

*For you created my inmost being,
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made
your works are wonderful.*

When did we See you

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Introduction

Worship is a central part of our identity – gathering and celebrating as the community of God’s people. In this guide, we have provided worship resources that correspond with the three sessions in the Group Study Guide. The central theme is “When Did We See You?” based on Matthew 25:31–46. The sub-themes and corresponding scriptures for the sessions are “See and Be Seen” (Psalm 139), “Know and Be Known” (Luke 24:13–35), and “Bless and Be Blessed” (Psalm 23 and John 10:1–16). Each session includes an opening worship service and a closing worship gathering that you are invited to reference and make your own.

Each of these worship services can be adapted to a variety of settings, whether it is a local congregation, camp setting, conference center, or even a public park. In our Presbyterian and Reformed tradition, we affirm that worship should be in the language of the people participating and accessible to their understanding and experience. So, we encourage you to approach this guide with that in mind. When it comes to things like the suggested music, we are mindful that you know your group better than we do. There may be favorite songs that fit in better than the songs we have listed, and we hope you play those instead!

Short video reflections that correspond with each session are available on the Presbyterian Youth Triennium website. These feature three different preachers, Rev. CeCe Armstrong, Rev. Peggy Jean “PJ” Craig, and Rev. Jerry Cannon. Also available on the website is a video and instructions for a Movement Prayer that we offer you as a Response to God’s Word, as well as a Spotify playlist of the suggested music. Again, please keep in mind that this resource should be used with great flexibility and in ways that best fit your own context and setting. It is our hope and prayer that this guide will aid and enhance your community’s experience together. May you be blessed as you gather in Christ’s name and may you “see” Christ among even the “least of these.”

And they will say, “Lord, when did we see you?” Matthew 25:44



Session One

SEE AND BE SEEN

Opening Worship

For Reflection

Psalm 139 tells us that God knows every single thing about us – even the things we do not know yet (or would like to keep hidden). This means that God knows and claims the people we might not see (or want to see) in just the same way. If God loves the people we cannot love just as much as God loves us, how does that affect the way we look at our neighbors and people we do not think we know how to see?

Introductory Video

“[Everyday Life](#)” by Coldplay

Opening Sentences

One: In a world of categories and labels,

All: We are seen by a God who loves us.

One: In a time full of violence and division,

All: We are seen by a God who loves us.

One: In a church where we might feel confused or not quite good enough,

All: We are seen by a God who loves us. Let us worship God.

Song

“Come, Now Is the Time to Worship”

Listening for God’s Word

Psalm 139 & Matthew 25:31-46

Reflection on God’s Word

Rev. CeCe Armstrong
Video available on the PYT Website

Prayer

One: Look at your thumbprint. Consider for a moment that this tiny patch of skin is so unique that this pattern etched on your thumb can single you out from every other human being on the entire planet! No other person on earth bears your same thumbprint. This is but more evidence of God’s limitless imagination and creativity. God has designed human genetics to produce billions of individual and unique thumbprints – no two the same. It is God’s way of saying that you are God’s best new idea. You are God’s best new story; never before told. You are a story that cannot be replaced by another.

All: God, you have created me to do some definite service. You have called me to some work and purpose that you have not committed to another. I have my mission. I am a bond of connection between persons. You have not created me for naught. So, I shall do good. I shall do your work.

I shall be a preacher of truth without intending it if I but open my heart and eyes and follow you. Therefore, I will trust you. Whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. You do nothing in vain; nothing is wasted if it is brought into my life by you. You know what you are doing. Amen.

Song “I Need You to Survive” by David Frazier OR “Open the Eyes of My Heart”

Closing Blessing

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Romans 15:13

Closing Worship

Call to Worship

One: Some of us like to stand out in a crowd and others of us like to blend into the background. God sees us where we are and calls us to come.

All: Some of us feel exposed and others of us feel invisible. God sees us where we are and calls us to come.

One: As we draw closer to the one who calls, we might see faces that are different than ours.

