

# FAITH @ HOME

Way of Love

Week 5: Worship

## ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

**READ:** Luke 24:30-31

**REFLECT:** Eggs, sugar and flour are very ordinary foods. But when you (and an adult) put them together in a special way it becomes cake! This happens when we worship together. Prayers, Bible stories and bread are wonderful things. We can pray before bed, read the Bible with our grandparents and have bread in our lunch, but it's not quite the same as coming to church. When we come together as a church family and worship on Sunday morning, an amazing thing happens. We see, hear and feel God in each other, the readings and in Communion. We get a boost to help us be kind and forgiving like Jesus all throughout the week. It is fun to eat cake, but it is more fun to cake with friends!

**RESPOND:** This week, go to church! It is hard get everyone dressed. It is hard to get everyone out to door. It is hard to keep little people quiet. Just go. Go in your pjs, get there late and make noise! It is fine! The most important thing we can do for our children's spiritual growth is to take them to worship. Nowhere else will they get to interact and learn from people of different generations who are not related to them. Try one of these ways of engaging in the worship service:

- Sit up front when you go to church. You can see so much more!
- Ask for a job. Help pass out bulletins or carry up the offering baskets. Church is much more engaging when you have something to do.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: HANNAH GRAHAM



For nearly 15 years, Hannah has served Episcopal parish communities in a variety of Christian Formation roles. As a gifted Godly Play storyteller and youth mentor, Hannah utilizes her knowledge of child and adolescent faith development not only in the classroom, but also in executing big picture planning to enhance the shaping of Christian community. Hannah has led the Education for Ministry Program as a trained mentor for 4 years, and regularly contributes to Diocesan events, camps, retreats, and committee work. She is recognized for her innovated use of social media to integrate liturgical seasons, parish programs, music, faith at home activities and outreach. In addition to the spiritual formation of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Glenwood, Maryland, Hannah devotes herself to growing in faith as a beloved child of God, wife and mother of three boys, ages 10 months-5 years old.

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## ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

**READ:** Mark 14:22-26

**REFLECT:** When we gather for worship each week, we come to pray, to hear the Word preached, to confess our sins and forgive those who have sinned against us, to break bread together, and to prepare as we return to the world. We have the opportunity to spend time intentionally with fellow Christ followers as we journey on our way. There are members of our communities that will challenge us to live more fully into our faith, and there are those who will lift us up when we are feeling down. By being part of this intentional community, we open ourselves to the movement of the Holy Spirit as we remember and are reminded to go in peace and to love one another as God has loved us.

As we gather, we remember that Jesus also worshipped with his disciples. In the reading, we hear about the Last Supper and how Jesus shared Communion as a symbol of the sacrifice He was about to make. Jesus knew his time had come, but He wanted to share practices and disciplines for his followers to use after He had gone. As Christians today, we recognize this gift as a sacrament, which is an outward, physical sign of an inward, spiritual grace. Jesus' death and resurrection are remembered in Body and the Blood, and we practice weekly to remember that salvation is given to us through Christ Jesus and not through our own actions and righteousness.

**RESPOND:** Go to a worship service this week and really pay attention to what is happening around you. What songs did you sing? What readings did you hear? What prayers did you say? Which part of the service excited you? Where did you see/feel/hear God during your worship experience? Draw a picture and share the story of your experience with a friend or family member. Tell them how you experienced God and how it made you feel. You can also follow along with the service through the resources below:

- **Parts of the Mass Sequence Cards:** <http://bit.ly/partsofmasscards>
- **Let Us Pray: A Little Kid's Guide to the Eucharist** by Jennie Turrell: <https://www.churchpublishing.org/letuspray>

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ERIN WOLF



Erin Wolf is a Youth Minister hailing from Little Chute, WI where she lives with her four kids. She serves both All Saints Episcopal in Appleton and the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac. Her ministry focuses include children & youth, camp & retreats, music, service work, interactive prayer for all ages, and more. You can connect with her via email at [ewolf@diofdl.org](mailto:ewolf@diofdl.org).

