



You have Searched Me

Psalm 139

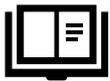
Welcome to 'Together Apart', free intergenerational resources to help us be church together while we cannot meet.

All the sections explore the same Bible passage in a range of creative ways. Choose whichever parts work best for you, and remember that 'All Age' does not mean 'only for the kiddies'!

You can find lots more free resources like this at www.reflectionary.org

[Reflection on Psalm 139 and Jeremiah 18](#)

Here is what you will find in each resource pack:



A Word in Your Ear

A Bible passage that we can all learn from together, whatever our age.



Food for Thought

Aimed at adults and teens, some thoughts and questions on the passage.



Inner Space

A blank space for you to record your thoughts, whether that is worries, dreams or a shopping list.



Looking Closer

A creative and interactive look at the Bible passage. Great for older children and anyone who likes a creative approach.



I Wonder...

An imaginative style of Bible study, perfect for younger children and those who like to immerse themselves in the Bible world.



Take a Break

A chill-out zone, with meditative colouring for adults and children, and links to audio recordings of the passage so that you can listen while resting your eyes.



Creation Station

A craft for children (or young-at-heart adults!)



All Together Now

Suggestions for activities throughout the week that link with the Bible passage.



High 5

Suggestions for spending time with God.



A Word in Your Ear

Take your time reading this extract from our Bible passage. Ask God to help you hear. You can decorate the space around the words if you like.

Psalm 139:1-6, 23-24

You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

(NIV)



Food for Thought

There are some famous quotes in this psalm: “You have searched me, O Lord, and know me”, “Before a word is on my tongue...” “fearfully and wonderfully made”, but it's a lot more than a collection of pretty sound-bites. Let's have a look at some of the lesser-known parts too.

In the first part of this psalm David writes about how God knows him better than he knows himself. David seems to be mostly happy about this, describing such knowledge as “too wonderful”, but I notice his choice of verbs in “you *hem* me in” and “you *lay your hand* upon me”. Perhaps these seem a little restrictive? There is a similar theme in the second section, where David lists all the places where he cannot hide from God. Is he rejoicing in God's omnipresence, or is there a note of frustration? Is David actually trying to avoid God?

Q: Do you think David is pleased to be so thoroughly known by God? I wonder how you feel about God knowing every little thing you do. Is it reassuring, or a little uncomfortable?

Can you think of any other times in the Bible where people tried to hide from God?

The lectionary readings miss out the middle section of the psalm, but it's always worth reading the full context. Verses 13-18 continue the theme of God knowing, but stretch the time frame into the past and the future. God knew David before he was born, and wrote all David's day in his book. David muses on the amount of thought God has put into this – more than the grains of sand!

The final thought, about still being with God “when I awake”, is interesting. Is David meaning that he senses God's presence each morning, or is he referring to the awakening after death into eternity, or something else? And why does David say, “I am still with you”, rather than the more normal, “you are still with me”?

Q: If you were David, would you want to know what God had written in his book about your ordained days? What do you think “when I awake, I am still with you” refers to?

Verses 19-22 are a bit of a shock to the system! This section is often missed out of readings, (and I can't say I'm surprised) Suddenly we change from poetic musings worthy of any poster to a rant about the bloodthirsty and asking God to slay the wicked. Steady on there David!

Q: Why do you think David included this sudden change of tone? How does it relate to the rest of the psalm?

After wrestling with the age-old problem of ‘Why does God not just get rid of evil?’, David returns to the thoughts at the start of the psalm. But instead of stating that God has searched him already, this time it is an invitation to do so. David has taken sober stock of himself and realises that not all will stand up to examination. He needs help, and trusts God to lead him in the right direction.

Q: Dare I invite God to search me and know my heart?



Inner Space

What's going round your head? Here is a space for you to put your thoughts on paper. You can write, draw ... whatever you like. What will you put here?



