

GVPC Liturgy Lessons

Call to Worship

Introduction:

How many of you have ever talked on a cell phone before? (If you have a cell phone—hold it up so they can see it.) The way it works is someone calls me and I answer it. Today we are going to talk about a different kind of call. But it's not a cell phone call. It's a call from God. In fact, every single Sunday God calls us during the worship service. Does anyone know what this call is called? (I'll give you a hint: It's not a telephone call!) It's called the call to worship! We always start our worship service with a time of silence where we talk to God—asking him to make our hearts ready to meet him. As soon as that time of silence is over God calls us with the call to worship.

I want to mention two really important things about the call to worship:

First, when God calls us to worship, we should listen:

When you call someone on the telephone you want him to listen to you. In the same way, when God calls us to worship him, he wants us to pay special attention to him. This means that when he calls us to worship, you should stand up and listen. If you can read, you should follow along in the bulletin. The really dark words (bold words) are the ones you should read out loud with the rest of the church. Going to church is not like going to the movies. We are not supposed to just sit there and watch and snack on popcorn! Instead God wants us to listen, to pray, to sing and to worship Jesus because he died for our sins and because we will live with him forever!

The second thing about the call to worship is to remember that worship is a joy!

What does that mean? Let me ask you, Do you go to church to impress your friends—so they will think you're cool? Do you go because somebody is paying you lots of money to go? Do you go because you have to go? No way! We worship God because worship is what makes us really happy and gives us true joy. Worshipping God is better than eating pizza, better than going swimming, and even better than playing video games!

Let's practice the call to worship.

Pretend I'm the pastor. I will say, "Let's take a moment to prepare our hearts to meet the Lord." When I say this, you will be quiet and say a prayer and ask God to help you to really worship him. Then when I say, "Stand for the call to worship" all of you stand up. (Have them practice this once. Again, encourage the ones who can read to follow along in their bulletin when they are in the church service.)

Hymns and Songs

Introduction:

How many of you like to sing? Do any of you have a favorite song that we sing in church? (Let the children give some examples). I want to ask you a question: *Why do we sing songs in church?* (Listen for responses) Here are three big reasons why we sing in church:

First, because God tells us to sing!

In the Bible it says, *Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord* (Ephesians 5:19).

A second reason to sing is because we have something to sing about!

If you listen on the radio you will notice that a lot of people sing because they are in love. A lot of times people sing because they really love somebody. Christians also sing because they are in love—they are in love with Jesus. He has made us, died for us, and gives us life forever with him. That is something we will never get tired of singing about!

A third reason we sing songs is so we can say the right words!

Tell me, has this ever happened to you? You want to say something but you can't think of the right words? Sometimes we feel like that with God. We want to tell him how much we love him—but we can't always think of the right words. So God has given us hymns and songs. This helps us to talk to God. Remember—when we sing we are talking to God. It is like a prayer.

Practice

What should you be doing when we sing in church? Is this a good time to just look around at people and to see where your friends are sitting? No way! Instead, if you can read, what should you be doing? (Let them answer: Following along in the hymnbook or bulletin). And if you can't read yet, you should at least try to hum the words.

If you are ever in a bad mood, you should try something. Try to remember the songs you sang on Sunday morning and see if you can sing them or hum them! God may use that to help you get into a good mood!

Prayer of Confession

Introduction:

What do you think would happen in your home if you or your parents didn't take out the trash? (Let them respond) After awhile it would be very gross! Your house would start to stink as the garbage piled up!

Our hearts are the same way. We need to regularly take out the trash. When we sin by disobeying God, it is like trash that stinks in our hearts. And after awhile, our hearts start to stink. So we need to take out the trash and clean house. How do you take out the trash that's in your heart? By saying you're sorry to God for not obeying him. This is called "confession." Every Sunday morning in church we say a prayer of confession.

Confession is saying you're sorry:

Confession is saying you're sorry to somebody. Let's say you got mad and said something mean to your best friend. What should you do? (Let them respond) You should say you're sorry for being mean so that you can still be really good friends. God is our very best friend. Whenever we disobey him (like when we are mean to our brother or sister or when we disobey our parents) we should apologize to him right away. God promises when we say we are sorry that he will always forgive us.

Practice

When we say a prayer of confession in church—make sure that you take this time to really pray and talk to God and tell him you are sorry for your sins. You should also do this each night when you go to bed.