Higher Voices: We might share truths that are hard to comprehend.

Lower Voices: We might hear stories that do not match our experiences.

All: We come from different places, and God sees us where we are.

One: Let's lay down our disguises and our defenses.

All: Together we will worship the Lord!

Prayer of Confession

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know the me that I show everyone else and the me I hope no one ever sees. You know the me that tries to fit in and the me that is often overlooked. You know that I often look on the world selfishly, seeing only the things I want to see and pleading ignorance to the rest. In your mercy, unblur my vision that I might focus on my life and the world as they are and not as I pretend them to be. Forgive me for the ways in which I have denied reality and made excuses for myself and others. Wash the mud from my eyes and renew my sight, I pray. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

“I Am Loved” by Common Hymnal

Prayer

As we conclude this day, O God, we want to bring before you those whom we have seen and those whom we have failed to truly see. You who have taught us that you knew us before we were fully formed and go before and behind us, we thank you for the many ways in which you see the deepest places in our lives. Help us to mirror such compassion for others. On this day we thank you for the circle of those who enrich our lives:

Those new friends and old acquaintances with whom we have connected today...
Those who are not physically present but surround our lives with love and care...
Those who have shaped our lives and continue to guide our future...
We are bold to pray for those who need to be remembered today:
Those who have made the news headlines today because of what they have done or said...
Those who have been brought to our attention because of a meeting, conversation, or message...
Those who are in the hospital, in care, or a place that is strange to them...
Those in whose family or relationship there is stress or a break-up...
Those who are waiting for a birth, or a death, or news that will affect their lives...
Those who need to forget the God they do not believe in and meet the God who believes in them...
Those whose pain or potential we should not forget to share with you today...
Help us to have eyes to see those whom we so often overlook. And help us be present to those who need us. Lord, we believe that you hear our prayers and will be faithful to your promise to answer us. So, as we end this prayer may we do so not to end our devotions, but to expect your kingdom, for Jesus' sake. Amen

Song

“This Is the Moment/Esté Momento”

Closing Blessing

From where we are to where you need us - Christ, be beside us.
From what we are to what you can make of us - Christ, be before us.
Through the streets of this world to the gates of heaven - Christ, be above us.
Surround us with your presence, inspire us with your purpose, confirm us with your love. Amen.¹

Examine me, O God. Look at my heart! Psalm 139:23



Session Two

KNOW AND BE KNOWN

Opening Worship

For Reflection

Jesus knows what it is like to not be seen or recognized by people who are supposed to know him well. Still, Jesus reveals who he is to his friends – an act of honesty and sacred insight that helps his friends to understand the reality of resurrection. Jesus was made known to the Emmaus travelers through the breaking of the bread. We are made known in our willingness to be vulnerable as well. Why do you think it took so long for Jesus’s friends to recognize him? Where (or in whom) have you been surprised to "meet Jesus" in your own life?

Introductory Song

"Open My Heart" by Ana Hernandez

Opening Sentences

One: In a world of fairytales and falsehoods,

All: We are known by a God who loves us.

One: In a time when we are not sure what is a filter and what is a fact,

All: We are known by a God who loves us.

One: In a church where we worry that seeming put together is more important than sharing our full selves,

All: We are known by a God who loves us. Let us worship God.

Song

"I Am" by Bebo Norman

Listening for God’s Word

Luke 24:13-35

Reflection on God’s Word

Rev. Peggy Jean "PJ" Craig
Video available on the PYT Website

Prayer

God of history and of my heart, so much has happened to me during these whirlwind days:

I’ve known death and birth;

I’ve been brave and scared;

I’ve hurt, I’ve helped;

I’ve been honest, I’ve lied;

I’ve destroyed, I’ve created;

I’ve been with people; I’ve been lonely;

I’ve been loyal, I’ve betrayed;

I've decided, I've waffled;
I've laughed and I've cried.

You know my frail heart and my frayed history - and now another day arrives. O God, help me to believe in new beginnings and in my beginning again, no matter how often I've failed before.

