



LEADER'S GUIDE
Serve the Lord with Gladness!
Come into His Courts with Thanksgiving!

Color Code: black = study text; blue = Scripture references; red = answers; green = leader notes

In the quiet times with God, we can seek His face and know what gives us joy. When we rejoice, however, what a sound there can be! For those attending LWML's 75th Anniversary at the national convention in Albuquerque, that thanksgiving celebration was anything but quiet. What praising there was with cow bells, whistles, singing, clapping — all kinds of joyful noises!

Opening Rejoice! Give thanks! Pray **Psalm 100** together (or have several Bible translations read aloud).

Psalm 100 (ESV) A Psalm for giving thanks.

100 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

² Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

³ Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Verse 1 How do you come before God with a *joyful noise*? _____

Verses 1 and 2 are our call to worship — not just on Sunday morning but with our lives. Answers will vary.

Verse 2 During the weeks before, during, and after convention, I was blessed to enter His courts wherever I went:

- in prayer for dear ones dealing with cancer and injury.
- at convention in prayer, Bible study, and celebration.
- touring the beauty of the Southwest's deserts, mountains, and canyons from hot air balloon, cable car, auto, and bus.
- with my mother, in a body riddled with osteoporosis and with memory much depleted, but still celebrating her 95th year of life.

List several reasons you praise God. **Answers will vary. Possible: Baptism, Holy Communion**

Optional Additional Questions:

Are your celebrations and your praises different at times? How? Why?

Optional Additional Verses:

Exodus 12:14 “This day shall be for you a **memorial day**, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; **throughout your generations**, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

17 And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, **throughout your generations**, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

Nehemiah 8:12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

18 And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he **read from the Book of the Law of God**. They **kept the feast** seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

Esther 9:28a that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, in every clan, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants.

Psalms 2:11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Psalms 145:7 They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

Isaiah 30:29 You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel.

One translation says *Serve the Lord with Gladness!* while another says *Worship the Lord with gladness!* In what ways is worship different than service? **Answers will vary.**

Is all your service joyful? _____ How can it be more so? _____ **Answers will vary.**

If you have ever had the opportunity to face the congregation during worship, what did you see? **Answers will vary. (Often the faces aren't joyful!)**

Suggestion for the participants: *Let your pastor see your joy during worship.*

What can increase your joy in worship? **Answers will vary, but may include:**

Focusing on the liturgy or hymns as they are sung — even if you aren't a singer

Relishing the quiet times in the service and basking in God's love.

Helping with the service (choir, ushering, helping a young mother or an elderly person.)

Letting God speak through church adornments (banners, Bible verses on walls, stained glass windows)

Readily and quickly forgiving if someone bothers or interrupts your worship

How can your service be your worship? See **Romans 12:1**. _____

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, **which is your spiritual worship.**

See also: Deut. 6: 12–14 then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you;

Deut. 10:11–13 And the LORD said to me, 'Arise, go on your journey at the head of the people, so that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.' "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all

your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?

Joshua 24:14 and 15, 17, 18b, 24–26a, 31 (especially verse 15) Now therefore **fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness**. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, **choose this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. **But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**” ... for it is **the LORD** our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and **who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us** in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed. Therefore **we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.**” And the people said to Joshua, **“The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.”** So Joshua **made a covenant** with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. And Joshua **wrote these words** in the Book of the Law of God. **Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua**, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the LORD did for Israel. **Psalm 29:2** Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor (beauty) of holiness.

Definitions you may find helpful:*

SERVE perform duties or services for (another person or an organization): "Malcolm has served the church very faithfully." Synonyms: work for, be in the service of, be employed by, obey, be of service to, be of use to, help, assist, aid, make a contribution to, do one's bit for, do something for, benefit, be a member of, work on, be on, sit on, have a place on

Spend (a period) in office, in an apprenticeship, or in prison. Synonyms: carry out, perform, do, fulfill, complete, discharge

SERVICE the action of helping or doing work for someone: "Millions are involved in voluntary service."

Synonyms: favor, kindness, good turn, helping hand, assistance, help, aid, offices, ministrations▪ employment as a servant

A ceremony of religious worship according to a prescribed form; the prescribed form for such a ceremony: "a funeral service"

Synonyms: ceremony, ritual, rite, observance, liturgy, ... sacrament, ordinance

WORSHIP the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity: "Worship God."

Synonyms: reverence, veneration, adoration, glorification, glory, exaltation, devotion, praise, thanksgiving, homage, honor, magnification **How we live our lives is our worship.**

Honor given to someone in recognition of their merit

The acts or rites that make up a formal expression of reverence for a deity; a religious ceremony or ceremonies: "The church was opened for public worship."

