

Clarion Call to Worship: Information and Instructions

Introduction

The Clarion Call to Worship program is a simple but comprehensive tool for facilitating private worship for individuals and families. It includes daily Scripture readings, weekly catechism questions, monthly Bible memorization suggestions, song selections, and a praise and prayer journal. The guide is designed to cover a two year period (104 weeks to be exact), and then repeat. It is our conviction that the discipleship and worship which occurs in the prayer closets and around the kitchen tables of God's people will provide the strongest and longest lasting foundation for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in our hearts and homes; churches and countries.

A brief introduction to the guide is here offered, as well as some suggestions and resources to enhance its usefulness. Please consult our [Worship Resources](#) page for a full listing of many helpful materials.

Scripture Reading

Morning and evening selections are designed to take the reader, over the course of two years, through the Old Testament once; through the entire New Testament twice; and through the Psalms and Proverbs thrice.

Mornings are reserved for the wisdom books. Except for the several weeks which are taken up by large blocks of Job, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, Mondays will feature one chapter from Proverbs, and the remainder of the week will consist of a Psalm each day.

The evening readings consist of one passage from the Old Testament and one from the New. The Old Testament readings are presented according to the commonly indexed order of the canon through Second Kings. After this, an attempt is made to harmonize the major and minor prophets with the chronology of Israel's history in First and Second Chronicles.

The New Testament is first read through synoptically and then again chronologically. A.T. Robertson's *A Harmony of the Gospels* was relied upon for the ordering of the latter. The readings are scheduled for Monday through Saturday. The Lord's Day is left open for catch-up, the more meditative reading of longer passages, or the previewing and reviewing of the Scriptures used in public worship.

For the purpose of reading and studying Scripture, the King James Version, New King James Version, English Standard Version, and New American Standard Bible are recommended. The New International Version can also be helpful, but readers should avoid the editions published after 1984.

An overview of the reading schedule can be found [here](#).

Resources:

[bible.com](#)

[biblegateway.com](#)

[biblia.com](#)

[blueletterbible.org](#)

[biblestudytools.com](#)

[KJV Clarion Reference Bible](#)

[The NKJV Study Bible](#)

[The ESV Study Bible](#)

NASB Life Application Study Bible
Comparative Study Bible, Revised
A Harmony of the Gospels, A. T. Robertson

Catechizing

The Clarion Catechism consists of one hundred eight questions and answers, being a very slight recension of the Westminster Shorter Catechism.¹ For those readers who might be under the mistaken impression that catechisms are the exclusive province of the Roman Catholic Church; the truth is, that a catechism is simply a teaching tool which uses questions and answers to instruct Christians in the fundamentals of their faith. Their use has been embraced by evangelicals from the very start of the Protestant Reformation. It has, over the last fifty years or so, unfortunately become a lost art in most of our churches and denominations.

The Westminster Standards are here chosen because they represent the high-water mark of Protestant dogmatic theology; not only in the precision of each question and answer, but also for the way in which they systematically and comprehensively present Christian doctrine. While many families start with a children's catechism or a modernized version, we cannot strongly enough stress the importance of sticking with the original shorter catechism. Most catechisms produced for children are written for young people to grow out of. The Westminster Shorter Catechism is designed for you to grow into. For centuries it was an essential and almost universal component of the theological D.N.A. of evangelical Christians, especially for those denominations which sprang from the fount of British Puritanism. Although this inheritance has descended into the subconscious of many churches, it is a heritage that we should take great care to recover and conserve. In its time (1648), the shorter catechism, being contrasted with its bigger brother, the larger catechism, was specifically designed for those of "weaker capacity;" but even today, and given the memory advantages of youth, the shorter catechism becomes very manageable when learned and reviewed over a two year period. Moreover, it should be remembered that the usefulness of catechizing is not primarily found in rote memorization. Confessions and catechisms provide the Christian with an indispensable systematizing framework of doctrine. The questions and answers become a pedagogical tool for the investigation of the whole of Scripture and exploration of all parts of theology.

An overview of the catechism can be found [here](#).

Resources:

["Is the Shorter Catechism Worthwhile," Benjamin B. Warfield](#)

[Westminster Shorter Catechism Project](#)

[Westminster Confession of Faith](#)

[The Westminster Shorter Catechism: For Study Classes, G. I. Williamson](#)

[Modern Exposition of 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, S. E. Waldron](#)

[The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary, J. G. Vos](#)

[Westminster Confession: A Commentary, A. A. Hodge](#)

¹ The departures can be found in questions #5 and #96. The former (#5) consists of the addition of question #2 from the larger catechism. It has long been included in the Baptist version, "Keach's Catechism;" and because it is a fine and succinct statement of presuppositional apologetics, we added it here as well. In the latter (#96), we dropped the final contradictory clause in the answer: "but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized;" thereby completing the ecclesiastical reformation which the divines at Westminster stopped short of. However, for our paedobaptist friends who insist on keeping the discrepancy, we have included a printable alternate version which retains the original verbiage.

