

Big Idea: Worship is more than just music.

Primary Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

Supporting Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:31, John 4:23-24

CAPTURE (Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?)

- Have you ever learned something that just seemed too impossible to be true, such as:
 - Your body will produce over 6,000 gallons of saliva over the course of your lifetime.
 - A single cloud can contain over 1,000,000 pounds of water.
 - You share a birthday with over 20,000,000 people.
- This isn't going to change how you live, but have you ever heard something that was not only nearly impossible to believe but also caused you to change almost everything about how you lived your life?
- That's exactly what happened to a seventh-grader named Zach Hunter.
- Zach was in seventh grade when he started learning about heroes like Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Rosa Parks, people who stood up against injustice and risked everything for freedom and equality, literally changing the world.
- Zach himself said, *"If I had lived back then, I would've fought for equality, too."*
- That's when his mom told him **slavery still exists today**.
- Zach started researching and discovered there are still an estimated 27 million people around the world trapped in modern-day slavery
- At just 12 years old, he launched a movement called *Loose Change to Loosen Chains*.
- It was completely student-led, and it quickly spread across the country.
- He partnered with the International Justice Mission to raise money and awareness to end slavery.
- At 15, he even published a book called *Be the Change*.
- Zach said, *"Anybody can make a difference and be a voice for the voiceless."*

- What Zach started was absolutely incredible, but did you know that what Zach did was also worship?
- You see, worship isn't just music. Worship is living your life in a way that honors God. It's how you treat people, how you serve others, and how you fight for what's right. Worship is way bigger than we sometimes realize.
- We're in week three of our ***Into the Deep End*** series, where we're learning how to deepen our relationship with Jesus.
- So far, we've talked about **prayer** and **Scripture**. And today, we're talking about something just as important: **worship**.
- We're talking about worship that goes beyond Sunday morning or Wednesday night and shows up in every area of your life.
- If we want to experience the fullness of God's love, we may need to completely rethink how we picture worship in the first place.

SCRIPTURE (What does God's Word say?)

- If worship really is more than just music, where do we get that idea?

¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2 – NLT)

- Paul is **pleading** with us, saying, *"If you really understand what God's done for you, if you've experienced His love, His mercy, His grace... then the only response that makes sense is to give your whole life back to Him."*
- He frames his plea through a powerful image: **a living sacrifice**.
- In the Old Testament, worship involved **literal** sacrifices.
- They offered animals to God as a symbol of devotion and repentance.
- It was a way to show God that we value our relationship with Him more than we value our own possessions.
- In just two verses, Paul flips the script on centuries of religious tradition. He challenges the Roman church—and us—to move

beyond the old system of animal sacrifices and, instead, offer **our own lives** as a living sacrifice to God.

- Paul redefines what true worship looks like. It's not just singing a few songs during a church service—it's surrendering every part of ourselves to God. That's a whole new way of thinking about worship.
- Paul says we need to let God transform the way we think—because when our thinking changes, our whole lives start to change. We begin to see the world—and our purpose—through God's eyes.
- Worship isn't just music. It's surrender. It's transformation. It's choosing God's way over the world's way.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)

1. Worship is a lifestyle.

- Worship is a decision we make every single day.
- Paul said to offer our whole lives to God.
- That means worship shows up in school, in sports, in our friendships, in how we treat people, and even in the choices we make when no one's watching.

² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
(Romans 12:2 – NLT)

- When we let God change the way we think, we stop chasing things the world says matter—things like popularity, success, and comfort.
- And as we stop focusing on those things, what we want starts to line up with what God already wants for our lives.

³¹ So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
(1 Corinthians 10:31 - NLT)

2. Worship is about the heart.

- Worship isn't about what you do as much as *why you do it*.
- Worship isn't a performance. It's a posture of the heart.

²³ But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24 – NLT)

- God is looking for people whose hearts are authentic and who worship in spirit and truth.
- We worship because of who God is because God is worthy of worship, no matter how *we feel* at the moment.
- God is literally awesome. Throughout Scripture, when people encountered God's presence—whether it was Moses at the burning bush, Isaiah in the temple, or the disciples seeing the risen Jesus—their first response was often to fall down in worship.
- A heart of worship is not forced, it's not performative. It's a response that flows from truly seeing God for who He is.

3. Worship is a habit.

- Worship is something you build into your life through consistent practice.
- When you build daily habits of worship—whether that's listening to music that reminds you of God's goodness, taking time to thank Him for specific things, or choosing to do ordinary tasks with a heart focused on Him—you start to become more aware of His presence throughout your day.
- The habit of worship doesn't just change what you do—it changes who you are.
- When worship becomes a habit, you discover that God has been there all along, waiting for you to notice.
- Worship becomes who you are—not just what you do.

ACTION (How could we live this out?)

1. Worship with and without music.

- This week, choose to experience **both** sides of worship.
- First, create a short playlist of 3-5 songs that help you focus on God.
- Set aside time this week to really listen—not just as background music while you do homework, but as focused time with God. Let the lyrics guide your thoughts and prayers.

- Then pick one ordinary thing you already do—schoolwork, chores, how you treat your family, even eating—and decide to do it as an act of worship.
- One way to help break through that awkwardness would be to simply pray this prayer every time you do that thing:
- *“God, please help me see this as a reminder of how much you love me.”*
- Try to pay attention to the differences and how **both** can draw you closer to God in unique ways.

2. Practice gratitude as a form of worship.

- Each day, identify three specific things you're grateful for and take a moment to thank God for each of them.
- Write them down if that helps, or just pause and pray them. The key is being **intentional** about recognizing God's goodness in the details of your life.
- Worship isn't limited to a specific room or situation. It's in how you do school, how you speak to people, how you show up—even when no one's watching.
- Let worship be more than a moment. Let it be your mindset, your rhythm, your response. Let it be the way you follow Jesus—with your whole life.