

### Our school vision:

Wincle School aims to deliver an enriching and outstanding rural education, **nurturing the whole individual: body, mind and soul**, inspiring rounded, happy, courageous children who shine in all that they say and do, exhibiting a passion for learning, a confident faith, a loving concern for community and an inclusive respect for all.

### Saturn Class

How can we nurture the whole individual: body, mind and soul?

Christianity Today (May/June 2012)

## Meeting the God of Nurture

Explore and respond to the nurturing side of God.

*Nicole Unice*



I'm not an art history buff, but there's one painting that's changed my view of God forever—and all because of two hands. In his remarkable painting "[The Prodigal Son](#),"





Rembrandt captures the full expression of God's character by painting the Father God with two very different hands. One hand is drawn masculine: rugged, protective, and strong. The other is clearly feminine: slender, nurturing, and soft.

There are times in life when God's nurturing qualities are exactly what we need. Our picture of God is only complete when we truly allow his mothering qualities to embrace our hearts. To know his tender love *and* his mighty power renews our strength to trust in him, no matter what challenges come our way.

Journey with me through four devotional times of exploring and responding to the truth of the nurturing side of God's character:

1. **Explore:** Ava Pennington says, "When I overlook *all* the characteristics God reveals about himself, I lose. I lose the blessing of knowing him as gracious and gentle, compassionate and comforting. I lose the joy of knowing him as encourager and friend, loving and kind."

**Respond:** Think of the first five words you'd use to describe God. Do you first think of him as holy and powerful or loving and tender? Because of our personalities, circumstances, and upbringing, most of us will lean one way or the other. [Psalm 131](#) is a short reflection that invites us to think of God as loving, kind, and tender. Record these verses in your journal or on a notecard, or post them in your car. Read the psalm several times this week to root the imagery in your mind as you rest your spiritual burdens in the loving arms of God.

## **Psalm 131**

**A song of ascents. Of David.**

- <sup>1</sup> My heart is not proud, LORD,  
my eyes are not haughty;  
I do not concern myself with great matters  
or things too wonderful for me.
- <sup>2</sup> But I have calmed and quieted myself,  
I am like a weaned child with its mother;  
like a weaned child I am content.
- <sup>3</sup> Israel, put your hope in the LORD  
both now and forevermore.

2. **Explore:** Mary Beth Chapman describes the imagery of wandering through a dense forest as a way to explain the years after her daughter's death. She says she sensed God saying, *I know you can't see me, but you've got to trust me.*

**Respond:** Have you experienced your own forest? Where are you in your faith journey right now? Entering or exiting a forest? Deep in the trees? Utterly lost? Imagine where you are right now, and then picture a loving, larger presence holding your hand, leading you forward. Every time you feel discouraged or disoriented, imagine that loving hand holding tightly to yours.

3. **Explore:** Have you ever wrestled with the question of God's healing? Are there places in your life that feel sick or diseased? Perhaps you've experienced the sudden interruption of life's plans because of an emotional or physical illness. If so, you may have wondered why God would withhold healing from you. In "[His Healing Heart](#)," Holly Vicente Robaina reminds us that we rarely focus on the many healings God *has* given us from physical sickness, and the *many* days we've experienced wellness.

[Revelations 21:4, James 1:17](#)

**Respond:** Stop now and record some ways God has healed you and made you well. Some examples might be to remember trials he has brought you through, or even to thank him for healing your cold last winter, for providing you with strong legs to exercise, or for creating you with a beating heart and a thinking brain.

4. **Explore:** In "Mother to the Motherless," Amy Simpson details some of God's many nurturing character traits.

Here are a few she mentions:

- "He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds."—[Psalm 147:3](#)
- "The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears."—[Isaiah 25:8](#)
- "He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young."—[Isaiah 40:11](#)
- "This same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus."—[Philippians 4:19](#)

**Respond:** Which of these verses (or any of the other passages mentioned in Simpson's article) captures an element of God's character that you need to be reminded of? How can you keep that characteristic with you today? Consider recording the verse, imagining you in the image, or drawing a picture. Pray boldly that God would reveal that aspect of himself to you so that you can trust more deeply in who he is.