



# Teacher Options

The next three sections provide a beginning, middle, and end for the session, with focus paragraphs in between.

## Focus Paragraphs



are printed in italics at the top of the page because they are the most important part of the Teaching Guide. These paragraphs will help you to move your class from “what the text meant” to “what the text means.”

## You Can Choose!

There is more material in each session than you can use, so choose one option from each section to tailor the session to the needs of your group.

### A Way to Begin

*As you read Psalm 13, keep in mind that the writer's pain and frustration were real. Their feelings arose from experiences in the psalmist's life similar to our own moments of great distress. This writer endured personal pain and, for reasons not readily apparent, felt cut off from God. As the psalm progresses, we see a transformation begin. The psalmist realized that God could be trusted. With hope beginning to grow, the psalmist planned a celebration of God's faithfulness. We see here from the writer's hope. Though circumstances may seem to be full of darkness and grief with God, ultimately God remains true. As we have found God sufficient in our past experiences, both great and small, God will also be present with us in whatever we currently face.*

□ Scan to the Blind □ Where is God?

### A Way to Explore Scripture

*As long as we have emotions, we will know pain. Because we love, we will know grief. Because we can hope, we will know delight. Because we long for completeness, we will know loneliness. Sometimes bit depressing, doesn't it? But turn the pages around and we begin to see that love and grief can be two sides of the same coin. From the psalmist's words of despair, we can hear a promise of hope. Psalm 13 concludes with an expectation of deliverance and celebration. Read the words of the text again. Think of times you have experienced these feelings in your life. What was happening? How did God bring you through? Maybe you didn't see God at work at first. Still, the experiences of the past assure us how true faith is in the present.*

□ The Changing of the Tide □ The Primary Players

### A Way to End

*The night will tell the end of Psalm 13 "Waiting for the Morning" if whatever moved the psalmist to write about his feelings, the emotions he expressed were his own deep, painful heartache. They were not merely words of hypothetical meaning. Would anyone be so confrontational with God unless they truly believed God had wronged them in some way? Despite his agonizing work, the psalmist asked the prayer of getting ready for the party. With a certainty born of faith, the psalmist knew that God's presence would be evident. When that happened, it would be time to celebrate.*

**The writer expected that God would do in the present what God had done in the past. The memory of God's action was enough to encourage the psalmist's faith. Sometimes that's what makes the difference between rising to the challenge or getting swept away in the life of despair. Have we decided that we will believe? If we have, then we're not surprised when the psalmist starts planning the party. We know nothing could be more appropriate.**

□ **Samira, Sunset**  
"Sunset, Sunset" is one of the songs from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. While it speaks of the waning passage of time, it also ties together two images filled with meaning. The sunrise offers fresh hope and promise, the possibility of new beginnings, and second chances. The sunset may carry the promise of rest, but it may also bear the sense of gathering darkness and fading light. In a strange coincidence, without a familiar point of reference, it is impossible to tell the difference between sunrise and sunset.  
During your preparation for this study, find a picture of a sunrise. Include one the picture is large enough to be seen and distinct enough to be recognized as a sunrise or sunset. Instruct your group to reflect on the picture. Explain that when we look at the still picture, we can't determine if this is a sunrise or a sunset. The difference relies entirely on perspective. Use this reflection to lead into the following closing prayer.

Dear God, in my life and in the lives of those close to me, I've known sunsets and sunrises. Help me see in the sunrise the promise of growing light to chase away fear and frustration. Help me see the sunset with a sense of renewed hope that each

day really does bring a new day. Help me also, Lord, to see in the sunset not the dreaded approach of gloom and shadows, but the peaceful opportunity for rest and recovery. To this end we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

□ **The Divider**  
Psalm 13 is the testimony of a believer who found a devastating experience but decided to believe in God, to trust that God treats believers with care and love. For the psalmist, the pain that engulfed the someone was that God had been faithful to show compassion and care in the pain.  
Belief and trust don't develop in a flash; they happen in the life of a disciple of Christ, each day, in a dozen small ways, with simple prayers answered and daily promises kept. These experiences set the stage for a positive outcome of the struggle of faith. The only faith that can be depended upon in dire emergency is the faith that has been nurtured through the ordinary days.  
Close your session with a challenge to your group to make a deliberate decision for faith each day. Such a decision is the best way to prepare for the traumatic times that might come their way.

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## Resource Kits Also Available

EVEN WHEN WE FEEL LOST AND ALONE, FAITH CAUSES US TO REACH OUT TO GOD.

Unit 1 • Following God