Faith of Our Fathers: A Commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith, W. R. Spear
Truths We Confess, R. C. Sproul
The Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 (Pocket Puritans)
The Westminster Confession of Faith (Pocket Puritans)
Westminster Shorter Catechism Illustration²

Bible Memorization

A large quantity of Bible memory material is included each month to give individuals and families an abundance of options to fit their needs. It is not intended that all the selections will be memorized the first time through. We attempted to choose some of the most significant doctrinal, devotional, and popular passages so that a wide spectrum of Scripture is included over the course of the two year cycle. Each month, individuals should attempt to memorize what they deem to be most profitable and manageable, leaving the rest for later. One verse memorized well, reviewed frequently, and maintained long, is better than many recalled hazily and quickly forgotten. It should also be noted that the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer are not included in the Bible memorization because they are learned in the course of catechism.

Regarding Bible translations, the Authorized Version is printed here for several reasons. The first is because of the universality which the King James Version has achieved, historically, denominationally, and geographically; The second is because the poetry, and to some extent the obscurity of the vintage language can prove to be an asset in memorization; Third, is because the Westminster Standards employ the King James Version; Fourth, because the A. V. has set a standard of stylistic excellence for the English language from which we are not so far removed as many would like us to believe; And last, even in the face of a glut of recent translation attempts, the King James is still unsurpassed in accuracy, especially for the purpose of memorization. In addition to Bible memorization, following each quarter, a week is set aside for review and some bonus memory material is offered. This material can be very helpful for someone who is just learning to read the Scriptures, especially as they endeavor to think through the whole narrative of the Bible. Once again, more is included rather than less, therefore the individual should start with what he finds most helpful.

An overview of the Bible memory passages can be found [here](#).

Resources:

www.memverse.com

[How to Memorize Scripture, Navigators](#)

[An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture, A. Davis](#)

[Survey of the Bible: A Treasury of Bible Information, W. Hendriksen](#)

[How to Memorize Bible Verses: The Fast and Easy Way to Memorizing Scripture, K. Buchanan](#)

Singing

Each week, several Psalm selections from *The Book of Psalms for Worship* are recommended. Although singing the Psalms is another practice which is largely and lamentably foreign to most modern Christians, the Psalms, rather than hymns, are here used for several reasons. First, the Scriptures insist that they make up the backbone of the church's singing in

² I very much appreciate Steven F. Miller's permission to post this helpful illustration of the catechism. Rev. Miller's sagacious grasp of Biblical truth and deft in presenting the Puritan theology of the Westminster Standards are matters for which I am greatly indebted.

worship (Col. 3:16). Second, the recent neglect of the Psalter is a major factor in our current liturgical and theological disorder, and its recovery is a necessary element in correcting this ailment. Third, when accurately translated, their lyrics are indisputably doctrinally sound. And lastly, the Psalter, as a canon within the canon, comprehends the full range of truth, history, counsel, and comfort which Christians need for faith and practice.

Further, the Psalms are uniquely suited for family worship because in *The Book of Psalms for Worship* they are arranged specifically for a cappella (non-instrumental) singing. Because these ancient compositions will be a “new song” to many people, most of the tunes are easy and many are familiar hymn tunes. If you are unfamiliar with a tune, an audio sample of most selections in *The Book of Psalms for Worship* can be found at: psalter.org/tunes. If you are viewing the worship guide online, each Psalm is hyperlinked to its corresponding tune and can be accessed by simply clicking on the number of the Psalm. The selections chosen ensure that every verse of every Psalm is sung at least once during the course of the two year program.

Resources:

[Book of Psalms for Worship](#)

psalter.org

thepsalmssung.org

psalter.com

cgmusic.org/workshop/index.htm

hymnary.org

[Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship, R. Van Neste](#)

[Old Light on New Worship, J. Price](#)

[The Psalter Reclaimed: Praying and Praising with the Psalms, G. Wenham](#)

[Sing a New Song: Recovering Psalm Singing for the Twenty-First Century, J. R. Beeke](#)

[Singing the Songs of Jesus: Revisiting the Psalms, M. LeFebvre](#)

Praise and Prayer

Prayer is the time in which we Adore God, Confess our sins, Thank the Lord for His blessings, and offer up Supplications according to His will. Therefore, the portion of the guide, where the A.C.T.S. acrostic is printed, is reserved for you to record what God has done, is doing, and is asked to do each week.

