



FREE TO BE

Children's Ministry Curriculum
and Resources about our History and Identity as
the Free Methodist Church

This curriculum is designed for Free Methodist churches to use to teach children what it means to be a Christian in the Free Methodist Church. Each lesson focuses on one aspect of our denomination's identity and history. These four lessons could be used for a 4-8 week focused time of teaching, as stand-alone lessons, or to supplement any curriculum or event. (For example, you may choose to use Lesson 2 (Free to be Equal) on Freedom Sunday.) We also tried to jam pack these lessons with lots of ideas for you to use any time throughout the year to create opportunities for your children and their families to engage in learning and serving.

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All Scriptures quoted are NIV 2011, unless otherwise noted.

THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US HONOR GOD WITH OUR WHOLE LIVES.

Key Lesson Element: *The Stories of Phoebe Palmer & Emma Ray*

Core Scriptures: *Romans 12:1; Acts 2:1-4; Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

Suggested Lesson Plan

We have intentionally provided multiple activity options. Choose whichever you think will work best for your time, space, and students' learning styles.

Elements that we think are essential to this lesson are marked with an asterisk.

- **Choose one or two intro activity options.**
- **Read and engage children in the stories of Phoebe Palmer and Emma Ray**
- **Discuss questions as a large group or in smaller groups.**
- **Choose one or more activities.**
- **Be sure to send home take-home materials.**

Suggested Supplies

Intro Activities

- **What do these objects have in common?** *candle, Bible, communion cup/chalice, offering plate, microphone, hymn book, musical instrument, and/or other items used for worship*
- **What is worship?** *White board (or posterboard) and markers*

Stories of Phoebe Palmer & Emma Ray: Pictures available in Additional Resources folder

Bible Time: Bibles or printouts of the Bible passages

Activity Options

- **Everyday Objects:** *PowerPoint slides (or printouts big enough for the whole group to see) of people doing everyday tasks, such as gardening, doing homework, washing dishes, walking the dog, etc. (a Google image search will help you find these)*
- **Worship in Action:** *slips of paper with a location written on each (school, home, friend's house, grocery store, playground, soccer game, etc)—one for each group*
- **Worshipping in Different Ways:** *Recording of a worship song, CD player, computer, or other music device*
- **Psalms of Praise:** *paper and pens/pencils*
- **Worship Around the World:** *Device that can display YouTube videos or pictures, or printouts of pictures of worship around the world (see lesson for links to video and pictures)*

Take Home Papers and prizes for Bingo winners

FREE TO WORSHIP

Intro Activities

**Choose one or more intro activities that will engage your students*

- **What do these objects have in common?** (3 minutes)

Show kids common objects that are used for worship, such as candle, Bible, communion chalice/cups, offering plate, microphone, hymn book, musical instruments, etc. Ask the kids to tell you where these objects are all used and what these objects are used for. The goal is that eventually the kids will figure out that these items are all used for worship.

- **What is worship?** (3 minutes)

Define worship for your kids. It might be helpful to write the following definition on a whiteboard, chalkboard, or poster and then discuss what worship is and what worship is not.

- Worship: Speaking and living in a way that expresses to God that we love him and that there is no one else like him.
- What worship is NOT... a spectator sport, being entertained, trying to impress or be better than others

***The Story of Phoebe Palmer** (5-10 minutes)

Read: When B.T. Roberts was a pastor, he served in some churches where people cared more about impressing others than about worshipping God. Some churches had fancy organs, formal worship, and (as we learned last lesson), they even let people pay money to have the best seats in church. These people should have cared about loving God and loving others, but they got distracted. They cared about things that didn't matter--they wanted to look and sound good. They forgot that worship was about honoring God, not about making themselves feel important. This is one of the reasons why "Free" Methodists were called Free. They wanted people to be free (so they were against slavery). They also wanted worship to be free. People shouldn't have to pay to worship. And they also should be free to worship God as themselves--without needing fancy instruments or clothes or music to make themselves feel important. And they should be free to let the Holy Spirit guide them in worship. Rather than following strict rules or doing what people expected of them, people should be free to listen to God's spirit speaking to them when they worshipped, and then letting God's spirit change them to make them more like Jesus.

One person that helped B.T. Roberts understand true worship was a woman named Phoebe Palmer. Phoebe was a friend of Ellen and B.T. Roberts, and she and her husband Walter were both church leaders. One night B.T. went to a camp meeting and heard Phoebe Palmer preaching. While Phoebe was preaching, B.T. Roberts felt that two paths were being laid out before him. He could choose the path that meant he would be popular and that people would give him lots of praise and applause. Or he could take the hard path--where he spoke the whole truth about Jesus. On that night B.T. Roberts gave himself fully to the Lord. This meant he would follow Jesus with his whole life--no holding back. Phoebe Palmer understood that worshipping God wasn't just something you did in church on Sunday; it was something you did with your thoughts, your beliefs, and your actions. Phoebe and her husband Walter helped B.T. and Ellen see that true worship meant showing love to God, to the poor, to their neighbors, and even to their enemy.

