

## Writing an Acrostic Psalm

Psalm 119 is known as the Great Psalm because of its length. It is an acrostic Psalm like Psalms 9; 10; 34; 37; 111; 112. In those Psalms, each of the verses starts with one of the letters from the 22- lettered Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 119 uses eight verses for each letter. This was an excellent teaching tool to help the Hebrew children remember all that God does. For example, if we used our alphabet, the first eight verses would have to start with "A." This would be a very long exercise if you used all 26 letters of the English alphabet and had to write eight verses for each letter. It can be done with older students. I have found that you can do this with younger pupils by either cutting up letters of the alphabet and putting them in a jar and letting students pull out 2 or 3 letters per person. With beginner readers, ask each pupil to give you two or three letters. I did this with a group of children who didn't have a spiritual education. It looked like this:

Kindergartener B S

Fourth Grader A N

Sixth Grader G C Y

On a big sheet of paper or white board write the letters and leave space for answers.

B S A N G C Y

B S A N G C Y

B S A N G C Y

Now ask each child to think of a word that we might use in talking to God that starts with each of those letters.

There is a great willingness to contribute on about three sets at a time. Another activity is helpful and then return to a few more letters. Write the beginning word next to each letter. See below:

BLESS	SACRIFICE	ALWAYS	NEVER	GREAT	COMFORT	YOU
BECAUSE	SPEAK	ASK	NO	GOODNESS	CALL	YOUR
BEHOLD	SHOULD	ALL	NOT	GUIDE	COME	YES

If you have time this session, start to fill in statements next to those words. While many find Ps. 119 comforting and helpful - it is also a little disjointed in the content since getting words to fit are somewhat contrived. However far you get, talk with the parents and ask them to help their children with this homework during the week.

Finish filling in the acrostic psalm.

**Example:**

BLESS the Lord for He helps us. (8 year-old)

BECAUSE God is my guide, I follow Him. (8 year-old)

BEHOLD the majesty of God, for all that He makes is beautiful! (6 year-old)

SACRIFICE human will for the divine will - just like Jesus. (11 year-old)

SPEAK Lord, I'm listening for your voice. (8 year-old)

SHOULD we keep God's Word? Yes! Because we are safe and sound with His protection. (5 year-old)

ALWAYS be yourself around others, because it might change who you are. (11 year-old)

ASK God for help and He will never let you down. (6 year-old)

ALL the time sing songs of happiness and peace to God. (5 year-old)

NEVER ever disobey God because He'll put us on a time-out. (5 year-old)

NO bad words about God or any bad stuff. (6 year-old)

NOT my way but Yours. ( 11 year-old)

GREAT news, God's in town, love Him! (5 year-old)

GOODNESS is supreme, our God is really good. (11 year-old)

GUIDE me in the way of truth telling, deliver me from lies. (11 year-old)

GOD help my muscles and make me strong, so I can live a good long life. (8 year-old)

COMFORT me and my family when times are tough. (8 year-old)

CALL me when you are lonely God, I'll be there for You. (5 year-old)

COME and see how I obey You. (8 year-old)

YOU are my God, my strength, and my cheerleader. (6 year-old)

YOUR way is my way. Help me follow you! (8 year-old)

YES, we will do whatever you say, because we trust you. (6 year-old)