



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

Psalm 24

Phase 1: ORAL



Step 1: Listen

Listening to a guide translation and versions of the psalm

There are two guide translations in Appendix A:

1. **Hebrew-mirror** - copied from the Exegetical Layout and adjusted for minimal readability,
2. **Hebrew-tight** - the literal, type 1 corresponding (but more readable) translation, exegetically the same as Hebrew-mirror.

Activity: Read the Hebrew-mirror and the Hebrew tight version in Appendix A. One reader per translation or one reader for all translations (as skills permit). Others to listen with closed books. Consider 'how to listen' – posture? with responses? in silence?



Step 2: Familiarise

Explaining and discussing the meaning and beauty of the psalm

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PSALM

After listening to the guide translations, discuss the following questions:

- What do you like about the psalm?
- What do you find difficult?
- Which verse do you find particularly important in this psalm?
- What does this psalm teach about Yahweh?
- What is repeated a lot in this psalm?

CREATIVE RESPONSES

In this Psalm, the Psalmist expresses his thoughts in combinations of two or three lines. Each combination of lines forms one verse in our Bibles.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

Activity: feel the rhythm

Listen to the Psalm verse by verse. The reader should pause between the lines in each verse.

- To feel the rhythm of the verses, the group should stand and rock forward onto a front foot with the first line and then rock back with the second line.
- Verse 4 consists of 2 pairs of lines. The group should simply repeat rocking forward with the third line and rocking back with the fourth.
- Halfway through the Psalm, the Psalmist switches to a three-line rhythm (vv.7-10). The group should rock forward for the first line and back for the second line as before, but then rock forward again for the third line (and then return to a standing position at the end of each verse.)

The movement of the group in the last part of the Psalm should help them to feel the prominence which the Psalmist gives to the purpose of the commands in v.7 and 9, that the king of glory may come in, as well as to his identification of Yahweh as the king of glory in v.8 and v.10.

ENGAGING WITH THE WHOLE PSALM

Address the following topics:

- *The participants in the psalm, the different “speakers” and “audiences”*
- *The theme and flow of the psalm*
- *The peak or peaks of the psalm*
- *The patterns of images, like metaphors, if relevant*
- *The genre and purpose of the psalm*
- *The historical background and the context of the psalm, the story behind the psalm, if relevant*
- *Key poetic features of the psalm, but only those relevant to the big picture*

There are three main parts to this psalm.

- Listen to the psalm and say where the Psalmist shifts his focus to something new [v.3, v.7]
- The psalm divides into 3 stanzas: vv.1-2, 3-6, 7-10.
- Which of the 3 parts falls naturally into 2 stanzas and why? [Part 3 with its repeated question-answer pattern]

3 Parts, 3 Places

The Psalmist speaks about a different place in each part of the Psalm. As you look at each part in turn, start by listening to the first verse of each part (verses 1, 3 and 7) and identify the place which the Psalmist speaks about as well as what he says, or implies, about that place.

Part 1

Activity: Listen to v.1

- What place does the Psalmist begin by speaking about? [The whole earth.]
- What does he say about it? [It belongs to Yahweh.]



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

- Who does he say that this includes? [Everyone.] Does he exclude anyone? [No.] For whom is this Psalm relevant? [Everyone.]

Activity: Now listen to v.2.

- What reason does he give for the earth belonging to Yahweh? [He made it.]

INSIGHT: Old Testament background.

The *seas* and the *rivers* (or *waters*) are different ways of referring to the deep oceans which Genesis 1:1-2 tells us existed before God formed the world. (Read Genesis 1:1-2.)

Activity: Start a Picture of the Psalm

On a board or large piece of paper, divide the space into three windows. Each window will represent the three parts of the Psalm in sequence. You will draw **the main place** that the Psalmist speaks about in each part as well as **the main person or persons** (and how they relate to the place that the Psalmist speaks about.)

- For part 1, draw a picture of the whole earth with people in it.
- Set the earth above waves and rivers.
- Draw a crown with the name of Yahweh (or LORD) to show that he owns the earth.
- To make the picture personal, give the figures you have drawn in the world names from the group (maybe just first letters of everyone's names).

Part 2

Activity: Listen to v.3

- What place does the Psalmist begin to speak about in v.3? [The mountain of Yahweh. His holy place.]
- What question does he ask about it? [Who may go up it? / Who may stand in it?]

INSIGHT: Mountains in Scripture

Mountains are important places in Scripture. They are the places where God comes to be with his people and reveals himself to them.

- The first mountain was the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve lived in there in God's presence, and it was from there that they were sent out of God's presence. (We know it was a mountain because rivers flowed out of it and watered the garden that Yahweh had planted, Genesis 2:10.)
- After Yahweh had rescued his people from Egypt, he brought them to the mountain in the desert of Sinai (Exodus 19). That was where he gave them his law and made a covenant with them that he would be their God and that they would be his people.
- When Yahweh brought his people into the Promised Land, the temple mount in Jerusalem, also called Zion, was the place where God came to be present with his people.

Then Revelation 21, at the end of the world and after the final judgment, gives us a picture of the new heaven and the new earth with God dwelling with his people. In Revelation 21:3-4, the



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

place where he will dwell with them is pictured as a city - called the new Jerusalem - and it is set on a mountain.

A Question at the heart of the Bible

The Psalmist's question in v.3 about who may enter God's presence is at the very heart of the Bible message.

- The Bible tells us that in the beginning, man (Adam and Eve) was sent out of God's presence and that God placed cherubim (terrible and mighty beings) and a flaming sword to guard the entrance or gate to the garden and to stop them returning.
- The Bible also tells us that at the end of this earth, there will be a judgment and that then God will dwell with his people.
- So, the question that Psalm 24 asks is important. Who is it that can come back into God's presence and dwell with him?

