

Lesson 3: Worship In Action

What we want students to learn: That responding to God looks a lot of different ways, each of them a vital way of interacting in relationship with Him.

What we want them to do with what they've learned: To identify one or more ways of worshipping God, and to commit to practicing them in the week(s) following your lesson.

Scripture Focus: Nehemiah 8:1-6, Psalms 103:1-5, Philippians 2:14-18, Psalms 51:1-15, Romans 12:1-2

Overview: We've defined worship as the right response to an encounter with God. Now, we know worship can look a lot of different ways. This lesson will help your students consider some very specific ways in which worship looks, but to also be challenged that truly everything they do has a chance to be worship to God. This lesson will challenge them to choose a specific way of worshipping God and to practice it in the week(s) following your lesson.

Teacher Prep Video

The *elements Teacher Prep Videos* are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Worship Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/worship-teacher-prep>
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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, while *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passages are 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

Nehemiah

- **Author:** Nehemiah is the main character of the Book that shares his name. But he is not the only author. In fact, Nehemiah was more than likely written by (at least) Nehemiah, Ezra, and the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles.

- **Time frame:** Nehemiah, a Jewish exile serving in the courts of the Babylonians, initially arrived in Jerusalem in 445 BC, and came back again sometime between 433 and 423 BC. The Book would have been written during and sometime after these events.
- **Purpose:** The Jews were at a historic low-point. They had been conquered and dispersed. The Temple and the city walls had been destroyed. Nehemiah is part of the narrative of the rebuilding of the Temple and the city. It was written as a historic narrative to record the events, but also to encourage the Jews as they struggled to re-discover their national identity at great cost.

Psalms

- **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).

Philippians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. Of course we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Philippians was one of the last letters Paul wrote before he was martyred, sometime around A.D 62.
- **Purpose:** Philippians was written to Paul's close friends at the Philippian church, thanking them for their kindness and prayers while he was in prison. And he was encouraging them not to lose their faith because of his persecution.

Romans

- **Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a 'level playing field' be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.

The Main Point

The idea is to help your students understand that responding to God in worship looks a lot of different ways, each of them a vital way of interacting in relationship with Him. You'll accomplish this using the following teaching points and Scripture passages:

- First, you'll teach students that they can worship God in and through reading His Word using the Nehemiah passage.
- Then you'll look at Psalm 103, helping students see that we can worship God through prayer.
- Next you'll remind students that we can worship God through acts of service, using Philippians 2 to back up your point.

- Then you'll help students see that we can even worship God through confessing our sins by looking at Psalm 51.
 - Finally, using Romans 12, you'll help students see that ultimately, our very lives, lived in sacrifice and devotion to God, are our most powerful acts of worship.
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Lesson Plan

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

The Lead In

- **Goal:** To help students understand the wide and vast array of ways that they can respond in worship to encounters they have with God.
- **Set-Up:** You will need a dry-erase board or some other means to display different elements of worship for your students to see.

BEGIN by telling your students that you want to work with them to list some of the elements of your typical worship service. (*NOTE: Your elements of worship will probably differ from this list, and will no doubt be influenced by your denominational distinctives and your church's traditions. Make sure you come up with a list that suits your particular worship service.*)

THEN, work to make a list based on your worship elements. Write the list on the board. Your list might include components such as an opening and/or offertory prayer, hymns, worship songs, liturgical readings, drama, art, a sermon, and so on. Encourage students' participation. When you've finished building the list, lead students in a short discussion about these elements (answers will vary based on students, and there are no real specific answers you're looking for). Ask:

- **What are some of your favorite aspects of worship?**
- **What are some of the aspects that are harder for you to engage in worship?**
- **What are any thoughts you have about the variety of methods reflected here? After all, what if we could only worship in one or two ways?**
- **What does this say about God to you?**

FINALLY, remind students that this is the last lesson in their three-lesson look at worship. Remind them that worship can take place at any time and at any place, not just in a worship service. Wherever they can have an encounter with God they can also worship Him. Explain that this lesson will focus on some of the main ways we respond to God in worship, and will lead them to maybe worship God using some practices they haven't in the past.

