

Family worship at home

One's experience of worship, whether in the sanctuary, in private, or with family, depends a great deal on one's personal preparation. In the same way that students who prepare for their class tend to have a fuller experience of their education, and those who visit their doctor having prepared in advance some questions and comments about their symptoms end up with a more satisfying diagnosis, when we come to worship ready to hear God's word, to offer our prayers, and to be surprised by God's grace and presence, we tend to encounter a more soul-filling experience and our worship is more God-honouring. So, how can we prepare ourselves to worship in the privacy of our homes through online resources? The Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Illinois (<https://trinityol.360unite.com/video-sermons>, accessed April 26, 2020) has a great guide on their website which I've adapted for our purposes:

1. Prepare the space. Choose a sacred space in your home. Some place with meaning, where life and gifts are shared. Often this is the kitchen table, it could be outside, or even the garage (see following note about distractions!)
 - It's unwise to enter your math class with your English textbook; likewise, it's hard to be present in worship with yesterday's bills lying in front of you. Clear the table of unnecessary stuff and add an object to help focus attention. A candle to represent the light of Christ. A cross (build one with your children, if applicable). A plate representing the Bread of Life. An open Bible.
 - Do this Saturday night. It's no surprise that in the Jewish community of Jesus' day, the sixth day of the week was a day of preparation for the seventh-day sabbath.
 2. Be intentional as you gather. We try to organize our corporate worship in a way that's decent and orderly (one of the many reasons why we don't show up for worship whenever we feel like it. This would be incredibly chaotic and would likely speed the greying of the hair for music director, choir, Sunday School teachers and preacher!) the same goes for worshipping at home. Set a time of day during which you can be fully present. Bring with you your computer or device, a Bible, a hymnbook (if you have one available.)
- Free online Bible in any translation or paraphrase: <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
3. Light the candle as a reminder of the presence of Christ and ask the Holy Spirit to help you pay attention to God during this time (have the children ask the Holy Spirit to help you pay attention to God.) If children are present, have them hammer a nail into the

cross while discussing why the cross is so important (keep it simple: “Jesus died on the cross to forgive sin.”)

4. Play the worship service.

- Open the “Sermons” page (<http://pccweb.ca/moorepc/sermons/>).
- Click on the service title (i.e. “April 5, 2020 – Palm Sunday Worship at Home”).
- Scroll down to *download* the audio file (MP3).

*There is a glitch in the website and you won’t be able to listen to the entire sermon by simply pressing the play button on the player. You need to download the audio by clicking on the icon that looks like a cloud with a downward pointing arrow. It might take a minute to download.

- Scroll down for any external links (such as YouTube videos of hymns and anthems.)
- Scroll to the bottom of the page for a PDF version of the service transcript (“Notes” – the icon looks like a sheet of lined paper.)

5. When the service is over, pray for the other members of the congregation. If someone comes to mind, give them a phone call. Print out the PDF transcript of the worship service and the announcements and deliver them to someone who doesn’t have internet access.