Who here would like to say a practice prayer of confession? (Pick a volunteer). Let's say you got into a fight with your brother yesterday and hit him. How would you say you are sorry to God? (*God, I am sorry for when I got mad and hit my brother yesterday. That was my fault. Please forgive me, and change my heart to want to help my brother, not hurt him.*)

Promise of Forgiveness

Introduction:

How many of you have a best friend? What is it that you like about this person? Why is he or she your best friend? Do you know who the very best friend in the world is? God! Do you know why? He made you and cares for you. He will never let you down. He never lies. And he always listens when you talk to him. Isn't that amazing? Psalm 73:25 says, "*Whom have I in heaven but you? And being with you, I desire nothing on earth.*" Do you know what that means? There is nothing better than having God as your best friend.

Forgiveness:

However, there is one problem. We can't have God as our friend. There is one thing that stands in the way of a friendship with God. It's called sin. Sin is when we disobey God and when we love other things more than God. It keeps God from being our friend. Have you ever been mad at a friend? (Listen to responses.) Sometime we get mad at our friends because they've done something wrong to us. You don't feel like talking to them or being with them.

Illustration: Ask for two volunteers. Have them stand back-to-back with arms crossed and angry looks on their faces. Explain that this is what it looks like sometimes when people get into a conflict.

That's how it is with God. We've done something wrong to him—we've sinned against him—and we can't be friends. Isn't that terrible? Here God is the very best friend in the world, and yet we can't be friends because he is mad at us for sinning against him. That is the worst news in the whole world!

But what would you think if I were to tell you that there is a way for us to be friends with God? Well, there is. It's called forgiveness. The Bible tells us that God sent his own Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. And because Jesus died for our sins, God is no longer mad at us. You just need to ask God to forgive you and tell him that you want to be his friend. And do you know what he'll do? He will forgive you. Isn't that amazing?

Practice

Every Sunday in our worship service we ask God to forgive us of our sins. This is not just for adults. Jesus wants all of you to say you are sorry for all the things you have done wrong. Then, when you have prayed, listen to what the pastor says. Each time he will tell you that God has forgiven your sins and that he really is your best friend in the whole world—forever!

Creeds

Introduction:

We are going to play a question game. I want to find out what you believe. All you have to do is answer by saying either “Yes” or “No.”

- Do you believe that monsters live under your bed?
- Do you believe that Spiderman is real?
- Do you believe that today is Sunday?
- Do you believe that a cow can really jump over the moon?
- Do you believe that you are in Bozeman right now?
- Do you believe that I am 100 years old?

It sounds like there are some things that you believe and other things that you do not believe. Let me ask you a couple more questions about what you believe:

- Do you believe that God made all things?
- Do you believe that Jesus is God?
- Do believe that Jesus rose from the dead?
- Do you believe that someday Jesus is going to give us new bodies and that we will live forever with him?

Great! Those are all things that everybody in the church believes.

Creeds:

Almost every Sunday during church we will all say together what we believe about God. This is called a Creed. Have you ever heard us say a Creed in church before? (Like the Apostle’s Creed, the Nicene Creed, or the Heidelberg Catechism.) When we say these Creeds, we are all saying what we believe is true about God. For example, in the Apostle’s Creed we say: *“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, is only Son, our Lord...”*

Now, when you say a Creed are you saying just what **you** believe? No way! You are also saying what everybody in the church believes. But are you saying just what the people in the church building believe? No! Listen to this: When you say a Creed, you are saying what all Christians believe all around the world. Also, you are saying what all the Christians who have ever lived believed! Isn’t that amazing! All Christians believe that Jesus died for their sins and rose from the dead.

Practice:

Are Creeds only for adults? Nope! They are for children too! If you can read, you should be saying the Creed with everybody else in church. If you can’t read, you should be trying to say as many parts as you can. And here is a big challenge. Try to memorize the Apostles’ Creed! Ask your mom or dad if they will give you a prize for doing it.

The Doxology

Introduction:

Have you asked another person to do something for you? (Have a couple of students given an example.) Let me ask you another question: Have you ever had to ask more than one person to do something for you? Have you ever asked more than ten people all at once to do something for you?

The Doxology

Well, you are not going to believe this, but you are about to learn how to ask more people than ever to do something. And you are not going to just ask people to do something. You are going to ask everything that is alive—in heaven and on earth to do something! That’s a lot of living things! Do you know what you are going to ask them to do? To praise God. Every Sunday in church we sing a song called the Doxology. Doxology means “a word of praise.” So when you sing this song, you are asking everything that is alive in heaven and everything that is alive on earth to praise God. Let me read the words to you.