The Psalmist's answer in vv.4-6

- What answer does the Psalmist give to his question in v.4? *[One with innocent hands and pure heart, who does not worship falsehood and speaks the truth.]*
- Why is his answer a problem? *[None of us are like this.]*
- What solution does the Psalmist speak of in v.5? What is the only way a person can enter Yahweh's presence? *[The Psalmist says He will lift up blessing from Yahweh, righteousness from God his saviour.]*
- Who are these people in v.6? *[They are those who seek him, who seek his face. The Psalmist called them Jacob. Jacob is one of the names in the Old Testament for God's people.]*
- What is the thing that defines God's people in v.6? *[They seek him. They seek his face / his presence.]*

Activity: Continue the picture of the Psalm

In the second window of the picture which you started of the Psalm, draw a picture of a mountain with a flat top. Label the top of the mountain in your language: 'Holy Place'.

- Draw another crown to represent Yahweh, this time on top of the mountain.
- Draw a figure at the base of the mountain. Put a question mark beside the person to represent the question, who may ascend Yahweh's mountain?
- Draw an arrow from Yahweh to the person with the label (in your language): *Blessing and Righteousness.*
- To make the the picture personal, ask the group if they were the figure at the base of the mountain whether they think they could go up it and how?

Part 3

As in the previous parts, start by identifying the place which the Psalmist speaks about in this part of the psalm as well as what he says, or implies, about the place.

Activity: Listen to v.7.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

- Where does the action in this part of the psalm take place? [Outside some gates, the gates of a city]
- What does he imply about the gates? [They are closed]
- Who is standing outside waiting to come in? [The king of glory]

Yahweh's mountain and Yahweh's city

Although the Psalmist shifts from speaking about Yahweh's mountain in Part 2 to the gates of a city, both the mountain and the city are images of God's dwelling place.

- The Psalmist does not use the name Zion in Psalm 24 but this elsewhere in the Old Testament, this is the name for both God's holy mountain and his city.
- Psalm 48:1-2 brings both images together to describe Yahweh's greatness in his dwelling place

Yahweh is great and very worthy of praise / in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

Beautiful in elevation, / the joy of the whole earth

Mount Zion in the far north, / the city of the great king.

Outside the Gates

While both Yahweh's mountain in Part 2 and the city behind the gates in Part 3 speak of God's dwelling place, there is an important difference between the two places in Psalm 24.

- Where is Yahweh in Part 2? [On his mountain. In his holy place.]
- Where is Yahweh in Part 3? [Outside the city gates.]

A victory march

The scene in vv.7-10 is a victory march. The king of glory is at the gates with a procession behind him after a great victory.

- We can imagine the stamping of feet and the shouts of praise as Yahweh, the king of glory arrives at the city gates.
- Can you hear the shout? *Lift up you gates, Be lifted up you ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in.*
- The gates have been firmly closed. They are ancient doors. They must open for Yahweh, the king of glory.

Commentators think that Psalm 24 may have been sung or chanted in a procession to enter the gates of the temple mount, seen as entering God's presence. The picture in vv.7-10 is of the king of glory at the gates. They must open for him and implicitly, the procession that is behind him.

- How is the king of glory identified and described in v.8? [He is Yahweh strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle.]
- How is he identified and described in v.10 [He is Yahweh of armies.]

INSIGHT: Yahweh of armies

The title *Yahweh of armies* (or *LORD of hosts*) speaks of Yahweh's mighty power. His armies are the armies of heaven.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

Activity: Complete the picture of the Psalm

Complete your picture of the Psalm by filling in the panel for the third part (vv.7-10).

- Draw a walled city with large gates which are closed.
- Draw another crown with its label Yahweh (or LORD) this time outside the city gates.
- Draw a procession of his people behind him.
- To make the picture personal, ask the group what they think they must do or be from vv.3-6 to be part of the procession. [They must be righteous v.4, but their righteousness must come from Yahweh himself v.5. They must be part of God's people, those who seek him.]

The Flow of the Psalm

- In vv.1-2, the Psalmist presents Yahweh as the owner of the whole earth and everyone in it. Although the Psalmist does not use these words, he shows us Yahweh as king of the earth.
- In vv.3-6, the Psalmist presents Yahweh in his holy place, on his mountain. The question he asks is who can enter and stay in his presence and the answer he gives is that it is the one who lifts up blessing from Yahweh himself and righteousness from God his saviour. These are his people, the ones who seek him, they are Jacob.
- In vv.7-10, the Psalmist presents Yahweh at the city gates. He is outside his own city and the gates, which have been closed, must open for him to enter. (And implicitly not only him but all his people behind him.)

UNLOCKING SOME OF THE BIG PICTURE OBSTACLES TO THE PSALM

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SEGMENTATION OF THE PSALM

Activity: Make a chart of the 4 stanzas in Psalm 24 and give a title to each stanza.

Stanza 1, vv.1-2: Yahweh: the king of the earth and all people.

Stanza 2, vv.3-6: Yahweh's mountain. Who may stand in his presence?

Stanza 3, vv.7-8: The king of glory at the gates of his city. He is Yahweh mighty in battle.

Stanza 4, vv.9-10: The king of glory at the gates of his city. He is Yahweh of armies.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

FINAL SUMMING UP

To summarise the Psalm, discuss the following questions:

Activity: Choose a heading for the Psalm as a whole.

Suggestions: i. Who can go up on Yahweh's mountain? ii. Yahweh is the king of glory. iii. Open the gates for the king of glory.

