

WHY GATHER AS A FAMILY TO WORSHIP?

First, it is part of our God-given role as parents. In Deuteronomy 6:4-7 we find these words from the Lord through Moses to the families of Israel:

Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up...

As a church, we have always believed that the spiritual nurture, instruction, and training of our children is committed by God primarily to their parents. You, as a dad or mom, have a special and unique role in the spiritual influence of your own kids. You get to share God's message of holiness and love, command and grace, praise and repentance within the warm context of your home and family life. God has given you authority there! *You matter.*¹ That "home-court advantage" gives us a remarkable ability to influence life-long habits, beliefs, and attitudes. You get to model a faith in Jesus Christ that is vibrant and central rather than just another add-on activity you can take or leave.

You are not alone—it's not only your task. God calls his church to gather weekly and to provide instruction for kids, students, and adults in the Scriptures so that we might all confess that Jesus is Lord and share in life united to him by his Spirit. That's why we seek to partner with you by providing classes, groups, and other programs to equip you for this central role. Just remember, as David Baer says, "You are not the solution for your children: God is!" His amazing gospel—the good news that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again to set us free from sin and for the good work he calls us to – is the only way to a transformed heart. It is for you and your children and all who are far off.

What happens at home is just as important as (perhaps more important than) what happens in church. If we're honest, we don't always act like that. This pandemic has really made some of us in Family Ministry stop and think. For a long time, we may have sent the unintentional message: "We've got this; just trust your kids to us on Sundays and Wednesdays and relax!" If we have overdone it—or worse, undermined or not equipped you—we own that and are working to change. *We know and believe wholeheartedly that parents and the church are designed to work together for the sake of telling the gospel to the next generation.*



WHAT IS FAMILY WORSHIP?

Family worship is simply gathering as a family for the purpose of worshipping God. Whether you are one or two parents, gathering with grandparents or just your immediate family, it is simply coming together once a week to read God's word, talk about his truth, and praise and pray together.

This is less like a fancy meal on your grandmother's china and more like pizza night on paper plates: it's a familiar staple, and it's loved. It's not about doing it perfectly, but diving in anyway. The habits we commit to shape us and form us in important ways because they put our priorities into practice.

THE WORD OF GOD (SCRIPTURE)

We learn who God is best when we hear his word. We ask what it shows us about who he is, what he has done, and what that means for us!

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH (CATECHISMS)

A Catechism is a teaching tool in a simple Q&A form that makes the basic, core teaching of the Christian church accessible to kids and students. There are several you can use: we recommend one question per week from the New City Catechism which is free to you: available at church, online at newcitycatechism.com, or your App Store (comes with great additional resources, Scripture, and simpler children's answers). You can also use the Westminster Shorter Catechism or the Heidelberg Catechism.

THE RHYTHMS OF PRAISING GOD (PRAYER & SONG)

Prayer and song are some of the best ways we learn to praise God. We simply pray for our needs, for others, and for God's work. Singing teaches us God's character (as we say who he is and what he has done) and trains our hearts to praise and give glory to God. *We were made to glorify and enjoy God!*



HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

BE WILLING. Wait, I have flashbacks or PTSD of my parents trying to do devotions or lectures with me at home. No way! Sure, you might feel that—but take this as an opportunity to start fresh, start small, do your own thing, and be faithful. We struggle together here, so enlist parent friends as a support!

BE HONEST. You might think *Who, me? Lead my family in Scripture and prayer? I'm not ready for that!* You're more ready than you realize—God has given you this role, and he will equip you. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you as you use the guide we'll give. Be honest that you feel inadequate, and dive in anyway. *Few things communicate trust to our kids more than being honest and vulnerable about something hard for us but showing we are willing to do it anyway.* Make Psalm 78:1-7 your prayer.

BE CREATIVE. Really—the same thing week after week? Won't we get bored? What we're giving you is a guide, not a rule. Change it up. Have fun with it. Change up the roles. Any kid can lead a prayer, and anyone who can read can open the Bible. All of us can sing. Ask your kids or spouse to each take a part. Give them suggestions, or let them pick their own! Praise their efforts and thank them. Act out a passage, or listen to it on the Bible app, read different characters in different voices, or draw it out. Use the *Jesus Storybook Bible* at any age. Pull songs from our Spotify or YouTube playlist. Share ideas.

With much love,
Signal Pres Family Ministry // Andy Cornett

¹ *Parents are the single greatest influence on their children's faith.*
See Fuller Seminary article "Helping Kids Keep the Faith" at bit.ly/kidskeepfaith.



JULY 2020

Remember, the goal is a weekly rhythm of worship together as a family. It works best on a consistent day and time, but change it up as you see fit or need to. On the whole, you might do this in only 10 minutes. If your kids are older or into it, they might string it longer. But don't run it by the clock! Trust God with your efforts and be gracious to yourselves.

Find the links to the New City Catechism (online and via the free app) and Spotify and YouTube playlists of songs at signalpres.org/family-worship.

This month we're suggesting looking at five of the Psalms. The unique thing is the Psalms are both God's word to us and give us words to use in talking to God. Pair them with prayer!

JUNE 28-JULY 4

From the New City Catechism: Question 5 — What else did God create?

A: God created all things and all his creation was very good.

From God's Word: Read Psalm 23 (helping us trust God)

For singing, try (or just listen to): *Fairest Lord Jesus* (Christy Nockels)

For prayer (home & family): Take a moment to talk about the ways we can trust God and trust each other. Pray for hearts to love him, love each other in our own family, and listen to and respect one another out of love.

JULY 5-11

From the New City Catechism: Question 6 — How can we glorify God?

A: *By loving him and by obeying his commands and law.*

From God's Word: Read Psalm 121 (trusting God for help)

For singing, try (or just listen to): *On Jordan's Stormy Banks* (RYM Worship)

For prayer (community): Pray this week especially for a few neighbors or people in your community. Pray for those who are your enemies, or have wronged you, or that you are tempted to look down or reject — to love and forgive as God has loved and forgiven us.

JULY 12-18

From the New City Catechism: Question 7 — What does the law of God require? A: *That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.*

From God's Word: Read Psalm 16 (delighting and enjoying God when things are hard)

For singing, try (or just listen to): *Wide, High, Long, Deep* (Ellie Holcomb)

For prayer (work and play): Take a moment to talk to someone you can befriend or show special attention to this week. As God keeps his promises to us, is for us, and protects us, so we can learn to be friends to others that reflect God's heart.

JULY 19-25

From the New City Catechism: Question 8 — What is the law of God stated in the Ten Commandments?

A: You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.

(continued on reverse)



From God's Word: Read Psalm 103 (praising God for who he is and what he has done)

For singing, try (or just listen to): *May The Peoples Praise You* (Getty)

For prayer (world): Pray this week in a way that 1) thank God for giving his word and his law to us, and 2) name a way you or your family see that the world is affected by disobeying God's commands and tells God about your sadness here, and 3) pray that people everywhere come to know and praise God.

JULY 26-AUGUST 1

From the New City Catechism: Question 9 — What does God require in the first, second, and third commandments? A: *First, that we know God as the only true God. Second, that we avoid all idolatry. Third, that we treat God's name with fear and reverence.*

From God's Word: Read Psalm 51 (confessing sin to God and remembering his forgiveness)

For singing, try (or just listen to): *In Christ Alone*

For prayer (home & family): Pray this week by thanking God for the forgiveness we have in Jesus Christ. (You may want to remind each other of 1 John 1:8-9). Praise God for being such a great and forgiving God who leads us in the way of truth and obedience.