



Why Do We Sing in Church?



Session 1

**Ephesians 5:19; James 5:13;
Colossians 3:16; Psalm 150**

Session Objective

In this session, youth have an experience of glorifying God, particularly with music; youth learn about congregational song as integral to Christian life and are encouraged to engage actively in the praise of God in worship and other times in the church's life; and youth become more active in worship planning by compiling and suggesting favorite hymns and songs.

Faith Statement

Q.1. What is the chief end of humankind?

A. Humankind's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy God forever.
— *The Shorter Catechism* (7.001)

People respond to that divine initiative through the language of worship. . . . They . . . lift hands and voices in praise, sing, make music, and dance. Heart, soul, strength, and mind, with one accord, they join in the language, drama, and pageantry of worship.
— *Directory for Worship* (W-1.2001)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- Where do people sing together and why do they sing?
- Why do we sing in church? Why do we sing together in church when we don't seem to sing together very often in other places?
- What is so important about music? What is the point of singing?
- Does God care if we are really bad or really good at singing? Why or why not?



Express

Use the following questions to help the young people express what they've learned. Consider discussing the questions from Engage again to see if anyone has any new perspectives after exploring the Bible passages.

- How do music and singing help followers of Jesus Christ praise and glorify God?
- What things prevent you from praising and glorifying God? What can you do to overcome these things?
- How can you do a better job of praising and glorifying God on a daily basis? How can you do a better job of praising and glorifying God in corporate worship?



Explore

Read Ephesians 5:19–20, Colossians 3:16, and James 5:13 and explore the following questions:

- How are these passages similar? How are they different?
- What do these Scripture passages say about worshiping God?

Read Psalm 150 in a boring voice and then read it excitedly. Explore the following questions:

- As a listener, how did each of these readings make you feel?
- How do you think it would feel to praise God with the same energy as the first reader? How do you think it would feel to praise God with the same energy as the second reader?
- What specific things made the second reading different from the first reading?
- What can we learn about worshiping God by reading this psalm?



Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together talking about God's Word.





Why Do We Worship on Sundays?

Session 2

**John 20:1; Acts 20:7;
Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11;
Mark 2:27**



Session Objective

In this session, youth will experience Sabbath, learn about the practice of worshiping on Sunday as part of the Christian Sabbath, reflect on their own need for Sabbath, and take action to encourage others to embrace the practice of Sabbath-keeping.

Faith Statement

... God hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto God: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath.

This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord when people ... do not only observe an holy rest all the day ... but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of ... worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

— *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (6.118–6.119)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What is a Sabbath? Is it more than just a day off?
- If Sabbath is supposed to be a day of renewal, why do we come to church on our Sabbath?
- Why do we traditionally worship on Sunday instead of another day of the week?
- Do you find spiritual renewal when you come to worship? Why or why not?
- If you had a day where you could do whatever you wanted as long as it renewed your spirit, what would you do?
- When is the last time you felt relaxed and renewed?



Explore

Read each of the following Scripture passages one at a time and explore the following questions after each passage is read:

Genesis 2:2-3 Exodus 20:8-11 Mark 2:27
John 20:1 Acts 20:7

- What can this Scripture passage teach us about God?
- What can this Scripture passage teach us about humanity?
- What can this Scripture passage teach us about Sabbath?



Express

Use the following questions to help the young people express what they've learned. Consider discussing the questions from Engage again to see if anyone has any new perspectives after exploring the Bible passage.

- How many hours a week do you spend on school and schoolwork? extracurricular activities? work? other commitments?
- How many hours a week do you spend on spiritual renewal?
- How can you do a better job of making time for spiritual renewal in your life?



Exit

Give each participant an opportunity to share one thing that he or she can do this week for Sabbath or spiritual renewal. Close in prayer.





Why Do You Go to Church If You Believe in God?