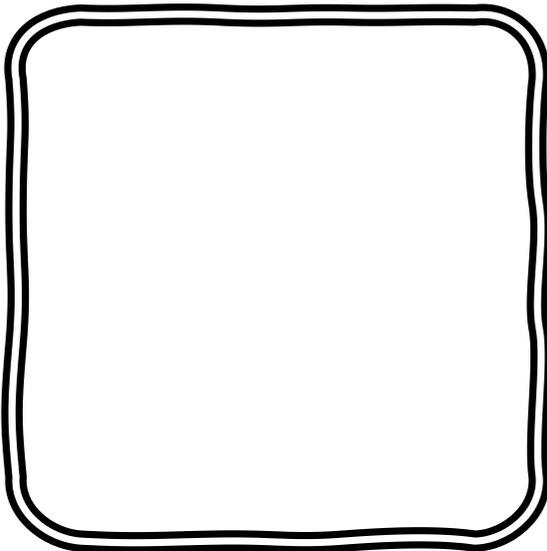
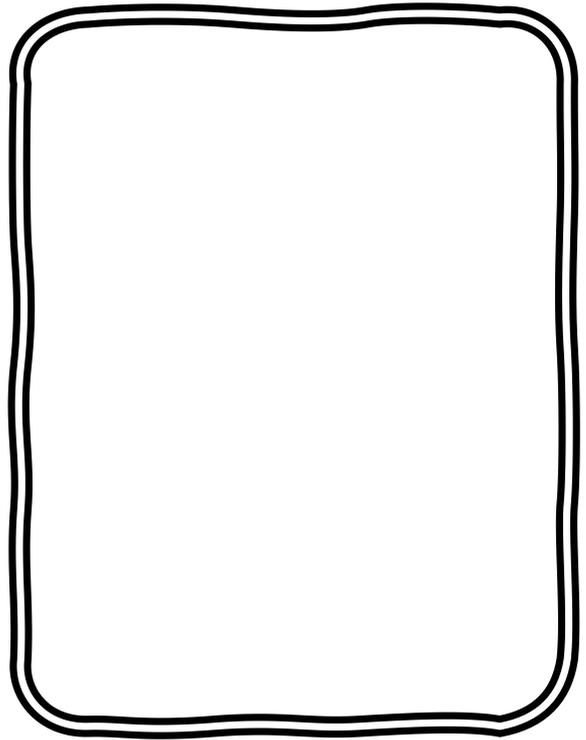
Looking Closer

This psalm was written by David, the shepherd boy who became a king (slaying Goliath on the way).

It feels like David is walking around his house imagining that God is next to him, watching everything he does – whether he sits down or stands up, goes out, even what time he goes to bed.

God even knows what David is going to say before he says it!

Try doing what David did, and imagine that God is walking with you everywhere you go. How does that feel? Is it nice knowing that you have the company, or are there things that you would rather God did not see?



Next, David thinks about outside of his house, and wonders how far God's presence can stretch. If he could fly up into the sky, would God still be there? If he burrowed down into the ground, would God still be there? If he flew to the ends of the earth, would God still be there?

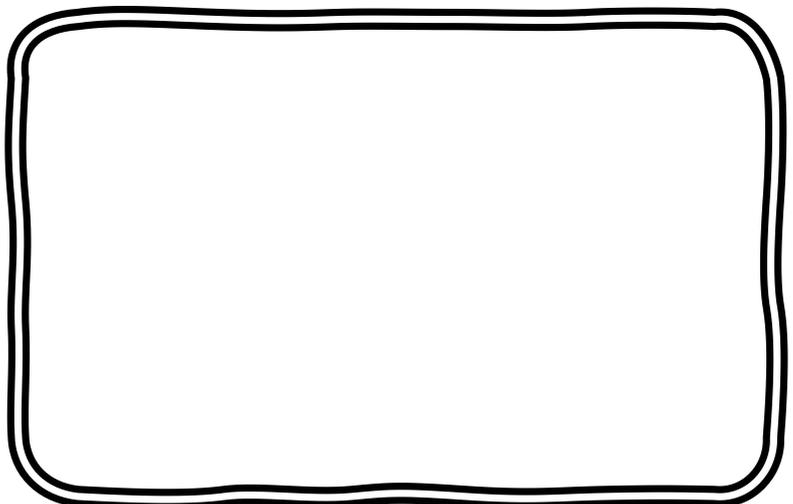
What about at night? (Remember that they did not have street lamps, so night was very, VERY dark.) Could God even see him when it was pitch black?

what do you think? Can you hide from God be going far away or by turning out the lights?

Finally, David looks inside himself, and wonders what God would think. Other people only see the outside, but God sees the heart. (see 1 Sam 16:7) Would God be pleased with what he saw in David?

David asks God to lead him in the right way, so that anything that needs the change, can.

What would God think about your heart? What might God want to change?





I Wonder...

Read or listen to the passage a few times and let it sit in your mind.

Which words, phrases or ideas do you notice? Does anything stand out for you? Hold that in your heart and listen to what God might be saying.

I wonder what part of the story is the most important.

