

ACU Chapel Curriculum Guide

Chapel Themes 2003-04

See weekly text/theme breakdowns at <http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/chapel/fall03cal.html>

Fall 2003: <i>Deep Calls to Deep: The Quest for God in the Psalms</i>	Explores an honest relationship with God and themes from the oldest worship book available. Deep Calls to Deep: The Quest for God in the Psalms is a fourteen-week curriculum developed by Dr. Mark Hamilton and implemented by Chapel Programs with input from the student, faculty, and staff led 2003 Chapel Program Team.
Spring 2004: <i>Dangerous Dialogue/Risky Peace: The Quest for Wisdom in Proverbs</i>	Continues exploring an honest relationship with God. Dangerous Dialogue/Risky Peace: The Quest for Wisdom in Proverbs is a thirteen-week curriculum also developed by Dr. Mark Hamilton and implemented by Chapel Programs with input from the 2003 Chapel Program Team.

Primary Format of the Week

Available at <http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/chapel/info/format.html>

Monday	Primarily presents a theological presentation of the theme and text. Monday presenters are speakers considered experts in text.
Tuesday	Further the Monday presentation with an application or integration of faith and life regarding the week's theme and text. This may be done with speakers, music, art, drama, or other types of presentations.
Wednesday	Primarily a celebration of community life at ACU with emphasis on learning, growth, and service. Designed for groups such as The Big Purple to perform and other organizations to present opportunities (such as Habitat for Humanity). These assemblies are sponsored through the Chapel Partnerships Program. The first Wednesday of each month is Departmental Chapel; the third Wednesday of each month is Class Chapel.
Thursday	Designated as Small Group Chapel day. However, because a minority of students attends SGCs, Chapel will be held in Moody and sponsored by various groups, departments, and organizations across campus through the Chapel Partnerships Program. However, this is not primarily a day for performances and other "community day" (Wednesday) activities.
Friday	Continues to primarily be a praise and worship day for the community. The Chapel time is set aside for worship in song, prayer, Scripture reading, and other acts of corporate worship led by members of the ACU community and experienced guests.

Chapel Curriculum 2003-04

Developed by Dr. Mark W. Hamilton and implemented by Campus Life

Fall 2003: Deep Calls to Deep: The Quest for God in the Psalms

Date	Theme	Text	Goal	Curriculum Note
Aug 25-29	Intro to ACU		To welcome and orient students to ACU's campus and Chapel	Includes opening assembly, Chapel syllabus review, Church of Christ 101, welcome from the President.
Sep 1-5	What is Wisdom?	Psalms 1	To explore the connection between wisdom and piety	The Psalter opens with a wisdom psalm, which seems to be a deliberate effort on the part of the book's final editors to frame the work as a wisdom book. That is, the placement of the psalm here grounds human wisdom in the quest for God.
Sep 8-12	Whom God Mocks	Psalms 2	To contemplate God's commitment to justice and the protection of the innocent	Psalms 2 reflects the royal ideals of the Jerusalem court, but it explicates a serious theological point; i.e., God's protection of the innocent against the oppression of the geopolitical power system.
Sep 15-19	The Sweet Hymn of Creation	Psalms 8	To understand all the cosmos as God's creation with a <i>telos</i> and thus call humans to act responsibly regarding the cosmos	The psalm, like other wisdom texts, sees piety as a feature of all beings, not just humans. A creation or environmental ethic can be grounded in part in the psalm.
Sep 22-26	Do Quarks Speak? Creation Points to God	Psalms 19	To continue the discussion of the previous week	This would be a good opportunity to bring in faculty from one of the sciences to talk about the complexity of affirming divine interaction with the cosmos.
Sep 29-Oct 3	When God is Absent	Psalms 22	To legitimize lament as a form of Christian worship and introduce the lament series of the month	Like other laments, this one moves from despair to trust to despair to praise. The preacher should avoid connecting this too early to Christ's use of it on the cross and should read it as the lament of Everyperson.
Oct 6-10	When Grace is Overdue	Psalms 102:1-17	To recognize the depth of despair that comes even to people of faith	This psalm provides an opportunity to explore spiritual dimensions of despair and acknowledge the reality and indeed legitimacy of such feelings.
Oct 13-17	Crying Out of the Depths	Psalms 130	To explore what it means to wait and hope when life seems hopeless on account of sin and failure	A dimension of lament is the realization of personal failure that nevertheless does not explain the full extent of the sinner's misery.
Oct 20-24	Working Wonders for the Dead	Psalms 88	To identify moments of utter despair and find within them grounds for hope	The psalm is a tremendous challenge for the preacher because, unlike most laments, it offers little ground for hope, except that the mere fact of its existence demonstrates the biblical tradition's ability to question God with utter frankness. This frankness is also the

