

“In Christ, all things hold together” (Col. 1:17), including ourselves and our families. The goal of personal and family worship or devotions is to practice having “the Word of Christ dwell among us richly” (Col. 3:16). I hope you’ll see this is truly a delight and is a practice that can be flexibly incorporated into daily life.

Why develop this daily practice?

Many probably already do a basic form of daily worship every time we eat a meal. The practice of daily worship is simply a way to greater thanksgiving and enjoyment in the Christian life as we more regularly focus our attention on God and his Word (see Proverbs 4:20-23; Psalm 119:9-16).

What might this look like?

Worship is a delicious treat. And, like any good treat, you have several key ingredients or elements. We enjoy these elements on Sunday when we gather to worship, but we can use them as a basic template for structuring our time with the Lord at home, too.

Doing it this way certainly isn’t *required*. There will be many a day and for numerous reasons when your time with God isn’t so structured! The point is that the elements in our worship service are biblical, time-tested, and rich ingredients to a well-orbed spiritual life. Here’s how it might go:

- 1) Read a call to worship to orient your hearts to God
 - a. For example, Psalm 117 or the beginning few verses of Psalms 145-150
- 2) Pray for God to bless your time with him and to thank him for his mercy
- 3) Sing the Doxology of Gloria Patri
 - a. Our culture finds singing somewhat awkward, but Christians are counter-cultural in that we *sing praises to our God!* God gave us voices to praise him.
- 4) Read God’s Law
 - a. Here I love to use the 10 Commandments from Exodus 20, or any of Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:21-48. As you read, mediate by yourself or with others on what God calls you to in this commandment, how you’ve fallen short, and how Jesus Christ fulfills the commandment perfectly.¹
- 5) Confession your sins to God (and to one another if applicable)

¹ A good resource here is the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q and A’s 42-82 or Heidelberg Catechism Q and A’s 92-113 (see below).

- 6) Read God's Assurance in Christ (try Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:21; or 1 Jn. 1:8-9)
- 7) Read a Scripture lesson
 - a. This is a opportunity to re-read Scripture readings or the sermon text from the worship services or upcoming worship services, something from a Bible reading plan, or, if you have children in Sunday school, to reinforce their lesson and to do memory verse and catechism work together.
- 8) Sing a Psalm or hymn
 - a. You might sing one verse or many, it's up to you! This is a great time to mediate upon Christ. If you have kids, give them the chance to pick *their* favorite hymn or children's song!
- 9) Pray to God for you/your family's needs
 - a. What prayer requests do you or your children have? Now is the time to pray alone for them or with your family.
 - b. *Optional closing to prayer*: I love to end prayer time with "Hear Our Prayer, O LORD" (728 in the Trinity hymnal)
- 10) Thank/pray to God for his blessing and ask him to give you peace
 - a. *Optional closing*: the threefold Amen (740 in the Trinity hymnal) is a great way to end your time.

How long does this take?

That all depends on your needs. If you're an individual adult or married couple, you may choose to mediate longer or read more Scripture, etc. If you're a family with small children, this can all be done in as little as 5 minutes, and you have complete freedom to adapt this to your unique needs.

When does this work well?

It all depends on you or your family's needs. For some individuals such a practice makes sense in the morning and/or evening. My family has found right after dinner is the best time with small kids, but families with older kids might do something similar at bedtime. And some days it's just not going to happen, because that's life!

What other resources are available?

On the next page I will list several great resources. For starters, mix and match or add and subtract edifying elements such as creeds (e.g., Apostle's, Nicaean), Catechisms (e.g., Heidelberg, Westminster), seasonal favorites (e.g., Christmas or Easter readings), or your favorite Christian songs. Make it your own!

Further Resources:

Be Thou My Vision, by Jonathan Gibson. <https://www.amazon.com/Be-Thou-My-Vision-Liturgy/dp/1433578190>

A collection of Scripture readings, confessions, and songs structured similarly to what I've given above. This volume is fantastic for its easy structure and rich texts. Parents with young children should understand that some of the readings are long, so you may have to adjust.

Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms: A Reader's Edition, by Chad Van Dixhoorn. <https://www.amazon.com/Creeds-Confessions-Catechisms-Chad-Dixhoorn/dp/1433579871>

Van Dixhoorn gathers 13 classic summaries of the Christian faith including the great creeds from Nicaea (325) and Chalcedon (451), as well as the Athanasian creed. He also includes classic Reformation era confessions such as the Augsburg (1530), Belgic (1561), and the 39 Articles (1571), as well as the classic 17th century confessions (e.g., Dort, Westminster). He also provides historical context for greater understanding.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism. <https://westminsterseminaryuk.org/westminster-shorter-catechism-original>

This link provides both the original English from the 1640s and a modernized version (I use the latter in my youth class). This version is great because it provides Scripture references and some reflection questions.

The Heidelberg Catechism. <https://www.heidelberg-catechism.com/pdf/lords-days/Heidelberg-Catechism.pdf>

There are many versions online, but this link has a simple layout and modern English.

Trinity Hymnal online. <https://hymnary.org/hymnal/TH1990?page=0>

This site provides the *Trinity Hymnal* songs, including audio files for some. Unfortunately, the audio files are not included for every hymn.

Trinity Psalter Hymnal app for Apple <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/trinity-psalter-hymnal/id1530561406> and for Android https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ActFiveSoftware.android.TrinityPsalterHymnal&hl=en_US

This app is well worth the \$10 price. You can listen to any song in the Psalter-hymnal to learn tunes easily. A great resource for family singing.

