

# Worship Education & Exploration Month

Workshop for the WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts  
Gustavus Adolphus College St. Peter, Minnesota

Tuesday, July 29, 2008 at 1:45 p.m.  
Wednesday, July 30, 2008 at 4:00 p.m.

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## Introduction

- How do you explain a banana split to someone who has never tasted one?
- How do you explain a game at Lambeau Field to someone who has never been there?
- How do you explain worship at this conference to someone who has never attended?

## Robert Webber's Worship Curriculum – 30 Days of Worship Discovery

- Webber (1933-2007) was a major voice for Protestant worship renewal.

*From online biography:* Dr. Webber was born in Congo of missionary parents, and was raised in the Philadelphia area. He earned the Th.D. from Concordia Theological Seminary. From 1968 to 2000 he served as Professor of Theology at Wheaton College, and was named Professor Emeritus upon his retirement in 2000. He was appointed William R. and Geraldine D. Myers Professor of Ministry and Director of the M.A. in Worship and Spirituality at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in the fall of 2000. He founded the Florida-based Institute for Worship Studies in 1998. Bob died April 27, 2007 in his home in Sawyer, Michigan, after an eight-month struggle with pancreatic cancer.

- Weekly Themes in Webber's Curriculum
  1. Worship is God's story
  2. How does worship reenact and proclaim God's story?
  3. How do we respond to God's story?
  4. How do space, music, and the arts serve God's story?
- Components of Webber's Curriculum (available at [www.ancientfutureworship.com](http://www.ancientfutureworship.com))
  1. Series of four sermons on the four weekly themes
  2. Daily reading based on the four themes in the curriculum's booklet, "Together We Worship"
  3. Weekly studies with DVD segments and a study guide as a follow-up to the daily readings
  4. Fellowship event for gathering responses and feedback

- While the curriculum has many good things to offer, there are theological problems adapting a generic Protestant curriculum for a confessional Lutheran setting.
  1. Equal time would need to be spent refuting false doctrine (or explaining worship practices derived from false doctrine) rather than teaching the main worship principle of the lessons. As a result, less time would be spent on the main goal of a worship curriculum.
  2. Teaching our people to beware of false doctrine and to be able to identify poor liturgical practices is important. However, using a curriculum that itself teaches some of those things will likely be perceived differently than using a solid, Lutheran curriculum as the springboard for warning parishioners about false doctrine and poor practice. This will probably be the case even if it is said upfront that there are theological problems with the curriculum that will be addressed and discussed throughout the study.
  3. Will the well-polished DVD presentations of the curriculum “trump” the instructor’s words of warning in the minds of some students? Will the presence of false doctrine lead some people to falsely assume that worship renewal inevitably involves questionable theology?
  
- *Lesson Learned:* The idea is good, but a different curriculum is needed.

### **Worship Education and Exploration Month**

- *Premise:* The concept of a month-long worship immersion program is good, and the outline of the “30 Days of Worship Discovery” curriculum is useful, but any program used in a confessional Lutheran setting needs to be built on confessional Lutheran theology and corresponding practices.
  1. The current influence of the church growth movement and its non-Lutheran practices require that worship education be a priority for Lutheran congregations.
  2. Experiencing good worship is just as important a component for worship education as traditional educational approaches (e.g. adult Bible Class).
  
- *Idea:* Develop a “Worship Education and Exploration Month” that accomplishes the same goals of “30 Days of Worship Discovery” but that uses Lutheran materials.
  1. *Bible study component:* “Worship” Bible study kit from the NPH “His Word, My Life” series
  2. *Daily reading component:* “The ABC’s of Worship” by Paul Prange
  3. *Sermon series:* Either one introductory sermon, or a series based on the four Lutheran worship principles espoused in the WELS worship curriculum, “Come, Worship Christ”
  4. *Service series:* Unique services for each Sunday, representing the past and present of worship
  5. *Fellowship component (optional):* Potluck with program, or casual open forum feedback meeting
  
- *Timing:* “Worship Education and Exploration Month” would probably work best during the post-Pentecost season, either in summer or fall.

