

## BIBLE STUDY

### Psalm 139 (OSB 138): God Knows You Completely

#### Bible Study Preparation and Materials Needed:

#### God Knows You Completely

A Discussion Guide on Psalm 139

50–60 minutes · Ages 14–18

**For the Lesson:** Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

**Recommended Orthodox Study Bible** [HERE](#).

**Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition** [HERE](#).

#### Optional Practice

If time permits, begin or conclude this Bible study with an antiphonal Psalm reading. Have students read the psalm aloud in two groups, line by line. Encourage them to hear David's emotion, allowing it to become their own prayer.

#### Leader Notes

**For the leader:** *You do not need to be a theologian to lead this discussion. Your role is to ask the questions, listen well, and keep the conversation moving. There are no wrong answers. If you don't know something, say so honestly, that it-self models the kind of openness this psalm invites. Encourage everyone to speak, but never pressure anyone to share.*

**Our tradition:** *Psalm 139 has been prayed in the Armenian Church for centuries. It appears in our liturgical life as a psalm of deep personal prayer, the kind of honest, searching conversation with God that St. Gregory of Narek embodied in his Book of Lamentations (Madyan Voghperkutyán). As you lead this discussion, you are inviting your students into that same ancient practice.*

**Pacing:** *Suggested times are printed in red at the start of each section. A good conversation is worth letting breathe, but move on if the group stalls. Protect at least 8 minutes for the closing.*

#### Things to Watch For:

Some students may have experienced real trauma. Don't push for details or force sharing.

If discussions stall, that's okay. Silence is better than forced responses.

Be ready to follow up individually with students who seem especially affected.

#### Adaptation Options:

For smaller groups (under 8), skip partner discussions and keep everything as full group.

For larger groups (over 15), use more small group time.

If your group is less familiar with Holy Scripture, add more context about psalms in general.

For groups that are more reserved, extend individual reflection time and reduce sharing time.

## God Knows You Completely

A Discussion Guide on Psalm 139

50–60 minutes · Ages 14–18

### Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տու՛ր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, ee paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

### About This Psalm

Psalm 139 is one of the most intimate psalms in all of Scripture. David writes directly to God about something both comforting and unsettling: God knows him completely. Not just his name or his deeds, but his thoughts, his fears, his words before he speaks them, and the days of his life before they began.

This is not a psalm about rules or history. It is a psalm about relationship. It raises questions that every person carries at some level: Am I truly known? Does anyone see the real me? And if God sees everything, is that something to fear or something to trust?

### Memory Verse:

**“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.”**

**-Psalm 139 (OSB 138):1–3**

## Opening

**Leader note:** Begin here before opening any Bible. This question is easy and gets everyone talking. Let 3–4 people respond before moving on.

Ask the group:

1. Think of someone in your life who really knows you, not the surface version of you, but the real you. What does it feel like to be known that well? Is it comforting, uncomfortable, or both?

## Read the Psalm Together

**Leader note:** Ask 4 volunteers to each read a section aloud: verses 1–6, verses 7–12, verses 13–18, verses 19–24. Use whichever English translation your parish uses in its curriculum materials. After the last reader finishes, pause for 15–20 seconds of silence before moving to the questions.

*“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.” (vv. 1–3)*

## God Knows Everything About You (vv. 1–6)

**Leader note:** These questions explore what it means to be fully known by God. Some students will find this comforting; others may find it unsettling. Both reactions are honest. Don’t rush past the discomfort, that is often where the most important conversation happens.

2. What specific things does David say God knows about him? Go through the list together as a group.
3. Does it feel comforting or unsettling to you that God knows your thoughts before you even think them? Why?
4. David ends this section by saying this knowledge is “too wonderful” to grasp (v. 6). Is he overwhelmed in a good way, or just overwhelmed? What is the difference?
5. Have you ever tried to hide a feeling, a doubt, or a mistake, even from yourself? What does it mean that God already sees it?

## There Is Nowhere God Is Not (vv. 7–12)

**Leader note:** This section is about God’s presence everywhere. David is not trying to escape God here; he is marveling that there is nowhere he could go, even if he wanted to. Let students sit with both the comfort and the weight of that.

Read verses 7–8 aloud together:

*“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”*

6. David names extreme places: the heights of heaven, the depths, the far side of the sea, and total darkness. What is he trying to say by listing all of these?
7. Is there a difference between God watching you and God being with you? What does this psalm suggest?
8. Has there been a time in your life when you felt like God was distant or absent? What would David say to that feeling?
9. Verse 10 says that even in the farthest place, “your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” What does it mean that God’s presence is also guidance, and not just observation?

## You Were Made on Purpose (vv. 13–18)

**Leader note:** *This section tends to resonate deeply with teenagers. The idea that God made them intentionally, not accidentally, can be genuinely moving for students who struggle with self-worth. Go slowly. The last question invites vulnerability; leave space for silence.*

Read verses 13–14 aloud:

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well.”*

10. The word “knit” pictures careful, slow, deliberate work. What does that image tell you about how God approached making you?
11. Verse 16 says God saw your “unformed body” and that all your days were written before one of them came to be. Does that feel like a comfort, or does it raise questions for you?
12. Is it easy or hard to say, “I am wonderfully made” and actually mean it? What makes it hard?
13. Is there something about yourself that you have a hard time believing God made on purpose? You do not have to share what it is, just sit with the question.

## Bringing It Together

**Leader note:** *Step back from the text and let students say what they are taking with them. Keep the energy personal. These questions should feel like a conversation landing, not a review.*

Psalm 139 begins with God searching David and ends with David asking God to search him again. What felt like an intrusion at the start of the psalm has become an invitation by the end. David moves from being examined to being held.

In the Armenian tradition, this kind of prayer, honest, unguarded, and trusting, is at the heart of our spiritual life. It is what St. Gregory of Narek practiced in the Madyan Voghperkootyan: a soul laying itself completely bare before God, not because it is fearless, but because it trusts that the One who sees everything is also the One who loves completely.

14. What is one thing from this psalm that you want to carry with you this week?
15. If you could make one line from Psalm 139 your own personal prayer right now, which line would it be?
16. David ends the psalm by asking God to search him. After this conversation, does that feel like a frightening request or a safe one? What made the difference?

## Closing

**Leader note:** *Read Psalm 139:23–24 aloud slowly as a group. Then read the closing prayer below. Invite a moment of silence afterward before you dismiss. The silence is part of the prayer.*

*“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.” (Psalm 139:23–24)*

*“Lord, You have searched us, and You know us. You know our sitting and our rising. You know what we are afraid to say aloud. We thank You that to be fully known by You is not to be condemned, but to be held. Search us. Lead us. We trust You with what You find. Amen.”*

**Armenian note:** *St. Gregory of Narek’s Prayer 3 in the Madyan Voghperkootyan speaks in a strikingly similar voice to Psalm 139 — a soul laying itself bare before an all-knowing, all-loving God. Consider reading a passage from it as a follow-up in a future session.*

## Take It Further

| **Optional:** *For groups that want to continue, or for personal reflection at home.*

17. Read Psalm 139:19–22. The verses about David’s enemies are often skipped. Why do you think David includes these raw feelings in a psalm about God’s love? What does that tell us about what honest prayer is allowed to sound like?
18. St. Gregory of Narek wrote the *Madyan Voghperkootyan* as a series of searching, unguarded prayers to God, much like this psalm. What would it look like for you to pray with that kind of honesty?
19. Psalm 139 says God knows you completely and made you intentionally. How would your daily life look different if you genuinely believed both of those things at the same time?

### Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.