Help me to make beginnings:

to begin going out of my weary mind into fresh dreams,
daring to make my own bold tracks in the land of now;
to begin forgiving that I may experience mercy;
to begin questioning the unquestionable that I may know truth;
to begin discipling that I may create beauty;
to begin sacrificing that I may accomplish justice;
to begin risking that I may make peace;
to begin loving that I may realize joy.

Help me to believe in beginnings, to make a beginning, to be a beginning, So that I may to just grow old, but grow new each day of this wild, amazing life you call me to live with the passion of Jesus Christ. Amen.²

Song

“You are Holy (Prince of Peace)” OR
“Jesus, Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child” (African American Traditional Spiritual)

Closing Blessing

One: For all that God can do within us, for all that God can do without us,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For all in whom Christ lived before us, for all in whom Christ lives beside us,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For all the Spirit wants to bring us, for where the Spirit wants to send us,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: Listen, Christ has promised to be with us in the world as in our worship.

All: Amen. We go now to serve God!³

Closing Worship

For Reflection

How do we project false images of who we are and buy into the inauthentic presentation of others? What are the ways in which we need to both know and be known by Jesus in our brokenness and his? Jesus was made known to the Emmaus travelers through the breaking of the bread. We are made known in our willingness to be vulnerable as well.

Call to Worship

One: In the beginning, God made the world:

Higher Voices: Made and mothered it.

Lower Voices: Shaped and fathered it.

Higher Voices: Filled it with seed and with signs of fertility.

Lower Voices: Filled it with life and with song and variety.

One: All that is green, blue, deep, and growing,
All: God is the hand that created you.
One: All that is tender, firm, fragrant, and curious,
All: God is the hand that created you.
One: All that crawls, flies, swims, walks, or is motionless,
All: God is the hand that created you.
One: All that speaks, sings, cries, laughs, or keeps silence,
All: God is the hand that created you.
One: All that suffers, lacks, limps, or longs for an end,
All: God is the hand that created you.
One: The world belongs to God,
All: The earth and all its people.

Song

“Come, Let Us Worship God”

Prayer of Confession

O God of life, of all life and each life, we lay our lives before you.
We give our lives to you, from whom nothing is hidden.
You are before us, God, you are behind;
You are around us, God, you are within.
O God of life, you know the secret thoughts of every heart.
We bring the faith that is in us, and the doubt;
We bring the joy that is in us, and the sorrow.
O God of life, you are in the light, and in the darkness.
We bring the knowledge that is in us and the ignorance;
We bring the hope that is in us, and the despair.
O God of life, O generous Spirit,
Renew us with your life, today, tomorrow, and always. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Listening for God's Word

Luke 24:13-35

Invitation

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! Scripture tells us that people will come from east and west, north and south, and sit at table in the kin-dom of God. Friends, look! (Motioning to the gathering here.) People will come from east and west, north and south, and sit at table together in the kin-dom of God.

According to the gospel of Luke it was when the risen Christ was at table with his disciples that he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, that their eyes were opened and they recognized him. May our eyes be opened, and may we recognize the presence of the risen Christ even as we break bread here and now.

This is the Lord's table, and our Savior invites all those who would trust in this One to partake of the feast which God has prepared. So come, not because you MUST, but because you MAY. Come, not to make a statement, but to seek a presence. Come, not because you are strong, but because you seek God's strength. Come, for all has been prepared. And the risen Christ welcomes you!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Gratitude, praise, hearts lifted high, voices full and joyful... these you deserve. For when we were nothing, you made us something. When we had no name, no faith, and no future, you called us your children. You brought good news to ALL PEOPLE. When we had lost our way or turned away, you did not abandon us. You were our FUN God... forgiving, understanding, and never too busy. When we came back to you, your arms opened wide in welcome.

And look, you prepare a table for us offering not just bread, not just wine, but your very self so that we may be filled, forgiven, healed, blessed, and made new again. You are worth all our pain and all our praise.