### **Bible Study – “Worship” from the NPH “His Word, My Life” Series**

- NPH order no. 220977 (to order, call 1-800-662-6022)
- Eight lessons could be divided between Sundays and midweek Bible study:  
First four lessons based on Old Testament sections  
Last four lessons based on New Testament sections
  1. The Basics
  2. The Worship Life God Gave to Israel
  3. Poems and Poetry for Worship
  4. Planning, Organization, and Leadership in Worship
  5. Jesus and Worship
  6. Worship in the Early Church: Instructions and Examples
  7. Worship in the Early Church: Elements of God-pleasing Worship
  8. Worship in Heaven
- Remember that the “His Word, My Life” series is meant to be a series of core, repeating Bible studies. It is especially helpful as the “next level” of study for new members after Bible Information Class. As such, this is a *basic* curriculum about worship.
- Options for other curricula
  1. Adapting a section of “Come, Worship Christ” (possibly the four Bible Information Class lessons)
  2. Use the study questions provided for “The ABC’s of Worship” (below)
  3. Wait for the release of the new WELS worship curriculum

### **Daily Reading – “The ABC’s of Worship”**

- NPH order no. 150692
- Twenty-six readings (27 with introduction page), generally 1-2 pages long
  - A. adiaphoron
  - B. bells
  - C. chancel
  - D. decoration
  - E. elevation
  - (etc.)
- Could be spread out over the full month by assigning one to each day except Sundays
- Small groups could meet weekly to discuss the previous week’s worth of reading
- Corresponding (free) study questions available at [www.nph.net/html/abc.html](http://www.nph.net/html/abc.html)

## Sermon Series

- *One-sermon option:* Since the regular lectionary is designed to cover the major themes of Scripture, there is some wisdom in *not* supplanting the appointed readings for an entire month. In that case, a worship-themed sermon could be preached on the first Sunday of the program, and then the sermons would revert to lectionary selections for the remaining Sundays. In a five-Sunday month, this sermon could be preached on the first Sunday of the program, and the remaining four Sundays would use the four special orders of worship. *Possible sermon texts:* Mark 2:23-28, Acts 2:42, Revelation 7:9-17.
- *Four-sermon option:* “Come, Worship Christ” emphasizes four principles for Lutheran worship. These principles could become the basis for a four-Sunday sermon series. Note that the first special service is narrated, and so the sermon length would be greatly shortened. If preferred, the first service could be a “regular” order of worship to allow for a normal-length sermon, and the special services would be used the next three Sundays, omitting the narrated service.

*Note:* Suggested sermon texts are marked with an asterisk (\*) below. Prayer of the Day suggestions may be found in *Christian Worship: Manual*, pp. 385ff. Congregations using the four special services in sequence (see next page) may want to rearrange the sermon themes to better reflect the services:

Week 1 – Theme One / Week 2 – Theme Four / Week 3 – Theme Two / Week 4 – Theme Three

### **THEME ONE – Let the Gospel Be the Most Important Part of Worship**

Suggested Lectionary Readings: Le 16:2-11,15-17,20-24,29-34; Ps 103; 1 Co 2:1-5\*; Mk 2:23-28  
 NPH Verse of the Day suggestions: Epiphany 8 (Lam 3:22), Pentecost 3 (2 Co 5:19)  
 Hymn of the Day suggestions: The Day Full of Grace (CW 254), In Christ Alone (CWS 752)  
 Prayer of the Day suggestions: Lent 5, Easter 3, Pentecost 11

### **THEME TWO – Let the People Participate in Worship**

Suggested Lectionary Readings: Ex 14:26-31, 15:1-7,11-13,17-18; Ps 98, He 10:19-25\*; Lk 19:37-40  
 NPH Verse of the Day suggestions: Pentecost 16 (Phi 4:4), Pentecost 19 (Phi 2:10-11)  
 Hymn of the Day suggestions: Arise, My Soul, Arise (CW 244), Rejoice in God (CW 733)  
 Prayer of the Day suggestions: Pentecost 13, Organ Dedication (some phrases would need to be altered)

### **THEME THREE – Let All of God’s Gifts Be Used in Worship (Music & the Arts)**

Suggested Lectionary Readings: Ex 35:4-36:7; Ps 150; Col 3:15-17\*; Jn 12:1-9  
 NPH Verse of the Day suggestion: Pentecost 1 (Is 6:3b)  
 Hymn of the Day suggestions: When Morning Guilds the Skies (CW 251), Voices Raised to You (CWS 724)  
 Prayer of the Day suggestion: End Time 4