The Main Event

- **Goal:** To help your students look at different forms of worship in the Bible and consider how that worship is still vital and necessary today.
- **Set Up:** Make sure each student has a Bible or a copy of the Scriptures used in this lesson. You'll also use a dry-erase board if you have access to one.

BEGIN the Bible study part of the lesson by briefly recapping the main points of the other two lessons:

- **Worship is the right response that results from our encountering God and some of those encounters happen through experiencing His creation, reading Scripture, singing songs of worship, and by giving our lives to Him for service.**
- **People in the New Testament who encountered Jesus worshipped by praising God and by telling others about their encounter with the Savior.**

NEXT, tell the students that you want them to look at even more ways people responded to God in the Bible. Tell them there are several passages and that you just want to read the Scripture and find the act of worship.

THEN, start by reading or have a student read Nehemiah 8:1-6. As students look for the passage, give just a little context by referencing the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read the passage. Explain that it was common for a scribe like Ezra to read the Scripture in a group setting, but when this was read it had been ten years since the last reading!

Ask the students if they noticed the acts of worship in the passage:

- **They stood as the Scripture was read**
- **Ezra offered a prayer of praise to God.**
- **The people said “Amen” and bowed down with their faces on the ground expressing their love and adoration for God.**

Ask if any of them have ever been in a service where people stood as the Bible was read. (Your church may practice this act of worship, or you may not.) If so, ask what they thought about that. Also ask if any of them have seen people bow with their face on the ground and what that felt like to see that. Explain that while those acts of worship are not required, they are some ways people respond in worship God through the reading of Scripture. You may choose to write the phrase, “Worship through reading the Word” on the board.

NEXT, move on to the next passage and read or have a student read Psalm 103:1-5. Again, as they are finding the passage, provide the context for the Book of Psalms using the Bible Background. Once you’ve read the passage, guide them to discover the following:

- **In verse one David states that his praise for God comes from his whole being or everything he has. That literally means every square inch of his body.**
- **Can you identify the reasons David gives for praising God?**
 - *Answer:* He forgives sin; He heals; He redeems us from destruction or saves us both physically and eternally; He shows us love and compassion; He gives us good things, and He renews us.

Ask your students if any of them, in their prayer time, include praising God for things like were mentioned in the passage. Also ask if anyone has a testimony or a praise relating to this psalm. Remind them that these are some ways people worshipped God through prayer. You may choose to write the phrase, “Worship through prayer” on the board.

THEN, instruct students to turn to Philippians while you provide the context by using the Bible Background. Read or have a student read Philippians 2:14-18. Tell them to look closely at verse 17. Ask:

- **Does anyone think they understand the meaning of this verse? What is Paul talking about here?**
 - *Answer:* Help them see that a drink offering refers to pouring an offering on a table of sacrifice during an act of worship. Point out that Paul was saying that the sacrifices he made and the service he gave to help lead the people to faith in Christ was well worth it.
- **Can any of you recall a time when you ministered through a church service project or served on a mission trip? Describe one of these experiences. What did it feel like to serve God in this way? Did you realize at the time that service could be worship?**

- *Answers will vary.* If no one responds be ready to give an example from your life. Help them think about serving in the future with the attitude that what they are doing is worship. Once again tell them that responding to God through acts of service is worship. You may choose to write the phrase, “Worship through service” on the board.

NEXT, instruct students to turn to Psalm 51. Have a student get ready to read Psalm 51:1-6 then verses 13-15. Prepare the students for this passage by telling them that this psalm was written by David in response to being confronted by the prophet Nathan with his sin with Bathsheba. Instruct the student to read the passage, then ask:

- Can you identify what is going on here?
 - *Answer: David is confessing his sin to God.*
- Do you sense the change in tone between verses 1-6 and verses 13-15? Why do you think David’s tone changed?
 - *Answer: David begins by speaking about the pain of his sin, begging for forgiveness, but then shifts to the tone of a forgiven person.*
- Look again at verses 13-15. What three things resulted from David confessing his sin?
 - *Answer: He would teach others about the pain and shame of living with sin, he would sing of God’s righteousness, and he would praise God with his mouth.*

Remind students that God is a God of forgiveness. The joy of living a forgiven life can result in a person wanting to shout out praise to God. Explain that sometimes an encounter with God creates an awareness of sin and the confession of sin is an act of worship, which can lead to more expressions of worship. You may choose to write the phrase, “Worship through confession” on the board.

