

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

*Worshipping Together* is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. [frankstonrp.org.au](http://frankstonrp.org.au) [bit.ly/WTrpcf](http://bit.ly/WTrpcf)

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. [airdrierpcs.org](http://airdrierpcs.org)

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. [bit.ly/WkBbl](http://bit.ly/WkBbl) or [bit.ly/3yrBbl](http://bit.ly/3yrBbl)

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on commentaries on Luke by John Calvin, William Hendriksen and Kent Hughes, and notes from the HCSB Study Bible, and the Reformation Study Bible

# Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

*The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.*



*If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men\* should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father\* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

*Read, pray, repeat.*

\* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested, a godly mother will lead her children

**Reading** Luke 2:1-7 Jesus is born

**Notes** (See back page for authors) This account in Luke is probably one of the most familiar in the Bible. As always when we encounter a familiar passage, we must not let familiarity breed contempt. While we might not learn something new, we can certainly be built up with reviewing something old yet wonderful.

Now, in the fullness of time, Jesus was born.

Hughes notes that *If we imagine that Jesus was born in a freshly swept, county fair stable, we miss the whole point. It was wretched—scandalous! There was sweat and pain and blood and cries as Mary reached up to the heavens for help. The earth was cold and hard. The smell of birth mixed with the stench of manure and acrid straw made a contemptible bouquet. Trembling carpenter’s hands, clumsy with fear, grasped God’s Son slippery with blood—the baby’s limbs waving helplessly as if falling through space—his face grimacing as he gasped in the cold and his cry pierced the night.*

*The wonder of the Incarnation! The omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient God became a baby!*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
  2. Why did Jesus humble Himself so?
  3. Why is the birth of Jesus so important?
  4.     

- Praise** Psalm 105a<sup>2</sup>
- Pray**
1. Rejoice with your family in Jesus becoming a baby
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

<sup>1</sup> You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord’s Day you review the previous week’s readings and/or the previous or current week’s sermons and pray together

<sup>2</sup> Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

**Reading** Luke 2:41-50 About My Father’s House...

**Notes** (See back page for authors) A year before Jesus would be counted a man at age 13, His parents take him on their annual faithful journey to Jerusalem for Passover. Three times each year all Jewish men were required to “appear before the Lord” (Ex. 23:17.) Yet Luke notes that, along with Joseph, Mary made at least the Passover trip each year as well.

After the week of the Passover feast, Mary and Joseph headed back home. After a day of travel, likely when they stopped for the night, they discovered Jesus wasn’t with their friends and relatives! After a day of travelling back and another of searching, they found Jesus, in the temple area listening to and learning from the teachers of the law. Although this had caused Mary and Joseph a few anxious days, we must remember that Jesus was sinless in this.

As they are reunited, after getting over their astonishment, they asked why he had not been with them. Jesus replied that He had to be in His Father’s house. Jesus notes here, perhaps for the first time in His human understanding, that God is His father in a way no other person had ever known. As Hughes comments, *this awareness was announced in the Jewish temple, the very heart of Israel’s faith...What is the point? Jesus is God’s Son! God is his Father!* This unique relationship would unfold throughout His earthly ministry, and is the basis for us becoming, in Jesus, sons of God by faith in Jesus.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why did Mary and Joseph and Jesus go to Jerusalem?
  2. What happened when Mary and Joseph went home?
  3. What is the significance of Jesus calling God, “My Father?”
  4.     

- Praise** Psalm 105a
- Pray**
1. Rejoice with your family that you can become God’s sons by faith in God’s Son
  2. Pray for your family
  3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
  4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God’s word tomorrow

**Reading**

Luke 2:39-40, 51-52 The boy grew...

**Notes**

(See back page for authors)

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned to their hometown, Nazareth. There, Jesus continued to grow as any boy would. Hughes reminds us that *in the Incarnation, the infinite God both became finite man and remained infinite God. This mystery is beyond earthly analogy or understanding. Truly human, the Son subjected himself to his own creation and its physical laws, its ups and downs. He would experience the development of human reason and language. He would be taught things he did not know. He walked like a baby before he walked like a man. He thought and talked like a baby before he thought and talked like a man. The growing pains of the Son of God were just as real for him as they were for us... He had to learn to be a carpenter from his earthly father, Joseph. Jesus Christ lived with a human body, mind, and soul with all their limitations, except for sin.*

Calvin likewise notes that *If it takes nothing from his glory, that he was altogether "emptied," (Phil. 2:6,) neither does it degrade him, that he chose not only to grow in body, but to make progress in mind. And certainly when the Apostle declares, that "in all things he was made like unto his brethren," (Heb. 2:17,) and "was in all points tempted like as we are, sin excepted," (Heb. 4:15,) he no doubt includes, that his soul was subject to ignorance. There is only this difference between us and him, that the weaknesses which press upon us, by a necessity which we cannot avoid, were undertaken by him voluntarily, and of his own accord. Christ received, in his human nature, according to his age and capacity, an increase of the free gifts of the Spirit, that "out of his fulness" (John 1:16) he may pour them out upon us; for we draw grace out of his grace.*

**Questions**

(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How was Jesus' boyhood like any other boy growing up?
2. How was it different?
3. Why does the sameness and the difference matter?