### **THEME FOUR – Let the Experience of the Church Be Honored at Worship**

Suggested Lectionary Readings: Jos 4:1-9,14-24; Ps 78; Ac 2:42-47 (v. 42\*) or He 13:7-20 (v. 7\*); Lk 4:14-21  
 NPH Verse of the Day suggestions: Pentecost 4 (Ps 132:9), Pentecost 17 (Ro 15:4), End Time 1 (Jn 8:31-32)  
 Hymn of the Day suggestion: When In Our Music God Is Glorified (CW 248, CWS 734)  
 Prayer of the Day suggestion: All Saints’ Day

## Service Series

- Week One: A Narrated Service
  1. *Resource:*  
“Service of Word and Sacrament: An Explanation” by Wayne Schulz  
Available from NPH, order no. 180360
  2. Arrange for a lector to narrate the service from a lectern placed in the front of the church, perhaps just off the chancel in one of the front corners.
  3. Because of the narration, the pastor should preach a short sermon or devotion (about five minutes). If a full-length sermon is desired, the service could be a “regular” order of worship (as suggested on the previous page) and the narrated service omitted from the plan.
  4. Another option is possible in a five-Sunday month: The first sermon could be preached on week one, and the remaining sermons on weeks three through five. Week one’s service would be a “regular” order of worship. The narrated service would be used on week two, with the narration serving as the “sermon” for the day.
  
- Week Two: Luther’s German Mass
  1. *Resource:*  
Luther’s Works, American Edition, Volume 53, pp. 61 ff.  
Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings, Second Edition, ed. Timothy Lull, pp. 303 ff.  
A sample version for congregational use is on the workshop resource CD.
  2. Know your congregation well! Will they be able to sing all the songs in the service? If not, arrange for a cantor or choir to sing some of the canticles that Luther prescribed in the service.
  3. Consider duplicating the style of the service as much as practically possible. If your church does not have a processional cross, can you borrow one from another local parish, along with an acolyte’s robe? Can the presiding minister obtain a chasuble for the service? If you want to purchase one, purchase a plain white chasuble, and wear your seasonal stole *over* the chasuble. (Consider ordering from Gaspard in Brookfield, WI: 1-800-784-6868, [www.gaspardinc.com](http://www.gaspardinc.com)).
  4. Some details may be less desirable for duplication. Is it practical to chant all the lessons and the Words of Institution? Is it practical to consecrate and distribute the host first and then the cup?
  5. If you use both the sermons and services according to the suggestions on the previous page (theme four for this service), you should *not* use the suggested Hymn of the Day! The version of this service on the worship resource CD offers hymn selections based on Luther’s suggestions.
  6. Our experience at Gloria Dei in Belmont, CA was quite positive. We had, however, used the service a few times in the past on Reformation Sundays, so the congregation was already acquainted with Luther’s service.

- Week Three: The Order of Holy Communion, TLH p. 15
  1. *Resource:*

Do you have access to enough copies of TLH to place in your pews?  
Can you borrow copies from a local LCMS church that just adopted LSB?  
Do you have the page 5 & 15 inserts that were available shortly after CW was published?
  2. If the preceding options are not available to you, can you reprint the service (either scan into a printable file or cut and paste into copy masters)? If so, you will need to explore copyright permissions with Concordia Publishing House.
  3. If hymns will be sung out of TLH, consider using one or two hymns that were not included in CW. If hymns will be sung out of CW, use hymns that were also included in TLH.
  4. Conduct the service in a way that reflects TLH-style rubrics and customs, so that worshippers get a sense of pre-CW worship in WELS. Pastors, dust off your old black geneva robes! The (spoken) Introit could be one or two well-chosen verses from the appointed Psalm of the Day. Remember TLH rubrics such as the direction you face for the Words of Institution. Finally, you may want/need to briefly walk through the service before starting (it's been 15 years!).
  5. Our experience in Belmont: Life-long Lutherans loved the service. Those who didn't grow up with the service were divided. Some enjoyed the service (including converts, visitors, and even teens!). Some newer adult members felt thoroughly confused by the end of the service!
  
