

To: _____
Psalm 95:7

What: _____
Psalm 95:1, 2, 6

In Honor of:

Why: _____
Psalm 95:1, 3-7

PREVIEW

Please RSVP to:

Psalm 95:1-2, 6, Hebrews 10:24-25,
Acts 2:42-47

When: _____

Where: _____

Dive

Year 3, Unit 1

**Come,
Now Is the Time
to Worship**

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Christians Gather

Each week Christians gather for worship in mud huts and Gothic cathedrals, in prisons and nursing homes, in storefront buildings and village squares, in sprawling megachurches and old country chapels. . . . Some congregations hear formal sermons read carefully from honed manuscripts; others hear extemporaneous outpourings of emotional fervor.

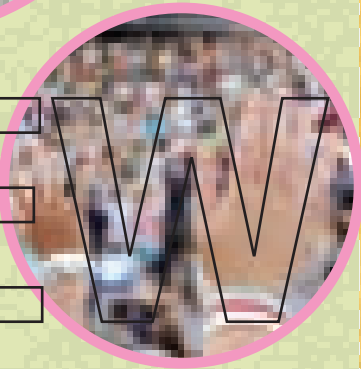
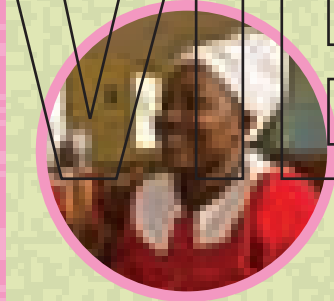
Some sing music accompanied by rock bands, some by pipe organs, some by drum ensembles, some by rusty old pianos, and some by no accompaniment at all. Some dress in their formal Sunday best, others in casual beach clothes, but no matter where, when, or how they gather, all Christians gather for the same reason: to worship the living God, Creator of heaven and earth!

No matter what the style of worship is, we always begin by remembering our God, who is worthy of honor and praise, and remembering who we are—the sheep of God’s flock, created to worship the Maker!



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“I am the LORD your God. . . .

Do not put any other gods in place of me. . . .

Do not bow down to them or worship them.”

—Exodus 20:2a, 3, 5a (NIRV)

Q: What is God’s will for you in the first commandment?

A: I should trust, love, fear, and honor the one true God with all my heart. I should not trust or worship any person, creature, or thing in place of God. —Q&A 55

It's All About God

As we gather to worship we acknowledge God’s worth.
We remember, once again, who God is.
And we remember, once again, who we are.

P R E V I E W

God is God.
We are not.

God is righteous.
We are not.

God is pure and holy and sinless.
We are not.

Forgive Me. For I Have Sinned

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

—Matthew 22:37-39

How do you know you are a sinner?

Christ’s summary of the Law tells me I should love God with all my heart, soul, and mind and my neighbor as myself. But I do not do this.

—Q&A 3

If we claim that we’re free of sin, we’re only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is nonsense.

On the other hand, if we confess our sins God won’t let us down; God will be true to himself.

God will forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing!

—1 John 1:8-9 (adapted from *The Message*)

Psalm 32

When I kept it all inside,
my bones turned to powder,
my words became daylong groans.

The pressure never let up;
all the juices of my life dried up.

Then I let it all out;
I said, “I’ll make a clean breast of my failures
to God.”

Suddenly the pressure was gone—
my guilt dissolved,
my sin disappeared.

Count yourself lucky, how happy you must
be—
you get a fresh start,
your slate’s wiped clean.

Count yourself lucky—
God holds nothing against you
and you’re holding nothing back from him.

(vv. 3-5, 1-2, *The Message*)

How do you feel when there’s something you’re keeping inside?

What keeps you from letting it out?

How would you feel if you could let it out? What would you do or say?

How will you feel after you let it out?

Look up Psalm 51 in your Bible and read verses 1-12. Then finish some of the sentences below as you compose your own psalm of confession and “let it out.”

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me (vv. 3-5).

I confess that sometimes I . . .

I regret the time that I . . .

I'm sorry that I failed to . . .

I wish I hadn't said . . .

I wish I hadn't . . .

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow . . .
Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me (vv. 7, 10).

In gratitude, O God, I will . . .

Amen.

Psalm 95

Come, let's shout praises to God,
raise the roof for the Rock who saved us!
Let's march into his presence singing praises,
lifting the rafters with our hymns!

And why?
**Because God is the best,
High King over all the gods.**
In one hand he holds deep caves and caverns,
in the other hand grasps the high mountains.

He made Ocean—he owns it!
His hands sculpted Earth!

So come, let us worship:
bow before him, on your knees before God, who made us!
Oh yes, he's our God,
and we're the people he pastures, the flock he feeds.

Drop everything and listen,
LISTEN AS HE SPEAKS ...

(vv. 1-7, *The Message*)



PREVIEW

When we gather together to worship, we believe God speaks to us through the hearing of God's Word and the pastor's message (or sermon). Next time you find yourself struggling to listen and pay attention, keep these questions in mind:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is there a sin for me to confess?

Is there a sin for me to avoid?

Is there an example for me to follow?

Is there a new thought about God the Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit?

Is there something I have questions about?

Road Signs

Before you can get a driver's license, you must be able to tell what the road signs mean. Put the number of each sign by its meaning.





- Do not enter
- Railroad crossing
- Stop
- Divided highway begins
- Divided highway ends
- Slippery when wet
- Narrow bridge
- No U-turn
- Yield
- School crossing

God's Covenant Promises*

Read the story of Joshua and the Israelites from Joshua 3:1-4:8 and then answer the questions below.

REVIEW

What did God promise to do? (see verse 10)

How was God faithful to the Israelite people?

How did the people remember what God had done?

Holding on to your stone, read some more of God's promises:

REVIEW

“I will make my covenant with you. It will last forever. It will be between me and you and your children after you for all time to come. I will be your God, and I will be the God of all of your family after you.”

—Genesis 17:7, NIV (promise to Abraham)

“This is the covenant I will make with Israel after that time,” announces the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds. I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

—Jeremiah 31:33, NIV (promise through the prophet Jeremiah)

I heard a loud voice from the throne. It said, “Now God makes his home with people. He will live with them. They will be his people. And God himself will be with them and be their God.”

—Revelation 21:3, NIV (promise for the end of time)

God's Promise to YOU (write your first name in the blank):

“I will be _____'s God; _____ will be mine.”

The Promise Is for You

Baptism is the mark of the covenant that reminds us and assures us that we belong to God and are God's people, even as infants.

Peter replied, "All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children. . . ."

—Acts 2:38-39, *NIRV*

PREVIEW

What's your response? Please check the phrase below that best describes how you feel when watching a baptism celebrated in worship:

- That baby sure is cute.
- What does this baby's baptism have to do with me?
- Yeah, I do belong to God. This promise is for me too.
- I wonder what that baby will grow up to be like?
- Thank you, God.
- I'm part of God's family.
- I know I have a church that cares about me.
- It's my job to be part of the church that cares about this person being baptized.
- Other: _____

Q&A

What are sacraments?

Sacraments are holy signs and seals which the Holy Spirit uses to assure us that we belong to him and are saved by Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross.

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Take and Eat!

The Lord's Supper is the "new covenant" in Christ's blood by which we participate in and receive the benefits of his death and resurrection.

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat. . . ."

—MATTHEW 26:26



PREVIEW

What's your response? Please check the phrase below that best describes how you feel when you see the Lord's Supper being celebrated in worship.

- No thanks.
- You don't mean me, do you? I'm not old enough.
- Thanks for the invitation. I'll get back to you when I'm ready.
- Oh please, not another loooooong communion service!
- Thank you.
- For me? I can hardly believe it.
- Amazing! I can hardly wait to eat your supper, Jesus!
- Other: _____

Scripture	Gives the Blessing	Receives the Blessing	Passes on the Blessing By
Genesis 1:27-28			
Genesis 12:2-3			
Luke 24:50-51			
Matthew 28:18-20			
Now			

PREVIEW

Our Lord Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep.
 The God who gives peace brought him back from the dead.
 He did it because of the blood of the eternal covenant.
 May God supply you with everything good.
 Then you can do what he wants.
 May he do in us what is pleasing to him.
 We can do it only with the help of Jesus Christ.
 Give him glory for ever and ever. Amen.

