

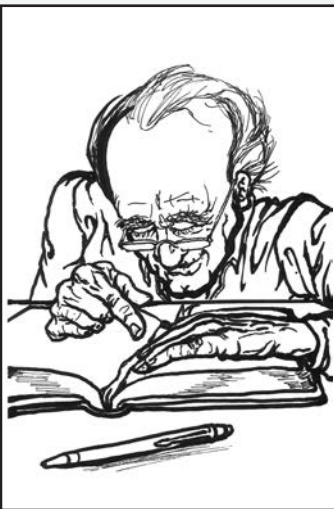
Worship in Education



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 7

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Daniel 3; Psalm 78:1–17; John 4:7–26; 1 Chronicles 16:1–36; Mark 7:1–13.

MEMORY VERSE: “Give the LORD praise worthy of his glory. Come into his presence [where He is] with your offerings. Worship the LORD in all his holy beauty” (1 Chronicles 16:29, ERV).



Christian education must teach us about worship.

WORSHIP is part of who we are as humans. God gave us freedom when He made us. We are free to worship Him. We worship God because we love Him. He is worthy of our worship too. Worship must have been very easy for humans before the Fall, right? At that time, humans saw God face-to-face. There was no sin or death on the earth. It is hard for us to make a picture in our minds about how the earth looked at that time. So, that makes it difficult for us to really understand how wonderful worship was back then.

Today, of course, we continue to worship God because we need Him. But sin has made a mess of worship. So, we can end up worshiping the wrong things. Or, we even end up worshiping the Lord in the wrong way. (Mark 7:1–13 and Jeremiah 7:4 talk about wrong examples of worship.)

Worship is an important part of the Christian experience. So, Christian education must teach us about worship. That is why worship is the topic for this week's lesson.

WE ALL WORSHIP SOMETHING (Daniel 3)

When God made us, He put in us a wish to worship Him. This wish or need became spoiled by sin. In the beginning, God made us to worship Him alone. He is the only one we should worship. He is our Lord and the One who made us. But since the Fall, everything changed in a big way.

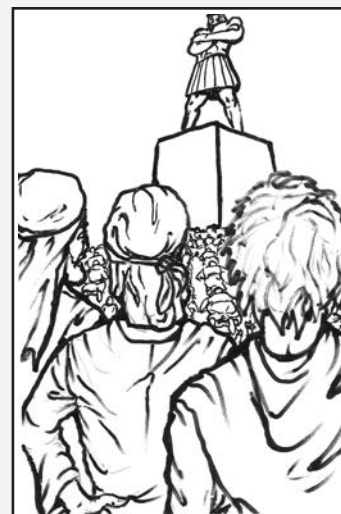
Yes, we all worship something or someone. This helps to explain why humans practice worship all during history and today too. In Egypt during Bible times, some people worshiped Pharaoh, the king. At other times and in other lands, people worshiped statues of fish, gods with many heads, and other things. Some people worshiped the sun, moon, and stars.

Today, most people are too smart to bow down before a statue of a frog. (But many will bow down to a statue of Mary the mother of Jesus.) If people do not bow down before a statue, does that mean they do not worship anything? Not at all. All people worship something: money, power, sex, self, rock-music stars, famous actors, or government leaders. We worship what we love most. Or whatever we live for or give most of our attention to. Writer David Foster Wallace warns that if you worship the wrong thing, “it will ‘eat’ you up” (adapted). That is, it will kill you.

What does the story in Daniel 3 teach us about why it is important to worship God in the right way?

As we can see, the three Hebrew boys follow the second commandment (Exodus 20:4–6) with all their hearts. That is exactly what God wanted them to do. The second commandment is part of the Ten Commandments that tell us not to kill or steal. So, worship is very important in God’s eyes. Worship becomes an important part of the test for God’s people in the end times before Jesus comes back. That is why Christian education must teach us what the Bible says about worship. We must know what worship is. How do we worship? Why is worship important? And who should we worship?

Read Revelation 14:6–12. What do these verses teach us about how important the question about worship will be in the end times right before Jesus comes back?



The three Hebrew boys follow the second commandment with all their hearts.

AND TELL THEM TO THEIR CHILDREN (Psalm 78:1–17)

The Psalms in the Old Testament soon came to be an important part in the religious life of the Israelites during Bible times. The Israelites sang the psalms. They often sang the psalms with music during public worship. Israel was a big community of people. And as a community, they worshiped together.

The Psalms are poems or the words to songs. The Hebrew word for the Psalms is “**Tehillîm**,” which means “praise songs.” When we sing praises to God, we worship God.

Read Psalm 78:1–17. What is the basic message in this psalm? What does this message teach us about education and worship?



When we sing praises to God, we worship God.