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## ADULT AND YOUTH

**READ:** Exodus 3:1-6

**REFLECT:** This week we are looking at the spiritual practice of worship. I have often heard the saying, “showing up is half the battle” in regards to attending communal worship. I think this is true because it is only half of what is required of us in worship together.

I went to visit some friends in Chicago in January, and, for someone who is from Texas, it was quite a cold time to be there. While I was there, I was incredibly intrigued by the length of time it takes for folks to enter and exit a home. First, as you enter, you knock the snow off of your boots and take them off to rest in the front walkway, then you peel off layer upon layer until you are pounds lighter, find a place to lay or hang your clothes as neatly as possible until it is time to go again, and then you have to layer back up to go out into the world again. This was such a foreign process to me that it piqued my interest.

In the reading today, Moses meets the LORD in a burning bush. Moses says, “I’m here.” He showed up, and that is half the battle. But the LORD says to Moses, you are standing on holy ground, take off your sandals. When you head to worship this week, what work do you need to do to prepare yourself for the service? Show up, but don’t just show up. Prepare your heart, think about how you want to enter worship with God and your community.

**RESPOND:** Before we leave Eucharist each week, we read together the Post Communion Prayer. Here is one we use: *Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.* (Book of Common Prayer, p. 366) During a worship service, what part fills you up the most? When this prayer says “send us out to do the work you have given us to do,” what does that mean for you?

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MEREDITH ROGERS



Meredith serves as the Director of Youth Ministries at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in San Antonio, Texas. She is a strong advocate of mental health in ministry and the benefits youth can gain from a summer camping or retreat program. While she feels incredibly underqualified to be a writer on behalf of Forma & Faith @ Home, Meredith trusts that her voice might be one that you need to hear and knows your voice is one that the world needs to hear.

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## ADULT AND ADULT

**READ:** Psalm 95

**REFLECT:** When I was growing up, I loved going to church on Sunday. My friends, my church grandparents, aunts, and uncles were all there, and my dad was the priest. I sang in the church school choir and daydreamed about boys during The Great Thanksgiving when my mind wandered. I felt deeply loved and so at home. I thought everyone felt that way at church.

God wants us to create that kind of community to offer God praise and thanksgiving. After college, I couldn't find another worship community like the one I had, so I stopped looking. I believed that God would be fine with my own praise and thanksgiving. Jesus would be cool with me following him by myself. The Spirit wasn't going to leave me because I wasn't worshipping in community. And I was right; God accepted my praise and my petitions. Jesus held my hand as I stumbled, and the Spirit never stopped guiding me.

Ultimately, I lost sight of what God calls us to do that we cannot do on our own. The Psalms call us to praise God and invites us to worship in a community where our songs, praises, offerings join together to the glory of God. Worship offers us a holy event where we can sing together, pray together, laugh and cry together, and share the meal Jesus shared with his friends. It takes a village to prepare for worship and God provides us with gifts worship gives us the opportunity to share.

As we work in The Episcopal Church on Becoming Beloved Community, I pray that your worship experiences make you feel like a loved family member at a joyous celebration at God's house.

**RESPOND:** If you love your faith community, say a prayer of thanksgiving for all who work to create meaningful worship. If you are not part of a faith community, take one step to find one. Try the Episcopal Asset Map to find a church near you. If you work at a church and seek community elsewhere, search for midweek programs like Bible study and dinner church. <https://www.episcopalassetmap.org/>

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MIRIAM MCKENNEY



Miriam is a child of God who finds extreme joy parenting her three girls: Nia, Kaia, and Jaiya. She met her husband, David, at the Union of Black Episcopalians conference in 1981. Miriam works as Forward Movement's Development Director, and writes for their family blog, Grow Christians. She was a children's librarian and school media specialist for 20 years before joining Forward Movement's staff. She has recently discovered a love of outdoor fitness in extreme temperatures, as there is no bad weather, just incorrect clothing choices.

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