



### INTRODUCTION TO THE SIX PRACTICES

Faith begins at home. Parents and caregivers are the first and most influential spiritual teachers in a child's life. Yet the congregation has a vital role to play, partnering with Christian parents by providing encouragement and resources to them.

These worship resources are designed to help families and individuals embody six simple formative practices that grow faith at home: **Talk, Pray, Celebrate, Serve, Learn, and Worship**. These practices are not just for Sunday—they are rhythms that shape everyday life. Introducing these practices in our communal worship invites people of all ages to live their faith every day. It gives families with children ways to grow in faith together at home.

**Why these practices?** They are grounded in research findings reported in *Families at the Center of Faith Formation* by Leif Kehrwald and others, which reports and reflects on numerous studies about nurturing faith in families.

#### Inside this Six Practices Toolkit, you'll find:

##### *Resources to send home with parents:*

- Reading the Bible with Children: Tips for Parents and Caregivers
- Six Practices folder

##### *Resources for congregational leaders:*

- "All Ages, One Body: Welcoming Children into Worship" by Jayne Byler
- "Children in Worship" by Mitch Stutzman
- Shine products designed to grow faith at home

In the following worship resources, "Story Time" takes the place of "Children's Time" to align with the approach Jayne Byler advocates in the article "All Ages, One Body" (listed above). Encourage people of all ages to come forward to be closer to the storyteller. The storyteller will also introduce the activity related to the worship visual, Growing Faith Pathway, and invite people of all ages to contribute to it.

Our hope is that six worship services focusing on practices that grow faith at home will inspire strong connections between home and congregation, supporting and encouraging people of all ages as they grow in faith. May these services spark new ways for every household to **talk, pray, celebrate, serve, learn, and worship—together**.

*Shana Peachey Boshart*  
Shine Everywhere Project Facilitator

# Six Practices that Grow Faith

## WORSHIP RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS

*A six-part worship series based on the Six Practices that Grow Faith at Home*

### INTRODUCTION

**Faith starts at home—and grows everywhere.**

Today, many churches and families are looking for new ways to help faith take root. The old methods don't always fit our lives anymore. So how do we keep growing faith when the usual tools aren't enough?

Shine Everywhere is here to help. It's a community of families and congregations learning the simple, daily habits that help us grow in faith—at church, at home, and everywhere in between.

Shine Everywhere is an initiative of *Shine: Living in God's Light* that creates Christian formation curriculum and resources, co-published by Brethren Press and MennoMedia. With support from the Lilly Endowment and generous donors, Shine Everywhere explores how families and churches can make faith formation a way of life—not just something that happens on Sundays.

We invite your congregation—and your households—to join us in practicing six faith habits that grow faith.

These worship services use story, scripture, song, prayer, reflection, and ritual to help us live an “everywhere faith.” Together, we'll rediscover what it means to express our faith in Jesus in our everyday activities.

The Six Practices that Grow Faith at Home come from research about how faith gets passed from parents to their children. Not surprisingly, these are the practices that grow faith at any age, which makes them relevant to adults at all stages of life. As you carry out these worship services, watch for the ways these practices apply to single adults, childless couples, and empty-nesters. Challenge every household to intentionally nurture their own growth in faith through these practices. Provide opportunities for everyone—children and adults—to tell the stories of how these practices are transforming their daily lives.

Come along as we explore these practices and answer Jesus' call to “go and make disciples”—starting right where we live.

### WORSHIP SERVICES



#### **Week 1: Talk**

Grow faith by having honest conversations and welcoming good questions.



#### **Week 2: Pray**

Learn simple, daily rhythms of prayer that fit your life and culture.



#### **Week 3: Celebrate**

Mark rituals, milestones, and moments that build joy and belonging.



#### **Week 4: Serve**

Meet Jesus in acts of kindness and service to neighbors near and far.



#### **Week 5: Learn**

Build a culture of curiosity and learn the Bible together.



#### **Week 6: Worship**

Worship together at church, where community and encouragement flourish.

## VISUALS

Many congregations use visual symbols to deepen worship. Choose visuals that fit your space and culture. Consider creating a “Growing Faith Pathway” that grows each week across your worship space. This can be a cloth runner, a drop cloth, or a simple mural. Adults and children participate together in these activities. As people leave the worship service, invite them to add their objects to the path.

