

# Transforming Worship

## A Simple Guide to Planning and Leading Worship

### Session 1: Why Worship?

#### **Worship is a gift...**

...inspired by God and offered to him. We find our true identity in acknowledging who God is and worshipping him. At the same time all creation worships God and voices God's praise.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." (*Psalm 19.1*)

"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." (*Psalm 150. 6*)

"I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (*Psalm 34. 1*)

"Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise." (*1 Chronicles 16. 25*)

#### **Worship is a corporate activity...**

...of the whole people of God, which summons the church together and makes it visible. It is a drama in which all are players rather than part of an audience. We all have our part to play.

"God inhabits the praises of his people." (*Psalm 22. 3*)

Worship builds up the Body of Christ, nurturing individual growth and the growth of community. Worship forms, teaches and equips the whole people of God of all ages, gender and skills.

#### **Worship is a transforming experience...**

...from one degree of glory to another (*see 2 Corinthians 3. 18*). There is an expectation that we will be changed through confession, absolution, and reconciliation.

"Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." (*Matthew 4. 17*)

#### **Worship is faithful and relevant...**

...a faithful expression of the Gospel, i.e. Scripturally based, and relevant to the lives of the gathered community, connecting with intellect, senses and emotions.

"For in him we live and move and have our being." (*Acts 17. 28*)

Most acts of worship end with a form of blessing or with 'The Grace'. We are reminded that God is faithful and intends good for our lives. We are not going out from God's presence, because God goes out into the world with us. God will continue to be with us in our daily lives of Christian service Monday to Saturday. Worship both prepares for the *Missio Dei* and is part of it.

## **Worship is a Trinitarian experience**

Our worship of one God in Three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is expressed in the Creeds:

*Bidding:* This is the faith of the Church  
*Response:* This is our faith.  
We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen

*Common Worship Baptismal Creed*

Also in the intercessions, when we pray *to* the Father, *through* or *in the name* of the Son, and *by the power* of the Holy Spirit.

Worship expresses transcendence (God is far off, existing beyond space and time) and immanence (God is close at hand, living among us in the person of Jesus Christ). We praise God in terms of might, majesty, glory and power for ever and ever, but we also praise God as friend, brother, teacher and humble servant of all in the here and now.

## **Worship begins wherever we truly are**

In the Bible, worship comes out of many different starting points. Here are a few examples, although there are many others:

Worship from the point of joy	<i>Psalm 104</i>
Worship from the point of hope	<i>Acts 4</i>
Worship from the point of confession	<i>Job 42</i>
Worship from the point of triumph	<i>Exodus 15</i>
Worship from the point of despair	<i>Psalm 57</i>

These scriptures describe where we may begin our worship, and may helpfully remind us that in church people may come to worship from many different places emotionally.

## **Worship remembers the Christian story**

As we move through the year, we tell the story of who God is and what God has done. We engage with the Incarnation and Second Coming of Christ during Advent and Christmas and with the Atonement during Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

## **Worship in spirit and in truth**

“True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”  
(*John 4. 23–24*)

This is our true calling as a worshipping community.