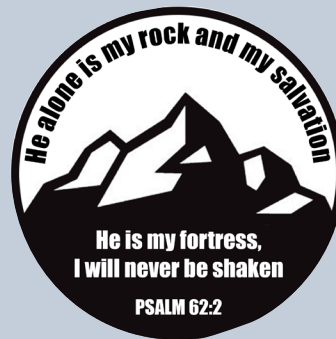


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Decorations

If you are hosting the meeting over Zoom, Google Hangouts, or making a video:

- Hang a large shower curtain or plastic wall hanging with the design of a mountain as your background. Consider adding things like a hiking backpack, hiking boots, etc. to your background.

If you are meeting in person:

- Hang wall hangings with an image of a mountain in the room.
- Set up artificial Christmas trees around the room, as if you are on a mountain.
- Create a fake mountain by stacking cardboard boxes and/or a ladder, and draping brown or black bulletin board paper over it. Crinkle paper and consider painting parts of it to make it look more realistic.
- Decorate the room(s) like a medieval castle/fortress.

Activities

Stepping Stone

This is a great activity to do outside.

Make a mold using one of the options here: Cut down a heavyweight cardboard box to 4 inches (20 cm) high and line with heavy plastic. Or cut the bottom 4 inches (20 cm) off a milk jug or other heavy plastic container. Spray or wipe the inside of the mold with cooking oil. Mix the cement according to directions. Add cement dye if you like. Quick-setting cement will be stiff within 5 to 10 minutes. So pour the cement into the mold right away. Cement can irritate your skin. So wash well if you get any on your hands.

Options: Push a piece of wire mesh into the wet cement to reinforce the stepping stone. Smooth the top and decorate with small objects (such as pebbles or small tiles) in the soft cement. Use a pencil to mark your initials and the date near the edge of the stepping stone.

Cover the top of the mold with plastic wrap if the air is very hot and dry. Let the cement harden overnight or longer. Turn the mold over on grass or another soft surface and pull the edges loose. Your stepping stone is ready to use.

Supplies:

- quick-setting cement mix
- bucket
- cooking oil
- cardboard box and heavy plastic
- *optional:* scissors, milk jug or other sturdy plastic container, cement dye, wire mesh, small objects to put in stepping stone to decorate

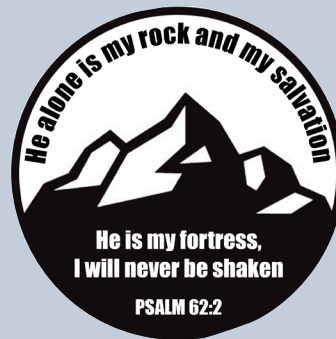
Rock Recycling

Find something such as a flower pot, picture frame, or small storage container. Glue on interesting pebbles to give it a new look.

Supplies:

- pebbles
- something to recycle
- glue

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Pebbles and Plants

Pile pebbles on netting. Stick plants into pebbles. Add more pebbles to hold up the plants, if needed. Bring the netting up around the pebbles, and tie it around the stems.

Supplies:

- pebbles
- netting
- twine or ribbon
- dried (or silk) plants

Story Stones

Give each kid 5-7 flat stones. Choose a Bible story that reminds you of God's power and love. Paint or draw on your stones the people in the story, or an object used in the story, or something to be the background of the story. Once the paint has dried, you can use the stones to retell the story.

Supplies:

- clean, flat, smooth rocks
- felt tip pens
- tempera paints
- paintbrushes

Crystal Garden

This is a great activity for families to work on at home.

Open a window or door, or work in a large open area. Put a thick layer of newspaper under a plastic container.

Cut up a sponge into four pieces. Wet chunks with water and squeeze them out. Put the pieces in a container so that part of the sponge will stick out of the liquid. Sponge pieces should be about 1/2 inch apart.

In the second container, mix 1/4 cup salt, 1/4 cup bluing, 1/4 cup distilled water, and 1/4 cup ammonia. Stir well. Pour over sponge pieces. Drip a few drops of food coloring over each sponge piece.

