

# *Faith Practices*

## WORSHIP



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*“Let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe.” — Hebrews 12:28b*

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Corporate worship offers a unique way to come into the presence of God and to praise the God who called all of creation into being. Luther regarded prayer, public praise and thanksgiving to God as one of the “marks of the church.” The hymns he wrote for worship often reflected Christmas and Easter joy. Worship made of the congregation a *Mundhaus*; literally, a “mouth-house,” as people raised their voices in song, petition and praise.

Through the ancient prayers and songs of Christians across the centuries and around the world, we enter into a community that goes beyond the barriers of time and space. As we join that throng, we are shaped by the liturgy. Prayers follow a pattern of praise and petition; we acknowledge who God is and what God has done; we plead for God’s continuing action in the world. Look at the Collect for Easter Day in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*:

*O God, you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, and by his glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death. Make us die every day to sin, so that we may live with him forever in the joy of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

Praise precedes petition. We give thanks for who God is; then we ask for God's continuing blessing. Intercessory prayer offers to God the needs of the neighbor and the concerns of the world. We ask for the neighbors' prayers for us, even as we assure them of our petitions for them.

Corporate worship features the preaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments. Read, preached, sung and recited, the Word of God vibrates around us, tuning our souls. In the Lord's Supper, we receive Christ himself, in, with and under the elements of bread and wine.

By sharing in that sacrament, we receive again the food that sustains us for service. As we daily return to baptism we are made new. Participation in the sacraments helps us discern the presence of the sacred in our daily lives; through the experience of God's presence in public worship we can trace the extraordinary presence of God in our ordinary lives. We know both where to look and what to look for. Worship sets us on the path of the cross-shaped life of discipleship; we acknowledge God's participation in our lives, and we offer ourselves in service to the neighbor.

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*“Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.” —  
Psalm 150:6*

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## BRINGING IT HOME

Have you ever gotten a compliment from someone? It's a good feeling to have someone notice you and the things you do. People compliment others to express admiration and recognize accomplishments.

Teachers share stickers and comments. Cheerleaders shout their praise and loyalty to a team. Parents and families have celebrations to mark accomplishments and honor each other.

*What are some ways you compliment other people?  
How do you show your love and admiration to friends  
and family members?*

## **WORSHIP IS A WAY OF GIVING GOD A COMPLIMENT!**

We use songs and prayers to express our love for God and our appreciation for the amazing gifts God gives. And we grow in our amazement as we become familiar with God's saving activities throughout history and listen to God's Word for us today. Worship services refresh us through God's loving embrace in the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Through worship we are energized by God's Spirit to live lifestyles that are Christ's style!

Worship is not dependent upon the time, place, the formality of it's content or the tradition of it's music. Worship has to do with an attitude of reverence for God and genuine expressions of love, thanksgiving and devotion. Worship can be public or private, indoors or outdoors, upbeat or reflective.

Look through the following ideas to nurture worship in your family. Choose one, two or more. Feel free to adapt them to fit your situation.

- Make it a priority to worship regularly with others. It will strengthen your faith identity in community.
- Take some time to offer simple explanations of each part of your congregation's worship service over a Sunday brunch —“Confession means to say we're sorry for the mistakes we're made. Absolution means that God loves us and forgives us, etc.”
- Connect prayers and phrases from a congregational worship service with ordinary moments in your daily life.
- Enrich your greetings and leave-taking with this prayerful exchange: “The Lord be with you. And also with you.”
- Pray the current bulletin offertory prayer as a morning, evening or mealtime prayer.
- Make the “sign of the cross” as a part of your devotional or prayer ritual at home.
- As you admire the wonders of God's creation, make sure to honor the Creator.
- Check out a local Christian book store in person or online.

- Give a family member a blessing as you leave or at bedtime. You might say:

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*“May the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you..”—Numbers 6:24-26.*

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- Find a way to honor Sunday as a special family day — a day set apart to celebrate God’s activity and presence in your lives. Schedule a special symbolic meal. Make it a ritual you can repeat often.
- Give God thanks as you nurture the many talents and abilities God has given you. Consider sharing your gifts of song, dance, drama or instrument with others in your congregation.
- Place a candle on your dinner table. Light it as you begin your meals, with the words of John 8:12, “Jesus said ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’” Teach the others to respond with an adaptation of Matthew 5:16, “May our lights so shine before others that they may see our good works and give glory to our father in heaven.”
- Look over the first three commandments (Exodus 20:1-8). Take a moment to figure out what they mean to you or your family. What does worship have to do with establishing God as more important than anything? How does the first commandment affect the others that follow?
- Remember your baptisms. Place a small bowl of water on the kitchen table. Encourage the ritual of dipping fingers in the bowl to celebrate the cleansing and refreshment of our baptisms as you make the sign of the cross on your forehead.

*I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together (Psalm 34:1-3).*