Add weekly markers that match each practice:

- **Week 1 (Talk):** Speech bubbles with conversation prompts or faith questions. Families can write their own and take them home.
- **Week 2 (Pray):** Stones or stepping stones with written prayers for different moments in the week. Invite people to decorate stones to take home.
- **Week 3 (Celebrate):** Paper flowers labeled with community milestones, traditions, holidays, and meaningful rituals.
- **Week 4 (Serve):** Paper handprints or simple tools (paper cutouts of shovel/hammer) with action words, such as “visit,” “share,” and “help” written on the cutouts.
- **Week 5 (Learn):** Books or lamps to symbolize learning God’s story, getting help, and growing in wisdom.
- **Week 6 (Worship):** Paper hearts on which to write or draw the places we worship God.

In the worship resources below, Story Time sometimes includes the weekly marker and sometimes includes an activity to take home. Worship planners and storytellers will decide how to introduce the Growing Faith Pathway and how Story Time connects with it.

## CONNECTING CHURCH AND HOME

Each service includes space for children’s participation and leadership—through storytelling, song, visual creation, scripture reading, or simple acts of worship. Encourage families to sit together and talk afterward about what they saw and heard.

As you prepare this worship series, think about ways to invite people to do these practices at home. Consider creating one or more of these prompts in your worship bulletin each week:

- A question to talk about at dinner.
- A simple family prayer to say at bedtime or before leaving home.
- A weekly act of kindness or service to do together.
- A verse to memorize or draw.

You will greatly increase participation in at-home faith practices if you provide opportunities for people to share at church what they have done at home. These conversations could take place during coffee hour, in a Sunday School class, during sharing time in worship, during a potluck or midweek meal—whatever fits your congregation best. Sharing these stories builds community and motivates participation.

By engaging people of all ages in this way, faith practices become *habits of daily life*—alive at dinner tables, during car rides, and in bedtime routines.

## WORSHIP RESOURCE TEAM

The Six Practices that Grow Faith worship series was created by Mitch Stutzman and Shana Peachey Boshart in collaboration with the creators of *Shine: Living in God’s Light Curriculum*.

## WEEK 1

# Talk

### KEY SCRIPTURE

Luke 24:13–35

### GUIDING STATEMENT

Our scriptures are full of examples of storytelling. Written over the course of centuries to a predominantly illiterate audience, the Bible contains many examples of how people talked with one another and used conversation in community to build faith. This worship outline offers the story of the disciples' encounter with the risen Jesus as one text for reflection. However, when choosing biblical texts for your worship together, consider the scriptures that will resonate with your community and be examples of how talking together serves as a catalyst for transformation. How do we create more opportunities as a community to talk together? What hooks or prompts can we give one another to create more opportunities for storytelling as it relates to our faith journey? What are we talking about as we “walk along?”

At every stage of life, “talking faith” means making space for questions. For families and children, it means bedtime stories that include wonder about God, mealtime reflections about the day, and car rides where curiosity is welcome. When adults model open, honest conversation about faith, children learn that their questions are welcome too. Talking about faith in everyday life helps children recognize Jesus walking beside them in ordinary moments. The same is true for households that don't have children, and adults of all ages can be challenged to talk about faith and ask their faith questions in daily life.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: On the road to Emmaus, the disciples shared their story, their hopes, and their questions.  
What are you talking about as you walk along?*

**People: As we gather, we bring our stories too,  
inviting Jesus to walk with us.**

*Leader: As they talked and as they listened, they found understanding, and in the breaking of bread, they recognized Jesus. What are you talking about as you walk along?*

