



Journey Group Discussion Guide  
Week of December 9  
Sunday's Text: Psalm 22:1-11

### ICEBREAKER

Read the Associated Press article on the next page about teachers' use of red pens for grading. Is the pain associated with marking errors in red unnecessary or is its significance exaggerated?

Do you see similar reactions to pain or criticism elsewhere in our society?

### SCRIPTURE

#### **Briefly review Psalm 22:1-11.**

How does David feel as he writes the psalm, and what losses does he communicate?

How does David describe God? What does he expect from God?

#### **Read Jeremiah 12:1-4.**

How does Jeremiah describe the people around him? What do they think about God?

What is Jeremiah's complaint? How have the actions of the wicked seemed to have impacted everyone?

#### **Read Jeremiah 12:5-15.**

In verse five God essentially tells Jeremiah to buckle up because as bad as it is, it is going to get worse. How do you think Jeremiah felt about this warning in the midst of his loss?

What does God say that he will do in verses 7-14? How does this address Jeremiah's complaint and the losses of the righteous?

What is God's ultimate goal as described in verse 15? How will Judah's experience of loss and judgment contribute to this goal?

### APPLICATION

To whom or what are you inclined to turn in times of loss?

What, if anything, do you expect of God in times of loss? What should we expect of God?

How might the experience of pain with God, rather than avoiding it, strengthen or improve you as a person?

## **Red ink falling out of favor with teachers**

April 4, 2005

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Of all the things that can make a person see red, school principal Gail Karwoski was not expecting parents to get huffy about, well, seeing red.

At Daniels Farm Elementary School in Trumbull, Connecticut, Karwoski's teachers grade papers by giving examples of better answers for those students who make mistakes. But that approach meant the kids often found their work covered in red, the color that teachers long have used to grade work.

Parents objected. Red writing, they said, was "stressful." The principal said teachers were just giving constructive advice and the color of ink used to convey that message should not matter. But some parents could not let it go.

So the school put red on the blacklist. Blue and other colors are in.

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At Public School 188 in Manhattan, 25-year-old teacher Justin Kazmark grades with purple, which has emerged as a new color of choice for many educators, pen manufacturers confirm.

"My generation was brought up on right or wrong with no in between, and red was always in your face," Kazmark said. "It's abrasive to me. Purple is just a little bit more gentle. Part of my job is to be attuned to what kids respond to, and red is not one of those colors."

Three top pen and marker manufacturers -- Bic, Pilot Pen and Sanford, which produces Papermate and Sharpie - - are making more purple pens in response to rising sales. School leaders and teachers are largely driving that demand, company representatives say.

"They're trying to be positive and reinforcing rather than being harsh," said Robert Silberman, Pilot Pen's vice president of marketing. "Teachers are taking that to heart."