

# WORSHIP TOGETHER

A Practical Aid for

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Worship Leaders

# INTRODUCTION

This resource has been developed by the Music & Gospel Arts Department of the Canada and Bermuda Territory to support the development of worship teams and leaders. We recognize that teams and leaders operate in varied expressions of worship and outreach across our territory. While the needs of individual teams will differ, our hope is that this resource will encourage meaningful thought, prayer and discussion about worship in your particular setting.

Overarching themes that are important to worship, no matter what your setting, are discussed and can be applied to specific situations.

F.L.O.W. is a practical tool we have designed to assist as you plan, rehearse, support and evaluate music for congregational worship.

A curriculum has been created to aid in building worship teams from the start, or to advance an existing group.

It is our prayer that this resource will be used to serve your congregations and communities in a more meaningful way as you facilitate an encounter with God through corporate worship.

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"YET A TIME IS COMING AND HAS NOW COME WHEN THE TRUE WORSHIPPERS WILL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN THE SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, FOR THEY ARE THE KIND OF WORSHIPPERS THE FATHER SEEKS. GOD IS SPIRIT, AND HIS WORSHIPPERS MUST WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH."

## JOHN 4 : 23-24 NIV

"IT'S WHO YOU ARE AND THE WAY YOU LIVE THAT COUNT BEFORE GOD. YOUR WORSHIP MUST ENGAGE YOUR SPIRIT IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH. THAT'S THE KIND OF PEOPLE THE FATHER IS OUT LOOKING FOR: THOSE WHO ARE SIMPLY AND HONESTLY THEMSELVES BEFORE HIM IN THEIR WORSHIP. GOD IS SHEER BEING ITSELF - SPIRIT. THOSE WHO WORSHIP HIM MUST DO IT OUT OF THEIR VERY BEING, THEIR SPIRITS, THEIR TRUE SELVES, IN ADORATION."

## JOHN 4 : 23-24 MSG

Produced by  
The Salvation Army Music & Gospel Arts Department

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2 Overlea Blvd., Toronto ON M4H 1P4  
Authors: Simon Gough and Heather Osmond

# SERVANT LEADERS

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

Worship leaders are first and foremost **SERVANTS**. We are charged by God to put the words of praise and prayer on the lips of His people. This is not a small responsibility.

Our main objective is to facilitate the interaction of God and His people through musical worship.

As leaders serving our congregations, we must be listeners. We need to hear from God, Scripture, our leaders, and the congregation. Taking all of this input, we must seek to develop and mold the time we lead others.

Our goal is to strive for excellence as we serve. This excellence is not a reflection of our own abilities as a leader, but rather, of our passion for people to meet with God through what we do.

Excellence starts before we stand in front of a congregation. Being prepared helps us to avoid any distraction from worship. This is not just in presenting the songs but in the things we say, our song choice, memorization of lyrics, transitions between songs and choice of key for songs. Every decision should be prayerfully considered.

Evaluating our personal leadership helps us serve our congregations better. We need to create relationships where we can be mentored as well as opportunities to receive feedback from our congregation and leaders.

## 1 PETER 5 : 1-3 NIV

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

# BLENDED WORSHIP

**My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ.**

Colossians 2 : 2 NIV

## WORSHIP TOGETHER

The Salvation Army has a rich and full musical history. As we work together for the good of all members of our congregation, we need to draw on all resources available to us as we lead worship.

As worshippers, we seek unity and connection with God. If we cannot model this as leaders by seeking unity and connection between differing musical groups, then we limit our ability to serve the congregation. We need to put aside our preferences and be an example to the people that we lead.

There are resources available that allow traditional brass and choral sections to join with guitar and piano driven groups. The Hallelujah Choruses Series, from The Salvation Army USA Central Territory, is designed specifically to facilitate this. Other resources, like PraiseCharts, have brass, choral and other musical instruments scored to compliment the lead sheets that are available.

Resource:

[www.praisecharts.com](http://www.praisecharts.com)

- Chord Charts
- Lead sheets
- Orchestrations
- Multiple key options
- Full piano charts

Resource:

**The Hallelujah Chorus Series**

- Lead Sheets
- Full Brass Band parts
- Condensed praise brass parts
- SAB vocal parts

When groups blend together, the result is not only a swell of dynamics and tonal color that lift a song to another level musically, but also an enhanced overall worship experience. Adding a choir to your worship time, or having the worship team accompany your choir in addition to the traditional piano accompaniment, can achieve a similar result.

