



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- 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?
- 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?

Session 2

- What is a Sabbath? Is it more than just a day off?
- When is the last time you felt spiritually renewed?
- Do you find spiritual renewal when you come to worship? Why or why not?
- How many hours a week do you spend on school or 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?

Session 3

- 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?

Session 4

- 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?
- Is it necessary to be part of a community of faith to be a follower of Jesus Christ?



WHY DO YOU COME TO CHURCH?

- For the doughnuts
- My friends come here
- To learn about the Bible
- My parents make me
- I meet God here
- I have a crush on someone who comes here
- For free food
- To thank God for everything
- The adult advisers listen to me
- To go on the mission trip
- I've got nothing else to do at this time
- To make a difference in the world
- To find strength for the coming week
- I've been coming all my life
- To worship God
- To play pranks on my friends on retreats
- To learn cool, new dance moves
- I feel safe here
- To meet new people
- For fun events, such as going to theme parks and on ski trips
- To sing and be joyful
- I was invited by someone and have been coming ever since
- To be part of something bigger than just me and my friends
- To learn new ways to praise God
- I think our adult leader is really cool



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?

What is your favorite song or hymn that is sung in your worship service?

Why do you think we traditionally stand up when singing a hymn or song in worship?

In worship, do you prefer pipe-organ music, piano music, or guitar music? Why?

Do you think you should dress up for worship? Why or why not?





FUN WITH A CONCORDANCE

What is your assigned word?

How many entries for this word are in the concordance? _____

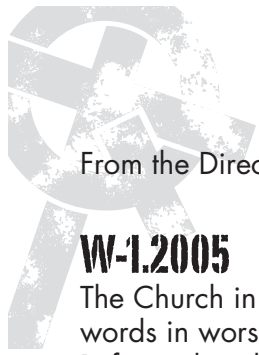
Look up and read three verses from three different books in the Old Testament that have this word, and fill in the chart below.

Passage	Summary

Look up and read three verses from three different books in the New Testament that have this word, and fill in the chart below.

Passage	Summary

How are these passages similar? How are they different?



From the Directory for Worship of the *Book of Order*:

W-1.2005

The Church in every culture through the ages has used and adapted biblical symbols, images, stories, and words in worship. The Church's use of this language has not always been authentic and appropriate. For the Reformed tradition in its various expressions the historical and cultural use of language proves to be authentic when it reflects the biblical witness to God in Jesus Christ. Language proves to be appropriate when a worshiping community can claim it as its own when offering praise and thanksgiving to God. Appropriate language by its nature

- a. is more expressive than rationalistic,
- b. builds up and persuades as well as informs and describes,
- c. creates ardor as well as order,
- d. is the utterance of the whole community of faith as well as the devotion of individuals.

Appropriate language seeks to recognize the variety of traditions which reflect biblical truth authentically in their own forms of speech and actions. In doing so the church honors and properly uses the language of the tradition. The church is, nonetheless, free to be innovative in seeking appropriate language for worship. While respecting time-honored forms and set orders, the church may reshape them to respond freely to the leading of God's Spirit in every age.

W-1.2006

- a. Since the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a family of peoples united in Jesus Christ, appropriate language for its worship should display the rich variety of these peoples. To the extent that forms, actions, languages, or settings of worship exclude the expression of diverse cultures represented in the church or deny emerging needs and identities of believers, that worship is not faithful to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- b. The church shall strive in its worship to use language about God which is intentionally as diverse and varied as the Bible and our theological traditions. The church is committed to using language in such a way that all members of the community of faith may recognize themselves to be included, addressed, and equally cherished before God. Seeking to bear witness to the whole world, the church struggles to use language which is faithful to biblical truth and which neither purposely nor inadvertently excludes people because of gender, color, or other circumstance in life.¹

1. *Book of Order*, Part II of *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* Copyright © 2007 by the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).





MURAL OF PRAYER

1. Read John 20:1 and Acts 20:7.
2. Pause for a moment and imagine these two events that occurred “on the first day of the week.” One is the reason we worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, and one is a description of worship in the early church.
3. To this mural, add your “first day of the week” prayers for yourself, for your family or friends, for your church and the community, or for the earth and the people in it. Be sure to put a smock on over your clothes and rinse out your brushes when you are finished.



COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

1. Read Exodus 20:8–11.
2. Pause for a moment and imagine God's people, the Israelites, just freed from slavery in Egypt and living in the wilderness hearing this as God's Fourth Commandment. Imagine what they would say their blessings were.
3. Think of everything for which you are grateful. For each item, toss a stone or marble in the jar.
4. Count how many stones or marbles you threw in and make that number of tally marks on the sheet of newsprint. (e.g., IIII II)



RE-CREATE

1. Read Genesis 2:2–3.
2. Pause for a moment and imagine God surveying all the work of creation and what it felt like to rest from all that work.
3. Take a rest from all your work this week and just play. Make something with these toys that you may have played with when you were younger.
4. Leave your creation for the next person to re-create, or take your creation apart so the next person can start from scratch.



LETTER TO MYSELF

1. Read Mark 2:27.
2. Pause for a moment and imagine Jesus and his disciples picking grain on the Sabbath day when they were famished from traveling. The religious leaders of their day criticized them for working on the Sabbath, then Jesus said the words from this verse to show that the leaders didn't know the true meaning of the Sabbath day.
3. Write a letter to yourself, listing all the reasons why you need the gift of Sabbath rest and what you would do with a Sabbath rest.