**All: Come, let us share, listen, and worship,  
for Christ is alive and walks with us!**

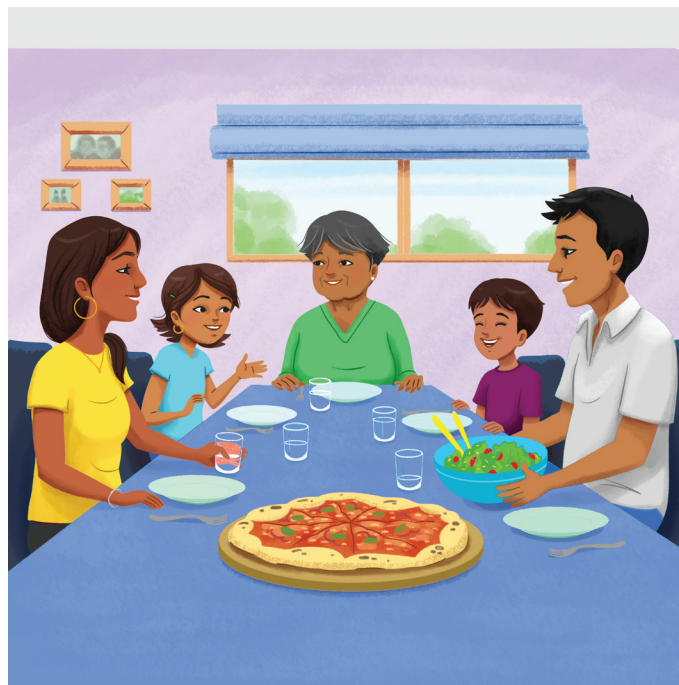


Illustration by Elisa Chavarr

### PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God of the road and the table, burn in our hearts. Make us aware of your presence among us in our conversations and time together. As we gather here, help us recognize you in our stories, in our questions, and in one another. Amen.

### SONGS

- “Come and See”
- “Goodness of God”
- “Hamba nathi” (Come Walk with Us)
- “How Can We Be Silent”
- “I Love to Tell the Story”
- “Speak, O Lord”
- “We Are People of God’s Peace”
- “Word of God Speak”

## STORY TIME

**Supplies:** *A backpack or a suitcase, papers shaped like speech bubbles and pens or markers*

Ask the children something like: Have you ever been on a trip? Or have you ever gone on a hike? What do you take along when you go on a trip? What do you do while you are on that trip? Do you ever tell stories? Sometimes when I am on a trip, I ask the people I am traveling with questions that I have been thinking about.

The Bible story today is about friends who were walking seven miles together. Jesus was their teacher and their friend, and he had just been crucified. They felt sad and scared and uncertain about what would happen next. These are big feelings! When we have big feelings, it's a good idea to pay attention to those feelings and talk about the situation that caused them. These friends needed to talk about Jesus and what had happened to him, and that's what they talked about as they walked along.

Jesus was important to them, and Jesus is important to us too. Just like he was a teacher and friend to these people, he is a teacher and friend to you and me too! We also need to talk about Jesus!

Give each child two papers in the shape of a speech bubble. Say: "What would you like to say about Jesus? Maybe you have a question about Jesus or something you'd like to talk to Jesus about. Write this or draw a picture about it on both speech bubbles. Put one speech bubble on our Growing Faith Pathway and take the other one home to talk about as a family."

Have extra speech bubbles available and encourage everyone to write their questions or conversation topics after the service and add them to the pathway.

Offer a short prayer to close your time: "Jesus, thank you for being our teacher and friend. We are learning to follow you, so we like to talk about you. Thank you for

our families at home and our church family here who help us learn more about you. Amen."

## SERMON STARTER

The story of the disciples meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus invites us to consider how we might answer Jesus' question in our contemporary context: What are you talking about as you walk along? Through your sermon, explore the transformative power of conversation in the Christian journey, as illustrated in the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

In their confusion and sorrow, Jesus meets them, listens to their struggles, and reframes their understanding of scripture through conversation. They recognize him not only through his teaching but also in the breaking of bread—a shared, relational act, mirroring the events of the Last Supper. This story highlights the importance of talking together as a means of faith formation, both in ordinary places like the road and sacred spaces like the communion table.

What we talk about along the road is what will form us. Jesus' question, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" challenges us to consider the conversations that shape our lives and how we understand discipleship. The story of the road to Emmaus calls us to embrace community conversations and dialogue as a core practice of Christian formation, encouraging us to talk about our faith daily, share life with one another, and see Jesus revealed in our relationships and rituals, even in the seemingly mundane moments of our day to day.

Invite your congregation to consider how conversation at home can become a spiritual practice. Encourage parents to share their own experiences of faith and doubt with their children. Ask what it looks like to walk and talk about faith together—on drives, at dinner, or during walks around the neighborhood. Children learn to see Jesus in those who listen well. As a church, how can we become a community where questions are not feared but nurtured, a community where storytelling keeps faith alive "along the road"?

## SENDING SONG

- "For We Are Strangers No More"

## BENEDICTION

Go now, sharing your stories along the road, and listening for Christ in every conversation.