Asaph wrote Psalm 78. In Psalm 78:2, Asaph says we will share the “things that were hidden” (NIRV). The word “hidden” in this verse means something that is fading. History can “fade” when we move far away in time from what happened in the past. In other Bible versions, “hidden” is written as “secret” (NLV) or “sweet old truths” (*The Message*). What these different versions show us is that education in Israel during Bible times included teaching children the stories from the past about God’s love for His people.

Look at Psalm 78:6–17. As these verses show, what lessons did the Jews teach their children? What was the reason for education in Israel during Bible times?

These verses show us that parents taught their children to trust in God and keep His commandments. How does Revelation 14:12 show that same idea for us as parents and teachers today?

IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH (John 4:7–26)

One of the most wonderful stories in the New Testament is the story about Jesus and the woman at the well. It shows how Jesus heals a broken spirit.

Read John 4:7–26. What does Jesus say about worship to the woman at the well?

Do you see how the woman tries to change the topic by talking about worship? Jesus lets her and gives us some deep spiritual truths about worship and what it includes. Maybe the most important thing Jesus says is in John 4:24: “ ‘God is spirit. So the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth’ ” (ERV).

We must worship the Lord “in spirit.” What does that mean? It means that our worship must come from our love for God. It also must come from our personal experience of knowing Him. “Religion must come from God. That is the only religion that will lead us to God. We must be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then we can serve Him in the right way. Our being born again will make our hearts clean. It will make our minds new. Then we will know and love God more. Being born again will help us to obey all God’s laws. This obedience is true worship. It comes from the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 189, adapted.

At the same time, we must worship God “in truth.” We must have a correct knowledge about God. We must know who He is and what He wants us to do. This is where Bible truth and teaching comes in. (It is wonderful to know that we worship a God who does not burn people in hell forever.)

So, we see here two parts in worship: (1) the experience and (2) truth. Worship includes the experience that comes from knowing and obeying God. Worship also includes Bible truth about God. Worship without truth can lead to a religion built only on strong feelings. Truth without an experience in the Holy Spirit can lead to a religion with no life in it. So, we need both experience and truth.

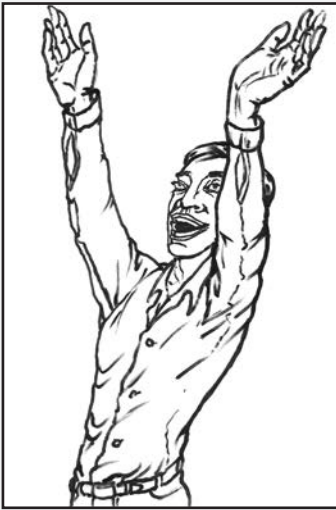
What is the best way to teach someone to worship “in spirit and truth”? When may someone need more of one than the other?



The story about Jesus and the woman at the well shows how Jesus heals a broken spirit.

BEAUTY THAT IS HOLY (1 Chronicles 16:1–36)

Read 1 Chronicles 16:1–36. Try to make a picture in your mind about what is happening in these verses. Do you feel what is happening is a time of fear or joy? In what way is this time a mix of both fear and joy? What can we learn from these verses about worship? What do these verses teach us about how we should teach and experience worship?



God has given us many reasons to praise Him.

The place of worship is the meeting tent where God lived with His people in the desert. God used this place of worship to teach His people about His plan to save them. So, this shows us that Jesus and His saving plan are an important part of worship. God has given us many reasons to praise Him. He has done so many things for us that should cause us to love and worship Him. But all our worship means nothing unless we have hope. This hope comes from Jesus' death for us on the cross.

These verses in 1 Chronicles also teach us that God wanted everyone on earth to learn about Him from Israel.

Look at 1 Chronicles 16:29: “Give to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!” (NKJV). The “beauty of holiness”? What does that mean?

Sin is very ugly. It causes a lot of harm, pain, and suffering. Also, in Bible times, the people around Israel did many evil things when they worshiped their gods. Many of them killed their own children. Then they offered the dead bodies as gifts to their gods. These works show us a picture of who those people were.

But God wanted His people to be different. He wanted Israel to be a holy people. God wanted the people of Israel to have holy hearts and minds. God's plan for worship made it have beauty and meaning. Again and again, the Old Testament messengers scolded people whose hearts were not right with God. These people did evil while they worshiped the Lord. Sadly, their hearts were far away from God.

**TEACHING THE PEOPLE TO WORSHIP FALSE GODS
(Mark 7:1–13)**

During Bible times, God’s people live near very religious people. Those people worship their gods by killing their own children and then offering them to the gods as gifts. It takes a lot of faith in your god to kill and give your own child to it. You can say that these people really give a lot to their gods, right?

This helps us to see why the worship of the true God is so important. Worship is part of God’s plan to protect His people from the false worship around them. God warned His people not to worship false gods. But His people worshiped false gods anyway. They also did the same things God warned them not to do.

What about us today? Why is worshiping the true God so important? Also, why is it important to tell each other about all the good things God does for us? How can doing these things protect us against the “modern” worship of false gods.

