

Your word
is a lamp
before my
feet and
a light for
my journey.
—Psalm 119:105 (CEB)

Sing to
the Lord a
new song!
Sing to the
Lord, all
the earth!
—Psalm 96:1 (NIV)

Call to
Worship

Offering

Singing

Singing

Scripture
Reading

Scripture
Reading

Sermon

Children's
Story

Prayer

Prayer

Communion

Pass the
Peace

Benediction

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

In Mark 12:30–31, Jesus encourages us to love God with all of ourselves—our hearts, souls, minds, and strength—and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Devotion like this is a lifelong project. Like all worthwhile and enduring endeavors, we are more likely to thrive when we are connected to a caring community.

Community can lift us up and offer practical help. Parenting is a challenging and rewarding labor of love that is made easier by the support of friends. Parents who are in your stage of life might appreciate the opportunity to swap children's clothes or carpool to events. Those whose children are older may be able to offer some tips they learned from experience. It's reassuring to hear from others who have walked a similar path.

Faith communities can be incredible resources for families. Faith takes on broader and deeper meaning when children grow up seeing people of all ages working and worshiping together. It is represented by people they know: the retired adult who is traveling to do mission work; the young adult who is using her musical gifts to write songs of hope and change; or the youth whose energy brings joy to potluck meals and game nights. These all are living examples of wholehearted worship.

We hope that this resource gives you fresh ways to strengthen the connection between your broader faith community and your family. Even more, we hope that you will be inspired to create your own ways of building bonds that deepen your family's faith. We need one another as we endeavor to follow Jesus. May God's Spirit guide you, comfort you, and give you joy.

We are cheering you on!

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One of the legal experts . . . asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus replied, "The most important one is *Israel, listen! Our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* The second is this, *You will love your neighbor as yourself.*"
—Mark 12:28–31a (CEB)



SHINE
families
worship



Illustrations by Elisa Chavarri



Hello, Shine Families!

We have been learning the Six Practices that Grow Faith at Home: Talk, Celebrate, Learn, Serve, and Pray. This month, we wrap up with the practice of "Worship." Families who are going to church together to worship with their community of faith are in a great position to grow in faith! There are good reasons why people have been making this a habit for generations. A pastor named Palmer Becker describes what Christians value this way:

- *Jesus is the center of our faith.*
- *Community is the center of our life.*
- *Reconciliation is the center of our work.*

Christian faith finds its best expression in community, and gathering for worship once a week is one of the main ways we live this value. Being connected to a faith community provides both children and caregivers priceless support for their growth in faith.

There are many aspects to attending worship together that make a difference for families:

- Relationships with people who will care for and support children as they mature in faith.
- Relationships with people who will care for and support adults as Christian parents and caregivers.
- Tools that help us grow spiritually: books, apps, music, retreats, service opportunities, Bible studies, small groups, classes, and more.
- Christian teaching, so family members of all ages learn to read and understand the Bible, learn to talk about their beliefs, and learn the traditions of the church.
- Learning "the Jesus way of living" that is grounded in love.

When families go to church together, parents and children alike are encouraged and challenged to grow in Christian maturity. The church provides support, accountability, friendship, and inspiration for growth in discipleship.

We hope the ideas in this folder will inspire your family to attend worship together and to create stronger connections between your family and your congregation.

Blessings to you!

Shana Peachey Boshart

Shine Everywhere Project Facilitator

SHINE
everywhere

We'll tell the next generation
all about the praise due the
Lord and his strength—
the wondrous works God
has done.
—Psalm 78:4b (CEB)



worship together at home



Try some of the following ways to strengthen connections between your home and worship services at church.

Create a Cozy Corner

What might it be like to create a corner in your home where your children know they can spend quiet time and find some worshipful resources? Devotional books, play figures, or picture books that connect to worship themes could be placed near a special chair or under a net canopy. Maybe you could include some finger labyrinths, *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible*, and other age-appropriate resources.

