

Jared Kennedy

Illustrated by  
Trish Mahoney



GOD MADE ME  
FOR



WORSHIP



Helping Children Understand Church


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“Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Ephesians 5:18-20**

## Dear Parent or Caregiver,

I wrote this book to give you a way to introduce your children to public worship. When you think of explaining a worship service, you might say something like this: “First, we sing. Then, we listen to the sermon.” But most worship gatherings involve more than music and preaching. When the church gathers, we follow a rhythm—or liturgy—of *call* and *response*. It’s like a big game of follow the leader. We hear God speak and then we move in response to him.

Maybe you’ve noticed this rhythmic back and forth in your own church’s gatherings. First, you hear God’s Word call to you—perhaps in what we describe literally as the “call to worship”—but then also in words of blessing or assurance and finally in the sermon’s words of instruction. Then, after you hear from God’s Word, you respond by lifting your voice in song, greeting others, giving, or by shouting, “Amen!”

We repeat this back and forth every week when we come to church, just as Christians have for hundreds of years. During the Reformation, John Calvin saw a need to help the church rehearse gospel rhythms when it gathered for worship.<sup>1</sup> His liturgy followed three movements:

- **Adoration**—Drawn from Isaiah 6, this rhythm reveals God as holy and calls upon sinners to respond with a cry for mercy.
- **Renewal**—Rooted in the burning bush story of Exodus 3, this rhythm begins with reading and teaching God’s Word then calls for a response of reverence and humility.
- **Commitment**—This rhythm, based in Luke 24, involves seeing Christ’s glory and participating in it as we gather around the table for communion.

*God Made Me for Worship* walks kids through each of these rhythms. My goal is that they’ll see and learn how *all the parts of worship work together to tell the gospel story*. The words we use to describe the parts of worship and the particular orders of worship we follow differ from church to church. But a wide variety of traditions view gathered worship as a weekly rehearsal of the good news. And that’s my prayer, that the children who read this book will learn to love and enjoy their church’s regular gatherings, because in worship they hear Christ speak and then by faith respond.

With joy in Christ,  
**Jared Kennedy**

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about this history, see Timothy J. Keller, “Reformed Worship in the Global City,” in *Worship by the Book*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 193–239, and Mike Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church’s Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2013), 117–50.

Mrs. Jackson walked the fourth graders to the front of the sanctuary after their class. Pastor Barnabas was waiting there for them.

“You can ask your question now, Alice,” said Mrs. Jackson.



Alice stepped forward, and her face lit up.

**“I love going to church!”** she said,  
**“but sometimes it’s confusing.”**

Alice’s classmates nodded.

“First, we stand. Then, we sit.  
One minute we’re singing loudly.  
The next minute, we have to be still and quiet.  
*Shhhhhh! No talking.*