- Week Four: Exploring Appropriate New Concepts for Lutheran Worship
  1. *An eclectic resource service:*

Multiple WELS resources: CW:NSS, CW:OS, CWS  
"Missa Pacem" from GIA (order no. G-6034, 1-800-442-1358, [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com))  
"The Honduras Alleluia" from GIA (order no. G-4588)  
A sample version for congregational use is on the workshop resource CD.  
This service can (and should) be easily adapted to utilize resources that you have at hand.  
This service may provide a good opportunity to introduce CWS materials to your congregation.
  2. Because of the misunderstanding and baggage surrounding the term, do *not* call this a "contemporary service" or advertise it as such. It isn't – at least, not by common definition.
  3. Some elements of the service may need to be taught in advance. In the sample service on the CD, the congregation spent time in the preceding weeks learning the sung Lord's Prayer and Song of Simeon. Some new items relied on familiar hymn tunes. Other new items in the service involved congregational refrains first introduced by a cantor, so learning music in advance was not necessary in those cases.
  4. As much as possible, rely on the piano for accompaniment. Use other instruments whenever possible, not just for service music, but also for hymns and liturgical songs. Give the service a different "sound" than a typical service in your congregation – a new sound, but one that is still appropriate for Lutheran worship.
  5. Use newer but familiar hymns. Since other musical items in the service will be new, it would be wise to select hymns that are familiar to the congregation. Since this service demonstrates a "new sound," it would make sense to select newer hymns in CW and CWS.

6. Pastors who normally wear a geneva (academic robe) could consider wearing an alb and stole for this service (see Gaspard info on previous page). Likewise, if you see customs or ideas demonstrated at this conference that you don't normally use at your own church, consider if this service provides an opportunity to introduce those concepts in your congregation.
7. Our experience in Belmont: This service was very well received. The most frequent compliment was that we retained familiar texts and a liturgical flow of the service while giving it a new, fresh sound with the musical styles we used. One caveat for presiding ministers: Know the service well so that you can conduct it with confidence and not look like you're wondering, "What's next?" One encouragement for the congregation: Teach them how to speak short responses (e.g. "Amen," "Glory be to you, O Lord," etc.) with intentionality and enthusiasm. The congregation's deliberate participation will go a long way toward making this service a positive experience.

## Fellowship Event

- A potluck dinner or another gathering after all the services/sermons are finished for congregational feedback
- Suggested questions from "30 Days of Worship Discovery" (this is directly quoted)

The purpose of the potluck gathering is to give people who have participated in the *30 Days* an opportunity to share with each other, offer ideas, and explore the question, "Where do we go from here?" After you have eaten, assemble the people and ask:

- What is the major thing you learned during the *30 Days*?
- What would you like to incorporate in our worship?
- What suggestions do you have for follow-up?
  - Worship ministry team
  - Arts and drama team
  - Space
  - Choir
  - More hymns
  - More choruses
  - More study
- Ask questions that direct people toward positive answers with theological grounding. Questions like these may be preferable to the "30 Days" suggestions:
  1. What principles of worship do we do well at our congregation?
  2. What principles of worship do we need to improve in our congregation?
  3. What aspects of our service series communicated the gospel clearly and meaningfully?
- Open or close the discussion time with one of the short "meditation" devotional services in CWS

## Miscellaneous

- This program works best if the Lord's Supper can be offered in each of the special services. If not, the sacrament could be offered in services two (Luther's German Mass) and four (exploring new concepts); the first service could include the single sermon option without narration, or the narration could be adjusted for a non-communion service; the TLH service could use page 5 instead of page 15.
- This program could be extended over two months. The first month uses the sermon series; the second month uses the special services. The NPH "Worship" Bible study could be done on Sundays (rather than on Sunday and one weeknight) to stretch it over eight Sundays. You'll have to come up with a different title for the program.
- Midweek Bible studies could use one of the short "meditation" devotional services in CWS with one of the canticles at the end of the CWS hymn section. To develop some familiarity, it may be preferable to use the same meditation and canticle before each midweek study.
- "Worship Education and Exploration Month" is a concept that is open to quite a bit of adaptation. You know your congregation better than anyone else. Adapt this concept so that it best serves your setting.

## Questions & Answers, Ideas, and Feedback

- Contact information for future questions and comments:

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- Thanks for your participation! May God bless your efforts to enrich the worship life in your congregations as you faithfully use his Word and Sacraments to his glory!