

Exploring Worship and Mission

Worship in Music



A series of workshops designed to help local congregations explore different aspects of worship and their relation to mission



Aim: to explore how much can contribute to worship in the local church

Mission Thinking:



Music can move us, uplift us and allow us to express emotions.

The experience of singing together can unite us as a worshipping community, and may unite us in solidarity with different peoples, cultures and situations.

The words we sing can challenge and change us to live out God's love in the world.

Practical Matters:

Timing: Allow 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours

Leaders Preparation:

- select and familiarise yourselves with a variety of music to introduce (see section 3)
- ensure that song words are available as required
- prepare a musical stave for the final exercise (section 4)
- prepare or delegate opening and closing worship

You will need

- flipchart and marker pens
- plain paper shapes (see final exercise, section 4)
- pens and pencils, blutack
- CDs/tapes and the means of playing them (optional)
- percussion or other musical instruments (optional)

Objectives:



- 1)** to share our experiences of ways in which music is used in worship
- 2)** to learn and sing musical items of various style, origin and purpose
- 3)** to discover how musical items can inspire, involve, challenge us and increase our awareness of other cultures

Leaders

The worship leader should be able to:

- appreciate different musical styles,
- read music
- teach a vocal melody

It is not necessary to be able to play a musical instrument. However, skills in performing or accompanying can easily be put to use in the course of this workshop.

It is useful to have more than one leader. One can act as scribe while the other speaks.

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1. Welcome and introductions

(Duration 15 minutes)

Open the session with a brief act of worship.

1.1 Introduce the purpose of the workshop (see the aims and objectives)

1.2 Clarify any domestic arrangements as necessary

1.3 by saying a) their name, b) where they are from and c) by completing the following sentence in any way they wish; "for me, the music of heaven would be...." (encourage the group, if necessary, to receive all contributions with respect and to avoid discussion or comment).

1.4 When everyone has spoken, comment briefly on the range of statements about the 'music of heaven', noting the variety of musical experience which touches us deeply.

2. The Place of music in worship

(Duration 20 minutes)

2.1 Suggest that worship has the potential to bring heaven and earth closer together. Music in worship can be a vehicle for the Spirit to inspire and uplift us. Equally it can be a vehicle for us to express to God our prayers and longings and the pain and anguish of the world.

2.2 Brainstorm: Invite the group to suggest 'in what different ways is music used in worship?' Write the responses up on a flipchart.

2.3 Explore any connections that can be made with earlier statements about the 'music of heaven' and the role of music in worship, e.g. In our own church, are we likely to experience:

- Music which touches deeply?
- Music which bridges heaven and earth?

Invite additional ideas about how music could enhance our worship and add these to the list, using a different colour pen.

The following practical suggestions may emerge in discussion:

- Use of different instruments including percussion, to accompany singing
- Solo playing/ singing
- Use of recorded music
- Spoken prayer or meditation over quiet background music
- Sung responses to prayers
- Music as a vehicle for powerful words – in congregational hymns and songs
- Use of music to create atmosphere – e.g. joy, stillness, anticipation, celebration
- Use of music to introduce experience of a different culture
- Ensure variety of musical mood, key and tempo in the course of an act of worship

3. Singing our worship – putting ideas into practice

(Duration 40 minutes)

Introduce the next activity, explaining that it involves:

- 1) Singing a selection of musical worship items.
- 2) A chance to reflect on the impact that these may have upon us, in terms of worship and mission e.g.

- Does this help me to worship God?
- Does it make me more aware of or help me to respond to the world and its need?

Teach and sing some of the following. Do not be restricted by the suggested examples, but feel free to introduce a range of items of your own choice.