—Hebrews 13:20-21, *NIRV*

PREVIEW

A Blessing from God

The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons,
‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say
to them:

**‘The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you and give
you peace.’**

So they will put my name on the Israelites,
and I will bless them.”

—Numbers 6:22-27



PREVIEW

In some sense, worship is like a conversation with God. Sometimes we do the talking; sometimes God does. Sometimes we do the listening; sometimes God does. And sometimes we talk and listen to each other. Like any good conversation, it goes back and forth. But it always starts and ends with God.

We gather at God's invitation to worship God's holy name.

God greets us with words of grace, and we respond with praise.

God invites us to be honest, and we respond by confessing our sins.

God assures us of forgiveness and grants us peace. We then share that peace with others and say thank you to God for his steadfast love and faithfulness.

God reminds us how he expects us to live as children of God: love God, love our neighbor.


We ask the Holy Spirit to help us hear God's Word.

God speaks through the words of Scripture and the sermon, and we respond in some way.

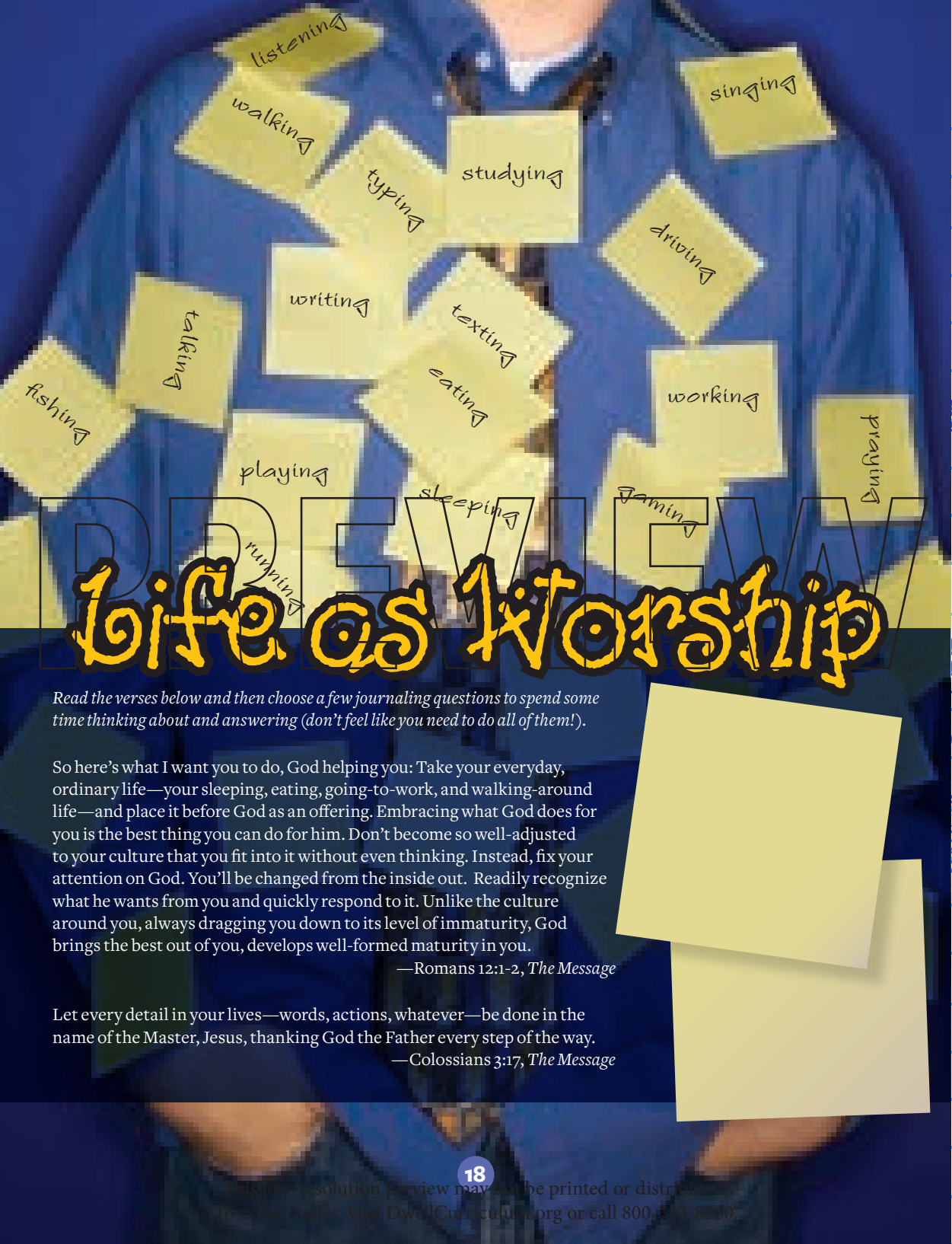
As God sends us into the world to live in faithful service, God blesses us and promises that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God will always be with us.