May your hearts burn within you as you encounter the Living Christ. Amen.



## WEEK 2

# Pray

### KEY SCRIPTURE

Luke 11:1–13

### GUIDING STATEMENT

When Jesus' disciples asked, "Lord, teach us to pray," he provided them words simple enough for young people to memorize and deep enough to be a continued presence on the journey of life. Prayer grounds our faith in relationship—between us and God. Prayer draws us to each other as well. As we pray together, at church, at bedtime, before leaving home, or around the table at mealtime, we learn to trust that God listens, provides, and responds in love. Prayer is not performance but practice. It is a rhythm that forms hearts and communities that depend on God for daily bread, forgiveness, and peace.

For children, prayer shapes their image of God and begins to define the relationship they have with God. For families or households, prayer is a rhythm that turns ordinary routines into sacred spaces. Our prayers bless the day ahead, thank God for food, or name people we care about or who we want to remember in special ways. Prayer reminds us that faith is not something we perform but something we practice together.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: The disciples came to Jesus and asked,*

**People: Lord, teach us to pray.**

*Leader: Our hearts speak through word, whisper, sigh, and silence.*

**People: Lord, teach us to pray.**

*Leader: We come before you, God, at your invitation to ask, seek, and knock.*

**People: Lord, teach us to pray.**

*All: God hears us and draws us close.*



Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

### PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Our God in heaven, hallowed is your name. In our worship today, teach us to pray, and quiet our spirits so we may listen for your voice. Draw us close as we seek, ask, and knock, trusting that your love will meet us here. Amen.

### SONGS

- "Build My Life"
- "Day by Day"
- "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"
- "The Lord's Prayer (It's Yours)"
- "Sweet Hour of Prayer"
- "Way Maker"
- "What a Beautiful Name"

## STORY TIME

**Supplies:** *Small stones, markers, and a basket or bowl*

Ask the children something like: Can you think of a time when you were really excited about something? Maybe you did well on a test at school or you won a soccer game, and you wanted to share that good news with someone. What are some exciting things that you have wanted to share with someone? Who did you tell?

Here is a second question: Have you ever needed help doing something? Maybe something that felt really hard to do, or something you just cannot do by yourself. When you need help, who do you talk to? Maybe a parent, teacher, or friend?

Did you know that God wants to hear the things that make us excited and hear the things we need help doing too?

In today's Bible story, Jesus' friends asked him how to pray; they asked him how to talk to God. And he taught them a special prayer that we still say today—we call it the Lord's Prayer. Jesus wanted his friends to know—and he wants us to know—that prayer isn't about saying fancy words. God is someone who loves you and is listening to you, and when you talk to God, that is prayer. Prayer can be saying what we are thankful for, that we are excited, that we are worried, or it can be naming the ways we need help.

Today we have stones to make into prayer stones. Think of something or someone you want to pray for. Pick two stones, write the thing you want to pray for on both stones. Place one stone on the Growing Faith Pathway. Take the other stone home with you and hold it when you pray for that thing. Everyone in the congregation is invited to create two prayer stones and leave one on the Growing Faith Pathway.

Offer a short prayer to close your time: "God, thank you for always listening when we pray. Thank you for listening to us when we talk to you about what makes us sad and what makes us happy. Amen."

## SERMON STARTER

In Luke 11, Jesus offers his disciples not a formula, but a framework for faith. The Lord's Prayer is communal from the start—*our* Father, *our* daily bread, *our* forgiveness. This shared language becomes a way of remembering who we are and whose we are.

Explore how prayer becomes formative when it's shared: parents teaching children, friends praying for one another, congregations holding hope for their communities. Jesus' parable of the persistent neighbor reminds us that prayer shapes us as much as it changes our circumstances. God invites us to keep knocking, to stay open, and to trust that every good gift comes from a loving Parent. As we learn to pray, we learn to live in dependence, gratitude, and faithfulness together.

Encourage your congregation to consider how prayer is taught. Reflect on how you pray as a congregation. What do children hear when adults pray? What words of gratitude or lament do they see, hear, and learn to use? Consider inviting families to write a short "family prayer" together, something they can say before meals or at bedtime. Remind the church that the practice of praying together reminds us to trust God's goodness and keeps us aware of the needs of others. When children grow up hearing the prayers of their community, they learn that they too have a voice that matters to God.