New Testament perspective

The title the 'king of glory' is unique to Psalm 24 in both Old and New Testament. In the New Testament, however, Paul speaks of Jesus as *the Lord of glory*. In 1 Corinthians 2:8 he says that if the rulers had known the wisdom of God (the mystery of the gospel), they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

- How does Jesus fulfill Psalm 24 in his death and resurrection? [Think especially of the righteousness which Yahweh gives in v.5, and the way that the ancient doors must open for the king of glory in vv.7-10.]



Step 3: Internalise

Absorbing the big picture of the psalm

In this section we look at the whole psalm so that we can retell the message of the entire psalm. This is not an attempt to memorize the psalm, but to be able to understand the whole message and to express it in the target language. The facilitator should do at least the first two activities and consider doing the third activity, if desired.

CREATIVE RESPONSES

Drama: Answering the Psalmist's question.

Verses 4, 5 and 6 all answer the questions that the Psalmist asks in verse 3. There is a progression, however, in the answers.

- In v.4, the Psalmist starts by spelling out the kind of person who may go up Yahweh's mountain, he must be one with *innocent hands and pure heart, who does not lift his soul to falsehood and does not swear in deceit*.
- Because he knows that there is no-one who fulfils the requirements of v.4, he says in v.5 that the person *will lift up blessing from Yahweh and righteousness from God his saviour*. (They must do so otherwise they will not be able to enter.)
- In v.6a, he identifies who such people are, *this is the generation of those who seek after him* and in v.6b they are those *who seek your face, they are Jacob*.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

Activity 1: Drama

Divide the group into four and assign one verse to each of the groups.

Read vv.3-6. As the groups listen to the verses, each group should do actions to represent the Psalmist's words.

Drama notes:

- With the questions in v.3, **the first group** should act a person going up Yahweh's mountain and of standing (remaining) in his holy place. The first group should finish with the question *Who?* (in your language).
- **The second group** should first point to the first group to make it clear who they are speaking about. Then they should give actions for each of the four lines in v.4. They should finish with a gesture to indicate sorrow because none of them are like this.
- **The third group** should also first point to the first group to make it clear that they are answering the same question. They should then do actions for lifting up the blessing from Yahweh / and righteousness from God their saviour (as the Psalmist describes in v.5).
- **The fourth group** should first point **to the third group** to make it clear they are referring to the person who received blessing and righteousness from Yahweh. They should then give actions for seeking Yahweh and for seeking his face or presence in v.6a-b.
- **All four groups** should then point together to the third group and say the name Jacob with the reader. (The third group can point to themselves and say that they are Jacob)

A dialogue between a procession and closed gates.

Half the group should represent the walls and gates of Zion.

- This group should stand in a solid line to represent no one being able to enter.

The other half of the group should represent a procession behind Yahweh, the victorious king of glory, Yahweh of armies. (The procession should not represent the armies of heaven, but rather Yahweh's own people, Jacob.)

- The group should be in procession behind Yahweh. Choose one of this group to represent Yahweh. Give him a sword to carry in victory representing Yahweh mighty in battle. (If you wish, give Yahweh a cross to carry representing the victory over sin and death which Jesus won in the New Testament.)

Activity 2: Questions and Answers.

Prepare a dialogue (in your language) between the procession-group and the gate-group in vv.7-10.

- The procession-group should arrive at the gates stamping their feet and beating drums.
- The procession-group should shout to the gate-group, *Lift up your heads you gates, be lifted up you entrances of old to let the king of glory come in!*
- The gate-group should answer with their own cry, *Who is this king of glory?*
- The procession-group should reply, *He is Yahweh, strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle.*



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

- The gate-group should not open straightaway so the procession group should march up again and command the gates to lift up. This time the gate-group should make their question more pointed *Who is he, this king of glory?* The procession-group should reply *He is Yahweh of armies* before giving their final identification beginning with an emphatic 'He', *He is the king of glory*.
- As soon as the gate-group hear the final answer, they should swing open to let the gate-group come through.



Step 4: Compose

Crafting a song of the psalm

Once the artist-translators have sufficiently internalised the psalm in the workshop setting, compose a song, poem, rap, chant, or prayer to capture as much of the psalm as possible. This could be a further refinement of a song, if that was done in Step 3.

Activity: Participants are to choose a style or genre that is relevant for the psalm, and to set the whole psalm or sections to a rhythm or music.

Activity: Make a recording of the composition(s).



Step 5: Draft

Translating stanza-by-stanza

To take full advantage of the oral form, avoid reverting to written Biblical text at this point. Divide into smaller groups and let one in each group read through guide translation #2: Hebrew-tight (or play a recording) while others translate. The oral draft can at that point be recorded and/or immediately written down (Step 6 merged with Step 5).

Activity: Have a look in the poems of your language and look for instances where there is a strange word-order, not the usual. Sometimes it would work to use some unusual word-order in your language as well. Experiment a bit with different word-orders and see what sounds the most beautiful, the most poetic.

STANZA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Often it speeds the work to have different groups do different stanzas. If you do this, make sure you all hear the psalm from top to bottom and to make suggestions to other groups when you come together...



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

Stanza 1: Verses 1-2

Of David, a Psalm

1 To Yahweh the earth and its fullness,
the world and those who dwell in it,
2 For he, on the seas he founded it,
and on the rivers, he established it.

A Psalm of David

1 The earth is Yahweh's and all that is in it,
the world and those who dwell in it,
2 For he founded it on the seas,
he established it on the waters.