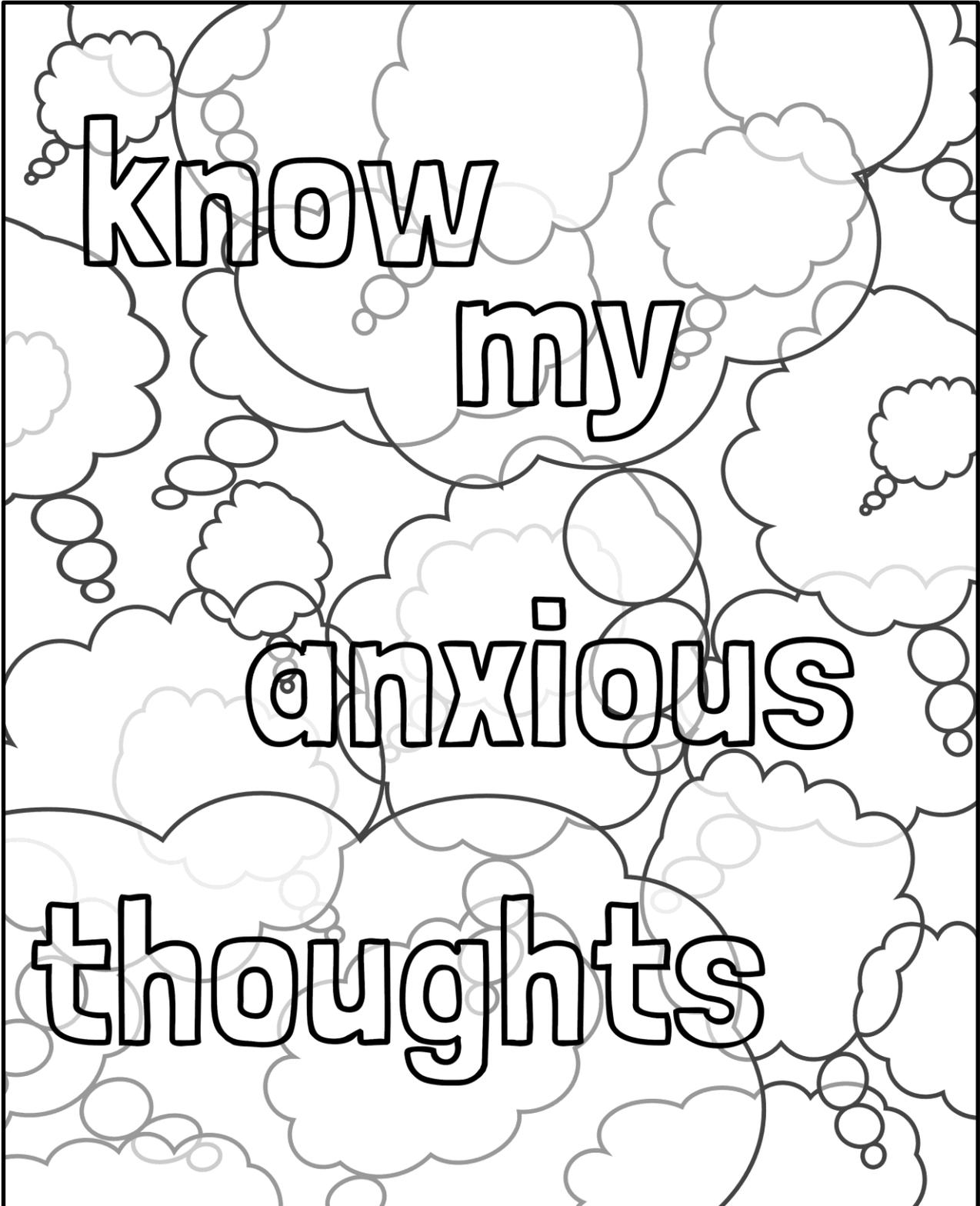
I wonder where you would be in this story.

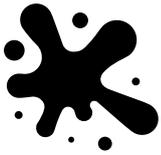


Take a Break

Put on some music, or listen to the passage being read out while you simply sit and be. You can colour the picture below, or fill it with zentangles, or you can just spend the time breathing.

