

# REFERENCE POINT

## FEBRUARY 2020

### Our Refuge

*“The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock where I seek refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” (Psalm 18:2 CSB)*

As a librarian, I often hear how lucky I am to work in a quiet, calm place. This is true, but those of us “in the trenches” get to see a different side of libraries. We know they can at times also be as hectic and stressful as any other workplace. While most of us are wearing multiple hats and dealing with unanticipated challenges, we may not always see the library as a place of shelter and peace. However, the reality is that often our patrons see us as a refuge.

Scripture gives us an insightful glimpse into the concept of a refuge in the Psalms. Repeatedly the word “refuge” is used in this book as we are reminded that our refuge in the Lord is safety and rest. Psalm 46:1-3 provokes such a strong image of protection when it states that we do not need to be afraid even when the seas roar and the mountains quake. In the midst of confusion and turmoil we are safe within the security of our Heavenly Father. Knowing this reality immediately brings a sense of calm to my soul.

As Christian librarians, we minister daily to students and patrons who are living in an uncertain, chaotic, and stressful world. With the knowledge that safety and rest lies within our trust in God, we have the unique opportunity to

offer a place conducive to sharing this truth. The library is perfectly suited to offer a quiet space for prayer, a break from the stresses of academia, and a spot for thoughtful reflection. The Hebrew word is “chasah” and this root word denotes seeking refuge or fleeing for protection; it gives a sense of desperation. As ambassadors of Christ we can offer a safe haven for the desperate by providing our patrons with compassionate words, listening ears, and generous encouragement. As we pray for our patrons we can ask that they be protected within the presence of the Lord as David was in Psalm 31:20-21. David praised the Lord for safety and for concealing His children from human schemes and quarrelsome tongues. If we strive to manage our libraries as places of sanctuary, we are able to serve our patrons not only academically but also spiritually. My prayer today is that we allow the Lord to direct our Christian librarianship and may our hearts and libraries continue to be a shelter to those in our communities who need refuge.



—Jill Botticelli

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