One thing that we believe as Free Methodists is that when we worship God, when we honor him with our lives, God works in us and changes us to make us more like Jesus--this is a process that lasts our entire life. (We call this sanctification--becoming more like Jesus!) This is why worship isn't just something we do in church. It's something we do everywhere, every day. It's about honoring God with our whole life.

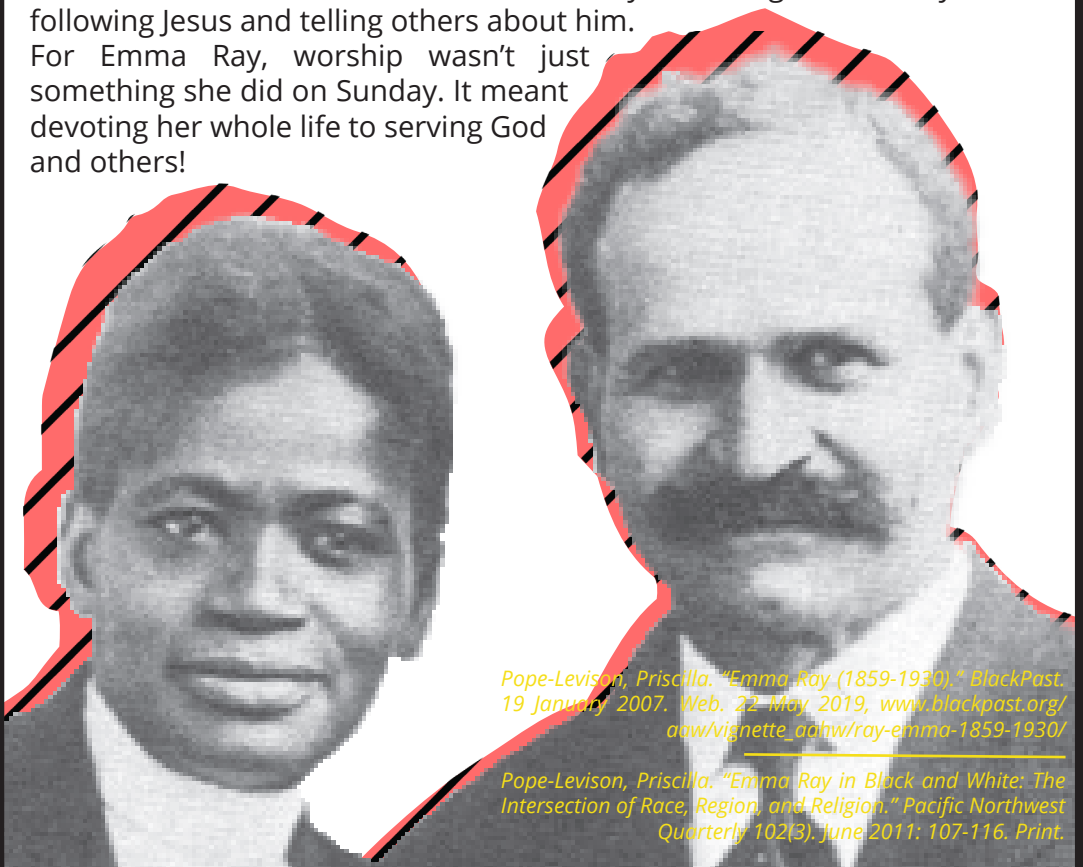
(Source: *The Roberts and Phoebe Palmer.* "Free Methodist Feminist. 1 January 2012. Web. 22 May 2019, freemethodistfeminist.com/2012/01/01/the-roberts-and-phoebe-palmer)

The Story of Emma Ray (5-10 minutes)

Read: Emma Ray was born as a slave in Springfield, Missouri in 1859. As an adult, she and her husband L.P. worked with the poor and homeless in the Seattle slums for almost thirty years. Emma led a chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and she and her group visited the local jail on Sunday afternoons to hold church services. Emma and her husband also ministered for a couple years in Kansas City. There they ran a mission for children living in poverty. They taught the kids Sunday School, offered them a warm place to gather in the winter, and gave them clothes and meals.

As older adults, Emma and L.P. joined the Free Methodist church and became Conference Evangelists. One thing that drew them to the Free Methodist Church was the Free Methodist teaching that the good news of Jesus should be preached first to the poor, not to the rich. Emma and L.P. preached revival meetings in churches throughout Washington state. Emma even wrote a book about her life called *"Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed"* in 1926.