-  Represents conversation from God to the people .
-  Represents conversation from the people to God.
-  Represent conversation among the people.

Draw the symbol that best represents who's doing the talking in each worship element below.
As an example, the first one is done for you.

-  Call to Worship
- Greeting
- Song or Prayer of Adoration and Praise
- Call to Confession
- Prayer of Confession
- Assurance of Pardon
- Passing of the Peace
- Prayer or Song of Thanksgiving
- The Law
- The Word of God
- Prayer for Illumination
- Scripture Reading
- Sermon
- The Response to God (Sending)
- Response to the Sermon
- Call to Discipleship
- Blessing (Benediction)

PREVIEW



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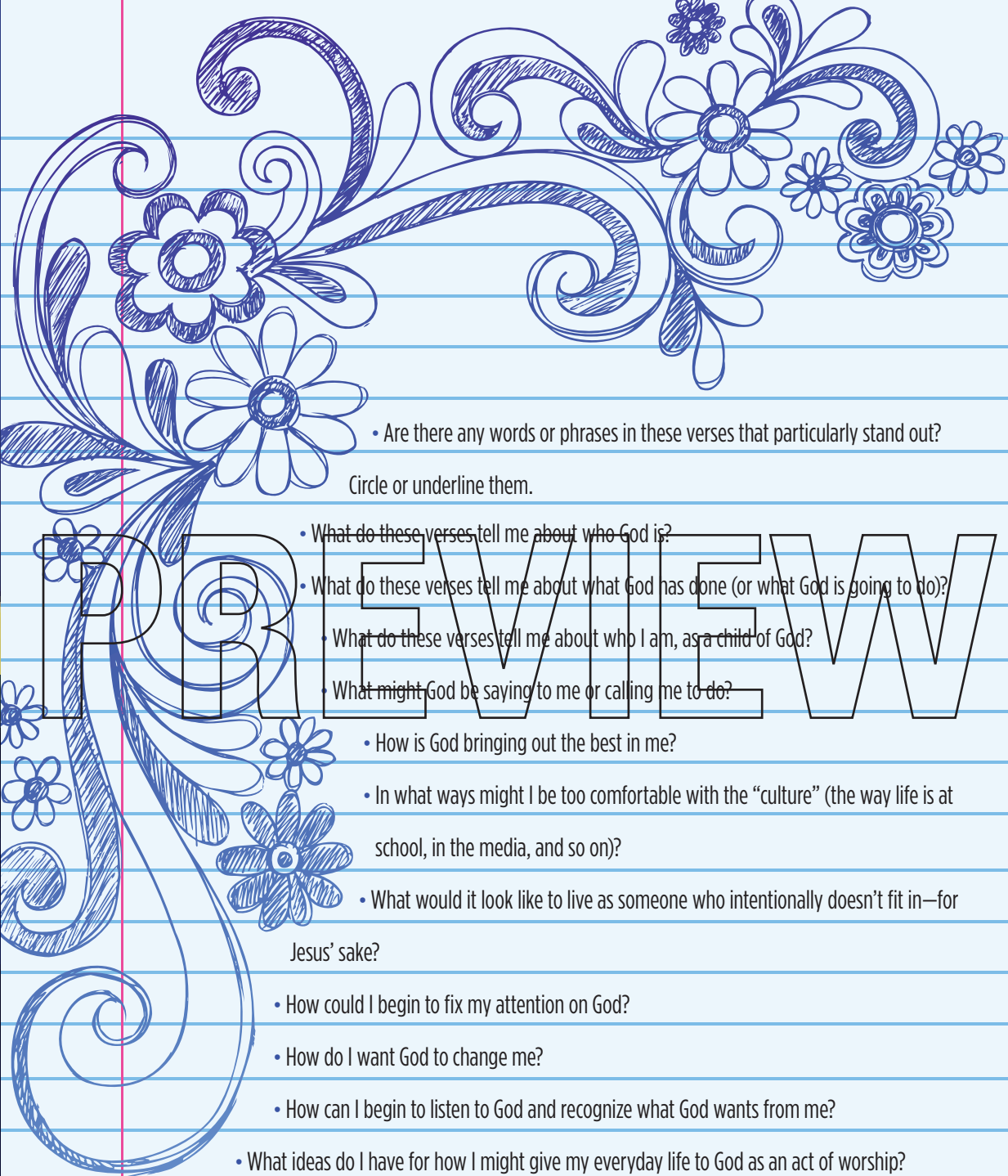
Read the verses below and then choose a few journaling questions to spend some time thinking about and answering (don't feel like you need to do all of them!).