To Yahweh... In the Hebrew text, the first line of the Psalm begins with the line *To Yahweh the earth and all its fullness*. The Psalmist has front-shifted the phrase *to Yahweh*. The front shifting serves to place the focus on Yahweh rather than on the earth. The initial focus on Yahweh governs the whole stanza even though his name is not repeated. In verse 1, the focus is maintained by the pairing of *the earth and its fullness* (everything in it), and *the world and those who dwell in it*. In verse 2, the Psalmist renews his focus on Yahweh by starting with an emphatic identifier and by backshifting the verb in the line *for he, on the seas he founded it*. The second line keeps the same pattern ...*and on the rivers, he established it*.

Pairing in v.1. In verse 1 the first pairing is between *the earth...* and *the world...* Earth and world are two names for the same thing. Do you have two terms which correspond to these? If so, the first should be the general term and the second the more special. In the Hebrew Bible, the second term only occurs in poetry and is associated with the idea of the inhabited world (as in this psalm). In some Bantu languages, the earth in the first line may be referred to by a compound phrase roughly meaning *the land of down*. It may be possible to reduce a compound phrase like this in the second line, or to replace it with a demonstrative like *that one / the same one*. The second pairing is ...*and its fullness ...and those who dwell in it*. The Hebrew phrase literally rendered *its fullness* refers to *everything that is in it* (the earth) while the paired phrase in v.1b refers to *those who inhabit it* (the world)

Pairing in 2. In v.2, the first pairing is between *on the seas...* and *on the rivers...* The seas and the rivers both refer to the vast underground ocean, 'the deep', on which the world was thought to rest (see Genesis 7:11, Exodus 20:4, Psalm 136:6). In the Hebrew Bible, God established and made the earth firm with pillars going down through the waters. These pillars were understood to be the roots or bases of the mountains which reached down to the underworld. The *rivers* in v.2b may be rendered with something like *currents of the deep, the swirling waters* or simply *waters*. The second pairing in v.2 is between ...*he founded it* and ... *he established it*. The two verbs describing Yahweh's actions are very close in meaning. The first refers to *founding* or *setting* the earth on the seas, the second to *establishing* or *making it firm* on the swirling currents of the deep.

In your translation, remember the renderings from Step 3. If necessary, adjust them to keep a good balance between the pairs of lines in each verse.

Creative activity: Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

Stanza 2: Verses 3-6

3 Who may go up on the mountain of Yahweh?
and who may stand in his holy place?

3 Who may go up on Yahweh's mountain,
and who may stand in his holy place?



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

4 The innocent of hands
and pure of heart,
who does not lift to emptiness his soul
and does not swear by deceit.
5 He will lift up blessing from Yahweh
and righteousness from the God of his
salvation.
6 This is the generation of those who seek him,
of those who seek your face, Jacob.
Selah.

4 He who has clean hands
and a pure heart,
Who does not lift his soul to falsehood
and does not swear deceitfully.
5 He will lift up blessing from Yahweh,
and righteousness from the God of his
salvation.
6 This is the generation of those who seek him,
of those who seek your face, even
Jacob.
Selah.

The connection between the pairs of lines in vv.1-6. Think about the connection you make between the paired lines in each verse. Decide whether juxtaposition or a connector will best express the connection between them.

The connection between the two lines in verse 5 is particularly important. This guide understands the second line to **express more specifically** what the Psalmist has said in the first line. Verse 5a and 5b are not two separate statements. The Hebrew text is *He will lift up blessing from Yahweh / and righteousness from God his saviour*. We understand the righteousness in the second line to be the blessing that the Psalmist has in mind in the first line. The source of that blessing/righteousness is also the same. In the first line he says that the blessing is *from Yahweh*, in the second line that the righteousness is *from God his saviour*. *Yahweh* and *the God of his salvation* are one and the same.

The verb lift up in verse 5. The action of *lifting-up blessing* in v.5a (and implicitly *lifting-up righteousness* in v.5b) may seem a little strange at first. It provides an important poetic link, however, between the second stanza which identifies the one who may enter Yahweh's presence as the one who lifts-up blessing and the third and fourth stanzas in which the gates are told to *lift up their heads* and to *be lifted up*.

The demonstrative identifier *this...* in verse 6. The demonstrative *this...* in v.6 introduces the Psalmist's final identification of the one who can enter Yahweh's presence, *this is the generation... Jacob selah*. He uses the same demonstrative in the question in v.8, *who is this king of glory?* He repeats the question with a bit more intensity in v.10, *who is he this king of glory*. Then in the final words of the Psalm, the Psalmist uses an emphatic pronoun, *He is the king of glory selah*.

Creative activity: Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

Stanzas 3 & 4: Verses 7-10

7 Lift up gates your heads
and be lifted up ancient entrances,
that may come in the king of glory.
8 Who this king of glory?
Yahweh strong and mighty,

7 You gates, lift up your heads,
You doors of old, be lifted up,
that the king of glory may come in.
8 Who is this king of glory?
Yahweh strong and mighty,



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

Yahweh mighty to battle.

9 Lift up gates your heads
and lift up ancient entrances,
that may come in the king of glory.

10 Who he, this king of glory?
Yahweh of armies,
He is the king of glory. *Selah.*

Yahweh mighty in battle.

9 You gates, lift up your heads,
You ancient doors, lift up,
that the king of glory may come in.

10 Who is he, this king of glory?
Yahweh of hosts,
He is the king of glory. *Selah.*

Personification of gates, ancient doors. In v.7a and v.9a, the Psalmist give the gates the same command, *lift up your heads (you) gates*. The paired command in the second line of the two verses is only slightly different in the Hebrew text: v.7b ...*and be lifted up you ancient doors*, and v.9b ...*and lift up you ancient doors*.

Ancient doors. The Hebrew word translated *ancient doors* refers to an opening or entrance which in this context are clearly closed.

