

Spiritual Formation in Worship, Part 2
Conspiring with the Word — Leader's Guide

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From the Missional Bible Studies series of the Center for U.S. Missions

As in Bible Study #1, this study encourages participants to discern the Holy Spirit more deeply and grow closer to Christ as they by faith "tune in to" or "practice" God's presence in worship. This Leader's Guide complements and clarifies the Participant's Guide; use both in leading the study. Reviewing both Guides before the study will help you anticipate questions and reactions. Scripture passages are taken from the NIV (New International Version).

In this study, Exploration and Discussion proceed together. The italicized questions following each Arabic numeral in the Participant's Guide are rhetorical questions to present the "What's the Big Idea?" topic under consideration; real discussion questions follow in the succeeding paragraphs.

Introduction – 5 minutes

...we say that Scripture is inspired or, literally translated in the Bible, God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16, NIV).

Exploration and Discussion – I, II, III, each 15 minutes

Breathing with Scripture Note: Three scripture passages are explored which appear in many Lutheran liturgies. However, knowledge of traditional orders of worship is not needed for this study; the *function* of each scriptural passage (coming together into the Lord's presence; praising God; receiving God's blessing) is common to all Christian worship traditions. The overall theme of meeting God in worship through his Word--understanding, experiencing, and praying the words of scripture through faith--is appropriate for both church and unchurched participants. Below are some helps for certain questions in the study.

I. Ruth 2:1-4. How is this verbal exchange between Boaz and his workers reworded in modern "church lingo"? "The Lord be with you/And also with you" or "The Lord be with you/And with thy spirit"

Note: following the exercise in greeting one another with eye contact and gesture, if time and inclination permit, you may invite the participants to offer feedback – were they comfortable or uncomfortable with the action? Could or should such an action be incorporated into worship? How much good will does this particular congregation have for moving beyond their comfort zone? And finally, how much of this little study in "The Salutation" would be helpful for the congregation as a whole to learn?

II. Rev. 19:1-8. Read the text, then take a guess:

- In Revelation the word "Alleluia" is a variation of the Hebrew word Hallelujah or Halleluyah
- The English meaning of "Alleluia" is Praise the Lord!

The book of the Bible containing this word the most number of times is Psalms. If in the Psalms the word Hallelujah has been translated as "Praise the Lord" then the answer is "Revelation."

A. How long does the praise of God last? Day and night/continually/eternally.

How then can our adoration more deeply engage: *this is open for discussion!*

Heart? (hint: Psalm 9:1)

Will? (hint: 1 Chron. 28:9a)

Mind? (hint: Col. 3:2)

Body? (God bless! Don't get derailed too long by the "clapping in church" issue!)

III. In light of our studies, answer this: **So what** does John 20:21-22 have to do with the Benediction and *breathing with the Word*? A few ideas: God draws near and invites response; God *breathes* peace on us; being breathed on was a foretaste of the Spirit Christ sent at Pentecost; Christ always sends us out with *His* peace which transcends understanding; more fully understanding this passage helps us experience more fully God's blessing on us.

December 2006. Dr. Borecki is an adjunct professor of worship, Concordia University, Portland and an LCMS Theological Educators visiting professor of liturgy and worship to Asia. Accompanying Participant's Guide is also available from the Center for U.S. Missions.