THEN, tell the students you want to conclude the Bible study part of the lesson by looking in the New Testament at Romans, a letter written by the Apostle Paul. Explain that in the 12th chapter of Romans Paul is concluding his teaching on God’s righteousness and our opportunity to have a relationship with Him. Read or have a student read Romans 12:1-2 then ask the following questions:

- **What are we to offer to God as a living sacrifice?**
 - *Answer: Our bodies; our lives.*
- **Why does Paul say we are to do this?**
 - *Answer: Because of the undeserving kindness and mercy God showed us by sending His Son to die for our sin.*
- **Does anybody see what Paul calls this?**
 - *Answer: Worship*

Lead students to the place where they understand that all we are, and all we have should be given to God. Ask them what they think are some things we can do to offer God our bodies as a living sacrifice. (*Some answers might include live a pure life, live a life that brings honor to God, being willing to sacrifice time and money for missions and ministry, tell others about God, and so on.*) Leave your students with this important thought:

- **Our very lives, lived in sacrifice and devotion to God, are our most powerful acts of worship.**

Tell them that by giving our lives in this way we are actually giving God everything, 100% and total control.

FINALLY, close by allowing your students time to reflect on what they’ve learned about worship over the past three weeks. Look back at the beginning of The Main Event and see the main points from the other lessons and add to that list what they learned today:

- **People responded in worship by bowing their heads and putting their faces on the ground when Scripture was read.**

- **David worshipped God through prayer and confession of his sin.**
- **In the New Testament people continued to worship God through acts of service.**
- **Our very lives, lived in sacrifice and devotion to God, are our most powerful acts of worship.**

Conclude this part of the lesson by saying:

- **As your youth leader I can more or less make you to do some things like read the Bible, break into Bible study groups, and so on. One of the things I can't make you do is worship. I can lead you to have opportunities to encounter God, but worship is your personal response to God. You have learned about many different ways to encounter God and many other ways to worship Him. Just remember, no matter what you do, it can be and it should be worship.**

Transition to the “Last Word” to wrap up your lesson.

The Last Word

- **Goal:** To help students put into practice what they've learned about worship by creating their own worship experience.
- **Set-Up:** Provide paper and pens. You may also want to prepare a list of some popular worship songs along with a list of the Scriptures used during the series on worship. Maybe provide some worship bulletins from your church, if your church features these in your worship service.

FIRST, tell your students that over the past three weeks, they've studied what the Bible says about worship. Explain that the main point of the whole series is this: **Worship is our response to encounters we have with God.** Tell them that you want them to have the opportunity to create a worship service expressing some of the things they've learned.

THEN, divide the group into some smaller groups to work on this activity. Make sure each group has paper and something to write with, or a note-taking app on a device of some sort. To move this activity along you may want to consider giving each group different sections to work on like music, Scripture reading, and so on.

(WORSHIP IDEAS: To help guide this experience you may want to offer the following suggestions for things to include in the worship service: prayers, responsive readings, one sentence testimonies on worship, Bible readings, devotions, songs, worship videos, worship drawings, original poems by your students, testimonies of mission or service projects students have participated in, etc.)

NEXT after giving each team time to complete the activity bring the teams together and get their input to create a single worship service guide based on their group time. A great follow up would be to plan to actually implement this idea and have the worship service they created. But the main takeaway is to encourage students to put this worship service to action in their personal lives, embracing these different elements of worship outside of your group time.

FINALLY, close the Bible study and the series on worship by saying something like this:

- **We have spent three weeks taking an up close and personal look at what the Bible says about worship. You have been challenged to rethink some things about worship, but most importantly you have been taught to always look to what the Bible says about our Christian life and our spiritual disciplines. As we close in prayer, let's go around the room and, if you feel lead, I want each of you express a brief prayer of worship to God based on what you've learned in this study. You can thank Him for His Word, or creation, or simply praise Him for who He is.**

Close out your time of prayer with your own prayer for your group and your expression of worship.

- Don't forget to distribute the "Worship Lesson 3" devotions to your students. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
 - Consider texting students a couple of times during the week to encourage them to follow through with reading the devotions.
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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.