## SONG OF RESPONSE

- "The Lord's Prayer"
- "The Lord's Prayer (It's Yours)"

## BENEDICTION

As you go from this place, may every breath become a prayer and every prayer draw you nearer to God. May the One who invites you to ask, seek, and knock fill your days with peace. Amen.

## WEEK 3

# Celebrate

### KEY SCRIPTURE

Nehemiah 8:9–12

### GUIDING STATEMENT

God's people have always celebrated together—marking moments of grace, recovery, and new beginnings. When the people of Israel heard God's word again after exile, their first response was tears, then joy. Celebration is not an escape from the hard work of faith but its natural overflow. It reminds us that God's goodness is best experienced in community—around tables, in song, and through laughter shared across generations.

For families, celebration forms memory. It tells children and reminds everyone that God is good and present with us. Rituals like lighting a candle for birthdays, sharing communion, baptism, marking the start of a new school year, and the liturgies of worship teach that joy is part of faith. When families celebrate God's work together through laughter, song, and generosity children learn that faith is a communal gift we share.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: The joy of the Lord is our strength!*

**People: We come with tears and with joy.**

*Leader: The joy of the Lord is our strength!*

**People: We rejoice and celebrate together.**

*Leader: Let our fellowship be filled with laughter and love.*

**All: The joy of the Lord shines through us!**



Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

### PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God of joy, we gather in your presence with gratitude and hope. As we remember your unfailing presence with us, draw us to your goodness. Fill our worship with celebration that strengthens and renews us. Amen.

### SONGS

- "Forever"
- "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"
- "O Sing to the Lord"
- "Sing for Joy"
- "This Is Amazing Grace"
- "This Is the Day"
- "We Will Dance"



## STORY TIME

**Supplies:** *Papers cut in the shape of flowers and pens or markers*

Ask the children something like: Have you ever been to a party? What was the party for? Maybe it was to celebrate someone's birthday, or to celebrate a special holiday. Or maybe it was to celebrate the start of something, or the end of something.

One of the things we often do during a celebration is remember. When we celebrate someone's birthday, we remember the day they were born and think about how special that person is. When we have a party or meal here at church, it may be to celebrate and remember a special day or holiday. Today's Bible story is about the people remembering. The people in our story have been very sad for a long time. They have been having a hard life. But they all come together and read the Bible. The story says that people of all ages, including kids just like you, studied the Bible together. Then something really special happened. The leaders told them to get a bunch of food and throw a party! Once they were reminded of the story of God, they celebrated, had a meal together, shared with everybody, and had a big party. They celebrated because learning about God gives us joy—even when things have been hard.

Name some ways your church community celebrates God's love (sharing food, singing together, or helping someone in your community). Make note of specific days, seasons, or events that are important in your life as a church or as individuals. Invite the congregation to write those ideas down on paper flowers and add them to the Growing Faith Pathway in your worship space.

Close with a short prayer: "God, thank you for giving us joy and reasons to celebrate. Help us share our joy with others so everyone can know your love. Amen."

## SERMON STARTER

In Nehemiah 8, the people gather in the public square—men, women, and all who can understand (verse 12), including children—to listen as the law is read aloud. Their hearts are moved to weep, but their leaders remind them that this day is holy: "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." They are told to eat, drink, and share with those who have none. After being reminded of God's goodness, the people are called into celebration with one another. In the context of the six faith practices that ground our faith, "celebration" is expressed through rituals, traditions, milestones, and moments.

This passage reveals that faith celebration is both spiritual and practical—joy and generosity intertwined. Consider how your community celebrates what God is doing. How do you share God's abundance with those who have little? How do your rituals, milestones, and holy days strengthen your sense of identity as God's people? How do your rituals and celebrations remind your community of the ways God is with you? Like the people of Jerusalem, we celebrate not to forget our struggles but to proclaim that God is with us, restoring and renewing life in every season.

Use this moment to remind your faith community that celebration is itself a spiritual discipline. It is a way of remembering. How do we help children connect joy with God's goodness? Encourage families to create rituals of gratitude—maybe sharing "joy moments" at dinner or thanking God for something each day. Invite the congregation to notice how celebration builds belonging and meaning. When we feast together, laugh together, and include children in our joy, we proclaim that God's love is abundant and worth sharing.

