



Children's story and activity

5. WORSHIP

Worship is a time when church members come together to pray, sing, read scripture, share with each other, and give praise to God. It can be a time of fellowship, restoration, comfort, celebration, or a call for renewed action. Believers can worship in a church building, in a home, or in a boat—worship can happen anywhere!

EARLY STORY

In the 16th century, it was against the law to gather as Anabaptists to worship. Instead Anabaptists often had to meet in secret to read the Bible and sing hymns. They met in the woods, in caves, or in barns.

In the Netherlands where there were many dykes and channels of water running through the towns, Anabaptists used those spaces to worship in secret. Pieter Pieters Beckjen sometimes did his preaching in a boat, so that the authorities on shore could not see or hear what was being said.

In 1546, when Andrew Smuel and Dirk Pieters of the Netherlands were arrested for being Anabaptists, they testified that they had studied the Bible together in a place other than at church:

Question: Where did the apostles go to teach?

Answer: They went into the synagogues, and preached the Gospel of Christ.

Question: We have heard that you also teach wherever you go.

Answer: We may have read the Gospel together.

Question: Where did you read it together?

Answer: At the dyke.



Pieter Pieters Beckjen (from *Martyrs Mirror*, page 739)

(from *Martyrs Mirror*, 477)



GLOBAL STORY

In the Kinshasa Mennonite Church in the Congo, joyous singing and drumming are important parts of worship. For song leader and drummer William Kulpeta, the construction of the drums and the different sounds each makes have special meaning in worship.

Drums are made from a single piece of wood that is hollowed out by hand till the sides are the correct width. An animal skin--goat, cow, or even antelope--is stretched across the open end of the drum.

Most churches use the tall, upright drum. Another drum is played with the drum head facing down. It has a small piece of wood (*pwita*) attached to the center of the drum head. The drummer reaches down into the drum and pulls on the *pwita* to put different amounts of pressure on the drum head. The other hand drums on the skin of the drum head. This makes a variety of sounds.



FAMILY QUESTIONS

- ▶ Where does your congregation gather for worship?
- ▶ What is the most unusual place you have gathered for a church service?
- ▶ What is your favorite part of worship?



SCRIPTURE

Matthew 18:20

**For where two
or three are
gathered in
my name, I am
there among
them.**

ACTIVITY

**CHOOSE A BIBLE STORY
TO READ TOGETHER**
in an unusual place.

Depending on your location and the time of year, consider: under a tree, while on a hike, next to a favorite window, or creating a "tent" inside with chairs and a blanket.





TAKE IT FURTHER!

Start a journal of your interesting places. Write down where you were and what Bible story you read together. Draw a picture or have a grown-up take a photo to include in your journal.

PRAYER

Thank you, God,
for being with us,
wherever we are.

Amen