



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Know God / Week 4

PRELUDE

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BOTTOM LINE

Worship is more about the Who than the how.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that worship is about making a big deal of God in any area of their lives.

SCRIPTURE

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song (Psalm 95:1-2 NIV).

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters (Colossians 3:23 NIV).

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

The psalmist is inviting us to worship God by singing—the method of worship that comes to mind first when most of us think about the word “worship.”

In the *Colossians* passage, Paul reminds the church in Colossae that they should do everything for the Lord. Paul’s words to the *Colossians* remind us today that worshipping God isn’t just about singing songs. In fact, we can worship God in all we do at work, school, on the field, and at home.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Every culture has some strange things about it. And American culture is no different.

Today we’re going to talk about something similar. Not similar to Halloween, but something else that could seem strange unless you’re a part of a culture where it makes sense to you.

We’re talking about worship.

TENSION

For people on the outside of church looking in, worship can be confusing and strange.

For church folks, “worship” refers to time with God where you do things like journal, sing songs to God, and admire God through His creation.

When worship is referred to at church, it typically refers to a time in a church service when people stand up and sing a bunch of songs together over and over.

So what’s the deal with worship?



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TEACHING OUTLINE

TRUTH

And like the other things we've talked about in this series, worship is a way to get to know God better.

At its core, worship is really just about celebrating something.

When you celebrate something, you turn the focus of your attention and emotion toward it.

Because we all have a natural desire to worship, shouldn't we use our brains and make some decisions about WHAT we want to be the object of our worship?

So when it comes to understanding worship, Psalms is a great place to start.

But the psalmist is saying that in the midst of everything competing for your worship stands the One who made you to worship in the first place!

God wants you to look His direction. Why? Because He wants to build a relationship with you, and relationships involve attention, emotion, and celebration.

But not just that: God is worth our worship!

But let's go back to music for a moment: Why does it seem to get the gold medal of worship?

The reason why we collectively sing songs about God at church is to collectively turn our emotions toward Him.

Worship brings us back to what's important in our faith.

Think about it this way: Worship is more about the Who than the how.

APPLICATION

One practical step is to think of one thing you already do, and offer it to God as an act of worship.

LANDING

The next time you're in a church service and everyone is singing, join in!



TEACHING SCRIPT

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BOTTOM LINE

WORSHIP IS MORE ABOUT THE WHO THAN THE HOW.

INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

Every culture has some strange things about it. And American culture is no different. Case in point, Halloween. Halloween didn't originate as an American thing. It's actually an ancient Celtic tradition and its history revolves around the dead causing problems for the living.

Which is strange. And super creepy.

Irish immigrants brought the idea to North America, and the rest is history. These days, people dress up like angels, vampires, celebrities, athletes, pirates, plumbers, cats, superheroes and video game characters—just to name a few. Which is *also* strange.

In addition to dressing up, people try to scare each other and "spook" each other out.

Then, they give each other candy.

Uhhhh, what?

Imagine being a foreign exchange student and calling home: "America's great, but last night the teenager that lives in my host home dressed up like Mickey Mouse, tried to make little kids cry, then gave them some Skittles."

Weird, weird, weird.

If you're part of American culture, however, it doesn't seem strange at all. It's just what you do (and what everybody does) during one random day in the fall.

Today we're going to talk about something similar. Not similar to Halloween, but something else that could seem strange unless you're a part of a culture where it makes sense to you.

It's a Jesus-follower, church thing.

We're talking about **worship**.

The word "worship" itself isn't a strange word. None of your friends, churchgoers or not, would look at you weird if you said it in a sentence. Although it's not a word you and your friends say often. A girl may say that she worships a band or a boy. But you're not going to text your friend and say, "I'm sitting here worshipping my writing on this research paper!"

TENSION

2 MINUTES

But when it comes to people who follow God and go to church, worship is a word that's used a lot, which makes sense to them. **But for people on the outside looking in, it can be confusing and strange.**

For church folks, "worship" refers to time with God where you do things like journal, sing songs to God, and admire God through His creation.

And I can see why this is a little odd to outsiders. Sure, people write in journals—but not to God. People sing songs, but they're about girls and broken hearts, not the glory and goodness of God. People admire creation, but they don't connect it to "worshipping God."

When worship is referred to at church, it typically refers to a time in a church service when people stand up and sing a bunch of songs together over and over. If you've been in church a lot of your life, that doesn't seem weird. But if church is new to you, think about how bizarre that is.

Worship is like God karaoke. The lyrics are put on the screen, or they're in a book that people hold. Some people sing, and some people don't. Sometimes the people who sing the loudest don't even sing that well. Some of the lyrics don't make sense: stuff like, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." If you posted that phrase on Instagram right now, people would call the International Fund for Animal Welfare on you. You'd be arrested by the animal police! Yet that's an example of a line that a lot of people sing at churches. Even more bizarre, sometimes people raise their hands—but not because they have a question. It's because they're super-excited about the song, even though it's totally unlike the music they listen to in their car.

So what's the deal with worship?

TRUTH

4 MINUTES

In this series, *Know God*, we've talked about different practices, habits, and skills that will help you know God better. They won't make you better than the people around you, but they will give you different ways of discovering who God is and how He relates to you.

And like the other things we've talked about in this series, worship is a way to get to know God better.

At its core, worship is really just about celebrating something. And when you put it that way, you realize that worship is already a significant part of your life. **Most of us have no problem getting so wrapped up in something that everyone around us knows about it.** We get really excited about a band, a college football team, someone we have crush on, someone we have a more-than-crush on, video games, or the upcoming Spring musical we're in.

