

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

Part 2: The Picture Of A Disciple
Unit 5: A Disciple Has A Desire To Worship God
Lesson 41: Christ-followers Worship Individually
and in Community

What we want students to learn: That as followers of Christ, we have to embrace both the personal and corporate aspects of worship.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To commit to intentionally focusing on both aspects of worship this week.

Scripture Focus: Psalm 63:1-4; Psalm 47:1-7

Supporting Scripture: Colossians 3:16

Overview: You've helped students define worship, and had the chance to really think about the impact of praising and worshipping God can have on their lives. In this lesson, you'll go a bit deeper into the practice of worship by looking at the two ways in which we lift songs of praise to God. So many of our students only think of worship as what they do on Sunday mornings with the greater congregation. But there is a personal aspect of worship that, for a Christ-follower, can't be overlooked. This lesson will help students understand the vital aspect of personal worship, as well as the importance of corporate worship.

Teacher Prep Video

Each *LIFE* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *LIFE* lesson 41 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 41, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

Bible Background

The *Bible Background* is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. *The Details* gives you background info for each book. *The Setting* informs you of what's happening in and around the passage. *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible Study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the *Bible Background* to help summarize the context.

The Details

- **Author:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in their era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other Psalms remain unknown.
- **Time frame:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e. Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e. Psalm 119).
- **Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e. Psalm 51).

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The Setting

The heading of this Psalm 63 tells us that David wrote this “when he was in the wilderness of Judah.” We can assume that this most likely refers to his time spent fleeing from King Saul, documented in 1 Samuel 21-31. David spent a significant amount of time in the desert while fleeing King Saul and this experience clearly had a significant impact on his faith. As he suffered the anguish of the desert, David turns to God in worship seeking comfort. Psalm 47 is attributed to the “Sons of Korah” and was likely composed by members of a group dedicated to temple worship. Judging by other psalms attributed to this group (Ps. 42, 44-49, etc), it is likely that this psalm was written during or after the Babylonian exile, as the psalmist longs to relive the experience of temple worship and celebrates the joy found in those corporate gatherings.

The Main Point

Whether written by David in the wilderness or by worship leaders in exile, the Psalter is clear that worship is a vital aspect of the Christian experience. This outpouring of faith and praise is effective when we are alone, as David was in the desert, or when we are gathered with brothers and sisters, as described in Psalm 47. Personal and corporate worship draws us closer to God and strengthens the bonds of our Christian community.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible study section called *The Main Event*; and an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

The Lead In

- **Goal:** To have students consider the important aspects of worship, both personally and corporately
- **Set-Up:** You’ll need paper, pens, scissors, and tape for each student.,

FIRST, begin your lesson with a conversation about a worship service. If you’re leading this study on a Sunday morning following worship, talk about what they experienced in that morning’s service. If you’re doing this study before worship on a Sunday morning, consider asking them about last week’s service, or perhaps ask them what they expect to experience during worship following the lesson. If you’re studying on a weeknight, ask them about a worship service they’ve attended recently. Discuss what they saw, heard, felt, etc.

NEXT, remind your students that over the past few weeks you’ve been studying the ins-and-outs of worship. Ask them what they remember from your past few lessons. Have them define worship and explain why we as Christians consider it to be so important in our faith.

THEN, after you’ve gotten them thinking, pass out papers and scissors. Ask them to cut out the shape of a body. If you don’t trust their cutting skills or don’t have enough scissors, you can simply have them draw the outline of a body on their paper.

Once they have their body-shaped pieces of paper cut out or drawn, ask them to take 2-3 minutes and write down words within the body that explain what worship means to them. These should be personal reflections on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences concerning worship. Words could include things like: powerful, important, transforming, exciting, holy, etc.

NEXT, lead your group in a discussion about what they wrote down. If you have a particularly artistic group, you might have them color or draw on their cutout bodies to personalize them while you have this discussion. Ask questions like:

- **What kind of words did you write down? Why?**
 - Answers will vary.

