

PRAISE TO THE LORD

Isn't it amazing how the thoughts and feelings of the writers of the Psalms hundreds of years ago are so much like the way you and I feel about God today!

Write down the words of Psalm 103: 1-3. _____

One of the hymns based on this Psalm is *Praise To the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation*. Its writer, Joachim Neander, lived to be only 30 years old! What a great hymn of Christian praise he gave to the world while still a young man!

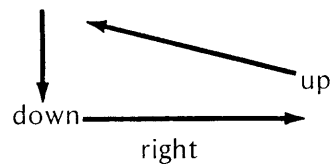
Both the Psalm and the hymn speak of God as being our "health and salvation." This does not mean we never will be physically sick but that we need never be afraid of sickness because our souls — the eternal part of us — cannot be harmed by anything once we have promised that God is first in our lives! Perhaps your choir director will read some of the Bible stories about Jesus healing persons — then you should talk about whether the verses mean that the physical body or the soul of the persons were "made whole."

The writers of the Psalms often compared God to the wonders of nature which they could see. Read some of the Psalms to see how God is described like the sky, like storms, like the ocean. What other ways can you find God described: _____

The hymn words of the second stanza, ". . . shieldeth thee under His wings yea so gently sustaineth," probably describe God's care much like a created thing that the little boy Neander might have seen. What do you think it was? _____

It is unusual for a tune written in 3/4 time to have such a strong, majestic feeling. What is the tune name? _____ (Part of it means "Songbook" in German.)

Listen to how the long phrases, with the first beats of each measure accented, help build the feeling of strength. Practice conducting 3/4 rhythm with a strong movement. Notice the triangle shape of the beat.



Be extra careful to hold each of the dotted half notes ($\text{d} \cdot$) for the full three counts, and to put its closing consonant sound on each word. Pronouncing words clearly and firmly also helps give a hymn a feeling of strength. Your choir director is always reminding you that when we share in a worship service — no matter how beautiful we sound — our words must be understood by others.

Will you someday — before you are 15 years old — write a hymn like Joachim Neander did? How about looking for Bible verses that describe your own feelings right now — and then — think up a tune for them. Why don't you try?