

THE INTERPRETATION BIBLE STUDIES LEADER HELPS

PSALMS

The IBS Leader Helps are designed to facilitate group study by providing lesson plans for the ten units in each of the Interpretation Bible Studies. These lesson plans utilize a variety of interactive methods, which have been chosen for the express purpose of engaging participants in the learning process.

Each participant in the group should have a copy of the IBS study book and should make a commitment to do advance preparation for each session.

The sessions are planned for one hour. If the time allotted is shorter than an hour, it will be necessary to be selective about the activities, choosing those that are most appropriate for your group.

Leader Preparation

Read Psalms in its entirety before beginning to teach. It is important to familiarize yourself with the book's overall content, so you can see how the individual passages fit into the larger scope of the book.

Skim through the whole study book to discern its flow. This is especially helpful if there are multiple leaders, in order to prevent leaping ahead into the next unit.

Prepare the room ahead of time. For informal discussion and ease of sharing, a semi-circular arrangement of chairs works best. Position yourself as one of the group, instead of setting yourself apart as "the authority."

Secure necessary teaching aids. A newsprint easel is an invaluable asset. Be sure to have markers and masking tape if you wish to display the sheets for future reference. Check the teaching suggestions for other necessary materials, such as hymnals, paper, pencils, art materials, and so on.

Prepare necessary handouts. A folder for each participant's handouts is helpful, but not essential. If you use a folder, place all handouts in the folder before the session begins, to avoid loss of time.

Keep the key idea firmly in mind. Make sure all activities point participants towards this goal.

Pray for God's guidance. Prior to making preparations for the session, allow time to pray for each participant and for yourself.

Unit 1: The Anatomy of a Psalm (Psalm 3)

Key Idea: The central theological theme of the book of Psalms is “the Lord reigns.”

Advance Preparation

Prepare a sheet of newsprint with this heading: “Favorite Psalms,” and post it where all can see it. Also provide paper and pens or pencils for the participants.

Make copies of the following “open book test” for use in step 3. You may want to omit the Answer Key from the handout you give to the participants.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PSALMS?

1. To what does the Greek word for Psalms refer?
2. What is a psalter?
3. To what musical instrument does *psalter* probably refer?
4. What does the Hebrew word for psalms (*tehillim*) literally mean?
5. How many psalms are included in the book of Psalms?
6. How many sections or “books” does Psalms contain?
7. What is the most prominent metaphor for God in the psalms?
8. What does the word *torah* mean in the Psalter?
9. What does the word *selah* mean?
10. What are two main characteristics of Hebrew poetry?

Answer Key:

1. Songs accompanied by stringed instruments (p. 1 of study book)
2. The stringed instrument itself (p. 1)
3. A lyre (p. 1)
4. Praises (p. 2)
5. 150 (p. 3)
6. Five (p. 3)
7. King (p. 4)
8. Instruction (p. 5)
9. Not known; perhaps a musical note (p. 7)
10. Rhythm and parallelism (p. 8)

Opening (5 minutes)

1. Prayer

Read Psalm 3 as an opening prayer. To do this antiphonally, divide your group according to the left and right sides of the room. Have the left side read the first stanza or section of the psalm, and the right side read the next one. Continue like this, alternating stanzas or sections, until the whole psalm has been read aloud.

2. Sharing

Ask participants to name their favorite psalm. Tally these on newsprint to see which is the group favorite. Ask for several volunteers to explain why the psalm they chose is meaningful.

Presentation (15 minutes)

3. Open Book Test

Give each participant a copy of the “open book test.” Ask them to answer each question, using the study book for guidance. When all have finished, go over the test aloud, asking for answers from the group.

Exploration (20 minutes)

4. Bible Research

Distribute the paper and pens or pencils. Ask participants to write out their answers to questions 2 and 4 on p. 11 of the study book. When all are done, ask for volunteers to share their answers.

Response (15 minutes)

5. Creative Writing

Remind participants of the description of *parallelism* on pp. 8–9 of the study book. Then read aloud question 1 on p. 11. Ask the participants to write a two- or four-line poem using parallelism to describe the way that anxiety affects them.

Closing (5 minutes)

6. Sharing

Ask for volunteers to share their poems aloud.