Session 3

1 Corinthians 12:12-26;
Romans 12:4-8



Session Objective

In this session, youth will experience community where they both give to it and receive something from it, explore the body of Christ as a metaphor for a church community, and see themselves and their gifts as a part of their church community.

Faith Statement

Each member is the church in the world, endowed by the Spirit with some gift of ministry and is responsible for the integrity of his or her witness in his or her own particular situation. He or she is entitled to the guidance and support of the Christian community and is subject to its advice and correction. He or she in turn, in his or her own competence, helps to guide the church.

— *The Confession of 1967* (9.38)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- Why should you go to church if you believe in God?
- Is it possible to be a Christian and not go to church? Why or why not?
- What do you like most about your church?
- If you could change one thing about your church (or the church), what would it be?



Explore

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 and explore the following questions:

- What happens to a body when one part is weakened or ill? What happens to a group when one member does everything or when a member doesn't pull his or her weight?
- Why do you think the apostle Paul described the church as a human body? How might the metaphor of the body have helped a church that was having a lot of arguments?
- What other metaphors can you think of that describe how a community of faith should function?

Read Romans 12:4-8 and explore the following questions:

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about humanity? about the church?
- What gifts have you been given to use in this group? in this church? in the world?



Express

On a sheet of paper or napkin, draw a large stick figure of a person. Be sure to make this a "gender neutral" drawing. Help the participants work together to diagram the stick figure with each group member's name and gift that he or she has as a member of the body of Christ. For example, if a young person is a good problem solver, draw a line from the stick figure's brain, write the young person's name next to the line, and write "problem solver" next to his or her name. Discuss the following questions:

- How does it feel to diagram our group in this way?
- Based on the diagram, what would happen if (*fill in a person's name who is on the diagram*) wasn't a part of our group? How would our group be affected? (*Reinforce that everyone is indispensable to the group's identity.*)
- Why is it important for us to come together each week at church?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Why do you go to church?"
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Is it possible to be a Christian and not go to church?"



Exit

Based on the gifts and skills on the diagram from Express, think of a couple of things that the group could do in the world to spread God's love and justice. Close in prayer.





Isn't It Enough to Believe in God and Jesus and Lead a Good Life?

Hebrews 10:24-25;

Romans 1:11-12;

Matthew 28:19-20



Session Objective

In this session, youth will experience being part of a community that is bigger than one person, enter the modern debate about being "religious" or "spiritual" (going to church or being a good person who believes), learn about the church's call in the world and how being together helps the church fulfill that call, and become more intentional about participating in the church's mission in the world.

Faith Statement

Although it is permitted all people to read the Holy Scriptures privately at home, and by instruction to edify one another in the true religion, yet in order that the Word of God may be properly preached to the people, and prayers and supplication publicly made, also that the sacraments may be rightly administered, and that collections may be made for the poor and to pay the cost of all the Church's expenses, and in order to maintain social intercourse, it is most necessary that religious or Church gatherings be held.

— *The Second Helvetic Confession* (5.211)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What is the point of going to church?
- What makes the church different from other service organizations?
- Is it enough to believe in God and Jesus and lead a good life without praying or going to church?
- If you think that it is enough to believe in God and do good things, why do you think it is enough?



Explore

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and Romans 1:11-12 together and explore the following questions:

- What do each of these passages tell us about the purpose of coming together as a church?
- Based on these passages, what do you think is the church's purpose in the world?

Read Matthew 28:19-20 together and explore the following questions:

- Is *this* the church's purpose in the world? Why or why not?
- Could Jesus' commission in this passage be fulfilled with people working alone? Why or why not?



Express

Ask each group member to answer the following question with a yes or a no: Is it necessary to be part of a community of faith to be a follower of Jesus Christ? Then have the group members discuss their answers, making sure that both sides are voiced as equally as possible. Pose the question again to see if anyone has changed his or her answer.



Exit

Give each participant an opportunity to share one thing that he or she has learned from this session or any of the previous sessions in this course. Close in prayer.