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

—Romans 12:1-2, *The Message*

Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

—Colossians 3:17, *The Message*



• Are there any words or phrases in these verses that particularly stand out?

Circle or underline them.

- What do these verses tell me about who God is?
- What do these verses tell me about what God has done (or what God is going to do)?
- What do these verses tell me about who I am, as a child of God?
- What might God be saying to me or calling me to do?

REFLECT

- How is God bringing out the best in me?
- In what ways might I be too comfortable with the “culture” (the way life is at school, in the media, and so on)?
- What would it look like to live as someone who intentionally doesn’t fit in—for Jesus’ sake?
- How could I begin to fix my attention on God?
- How do I want God to change me?
- How can I begin to listen to God and recognize what God wants from me?
- What ideas do I have for how I might give my everyday life to God as an act of worship?

The Gathering or Approach to God

Preparation for Worship or Prelude

The music, fellowship, or silent meditation before the service begins that prepares us for worship.

Call to Worship

A song or verse inviting us to come and worship—the call to worship reminds us why we’ve gathered and whom we are worshipping!

Choose a verse from the Psalms or a song/hymn that could be used for a call to worship (there are some ideas below, but feel free to use other worship resources for additional ideas).

Decide how you want the people to hear the Scripture verses: broken up in parts for different readers; congregation reading it in unison or responsively; one person speaking it; or in another format. If you choose a song, decide how it will be played (piano, organ, praise band, electronic device), who will sing it (congregation, soloist, praise team), what verses will be sung, and so on.

If you have the technology, consider videos or other creative ways to help call the congregation to worship.

Call to Worship Verses

O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

—Psalm 34:3, NRSV

Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

—Psalm 124:8, NRSV

It is good to praise the LORD
and make music to your name, O Most High,
proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night.

—Psalm 92:1-2

Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

—Psalm 95:6-7

Call to Worship Hymns and Songs

All Creatures of Our God and King
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty
Come, Now Is the Time to Worship
Here I Am to Worship

Greeting

We begin by hearing a greeting from God, granting us grace and peace.

Decide who will give this greeting from God—a pastor, worship leader, member of the congregation, etc. What will the person say? How will the congregation respond?

Possible Greetings

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

Amen.

—Galatians 1:3-5

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

—2 Corinthians 13:14

After hearing a greeting from God, sometimes worshipers extend God's greeting to each other with words such as, "The peace of Christ be with you," answered with, "and also with you." Or sometimes a simple "good morning" is used as a way to greet one another.

Decide when in the worship service the congregation will greet each other, how the worship leader will invite them to do this, and what they might be prompted to say to each other.

Mutual Greeting Ideas

As God has greeted us with his peace, so let us pass the peace of Christ to each other.

As God has greeted us, so let us greet each other.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Song or Prayer of Adoration and Praise

We respond to the call to worship by offering glory and praise to God.