Create Connections

Does your church use a bulletin? Why not use it to strengthen connections between church and home? If you receive an electronic bulletin before the service, you could sing a song that the congregation will be singing on Sunday. Even knowing a chorus can help everyone in your family to feel included. If you bring a paper bulletin home, you could sing one of the songs from the worship service throughout the coming week or reread the key scripture text from the sermon.

Pray Together

If your congregation shares joys and concerns during your gathered worship, you can make a note to remember these items at home during your prayer time. One person could name the request or note of gratitude, and everyone else can chime in with simple refrains, such as “Lord, hear our prayer” or “God, we give you thanks.”

Talk Together

As you gather after your worship service, people can share one thing they noticed or appreciated from the day. Was the children’s time story especially interesting? Maybe you sang a favorite song. Did someone have an especially good conversation? What word, idea, or interaction stands out to you?

Care and Calendars

If your church uses a prayer calendar, post it in a prominent place so that you can pray for the names mentioned each day. If you have a directory with photos in it, why not look at the faces of the people for whom you are praying?

With All Your Strength

Jesus told us to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength and to love others as ourselves (Mark 12:30–31). Worshiping God involves our whole self: our emotions, our spirits, our minds, and our bodies. Take turns tossing a die or another simple marker onto this paper grid. When it lands on a square, name one idea connected with worshiping God in that way. For example, if the die lands on “soul,” you might mention praying or resting quietly in God’s presence.



Worship Service Version: You could play this game after a worship service and see if you can connect your experience in the service to the words on the grid.

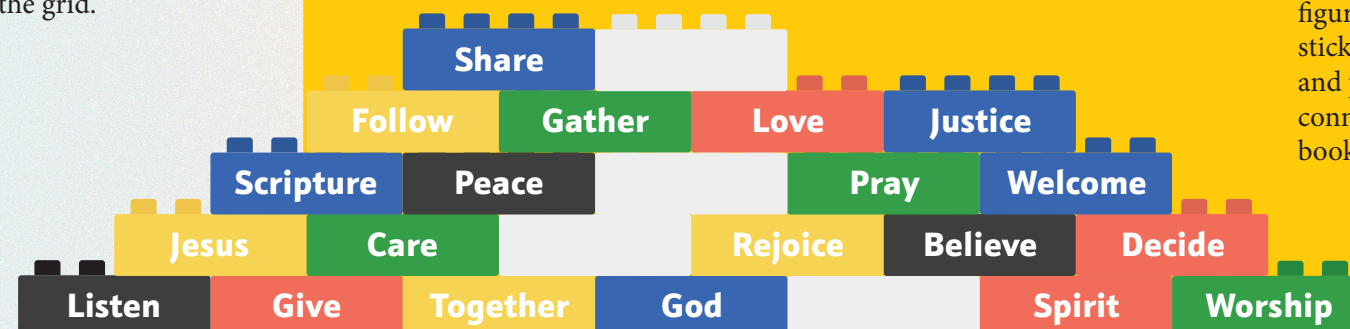
worship together at church



Here are some resources and ideas to use when you worship together with others in your gathered faith community.

Listen In

Take this paper to church. Listen carefully throughout the worship service. See which words you hear! You could circle each word as you hear it OR choose one or two words that you think will be said often and place a checkmark or small dot beside each word every time it is said. Add your own words in the blank blocks.



Busy and Blessed

Consider bringing a worship bag to church with you that contains activities your children can do while they are in church. You could include quiet dolls or figures, fidget toys, sticker books, crayons and paper, Bible-connected activity books, and so on.

Save the place

Cut out the bookmarks at the top of the next page. Take them with you to worship. One can be placed in a Bible to mark a scripture passage and another can be placed in a hymnal to mark the next hymn.

Follow Along

Cut out the cards on the next page. You can put them in the order of your worship service and follow along. Three of the cards are blank so you can add your own terms. If you like, you could punch a hole in one corner of each card and put them on a ring.



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