## SONG OF RESPONSE

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness (Beginning to End)"

## BENEDICTION

Go in joy, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. May the assurance of God's presence dry your tears and move you from mourning to praise, and from grief to laughter, gratitude, and celebration. Amen.

## WEEK 4

# Serve

### KEY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:31–46

### GUIDING STATEMENT

Serving others is one of the clearest ways we encounter Christ. In Matthew 25, Jesus reminds us that faith is revealed not in what we claim to believe but in how we respond to those who hunger, thirst, or need welcome. Service is a communal act of love—a way of seeing and meeting Christ in our neighbor. When we serve together as households, congregations, and communities, we live out God’s kingdom of compassion, justice, and mercy.

For children and older members of your community alike, service teaches empathy. It helps us see that every person carries God’s image. When families and faith communities volunteer together, cook meals, or visit neighbors together, these shared experiences create a sense of belonging and shared history. Children learn (and adults are reminded) that helping is not extra; it’s central to following Jesus. Acts of service connect the dots between faith stories and real life needs, forming habits of generosity that last a lifetime.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: When did we see you hungry and give you something to eat?*

**People: We serve God when we serve others.**

*Leader: When did we welcome you in?*

**People: We serve God when we serve others.**

*Leader: When did you need clothes or when do we see you sick?*

**People: We serve God when we serve others.**

*Leader: God meets us in every act of love.*

**People: When we welcome others, we welcome Christ.**

*All: Come, let us worship with hearts ready to serve.*



Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

### PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Oh God, the most Holy One, open our eyes to see you in our neighbor and in every person in need. Form our hearts; prepare us to extend compassion. May our worship overflow in acts of love and service to one another and to the world. Amen.

### SONGS

- “Build Your Kingdom Here”
- “Christ, Be Our Light”
- “Here I Am, Lord”
- “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love”
- “When I Needed a Neighbor”
- “Will You Let Me Be Your Servant?”

## STORY TIME

**Supplies:** *Items for a relief kit or bucket*

This story takes some preparation if it is to be specific to your congregation. Find out what relief organization your congregation connects with and whether your congregation has donated relief kit supplies or even had an event to assemble relief kits. An internet search for “relief kits” might be helpful.

Ask the children something like: What are some ways you help at home or school? Maybe you feed a pet, set the table, or help a friend who’s sad. What ways are you a helper?

In today’s Bible story, Jesus tells us that whenever we help someone who’s hungry, thirsty, lonely, or sick, it’s like we are helping him.

Did you know that the church has sometimes created a whole organization just to help people in need? Yes, that is what [fill in the organization your church connects with or the organization that sponsors the activity you are about to share] was created for.

Do you remember collecting things to put in [fill in the type of kit or bucket your congregation has made] kits? [Make the connection to a service project the children have already participated in.] These kits go to people who would not be able to have these things. Let’s make a \_\_\_\_\_ kit together.

[Have all the items for a relief kit or bucket. Talk about the items in the kit and who will get them as you put the items in a bag or box to give to the relief agency you’ve chosen. Another possibility would be to create a blessing bag for someone without a home.]

Provide paper handprints already cut out for anyone who wants them. Encourage children and adults of all ages to write or draw on the handprint the different ways they can help someone. Add these handprints to the Growing Faith Pathway as a reminder that our hands serve Jesus when we help others.

Close with a brief prayer: “Jesus, thank you for showing us how to care for others. Use our hands to help, our hearts to love, and our eyes to see people the way you do. Amen.”

## SERMON STARTER

This passage begins with a vision of the Son of Man separating the nations, but it ends with a simple truth: we meet Jesus in ordinary acts of care. Feeding, visiting, clothing, welcoming—all become holy moments where heaven touches earth.

Invite your congregation to reflect on where they have seen Christ in the faces of those they serve. How might your community reimagine service not as a program but as a way to live? Service flows naturally from discipleship—it’s how we live the gospel. Encourage families and individuals to serve side by side, listening for the Spirit’s call to compassion. When we serve “the least of these,” we live out the love that defines an everywhere faith.

Encourage your congregation to make serving together a communal rhythm. Activities like packing hygiene kits, baking for a neighbor, or writing cards to elders are important acts that connect us broadly and across generations. Ask children in your congregation about the people they see who have needs. Children are connected in circles that their parents are not always connected to; the needs children see may open up new ways for your faith community to engage your community and the world. Reflect on how serving together connects all of us.

