

## A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD Worksheet

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### Verse 1

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing;  
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel  
hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

### Verse 2

Did we in our strength confide, our striving would be  
losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's  
own choosing:  
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;  
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.

### Verse 3

And though this world, with devils filled, should  
threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to  
triumph through us:  
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word shall fell him.

### Verse 4

That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to  
them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who  
with us sideth:  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;  
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.

## Vocabulary

In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

Verse 1: fortress, bulwark, amid, mortal, prevailing, ancient, foe, craft

Verse 2: confide, striving, Sabaoth

Verse 3: threaten, triumph, Prince of Darkness, tremble, rage, endure, lo, doom

Verse 4: abideth, kindred

**Word Pictures** Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, perhaps, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

Verse 1: mighty fortress, bulwark neverfailing, amid the flood, ancient foe

Verse 2: must win the battle

Verse 3: tremble not

Verse 4: earthly powers, goods and kindred

**Mechanics** Verbally discuss

Who is the speaker?

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?

Does the poem have a setting?

Is the poem about a particular event? Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?

Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?  
What point of view or perspective is the speaker?  
How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?

**Comprehension Questions** Verbally discuss

*Verse 1:* Why do you think the author used the terms “fortress” and “bulwark”? Explain and discuss “flood of mortal ills prevailing.” Who is “our ancient foe”? How does the author describe this foe? Do you agree/disagree with the author? Why?

*Verse 2:* Discuss “Did we in our strength confide, our striving would be losing.” Who does the author mean by “Man of God’s own choosing”? Why is the word “Man” capitalized? Did you notice the term “dost”? What does it mean? Who is the same from age to age? According to the author, Who must win the battle? Do you agree/disagree? Why?

*Verse 3:* According to the author, who threatens the author and the reader? What does the author recommend in the second line? Who is the “Prince of Darkness”? According to the author, what will happen to the “Prince of Darkness”? Do you agree/disagree? Why?

*Verse 4:* What is above “earthly powers”? Why are the words “Spirit,” “Him,” and “Who” capitalized? Explain and discuss “Let goods and kindred go.” What is forever?

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

**What Does the Bible Say?**

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the four verses.

Discuss the message of this poem with respect to Psalm 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Give Biblical and historical examples of those that have had to face the message of this poem. Does this poem remind you of anyone or any event? What caused you to think of that person and/or event?

**The Author/Poet**

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The author’s name for this poem or lyric is Martin Luther (1483-1546). He was born 10 November 1483, in Eisleben, Germany, and died 18 February 1546, in Eisleben, Germany. Interestingly, he was buried in Wittenberg, Germany. Martin Luther is credited with beginning the Protestant Reformation 1517. This 1529 poem is referred to as the “Battle Hymn of the Reformation.” The poem was translated from German to English by Frederic H. Hedge in 1853.

## Geography

Locate Germany on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Eisleben (Germany) and Wittenberg (Germany) on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast weather from Germany with your own for one week.

Make a German meal for your family.

## Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be four different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the event and message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the historical event and the message of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, "interview" various individuals this poem reflects (e.g., Martin Luther, parents/grandparents, Dolley Madison, Joshua, Caleb, William Tell, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents' permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author's view of the impact of *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Martin Luther and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.