

Module 6 Exercise Handout

WHAT LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY ABOUT GOD ARE IN SCRIPTURE?

(15 MINUTES) From Pages 88-90 of Study Guide:

Scripture provides a variety of expansive language and images about God.

**(Note to leaders: Divide the group into pairs or groups of three. Assign each group a list of verses, either 1-6 or 7-13. If the group is working without a hard copy of the entire study, make photocopies of the verses for handouts.*

Invite groups to:

Skim the verses for a minute and notice how the images and language make you feel. Start to wonder why these particular feelings are evoked.

Reflect on these questions together:

- 1. What do you think these images say about God?*
- 2. What do you think these images say about humankind? □*

After participants have read and discussed the verses, gather in a large group and hear short responses from a few people.

When we seek to proclaim the good news of God’s love in Christ in ways that minister to many people, we can turn to Scripture and theology for resources.

1 “The Rock, his work is perfect, and all his ways are just.” (Deuteronomy 32:4a)

“You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.” (Deuteronomy 32:18)

“Indeed their rock is not like our Rock; our enemies are fools.” (Deuteronomy 32:31)

2 “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” (Psalm 27:1)

3 The LORD says to Israel of those who are wayward, “I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs, and will tear open the covering of their heart; there I will devour them like a lion, as a wild animal would mangle them.” (Hosea 13:8)

4 Jesus says: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers

her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.” (Matthew 23:37)

5 “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ... Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?” (Luke 15:4,8)

(For the full text, see Luke 15:1-10.)

6 God says about Israel: “Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I who took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.” □ (Hosea 11:3-4)

7 “You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.” (Psalm 32:7)

8 Moses proclaims to all of Israel: □ “As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; as it spreads its wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on its pinions, the LORD alone guided [Jacob]; no foreign god was with him.” (Deuteronomy 32:11-12)

9 “As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until he has mercy upon us.” (Psalm 123:2)

10 God says: “For a long time I have held my peace, I have kept myself still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor, I will gasp and pant.” (Isaiah 42:14)

11 God says to Israel: “Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from your birth; carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, even when you turn gray I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.” (Isaiah 46:3-4)

12 God says: “Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.”

(Isaiah 49:15)

13 God says: “As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 66:13)

At times, gender roles are subverted or mixed in Scripture.

**(Note to leaders: Ask one or two people to read the following section aloud while the*

group follows along. Encourage participants to circle anything in the texts that strikes them about gender roles. This exercise should take no more than a few minutes.)

1. Paul describes himself as a mother in labor. □ “My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,” (Galatians 4:19)
2. Jesus washes his followers’ feet. (John 13:1-20) □ “[Jesus] got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.” (John 13:4-5)