Emma Ray lived in a time when it was really hard to be an African American and a woman. But she didn't let any obstacle get in the way of following Jesus and telling others about him. For Emma Ray, worship wasn't just something she did on Sunday. It meant devoting her whole life to serving God and others!



Pope-Levison, Priscilla. "Emma Ray (1859-1930)." *BlackPast*. 19 January 2007. Web. 22 May 2019, www.blackpast.org/apw/vignette_apw/ray-emma-1859-1930/

Pope-Levison, Priscilla. "Emma Ray in Black and White: The Intersection of Race, Region, and Religion." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 102(3). June 2011: 107-116. Print.

FREE TO WORSHIP

Bible Time (15-20 minutes)

As a large group, or divided into small groups, look up the following passages and discuss the related questions.

- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9** How should we love the Lord? Why should we love the Lord?
- **Acts 2:1-4** Who comes to the Church on the day of Pentecost? How does the Holy Spirit help us worship God?
- **Romans 12:1** How can we worship God with our bodies?

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

*Discussion Questions (5-10 minutes)

As a large group or in your small groups, discuss these questions after reading one or both stories.

1. How does our church make people feel welcome to worship? Are there things we can do better to make all people welcome when they come to our church to worship?
2. What is your favorite way to worship God? How do you feel close to God? *Optional: Ask adult leaders ahead of time of different examples of ways they feel close to God to show kids there are different ways to worship, such as going out into nature, painting, singing, writing in a prayer journals, serving other people, etc.*
3. Are some ways of worshipping God better than others? Why or why not?
4. Define worship.
5. Define sanctification.

Activity Options

Choose one or more activities to engage your students.

• Everyday Objects (5-7 minutes)

Choose one person to face the group with their back to a screen (or someone holding pictures). Flash pictures up on the screen one at a time with people doing everyday tasks (e.g. gardening, doing homework, washing dishes, walking the dog, etc.) For each picture the group of kids has to mime the action in the picture. The person with their back to the screen has to guess the activity. After the game is over, have the kids discuss how these activities can be acts of worship.

• Worship in Action (20 minutes)

Divide the kids into pairs or small groups. Give each group a piece of paper with a location on it (school, home, friend's house, grocery store, the playground, soccer game). Have each group brainstorm different ways they can worship God in that place/situation and share with the group. Have them act it out as a skit, or act it out as a charades-style game for the other kids to guess what they are doing. [small group/whole group activity, 15-20 min]

FREE TO WORSHIP

- **Worshipping in Different Ways** (5-10 minutes)

Demonstrate for kids that different people worship God differently--each of us is unique and we have different ways of loving God and of praising him. Sing a worship song that your kids know well, such as "O Happy Day," "How Great Is Our God," "10,000 Reasons," "Cornerstone," "Trading My Sorrows," or "In Christ Alone." Try something new for each verse (or alternate between verse and chorus). For example, during the first verse you might encourage everyone to worship by kneeling. Then, during the second verse, have everyone worship by dancing. During the third verse, worship by raising their hands. Finally, during the fourth verse, or perhaps during each chorus, worship freestyle.

- **Psalms of Praise** (5-10 minutes)

Let the kids write their own Psalms individually, or in pairs. Have the kids write five things (or more, if you have time) that God has done for them. Or, have kids write down words that describe who God is. Then have them fill in a template with "His love endures forever" after each of their written lines. **See example.**

- **Worship around the World** (5-10 minutes)

Show videos or pictures of worship around the world. This will help kids understand that worship can look and feel and sound different than what they are used to, and that's okay!

- Show The Worship Project from Worldrace (See Additional Resources folder)
- Check out Photos of worship and praise around the world (See Additional Resources folder)

Example

God helps me when I am scared.

His love endures forever.

God made me feel better when I was sick.

His love endures forever.

Jesus died for me.

His love endures forever

God is forgiving.

His love endures forever.

God was with me when my Grandma died.

His love endures forever.

Additional Resources

- **How Great is our God (World Edition) [feat. Chris Tomlin]**
Search for “How Great is our God (World Edition)” on YouTube and show the video. This video features the contemporary classic “How Great is our God” sung in different languages by various artists. It also includes pictures and videos from around the world.
- **More about Phoebe Palmer**
 - Reuther, Rosemary Radford and Rosemary Skinner Keller, *Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century*. San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1981.
 - White, Charles Edward. *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian* (Zondervan/Francis Asbury Press, 1986).

Event Ideas

Engage your entire church family or community through one or more of these ideas.