7. Prayer

Have the group read v. 8 in unison as a closing benediction.

8. Assignment

Ask participants to read Unit 2. Also ask them to find additional psalms beyond those named in the study book that exemplify the categories found in the book of Psalms (one example per category).

Unit 2: Types of Psalms

Key Idea: Our use of psalms in worship is enriched when we know how and why they were written.

Advance Preparation

Turn a sheet of newsprint sideways and draw five columns on it. Label each column according to one of the categories found in Psalms:

- Individual prayer for help
- Individual thanksgiving
- Corporate prayer for help
- Hymns
- Instruction

Leave room under each heading to fill in specific psalm numbers. Post the sheet where all can see and where you can easily write on it.

Also provide modeling clay, paper, and pens or pencils for the participants. Place an empty table somewhere near the front of the class area for displaying the clay creations made in step 4.

Opening (5 minutes)

1. Prayer

Read Psalm 80:1–2 as an opening prayer. To do this antiphonally, divide your group according to men and women. Have the men read the first stanza or section of the psalm, and the women read the next one. Continue like this, alternating stanzas or sections, until the whole psalm has been read aloud.

Presentation (15 minutes)

2. Group Discussion of Assignment from Last Session

Ask participants to name the psalms they selected for each of the five categories: Individual prayer for help; individual thanksgiving; corporate prayer for help; hymns and instruction. Write the psalms named under the headings on the poster you prepared.

Exploration (20 minutes)

3. Scripture Analysis

Ask participants to read silently Psalms 11, 12, 30, and 116. Then ask them to answer questions 1 and 2 on p. 21 of the study book.

Response (15 minutes)*4. Expressing Ideas with Clay*

Give each person a lump of modeling clay. Ask them to select one of the five psalms they chose in the homework assignment, and use the clay to express the main idea of that psalm. (Note: You will want to cover the table on which they are working to protect it from the clay.)

5. Sharing

Ask each person to bring their clay creation to the table in the front of the class. Invite the class to move around the table and respond to the creations. Ask them to try to identify the types of psalms illustrated.

Closing (5 minutes)*6. Prayer*

Have the group read Psalm 30:4–5 in unison as a closing prayer.

7. Assignment

Ask participants to read Unit 3 and Psalm 1. Also ask them to write the answer to the question, What makes you happy?

Unit 3: The Way of the Righteous (Psalm 1)

Key Idea: Righteousness requires devotion to and delight in God’s Word.

Advance Preparation

Provide a Bible dictionary, a theological wordbook, and a commentary on Psalms for step 3. Also provide paper and pens or pencils for the participants.

On a poster board, draw the outline of a tree with bare branches. Cut out enough leaf shapes (approximately 2x3 inches) from green construction paper that each class member can receive at least one “leaf.” Provide fine-line markers and double-sided tape for the rest of this activity (step 5).

Opening (5 minutes)

1. Prayer

Use the following prayer, one of your own, or ask one of the participants to pray:

God of mercy,
grant that the Word you speak this day
may take root in our hearts,
and bear fruit to your honor and glory,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. Scripture Reading

Ask three participants to read Psalm 1. Have the first read vs. 1–3, the second read vs. 4–5, and the third read v. 6.

Presentation (20 minutes)

3. Word Study

Divide participants into four groups. Give one group a Bible dictionary, give the second a theological word book, give the third a commentary on Psalms 1 (such as James May’s *Psalms* in the Interpretation commentary series), and the fourth the study book. Ask each group to define *beatitude* and to distinguish between the words *blessed* (Hebrew, *baruk*) and *happy* (Hebrew, *ashre*).

Allow time for the groups to come back together and compare their findings.

Exploration (15 minutes)*4. Group Discussion: What Is Happiness?*

Ask participants to share what makes them happy. Then ask: According to the psalm, what makes a person happy?

Also ask: What does “delight in the law of the LORD” mean? What conclusions can we draw about the “way of the righteous”?

Response (15 minutes)*5. Sentence Completion*

Give each participant a leaf shape and a marker. Ask them to complete the sentence, “Happiness is . . .” and to write their completed sentence on the leaf shape. When all are done, have each participant read aloud his or her sentence and then use the double-sided tape to attach the leaf to the tree poster.

