

INTRODUCTION

Renew Your Worship: A Study in the Blending of Traditional & Contemporary Worship is a small-group course of study and spiritual formation designed around thirteen easy-to-understand sessions. Each session has a two-part study guide. The first part is an individual study that each person completes privately. The second part is a one-hour interaction and application session that group members complete together (during the week or in an adult Sunday school setting). The first part helps you recall and reflect on what you've read, while the small-group study applies the material to each member's personal life and experience of public worship.

Renew Your Worship is designed for use by two or more people. The person who is designated as the leader simply needs to lead the group through the lesson step by step. It is always best to choose a leader before you begin.

Here are some suggestions for making your group discussions lively and insightful.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

A few simple guidelines will help you use the study guide most effectively. They can be summarized under three headings: Prepare, Participate, and Apply.

Prepare

1. Answer each question in the study guide, "Part I: Personal Study," thoughtfully and critically.
2. Do all your work prayerfully. Prayer itself is worship. As you increase your knowledge of worship, do so in a spirit of prayerful openness before God.

Participate

1. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Your questions may give voice to the other members in the group. Your courage in speaking out will give others permission to talk and may encourage more stimulating discussion.

2. Don't hesitate to share your personal experiences. Abstract thinking has its place, but personal illustrations will help you and others remember the material more vividly.
3. Be open to others. Listen to the stories that other members tell, and respond to them in a way that does not invalidate their experiences.

Apply

1. Always ask yourself, "How can this apply to worship?"
2. Commit yourself to being a more intentional worshiper. Involve yourself in what is happening around you.
3. Determine your gifts. Ask yourself, "What can I do in worship that will minister to the body of Christ?" Then offer your gifts and talents to worship.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER

Like the worship that it advocates, the group study in *Renew Your Worship* is dialogic in nature. Because this study has been developed around the principles of discussion and sharing, a monologue or lecture approach will not work. The following guidelines will help you encourage discussion, facilitate learning, and implement the practice of worship. Use these guidelines with "Part II: Group Discussion" in each session.

1. Encourage the participants to prepare thoroughly and to bring their Bibles and study guides to each session.
2. Begin each session with prayer. Since worship is a kind of prayer, learning about worship should be a prayerful experience.
3. Discuss each question individually. Ask for several answers and encourage people to react to comments made by others.
4. Use a chalkboard or flip chart or dry-erase board. Draw charts and symbols that visually enhance the ideas being presented. Outline major concepts.
5. Look for practical applications of answers and suggestions that are offered. Try asking questions like, "How would you include this in our worship?" "How would you feel about that change?" "How does this insight help you to be a better worshiper?"

6. Invite concrete personal illustrations. Ask questions like, "Have you experienced that? Where? When? Describe how you felt in that particular situation."
7. When you have concluded Session 9, send the names and addresses of all the students who will complete the class to: Institute for Worship Studies, Box 894, Wheaton, IL 60189. We will then send a certificate of accomplishment for each student in time for you to distribute them during the last class. The cost of each certificate is \$1.00. (Add \$3.00 for postage and handling.)

Two final suggestions:

First, enroll in the Layperson's Curriculum in Worship Studies, a course of study that leads to a Certificate in Worship Studies (CWS). The course CWS 103, *The Renewal of Sunday Worship*, is a fuller study of the same content as *Renew Your Worship*. CWS 103 will give you greater knowledge that will equip you to be a better group leader. CWS 103 earns you two continuing education units (CEU). To order the course, contact the Institute for Worship Studies at the address given above; or call (630) 510-8905.

Second, purchase volume 3 of *The Complete Library of Christian Worship*. This work, entitled *The Renewal of Sunday Worship*, contains an in-depth study of worship renewal. It is a beautiful 8½-by-11-inch coffee table book that will inform your mind and inspire your heart through hours of reading and study.