LEADERSHIP

COMMUNICATION
BEFORE WORSHIP

As part of your team, you need to have someone leading the worship (congregation) and the music (team). These roles can be performed by one person or two people, depending on the comfort level of your group. A music leader and worship leader, if they are not the same person, should work together to plan the worship time by choosing repertoire and planning rehearsals.

A **musical leader** needs to indicate tempo, dynamics, the "road map" of the song, and any changes that are being made. They need to be visible to the group and the team members need to commit to watching and following their direction.

Worship leaders are responsible for leading the congregation through the service. Their responsibilities are mostly in the service itself, but they should be comfortable working with the music leader before and during the service.

Your audio/visual team are an integral part of the worship team as a whole. Working with them before the service will help eliminate technical distractions. Balancing microphones and instruments, as well as checking over lyrics that will be displayed, is just as important as rehearsing the music.

Being able to hear yourself and other musicians in your group is vital. Working with your sound team to have effective monitoring helps the group communicate and work together musically.

Avoid confusion for the congregation by checking that song lyrics match your arrangement and the projected words on screen. If the words can be displayed at the back of the room, singers will not need to look at a stand and can therefore engage more with the congregation. Keeping a physical copy of lyrics on your stand is a good backup in case the words on screen fail or are changed incorrectly.

Prior to worship, it is important to communicate with your officers/pastors so there is an awareness about different aspects of the service. In times such as an appeal, they may want the musical support of your team as they lead or they may want you to lead the congregation through this time.

Communicate with:
Officers/Pastors
Team Members
Audio/Visual Team

COMMUNICATION
DURING WORSHIP

During worship, communication is driven by the worship leader. They are focused on the congregation's response to the music presented and can choose to make adjustments as necessary. This is where the worship leader and music leader need to work together to share information with the team.

The worship leader gives direction to the music leader who shares it with the team. This allows the worship leader to stay focused on the congregation's worship. This is challenging if the worship and music leader are the same person. In that case, do your best to be clear and concise with your team to stay engaged with the congregation. When the roles are combined, the team has a greater responsibility to be engaging with the leader who is juggling these roles.

Singers are natural leaders because they are amplified and heard by the congregation, your audio/visual team and other musicians. Also, their physical location on stage allows them to communicate effectively with the rest of the group.

**Good communication
=
clear understanding
=
smooth delivery of a
worship set**

Sometimes during a service, your officers/pastors may call for a song that you haven't rehearsed. Do your best to support their requests. Having a music library readily available is helpful for this. While a spoken introduction to this song is being given, you can quietly start the song and communicate to your team the key and tempo that you want.

If you are unable to pull a song together quickly, reduce the number of instruments or just sing a cappella.

The Holy Spirit will guide your worship times and inspire leaders in different directions than what you may have planned. Learning to be sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit is an important part of leading a congregation in worship. The better your team is at communicating, the easier these times will be to navigate. This level of communication takes time and practice.

MAKING MUSIC
IN WORSHIP

**NEXT TO THE WORD OF GOD,
THE NOBLE ART OF MUSIC
IS THE GREATEST TREASURE IN THE WORLD.**

MARTIN LUTHER

Music is a gift from God and the talents He has given us need to be used to the best of our ability. Excellence in worship music is what we need to strive for. This is not to make much of our abilities, but rather to give the best offering we can and to assist the congregation in doing the same.

Arranging songs to suit the instrumentation and ability of your team will help you make the most of the talents they offer. Arrangements also need to work for the congregation.

Avoid "over arranging" songs. This happens when sections of songs are too loud or melodies become unclear due to excessive harmonizing.

If you take your arrangements from recordings, you will likely have to alter various elements of the song to make it work for congregational singing. Remember that recordings are done to promote the skills of an individual artist. You may need to change the key, alter the number of repeated sections, standardize the melody, or eliminate prolonged musical interludes. This will make the song more accessible for a large group.

Using different musical groups together in blended worship is a great way to unite the music sections of your corps/church and provide different musical treatments of congregational songs. Re-arranging a song for different instrumentation can give energy to a familiar song. Try using different combinations of band, choir and worship team together.

Using a combination of traditional hymns and contemporary songs will allow a wide cross section of your congregation to worship in an area of comfort and familiarity, while also branching into new expressions of worship. Tying this music together can be done by finding common elements like theme, key or tempo.

VERBAL
TRANSITIONS

The QUALITY and QUANTITY of what you say in worship is important.

A time of worship will often require you to lead verbally, outside the confines of a song. What and how much you say in these times can have a significant impact on the hearts of those who hear.

