

HOSTING WORSHIP IN YOUR GATHERING

If you are reading this, you have already made the first step into something that might be familiar or something that is entirely new. Our goal at Gathering in Christ is to make it as simple as possible for you to start a Christ-centred gathering, regardless of where you are. This does not mean it will be easy. Stepping into leadership for a Christian gathering is both an exciting and humbling opportunity. You might feel unqualified or uncertain, but remember this—God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called. If He has placed this on your heart, He will provide everything you need!

Your role is not to have all the answers, but to create a space where people can encounter Jesus, grow in their faith, and build authentic community. You are simply making room for God to work. Through prayer, Scripture, and open conversation, we can trust that He will move in ways beyond what we can imagine.

Worship is not about the location—it's about gathering in God's presence with a heart of devotion. Whether you are meeting with family, friends, or neighbours, a worship service can be a powerful way to experience God together wherever it might be. This guide will help you create a meaningful and Christ-centered time of worship from your chosen location.

As you prayerfully consider the use of our resources for a Bible study, a weekly meeting, or as a Sunday service, you may already have a group of people in mind. While bringing together any group can be challenging, below are some tips on what you can keep in mind so that you can keep the main thing, the main thing. Below you will find practical things to help you best host a Christian worship service or Bible study. ****For more about facilitating group discussions see "Best Practices for Group Discussions in Your Gathering"***

Lean on the Holy Spirit, stay faithful to the mission, and trust that God is using you. The impact of your obedience will reach far beyond what you can see.

"The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it." – 1 Thessalonians 5:24

You've got this—because He's got you!

Purpose:

Equip and encourage leaders to create meaningful, Christ-centered gatherings that foster spiritual growth and community, no matter where you meet.

RESOURCE OUTLINE

Every week, new resources are being added. Most of the elements are adapted from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Barrie's weekly service and small group materials, and will typically follow a similar structure:

- **Opening Prayer**
- Two **Songs of Praise** with sing-along audio and lyrics
- **Scripture Passage** taken from the English Standard Version
- **Sermon** with preamble, video, and sermon notes
- **Discussion Questions**
- Invitation to **Deep Meditation on God's Word**
- **Life Application**
- **Closing in Prayer** ending in the **Lord's Prayer**

***Based on the week to week ministry of Westminster Church, some elements may be missing from resources.**

ABOUT CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

What is Worship?

Worship is the act of honoring, revering, and glorifying God. It is a response to God's greatness, love, and holiness. Worship isn't confined to just singing songs or attending church services; it is a **lifestyle** that involves every area of life. It's about recognizing God's worth and offering ourselves—our hearts, minds, and actions—in service to Him.

In the Christian context, worship is **acknowledging** God as Creator, Jesus Christ as Savior, and King, and offering Him our love and devotion. It can be expressed in various ways, such as through prayer, singing, studying Scripture, acts of service, and even the way we live our everyday lives.

Why Do We Worship?

1. **To Glorify God:** Worship is ultimately about giving glory to God for who He is. He is the Creator of the universe, and He is worthy of our praise (Revelation 4:11).
 2. **Out of Love and Gratitude:** As Christians, we worship because of what God has done for us, especially through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In response to His love, we offer our hearts in worship (1 John 4:19). Worship is a way of saying "thank you" for His salvation, grace, and mercy.
 3. **To Strengthen Our Relationship with God and others:** Worship brings us closer to God. It's a way of inviting His presence into our lives and acknowledging His work in our hearts. Worship helps us to hear from God and grow in our faith together (Psalm 95:6-7).
 4. **It's a Command:** Worship is not only a privilege but also a command from God. We are instructed in the Bible to worship Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). God desires our worship because He alone is worthy.
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How Do We Worship as Christians?

1. **Through Singing and Music:** One of the most common expressions of worship is through music. The Bible is filled with calls to sing praises to God (Psalm 100:2). Singing hymns, praise songs, and worship choruses allow us to express our love and adoration for God.

