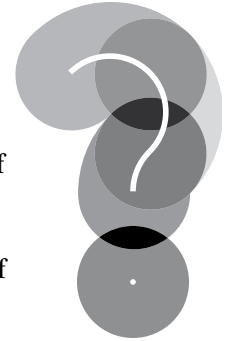




WHAT IS WORSHIP GOD ABOUT?

Worshipping God is at once clear and complicated. Does worship happen only in church on Sunday mornings? The worship of God is not limited to one location, is not mandated to be led by ordained clergy, and does not require a printed order of worship for it to be a true expression of our faith. By bringing aspects of worship into your home (and aspects of yourself to worship!), worship can be experienced as a regular, even daily, practice of faith, rather than something limited to certain places and occasions. Bring the faith practice of worship into your home. Spend time together to understand the rhythms and participate in the practices of worship.



WORSHIP BAGS

Supplies: tote bag; some quiet items such as finger puppets; fidget items; a children's Bible or story Bible; a notebook, pencils, and crayons for prayers/observations

Although some churches provide bags with activities for children to use during worship, it may be helpful to create your own that will specifically appeal to your child and your family. Select items together. Talk with your child(ren) about why you are making this worship bag and what its purpose is, not to be distracted from worship, but to enhance their connection with worship. Items such as finger puppets to act out stories, fidget items to occupy hands to allow attention to focus better, or a notebook to write or draw thoughts and prayers from what they are hearing help children engage in worship. Invite your child to take ownership of the bag, updating items as desired.

BE A GUEST!

Sometimes our own churches are so familiar that it is easy to take our practices for granted, even tuning out the routine aspects of worship, so this activity may very well take your family out of your comfort zone!

Choose a Sunday to visit a different church. This could be visiting a church out of town while on vacation, asking friends or family members if you can join them at their church for a worship service, or choosing a congregation of another denomination that you have wanted to know more about and visiting there. Spend the journey there asking "I wonder" questions, and the return journey sharing "I noticed" observations.

THE FARTHEST PEW

Supplies: internet-connected device

Ask your pastor or other church leader if there are members who are homebound who are not able to attend worship in person. If your congregation offers hybrid, recorded, or streamed worship services, make plans to visit one of the members who are homebound in your congregation to worship together with them remotely. Bring an internet-connected device if they do not have one and have not been able to attend worship in that way.

FAITH5

Supplies: internet-connected device

The Faith5 framework is based on using five steps for a nightly five- to fifteen-minute time of family sharing and devotion. The steps are:

Step 1: **Share** your highs and lows.

Step 2: **Read** a Bible verse or story.

Step 3: **Talk** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows.

Step 4: **Pray** for one another's highs and lows.

Step 5: **Bless** one another.

Learn more about this program at www.faith5.org.

FAMILY WORSHIP RITUALS

Many events in the life of families can be blessed with ritual to create an act of worship. From the simple (such as a consistent nightly blessing or before school send-off), to annual celebrations (such as marking baptism anniversaries with a special prayer or time of remembering), to more difficult rituals (such as marking the death of a beloved pet), the



creation of and commitment to these rituals and milestones are a meaningful practice. Such a practice can bring acts of worship into family life so that children are able to understand that worship is not something that happens only at church; it is a practice that can be carried with them into their homes and beyond.

WORSHIP FOR ALL TIMES AND SEASONS

A great introduction to creating a home worship practice is to relate that practice to a liturgical season. This short-term focus is a good opportunity to try out different activities to determine the type of practice that is a good fit for your family. If you need some information about the liturgical year (or calendar) watch this YouTube video: “The Liturgical Year” (bit.ly/FMLiturgicalYear, 2:51). While some pictures in the video reflect Catholic church leaders, the information is common to all. You may need to pause and read aloud since the audio is just quiet chanting music.

Ideas for different seasons could include:

- Advent: Using an Advent wreath, incorporate a weekly worship ritual around lighting candles, reading Scripture, singing hymns, and prayer. Your church may have prepared materials available or be able to recommend resources.
- Lent: To mark the forty days, adopt a daily time of prayer, thanksgivings, or Scripture reading. *Take on* a new practice instead of *giving something up* for the season.
- Pentecost: Bake cupcakes and decorate them with red frosting and a candle to celebrate the birthday of the church! Instead of making a wish as you blow out the candle, share a prayer for your church for the coming year.
- Ordinary time: At mealtime start a list and add to it each day of the ordinary things that we take for granted and give thanks. You are counting (which is where *ordinal* comes from) and noticing the ordinary!

OTHER RESOURCES:

Many children’s books about worship are perfect for families to read together including:

- *Come Worship with Me: A Journey Through the Church Year* by Ruth Boling (Westminster John Knox Press, 2010)
- *Sunday Is for God* by Michael McGowan (Random House, 2010)
- *Hush Harbor: Praying in Secret* by Freddi Williams Evans (Carolrhoda Picture Books, 2008)
- *Faith* by Maya Ajmera, Magda Nakassis, and Cynthia Pon (Global Fund for Children Books, 2009)
- *Come Sunday* by Nikki Grimes (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 1996)

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS

- ➔ What is a hymn that you really love? Share what it is about the hymn that you like: the tune, the words, a special memory associated with it, or something else.
- ➔ What message would you want to share with the congregation if you preached a sermon?
- ➔ What is one special service in the year that is particularly meaningful or special for you? Why?
- ➔ If you could plan a worship service that was not in your sanctuary, where would you want to worship? Why do you think that would be a good place to worship?
- ➔ If you could ask our pastor any question, what would you ask them?
- ➔ Worship is a time for us to be in conversation with God. What is something you would like to ask God? What is something that you would like God to say to you?
- ➔ On social media, sometimes people tag photos with *#blessed*. When we think of blessing in terms of the Christian faith, which types of photos still warrant being labeled as a blessing? What is something in your life that feels to you like a true blessing?



PRAYER

Loving God, in our church, in our home, and everywhere we are, may we bless, praise, and worship you. When we gather, we know you are with us, and are working through us to bless your world. Amen.

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.