



HOME / FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE

Gathering together in a home to worship God with family and friends goes all the way back to the New Testament before Christians were allowed to use more public facilities (see Col.4:15). The church is not a building; it's the called-out people of God who gather together in Jesus' name. This form of worship has occurred in various forms throughout history. The following guide is meant to provide some ideas, encouragement and direction for those who are just getting started.

SAMPLE ORDER OF WORSHIP

1)	SONG(S) OF PRAISE:	Acknowledging God for who He is
2)	OPENING PRAYER:	Asking for God's blessing & forgiveness
3)	SONG(S) OF WORSHIP:	Thanking God for Christ & the cross
4)	HOMILY / DEVOTIONAL:	Encountering the truth of God's word
5)	SONG(S) OF RESPONSE:	Renewing your commitment to God
6)	CLOSING PRAYER:	Asking for God's help and strength

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SINGING

RELAXED: Have fun. Don't over do it. The goal isn't perfection.

CREATIVE: Play instruments, go acapella, try recorded music.

FAMILIARITY: Sing songs that the majority of people know.

VARIETY: Mix it up with a hymn, contemporary, kids song, etc.

BASIC BIBLE STUDY APPROACH

OBSERVATION:

What does the text say?
What does this verse or passage teach me about God?



INTERPRETATION:

What does the text mean?
What's the context? Where does the gospel story fit in with this?



APPLICATION:

How does the text apply to my life? How can we / I put this truth into practice?

SAMPLE OPENING PRAYER OF CONFESSION

“Heavenly Father, we praise you for the unchanging and unstoppable love that you have for us. We acknowledge that every good and perfect gift comes from you. Yet, we confess that we too often turn from your heart of goodness and allow sin to have great power over us in our daily lives. We think of ourselves before others, take pride in our own conduct, deny, blame-shift, justify, and seek out other things to ultimately satisfy us besides you. But we also confess that Jesus lived the life of self-denial and sacrificial love in our place, so that in his perfection is our peace. We thank you for your promise of pardon that we have in Acts 10:43 that assures us that whoever believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through his name. Jesus, thank you for your amazing grace in bearing our sin in your own body on the cross. May your cross be to us the tree that sweetens every bitterness; the vine that connects us to you, and the only source of joy and strength. Holy Spirit, help us to fix our eyes upon Christ that we might die more unto pride and rise more unto humility. Empower us to serve others, to walk by faith, and to trust you more. Please bless our time of worship today, in Jesus name, amen.”

GOSPEL MEDITATION

“LESSONS IN THE STORM” (JOHN 6:16–21)

Rev. Jeremy McKeen

How can we face the storms of life with peace in our hearts? Christians often sing about this peace, but is it really possible in the midst of trouble? In the story of Jesus approaching his disciples in the midst of their storm, we can learn a few fundamental lessons that can help us through our storms.

Life is Like Being at Sea: The sea can change in a second. What started out as a calm pleasure cruise on the water, quickly turned into a troubling voyage on the crashing waves. Anyone who has been on the open sea for any length of time will tell you how uncertain it can be. The conditions can change rapidly. It can be sunny one minute and then storming the next. The water that seemed like your glistening friend can unexpectedly seem like your greatest enemy. The sea is both beautiful and dangerous. It’s the same

when it comes to life. Our conditions can change in an instant. So, how should we respond?

Wise captains never set sail anticipating all calm waters. They prepare their sails and outfit their boats for the inevitable storms. This is why James said, “Count it all joy when you face various trials” (James 1:2). It’s always a when; never an if. Part of navigating life well is knowing that the storms of life will come and not being surprised when they do. Approaching life with proper expectations can help a great deal. We’ve got to remember that because of the Fall, the storms will come, and we will face trials on every side. But knowing the character of Jesus and trusting the plan of Jesus will equip us for the inevitable. Jesus does not shield us from experiencing the storms of life (his beloved disciples faced many), but he can keep our hearts from sinking in the midst of them.

Sometimes Jesus will multiply the loaves and give us relieving grace, but other times he will allow the storms to come our way and give us refining grace. So, how are you approaching life? And how are you spiritually preparing for your conditions to change?

Jesus is Lord of the Storm: So, the disciples are rowing as hard as they can. The sea is breaking hard against them, and more than likely, they're thinking, "Where is Jesus when we need him?" Remember, at this point, Jesus had already calmed a storm before. Jesus was sleeping in the boat, the disciples woke him up, and he stood on the bow of the boat and told the sea (literally) to shut up. And it did! So, what's the problem in this story? Jesus isn't with them, and he can't get to them. Or so they thought. Suddenly, who do they see walking on the crest of the towering waves? They see Jesus. There will be times in our lives when Jesus seems absent, but we will never be in a place where he can't get to us. Somehow, in some way—through the lyrics of a song, the message of his word, the words of a friend, the truth in a book, etc.—he will come to us! For, he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

What was troubling the disciples? The sea. Yet, what was under Jesus' feet? The sea. The very thing that was troubling them was under Jesus' complete control. Jesus could have come to them in any other way, but he chose to come to them walking on the water to show them, and to show us, that he is in complete control of all our troubles. Whatever we're battling and afraid of is entirely under his feet. It's all under his feet! This is why we can confidently sing, "Be still my soul,

the waves and winds still know the voice who ruled them while he dwelt below." Jesus is still Lord of the storm, and peace isn't found by never knowing trials; it's found by knowing and trusting the One who's in charge of them all. And what was the greater lesson in all of this?

The Gospel is Our Anchor for the Soul: The miraculous feeding (John 6:1-14) and the miraculous arrival (John 6:16-21) were just a dress rehearsal for what was to come. Jesus was preparing them for his greater miracle of giving himself for our sins and conquering the grave of death.

Where else does Jesus feed his disciples by taking bread and blessing it, breaking it, and giving it to them? The Last Supper, where he said, "This is my body given for you" (Luke 22:19). And what happened after that feeding? The same pattern that we find in this story. Jesus withdrew from his disciples to pray and then was separated from his disciples in death—not for 3 miles, but for 3 stormy days. But yet again—when they didn't think that it was possible for Jesus to get to them, and they were afraid—what did Jesus do? He did more than walk on the sea; he walked out of the grave and came to them in the locked upper room and said, "Peace be with you!"—proving that even death is under his feet. Jesus willfully went under the storm of God's judgment for our sins, so that through our faith in him, we might face every other storm in life with the confidence of God's mercy, peace, and loving presence in our lives. Remember, life is like being at sea, Jesus is Lord of the storm, and the gospel is our anchor for the soul!

Remember that this is not meant to be an ongoing replacement for regular corporate worship; it's meant to be a rich time of growing together around God's word and amongst His people. And it does not have to be some long drawn out event. Keep it simple. Be patient with the children who are participating. Try to get everyone involved and engaged with the process. Keep the focus on Jesus and the pardoning and empowering grace that he freely offers us in the gospel. Keep in mind that this guide is just a starting point. There are a variety of books and resources available online that can assist family and friends in worshipping together in a home. Have fun and rejoice in the Lord!