Choose or suggest a song or prayer of praise. If a prayer, decide who will say it—a worship leader, in unison by the congregation, etc. Consider writing a prayer of adoration, praising God for who he is and what he has done!

The Gathering or Approach to God (cont.)

Call to Confession

This is the part of the service in which God encourages us to “come clean” and admit the ways in which we’ve sinned—either as individuals or as a corporate body.

Choose a verse from Scripture that could be used for a call to confession (see some ideas below, but feel free to consult additional worship resources) and who will speak it.

Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed are those whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When we keep silent, our bones waste away and our strength is lost.

When we acknowledge our sin and don’t hide what we’ve done wrong, God is faithful and will forgive us our sin. So let us confess our sins together.

—based on Psalm 32:1-5

Hear the words of Psalm 51:

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;

so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

Join me in confessing our sins before our Holy God. Let us pray.

—based on verses 3-4

God’s Word assures us:

If we say that we have no sin,

we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins,

he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In humility and faith, let us confess our sin to God.

—based on 1 John 1:8-9

We cannot come before God

unless we are at first honest with ourselves

about who we are and what we’ve done.

In this spirit, let us offer our prayers to God.

PREVIEW

Prayer of Confession

In the prayer of confession, we acknowledge before God that we are sinners.

Write a short prayer, or choose a verse from Scripture that expresses being sorry for our sin. You may also choose a song that is a confession of sin. If writing a prayer, decide if it will express individual or corporate sins, general or specific sins. Decide who will pray it—a leader on behalf of the people, in unison, responsively, silently, etc. If choosing a song, decide how the song will be played, who will sing it, and so on. Consider how a time of silence might be used before, during, or after the prayer to allow the words of the confession to sink in.

Verses and Prayers of Confession

Like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out:
“Woe is me!

I am lost, for I am a person of unclean lips,
and I live among a people of unclean lips!”

In the silence now, take time to come clean and confess
your sins before our Holy God . . .

—*adapted from Isaiah 6:5*

Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercies,
blot out our transgressions.

Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity,
and cleanse us from our sin.

For we know our transgressions,
and our sin is ever before us.

(silent prayers of confession)

Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within us.

Cast us not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from us.

Restore to us the joy of your salvation,

**and uphold us with a willing spirit.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

—*responsive prayer, adapted from Psalm 51*

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

—*Kyrie Eleison; to be preceded or followed
with time of silent prayer*

Lord, we are like sheep, and we get lost.
We forget the needs of our neighbors
And do not love you above all else.
We need a Savior, so we long for Jesus.
Come, fill our lives, Jesus. Amen

—*From A Child Shall Lead: Children in Worship.
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Lord, you are a God who keeps promises.

In our prayers and songs we say that we want to be
Christians,

but then we forget our promises.

Our actions do not match up with our words.

We say mean things to other people,
we hurt their feelings,

we think of ourselves first,
and worst of all, we ignore you.

Lord, forgive us and hear our prayer
for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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Songs of Confession

Create in Me a Clean Heart

Give Us Clean Hands

Trading My Sorrow

Kyrie Eleison (Lord, Have Mercy)

The Gathering or Approach to God (cont.)

Assurance of Pardon

After confessing our sins, we hear the good news that God is gracious and God forgives sin—always!

Choose a Bible verse that communicates this good news, and decide who will say it. Some possibilities include the following:

After Isaiah confessed his sin, one of the seraphs flew to him, touched his lips with a live coal, and said:

“Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.”
So too have our sins been blotted out.
We live as forgiven children of God.
Believe this good news, and live in peace!

—based on Isaiah 6:6-8

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. . . .

He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

—Psalm 103:8, 10-12

PREVIEW

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that whoever believes in him may not perish
but may have eternal life.

**Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to
condemn the world,
but in order that the world might be saved through
him.**

—John 3:16-17, NRSV (responsively)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and
the truth is not in us.

When we confess our sins,

he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Live in the sure hope of Christ's promise! Our sins are
forgiven!

Thanks be to God.

—based on 1 John 1:8-9

Hear the good news:

**Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.**

Believe this good news and be at peace!

—Psalm 32:1 (responsively)

While it is true that we have sinned,
It is a greater truth that we are forgiven
through God's love in Jesus Christ.
To all who humbly seek the mercy of God I say,
"In Jesus Christ your sin is forgiven."