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Notice that we are asking all creatures to praise God “here below.” That means all creatures here below on earth. And we are asking all “heavenly host” to praise God. That means we are asking everybody in heaven to praise God too. Let’s try singing it:

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Good job! Let me ask you two more questions: First, why are we asking everybody in heaven and on earth to praise God? (*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow*—because He is so good to everyone!) Second, who are we praising in this song? (*Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*). Another name for the Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit. He is the one who lives inside of our bodies.

Practice:

So next time we sing the doxology in church what should you do? Should you just sit down on your seat and act board? No way! Make sure you stand up and sing loudly—telling every creature in heaven and on earth to praise God because he is so good.

Prayer

Introduction:

I want to start off by asking each of you to share the name of someone you enjoy being with. What kinds of things do you enjoy doing with this person? (Have a couple of students answer). Do you think you would be good friends if you decided that you were never going to talk again? No way! In order for us to have a really good relationship with somebody—we need to talk to them!

Prayer: Talking with God:

That's not only true of people, but it's also true of our relationship with God. To have a good relationship with God means that we talk to him. What is it called when we talk to God? (*Prayer!*). Yes—prayer is simply talking to God. What kinds of things can we talk to God about? (*Thank him, say we are sorry for our sins, ask him for help with something, etc.*)

How can God hear you when you pray? Isn't he far away? (No!). Do you have to talk loudly when you pray so he can hear you? (No!) Can God hear you if you just whisper? Can he hear you if you just talk to him in your mind without using your mouth? (Yes!). Each of you should talk to God on your own each day.

Practice:

During each worship service, there is a special prayer time when one of the elder leads us in prayer. Sometimes he will ask if anybody has anything to share—something to praise God about or something to ask God for. Do you think that only the adults should share? Can children share prayer requests too? Sure they can! Just raise your hand and if you are called on, stand up, and speak up loudly. I want to encourage all of you to share sometimes during the prayer time.

When the elder starts praying, what should you do? Is this a good time to draw or play on the floor? Is this a good time to talk to your parents or to your brother or sister? What should you be doing? You should be praying! You should sit still, close your eyes, and fold your hands. This is a respectful way to talk to God. Listen to the elder's pray and you pray with him. Talk to God in your mind and say, I agree with what that elders is saying. Please do everything he is asking.

And when the elder is done praying and says, "Amen" what should you say? You should say out loud, Amen! Let's practice that together right now: I'll say, "In Jesus name, Amen" and you say "AMEN!" Good job!

Tithes and offerings

Introduction:

I want to tell you a story about a pretend boy named Johnny. There is something that he really loves and I want you to try and guess what it is. Johnny gets money every week for doing jobs for his mom and dad. As soon as he gets paid—do you know what he wants to buy? Legos. He has lots and lots of Legos in his room. When it's his birthday, he always asks his grandma and grandpa and his parents to give him money. That way he can go to the store and buy more Legos. And when Christmas comes around, he loves it when people give him money. Guess why? You got it—so he can go and buy more Legos! Now, let me ask you: What is it that Johnny really loves? (*Legos!*) How do you know that he loves Legos so much? (*Because that's what he always spends all of his money on!*). We spend our money on the things that we think are important. We spend our money on the things that we love. Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

Giving Money to God:

Do you think that we should give any of our money to God? (*Yes!*) Why should we do that? (Listen to answers). Because we love him. Remember, we spend our money on what we love. So, if we love God, then we should give him some of our money too.

Practice:

On Sunday mornings you will hear the pastor say, "Now the ushers can come forward for the tithes and offerings." Two people will walk around with little bags with handles on them collecting money. The bag will go by you. That's when you should put your money in. Then pass it along to the next person. God uses the money to help the church and missionaries.

How can you make sure that you have some money to put in each Sunday? Ask your parents to help save money for the offering each Sunday. Maybe they can give you some money. Or if you have money of your own, you can ask you parents to help you decide how much to give. Try to give a little each Sunday—even if it's a nickel!

When you get ready for church in the morning, make sure you don't forget your money. You should put it in your pocket or in your book bag.

Giving our money to God is like giving someone a gift. It's a way to show that you love God. It's a way of saying thank you for all that He has given you, especially for dying on the cross for your sins.

Reading of Scripture and the Sermon

Introduction:

Are there times when someone is talking and you really are not interested in what they are saying? Sometimes it's hard to listen when you feel like the person who is talking isn't really saying anything to you.