				greatest opportunity for the preacher.
Oct 27-30	Wash Me Clean!	Psalm 51	To move past Psalm 88 to a kind of preliminary resolution to lament	One should avoid reading this as part of Davidic psychology. It is a more general lament that nicely balances concern with personal sin with larger communal or even human concerns. Note 2: This week precedes All Saints' Day (November 1) and could be tied into that day's celebration of the universal church somehow.
Nov 3-7	The God Who Remembers	Psalm 105	To remind us of the depth of the story of God's saving work	The psalm, like 78 and 135, recites God's saving acts (especially in the Exodus). Following All Saints' Day, this text can elicit memories of past interventions of God.
Nov 10-14	Treasuring God's Word	Psalm 119 (esp. vv. 9-16)	To connect wise living with a knowledge of and appreciation for Scripture	This, the longest psalm of all and an acrostic, explores the nature of wisdom and its connection to Torah. The psalm is relatively late, coming from a postexilic period in which Scripture has begun to influence Israelite religion profoundly.
Nov 17-21	En Route to God	Psalm 122	To cultivate a sense of the Christian life as pilgrimage	Part of the pilgrimage Psalms of Ascent, Ps. 122 calls the pilgrims to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, a city that had previously been sacked. Treatment of this psalm must capture the tension of being peace-seekers.
Nov 24-25	Thanksgiving	Psalm		
Dec 1-5	The Generation that Praises	Psalm 145:1-7	To call students to praise and create an environment of praise	The psalm starts the coda of the Psalter, which frames all its texts within the contexts of praise. That is, even laments and recitations are simply species in the genus "praise."

Fall Semester Notes:

1. The shape of the Psalter to some degree shapes the course. The Psalter opens with various hymns of praise and wisdom texts but soon moves into lament. The density of lament diminishes later in the collection. The book ends with a coda of praise of Psalms 145-50.
2. October becomes a month of lament. This is dictated by the flow of the course, but it may clash a bit with the flow of the academic calendar. But this somewhat radical juxtaposition of text with outside events can be used well by a good preacher, who can play on the tension.
3. On David. Although ancient and medieval interpreters commonly read the Psalter as the product of David's personal spiritual life, there is little evidence for this. Instead, the Psalter arose over a period of centuries within the Israelite cult and in circles of pious individuals. The series should avoid the sort of psychologizing that commonly occurs with the interpretation of the Psalms.