Thanks be to God.

—Reprinted from the Book of Common Worship © 1991 by
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The Gathering or Approach to God (cont.)

Passing of the Peace

Hearing the good news that we are forgiven, we extend that peace to those worshiping with us. Sometimes this happens earlier or later in the service.

Decide when to “pass the peace” and how to do it.

Here’s one possibility:

As God has given us peace through Christ, so let us pass the peace of Christ to each other.

The peace of Christ be with you.

Prayer or Song of Thanksgiving

We respond to God’s grace with our heartfelt gratitude.

Write a prayer or choose a Bible verse, hymn, or praise song that expresses praise and gratitude. Decide who will lead the prayer or song and how the people will participate.

Verses of Thanksgiving and Praise

Open my lips, LORD, and my mouth will declare your praise.

—Psalm 51:15

(a great introduction to a prayer of praise or song)

Be glad because of what the LORD has done for you.

Be joyful, you who do what is right!

Sing, all of you whose hearts are honest!

—Psalm 32:11, NIRV

(a great introduction to a song of thanksgiving or praise)

Songs of Thanksgiving and Praise

Amazing Grace

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Gloria Patri

Forever

Blessed Be the Name

How Great Is Our God

The Law or God’s Direction for Living

We respond to God’s forgiveness by living out our thanks according to God’s Word. This is the time to hear, once again, God’s will for our lives.

Choose a Bible passage that reminds us how God calls us to live. You may want to use the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) or the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40) or look for other ideas in some worship resources.

Decide how you want the people to hear God’s directions. Will the directions be broken into parts for different readers? A responsive reading? Some other creative way?

The Word of God in Proclamation

Prayer for Illumination

A sung and/or spoken prayer in which we invite the Holy Spirit to be present and help us hear and understand God's Word—both in the hearing of Scripture and the sermon.

Write a short prayer of illumination or choose an idea from below. Feel free to check in other worship resources for additional ideas. Decide who will pray the prayer or whether the people will say it in unison.

Prayers for Illumination

Guide us, O Lord, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover peace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. **Amen.**

Prepare our hearts, O God, to accept your Word. Silence in us any voices but your own, so that we may hear your Word and also do it. Through Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

O Lord, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love, and strength to follow on the path you set before us. Through Jesus Christ, **Amen.**

Gracious God, we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from your mouth.

Make us hungry for this heavenly food, that it may nourish us today in the ways of eternal life.

Through Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven, **Amen.**

Draw us close, Holy Spirit, as the Scriptures are read and the Word is proclaimed. Let the word of faith be on our lips and in our hearts, and let all other words slip away. May there be one voice we hear today—the voice of truth and grace. **Amen.**

God, the Bible is a very special book. It is so big and so old. What do these old words mean for our lives today? Please send your Spirit, so that we can understand your Word. **Amen.**

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Songs for Illumination

Spirit of the Living God
Spirit of God Descend upon My Heart
Breathe on Me, Breath of God
Holy Spirit Rain Down
Spirit Fall

The Word of God in Proclamation (cont.)

Scripture Reading

Depending on the style of worship in your congregation, there may be multiple Scripture readings (one from the Old Testament, one from the psalms, one from the New Testament, and one from the gospels) read during worship. Ask your pastor to share more about how he or she chooses the Scripture readings for each week.

The Scripture verses from session 6, suggested as the Scripture readings for the worship service you're planning:

Romans 12:1-2
Colossians 3:17

Read both, then plan how the verses will be heard by the people—what Bible translation will be used, will the people read along while one person reads aloud, will there be multiple readers, a skit, or perhaps the people could listen to an audio version of the verses from something like “Inspired By...The Bible Experience”? Check in with your leader for more help and ideas.

To signal the people to pay close attention as the Word of God is spoken, choose if or how the Scripture reading will be announced. For example,

The Word of the Lord from [insert Scripture reference here].

or

Let us hear what God is saying to us today. . . .