3-line rhythm. Verses 8 and 10 both have three lines. The line-pattern in both verses is Question-Identification-Identification. Think about the best way to connect the answers in the second and third lines. In v.8, the second line identifies the king of glory as *Yahweh strong and mighty*. The third line elaborates or builds on the second, *Yahweh mighty in battle*. In v.10, the connection between the second and third lines is slightly different. The second line identifies Yahweh of armies as the king of glory. The third and concluding line makes that identification emphatic, *he is the king of glory*.

Creative activity: Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Activities:

- 1) Listen again to the recordings of each verse/section.
- 2) Think about how to use ideas from the previous creative activities, and try to include the different ideas you've had so far.
- 3) Make a poetic oral representation of the complete psalm and then record it.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

Phase 2: TEXT



Step 6: Transcribe

Make a written draft

Activity: Transcribe the recordings of each section/stanza onto paper or a computer.

Before moving on to the exegetical check, check the transcribed draft for the following. This should be done as a whole group, looking at the psalm projected onto a screen or wall. It is up to the facilitator to make this step move on at a good pace, but getting this out of the way at the beginning will help the exegetical and poetical checks that follow to stay focused on essential matters.

1. **Versification:** put the verse numbers into the psalm.
2. Check that the number of the psalm, and any **superscription**, are in place at the top. (Superscriptions are often left out completely according to team policy, but they are recommended to be put in the written text but not the song.)
3. Put in the **stanza breaks** (blank lines usually).
4. Correct the **punctuation**, in particular finding out where the sentences should end. Different groups use different approaches. Our recommendation is to use capital letters only for the beginning of sentences, not for the beginning of each poetic line.
5. Correct the **spelling**. You may find that there is a lot of discussion over this. The group needs to have consistency but also needs to abide by any government guidelines.
6. Raise any questions you have about the **back translation** at this point. The back translation just needs to be comprehensible; it does not need spell checks etc. You, the facilitator, are the only person who needs it. However, without a good back translation you cannot understand what is going on. As a bonus, at least a couple of exegetical questions you've prepared usually turn out to be unnecessary after this step.
7. Check the **line divisions** (this refers to how the power is broken up into lines and where to make those breaks).



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B



Step 7: Contents Check

Checking exegetical faithfulness

The purpose of this step is to check the content of your draft for faithfulness and trustworthiness as you compare it to the guide translations found in Appendix A and details in Appendix B.

Activity: Review the draft translation in detail, using the oral recording of Step 5 or the transcription of Step 6. Do an exegetical check by comparing the draft with the guide translations given in Appendix A and the exegetical layout in Appendix B and adjust the text as necessary.

EXEGETICAL CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

Stanza 1

- Check that Yahweh is the focus in both v.1 and v.2.
- Check the rendering of *seas* and *rivers* as well as the other word pairs discussed in Step 3.

Stanza 2

- Check how vv.4-6 relate to the questions in v.3. [Each verse responds to the question in v.3. Verse 4 by identifying the one who may enter, v.5 by declaring what he will lift up from Yahweh, and v.6 by identifying those who are part of this group.]
- In v.6, the two terms for seeking are close but slightly different. The first has the sense of *seek after*, the second has the sense of *search out*¹. Check the switch from the 3rd person in the first line *...of those who seek him* or *...of his seekers* to the 2nd person in the second line *...of those who seek out your face*.
- Check that the concluding identification in v.6 is *Jacob selah*. The Psalmist is not addressing Yahweh as Jacob nor is referring to the God of Jacob (see the footnote in Appendix B). He is identifying the group of people who seek Yahweh as Jacob.

Stanzas 3 and 4

- Check the *gates* and ancient doors (or *entrance ways*²) are spoken to as people.
- In v.8, check that the identification in v.8b *Yahweh strong and mighty* is picked up and continued in v.8c *Yahweh mighty in battle*.
- In v.10, check that the first answer *Yahweh of armies* is emphatically identified as the king of glory in the final line

¹ Robert Alter distinguishes in his translation between Yahweh's *seekers* and those who *search out* (his presence)

² Robert Alter nicely renders the second term as *portals* rather than the more common rendering *doors*.





STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B



Step 8: Poetry Check

Compare and weigh the poetic features

Attention now needs to be given to the poetic devices found in the Hebrew, as well as poetic devices found in the receptor language that might not have been used in the Hebrew text (or might have served a different function).

Activity: Consider the poetic features of your translation. Compare also the compositions from Step 4 with the draft. See if there are any features from the compositions that can be used in the final official version.

POETIC CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

- Check the pairing of lines throughout the psalm to ensure their rhythmic balance and that both lines of each pair work together. In Hebrew the line-pairs keep the same structure. Does this work well in your language? Is there another way to express the meaning of the two lines in a poetic form that sounds better in your language?
- In each of the stanzas, check the connection between the paired lines in each verse. Should the connection in your language be by juxtaposition, a connector word like *and*, or something else?
- In v.4, check that there are two line-pairs: the first pair is minimalist in the Hebrew poetry (*the one*) *innocent of hands / and pure of heart*. The second pair develops the description: *who does not lift his soul to falsehood / and does not swear deceitfully*.
- Check the translation of *lift up* in v.4, v.5, v.7 and v.9. You may decide that you cannot keep the same rendering in all the verses. If you render it differently in the different verses, be aware of the connection by repetition that you are losing.
- Check the 3 line-patterns in Stanzas 3 and 4 are expressed poetically in your language. In the Hebrew poetry the repeated patterns are *command-command-purpose* and *question-identification-identification*.
- Check that the final identifications are the prominent ones. In v.6 prominence is given by the emphatic *This...* at the start of the verse running through to the final identification, *Jacob selah*. In v.8 the question *who is this king of glory?* is made more pointed in v.10 *who is he, this king of glory?* The answer in v.10b-c is both emphatic and final, *Yahweh of armies / He is the king of Glory*.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B



Step 9: Finalise

Preparing the final version of an authenticated translation

Preparation of the final version which will serve as an authorized translation, that in turn will serve as the basis for performing the psalm in the community.