For us, devoting energy and time to celebrate what we love is easy.

So although "worship" isn't a common word, if I asked your closest friends to tell me what YOU celebrate most, they would probably all give me the same answers. We may not all express our celebration the same way, but most of us know what or who we worship.

When you celebrate something, you turn the focus of your attention and emotion toward it. You make a big deal out of how awesome it is.

Now, what's really cool is that we're actually wired to worship. We were designed with the urge to celebrate and turn our emotion toward *something*.

So the question is, because we all have a natural desire to worship, shouldn't we use our brains and make some decisions about WHAT we want to be the object of our worship?

There's a book in the Old Testament titled *Psalms*. It's actually an anthology, which means it's a collection of writings and music. It's like if one of your favorite bands came out with an "anthology" of their early music. It would just mean a collection of some of their favorite or best-selling songs.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a psalm is a *sacred song or poem used in worship*.

So when it comes to understanding worship, *Psalms* is a great place to start. There are 150 chapters in the book, ranging in emotion from "I just got asked to prom by the guy I WANTED to ask me" to "I just got dumped by my prom date a week before prom."

If there's an emotion, *Psalms* has it.

Psalms also has worship in it. In Psalm 95, the author encouraged the Israelites to worship God:



TEACHING SCRIPT

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song (Psalm 95:1-2 NIV).

Which is exactly how you'd expect a Bible verse to sound.

But if you took "LORD" and "Rock of our salvation" out of this verse and replaced them with your favorite band, celebrity, sports team, video game, or the person you're dating, you can see what I mean. The language is a little different, but it's the same idea. Worship is part of everyday life for us.

But the psalmist is saying that in the midst of everything competing for your worship stands the One who made you to worship in the first place! God, who *created* your attention and emotions, *wants* your attention and emotions. The author is saying, **"I want you to take some of your attention and emotion and place God on the receiving end of it."**

God wants you to look His direction. Why? Because He wants to build a relationship with you, and relationships involve attention, emotion, and celebration.

But not just that: **God is worth our worship!** He *deserves* our celebration. Of all the things we worship, He's better, more loving, and more powerful!

But let's go back to music for a moment: Why does it seem to get the gold medal of worship?

Well, music is emotional. Think about it:

- When the college football team you love runs out of the locker room, that's exciting. But when they run out to an epic song that's blaring through the speakers, it takes it to the next level.
- If you're about to go for a one-rep max on your bench press, pumping music through headphones helps, doesn't it?
- Most of you can think of a song that represents a good time in your past—it evokes great memories. A song plays randomly on Spotify, and you remember hanging out with your friends last summer. And you smile.
- Most of you can also think of a song that represents a sad time in your past. Remember that girl that dumped you? When the song that was "your song" comes on in Walmart, it makes you want to cry in the dressing room, doesn't it? (Go ahead, you can admit it!)

The reason why we collectively sing songs about God at church is to collectively turn our emotions toward Him. As a group, we declare that we're not a bunch of random people who meet just for the sake of meeting; we're people who worship toward God.

There's a different level of emotion, meaning, and power that comes from a crowd of people, all declaring the same thing at one time.



TEACHING SCRIPT

But worship is not just about emotion; it's also about humility. **Whether you're worshipping privately or in a group, worship is a way of declaring, "God, you're greater than we are. You're bigger and better."** And that's always a good thing. Because it puts who we are in perspective to who God is.

Worship is also about focus. That's why there are words on a screen or in a book. Because sometimes we don't know what to say, think, or declare about God, and these words remind us what's true and great about Him. **Worship brings us back to what's important in our faith.**

Music, however, is simply scraping the surface of what worship can be. Because music isn't the only way to worship, and music doesn't define your ability to know God.

The apostle Paul confirmed this when he said this:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters (Colossians 3:23 NIV).

Worship is a way to live in light of who God is. It's not simply about music. It's not even just about emotion and celebration. It's about living for God.

Think of it this way . . .

Worship is more about the Who than the how.

- It's not about singing the right songs—it's about honoring a good God!
- It's not about saying the right words—it's about humbling yourself before a big God.
- It's not about a once-a-week gathering—it's about celebrating your loving Father.

As you begin to see worship as a way to live—and know God better—you'll find that you may want to do something just to thank Him for being awesome. You join in with other people to celebrate Him. You'll discover new ways to honor Him with your life.

And *that's* worship: It's a habit of honoring and celebrating God day by day. **It's making God more important than the other things you worship.**

APPLICATION

1 MINUTE

So, to help you see worship as a way of life more than a 15-minute time slot during a church service, one practical step is to **think of one thing you already do, and offer it to God as an act of worship.**

TEACHING SCRIPT

For instance . . .

- Let's say you run on the cross-country team. This week, declare your running—whether at practice or a meet—as an act of worship.
- If you have a job, think of your work this week as a way of honoring God.
- This week, do your homework in a way that makes a big deal of who God is.

It honors God when you . . .

- Work hard in what you already do.
- Use your talents to serve others.
- Make the most of your awesome mind.

That's worship.

It's about humbling yourself before HIM, and making a big deal of HIM with your attention, focus, and emotion.

And it's definitely a way to know God better!

LANDING

1 MINUTE

See, worship is more about the Who than the how.

But just as an experiment . . .

The next time you're in a church service and everyone is singing, join in! Sing and declare how big God is, along with the people around you. As you humble yourself with others and focus on God, you may find yourself celebrating who He is.

It's not the only way to worship, but it's a great way to make God the center of your attention. And it's a great way to remind yourself that He's worth worshipping in all the other areas of your life.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