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- **Do you recognize any common words throughout the group? Why do you think they were so common?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What do these words say about our thoughts and attitudes towards worship?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Of the words you wrote down, which one do you feel strongest about? Why?**
 - Answers will vary.

THEN, as you wrap up your discussion over their words about worship, ask your students to tape their body cut out to a wall or whiteboard. Have them tape their papers alongside each other like a chain to represent the individual persons coming together in corporate worship. If you have quite a few students in your group, you might even have them create a body-shape using their body cutouts to represent the collective body of Christ.

FINALLY, once the bodies are taped to the wall, say something like:

- **Worship is special to each of us individually. We've talked about how it can be transformative, powerfully effective, exciting, and so much more. If you've experienced authentic worship, then you know how great it can be! But worship is more than just a personal experience. When we come together, like all of these bodies taped to the wall, worship becomes about the collective body of Christ. We come together across all of our differences to recognize the one Christ who unifies us as one Church. Personal worship is very important, but corporate worship is important, too.**

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

The Main Event

- **Goal:** To teach your students that as followers of Christ, we have to embrace both the personal and corporate aspects of worship.
- **Set Up:** You may benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not essential. You'll want to make sure students have a Bible or a Bible app.

FIRST, explain to your students that you're going to look at the personal side of worship. Throughout the lesson you may want to reflect back on the words they wrote down in this lesson's *Lead In* activity. Use those discussions to evaluate where your group is in your past few studies of worship and consider where you want to lead them.

THEN, read or have a student read Psalm 63:1-4. Let the students know that you last looked at this passage in Lesson 19 as David hungered and thirsted for the comfort of God, as all disciples should imitate in their own lives. Today we'll look at how David worships in this passage and how that worship affects his perspective on his situation.

NEXT, fill your students in on a bit of the context of this passage. Check out the *Bible Background* section for more information. Be sure to explain the despair of David's situation. He was not in a great place. The princely life he had grown accustomed to was torn away from him when his own king, a man who was like a father to him, threatened his life out of jealousy and selfish greed. He was forced to flee his home and wander around in the wilderness struggling to survive.

THEN, point out specific parts of Psalm 63:1-4 to reinforce some of the language David uses and the imagery he asserts. Ask some questions like:

- **How does David describe God's role in his life?**
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- *Answer:* David says that God's "steadfast love is better than life." Because he has experienced this unwavering love, David will praise God for as long as he lives.
- **David was in a lot of trouble in his life when he wrote this. What does this worshipful psalm say about his attitude toward worship?**
 - *Answer:* It says that he thought it was really important! Even when David was thirsty, hungry, and pursued by a murderous king, he stopped to recognize God's goodness.
- **Why does David make the life-long commitment to praise and worship God?**
 - *Answer:* David recognizes God's power and glory, and he knows that God's presence is the sustenance his soul needs. When David sees these attributes of God, he knows that there is no other logical choice than to dedicate himself to the praise of God.

NEXT, explain that in this passage David comes before God a broken and desperate man. He was hungry and thirsty, not only physically, but also spiritually. He found that his spiritual state reflected his physical reality. Ask your students something like:

- **You probably haven't been stranded in a desert before, but have you ever experienced a spiritual desert like David was in? What was it like?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Why do you think David turned to God in worship when his life was going so terribly? Do you think it was easy for him?**
 - Answers will vary.

THEN, say something like:

- **David's example here shows us what we should do in the good times and in the bad. Even though David was struggling with many difficulties in his life, he turned to God in worship because he knew that would be satisfying. Worshipping God individually is comforting. It fortifies our soul and prepares us to meet challenges head on.**

NEXT, move on to considering the importance of corporate worship. Read or have a student to read Psalm 47:1-7 aloud. As you get into this portion of the discussion, make sure to explain to students that "corporate worship" means to worship together as a group. It's different than personal worship, which means we worship alone. Ask your students something like the following questions:

- **What differences do you see in these two passages?**
 - *Answer:* Psalm 63 was a personal psalm. It was from David to God. This psalm describes corporate worship. It addresses "all peoples" and makes the statement that God is king over all the earth.
- **If both of these passages are worshipping God, what can we learn from their differences?**
 - *Answer:* These scriptures show us that it is important for us to individually acknowledge God's majesty, but it is also important for us to do it together. When we worship corporately, we make it known to all who hear that God rules over all.