To encourage the people to receive the Scripture reading as nothing less than God's Word, consider incorporating a brief time of silence or a spoken response from the people after the Scripture is read, for example

**This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

or

**May God bless to our understanding this reading
from the Word.**

Sermon

This is the time in which the Scripture reading—God’s Word—is interpreted, explained, and applied to our lives. There are numerous ways to do this. Some sermons are short and some are long. Some sermons are challenging and some are comforting. The most important thing about a sermon, though, is that through the interpretation of the Scripture reading, we’re reminded of who God is (Father, Son, and Spirit) or what God has done for us through Christ. The focus is always on God!

Session 6 will provide time for the preparation of a sermon and/or a reflection on the Scripture readings.

Responses to the Sermon

God speaks to us through the Scripture and the sermon, and we respond with a prayer of blessing or application, in a song of praise, in a confession of faith (such as the Apostles’ Creed, Nicene Creed, or the Belhar Confession), in the passing of the peace (if not done earlier), by receiving an offering, or by singing the doxology.

Check in with your leader as you decide the best way to respond to God’s Word. Plan what to do and how it will be done. Consider looking at additional worship resources for some ideas.

PREVIEW

The Sending or the Response to God

The close of a worship service depends a great deal on the theme and development of the particular service. Some services end in celebration, others in quiet contemplation. Some end in a confident call to discipleship, others in a quiet prayer for God's comfort—but every worship service ends with a blessing from God!

Call to Discipleship

Before God sends us into the world, we're reminded of who God wants us to be (disciples of Jesus) and what God wants us to do (follow Jesus).

Decide how you'd like the people to hear God's call to be disciples of Christ in this world. It could be a hymn or song, or a verse from Scripture. Decide who will be responsible for issuing the call and how that person will do it. Check in other worship resources, or see some ideas below.

If you'd like, the call to discipleship may be introduced by words like these:

**As you prepare to leave this place,
hear now God's invitation to a life of Christian
discipleship...**

or

Hear now this call to service...

Call to Discipleship Verses

Jesus said to his disciples and he says to us today,
“Go and make disciples of all nations.
Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.
Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the
very end.”

—based on *Mathew 28:18-20, NIRV*

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you:
Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping,
eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and
place it before God as an offering. Embracing what
God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.
Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that
you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your
attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside
out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and
quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you,
always dragging you down to its level of immaturity,
God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed
maturity in you.

—*Romans 12:1-2*
(*session 6 Scripture, from The Message*)

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

—Colossians 3:17 (session 6 Scripture)

Lead a life worthy of the calling
to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.

—Ephesians 4:1-6, NRSV

Go forth, remembering who you are
and to whom you belong.

Go out into the world in peace:
have courage;
hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
help the suffering;
honor all;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
With God's help we will.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you, and remain with you forever.

Amen.

—based on 1 Corinthians 16:13,
1 Thessalonians 5:13-22; 1 Peter 2:17

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Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Call to Discipleship Hymns or Songs

How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord
God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending
Take My Life
Will You Come and Follow Me?
I Will Follow
Send Me Out

God's Blessing or Benediction

Just as we begin worship by hearing God's gracious invitation, we end by hearing God's promise to always be with us. The words of benediction are intended to bring a blessing. Often, the benediction is spoken by the ordained pastor and includes the raising of hands in a gesture of blessing. But it can also be appropriate for others to extend a blessing; in such a case, consider changing the second-person pronouns to first-person pronouns (for example, "May the God of hope fill you . . ." would be changed to "May the God of hope fill us . . ."), or simply introduce the words of benediction directly from Scripture by saying, for example, "Hear the Word of the Lord from Numbers 6."

Decide how you'd like God's blessing to be received by the people—who will say it and what will that person say?

Some ideas of blessings include:

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

—Numbers 6:24-26

The God of peace,
who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great Shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you complete in everything good
so that you may do [God's] will,
working among us that which is pleasing in [God's]
sight,
through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and
ever!

—Hebrews 13:20-21, NRSV

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen!

—1 Corinthians 13:14

May the blessing of God,
the giver of every good and perfect gift;
and of Christ, who summons us to service;
and of the Holy Spirit, who inspires generosity and love,
be with us all.

Any blessing may be concluded with:

Bless the Lord.

The Lord's name be praised.

or simply

Amen.

Dive, Year 3, Unit 1

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