2. **Through Prayer:** Prayer is a vital part of worship. It's a way to communicate with God, express our gratitude, and seek His guidance. Jesus Himself modelled a life of prayer, and He instructed His followers to pray (Matthew 6:9-13).
3. **Through Studying the Bible:** Worship is not just about emotion; it's also about engaging with God's Word. As we read, meditate, and learn from the Bible, we understand more about God's character and His will for our lives, which deepens our worship.
4. **Through Sacrifice and Service:** Worship also involves offering our lives in service to others. Romans 12:1 calls us to present our bodies as living sacrifices—this means serving others, using our talents, and living out our faith. Acts of kindness and obedience to God's commands are forms of worship (Colossians 3:17).
5. **Through the Sacraments:** Christians participate in worship regularly through the sacraments which are Communion (the Lord's Supper) and Baptism. In these sacred moments, we remember Christ's sacrifice and acknowledge His ongoing work in our lives (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
6. **In Everyday Life:** Worship isn't just about what happens during a church service; it's about living a life that honors God. Colossians 3:17 reminds us that everything we do should be done in the name of Jesus, whether in work, relationships, or recreation. By doing all things for God's glory, we worship Him.

***Our resources do not provide a provision for the Sacraments. Contact us to learn more.**

Key Takeaways

- **Worship is a response to God's greatness, love, and salvation.**
- **We worship to glorify God, show our gratitude, grow in our faith, and obey His commands.**
- **Worship can be expressed through singing, prayer, studying Scripture, serving others, participating in the sacraments, and living a God-centered life.**

Ultimately, worship is not about going through rituals or traditions—it's about **encountering God** and being transformed by Him to live in a way that reflects His love and holiness.

HOSTING YOUR GATHERING

1. Preparing for the Gathering

A. To Start

- Pray for God's wisdom as you prepare and host: for yourself, for the people you'll be leading, that God's Spirit will move and help others connect and grow in their faith.

B. Become Familiar with the Chosen Resource

- Look over the resources and become familiar with the provided prayers, readings, songs, and discussion questions. Adjust them as necessary depending on the needs of your group
- Watch, listen or read through the sermon (~20 min in length)
- Make sure that all audio and video elements are accessible and playable
- Communicate significant concerns or questions using the form at the bottom of the page

C. Set the Atmosphere

- Choose a **comfortable space** where everyone can gather without distractions.
- Consider **lighting candles**, playing soft instrumental music, or displaying **Scripture verses** to set the tone.
- Remove distractions (TV, phones, clutter) to help everyone focus.

D. Pray for Guidance

- Ask the Holy Spirit to lead the time of worship.
- Pray for open hearts and a spirit of unity.

2. Elements of a Gathering

A. Worship Through Music

- Start with **praise and worship songs** to prepare hearts for God's presence. Some are included on each resource page to sing along to, but you may prefer to have a musician lead, or you can use lyric videos found on sites like YouTube.
- Keep it simple—2 to 3 songs that focus on **God's goodness and truth**. Encourage everyone to sing along or meditate on the lyrics.

B. Scripture Reading & Reflection

- Read a passage of **Scripture** together from the resource provided.
- Take time to reflect. If available use the provided discussion questions or discuss:
 - What is God speaking to us through this?
 - How does this apply to our daily lives?

C. Discussion & Encouragement

- Allow space for **sharing insights, questions, or personal testimonies**.
- Ask open-ended questions:
 - What stood out to you?
 - How can we live this out this week?
- Keep the discussion **grace-filled**.

D. Prayer & Intercession

- Spend time praying together for:
 - Personal needs
 - Your community
 - The world
- Encourage **both silent and spoken prayers**.

3. Practical Tips for Hosting

- **Keep It Simple** – You don't need a big production; just a **sincere heart**.
 - **Be Flexible** – Let the **Holy Spirit guide** your time together.
 - **Invite Participation** – Encourage different people to **read, share, or pray**.
 - **Honour Time Commitments** – Aim for ~**60 minutes** to keep engagement high.
 - **Foster a Welcoming Space** – Ensure **openness, respect, and confidentiality**.
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4. Closing & Next Steps

- End with a final song, prayer, or **blessing over the group**.
- Encourage attendees to **stay connected** during the week.
- Discuss when you'll meet again and how people can prepare.

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another." – Hebrews 10:25

Final Encouragement

Hosting a worship service in your home is **not about perfection—it's about seeking God together**. Trust that **He will move** in your gathering and be faithful to meet you where you are.

You are creating a space for people to encounter Jesus. That is a beautiful thing!

*More resources coming soon!

Visit www.gatheringinchrist.ca for more tools to help you grow your home gathering or contact william@westminsterpc.ca for any questions.