Closing (5 minutes)*6. Prayer*

Have the group read Psalm 1:1–2 in unison as a closing prayer.

7. Assignment

Ask participants to read Unit 4 and Psalm 23. Also ask them to write a paraphrase of their favorite line or phrase in the psalm.

Unit 4: The Lord Is My Shepherd (Psalm 23)

Key Idea: The psalms have the power to comfort those in extreme situations.

Advance Preparation

Make a display of artists' interpretations of Psalm 23 and of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Use Sunday School pictures, art books, prints, and/or images you downloaded from the Internet.

Obtain or make a tape of someone singing a musical version of Psalm 23. Position a tape player in the room so that participants will be able to hear the music as it is played softly.

Provide copies of the King James Version of Psalm 23 for each participant.

Opening (5 minutes)

1. Prayer

Use these words, based on Psalm 95:6–7, as the opening prayer:

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.
For the Lord is our God,
and we are the people of the Lord's pasture,
the sheep that God shepherds.

2. Paraphrases

Ask participants to share their paraphrases of a line or phrase from Psalm 23. (This was the assignment they received at the end of the previous session.)

Presentation (15 minutes)

3. Picture Study

Ask participants to walk around the room and decide which picture reflects most clearly the meaning of the psalm for them. After they resume their seats, ask them to share which picture they chose and why.

Exploration (20 minutes)*4. Question and Answer*

Ask these questions of the group as a whole:

- What does the shepherd metaphor tell us about God?
- How does Ezekiel 34:1–10 use the metaphor?
- How does Jesus use it in John 10:1–21?
- How does the shepherd metaphor connect with the wilderness wanderings?
- How is Psalm 23 a lament?
- What second image is used in vs. 5–6 of the Psalm?

Response (15 minutes)*5. Meditation on the Scripture*

Ask participants to read question 4 on p. 38 of the study book and reflect quietly on it while a taped musical version of Psalm 23 is played softly in the background.

Closing (5 minutes)*6. Recitation of the Scripture*

Ask participants to say aloud the King James Version of Psalm 23.

7. Assignment

Ask participants to read Unit 5 and Psalm 51.

Unit 5: “I Have Sinned against You” (Psalm 51)

Key Idea: The psalms call us to repentance, both individually and corporately.

Advance Preparation

Write the two sets of questions from step 3 out on paper, and obtain a Bible dictionary. Also, have paper and pens or pencils available for the participants.

Opening (5 minutes)

1. Prayer

Pray this prayer or one of your own:

Almighty and merciful God,
 we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.
 We have followed too much
 the devices and desires of our own hearts.
 We have offended against your holy laws.
 We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;
 and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.
 O Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Spare those who confess their faults.
 Restore those who are penitent,
 according to your promises declared to the world
 in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 And grant, O merciful God, for his sake,
 that we may live a holy, just, and humble life
 to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

(From *Book of Common Worship*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, pp. 87–88.)

Presentation (15 minutes)

2. Listening to Scripture

Ask participants to read Psalm 51 in unison. Then invite them to say which verses are most meaningful to them, and why.

Exploration (20 minutes)

3. Bible Study in Small Groups

Divide participants into two small groups. (If your class is large, break into four or six groups, and duplicate the set of assigned questions.) Give each group a set of questions. Ask them to appoint a scribe who will report on the group’s findings.

For Group 1:

1. Read 2 Samuel 1:1–27.
2. List the ways that David sins in this story.
3. What do you think he is feeling as he approaches God in this psalm prayer?
4. What lines reflect his sins most poignantly?
5. What request does David make in this psalm?

For Group 2:

1. Using a Bible dictionary, define *transgression*, *iniquity*, and *sin*. What are the differences in their meaning?
2. What do you think being “sinful from the time of conception” means?
3. What is hyssop, and how was it used in the Old Testament? (Use the Bible dictionary, and also look at Leviticus 14:4–7.) Why is hyssop mentioned in Psalm 51:7?
4. What does “blood guilt” or “bloodshed” mean in v. 14?
5. What is the connection of vs. 18–19 to the rest of David’s prayer of confession?

Bring everyone back together after fifteen minutes, and have someone from each group briefly report their findings.