While spontaneity is important in prayer, so is structure; and the best source of structure is Scripture itself. Several resources are offered below for guidance in learning to pray. It is especially important in family worship that the head of the household leads in prayer and ensures that all members of the family are encouraged to participate, both silently and audibly, as they are able. The worship guides can be kept over the two year period and reviewed from time to time as a testimony to the Lord’s providence and provision.

In addition to this essential vertical element in our prayers to God, the Bible also teaches us about the importance of prayer as it concerns our horizontal relations with other people (Matthew 5:22-24 & 6:12). As where prayer calls us into an intimate and right relationship with our Father in heaven, it also calls us to the same with our brothers and sisters on earth. This time, before and during prayer, is an opportunity for the family to conduct the spiritual business of the household. It is a time for honest grievances to be received, confessions offered, forgiveness asked, rebukes heard, and hearts reunited. If this is done regularly, in the Spirit of love and truth, Christians have the supreme joy of witnessing and experiencing Christ’s ministry of

reconciliation in their very midst. While this may be the most intimidating aspect of family worship, it is also most essential. For families new to this, or for those who are currently struggling through difficult times, we suggest reading the section entitled “The Conference Table” (p. 231) in Jay Adam’s book *Competent to Counsel*, as well as asking one of your pastor or elders to join with you and your family in order to lead you through this time.

Resources (Prayer):

matthewhenry.org

A Way to Pray, M. Henry

The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions, A. G. Bennett

Talking to God: The Theology of Prayer, W. R. Spear

A Praying Life: Connecting With God In A Distracting World, P. E. Miller

Developing a Healthy Prayer Life, J. Beeke

Finding the Will of God, B. K. Waltke

Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation, J. Mandryk

Resources (Family Discipleship and Discipline):

Marriage Conference Table

nanc.org/Find-a-Counselor

ccf.org/counseling

Bound for Glory: A Practical Handbook For Raising a Victorious Family, R. C. Sproul

Christian Living in the Home, J. E. Adams

Competent to Counsel, J. E. Adams

Strengthening Your Marriage, W. A. Mack

Love & Respect, E. Eggerichs

Shepherding a Child's Heart, T. Tripp

Instructing a Child's Heart, T. Tripp

Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens, P. D. Tripp

Parenting by God's Promises, J. Beeke

How to Conduct Family Worship

Of late, there have been some excellent books and tracts published on family worship. This program was designed to provide folks with a very practical way to implement the practice of private worship which these authors advocate. We encourage you to acquire some of these resources, begin family worship, and here offer a few tips on how to immediately implement and improve family worship.

To many, the term “family worship” conjures up an idyllic domestic scene of a large Victorian brood, seated quietly around an immaculate kitchen table; children reverently listening with rapt attention as father leads them in an enthralling presentation of Biblical truth, followed by mother leading in a pitch perfect Psalm. Your first night of family worship, complete with crying infants, whining toddlers, absent (physically or mentally) teenagers, unexpected guests, and unprepared parents should be enough to rightly vanquish the Victorians from your mind.

While worship in the home is not easy, it should not be made more difficult by unrealistic expectations. It should always be made a priority, it should never become drudgery. Worship is a time when we simply avail ourselves of the means of grace in the midst of a messy life. If family worship starts to turn into a forlorn formality, done out of sheer duty; priorities and practices

need to be reassessed immediately. Following are some tips for keeping family worship fresh and fulfilling.

- 1) Be consistent, but not inflexible. It is suggested that morning devotions are done individually, the earlier the better; and that evening devotions are practiced as a family, after dinner or before bed probably being the best time.
- 2) Keep it short. While occasionally, perhaps one night a week, the family can enjoy an extended time of worship, most sessions should not exceed twenty minutes.
- 3) If you get behind, do not overburden yourself with attempting to catch up, as the guide repeats every two years, you will eventually revisit the missed material.
- 4) Keep distractions to a minimum. Technological paraphernalia should be off at this time.
- 5) Take God more seriously and yourself less so. Family worship should be a time of fun and fellowship. It will certainly be a time in which some of your most cherished memories are made.
- 6) Do not be deterred if every member of the family is not present for evening worship. All who are present should partake in devotions. Moreover, fathers and mothers should make it a point to worship with and disciple their children individually on a frequent and intentional basis.
- 7) Single folks should seek out friends with which to have shared worship at least once a week. And likewise, families should seek to bless and be blessed by inviting singles and couples over to worship frequently.
- 8) Single parents and families with unbelieving fathers face special challenges in establishing family worship. The elders of the church should give these families special attention and assistance as they implement private worship. The below list of resources should be consulted and the church should be ready to give guidance and help in this area.
- 9) Attempt to make the time interesting for young children. Try to actively find ways to make them look forward to family worship. In addition to Bible reading and Bible stories, it is a great idea to include quality Christian fiction (old and new) and the biographies of important persons in church history. A great deal of very fine literature is being produced in these areas and can be found in our [store](#).
- 10) Unbelieving guests should be welcomed and encouraged to participate in worship with your family. We can think of few things that bear a better testimony to Christ than His gospel being lived out authentically in the homes of His people.

