

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

With thanksgiving

How does each sermon connect to this theme?

Psalms 100 serves as a fitting threshold to our Season of Thanksgiving. It inspires jubilant singing, worship, prayer, and gathering. Verse 2 unfolds with more meaning when we explore the original Hebrew. The root word, עָבַד (*avad*), translated in the NKJV as “serve” has many definitions. Besides serving, it also expresses the command to *worship* the Lord, and *work* for the Lord, with gladness. All these actions apply to the sentence and can define our focus in this coming season.

Furthermore, as the psalm continues (verse 4), we are called and beckoned through gates and courts into His presence, with thanksgiving. Here we arrive at the foundation for our October sermon series.

The first Sunday’s sermon will further explore how we can attend to Psalm 100 as a song of praise that inspires each one of us to *lift up your voice* in thanksgiving. In the second sermon we will again return to the theme for 2025 in considering how doing good and sharing requires *sacrifice*.

The third sermon for the month returns to the book of Psalms, this time to Psalm 36, where we will be confronted with the contrast of what sin offers to mankind, and what God offers. We are called to *be satisfied* with God’s presence, safety, provision, and illumination.

In the final sermon for the month, we will dig into the story of four men who bring their paralytic friend to Jesus for healing. Here we come to understand what it means to *care for one another*.

Finally, our midweek sermon for October takes us to the final chapter of the book of Jonah, where we encounter a story different from the one we might remember from Sunday School. This glimpse into the conversation between an angry Jonah and a gracious God will push us toward self-reflection and encourage us to *extend grace*.

I wish for you a joyful entry into this special season, *with thanksgiving*. Let us look forward to and prepare ourselves even now for the celebration of Thanksgiving Sunday, November 23.

OCTOBER 2025

October 5

With thanksgiving:
Lift up your voice!

October 12

With thanksgiving:
Sacrifice

October 19

With thanksgiving:
Be satisfied

October 26

With thanksgiving:
Care for one another

October midweek

With thanksgiving:
Extend grace

(based on the Oct 15/16 DSG)

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR OCTOBER 5

Where are we in the Bible?

The book of Psalms is the heart of the Old Testament, the libretto of the most vibrant worship imaginable. It informs our intellect, stimulates our imagination, arouses our emotions, and stirs us to holy thoughts and actions.

Psalm 100 fits well under the above description, and is part of a collection of psalms known as the *Yahweh malak* ("the LORD reigns"). It concludes this collection focusing on the universal reign of God with a strong voice of doxological celebration. The hymn-like psalm consists of seven commands addressed to the whole earth and two motivation clauses that give clear reasons justifying this resounding and universal call to expressive worship.

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. Lift up your voice in awareness of God
2. Lift up your voice in the sanctuary
3. Lift up your voice in all seasons

WITH THANKSGIVING: **Lift up your voice!**

Psalm 100:4-5

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
Psalm 100

Catechism
12.1.5 4

Discussion Questions

Read Psalm 100 together and discuss how it can inform and orient your Season of Thanksgiving.

Often, the Psalms reveal human struggles and emotions that aren't always pretty. How can worship in these challenging moments reveal God's presence in your life?

How have you experienced a new perspective on worship in different seasons of life?

Share what is special to you about worshipping communally in your congregation.

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR OCTOBER 12

WITH THANKSGIVING: **Sacrifice**

Where are we in the Bible?

The letter to the Hebrews was written to encourage early Jewish Christians who were tempted to drift back into old covenant practices because of persecution and pressure. Throughout the book, the author presents Jesus as the ultimate High Priest and perfect sacrifice, superior to all previous mediators. Hebrews 13 is the concluding chapter. After a theological argument about Christ's supremacy, the focus turns to practical exhortations for daily Christian living. These closing verses address hospitality, contentment, respect for leaders, perseverance in sound doctrine, and acts of service. Verse 16 specifically reminds believers that doing good and sharing with others is not optional; it is a form of sacrifice that pleases God. This verse connects doctrine to practice: faith in Christ naturally overflows into concrete acts of kindness toward others.

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. Doing good and sharing is costly and inconvenient.
2. Doing good and sharing is concrete.
3. Doing good and sharing is what you are called to do.