Do the following roll play: Get three volunteers. Tell two of them to stand up front and to pretend like they are talking to one another. Tell the next volunteer to pretend like he is walking by them. As he walks by ask: Should you stop and listen to what they are saying? No! They aren't talking to you. It wouldn't be polite to stand nearby and to try and listen to them if they haven't invited you.

But now let's try it again. This time when [child's name] walks by I want the two volunteers to call his name out and say "Come here, we want to talk to you!" Have the student walk by again. This time, they call out his name and he goes over to them to listen. Ask him: Why did you stop and listen to them this time? Because they were talking to you! (Thank them and have them all sit down).

Listen to God's Word:

Every Sunday God's word is read in the worship service. When God's word is read some people think that He is talking to someone else and so they don't really listen. It's kind of like when you walk by someone because you don't think they are talking to you. But when God's word is read in church—God is talking to you. He wants you to listen to him. It's like he is saying your name. He has something special he wants to say to you. God is talking to us when we read the Bible and during the sermon.

Practice:

What should you do when the Bible is read in church? (Listen for responses.) If you can read, you should bring your own Bible to church and follow along. If you can't read, then you should make sure you are really listening. Also, in our church, we stand up when we read God's word. Why would we do that? (Listen again for responses.) It's a way of showing God respect.

What about during the sermon? What should you do when Pastor Bryan or Pastor Jeff is telling us about what the Bible says? (Listen to responses.). If you are old enough you should try to take notes and write down things that you think are important. Try to write down what the sermon is about. If you are not old enough to write words, then you can try to draw a picture that shows what the sermon is about.

This is not a time to make noises, to distract your parents, or fall asleep. Remember, God is talking to you. You want to listen!

The Lord's Supper?

Introduction:

Let me tell you a story about a girl named Kelly. She was 5-years old. And do you know what her favorite day is? It's the day that her dad takes her out for breakfast. Kelly has two bothers and one sister. But once a month, her dad takes only her out for breakfast. He lets her order a big pancake and bacon. They laugh and talk about things that they like. But most of all, Kelly is just happy that her dad wants to eat with her. Now do you see why Kelly's favorite day is when her dad takes her out to eat? That is a really special time isn't it?

I don't know if your mom or dad ever takes you out for a meal, but what would you think if I told you that God wants to take you out for a meal? How would you feel if I told you he wants to eat with you and spend time with you? Just like Kelly's dad took her out for breakfast to spend time with her—God takes us out to eat with us and spend time with us when we come to worship Him on Sunday morning.

A Meal with the Lord:

The meal he takes us out to is called Communion or the Lord's Supper. Have you even seen this in church before? Instead of eating pancakes and orange juice what do we eat? (Bread and Wine). Why do we eat bread and wine? Because the bread stand for Jesus' body which he gave for us and the wine stands for Jesus' blood which was shed for our sins. And just like your body grows strong when you eat a meal; your soul grows strong when you eat the Lord's Supper. Someday, when we are all in heaven we are going to have a meal with Jesus that will be bigger than the biggest birthday party in the whole world.

Practice:

Who gets to eat the Lord's Supper? People who take the Lord's Supper are people who have asked Jesus to be their King. They ask him to forgive them for all the things they have done wrong. They pray to Jesus all by themselves—even when their parents aren't around. People who are ready to take the Lord's Supper participate in the worship service—they sing, pray, and listen to God's Word. They follow along. Someday, when you think you are ready to take the Lord's Supper, talk to your parents and they will visit with Pastor Jeff.

What should you do if you are not ready to take it yet? You should watch the bread being broken and think about how Jesus gave his body on the cross because he loves you so much. Look at the wine and remember that Jesus gave his blood so that your heart can be clean. Thank Jesus for dying for you.

The Benediction:

Have you ever had somebody say some kind words to you before? What did they say to you? Practice saying some good or kind words to somebody else right now (Something like, “You look nice today” or “I think that is a nice shirt”).

Did you know that at the end of every worship service God says some good words to us? It’s called the “Benediction.” “Benediction” means “good word.” Have you ever notice that at the very end of the worship service, after we sing the very last song, the pastor will say “Receive the blessing of Christ”? And then he will lift up his arms and say some good words to everyone. For example, he might say:

*May the Lord bless you and keep you
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord turn his face toward you and grant you peace.*

These are God’s good words to us.

What should you do during the benediction? What do you do when you are about to receive something? If I were to hold out a present and say, “Here this is for you!” what would you do? You would hold out your hands to receive it. In the same way, you can hold out your hands during the benediction to show that you want to receive these good words from God.

There is no greater gift than to receive words of blessing from God.