Response (15 minutes)*4. Creative Writing*

Ask participants to think of an image of brokenness and to use that image in a two-line prayer poem. Tell them the first line should begin, “My sin is like . . .,” and serve as a prayer of confession. The second line should begin, “O Lord,” and serve as a petition for forgiveness. As they finish, have them give their papers to you without signing them.

Closing (5 minutes)*5. Prayer*

Read aloud the anonymous poems from step 4 as a group prayer.

6. Assignment

Ask participants to read Unit 6 and Psalm 99. Also ask them to think about the meaning of *holiness*.

Unit 6: Rejoice, the Lord Is King (Psalm 99)

Key Idea: The Lord reigns over heaven and earth.

Advance Preparation

Copy the words of the Jewish blessing from step 1 onto newsprint, and post the sheet where it can be easily seen.

On another sheet of newsprint, these passages from Scripture:

- 2 Corinthians 10:3–4
- Ephesians 6:11–17
- 1 Timothy 1:18
- 2 Timothy 2:3–4
- Revelation 17:14

Prepare a third sheet with these questions:

- What does the war image in the passage teach?
- How do you reconcile this image with Jesus' command to "turn the other cheek"?
- How does the image relate to the image of God as warrior/king?

Set up centers for creative expression around the room. Select whatever activities you think will work best for your group, but be sure to have at least three different types of activity available. Here are some examples:

- *Montage*: The participants will need scissors, glue, construction paper, and magazines from which to cut pictures.
- *Modeling with clay*: The participants will need clay and something with which to clean their hands. (Note: You will want to cover the table on which they are working to protect it from the clay.)
- *Drawing*: The participants will need paper (regular, construction, or poster) and colored markers.
- *Writing a poem*: The participants will need paper and pens or pencils.

Opening (5 minutes)

1. *Blessing*

Begin with reciting in unison the Jewish blessing you have put on newsprint:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe,
Who bringest forth bread from the earth.

Presentation (5 minutes)*2. Listening to Scripture*

Read Psalm 99 antiphonally. Divide your group according to the left and right sides of the room. Have the left side read the first verse of the psalm, and the right side read the next one. Continue like this, alternating verses, until the whole psalm has been read aloud.

Exploration (25 minutes)*3. Scripture Research*

Post the two sheets of newsprint you have prepared (one with the list of scripture passages and one with the set of questions). Divide the participants into five groups. Assign one of the scripture passages to each group. Ask the groups to read their assigned passage and then to answer the three questions on the newsprint.

Bring everyone back together after fifteen minutes, and have someone from each group briefly report their findings.

Response (15 minutes)*4. Centers for Creative Expression*

Explain the centers for creative expression that you have prepared, indicating what can be done at each area. Invite participants to select one of the centers and to use the materials there to express their understanding of the meaning of *holiness*. Ask them to use images from Psalm 99 or from the study book.

Closing (10 minutes)*5. Sharing*

Allow time for participants to show and comment on their creations.

6. Assignment

Ask participants to read Unit 7 and Psalm 121. Also ask them to make three copies of scripture passages that have been a special encouragement to them and bring these to the next session.

Unit 7: The Pilgrimage of Life (Psalm 121)

Key Idea: God’s people are pilgrims, journeying together in faith.

Advance Preparation

Prepare a report on “Psalms of Ascent,” using information from pp. 60–61 of the study book and from a commentary on Psalms. Also, provide paper and pens or pencils for the participants.

Opening (10 minutes)

1. Reciting the Psalm

Since Psalm 121 is a psalm of ascent, it would be good, if possible, for the participants to read or recite the psalm in unison while marching to the meeting room. If convenient, have them start at the foot of a flight of stairs to simulate “climbing to Jerusalem.” If this is not possible, have them read or recite the psalm in unison while marching around your meeting area.

Presentation (15 minutes)

2. Mini-lecture: Psalms of Ascent

Ask participants how it felt to march while reading or reciting scripture. Then give a brief presentation on what you have learned about the “Psalms of Ascent.”

Exploration (15 minutes)

3. Definition of Terms

Divide participants into three groups, and assign one of the following terms to each group:

- Maker of heaven and earth (See pp. 62–63 of the studybook.)
- Keeper of Israel (See p. 63.)
- Shade at your right hand (See p. 64.)