Spring 2004: Dangerous Dialogue/Risky Peace: The Quest for Wisdom in Proverbs

Date	Theme	Text	Goal	Curriculum Notes
Jan 12-16	The Challenging Quest for Wisdom	Proverbs 1:1-7	To call students to the quest for Wisdom	Proverbs 1-9 seeks to provide a theological framework for the random collections of proverbs in chapters 10ff. These initial chapters frame the quest for wisdom as (1) God's action; (2) a difficult, lifelong task; (3) and an international, universal human pursuit. 1:1-7 is the thesis statement of the book.
Jan 20-23	Seeking Nonviolence	Proverbs 1:8-19	To frame nonviolence as an aspect of wisdom	The book of Proverbs understands the quest for wisdom to occur only in the context of a just, i.e., nonviolent, society. Since the book's intended audience is the upper class, the call to nonviolence translates into the avoidance of the abuse of power.
Jan 26-30	The Eternity of Wisdom	Proverbs 3:11-20	To connect the pursuit of wisdom to the nature of God	Christianity does not demand the end of the life of the mind, but rather its full development, since wisdom is the principal by which even God creates. This week could be used to celebrate creativity and critical thinking as a gift of God.
Feb 2-6	The Wisdom of Sexual Discipline	Proverbs 5:15-23	To celebrate sexual discipline as an aspect of wisdom	Sexual discipline, though difficult, can be an opportunity for spiritual growth. Here, this discipline occurs within the bounds of marriage, which is not a matter of convenience but of covenant.
Feb 9-13	What Do You Hate? What Do You Love?	Proverbs 8:1-31 (esp 13)	To call for humility and service as aspects of wisdom	The chapter personified wisdom as a woman (Lady Wisdom) who calls everyone ("the simple") to a life of self-discipline and service. The chapter also claims that this lifestyle is part of the pattern of the universe itself. It does this by talking about how Wisdom accompanied God at the very creation of the world.
Feb 16-20	Beyond <i>Caveat Emptor</i> : Wisdom in Economics	Proverbs 11:1, 20:23	To cause students to think about the use of resources	The Bible frequently talks about the need for honesty and transparency in economic systems. This would be a good opportunity for COBA help on economic ethics.
Feb 23-27	Lectureship	Isaiah 40	<i>Come to the Waters</i>	
Mar 1-5	Is Honor Worth Having?	Proverbs 18:12, 20:3	To highlight honor or the cultivation of reputation as a facet of wisdom	The cultivation of reputation is a significant theme in Proverbs. Such cultivation demands discipline and a focus on what is noble.
Mar 15-19	Language Creates Reality	Proverbs 15:1-2, 4, 7	To call for the use of language to build a peaceful community	A major theme of Proverbs (and Wisdom literature in general) is the use of language. This text calls for language that is gentle, wise, instructive, and life-giving.

Mar 22-26	Faith Without Pretensions	Proverbs 20:22-25	To underscore the connection between truth-telling and faith	Another major theme in Proverbs is sincerity of expressions of faith. This week can be used to call students to serious self-examination of the connection between their faith and their behavior.
Mar 29-Apr 2	When is Enough Enough?	Proverbs 23:1-11	To highlight restraint as an aspect of wisdom	This series of proverbs (vv. 1-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9, 10-11) covers a common theme: self-restraint. Practical advice to prospective courtiers, the proverbs envision a society in which resources must be shared by all.
Apr 5-8	Holy Week		To connect & educate students with the Christian calendar	Observance of Palm Sunday (on Monday) and Good Friday (on Thursday)
Apr 12-16	Four Insufferable Things	Proverbs 30:20-23	To call students to take sides in the struggle between good and evil	Like the prophets in different ways, the Wisdom tradition believes that human goodness includes the ability to discriminate between good and evil and the commitment to choose good over evil.
Apr 19-23	The Paradox of Power	Proverbs 30:24-31	To understand the paradox of power and call students to use what power they will have well	Proverbs addresses potential courtiers and leaders. So it is striking that the two atypical proverbs chosen here note the ultimate futility of power (lizards in the royal palace). The week can be a way of underscoring the fact that power, which American college graduates in particular will enjoy, creates responsibility.
Apr 26-30	Wisdom Embodied	Proverbs 31:10-31	To celebrate the wise life in concrete ways	This familiar text is often used to reinforce sexist stereotypes, a process that should be avoided. The text works with the personification of Lady Wisdom in chapters 1-9, translating her into a real woman. Thus an older theme of the book is brought back to close out the book.

Spring Semester Notes:

1. The course follows the plan of the biblical book itself, trying to capture its shape and flow.
2. The series needs to emphasize that proverbs are provisionally true, not statements of absolute truth.
3. The lessons in the six weeks before Easter can be tied to Lenten themes of repentance and self-examination, both preconditions of peaceful wisdom.
4. A major challenge in this series will be to avoid moralizing, that is, the drawing of trivial moral lessons or even a heavy-handed didacticism. The nature of proverbs is to make their hearer reflect in nuanced ways on the moral issue at hand. Thus the book of Proverbs sometimes juxtaposes contradictory proverbs (e.g., 14:20-21; 26:4-5) in order to stimulate creative thinking and thus creative action.