Read Mark 7:1–13. What important rule do we see in Mark 7:7–9 that can help to protect us from the danger of all the false teachings around us?

Many of the popular ideas taught in schools today come from believing that there is no God. That means that students will be taught things that go against the Bible. We can worship false ideas. We can worship the minds of the thinkers, scientists, and mathematicians who invent these ideas. These ideas often do not agree with Bible truth. The problem is that many people believe in these popular ideas. They are taught in most schools. So, Christian teachers try to mix and blend these ideas into Christian education. There is only one way to do that with any success. You have to destroy Bible truth first and twist it. Then you can make the Bible “agree” with today’s popular ideas.

What are some of today’s popular beliefs and ideas that go against Bible truth? How can we as a church protect ourselves from teaching these ideas in our own schools?



We can worship false ideas.



“The evil angels show God’s angels all the bad things that the lukewarm believers are doing in Jesus’ name.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “The human heart is very evil. It is full of lies. It is very evil. People of faith do not want to look into their hearts to see if they are loyal to God. Many of them are trusting in a false hope. Some trust in an old experience they had years ago. But we are now living in a time when everyone must search his heart. During this time, we all must have a daily experience in God. But these people with only an experience in the past do not have a new experience with God to share with other people. They think that believing in the truth is enough to save them. But God hates the sins in our hearts. We must win our war against those sins. When that happens, Jesus will come into our hearts. We will get strength from Jesus. We will grow stronger in Him. Then we can say, Blessed be God! He gave us Jesus, who helps us win the war against sin. Are you fake or lukewarm in your faith? If yes, then it will make the Lord happy if you did not name yourself a Christian. Lukewarm believers stop people who want to become hot and follow Jesus. Lukewarm believers cause people who do not know God to turn away from Him. Lukewarm believers make evil angels so happy. They give them an excuse to hurt the angels of God. The evil angels show God’s angels all the bad things that the lukewarm believers are doing in Jesus’ name. These false believers are a curse to God’s cause at home or away from home. These lukewarm believers say all the right words about God. But their hearts are far away from Him.”—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2, page 227, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① From Mark 7:1–13, we learned that the cause of false worship is a heart problem. God does not listen to our worship if this worship does not come from our hearts. Why is the Good News about Jesus and the story of His death the most powerful way to open our hearts to God to love Him?
- ② We must worship God with our whole hearts. We also must obey His truth. Can we do one and not the other? Or does true worship ask us to do both? If so, why?
- ③ Yes, our hearts need to be holy so that we can worship God. Do you have to wait until you are connected to God 100% and your life is perfect before you can worship Him? How can true worship help get your heart in the right place with God?

PRAYING FOR A JOB IN FRANCE

Abdelkader Henni is not interested in becoming a Christian. So, he is surprised when a pastor at a high school talks to him about Jesus. The school offers many games and fun things for kids to do at the end of the day when school is out. Many young people in France go there after school to take part in the games. Abdelkader goes there to have fun too.

“You come here often,” the pastor says to Abdelkader. “Why not become a Christian?”

Abdelkader stops going to the after-school games after that. Abdelkader lived most of his life in France. He moved to France with his parents from Algeria when he was little. After Abdelkader stops going to the school games, he does not know what to do next. He finished high school. But he cannot get a job.

A short time later, Abdelkader meets a Seventh-day Adventist from Algeria. Abdelkader’s heart is touched as he hears this person’s personal story about Jesus. Abdelkader now understands that an Algerian person can become a Christian. So, Abdelkader starts to read about Christianity. Around that time, he meets Crystal, his friend from high school. Crystal was unhappy in high school. But now she is filled with joy. Abdelkader wonders what happened. Crystal tells him.

“I met Someone. That Person changed my whole life,” she says.

“Who did you meet?” Abdelkader asks.

“I met Jesus Christ,” Crystal says.

Abdelkader wonders if Jesus can change his life too. That evening, Abdelkader goes with Crystal to prayer meeting at church. Someone at the meeting asks Abdelkader if he has anything he wants the prayer group to pray for. Abdelkader says, “Yes. I need a job.”

The next morning, Abdelkader’s phone rings. “Are you Abdelkader?” a stranger asks.

“Yes,” he says.

“Are you looking for a job?” she asks.

Later that morning, the woman on the phone drives him to his new job. Abdelkader is surprised. He tried to get this job weeks ago. But now he gets the job only after he prays. Abdelkader believes Jesus can change his life.

Back at home, he prays, “Show me which church to join.”

Three days later, Abdelkader hears a man on the radio talk about the seventh-day Sabbath. The man reads Isaiah 56:1, 2.

Today Abdelkader is a 51-year-old Adventist pastor. He works with non-Christians in France.

“Every day, I praise God for the work that He gives me to do,” Abdelkader says.

INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



“Why not become a Christian?” the pastor asks.