Children can remind adults to see joy in helping, and adults can model faith through action and implementation. In a Christian perspective, service is both witness and worship. It is how the body of Christ lives out love in the world.

## SONG OF RESPONSE

- “Build My Life”

## BENEDICTION

Go now to serve Christ, seeing his face in everyone you meet. May your words be kind, your hands be generous, your hearts compassionate, and your spirits alive with love. Amen.

# Learn

## KEY SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 6:4–9

## GUIDING STATEMENT

Learning is a lifelong act. The Jewish prayer *Shema*, here in Deuteronomy 6, calls God's people to remember, teach, and talk about God's commandments at home, on the road, and through every part of life. Ancient Israel used the *Shema* to teach and remember their covenant. How do we create practices and rituals in our churches that encourage learning? How do we use songs, the memorization of special verses, or teaching how to find chapters and verses in the Bible to nurture the faith of our communities?

Faith learning is not confined to classrooms or to what happens inside the walls of the church but happens in daily rhythms and in the rhythms of our faith communities. Our faith is taught and passed on through stories told at bedtime, questions asked at the table, and wisdom shared between generations.

For children, learning faith begins through imitation and wonder. When they hear their community pray, read, and discuss scripture, they see that faith is part of real life. For families, teaching faith is not about having all the answers but about making room for conversation. Every question asked is a chance to remember together who God is and how we live as God's people.

This would be a great Sunday to give Bibles or story Bibles to families or children. *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* is 20% off when ordering 12 or more at [www.ShineCurriculum.com/shop](http://www.ShineCurriculum.com/shop).

## CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: Hear, O people of God—the Lord our God is one.*

**People: We will love God with heart, soul, and strength.**

*Leader: We will share the good news with all generations and walk in God's ways.*

**People: We will love God with heart, soul, and strength.**

*All: Come, let us learn about and worship the God who leads us.*



Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God of wisdom, speak to us in our worship today through your Word and through one another. Awaken a spirit of curiosity within us so that learning becomes a way of life for our community. May our learning become a communal expression of devotion and discipleship. Amen.

## SONGS

- “Ancient Words”
- “Listen, God Is Calling”
- “Open My Eyes that I May See”
- “Speak to Me”
- “Teach Me Thy Truth”
- “Thy Word”

## STORY TIME

**Supplies:** *Papers cut in the shape of books or lamps and pens or markers*

Start by sharing an interesting fact that you have learned recently. Maybe share a fact like “A group of flamingos is called a *flamboyance*” or “Octopuses have three hearts.” Ask the kids if they have learned any interesting facts recently.

You all know a lot of interesting things. What are some things you know about God? (Talk about how we describe God and about some things God has done.) We learn so much about God from the Bible. What are some things you know about the Bible? (How many books, how they are organized, what the Bible is: “a story about God that leads to Jesus,” and so on.)

In the Bible, God tells families to talk about God’s love all the time—when they wake up, when they walk, and when they go to bed. There are so many interesting things to learn about God and a lot of questions to talk about together. That means we can learn about God everywhere, not just at church. Every day is a chance to learn about and remember God, learn about things that the Bible says, and learn about how churches like ours are trying to follow God.

Let’s think of some ways we learn about God. (Bible stories, songs, programs we have at church, talking to people at church). Provide little paper books or lamps for people to write or draw their ideas on. Have them add these to the Growing Faith Pathway to remind us that God and others help us learn.

Offer a short prayer to close: “God, thank you for giving us curious minds that love to learn. Thank you for the Bible, that teaches us so much about you. Help us learn to know you better and remember your love wherever we go. Amen.”

## SERMON STARTER

Deuteronomy 6 paints a picture of faith formation woven into everyday life. This selection from chapter 6 may be the most quoted portion of scripture in the entire Bible. Verses 4 through 9, known as the Shema (shuh-MAH), are recited every morning and every evening by orthodox Jews. They have engaged in this practice for hundreds of years. These verses emphasize the importance of understanding the covenant and commandments of God. The command is not simply to believe, but also to *teach* and *remember*.

Explore what it means to build a culture of curiosity in your congregation. Where are the spaces where children can ask their questions, where elders can tell their stories, where learning happens through doing? An everywhere faith is one that embraces a culture of curiosity and nurtures lifelong learners on the journey of faith. It is a faith that expects God to keep revealing truth in scripture, creation, and community. As we teach and learn together, we not only pass on information, but nurture a living and dynamic relationship with God.