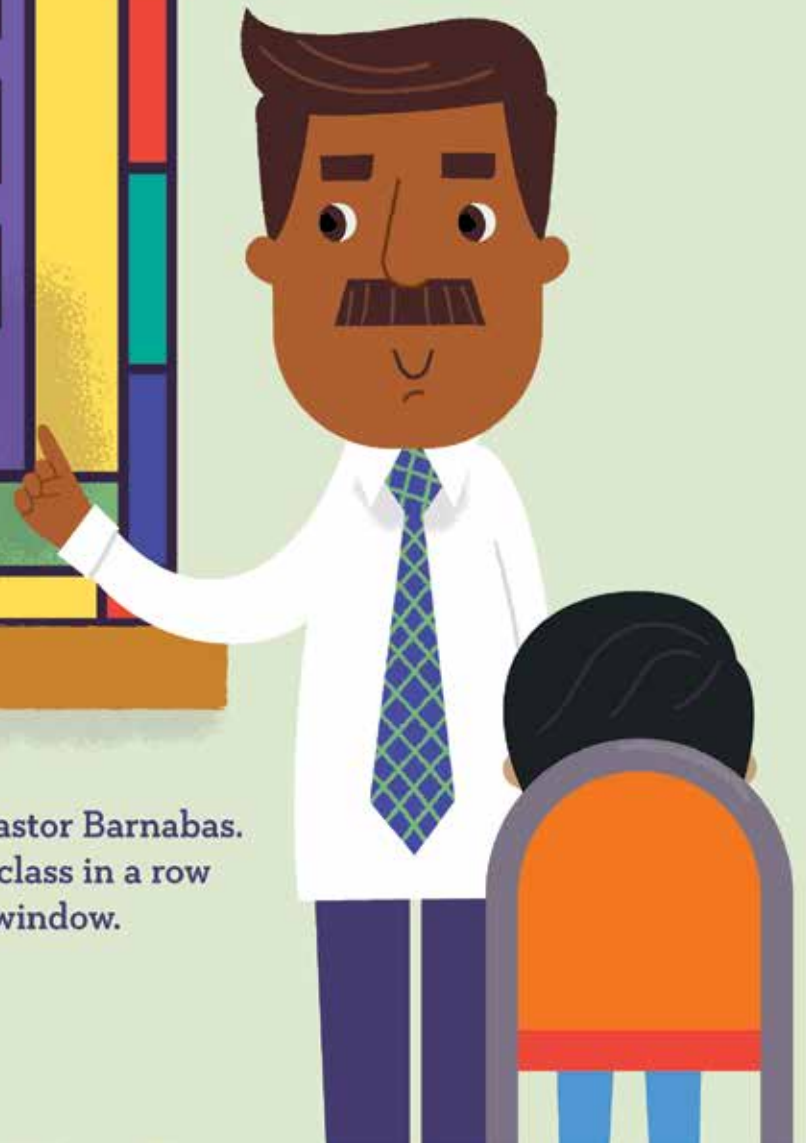
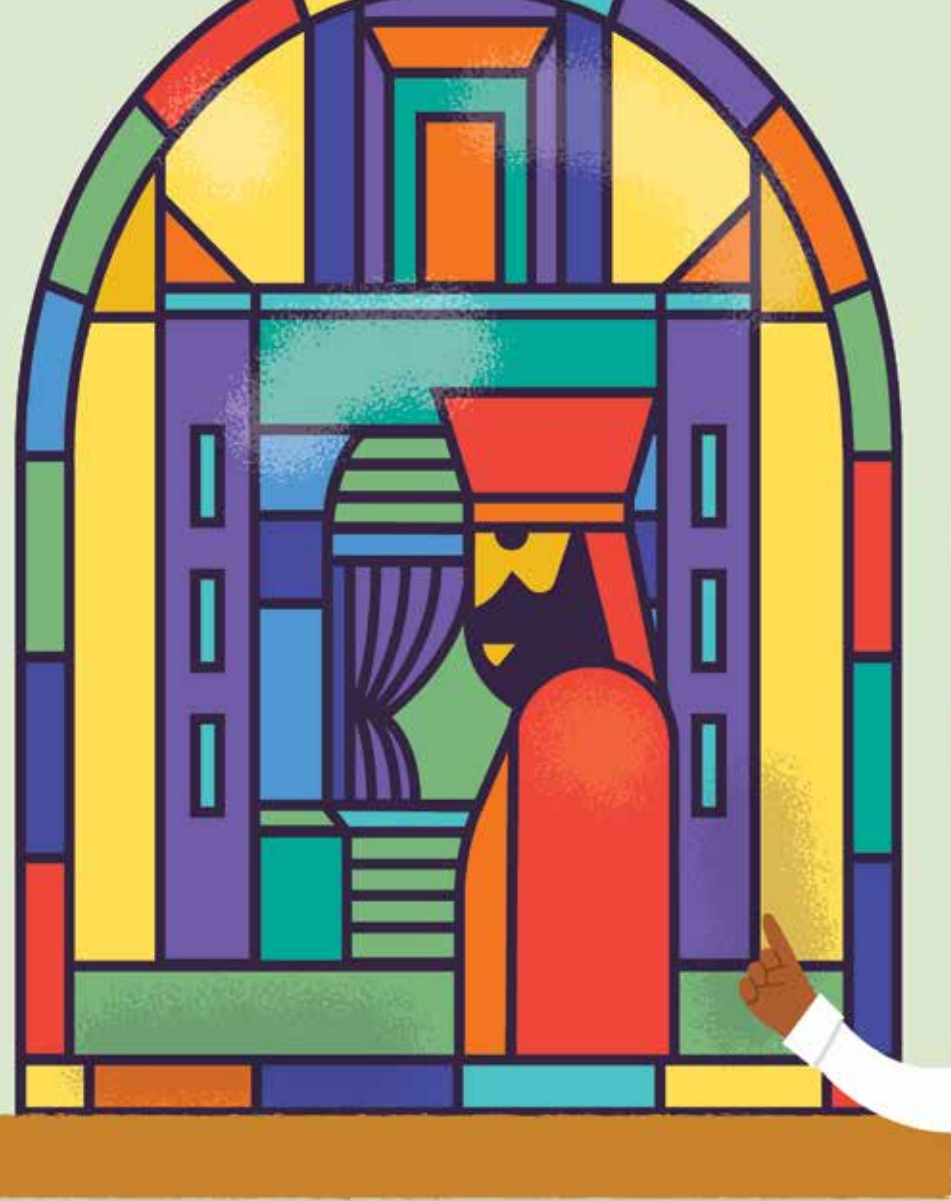
Then, all at once, everyone stands,  
shakes hands, and talks to other people again.

Here’s my question.

**Why are there so many  
different parts to a church service?”**

“And why does it have to be so long?” asked Henry.  
Mrs. Jackson looked embarrassed,  
but Pastor Barnabas just smiled and laughed.





“That’s a great question, Alice,” said Pastor Barnabas. Then he sat down with Mrs. Jackson’s class in a row of chairs next to the big stained-glass window.

You can read  
about what  
Isaiah saw in  
Isaiah 6.

## **“All the parts of worship tell the gospel story.**

It might seem long, but when you understand it,  
it’s the best story ever told. Let me tell you about it:

In the Bible, there’s a story about a prophet named Isaiah who lived a long  
time before Jesus was born. A prophet is someone who heard God’s words  
and told them to the people.

Isaiah was sad because a good king, King Uzziah, had died. So Isaiah went  
up to the temple to pray and worship God. When Isaiah was in the temple,  
something amazing happened. He saw the Lord!”