THEN, explain that sometimes it's easy to just worship individually, to forget the congregation, to get away from all of the things we've made worship into, and to just acknowledge and praise God on our own. Other times it's easy to just worship corporately, to come to church, to sing the hymns, to join our brothers and sisters in Christ in songs of praise. In these times of corporate worship we don't always participate in personal, individual worship. The disciple of Christ makes both corporate and personal worship a priority. It can't be one without the other; the two aspects of worship are both vitally important to our faith journey. Ask something like:

- **Why do you think it's important for us to worship both corporately and personally?**
 - *Answer:* In personal worship we acknowledge God as Lord over our lives and in corporate worship we celebrate that fact alongside our fellow believers, while also making the statement that God rules over this entire world.

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FINALLY, read Colossians 3:16 to your group. Point out to them that Paul doesn't consider corporate worship some lower-order of Christian life. He puts singing hymns of worship and praise with each other right alongside the charge to teach and live by the word of Christ. Corporate worship was a priority for the authors of the Old Testament, the Church of the New Testament, and is still a priority for believers today.

Transition into *The Last Word* section as we discuss how this affects our lives.

The Last Word

- **Goal:** To encourage students to engage in personal and corporate worship on a regular basis as a part of their spiritual journey
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

FIRST, as you begin the final section of this lesson, ask your students this question:

- **What role does worship play in your life? Does it currently have a place in your faith? Why or why not?**
 - Answers will vary. For some students, this may be an easy "yes" answer. For others, worship might be an unfamiliar or uncomfortable practice. Ask them why it's difficult for them. Encourage their questions and allow them room to consider the state of their faith.

THEN, ask them these questions concerning worship at your church:

- **Think about the way we worship at our church. What aspects of our worship service really speak to you? Are there any parts you're less comfortable with? Why?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What are the most important aspects of a worship service in your opinion?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What does our worship service say about God's role here?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Is it easy for you to participate in corporate and personal worship here? Why or why not?**
 - Answers will vary.

As you discuss these questions, be sure to remind your students that worship can take many different forms and that ultimately is not about the "how" of worship, but about the "why." We don't worship because we want to praise and adore the musicians or worship leader or show others what great singers we are. We worship because we want to acknowledge God by singing songs about His goodness and love. Even if a particular style of worship isn't our favorite, we can still worship God by participating in the act of praise and adoration.

NEXT, say something like:

- **Worship can take many different forms in our life. It's important that we worship in song, as Paul encourages in the Colossians passage we read. But we can also worship through other creative acts. Journaling, writing poetry, prayer, mediation, and using our talents for God's glory are all worshipful acts.**

THEN, ask your students some follow-up questions like:

- **What are your favorite ways to worship?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Do you only worship during a worship service, or do you find other ways to worship God in your life?**

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- Answers will vary.
- **What are some practical ways we can increase the amount of worship in our lives, both corporate and personal?**
 - Answers will vary.

NEXT, as you wrap up your lesson, challenge your students to find new ways to bring worship into their lives this week. Consider sharing your own journey to make worship a priority in your life. How did you do it? What were some practical ways you tried to include worshipful acts in your daily life? Personal stories and vulnerability go a long way in encouraging students to grow in their own faith struggles.

FINALLY, wrap up the lesson by saying something like:

- **It can be so hard to worship the way we should. It's easy to check out of our routine worship services if we allow ourselves to do so. But the psalmists we read from today showed us the importance and the potential power of worship in our lives. When we take time to pause and recognize the awesome power of God, our temporary problems seem so small. This week, find ways to incorporate worship into your life and you'll see how the act of praising God can be so satisfying. It is important for us to worship God on a personal level, but it is also important for us to worship as unified body of believers.**

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the *Social Media* guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.