Activity: Check the spelling of your transcription.

Activity: Recheck the punctuation, for instance whether there are appropriate commas for pauses, the in-setting, and the layout of paragraphs to represent stanza segmentation.

Activity: Recheck the line divisions of your transcription and recheck the essential accuracy of the back translation (not worrying about spelling).

Activity: In AVTT, open a new passage for Step 9 and make a blank recording (a second or two without any speech). This will open transcription and back translation boxes in that passage. Copy the transcription and the back translation of your translation into the new step. This will be the place you make changes as you go through Steps 7 and 8 and edit your translation. The performances will be based on this version.

Activity: Copy the final written text into Paratext.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

Phase 3: PERFORMANCE



Step 10: Perform

Performing the psalm in your community

Introduction to the creative performances. Different groups can do different performances.

Activity: Complete a transcript and back translation for the lyrics of any song created by the team to be checked before recording.

FINAL CHECKLIST

In the end of each psalm, there should ideally be four products:

1. Transcription: An authorized, authenticated, or officially written draft in AVTT and Paratext.
2. Dramatic Reading: A recording of a dramatic reading or recitation of the whole psalm, using the authenticated version word-for-word, recorded in AVTT.
3. Whole Psalm Performance: A recording of a performance of the whole psalm, using the entire authenticated version but with freedom to adapt it for authentic performance, including poetic and dramatic features beyond the authenticated version, recorded in AVTT.
4. Song or Hymn: A recording of a performance of part of the psalm including the main idea of the psalm (this could be from v 2 as mentioned in Psalm-specific ideas above), in the form of a song or a hymn, with or without drama, with freedom to adapt it for authentic performance and to make it easy to sing and remember, recorded in AVTT. An improved version of the Step 4 composition could be used here.
5. Chorus: A recording of a short chorus of a main verse of the psalm. Something catchy and highly memorable, recorded in AVTT.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B



Appendix A: Guide Translations

Guide Translation #1 (Hebrew-mirror)	Guide Translation #2 (Hebrew-tight)
<p><i>Of David, a Psalm</i></p> <p>1 To Yahweh the earth and its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it,</p> <p>2 For he, on the seas he founded it, and on the rivers, he established it.</p> <p>3 Who may go up on the mountain of Yahweh? and who may stand in his holy place?</p> <p>4 The innocent of hands and pure of heart, who does not lift to emptiness his soul and does not swear by deceit.</p> <p>5 He will lift up blessing from Yahweh and righteousness from the God of his salvation.</p> <p>6 This is the generation of those who seek him, of those who seek your face, Jacob. <i>Selah.</i></p> <p>7 Lift up gates your heads and be lifted up ancient entrances, that may come in the king of glory.</p> <p>8 Who this king of glory? Yahweh strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty to battle.</p> <p>9 Lift up gates your heads and lift up ancient entrances, that may come in the king of glory.</p> <p>10 Who he, this king of glory? Yahweh of armies, He is the king of glory. <i>Selah.</i></p>	<p><i>A Psalm of David</i></p> <p>1 The earth is Yahweh's and all that is in it, the world and those who dwell in it,</p> <p>2 For he founded it on the seas, he established it on the waters.</p> <p>3 Who may go up on Yahweh's mountain, and who may stand in his holy place?</p> <p>4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who does not lift his soul to falsehood and does not swear deceitfully.</p> <p>5 He will lift up blessing from Yahweh, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.</p> <p>6 This is the generation of those who seek him, of those who seek your face, even Jacob. <i>Selah.</i></p> <p>7 You gates, lift up your heads, You doors of old, be lifted up, that the king of glory may come in.</p> <p>8 Who is this king of glory? Yahweh strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle.</p> <p>9 You gates, lift up your heads, You ancient doors, lift up, that the king of glory may come in.</p> <p>10 Who is he, this king of glory? Yahweh of hosts, He is the king of glory. <i>Selah.</i></p>





STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B



Appendix B: Exegetical Layout

Genre

Psalm 24 is a hymn or processional song which sings of Yahweh's kingship.

Content

The Psalm divides into three parts: an opening stanza speaking of Yahweh's ownership of the whole earth, a central stanza which asks and identifies who may enter his presence, and two final stanzas which portray Yahweh as the king of glory, mighty in battle, Yahweh of armies, for whom the gates of the city must open so that he may enter.

In the first stanza, the Psalmist declares Yahweh to be the one who owns the earth and everything in it, specifically perhaps the inhabited world and all those who live in it. The reason the Psalmist gives is that he is the one who created the earth; he founded and set it firm upon the seas.

In the second stanza, the Psalmist asks who may enter and who may stand (that is, may remain) in Yahweh's presence? The remainder of the stanza answers that question. It is the one who is righteous in v.4. He will receive his righteousness, however, not from himself but from Yahweh, from God his saviour in v.5. And finally, in v.6a such people are defined as the generation of those who seek him, and in v.6b who seek your face, they are *Jacob*.

The third and fourth stanzas present the king of glory at the gates of a city, implicitly the gates of Mount Zion, the city of God. In the repeated commands, questions and responses, the king of glory is successively identified as Yahweh *mighty in battle* and *Yahweh of armies*. The image is military. This is a conquering King returning in victory to his own city. This is the King for whom the gates must open to allow him to enter the city. And with him, implicitly, Jacob from the previous stanza, his chosen people.