Ask the groups to explore how the study book defines their term and to make a brief report to the whole class when they are done.

Response (15 minutes)

4. Sharing Scripture

Divide the participants into groups of three, and have them share the scriptures of encouragement they were assigned to prepare. If any did not prepare these in advance, provide paper and pencils for them to do so now.

Closing (5 minutes)*5. Prayer*

Close with a prayer of your own, or invite the group to offer sentence prayers.

6. Assignment

Ask participants to read Psalm 8 and then, *before* reading the study book, write their answer to the question posed by the title of the next unit: What does it mean to be human? Ask them, once this is completed, to read Unit 8.

Unit 8: What Does It Mean to Be Human?

Key Idea: To be human means to be bearers of God’s image. As bearers of God’s image, we have responsibility for the care of creation.

Advance Preparation

Be prepared to summarize the information on pp. 69–70 in the study book regarding the “prescientific” worldview of heaven and earth. Using a Bible dictionary and a commentary on Genesis, prepare a brief report on the term *firmament*.

Provide hymnals and pens or pencils for the participants. For step 6, you will also need to supply a large sheet of construction paper, several nature magazines (such as *National Geographic*), scissors, and glue for every two participants. Make sure you have a clothespins and a cord taped across a corner of the room for displaying the posters they create.

Make copies of the following Fill-in-the-Blank exercise for use in step 5:

Fill-in-the-Blanks

1. Psalm 8 reveals an understanding of the role humanity plays to _____.
2. Psalm 8 is different from other hymns in the Psalter because _____.
3. Mays says that v. 2a may mean that every human utterance is _____.
4. The word *adam* comes from the Hebrew word _____, meaning _____.
5. The divine image is defined in this psalm as _____.
6. Humans serve not as _____ over creation, but as _____.
7. The _____ and _____ bestowed upon humans are received with _____ and _____.
6. Hubris is _____.

Opening (10 minutes)

1. Singing a Hymn

Sing “This Is My Father’s World” or another hymn about the glory of God’s creation.

Presentation (15 minutes)

2. Listening to Scripture

Have participants read Psalm 8 in unison.

3. Review of Assignment from Last Session

Ask participants to share their answers to the question: What does it mean to be human?

4. Mini-lecture: The Old Testament Worldview

Give a brief summary of the Psalm's "prescientific" worldview of heaven and earth. Add other information about *firmament* that you have gleaned from a Bible dictionary or commentary on Genesis.

Exploration (15 minutes)

5. Fill in the Blanks

Have the participants divide into pairs and, using information from the study book, fill in the blanks on the handout you have prepared.

Response (15 minutes)

6. Mini-posters

Ask participants to work with the same partner to construct a small poster bearing a message of the care of creation. Provide each pair of participants with the materials you have assembled. Ask them to create a slogan, spell it out by cutting letters from the magazines, and then illustrate it with pictures from the magazines.

Closing (5 minutes)

7. Learning from One Another

Ask each twosome to show and explain the poster they have created. Display the posters by attaching them with clothespins to the cord you taped up earlier.

8. Assignment

Ask participants to read Unit 9 and Psalm 137.

Unit 9: Praying Anger (Psalm 137)

Key Idea: The main point of Psalm 137 is not vengeance, but remembering Zion.

Advance Preparation

Provide index cards and pens or pencils for the participants.

Make copies for the participants of the following reading of Psalm 137:

A Reading of Psalm 137

Captives: By the rivers of Babylon—
 there we sat down and there we wept
 when we remembered Zion.
 On the willows there
 we hung up our harps.
 For there our captors
 asked us for songs,
 and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying . . .

Enemies: “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

Captives: How could we sing the LORD’s song
 in a foreign land?

Voice A: If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
 let my right hand wither!
 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth,
 if I do not remember you,
 if I do not set Jerusalem
 above my highest joy.

Voice B: Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites
 the day of Jerusalem’s fall,
 how they said,

Enemies: “Tear it down! Tear it down!
 Down to its foundations!”

Voice B: O daughter Babylon, you devastator!
 Happy shall they be who pay you back
 what you have done to us!
 Happy shall they be who take your little ones
 and dash them against the rock!

