

 **World Day of Prayer**

**Prepared by the WDP Committee of Cook Islands**

**March 7, 2025**

**“I Made You Wonderful”**

**Psalm 139:14**

**Bible Study**

**INTENTION**

This program invites us to recognize that God created each one of us with great attention and loving care. God knows us intimately, and we are special to God in our uniqueness. When we open the doors of our hearts to this truth, everything in our life changes. We glow from within, and we begin treating others as beloved children of God. Through this program, we hope people will be spiritually uplifted as they come to trust the great love of God.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Opening prayer can be inspired by Psalm 119:18: “Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.”

**OPENING SONG**

Singing and music are a very important part of the Cook Islands culture. “My God Loves Me” is a favorite of both adults and children. It is heard all over the Cook Islands, as well as in Cook Islands communities in New Zealand and Australia.

***Aroa mai te Atua***

Aroa mai te Atua iaku  
Ki te au mea  
Taku e kite nei  
Te Anuanua, kua iti mai  
Ki roto iaku  
Aroa mai te Atua iaku.

***My God loves Me***

My God loves me  
and all the wonders I see.  
A rainbow shines through my window,  
my God loves me.

## **WELCOME**

“Kia orana” is a phrase in the Maori language, that Cook Islanders use to greet each other. Kia orana means more than just hello. It means: “May you live a long and prosperous life!” Invite all to greet one or several other people by making eye contact and saying “Kia orana.”

## **BIBLE STUDY**

### *Psalms 139:1-6 (NRSV)* *God Knows Us*

We do not know the specific circumstances of when this Psalm was written. But we know that the Psalms are a prayer and song book that have carried people through many different circumstances in life. Psalm 139 is a reflection on the psalm writer’s relationship with God.

The first section of the Psalm focuses on how God knows us. The theological term for this is omniscience. Omniscience refers to God having intimate and comprehensive knowledge of everything, including us as human beings. This Psalm shows how God knows us intimately and holds us tenderly.

*O LORD, you have searched me and known me.  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.  
You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O LORD, you know it completely.  
You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.*

### **Questions for discussion:**

Why do you think the psalmist feels that such knowledge is so wonderful?

How does this kind of knowledge make you feel?

## **THEME SONG**

Invite all to hum the melody of the theme song composed for the 2025 Cook Islands program.

*Psalms 139:7-12 (NRSV)*  
*God is With Us*

The second section of this Psalm focuses on how God is always with us. The theological term for this is omnipresence. Omnipresence means that God is present in all places and all circumstances. This part of the Psalm describes how God is with us, even in our weakest and most vulnerable states, when we feel cast out and surrounded by darkness.

*Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and night wraps itself around me,"  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.*

**Questions for discussion:**

Why are we sometimes tempted to "flee" from God's presence?

What is a time in your life that you felt the presence of God in the midst of deep struggle?

**THEME SONG**

Invite all to hum the melody of the theme song composed for the 2025 Cook Islands program.

Commented [SF1]: This is repetitive form the section right above. Is it necessary?

***Psalms 139:13-18 (NRSV)***  
***God Made us Wonderful***

The third section of this Psalm focuses on how we are “fearfully and wonderfully” made by God. This resonates with Genesis 1 and 2, where we see God’s creative acts, and learn that human beings are made in the image of God. God called the creation “very good” in Genesis, which resonates with the word “wonderful” in this Psalm.

A new insight into God creating us as human beings shows up in the Psalm with the word “fearfully.” The Hebrew word is “yare,” which can be translated as “to be afraid,” but it also means “to stand in awe and reverence.” We learn that God created and breathed life into us with great honor and respect.

In this part of the Psalm, the psalmist is profoundly moved to give praise and thanksgiving to God.

*For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well.  
My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me,  
when none of them as yet existed.  
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!  
I try to count them—they are more than the sand;  
I come to the end—I am still with you.*

**Questions for discussion:**

What is unique and special about the way that God created you?

What feelings does it evoke to know that God made you with reverence and awe?

**THEME SONG**

Invite all to sing the theme song composed for the 2025 Cook Islands program.

*I am fearfully made, and wonderfully made.  
Marvelous are your works,  
that my soul knows very well.  
And I’ll praise you all my days!*

## **MEMORIZATION**

Read Psalm 139:14 three times out loud together.

*"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."*

Invite everyone to stand, close their eyes, and offer a silent word of gratitude to God. And each person can be invited to speak this passage from Psalm 139:14, as they feel moved.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, sometimes we feel unappreciated, unloved and ordinary. We put ourselves down with criticism that leaves us feeling worthless. And we speak harsh words to others that leave them feeling ashamed. We are starting to see that when we do this, we are criticizing you...the one who created us...the one who knows us and loves us unconditionally. God, remind us in these moments that you shaped all of us in a unique way. Help us accept the truth that we are a marvelous reflection of you, so that the whole world would come to know we are loved. Amen.

## **GIFT**

Hand out a bookmark designed by WDP Cook Islands to each participant as a gift.

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