Try to include:

- a) At least one item from a different culture
- b) At least one item with words which bring challenge to our discipleship
- c) A range of musical styles

Key to abbreviations used:

• **CG Common Ground.**

A song book for all the churches. *Saint Andrew Press*

• **DW Drawn to the Wonder.** Hymns and Songs from Churches Worldwide. *CWM*

• **JP Junior Praise.** Marshall Pickering

• **MG Many and Great.** Songs of the World Church. *Wild Goose Publications*

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Worship in Music



3 cont. Singing our worship - putting ideas into practice

- **MP Mission Praise.** *Marshall Pickering*
- **RS Rejoice and Sing.** *Oxford University Press*
- **SP BBS Songs of Praise.** *Oxford University Press*

a) A Round

Simple melodies can become a more rewarding musical experience when sung as a round.

E.g. Jubilate Deo Taizé
Glory to God (Tallis' Canon) (MP 176; RS 416: SP 393)
Shalom my Friends (JP 217; RS 476)

b) Cantor and response

This is a good way of singing new material without need for books and with only a brief rehearsal. The congregation responds to the cantor, often repeating what has just been sung.

E.g.
Peruvian Gloria (RS 8; SP 226)
Brothers and sisters (JP 21)
Chimwemwe mwa Yesu (Zambia) (DW 49)

c) New words to a traditional tune

It is easier (with a literate congregation) to introduce new words than a new tune. Care is needed to ensure that the spirit of the words and tune are well-matched.

E.g.
Praise with joy the world's creator (DW 41)
Will you come and follow me (CG 148; RS 558)
Jesus Christ is waiting (CG 67; SP 332)

d) Chant/ prayer responses

A short melody and simple words, sung in unison or harmony. A chant may be sung repeatedly, varying the volume and intensity of singing, as an act of meditation. A prayer response is sung at intervals during the course of spoken prayer, e.g. as a response to each section of the prayer. You may like to try out both of these. If so, find a suitable prayer, with sung response, before the start of the workshop.

E.g.
Kindle a flame (RS 393)

There are many suitable examples from the Taizé community, Wild Goose Resource Group, or by Margaret Rizza (see the resource list).

e) A new song

When introducing a new song, take time to teach it well, line by line, use hand movements to indicate the rhythm and the rise and fall of the notes.

Choose a new song to teach and enjoy. Make sure that everyone has sight of the words. You may want to add simple percussion accompaniment, if appropriate.

E.g.
Enter into Jerusalem (Jamaica) (DW 23)

He came singing love (DW 1)
(or see the resource list, for sources of other material)

If time allows, listen to one or two unfamiliar songs on CD.

f) A sung Amen or a Blessing

E.g. Chinese Amen (DW 9)
Amen, Siakudumisa (CG 7, MG p 48)
(South Africa)
Now go in peace
(CG 91)
(Caribbean) (May be sung as a round)

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Worship in Music



4. Feedback

(Duration 20 minutes)

4.1 Invite comments and discussion on the examples introduced.

4.2 Remind the group of the questions suggested at the start of the session i.e.

What impact do the various songs have in terms of worship and mission?

Do they help me to worship God?

Do they make me more aware of or help me to respond to the world and its need?

In the course of discussion you may want to consider the following:

How did the different styles of singing affect the singers?

For example, in singing a round we must listen to one another and can build up a complex pattern of sound; in a cantor song we may have a sense of responding to a challenge set the leader; in a quiet song? We have the opportunity for reflection and in a sung prayer response, the sense of uniting in our prayer. Does the musical key (major or minor) and tempo affect the mood of worship?

What combinations of music and world experience were inspiring or challenging?

E.g. was it singing powerful words about the love of Jesus for those in need, or music from a different culture increasing a sense of the wider world community?

What methods/ideas or songs would work well elsewhere?

NB One or two new ideas on any occasion will sufficient challenge for most congregations!

4.3 Ask participants to identify any particular idea/thought arising from the workshop, which they would like to pursue in their local congregation.

4.4 Hand out pieces of paper in the shape of musical notes (crochets and quavers). Ask people to write their response on these, then stick them onto a musical stave, drawn onto a large piece of paper and displayed clearly.

Can you sing the result, as a closing Amen?

5. Closing Worship

(Duration 10 minutes)

Include one of the songs that has had most impact upon the group.

Use this space to write down notes: