

What we want students to learn: That because there is no one like our God, we raise up in worship.

Main Scripture: Psalm 95:1–9

Supplemental Scripture: Hebrews 12:28

Session Snapshot: If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). This verse captures the heart of the Uprising. There is a difference in the "down here" and the "above." Scripture calls us to be people with our hearts and minds on the things of God. This is our response to who God is. The four sessions of the Uprising will all utilize the framework of a specific response to who God is. In this first session, we'll look at worship. Worship is the right response to a recognition of the person and character of God. When we encounter God, our hearts rise to meet Him in praise. This lesson will challenge your students to think about worship not in light of our needs, but in light of who God is.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the main passage you will be teaching.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each Small Group Leader's Guide comes with a **Teacher Prep Video**. These are simply short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

- <https://youtu.be/9XyUiG3Y5qo>

THE DETAILS

Who wrote this book?

God inspired various authors to write a majority of the psalms in their era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan, and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other psalms remains unknown.

When was it written?

The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e., Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e., Psalm 119).

What was the purpose for its writing?

The psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e., Psalm 51).

THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this session is to get a feel for how the psalmist describes worshipping God. The author of Psalm 95 could worship God because he knew God. He had encountered God, had experienced His goodness and His

blessing, and responded with worship. Worship is our right response to an encounter with God. It's the focus of Psalm 95 and the focus on this lesson.

THE TAKEAWAY

The takeaway here is that you want to lead students to encounter God (or more accurately to a greater awareness of the encounters they have with God) and to consider their response. Hebrews challenges us to worship with reverence and awe. You'll get a chance to practically work out what this looks like in their lives.

LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: an introductory activity called **Getting Started**; the Bible study section called **Digging In**; and an application-focused segment called **Wrapping Up**.

GETTING STARTED

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This lesson will utilize pages 8-12 the *Uprising* Student Book.
 - This activity will use page 8-9.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - None

FIRST, welcome students to their first Small Group Session. If everyone in the group doesn't already know each other, take a moment to have people introduce themselves. Explain to them that you're going to spend a lot of time together this weekend. Explain that a great way to get to know people is by learning about their favorite places to visit. Have students go around and share their favorite place they've ever been. When you're done, explain that you're going to use their Student Book to facilitate these times of Bible study. Have them turn to page 8 in their Student Books. Have a student read the session intro on page 8.

THEN, direct students' attention to page 9. Point out the different scenarios on the page. Explain that for each scenario, your task is to determine how you would respond. Take turns having students read the scenario out loud and then read the options, A-C. Have students raise their hands for how they would be most likely to respond. Inform them that "D" is an option as well; if they have a different way of responding, they can choose "D" and provide their response. If this applies to them, allow them to share their response with the group. Do this for all five of the scenarios, having fun with the different responses.

FINALLY, when you've finished, say something like:

- **We spend much of our life responding to things around us. We respond to the weather by choosing specific clothes to wear. We respond to teachers and coaches and parents according to what they ask of us. We respond to friends through text message and social media. What we're going to be looking at over the next few days is how we respond to God to who God is. We're going to look at a few of these responses. In this session, we're going to look at how we respond in worship.**

If there are no more comments or questions, transition to the *Digging In* section of your lesson.

DIGGING IN

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This activity will utilize pages 10-11 in the *Uprising* Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - You'll want to make sure students have something to write with, and a Bible or Bible app.

FIRST, instruct students to look at the prompt at the top of page 10. Instruct them to consider how they would answer the question, "How would you define worship?" If you want, allow them a moment to write their answer in the space provided. Then, have them share their answers with the group. As students share, don't worry about making sure they have a "right" answer. The goal of the question is to get students thinking about worship.

When students have had a chance to share, explain that you're going to look at a passage from Scripture that depicts expressions of worship to God. Explain that the goal is for you to discover what worship looks like and how it relates to who God is.

THEN, read or have students read aloud Psalm 95:1-9. When you've finished, lead students to go back through the passage and circle every mention to any description of God. Answers are below:

- **Answers: v. 1 "rock of our salvation"; vs. 3 "great God," "King above all kings"; vs. 4-5 various creative elements attributed to God; vs. 6 "our Maker"; vs. 7 "our God."**

When you've finished this, lead students in brief discussion. (You can allow students the chance to write down their answers and share them when they've finished, or you can simply allow the discussion to happen as you go.) Ask:

- **How could the author of Psalm 95 say these things about God?**
 - Answer: Because he and his people, the Israelites, had a long history of encounters with God. The author knew God as the "rock of [his] salvation" because he had experienced the salvation only God could bring. He could describe God because he knew Him.
- **Worship is defined as "a right response to an encounter with God." List a few examples of how a biblical character from the Old Testament would have "encountered" God.**
 - Answers will vary. You're looking for some examples from Scripture of people who had an encounter with God. This could be Old Testament characters such as Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and so on, or New Testament characters who had encounters with Jesus.
- **Where do you encounter God?**
 - Answers will vary. The goal here is to help student become more aware of the times in their lives where they encounter God. Answers may include meeting God in the Bible, seeing His hand in creation, praying to God, and so on. You'll get a chance to revisit this more in-depth in the Wrapping Up section. But work to help your students think about where they meet God.