So, now in gratitude, we join our voices with those of the Church on earth and in heaven saying: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Lord God, as we come to share the richness of your table, we cannot forget the rawness of the earth. We cannot take bread and forget those who are hungry. Your world is one world, and we are stewards of its nourishment. So, Lord, put our prosperity at the service of the poor.

We cannot take this cup and forget those who are thirsty. The earth and its weary people cry out for justice. So, Lord, put our fullness at the service of the empty.

We cannot hear your words of peace and forget the world at war; a world torn with violence, hatred, and division. Show us, Lord, how to turn weapons into welcome signs, and the lust for power into a desire for peace.

We cannot celebrate the feast of your family and forget our own divisions. We are one in spirit, but not in fact. History and hurt still dismember us. So, Lord, heal your Church in every brokenness.

For us you were born, for us you healed, preached, taught, and showed the way to heaven; for us you were crucified, and for us, after death, you rose again. With you is mercy and the power to change.

So, as we do in this place what you did in an upstairs room, send down your Holy Spirit upon us and on these gifts of bread and cup that they may become for us your body – healing, forgiving, and making us whole, and that we may become for you, your body – loving and caring in the world until your kin-dom comes. Amen.

Among friends, gathered round a table, Jesus took bread, broke it, and said, "This is my body broken for you."

And later he took the cup of wine and said, “This is the new relationship with God, made possible because of my death. Take this – all of you – to remember me.”

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Song

“Eat this Bread”

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you have put your life into our hands; now we put our lives into yours. Take us, renew and remake us. What we have been is past; what we shall be, through you, still awaits us. Lead us on. Take us with you as we go. Amen.



Jesus said: "You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing - Luke 24:25"

Session Three

B L E S S A N D B E B L E S S E D

Opening Worship

For Reflection

When have you felt like you are supposed to have an exact plan for your life, year, or semester? How did that pressure to plan to feel? How does Jesus's role as a gentle shepherd that leads us to "abundant life" counteract those stressors? How might Jesus as a shepherd we follow affect how we think about decisions that feel high stakes or high stress? How does Jesus's view of us as "sheep" he knows by name contrast with the way we might feel seen by a world focused on achievement?

Introductory Video

"Blessed with Discomfort" by Sister Ruth Marlene Fox
Video from The Work of the People available on the PYT Website

Opening Sentences

One: In a world of long-term plans and stressful decisions,

All: We are blessed by a God who loves us.

One: In a time wracked by scarcity and stress,

All: We are blessed by a God who loves us.

One: In a church where we wonder if there is a place for our doubts and our questions,

All: We are loved by a God who sees, knows, and blesses us. Let us worship God.

Song

"When the Spirit of the Lord" (English & Spanish)

Listening for God's Word

Psalm 23 & John 10:1-16

Reflection on God's Word

Rev. Jerry Cannon
Video available on the PYT Website

Response to God's Word - Movement Prayer

Rev. Melanie Marsh
Video and Instructions available on the PYT Website

For all who hunger
Something to eat

For all who thirst
Something to drink

May all who are outside
Be invited in

May all who are exposed
Be sheltered and clothed

For all who are sick
Healing and comfort

For all who are imprisoned
Liberation and love

Give us eyes to see
And Hearts to know
That as we do for the least of these
Our sisters and brothers and siblings
We do for you, O Christ
We do for you, O Creator
Amen

Song

“I Could Sing of Your Love Forever” OR
“Prayers of the People” by Ben Johnston Krase

Closing Blessing

One: From where we are to where you need us,

All: Jesus, now lead on.

One: From the security of what we know to the adventure of what you will reveal.

All: Jesus, now lead on.

One: To refashion the fabric of this world until it resembles the shape of your kingdom,

All: Jesus, now lead on.

One: Because good things have been prepared for those who love God,

All: Jesus, now lead on. Amen.⁴

Closing Worship

This simple worship experience makes use of river stones available at most craft stores or building and garden supply stores. (Make sure you have enough for two stones for each person.) Each participant should receive two stones upon entering worship.

Introductory Video

"Hope Beyond All Hope" by Alana Levandoski
Video from *The Work of the People* available on the PYT Website

Call to Worship *(Three readers, each with a lit candle.)*

Reader One: I will light a light in the name of God who lit the world and breathed the breath of life into me.

Reader Two: I will light a light in the name of the Son who saved the world and stretched out His hand to me.

Reader Three: I will light a light in the name of the Spirit who encompasses the world and blesses my soul with yearning.

All: We light three lights for the Trinity of love: God above us, God beside us, God beneath us; the beginning, the end, the everlasting one.⁵

Song

“Glory to God”

Meditation

Participants are asked to hold the two stones in their hands. “Look at the stones that you now hold in your hand. Feel their weight. Notice their shape, their color, the texture and mass. Listen to the following meditation about stones.” If the worship meeting is outdoors near a pond or lake, that is ideal. You may also set up a large basin or bowl of water.

Reader One: What I hold in my hand is as old as me, and older.

Reader Two: As old as my name, my language, my culture, and older.

Reader Three: As old as my race, as old as the human race, and older.

Reader One: As old as the soil, as old as the sea, and older.

Reader Two: As old as the earth, as old as the sun moon and stars... but younger than God.

Reader Three: For God made this stone, made and meant its color, its contours, its journey from below to above. And had earth never revealed it, and had I never admired it, it would still bear witness to God’s deep intention to make the world mean the world, want the world, ween the world; and one day walk the world and hold in his hand what I now hold in mine.⁶

Reader One: Now take one stone; the one that represents something you need to let go of. It is time to leave it behind. It may be a hurt or grievance, an action you wish you had not done and for which you seek forgiveness, it may be a habit or a pattern you wish to end. Take that stone and drop it into the water; it now belongs to God. It is part of the sea of God’s forgiveness, where God has posted a sign saying, “NO FISHING.” It is time to move forward in freedom.

All: God, I trust You with this, I leave it in Your hands – help me let go...

Reader Two: Now take the stone that represents something you want to take from this place, this moment, this experience together. It may be a memory, an activity, a conversation, a question, or an encounter with someone that has had an impact upon you. You are invited to take this stone with you when you leave; You may carry it in your pocket or place it on a table or dresser at home. It is a lasting memorial of God’s presence and action in your life. Take a long and deep look at this stone. Squeeze it tightly in your hand.

All: God, I thank You for this gift. Help me to hold it and keep learning from You.

Reader Three: You go forth from this moment, transformed in some ways from the person who began this experience. You have seen and been seen. You have known and been known. You have been blessed to be a blessing to others. In some ways you will never see yourself or the world around you in quite the same way again. This is the Spirit's work among us. Let us rejoice in God's love in Christ that meets us where we are, and refuses to leave us alone.

Song

"You Shall Go Out with Joy"

Closing Blessing

On your heart and your home, the blessing of God.
In your coming and your going, the peace of God.
In your life and in your seeking, the love of God.
At each ending and new beginning, the arms of God
to welcome you and bring you home.⁷

I came so that they could have life. John 10:10



Notes & References

Session One

¹ *A Wee Worshipbook*, Wild Goose Worship Group

Session Two

² *Guerrillas of Grace*, Ted Loder

³ *A Wee Worshipbook*, Wild Goose Worship Group

Session Three

⁴ *A Wee Worshipbook*, Wild Goose Worship Group

⁵ *A Wee Worshipbook*, Wild Goose Worship Group

⁶ Adapted from *He Was in the World*, John Bell

⁷ *Celtic Prayers from Iona*, J. Phillip Newell

Preparation & Supplies

- 2 small stones per participant
- Large basin of water
- Communion elements (bread, juice, baskets, napkins)
- Technology to play videos and songs if desired (projector, screen, speakers, etc.)

*Don't you have eyes? Why can't you see? Don't you have ears?
Why can't you hear? Don't you remember? Mark 8:18*