Psalm 139 on Bible Gateway audio [ESV](#) – [Message](#) – [NIV \(Dramatised\)](#) – [NIV \(Suchet\)](#)



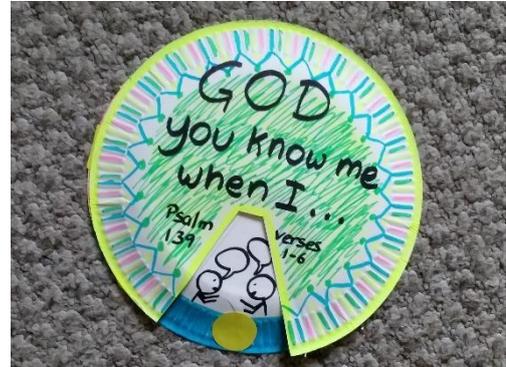


Creation Station – God Knows Me

God knows us everywhere and everywhen – it's a comfort and a challenge. This great craft can help us think about how God knows us all through the day.

You will need:

- Two paper plates
- Pencil, scissors and glue stick
- Black marker pen
- Coloured pens or highlighters
- Gold or silver sticky stars or metallic pens
- Yellow paper
- Spilt-pin fastener or a drawing pin and a rubber to stick it in (I could not find either when I took the photos, so please just imagine!)



What to Do

1. Divide one plate into eight pizza slices and colour the rim black on three adjacent sections. This will represent the night. Make a colourful sunrise and sunset on the rim in the sections either side of the night. Colour the rims blue for the remaining three sections for day
2. Cut four 2p-sized circles from yellow paper and cut one in half. Glue the three complete circles in the blue sections for the sun, and the half circles in the sunrise and sunset sections. Use the metallic pens or stickers to decorate the black sections with stars.
3. Now we can add the activities. Read Psalm 139 and find when God knows us. You could have: sit, rise, think, speak, go out, lie down (this covers the three night sections)
4. Draw sleeping faces in the night sections. Then add stick figures for the other actions during the day. I chose 'rise' for first thing (that's yawning, not screaming, by the way), thinking in the morning, talking at lunchtime, going out in the afternoon and sitting (by the TV!) in the evening.
5. Now take the other plate. Cut out one pizza slice section, but leave a couple of cm in the centre. Write '**God, you know me when I...**' in large black letters, with the pizza-slice hole finishing the sentence. You can add the reference to Psalm 139:1-6 as well. Decorate the rest of the plate.
6. Put the plates on top of each other and join them in the centre.
7. Now you can turn the bottom plate and remember that God sees us and knows us all through the day, whatever we do and wherever we go.





All Together Now

This fun game helps us to think about how well God knows each one of us. You could play it outdoors in the garden or a park, or you could play it indoors if it's raining. You need at least three people, preferably more.

Getting to Know You Game

1. Start by choosing some questions and writing them on paper so that everyone can see. You'll want about 10 in total. Everyone will answer all of them. You could have:
 - What is your favourite food?
 - What are you really scared of?
 - What is / was your favourite school subject?
 - What part of your body would you change if you could?
 - If you were a superhero, which one would you be?
2. When you have chosen all your questions, everybody writes their answers on paper strips. Put one answer on each strip and do not include your name or the question. You may like to disguise your writing!
3. Scrumple up the paper strips and let everyone hide them in whatever area you have decided. You may wish to have some areas out of bounds, or make rules like 'you don't have to move anything to find them' or 'no more than 1m off the ground'.
4. Once the answers are all hidden, let everyone look for the scrumpled strips (no points for finding your own!) When all (or most) have been found, people can look at the strips and try to work out who wrote what, and which questions they were answering.
5. Go round in turns. Each person reads out one answer and says who they think wrote it and what question it was answering. Everyone else can have a guess as well, but only the person reading out gets points. Keep going round until all the strips are done.
6. **Scoring:** both parts right = one mark (place the strip in front of you as the score). Just one part right = half mark (tear your strip in half to keep score). If you picked up your own answer strip, or if you got both parts wrong, you score nothing.

My ideas:

Which will you do this week?



High 5

Spend five minutes talking and listening with God. Here is one way:

When I sit and when I rise ... my going out and my lying down.

When I sit

Start sitting down, and consider yourself and other people in the room. Thank God for being with you always, and ask God to help you become more how he would have you be.

Dear God,

.....
.....

Amen.

When I rise

Stand up, and walk around the building you are in. Let your prayers be guided by the rooms you enter. In the kitchen, thank God for the food you eat. Pray for the people whose bedrooms you pass. Pray for vaccines for coronavirus when you see taps or soap.

Dear God,

.....
.....

Amen.

My going out

Leave the house and look outside. You could even walk down the road a little. Pray for your friends and neighbours and for the people who make decisions about your school, work, town and country.

Dear God,

.....
.....

Amen.

My lying down

Go back inside and lie down on your bed, on a sofa or on the floor. Pray for those who lie in hospital beds, and for those who have no beds at all.

Dear God,

.....
.....

Amen.