Before moving on, help drive home the point of your discussion. Consider saying something like:

- The psalmist knew God. He could describe God because he had a history of interacting with God. Many of us in this group can say the same thing. We can say that we have a history of encountering God as well. We meet God in Scripture. We have stories of Him answering prayers. We look around us and see the beauty of His work in creation. But the truth is this: if we are not in a practice of looking for God, it's easy to miss Him, not because He is easy to miss but because, as sinful people, our hearts aren't naturally bent on looking for Him. Before we can worship God, we have to become more aware of where we encounter Him.

NEXT, instruct students to follow the prompts on page 11. Have them look back at Psalm 95 and underline any place that describes a reaction to God that they would consider worship. Answers are below.

- **Answers: vs. 1 "let us sing," "make a joyful noise"; vs. 2 "come into his presence with thanksgiving"; vs. 6 "let us worship and bow down," "let us kneel"; vs. 8 not hardening our hearts.**

When you've finished, lead students in brief discussion. Ask:

- **We may not "hear God's voice" audibly, but we can know what God is leading us to do. How is this possible?**
 - Answer: Through God's Word; through the Holy Spirit prompting us to act; through the counsel of other Christ-followers.
- **When we encounter God, we have a choice, don't we? Verse 8 gives us one possible response. What is it?**
 - Answer: Hardening our hearts.
- **What's the alternative of hardening our hearts? And what do you think that means?**
 - Answer: Softening our hearts. When we harden our hearts, we are closed off to God's leading. We don't allow Him to speak into our lives. When we soften our hearts, we take on a posture of obedience. We're saying to God, "My life is yours. Lead me where you will." We listen to God. We want to be moved by Him.

Wrap up this section by saying something like:

- **What we have seen in this psalm is someone reacting to an encounter with God by worshipping Him. The psalmist talks about singing to God, being thankful to God, bowing down in worship, and putting ourselves in the position to have God move and direct us. These are examples of worship. Each of these shows us being aware of who God is and responding to Him. We're going to begin to wrap up our time in Bible study by looking at one more verse that describes what a worshipful response to God looks like.**

THEN, have students read Hebrews 12:28. Explain that we don't know exactly who the author of Hebrews was, but that the book is an awesome look at what it means to live as a Christ-follower. Verse 28 is a short but focused encouragement of what worship should look like. Lead students in a brief discussion of the verse. Ask:

- **In your own words, what do you think it means that we inherit a Kingdom that "can't be shaken"?**
 - Answers will vary. Help students to see that this is referring to the present confidence we can have that we're God's children and that He's present with us as we face our everyday life. But this is also pointing toward the hope we have that if we've come to saving faith in Jesus, we are chosen by God to spend eternity with Him.

- **What should our response be to this truth?**
 - Answer: Thankfulness.
- **Look at how the author described worship. What is the opposite of acceptable?**
 - Answers will vary, but lead students to see that if something is not acceptable, it's unacceptable. In other words, it won't work, or it's not the expected response.
- **What is the author of Hebrews trying to tell us about the kind of worship we bring before God?**
 - Answers will vary, but the point is to show students that it is possible to come to God with worship that isn't acceptable. We can come to God in worship that is more about us and less about a right response to who God is.

At this point, you'll want to make sure to note that the author of Hebrews talks about worship that is "reverent" and "with awe," but don't worry about explaining that too deeply. You'll focus on it in the Wrapping Up portion of your session.

FINALLY, wrap up your time of Bible study by saying something like:

- **Worship is a right response to God. When we worship God in a spirit of reverence (that is, knowing God and honoring Him for all that He is) and awe (understanding our relationship to God in proper perspective, knowing He is the Lord of lords and King of kings), we honor God with our worship. When we come to worship God half-heartedly, or without fully focusing on all that God is, we bring an offering to Him that may very well be unacceptable. Only God knows our hearts. Only He knows the spirit in which we bring Him our worship. But it's up to us to truly evaluate our response to encountering God. Are we bringing God worship that comes from a place of humility, love, and thanksgiving? It's a powerful question that is worth searching our hearts to consider where we stand.**

Ask if anyone has any thoughts or questions, then transition to the *Wrapping Up* portion of your lesson.

WRAPPING UP

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This activity will utilize page 12 in the *Uprising* Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - Make sure students have something to write with.

FIRST, instruct students to turn to page 12 in their books. Read the instructions and walk students through the first few examples that have been provided. Make sure they get the gist of where the activity is headed.

THEN, explain to students that the goal of the activity is to simply get them thinking a little outside of the box about what worship is that is acceptable to God. Remind them that worship goes way beyond simply singing praise music to God. It's any right response to our encounters with God. Once you feel like they have a grasp on what you want to accomplish here, decide how you want to facilitate the activity. You can have them do this individually or in small groups and come back and share their responses, or you can do the activity as a large group processing responses together.



THE UPRISING



SESSION 1: RISING UP IN WORSHIP

The goal is not to necessarily come up with exactly 20 responses. If you have more or less, that's fine. The goal is that your students spend time focusing on what it means to worship God. It's that simple.

FINALLY, wrap up your time together by having students circle a few of the actions they came up with to focus on practicing in their daily lives. Additionally, remind students that while they are here, they will get an opportunity to worship God as a group. Challenge them to allow this lesson and the truths contained in it to influence the way they worship God.

Ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the Encounters devotions located on pages 38-45 in their Student Books. Provide them with a schedule or some structure as to when you would like for them to work through them. (The first devotion is on page 38.)

If there are no more questions, close in prayer for your group.