Context: Psalm 24, the Psalter and Bible story

Yahweh's mountain in Psalm 24 is Mount Zion of Psalm 2:6. This is the City of God in Psalm 48:1-3, the place where he dwells. In Psalm 132, Zion is Jerusalem, Yahweh's resting place on earth mirroring the heavenly city.

The story of the Bible from the first chapters of Genesis through to Revelation has been described as the story of how God brings a people back into his presence. Psalm 24, as Psalm 15, addresses the question, who may enter? Psalm 15 tells us that it is the righteous one who may dwell in his presence. Psalm 24 agrees, but goes further. It tells us how we may enter. Yahweh is presented as both the goal and the way. He is the King of the earth, our Creator as well as the king of glory, Yahweh of armies. He himself is the one who opens the way back into his presence. Whether he speaks of Yahweh's mountain, his city or his temple, this is the longing of the Psalmist throughout the Psalms. Psalm 24 is then an answer to the longing to enter God's dwelling place expressed in passages like Psa 27:4, 42:1-2 and 43:3, 65:4 and the whole of Psalm 84.





STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

SUGGESTED HEADING

- i. Who can go up on Yahweh's mountain?
- ii. Yahweh is the king of glory.
- iii. Open the gates for the king of glory.

Coding for TAM Verbs and Hebrew features:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qatal perfective = blue Yiqtol imperfective = red | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infinitive construct = purple Wayyiqtol waw+imperfective = pink Jussive/cohortative = light brown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imperative = brown Participle = green Weqatal = navy |
|--|---|--|

לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר	¹ of.David a.psalm
לַיהוָה הָאֲרֶץ וּמְלֹאָהּ	to.Yahweh ³ the.earth and.fullness.her ⁴
תִּבְּלֵ וְיֹשְׁבֵי בָּהּ:	world ⁵ and.dwellers in.her
כִּי־הוּא עַל־יַמִּים יִסְדָּהּ	² for-he ⁶ on-seas ⁷ her.founded.her

³ **To Yahweh...** The front-shifted phrase places focus on Yahweh throughout v.1-2 (see the notes in Step 5).

⁴ **the earth and her fullness...** The line pattern in v.2a/2b is female object + something of or in her: *earth and the-fullness-of-her/ the world and those who dwell in-her*. The pattern can often be maintained in translation with the parallel phrases *the earth and everything in it / the world and those who dwell in it*.

⁵ **earth-world...** Two words for the same thing - see notes in Step 5.

⁶ **For he...** The connector with the added pronoun, continues the focus on Yahweh begun in the previous verse - see notes in Step 5.

⁷ **seas-rivers...** The two terms both refer to the same mass of water. The Hebrew Bible understands God to have founded the earth on the *deep* a chaotic mass of water or seas with swirling currents or *rivers*. To make it clear that these are not separate things, consider i. dropping the connector *and* at the start of v.2b, and ii. using a possessive phrase in the second line to refer to the same *seas* of the first line. This might result in a translation like, *for he on the seas he founded it / on its currents he established it*.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

וְעַל-נְהָרוֹת יְכוֹנְנָה:	and ⁸ .on-rivers he.established.her ⁹
מִי-יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר-יְהוָה	³ who-may.go.up on.mountain ¹⁰ _Yahweh
וּמִי-יָקוּם בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ:	and.who-may.stand in.place his.holy?
נָקִי כַפַּיִם	⁴ innocent.of ¹¹ palms
וְבֵר-לֵבָב	and.pure.of_heart ¹²
אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִשְׂאָ לְשׂוֹא נַפְשִׁי	who not_he.lifts.up ¹³ to.falsehood ¹⁴ soul.his
וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה:	and.not he.swears by.deceit
יֵשׂא בְּרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה	⁵ he.will.lift.up ¹⁵ blessing with.from Yahweh

⁸ **and...** Take over the connections between paired lines, here and throughout the Psalm. While the Hebrew text connects each of the paired lines in verses 2 to 6 with *and...* it may be better to use juxtaposition or another connector in your language. See the note above on *the seas* and *rivers* in v.2a-b.

⁹ **founded-established...** The two verbs describe very similar actions. The first speaks of the action of setting something in place (v.2a) and the second speaks of making something firm (v.2b).

¹⁰ **Yahweh's mountain...** The Hebrew word does not distinguish between mountains and hills. Although many English translations render the word as *hill*, if your language makes this distinction, it is probably better to translate the word as mountain. This is Zion, God's holy mountain described in Psalm 2:6. Psalm 48 describes that holy mountain as a city, the city of God, the city of the great King, in which he dwells (Psa 48:1-3). This is the city at which the King of Glory arrives in Psa 24:7-10.

¹¹ **innocent...** The primary sense of the adjective is that of innocence or freedom from guilt. *Clean* is an acceptable translation but *innocent hands* (lit. *palms*) is probably a better pair with *pure heart*.

¹² **(The) innocent of hands / and pure of heart...** The Hebrew text in v.4a-b simply refers to innocent hands and pure heart. This is an answer to the Psalmist's question *who?* in v.3. The relative clauses in v.4b-c also indicate a person.

¹³ **lift up...** In Step 5, we note the importance of the repeated verb *lift up* for both the poetry and meaning of the whole Psalm.