You might focus on the many ways we learn the Bible or on the ways faith changes and matures as we go through life.

## SONG OF RESPONSE

- “Thy Word”

## BENEDICTION

Impress these things upon your children. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up, when you sit at home and when you travel on the road. Go in the presence and love of God, serving with all your heart, your soul, and your strength. Amen.



## WEEK 6

# Worship

### KEY SCRIPTURE

John 4:19–26

### GUIDING STATEMENT

Worship is more than a gathering; it's a way of life centered in spirit and truth. In his conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus reveals that worship isn't limited to a place or tradition but is about encountering God, who meets us where we are. True worship flows from hearts open to God's presence and lives shaped by that encounter. When we worship together in song, silence, prayer, and service, we become a people who carry God's presence into the world.

For families, worship extends from Sunday into daily routines: singing together, giving thanks at meals, or noticing beauty in creation. When children are invited to lead prayers, read scripture, or play instruments, they experience worship as something they belong to—not something adults do for them. Worship in community teaches children that God meets us everywhere: on playgrounds, in our homes, in classrooms, and in the church.

For people of all ages, participating regularly in a faith community is a source of encouragement, inspiration, and practical support for our growth in faith. Church attendance is a practice that helps us grow in Christian maturity.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: We come to worship in spirit and in truth.*

**People: God meets us here and everywhere we go.**

*Leader: Our songs, our prayers, our lives are praise.*

**People: We shine God's light in all we do.**

*All: God is spirit. Let us worship together in spirit and in truth.*



Illustration by Elisa Chavarr

### PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Our God who is most worthy of our praise and worship, gather us as one people, as we lift our voices and prayers to you in this space. Center us in your presence, that our worship may become the light we carry into the world. Amen.

### SONGS

- "10,000 Reasons"
- "Great Are You Lord"
- "Here I Am to Worship"
- "Here in This Place (Gather Us In)"
- "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty"
- "Holy Spirit"
- "You Are Holy"

## STORY TIME

**Supplies:** *Paper hearts and pens or markers*

Ask the children something like: Different rooms or different spaces do different jobs. In our houses, we have bedrooms for sleeping, kitchens for making food, and living rooms for relaxing. In the same way, we have spaces at church that we use for something. What activities do you do in Sunday school? What do we do in the fellowship hall? What do we do together in this sanctuary? (Worship.)

In our Bible story today, Jesus says something very interesting to a woman that he met. He said that we didn't need one special place to worship. Jesus told the woman that we can worship God anywhere. Worship can happen anytime and anywhere. It happens anytime we talk to God, anytime we pray, anytime we ask each other questions about God, and anytime we show love or kindness in our words and actions.

Let's think of places we can worship God this week—maybe in the car, at school, or while playing outside. Provide paper hearts for children and adults to write or draw places we worship God. These hearts can be added to the Growing Faith Pathway.

Close in a brief prayer: "God, we are thankful that you are everywhere and that we can worship you everywhere we go. Help our songs, our words, and our lives show your love and kindness to everyone we meet. Amen."

## SERMON STARTER

The Samaritan woman begins with a question about *where* worship should happen, but Jesus redirects her to *how* and *why* we worship. God is not bound to mountain or temple; God seeks worshipers who come in spirit and truth. This radical invitation includes everyone—outsiders, seekers, and children alike.

Invite your congregation to imagine worship as both gathered and scattered—as what happens on Sunday and what continues on Monday. How does your community embody worship in its relationships, choices, and rhythms of life? Anabaptist faith understands worship as a response to God's transforming presence—where the words we sing become the lives we live. To worship in spirit and truth is to "shine everywhere."

Reflect on how worship becomes a shared rhythm of life. What does it look like for a family to worship together beyond Sunday? Encourage households to make simple rituals—lighting a candle before dinner, reading a psalm before school, singing a song at bedtime. Worship is not confined to the church building; it is the posture we carry into the world. In embracing an attitude of worship every day, we become people who shine God's love everywhere we go.

## SONG OF RESPONSE

- "Here I Am to Worship"
- "Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

## BENEDICTION

Go in spirit and in truth, wherever life takes you. May your life become a song of praise to the God who is everywhere. Amen.