In a day or two, colorful crystals will begin to form and will grow for a week. The crystals will break easily, so they must not be touched or moved. After crystals stop growing, you could keep your garden by turning a glass bowl upside down over it.

Supplies:

- two plastic containers (with lid for one)
- ammonia (not sudsy)
- salt (not iodized)
- distilled water
- bluing (found in grocery stores)
- sponge
- newspaper
- water
- food coloring
- measuring cup
- spoon
- scissors
- glass bowl (*optional*)

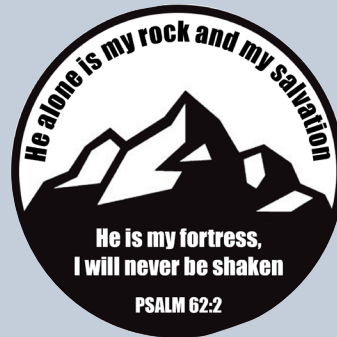
Songs

Sing songs about how God is our firm foundation. He is our rock and salvation, our refuge and strength.

Devotional

Today we are going to look at a psalm that was written by a man named David. David followed God with his whole heart. However, that doesn't mean that David lived a trouble-free life. David was on the run from his enemies for years! Yet he still trusted in God. Let's look at what he says. Read Psalm 62:1-12.

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- Do you think David wrote this psalm when things were going well in his life, or when things were hard? **Why?** (Hard—David describes his enemies attacking him in verses 3-4.)
- Which words in this psalm does David use to describe God? As kids list these out, write these on a board or easel pad. (Rock—2, 6, 7; Salvation—1, 2, 6; Fortress—2, 6; Hope-giver—5; Mighty rock—7; Refuge—7, 8; Powerful—11; Loves steadfastly—11.)

Some of these words describe how God acts, and some of these are pictures that help us understand God better. Let's take a closer look at some of these.

- How many of you have ever seen a mountain? What is it like? *Option:* Show a picture of a mountain/mountain range. (Take responses.)

When we think of mountains, we often think of how large and imposing mountains are. We are so small in comparison.

- Is it easy for a mountain to be moved or destroyed? **Why or why not?** (Hard. It takes tools like dynamite or a rock slide, or erosion over hundreds or thousands of years.)
- How could God be like a mountain or a rock? (God is steadfast; He never changes; He is strong and powerful; etc.)
- God is also described in this passage as a fortress. What is the purpose of a fortress? *Option:* Show pictures of medieval fortresses. (To protect the people inside from an enemy; etc.)
- How can God be like a fortress? (He is our protector; Refuge; etc.)

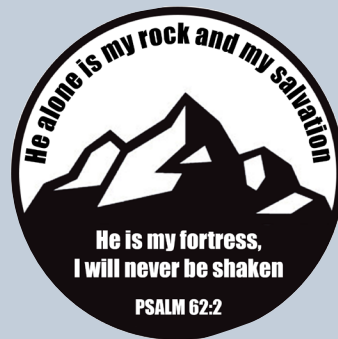
- In this psalm, David mentions that God is the one whom he gets strength, salvation and protection from. How many times does this psalm use the words "alone," "one," or "only" when describing God? (4.) These are found in verses 1, 2, 5, 6.
- Why do you think David kept repeating this idea? (To emphasize that we should put our trust only in God and not in people or things.)
- Reread verses 9-10. What does this psalm say not to put our trust in? (Being "important," Money/ riches.)
- What other things do you see yourself or other people putting their trust in? (Good grades; Staying healthy; Family provider(s) has a stable job; etc.) *Option:* Write each idea on a Jenga block to use in the illustration.

Let's see what this could look like. Set a hand towel on the table in front of you. Start building a Jenga tower on the towel. Move the pieces to make it more precarious. These blocks represent the things or people that we put our trust in apart from God. But when hard times come, these things can be shaken. As you talk, start shaking the towel underneath the tower until the pieces fall down.

But trusting in God, is like trusting this rock. Set a large stone on the towel. Shake the towel. God cannot be shaken—He has been and will always be the same—loving, powerful, good, dependable.

Like we can see from David's life, trusting God doesn't mean that we won't experience some really tough situations. It does mean that we can depend on God during those times to always be with us and someone we can depend on. Whether we feel lonely, afraid, discouraged, sad, or even happy, He cares for us.

