pray. We sacrifice things. We admit that we have sinned and need Jesus to forgive us, and we admit that we are sad.

There is a lot of sadness in the story leading up to Easter morning. Jesus is sad because he knows he is leaving his friends and he knows he will die a painful death.

The disciples are sad when he is arrested, beaten, and crucified.

His mother is sad and they stay in a place of mourning until they find out that he is alive again.

Do you ever admit that you are sad about things? Do you ever cry anymore? When you were a baby, you cried a lot. Do you still cry? Write down in your book what things make you cry.

The Bible talks about being sad and crying a lot. And we know that Jesus cried several times.

There is a word we don't use much anymore and that is **Lament**. It is a word that means someone is grieving a great loss. They are overwhelmed with sadness and they cry.

Did you know that in the book of Psalms, there are around 42 Psalms of Lament? There is a whole book in the Bible called Lamentations; the Israelites weren't afraid to tell God how sad they were. They would even repeat these psalms at their worship services in large groups. It is OK to be sad, angry, or worried and to tell God about it.

It is good to talk about sadness or lament with your family. and also to talk to God together.

Your family will look at a short lament Psalm in the Bible, and then make a craft together.

**Psalm 13** is one of the shorter ones. As we go through each section of the psalm, you will see a **To Do** prompt in bold font to help you write your family psalm. First, think of something that makes you sad.

**To Do:** Write this in your journal or wait to write about it during our craft.

Psalm 13 starts by asking the same question 4 times! How long, Lord?

***"A song of David.***

*1 How long will you forget me, Lord?*

*How long will you hide from me? Forever?*

*2 How long must I worry and feel sad in my heart?*

*How long will my enemy win over me?"*

**To Do:** Ask God 4 'How long' questions. Pause while you write.

## The spiritual practice of Lament

Now David asks God to do something. He doesn't just tell God how he feels, he wants God to do something about his problem.

**3** *"Lord, look at me.*

*Answer me, my God.*

*Tell me, or I will die.*

**4** *Otherwise my enemy will say, "I have won!"*

*Those against me will rejoice that I've been defeated."*

**To Do:** What are you asking God to do about your situation? Write it down.

Then David begins to tell God and anyone else who will listen, what he believes about God. This is an important step in Lament. What do we believe about God? Can he answer our prayers?

**5** *"I trust in your love.*

*My heart is happy because you saved me."*

**To Do:** Tell God what you believe about him. Tell him what you know to be true. Write it down.

The last thing he does is to worship God even though he is still sad. Sometimes the things we lament may last a long time. David worships God even though his problem isn't fixed. To end his psalm, David reminds himself that he can worship the Lord. Why? Because God takes care of him. He ends his prayer of Lament with hope and belief that God answers prayer and takes care of him while he waits for the answer.

**6** *"I sing to the Lord*

*because he has taken care of me."*

**To Do:** Write down something in your past that reminds you to trust Jesus.

That is what Lent is all about. We are sorrowful for a time, but we know Easter is coming. Jesus was raised from the dead. He has gone to be with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Someday he will come back and we will be with him forever. While we wait, we know he hears our prayers. He knows when we are sad and lamenting. He cares about us and our families. And we can trust him with our sorrow.

Parents: For further study on Lament, watch this YouTube video by N.T. Wright, What Role Does Lament Play in the Christian Life? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-gdnxiYBm8>

## The spiritual practice of Lament

### A lament activity for everyone: Tears in a bottle

Did you know that in the Psalms, King David imagines God keeping all his tears in a bottle?

*Psalms 56:8 New Living Translation (NLT)*

*“You keep track of all my sorrows.*

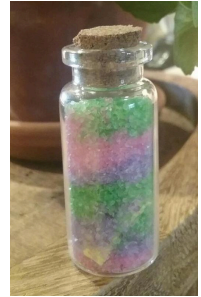
*You have collected all my tears in your bottle.*

*You have recorded each one in your book.”*

Do you ever wonder what your tear bottle might look like in heaven?

Have you ever cried so hard the tears fell into your mouth and tasted like salt?  
That's because there is salt in our tears.

Your family will fill a bottle with your tears (actually colored salt) to help you remember that God knows every tear you have ever cried. The psalmist says your tears are so important to him that he has kept each one that falls.



#### To Do:

- Open your Lament bag carefully, and each person will unwrap a small piece of paper. Use a pen to write down something that made you cry.
- Now roll the paper back up tightly and place the ring on it. Put it inside your bottle.
- Take the 6 colors of salt out of your bag. Don't eat it.
- Use the plastic funnel and pour a small amount of each color from your bags slowly, one at a time, to make layers until you fill up your bottle.
- **Don't shake the bottle** or all of the colors will mix.
- Place the cork on the bottle once it is full.

Keep this as a reminder of Lament. We all cry. We all ask God questions like how long will I be sad? We all ask God to do something about things that worry us or make us sad. It is good to share sorrows as a family.

**To Do:** Moms or Dads, share with your family about something you have lamented and use Psalm 13 as a model.

1. Did you tell God why you were sad?
2. Did you ask God what he planned to do about your sorrow?
3. Do you remember the times he took care of you in the past? Could you share one of the ways?
4. How do you worship God? (sing, sit in silence, or share about times he has helped you in the past).

When we say, Amen, it means “let it be so” or “it will happen.”

**To Do:** Take a picture of your bottle of tears and post it on the Facebook page or email the Growing Families team at [growing.families@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:growing.families@asburyseminary.edu) so we can see the beauty of your family bottle.