Here are some tools for verbal transitions:

Memorize Scripture - Using Bible verses that songs are based on, or Scripture that reflects the theme of the service, can make for effective transitions between songs.

Pray - Worship songs are often prayers. The breaks in the music provide an opportunity for spoken prayer.

Personal Testimony - If a song speaks to a particular experience in your life, share that testimony as an affirmation of what the song expresses. Being open and honest with your congregation makes you more genuine and approachable.

Videos - Using a video that tells a story, or displaying Scripture that relates to the songs, can provide a different transition. Be sure you've worked this out with your technical support team. A smooth transition is important to keep the flow and avoid distractions.

Leading a congregation can be daunting. If you are not yet comfortable speaking in front of your congregation, or you tend to wander from the point, write out what you will say. Avoid rambling or making your spoken introductions only about yourself.

Just as you practice the music, you should also practice and review what you are going to say. This can be done by audio or video recording yourself and reviewing it after. Practicing your verbal transitions in rehearsal can also help your team be sensitive and aware of what you are doing.

It is important to engage with the congregation. Even if you choose to write out what you will say, look up and make eye contact with them as much as possible. Be aware that they are there and make them feel a part of what is presently happening. They are not just a spectator to your worship.

If little things go wrong musically, or you feel unsure about something, avoid talking about that to the congregation. It draws attention to those things and away from our worship of God.

MUSICAL
TRANSITIONS

Musical transitions require planning and practice. A solid understanding of music theory will be helpful as you plan and navigate transitions.

Here are some tools for musical transitions:

Selecting Keys -If possible, either select songs that are in the same key or take the songs you've chosen and put them in the same key. Be very careful to check what this does to the melodic range. It may put a song in a register that is way too high or low for congregations to sing comfortably.

Key Changes - When it is not possible to put your chosen songs in the same key, there are techniques that can be used to change key without stopping between songs. Using relative keys or playing the dominant chord of a new key as a transition chord are some of the methods you can try.

Manage Tempo Changes - The leader and members of the rhythm section need to communicate effectively when there are changes to the tempo of songs. Changing the tempo during the last section of the initial song can help establish the tempo for the next song. A prolonged chord held by some instruments and a rhythmic drive into a new tempo can also provide a tempo change.

Ambient Sounds - At the end of an initial song, synthesizer or pad sounds played on a keyboard or guitar can provide space in the music and allow a new song to be established. These sounds should have less melodic features and more background presence.

Using "Hooks" from Songs - Elements of one song can be incorporated into another to establish a transition. This could be a melodic line, a chord progression or a rhythmic pattern. These elements are an audible cue for the congregation that the song is changing.

Just Switch - Sometimes, there is no musical element that can tie two songs together effectively. Even some key changes can sound awkward. When this occurs, it is okay to finish one song and start the next one.

It is important to **PLAN** and **PRACTICE** your musical transitions.

THE OTHER STUFF
THAT'S NOT MUSIC

There are other factors to consider in supporting your group as they lead the congregation. The most important is the words on screen. These need to be large enough to read and presented in a clear font. While it may be nice to add color and pictures to some of your slides, if it distracts from the lyrics, then it will distract from the singing and the opportunity to engage in worship.

Be sure the displayed slides change ahead of time so there is an awareness of what is coming next and lyrics aren't missed. People will sing more confidently if you can time this well.

Have your words/slides in the order you will sing them. Jumping back and forth between slides is sometimes required. Be sure the person operating the words on screen can see the worship leader's gestures, or hear their instructions, to indicate which set of words should come next. It is ideal if the person who is changing words on screen is a part of your team and rehearses with you. It will help make this part of the service as seamless as possible.

Personal equipment, such as amplifiers and instruments, are the responsibility of the owner to ensure they are cared for and kept in working order. There is other equipment that your group will use regularly that they should know how to care for. For example, cables, stage monitors, microphones and stands are all essential to the effectiveness of your group. Ideally, you should have a person on your team that can help you look after all of this equipment and teach the team to do the same.

Understanding how to communicate with your sound technician is vital when it comes to hearing yourself on stage. A monitor mix is designed to help your team hear themselves while playing. This can sound totally different from what the congregation is hearing. Working with your sound technician in rehearsal is the best way to deal with this, before you have the added responsibility of leading the congregation.

Using a microphone properly is important. Be aware of the type of microphones at your ministry unit and the correct way to use them.

AUDIO/VISUAL technicians need to be a part of worship team rehearsals. They are part of the team and therefore are part of leading the congregation in worship.