

Illustration: **What is Worship**
YOU WILL NEED: A volunteer.

What Is Worship?

ASK • How would you define worship?

At this point just listen to the student's answers without any commentary of right or wrong. Prod for a deeper answer. For example, if a student says, "Worship is serving God." Ask, "In what ways?" or "How is that worship?"

Ask for a volunteer to help you illustrate what worship means.

SAY: The most frequently used word for "worship" in the New Testament paints a picture for us of what worship really means. In the ancient Persian culture, if (your volunteer's name) and I had equal status, when we met, we would kiss on the lips. (Turn to your volunteer and SAY:) But don't worry. I'm not going to do that.

If (talking to your volunteer) you were my superior, however, I would kiss you on the cheek. But I'm not going to do that either!

If you were someone of great prominence such as a general or an emperor, I wouldn't kiss you on the lips or the cheek, but instead I would do this. Begin to blow kisses as you bow down and continue blowing kisses until your head touches at his/her feet.

SAY: The word for this last picture is the one the Bible uses most often for "worship". It literally means "to turn to kiss." ¹

ASK • Have you ever had to kiss someone you didn't want to? Perhaps, it's Aunt Gertrude who always pinches your cheeks, and every time you leave her house, she asks for a kiss. Worst of all, you have to give it to her because everyone is staring at you. Why would you dread this? Obviously, because your heart isn't in it. Or, perhaps you don't have affection for that person.

SAY: This is how many people treat worshipping God. Instead of something they *get* to do, it's something they *have* to do.

LEADERS NOTES:

Here's some more thoughts and information on the discussion above:

The Greek word *proskuneo* (translated "worship") means "towards to kiss" or to "adore"... "Literally, to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage. The ancient Oriental (especially Persian) mode of salutation between persons

of equal rank was to kiss each other on the lips; when the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek; when one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees and touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, throwing kisses at the same time towards the superior. It is this later mode of salutation that Greek writers express by *proskuneo*.”¹ This is the heart of worship, an in-love relationship with Jesus Christ where you long to bow before Him, to turn “to kiss” Him.

Christianity is not a religion. “Religion” comes from a Latin word meaning “back to bondage” because religion tries to squeeze your life into a rule book. Christianity is a relationship where the “rule book” Himself comes to live His life in and through you. Are you letting Jesus live through you? When was the last time you “turned to kiss” the Lord Jesus? Are you in love with Jesus Christ? How does this “in love” relationship come out in the way you live?

Our word “worship” comes from an Old Anglo-Saxon word, “worthship,” because when you worship, you are giving someone their worth. What “worth” do you give Christ daily? Live a life that blows Him a kiss.

¹Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D., ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, Iowa Falls, Iowa: Word Bible Publishers, Inc, pp. 1233-4.)