¹⁴ **to falsehood... by deceit...** In the Hebrew text, *falsehood* (or *emptiness*) in v.4c is closely paired with *deceit* in v.4d. The pairing is achieved by the use of same prefix (lamedh). In v.4c, the prefix has the directional or locative sense *to falsehood*, in v.4c it has the instrumental sense *by* or *in deceit*. The pairing suggests that both nouns are best understood as abstract qualities. For this reason, it is probably better to retain the sense of *falsehood* or *emptiness* rather than to follow an interpretive rendering such as *to an idol*. Robert Alter, however, nicely renders the two prepositional phrases *...in a lie*, *...in deceit*. This could provide the following model for this pair of lines: *who does not lift his soul in a lie / and does not swear in deceit*.

¹⁵ **The imperfective verb** can be understood as a present (declarative) *he lifts up* or a future *he will lift up*.





STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעוֹ:	and.righteousness ¹⁶ from.the.God.of his.salvation
זֶה דִּוָּר דְּרָשׁוּ	⁶ this¹⁷ (the)generation¹⁸ who.seek.after.him
מִבְקָשִׁי פָנֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה:	who.seek your.face ¹⁹ Jacob ²⁰ selah
שׂוּ אֲזָנוֹתַי שְׁמַיִם רָא אֲשִׁיכֶם	⁷ lift.up gates your.heads ²¹

¹⁶ **The righteousness of v.5b** is understood in this guide to be the blessing of v.5a (see Step 5). As v.4 has explained, only the righteous one can ascend Yahweh's mountain and stand in his holy place. The *blessing* that the righteous one *lifts up from Yahweh* in v.5a is the *righteousness* that he lifts up *from God his saviour*. The blessing and the righteousness of v.5 can also be understood as separate albeit related entities. The Psalmist's inference, however, that the righteous one of v.4 only receives (or *lifts up*) his righteousness from Yahweh is then somewhat blunted.

¹⁷ **This...** In Step 5, we note the importance of the repeated identifier *this...* for both the poetry and meaning of the whole Psalm.

¹⁸ **generation...** Psalm 14:6 declares that *God is with the generation of the righteous* and that this knowledge strikes terror into the rest of mankind who have turned away from him. The term *generation* refers to a particular group of people in contrast to another. In modern English usage, *generation* is used to distinguish groups of people by their age group. In Psalm 14 and here in Psalm 24, it refers rather to those who seek Yahweh. When the Psalmist says *This is the generation of those who seek him*, he is bringing his answer to the question *who* in v.3 to a conclusion. Avoid renderings like *These are the kind of people who seek him*. The Psalmist is not talking about the kind of people who seek Yahweh. He is identifying the group itself. A rendering like *This is the group who seek him...* captures the sense more clearly.

¹⁹ **your face...** The phrase those who seek your face can be translated those who seek your presence.

²⁰ **Jacob...** The Masoretic text (which this guide follows) simply has *Jacob*. The HOTTP rating for Jacob is B. Psalms Layer by Layer follow the same reading of the text. The ESV and NIV with some other English translation follow the Septuagint, Syriac and two Hebrew manuscripts in smoothing out the text to turn the reference to Jacob into a reference to the God of Jacob. This gives translations of v.6b like *...(the group) who seek the face of the God of Jacob*. We recommend that you stick with Jacob. The verse identifies the group who seek Yahweh and concludes with the final statement that they are Jacob. The wording may seem awkward but that is the beauty of poetry. Poetry often surprises you and makes you think. Goldingay and Ross, cited in SIL's Exegetical Summary of the Psalms, helpfully see a chiasm in this verse between the generation mentioned in v.6a and the name Jacob at the end of the verse. With them, we understand the name Jacob to identify the generation of those who seek Yahweh.

<i>a</i> Refers to Israel	'This is the generation ~ company
<i>b</i> Refers to YHWH	of those seeking him,
<i>b</i> Addresses YHWH	of those seeking your face—
<i>a</i> Refers to Israel	Jacob'.

²¹ **Lift up your heads, gates...** See Step 5 for comments on the personification in the commands of v.7 and v.9 as well as the significance of the *gates* in the first line of these commands and the *ancient doors* in the second line. Note that although the Hebrew text connects the two commands with *and*, we take the second command to be an amplification of the first.





STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

וְהִנְשָׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם	and.be.lifted.up doors.of forever ²²
וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:	and.he.will.come.in king.of the.glory
מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד	⁸ who this king.of the.glory ²³ ?
יְהוָה עֲזוּז וְגִבּוֹר	Yahweh strong and.mighty
יְהוָה גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה:	Yahweh mighty to.battle
שִׂיאוּ שַׁעְרֵיכֶם רָאשֵׁיכֶם	⁹ lift.up gates your.heads
וְהִנְשָׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם	and.lift.up doors.of forever
וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:	and.he.will.come.in king.of the.glory
מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד	¹⁰ who he ²⁴ this king.of the.glory
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	Yahweh.of hosts ²⁵
הוּא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד סֵלָה:	he king.of the.glory selah

²² **The gates in v.7/9a** and the *ancient doors* in v.7/9b are one and the same. They are the entrance to the city.

²³ **The questions in v.8/10a** are rhetorical, they pave the way for the Psalmist's identification of the King of Glory in the following two lines in each verse. The line-pattern of 1-1-2 in v.7/9 (command-command-purpose) are matched by the 1-2-2 pattern in v.8/10 (question-identification-identification). The lines of the Hebrew text and the interlinear glosses have been formatted to represent the rhetoric nature of the line patterning in these verses.

²⁴ **He...**The addition of *he* to the question from v.8 makes it more pointed. It is also mirrored by the emphatic final identification in the final line, *He is the King of Glory*.

²⁵ **Yahweh of armies...** In Psalm 48:8, the City of Zion is named as the City of Yahweh of armies. The city in Psalm 24 is Yahweh's own city. We see Yahweh's return to the heavenly city. Psalm 24 presents God opening the way back into his own presence.