Synonyms: service, religious rite, prayer, praise, devotion, religious observance show reverence and adoration for (a deity); honor with religious rites: "The Maya built jungle pyramids to worship their gods."

Synonyms: revere, reverence, venerate, pay homage to, honor, adore, praise, pray to, glorify, exalt, extol, hold dear, cherish, treasure, esteem, adulate, idolize, deify, hero-worship, lionize, overpraise, follow, look up to, put on a pedestal, laud, magnify

Take part in a religious ceremony: "He went to the cathedral because he chose to worship in a spiritually inspiring building."

Verse 3 What is my responsibility in knowing that the LORD is God? _____

The Psalmist says that to worship God, to revere Him, to call Him holy, to thank Him for what we have, we need to know who God is, what God has done for us, and what He does in our lives. We need to know the Word. God gave us life, not some accident of nature. We are His sheep, and He gives us what we need for this day — for each day.

Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture

Knowing the Lord is God is our reason for:

Nehemiah 8:10b _____ and _____ **Joy/strength**

Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Psalms 139:13–16 _____ and _____ **Created me/knows me intimately**

¹³ For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Proverbs 9:10 _____ and _____ **Wisdom/knowledge**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Proverbs 15:33 _____ and _____ **Instruction/humility**

The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Jeremiah 29:11–14 _____ and _____ **Hope/future/audience with God/in God's plans**

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Romans 1:16–17 _____ and _____ **Salvation/faith**

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.

Romans 8:14–17 _____ and _____ **Part of God's family/heirs/Spirit**

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Ephesians 2:8–9 _____ which is a _____ **Grace/ gift**

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:19 _____ and _____ **Fellow citizens of His kingdom/members of God's household**
So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God

I John 4:16–20 _____ and _____ **Confidence/love**
¹⁶So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Participants may want to add reasons/passages of their own. Examples:

Exodus 6:7a I will take you to **be my people** and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God ...

Psalms 35:1–6 Praise the LORD! Praise the name of the LORD, give praise, O servants of the LORD, ² who stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God!

³ Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant!

⁴For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his own possession.

⁵For I know that the LORD is great, and that our LORD is above all gods.

⁶Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.

Psalms 77: 11–15

I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old.

¹² I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.

¹³ Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?

¹⁴ You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples.

¹⁵ You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph.

Micah 6:6–8 ⁶“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” ⁸ He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Verses 4–5 Certainly we enter our worship in our congregations with praise. What attitude characterizes God's people who come before Him in any place? _____

⁴ **Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!**

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

⁵ **For the LORD is good;**

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

Joyful, worshipful, servant-heart, humble, knowledgeable (about God), thankful, worshipful, steadfastness, love — we should imitate God.

Ephesians 5:1–2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Be thankful and say so.

Psalm 107:1–2 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! ² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble ...

The *ESV* translation of Psalm 100 subtitles it “A song for giving thanks.” Should thankfulness only be a public event? _____

Answers will vary. (Have participants look at their reasons to Praise under verse 2 and answer. Time will be limited, so ask for volunteers to share one choice.)

My examples from above:

Prayer for others — private and public

Convention — with others

The Southwest — personal joy, but knowing others have experienced it, too

Celebration — with family and friends

Does private thankfulness limit joy? _____

Not necessarily, but public thankfulness can increase knowledge, joy, and praise in others.

Read **Psalm 103:1–2**. God is the giver of all blessings. How can *I/we* Bless God’s Name? _____

Be thankful and let others know!

Be Joyful. Joy is infectious — and it’s fun! It makes the heart and soul merry.

I recently heard about the green pastures of desert lands. The lesson had even greater meaning when I saw desert pasture for myself. When watered, there’s a green hue over the browns and grays, with tufts of grass sprouting up here and there. The speaker said this is God’s green pastures — not belly-deep, grassy fields where sheep can get sick by overeating. His green hue and refreshing tufts provide just enough for each day and give us sustenance for the difficult times. What a blessing!

How do I praise during the challenges of life? Answers will vary. Possible: If we are in God’s peace, praise will be the same. If we are content in all circumstances, praise will still abound.

As a *Lutheran woman in mission*, how can I put my faith into action with these verses? Thank Him, praise Him, bless His name, tell of His faithfulness, share His love with future generations.

Closing Psalm 100 is called *jubilare* in Latin [O, be joyful]. It is also called a “doxology” (liturgical praise*). Joyfully praise the Lord by singing praying the “Doxology” (*LSB* #461; *LW* #805; *TLH* #644) or “Serve the Lord with Gladness” (<http://www.lwml.org/the-league-pledge-and-songs>).

DOXOLOGY a usually liturgical expression of praise to God*

*Definitions are taken from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary. Bible references are *ESV*.