4.     

**Praise**

**Pray**

- Psalm 105a
1. Rejoice with your family that Jesus was like us, except no sin
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading**

Luke 2:8-20 First witnesses

**Notes**

(See back page for authors)

Hughes comments that *the great historic doctrine of the church is that the Son of God became a real man—not just someone who only appeared to be a man. When he was born, God the Son placed the exercise of his all-powerfulness and all-presence and all-knowingness under the direction of God the Father. He did not give up those attributes, but he submitted their exercise in his life to the Father's discretion. Though he was sinless, he had a real human body, mind, and emotions—complete with their inherent human weaknesses.*

And it was this real man, although still a baby, that was announced to the shepherds. Calvin notes that *it would have been to no purpose that Christ was born in Bethlehem, if it had not been made known to the world. But the method of doing so, which is described by Luke, appears to the view of men very unsuitable. First, Christ is revealed but to a few witnesses, and that too amidst the darkness of night. Again, though God had, at his command, many honourable and distinguished witnesses, he passed by them, and chose shepherds, persons of humble rank, and of no account among men.*

The shepherds see, then tell, as instructed. Mary considers this wonder silently.

**Questions**

(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. In what ways was Jesus the same as any human baby?
2. In what ways was Jesus different from any human baby?
3. Why did God choose shepherds to announce Jesus' birth?

4.     

**Praise**

**Pray**

- Psalm 105a
1. Rejoice with your family in Jesus being born to save sinners like you
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Luke 2:21-24 Obedience to God’s law

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

Jesus’ early childhood continues. At 8 days old, like all Hebrew boys, He is marked by God’s covenant sign of circumcision in obedience to God’s law. (Gen 17:10) Calvin notes that *by undergoing circumcision, Christ acknowledged himself to be the slave of the law, that he might procure our freedom.*

At his circumcision, as was the custom, the baby was named. He was named, Jesus, as God’s angel had directed both Mary (Lu 1:31) and Joseph (Mt 1:21), because He would save His people from their sins. Hughes notes that *Jesus is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew word Joshua... Joshua (or Jesus) not only means “Jehovah is salvation” but suggests deliverance. It carries the idea of our being delivered by heroic action from the bondage of sin (cf. Isaiah 9:6, “Mighty God”). The name Jesus shouts to the world the heroics of the Incarnation and the cross.*

Following Mary’s purification from childbirth (Lev 12) Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him as the firstborn and offer a sacrifice, as God’s law required. Dedication of the firstborn was a constant reminder to Israel that their firstborn deserved to die just as Egypt’s had (Ex 13) because they, like Egypt, were rebels against God. Israel had not been spared because of their innocence, but because of God’s mercy. In this perfect firstborn son, that mercy would be fully realised!

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why was Jesus circumcised?
2. Why was Jesus dedicated as the firstborn?
3. Why was Jesus named “Jesus”?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 105a
1. Rejoice with your family in Jesus being born to save sinners like you.
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Luke 2:25-38 Now dismiss...

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

As Mary and Joseph brought Jesus for his dedication as the firstborn, they were met by 2 elderly saints. Calvin notes that these two were a reminder *that a few worshippers of God remained, and that Christ was known to such persons from his earliest infancy.* Hughes comments that these two *believed when few others truly believed in Christ’s coming. They never gave up but kept trusting and looking. What an example they are even for us today!* The extraordinary continues...

Simeon was the first. God had promised him that he would see the Messiah before he died. Hughes asks, *how long had he been waiting? Days—months—years? We do not know...And then, one grand day, “Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.” (v. 27). With trembling arms Simeon lifted the fat, dimpled baby from the startled virgin, and for a moment the world ceased to turn. The man of God was, as the early church called him, Theodoches—God-receiver! As he held the baby Jesus, he began to praise God in song, and his song laid down for Mary and Joseph (and for us) the purpose of the Christ Child. “Now,” Simeon said, “dismiss Your slave.” I can die in peace, having seen God’s salvation!*

Anna was the second. Probably in her early 100s, this faithful widow served God constantly. As she saw the baby Jesus, she too began to speak about God’s redemption.

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What had kept these two elderly saints faithful?
2. What did Simeon say about baby Jesus?
3. What did Anna say about baby Jesus?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 105a
1. Rejoice with your family that Jesus is God’s salvation
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member