Hebrews 13:16

But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

Hebrews 13:7-16

Catechism

13.2-13.2.4

Discussion Questions

Why is doing good and sharing worth the sacrifice?

Discuss how you move from good intentions to tangible, concrete actions when it comes to doing good.

How is gratitude towards God related to doing good and sharing?

How did the sermon inspire or instruct your understanding of the Bible verse and/or its context?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR OCTOBER 19

Where are we in the Bible?

Psalm 36 is a psalm of contrasts. Here we get a glimpse of human wickedness in comparison with divine goodness. The author starts by describing (what we can understand as) either the evil of humankind that he sees around him, a specific enemy or pursuer, or he is expressing the evil he finds within himself. But as he turns toward God, a whole world of beauty is opened to him as he contemplates the characteristics of the Almighty One. We might be reminded of the awe and bewilderment of Psalm 8 - *"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him..."* (Psalm 8:3-4). But indeed God is mindful of us. He wants to come close to us and supplies us with safety, provision, and illumination, if we can only be satisfied with what He provides.

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. Satisfied in yourself
2. Satisfied in what God provides
3. Satisfied in Jesus Christ

WITH THANKSGIVING: **Be satisfied**

Psalm 36:7-9

How precious is Your loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
Psalm 36

Catechism
5.3.2.1

Discussion Questions

Read Psalm 36 together and discuss the contrast between verses 1-4 and 5-9.

Discuss and make a list of the characteristics and provisions of God in verses 5-9.

Why do we so often strive for self-satisfaction, rather than being satisfied with what God provides?

How are thanksgiving and satisfaction or contentment related?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR OCTOBER 26

Where are we in the Bible?

The pericope (a section from a book) of Mark 2:3–5, set in Capernaum during the early Galilean ministry of Jesus, presents not merely a dramatic narrative of healing but a profound theological moment in which Christ asserts divine prerogative through the forgiveness of sins. The communal effort of the paralytic's companions provides a rich framework which reflects care and the communal nature of faith. It's not enough for us to seek out Jesus Christ on our own... we also must not leave our brother behind.

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

The paralytic's friends **cared enough**:

1. ...to be friends.
2. ...to carry.
3. ...to be undeterred.
4. ...to be creative.
5. ...to have faith

WITH THANKSGIVING: Care for one another

Mark 2:3-5

Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

Mark 2: 1-12, Luke 5: 17-26

Catechism

9.6.1

Discussion Questions

Read the story of the four friends in Mark 2 together. Discuss the actions and characteristics of the friends.

Consider how friendship could include presence, sacrifice, and advocacy. Give examples.

Discuss how this story highlights Galatians 6:2 – "bear one another's burdens." How can you be such a friend?

How did the sermon inspire or instruct your understanding of the Bible verse and/or its context?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR OCTOBER MIDWEEK

Where are we in the Bible?

The story of Jonah presents us with a powerful lesson about the dangers of ignoring our own flaws and the importance of self-reflection. Jonah's journey, from fleeing God's command to his anger at God's grace towards the Ninevites, highlights how blindness to our own shortcomings can hinder our spiritual growth and ability to share the gospel with others.

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire, a major military power in the Near East, which used calculated and advertised acts of brutality to subjugate those tribes near to them. Israel eventually became a vassal of the empire in 841BC. This may help us understand the "why" of Jonah's anger towards God's grace.

"For some, the story of Jonah is a legend. For others, the story describes real events. It is not for us to decide... What is important for us is what the Spirit wants to tell us through this story" (Chief Apostle Schneider, February 2025).

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. Understanding God's grace
2. God's grace toward us - *Self-reflection*
3. God's grace toward others - *Extension*

WITH THANKSGIVING: Extend grace

Jonah 4:1-3

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!"

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
The book of Jonah

Catechism
3.1.7, 4.5.3

Discussion Questions

Walk through the story of Jonah together (especially focus on chapter 4). Discuss new insights.

How did Jonah misunderstand God's grace? How can ego blind you to God's graciousness?

What purpose do God's questions serve for Jonah?

Discuss what effect witnessing God's grace in the lives of others should have on you.

How did the sermon inspire or instruct your understanding of the Bible verse and/or its context?