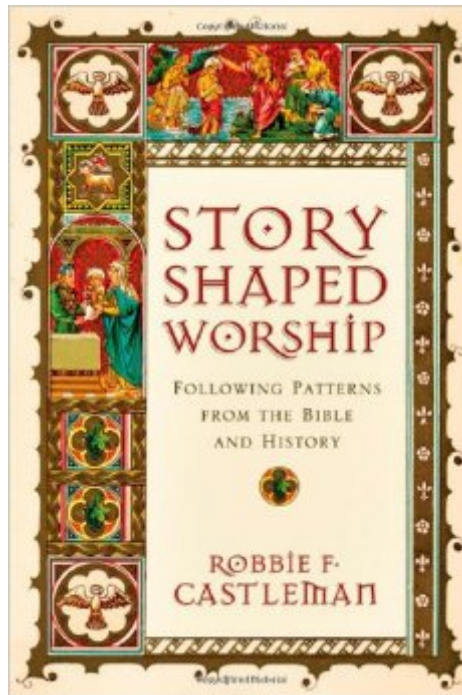


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# Story-Shaped Worship: Following Patterns From The Bible And History



## Synopsis

What is the right way to worship? Right worship does not require a return to the identical forms found in the early church or later in Rome or after that in Westminster. What it calls for is a faithful response today to the God of our salvation in light of those biblically ordered and historically informed patterns. In this study Robbie Castleman uncovers the fundamental shape of worship. What she finds—outlined in Scripture, enacted in Israel, refocused in the New Testament community, guarded by the apostolic fathers, and recovered in the Reformation—is a grand narrative of redemption offering order and meaning to all worshiping communities down to the present day.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Who doesn't love a good story? And we got one! Greatest story ever told! But how does the Bible's story 'shape' our worship? This is a question I am deeply invested in and I am grateful for *Story Shaped Worship: Following Patterns from the Bible and History* for exploring the biblical story with an eye for what it tells us about how we worship God. I have reviewed Castleman's previous volume, *Parenting in the Pew* and found it helpful. In that book, Castleman has her 'parent' hat on as she talks about how children are formed in worship. In this book, she wears her scholar hat and presents a thoroughly researched look at worship in the Bible (with a couple of historical vignettes). Castleman teaches biblical studies and theology at John Brown University and has served on staff with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (my first exposure to her was at Urbana '96). Castleman

proposes a canonical-theological approach to liturgical studies. By attending to the biblical story, she is countering trends in some contemporary contexts where the worship experience has been commodified. Castleman writes: There is no question that the often historically anemic ecclesiology of some Christian congregations has often resulted in Sunday morning programs that are focused on the subjective experience of the individual rather than true worship that is mediated by and focused on the blessing of the triune God of grace. The necessity of worship as a service mediated by the Spirit, through the Son and for the Father is often lost in the pragmatism of the commodified liturgies of many services of worship. Sunday mornings too often have become storefront windows designed to attract and keep shoppers in the store in order to buy congregational programs.

In my experience, after years of sitting in the pew and now years of standing in the pulpit, many people have given little thought to the "why, wherefore, and how come" of Christian worship. If there is any gauge by which to decipher the rightness or wrongness of any worship service, it is usually a subjective, "Was I blessed" or "I really felt like it encouraged me" kind of decoder ring. That's what makes "Story-Shaped Worship" by John Brown University associate professor of biblical studies and theology, Robbie F. Castleman, an important resource. This easily readable, 224 page paperback, is primarily pitched to worship leaders and pastors who are already standing in the batter's box, but can quickly be picked up and enjoyed by a majority of Christians. As Castleman herself notes, "The purpose of this text is to help evangelicals, especially those in historically independent communities of faith, rediscover in the great story of God's salvation related in the Bible, God's design for worship that is focused on God's pleasure" (13). Instead of taking the reader through various extra-biblical formularies, systematic theologies, or liturgical handbooks, she guides her audience through the Bible. Unlike many works that hen-peck choice pieces in the Scriptures, Castleman walks through the Biblical narrative from Genesis, to Exodus, then Leviticus, and on through the New Testament.

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