

Teaching Plan  
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: July 16, 2017  
Lesson Title: "God Revealed"  
Lesson Passage: Psalm 19:1-14

ABOUT THIS LESSON

Bible scholars believe that Psalm 19 consists of two different compositions. One is a hymn celebrating the glory of God as it is revealed by the sky and the sun. The other is a poem praising the law of God, exemplifying the attitude of a person who is devoted to the study of God's word.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Describe the purposes served by the word of God in the life of the person who is devoted to it. (2) Intensify commitment to Bible study.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

**To introduce the lesson, read the first line in Psalm 19 ("The heavens are telling the glory of God..."), then comment:** We have no way of knowing what the psalmist saw when he looked at the skies, but we can safely assume that his vision of "the heavens" was well within the limits of our galaxy, the "Milky Way." Modern astronomers estimate that the Milky Way has approximately 100 billion stars in it; and this is only a small portion of "the heavens" as we know it. Today's astro scientists estimate that there are 10 billion galaxies in the observable universe, each containing 100 billion stars, equal to the number of grains of sand on all the beaches on planet Earth. And they estimate that the diameter of the observable universe is 91 billion light years (a light year, the distance that light travels in a year, is 6 trillion miles). **Add this summary statement:** When we contemplate the immensity of the heavens that are "telling the glory of God," we can easily understand the title of the insightful book by J. B. Phillips, Your God is Too Small.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. *With reference to verse 1, add this comment:* The psalmist's words of praise take us back to the opening words of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This is why the vastness of the created order should remind us of the greatness of God; for He brought it all into being. Without Him, the universe wouldn't exist.

2. *Interpret verse 2, in which day and night are pictured as passing on the proclamation of God's glory:* (1) The verb "pours forth" means to pour out like a spring, in a continuous, uninterrupted proclamation. (2) The TEV translation, "Each day announces it to the following day;

each night repeats it to the next," clearly conveys the meaning of this verse.

3. *Suggest this informal translation of verses 3 and 4: "The natural phenomena referred to in vv. 1-2 do not talk, using words like people do; yet, what they say can be heard everywhere, throughout the world." FOR DISCUSSION: We are obviously very dependent upon verbal communication; but a great deal of meaning is conveyed through the non-verbal voices of nature like those the psalmist is referring to in verses 1-2. For example, a violent thunderstorm can sound angry and threatening, while a brilliant sunset can impress us with the grandeur of God's creative work. (Ask class members to suggest other examples.)*

4. *Call attention to the psalmist's reference to the sun as a supreme example of the Creator's work (vv. 4b-6): (1) Many ancient people worshiped the sun as a god. In Egypt, the sun god Ra was the supreme deity. In the morning Ra emerged from the east and sailed across the heavens. At the end of the day, it was believed that Ra died and sailed on to the underworld, leaving the moon in his place to light up the world. Then, the next day Ra was reborn at dawn. (2) The psalmist, too, describes the daily circuit of the sun in vv. 5-6; but, in sharp contrast to those who deified the sun, he makes it clear that Yahweh alone is the sole ruler of the universe. It is God who has "pitched a tent" in the sky for the sun, where it spends the night before coming out in the morning, like a bridegroom leaving his bridal chamber (v. 5).*

5. *Comment on Psalm 19:7-9: In these verses, five words are used for the Law, the sacred record of Yahweh's instructions to His people: (1) The first one, **Torah**, means "teaching, instruction, guidance" (this usually refers to the "Books of Moses," the first five books of the Old Testament); (2) **testimony** (v. 7) means "reminder" or "instruction"; (3) **precepts** (v. 8a) refers to "orders" or "legal directives"; (4) **commandment** (v. 8c) refers to a divine "command"; (5) **ordinances** (v. 9) is the plural of *mishpat*, "judgments".*

6. *Observe that, in verses 7-9, the psalmist mentions four aspects of the law, and follows each with a description of the effect it has on a godly person: (1) "The law is perfect" (i.e., "without blemish"). It "revives the soul" (i.e., it restores one's vitality). (2) "The testimony is sure." ("Sure" means "reliable," it can be counted on.) It "makes wise the simple" (helps the inexperienced person gain wisdom). (3) "Its precepts are right" (there's nothing crooked about them). "Rejoicing the heart" means it brings gladness, enabling one to enjoy the fulness of life. (4) "The commandment is pure" (It is "bright, radiant," enlightening the eyes and giving understanding). (Refer to Prov. 6:23 and Ps. 119:105.)*

CLOSING THE LESSON

*In two or three minutes of silent meditation, suggest that everyone use the words of Psalm 19:14 as a personal prayer of commitment.*