Copy the following prayer by Howard Thurman onto newsprint, and post it where it can be easily read by the group:

Lord, open to me
 Open unto me—light for my darkness.
 Open unto me—courage for my fear.
 Open unto me—hope for my despair.
 Open unto me—peace for my turmoil.
 Open unto me—joy for my sorrow.
 Open unto me—strength for my weakness.
 Open unto me—wisdom for my confusion.
 Open unto me—forgiveness for my sins.
 Open unto me—love for my hates.
 Open unto me—thy Self for my self.
 Lord, Lord, open unto me! Amen.

(From *Book of Common Worship*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, p. 23.)

Opening (5 minutes)

1. Prayer

Ask the participants to offer sentence prayers.

2. Identifying Feelings

Ask participants to imagine that a family member was killed in the World Trade Center or Pentagon attack on September 11, 2001. Have them name aloud some of the feelings they might have had. List these on chalkboard or newsprint. (Note: Be sensitive to the fact that some members of the class may actually have suffered a loss that day.)

Presentation (15 minutes)

3. Choral Reading

Explain that you are going to do a choral reading of Psalm 137, and pass out the copies you made for this activity. Assign the left side of the room to read the part of the “Captives,” and the right side of the room to read the part of the “Enemies.” Then select one person to be Voice A and another to be Voice B. Once the parts are assigned, have the group begin the reading.

Exploration (20 minutes)

4. Question and Answer

Have the participants discuss the following questions:

- What are the three parts of Psalm 137? (setting, remembering, prayer)
- What is the historical setting?
- What are the people to remember?
- When is anger righteous? (See p. 81 of the study book.)
- What does the psalm ask of God? (See p. 83.)
- How do we deal with the shocking statement in v. 9?
- Should this psalm be included in the church's worship? Why or why not?
- How does Ephesians 4:26 influence your understanding of this psalm?
- What does the study book say is at the heart of model prayer ? (See p. 85.)

Response (15 minutes)

5. Application to Life

Have someone read aloud Matthew 6:10. Give participants an index card and ask them to write on one side a time when they felt anger and wanted justice done over harm done to them or a family member. Then ask them to write a prayer for healing, based on the concept in Matthew 6:10, on the other side of the index card.

Closing (5 minutes)

6. Prayer

Call the participants attention to the prayer by Howard Thurman that you put on newsprint. Ask them to read the prayer in unison.

7. Assignment

Ask participants to read Unit 10 and Psalm 22.

Unit 10: The Psalms and Jesus Christ (Psalm 22)

Key Idea: Psalm 22 communicates both affliction and confidence, as Jesus did on the cross.

Advance Preparation

Gather an assortment of pictures of the crucifixion and of people suffering. Also provide paper and pens or pencils for the participants.

Opening (5 minutes)

1. Prayer

Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

2. Sharing Experiences

Ask participants to share with a partner a time when they felt abandoned by God. Ask them also to address the following questions with their partner:

- How did you give vent to your feelings at that time?
- What helped you get through that period?

Presentation (15 minutes)

3. Listening to Scripture

Ask participants to read silently Psalm 22 and Mark 15, noting similarities in the two texts. Have paper and pens or pencils for those who wish to take notes.

Exploration (20 minutes)

4. Scripture Analysis

Invite the participants to share aloud the similarities they saw between Psalm 22 and Mark 15. List their responses on newsprint.

Then ask:

- What connection is there between this psalm and the death of Jesus?
- What kinds of help are sought by the psalmist?
- What kinds of praise are offered?
- In this psalm, God is described as being both near and far. How can both be so? When God seems far away, what helps you sense God's closeness?

Response (15 minutes)*5. Picture Study in Small Groups*

Divide participants into groups of five or six. Give each group an assortment of pictures of the crucifixion and people in distress. Ask participants to examine the pictures and select one that is particularly meaningful. Then ask them to share with their small group what the picture says to them about suffering and God.

Closing (5 minutes)*6. Writing a Group Prayer*

Ask each participant to write two lines of a prayer, one a petition for help and the other an ascription of praise to God. Tell them to turn these in unsigned.

7. Prayer

Collect the prayers and read them as a single closing prayer. Read all the petitions first. Then go through the stack a second time, reading all the ascriptions of praise. End with a group "Amen."