DESPERATE DISCIPLES BIBLE STUDY

Episode 1

Narrator: On this episode of “Desperate Disciples,” three disciples are discussing why they are not available on Sunday mornings.

Disciple 1: You are in charge of the Basketball Club fundraiser this year and are inviting Disciple 2 and Disciple 3 to be part of it. You don’t understand why they keep saying no. You need their help. It’s only four Sunday mornings, right?

At some point in the skit, you need to say: “OK, worship is important to you, but why do you have to do that on Sunday?”

Disciple 2: You are interested in being a part of the Basketball Club fundraiser, and it’s important to you. However, when you find out when it is, you say you can’t go because it’s on Sunday mornings.

Disciple 3: You helped run the Basketball Club fundraiser last year, when it was on Saturday mornings. But this year it’s on Sunday mornings, so you didn’t sign up.

Voice of God 1: Turn to John 20:1 in your Bible. When Disciple 1 says the cue line below, make a big deal of interrupting the conversation, then read John 20:1 aloud.

Your cue: Disciple 1 says something like: “OK, worship is important to you, but why do you have to do that on Sunday?”

Voice of God 2: Turn to Acts 20:7 in your Bible. When Voice of God 1 is finished reading his or her assigned verse (John 20:1), read Acts 20:7. Voice of God 3 will read a statement of faith after you read your verse. After Voice of God 3 finishes reading the statement of faith, tell the group members to pick a partner and to answer this question: How do these readings help the disciples’ situation?

Voice of God 3: When Voice of God 2 is finished reading his or her assigned verse (Acts 20:7), read this excerpt from *The Westminster Confession of Faith*:

“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)





DESPERATE DISCIPLES BIBLE STUDY

Episode 2

Narrator: On the next episode of “Desperate Disciples,” a parent and young adult are arguing about going to church.

Disciple 1: You are the parent of Disciple 2. There are a lot of chores to do at the house, and you want Sunday to be a family day of working and then fun together. Going to church seems like a waste of time, and you don’t understand why your teenage child wants to go so badly.

At some point in the skit, say: “OK, but what good does it do you to go to church?”

Disciple 2: You are the young adult child of Disciple 1. You look forward to Sunday every week because it is a break from the rest of your life and you feel safe and loved there. Being together with everyone helps you worship God there and in the rest of your life.

Voice of God 1: Turn to Genesis 2:2–3 in your Bible. When Disciple 1 says the cue line below, make a big deal of interrupting the conversation, then read Genesis 2:2–3 aloud.

Your cue: Disciple 1 says: “OK, but what good does it do you to go to church?”

Voice of God 2: Turn to Exodus 20:8–11 in your Bible. When Voice of God 1 is finished reading his or her assigned verses (Genesis 2:2–3), read Exodus 20:8–11.

Voice of God 3: Turn to Mark 2:27 in your Bible. When Voice of God 2 is finished reading his or her assigned verses (Exodus 20:8–11), read Mark 2:27. Then tell the group members to pick a partner and to answer this question: How do these readings help the disciples’ situation?



Select two of the three Scripture passages from this session (Hebrews 10:24–25, Romans 1:11–12, and Matthew 28:19–20) and . . .

Paraphrase the first one into a bumper sticker:

Paraphrase the second one into a cinquain poem:

Line 1: One word, a concept in the Scripture passage

Line 2: Two words, describing the concept in the Scripture passage

Line 3: Three action words, describing the concept in the Scripture passage

Line 4: Four words, expressing feelings about the concept in the Scripture passage

Line 5: One word, restating the concept

Example:

Tree

Sturdy, tall

Climbing, swinging, playing

Fun among the branches

Maple

_____/_____/_____

_____/_____/_____/_____



Is it necessary to be part of a community of faith to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

Ideas for the PRO Group

- Praising God together is an important part of being a faithful disciple.
- Read Matthew 26:9–11. The disciples think an act of praise is a waste of money, but Jesus says the poor will always be there and that the woman's devotion is just as necessary as service.
- God's people experience the Spirit's presence when together. There is an experience of the divine and sacred when God's people are together.
- Read Matthew 18:20. Where two or three are gathered in Jesus' name, Jesus is in the midst.
- We are encouraged for the Christian life when we are together. We can do more together than we can apart.
- Read Proverbs 27:17, Hebrews 10:24–25, and Romans 1:11–12. As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Meeting together helps encourage each other.
- Doing good works comes from God's grace acting through us. We need the community's encouragement and worshiping together to help our faith grow.
- Read Ephesians 2:8–10. We are saved through faith, and it is God acting in us for the good works we do.
- Take a poll of people at your church who are not in your meeting space to see what others say.



Is it necessary to be part of a community of faith to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

Ideas for CON Group

- Individuals can do great things such as fulfill the Great Commission alone. Working in groups slows people down.
- Read Luke 14:26, Luke 9:57–62, Luke 8:20–21, and Matthew 10:37–38. Jesus says people leave even their families to take up the cross of discipleship.
- Churches are simply places with human beings who make mistakes and are mean to each other. Consider when someone at your church has been mean to you, or hurt you. Consider when you've tried to change your church and nothing changed.
- Read Matthew 18:15–17: a process for reconciliation when someone has wronged you. Consider when a church has hurt someone or someone in the church has hurt you.
- It's a waste of resources to gather together as a church community. That money could feed and clothe the poor instead of building large churches.
- Read Matthew 26:6–9. The disciples think of all the good deeds that could be done with money, rather than wasting it on an act of praise.
- Take a poll of people at your church who are not in your meeting space to see what others say.