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Bible Memory

Memorize Psalm 62:2. Use motions to help memorize this verse.

- He—point up
- Alone/truly—hold up one pointer finger
- Rock—make a fist
- Salvation—put arms out to make the shape of a cross
- Fortress/defence—hold hands up above head like forming a shelter
- I—point to yourself
- Not/never—shake head "no"
- Shaken/moved—Wobble unsteadily

Supplies:

- Bible

Games

Don't Get Knocked Over

Divide kids into pairs and stand facing each other, approximately one foot away from each other. They should stand up tall, with their feet closed and pointed towards their partner. Their hands should be about shoulder level, palms facing their partner.

The goal of the game is to get their partner to take a step or get knocked over by pushing their partner's hands.

Knock the Fortress Over

Divide kids into pairs. Give each kid a set of six plastic cups and a few paper or foam plates. Have one partner build a "fortress" with their plastic cups. Set a timer for one minute. The other partner will try to knock down as many cups from the fortress in the minute. The players who built the fortress can keep rebuilding as long as the timer is still going. See how many cups are still up at the end. Then switch roles to see which partner built the stronger fortress.

Fort Making Contest

This is a great activity to do if you are meeting over Zoom, or families are doing this at home. Have families work together (or have kids in each family compete against each other) to build forts with supplies they have at home. Encourage the use of things like pillows, sheets, cardboard boxes, etc. See which forts provide the best defense and why. Have families post pictures in a closed Facebook group, or something similar. Consider giving a gift card or small gift to the family who builds the "best," "most creative" or "most secure" fort.

Rock Climbing

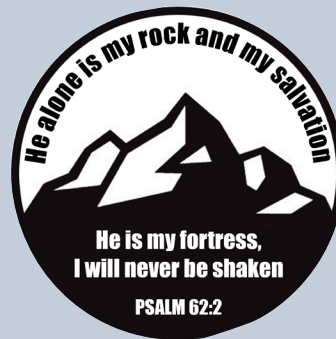
Arrange to visit a rock climbing wall, or rent a climbing wall. Be sure to have waivers signed ahead of time before anyone climbs. Rent the proper safety equipment as well, if needed.

Rock/Paper/Scissors

Have kids divide into pairs. On the count of three, each kid makes a symbol with a hand in the shape of a "rock," "paper," or "scissors." Rock smashes scissors. Paper wraps rock, and scissors cut paper. If both players in a pair make the same symbol, they repeat until one of them has won. Have kids find a new partner and repeat. Kids can keep track of the number of times they have won.

Alternative if socially distancing: Have kids line up in two lines facing each other. Kids should stand 6 feet apart in both directions. They will play against the person standing across from them. Then have all players move one space to the left, or clockwise. Play another round. Have kids keep track of how many times they have one. Play until each kid has played against every other kid at least once, or for a specific number of rounds, such as 10.

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Snacks

Build a Fortress

Use frosting and graham crackers to build a fortress. After putting it together, shake the plate to test its ability to stand firm. Give kids gummy bears or graham cracker bears to "live" in their fortresses. Then eat and enjoy!

Supplies:

- paper plates
- plastic knives
- graham crackers
- frosting
- gummy bears or graham cracker bears

Rock-themed Candy

Pass out pop-rock candy or rock-shaped chocolate candies.

Supplies:

- pop rock candy
- chocolate rock-shaped candy

Fine-Grained Rock—Microwave Fudge

Microwave chocolate and butter for one minute to melt. Stir in confectioners sugar and milk. Cook on high power for two minutes. Stir. Cook on high for 1-2 more minutes until mixture starts to bubble. Stir in until smooth. Blend in vanilla. Spread into a buttered square pan and cool. Cut into pieces and eat!

Supplies:

- 3 2/3 cups (875 ml) confectioners sugar
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) milk
- 3 squares unsweetened chocolate
- 4 tablespoons (60 ml) butter
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml) vanilla
- microwave-safe bowl
- measuring cup(s) and spoon(s)
- square cake pan
- knife