Web Resources:

ministry-to-children.com/family-worship

famtime.com

familyworshipproject.com

familyworshipmonth.com

[The Children's Hour](#)

seedsfamilyworship.net

sojournkids.com

capitolhillbaptist.org

Articles:

[Then, What, When, and How of Family Worship](#)

[11 Reasons to Worship with Your Family](#)

Books:

[The Big Book Of Questions and Answers, S. B. Ferguson](#)

[Big Truths for Young Hearts: Teaching and Learning the Greatness of God, B. A. Ware](#)

Family Driven Faith, V. Baucham Jr.
Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes, V. Baucham Jr.
Family Worship (Family Guidance), J. Beeke
Family Worship: In the Bible, in History & in Your Home, D. S. Whitney
Gather the Family DVD
A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Christian Home, J. Helopoulos
Rediscovering Family Worship, J. Marcellino
The Case for Family Worship, G. Hamond
The Family Worship Book: A Resource Book for Family Devotions, T. L. Johnson
Thoughts on Family Worship (Family Titles), J. W. Alexander
Training Hearts Teaching Minds: Family Devotions Based on the Shorter Catechism, S. Meade
Truth and Grace Memory Book #1, T. Ascol
Truth and Grace Memory Book #2, T. Ascol
Truth and Grace Memory Book #3, T. Ascol

Integrating Private and Public Worship

Private and public worship are never meant to compete; instead, they should complement one another. The Clarion Call to Worship program is specifically designed with this end in mind. Following are some ways in which each element of the guide can be easily and meaningfully integrated into the life of your congregation.

You can start the program on any week of the year, therefore any church can commence together at any time, and anyone can join in at any time thereafter. Please feel free to print the guide and provide it to the congregation with each week's bulletin. It is better to start sooner rather than later, but if one wants to make a memorable day for beginning the program, Pentecost Sunday would fit the bill nicely. Also, if the congregation begins the guide together, a few sermons or lessons on the importance and implementation of family worship would be expedient.

Family worship falls under the purview of discipleship, and discipleship is the particular responsibility of the elders. They should make it one of their highest priorities to be well versed in conducting personal and family devotions and to be able to instruct others in this discipline. Elders should reach out to families which are new to the practice of family worship by inviting them into the Elder's home for dinner, and afterwards to experience and example family worship as a combined group.

The pastor could consider writing a blog or other brief devotional which expounds the daily Scripture readings for each week; thereby making them an encouraging part of the shared life of the church, which the members can enjoy, as they are absent from each other's fellowship throughout the week.

Catechisms and Bible memory work should be integrated with either the Sunday morning or Wednesday evening educational curriculum, or perhaps with small group meetings. This should apply to both children and adults. Regarding the catechism, it is especially important that the answers are not just read and recited; instead, they should be explained and discussed.

The church could consider giving quarterly or annual awards to those who do the hard work of memorizing. For adults, good Biblical, theological, and biographical books make a great gift for those who are taking their Christian growth seriously. A suggested list can be found on our [Worship Resources](#) page.

If a church has not already done so, it is recommended that the congregation begin using the Psalms in their corporate singing. For those new to Psalm singing, it would be a great idea to

learn a new Psalm from the guide in the Sunday evening service, practice it in family worship all week, and then use that Psalm again in the following Sunday morning worship service.

And of course, the weekly prayer service should be used to alert the church body of the many individual and corporate needs and thanks which arise. A separate section is given for the church to focus on one ministry and one missionary for each particular week. Churches which meet for a meal and meeting on Wednesday night could integrate the guide with these evening activities.

Contact and Support

If you find errata or have suggestions on how to make this a better or more useful guide, we would appreciate hearing from you. Contact us by email at: clarioncalltoworship@gmail.com Finally, we encourage you to use and reproduce the Clarion Call to Worship guide freely;

Moreover, if you find it valuable, please consider contributing to our efforts so that we can maintain and expand our mission of providing sound and simple resources for private and public worship.