- **Learn and perform a worship song in another language** for your church congregation. This could be a great addition to a worship service focusing on world missions.
- **Have a Children’s Sunday.** Have kids get plugged in to help lead worship by reading or reciting Scripture, singing, playing instruments as part of a worship team or for special music, greeting, serving as ushers for offering/communion, etc.
- **Hold a Worship Walk or Worship/Prayer Stations.** Set up different stations where kids and their families can worship God in different ways, such as painting, coloring, praising God through music/song, a nature walk, journaling, Scripture reading, etc. You can find lots of ideas for creative prayer or worship themed stations online.
- **Host a Secret Service Event.** Give families or groups super secret service missions to complete or have them find create their own missions to anonymously bless others. End the event with a meal and share what it was like to serve and bless others for God’s glory alone and not your own.

FREE TO WORSHIP

Discussion Questions from today's lesson

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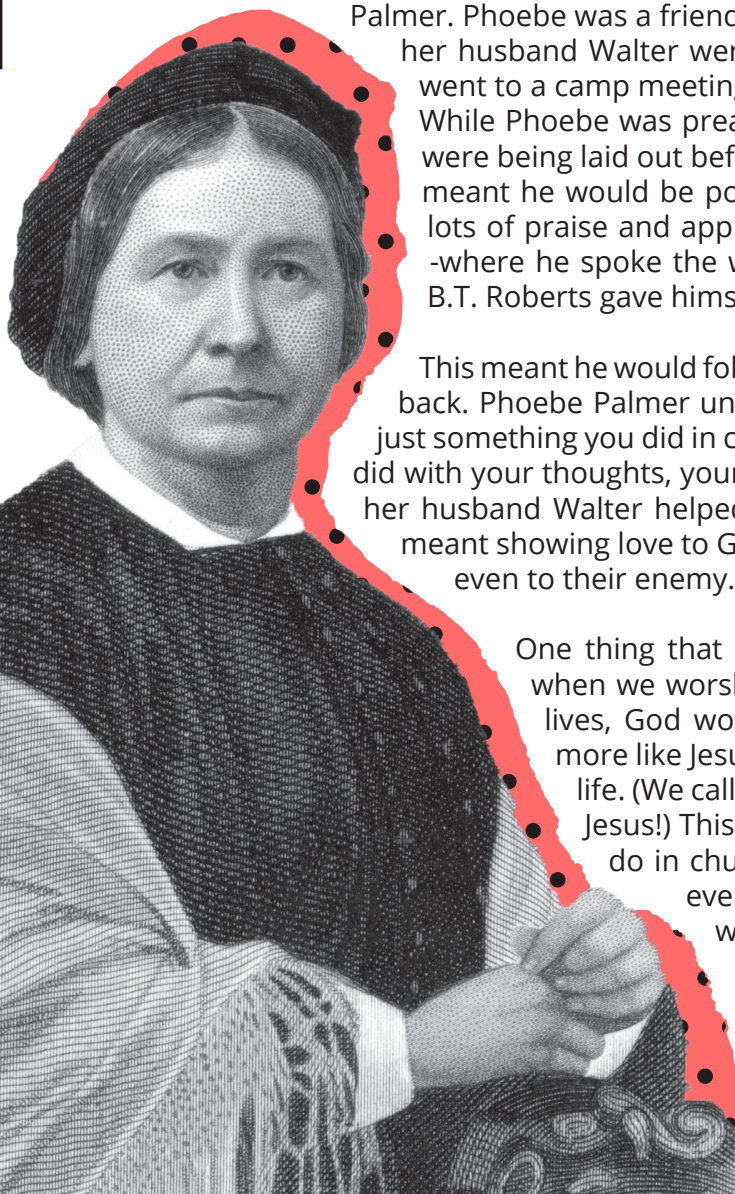
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Take it Home



FREE TO WORSHIP

Find people from your church who worship God by serving in different ways. Once you have found someone who serves in that way, have them initial or write their name in that space. You must get 4 in a row to get a Bingo!

Family Worship!

Choose a new way for your family to worship this week!

- Create a banner with a favorite psalm and decorate it with pictures and written praises.
- Go for a nature hike and share praises of what you see, hear, and feel.
- Share around the dinner table what God is teaching you.
- Turn up the music and have a family praise jam session!

BINGO

Worships God by playing an instrument or singing _____	Worships God by cleaning the church building _____	Worships God by taking care of babies or toddlers _____	Worships God by preaching _____
Worships God by fixing things in the building when they are broken _____	Worships God by keeping track of church money _____	Worships God by mowing the lawn or shoveling snow _____	Worships God by running the sound system _____
Worships God by visiting people who are sick _____	Worships God by serving communion _____	Worships God by praying for people _____	Worships God by helping in the church office _____
Worships God by helping with kids or teen ministries _____	Worships God by decorating the church (and keeping it beautiful) _____	Worships God by teaching _____	Worships God by cooking for church meals _____

Bring your completed sheet back to your children's ministry leader to get a prize.