In situations where there are smaller music groups, blending these groups can be an advantage. Musically, there are parts covered by more instruments. Congregationally, the singing is supported by a fuller sounding accompaniment.

# STYLE VS PREFERENCE

We need to be intentional and thoughtful in our preparation. Most importantly, we need to put ourselves and our preferences aside. Our goal is not to promote the newest or to continue with the accepted. It is to facilitate the meeting of God and His people through musical worship.

Style can be a big point of contention in musical worship. Often the problem is not solely with the music, but rather with the person who is unwilling to entertain something new or different, or with the person who discounts centuries of church music.

Music is emotive and people can have a personal and profound connection to God through song. When we stop using a particular song, or infer that a certain hymn might be irrelevant, we may be incorrectly communicating the same things about their experience with God through that song.

This is one reason why a change in musical style can be so difficult in the church.

As we lead, we need to be mindful that preference is not about God, it is about us.

"This is what I like" is a personal statement. If the main argument for why we want to use a particular song in worship is "because I like it," it needs to be supported by:

*Does it work for our congregation?*

*Does it fit within the theme of this service?*

*Are the words theologically sound?*

If these things don't support why we like a song and want to use it in worship, then "because I like it" is not a good enough reason to add it to the worship service.

We need to take our preference out of the picture to facilitate the engagement and participation of the congregation.

God likes all expressions of love and worship that are offered, not only the contemporary or the traditional.

**We need to cultivate an attitude amongst worship leaders that says:**

**"We don't use songs because they are new. We don't use songs because they are old. Rather, we use songs because they are a good tool to help us engage with God."**

# TRADITIONAL & CONTEMPORARY

**All traditions**  
were once  
**contemporary**

**Someone**  
had to  
**introduce them**  
and they were  
**different**

As worship leaders, we are privileged to plug into the traditions of the church. It lets us tap into a stream of worship that has been going on for millennia and allows us to add our voice to that worship. Honouring tradition can be a way of keeping us grounded in our faith. It helps us enjoy the richness of past experience, make it new and experience it in our own context.

All traditions were once considered contemporary. William Booth took tunes like *Champagne Charlie* and put Christian lyrics to them. He led people to Christ by taking contemporary tunes that were known and understood by an unchurched audience. A song such as *How Great Thou Art* was once considered a new song. Someone had to introduce it and it may have been regarded as new or different to songs that came before it.

We need to be open minded to what God is doing now in the new experiences we have with new worship music. At the same time, we need to remember and celebrate the interactions and lessons we have learned from the songs we already know and have used many, many times. We need to create a balance between familiar songs and new songs. The familiar shouldn't become stale or stagnant. The new should not be overwhelming or a barrier to engaging with God.

We need to cultivate an attitude amongst worship leaders that suggests we don't use songs because they are new. We don't use songs because they are old. Rather we use songs because they are a good tool to help us engage with God.

## 2 TIMOTHY 2 : 1-5 ESV

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

# RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Who you are is noticed by your congregation. If you are not the same person on and off the stage, the congregation will sense this. God has gifted each worship leader differently and those differences are important to Him and your congregation.

**BE AUTHENTIC. IT MATTERS TO YOUR LEADERSHIP.**

It is important that you have an opportunity to worship with your congregation and not just spend all of your time leading.

If there are no other leaders, you may not have the option of being a participant with the congregation. Are you involved in other fellowship times like Bible study? Are your rehearsals a time where you and your team can worship together without the responsibility of leading the congregation?

Looking after your spirit and fostering relationships with others are essential as you lead.

Having a positive working relationship with the other leaders in your corps is important. As well as being able to plan together, this relationship should include the opportunity for feedback and evaluation. The leaders around you also care for the congregation and their feedback can be extremely valuable.

As a worship leader, you need to assume a pastoral role for your team members. Being present in their lives, away from their involvement in the worship team, is part of your calling. Leading them spiritually is just as important as your leadership of the congregation. You should be a spirit-filled leader that is an example to your team.

**So then we pursue  
the things that make for  
PEACE  
and the  
BUILDING UP  
of one another**

**Romans 14 : 19 NASB**



# FOR DISCUSSION:

*We need to create a balance between familiar songs and new songs. The familiar shouldn't become stale or stagnant. The new should not be overwhelming or a barrier to engaging with God.*

*Our goal is not to promote the newest or to continue with the accepted. It is to facilitate the meeting of God and His people through musical worship.*

*As worshippers, we seek unity and connection with God. If we cannot model this as leaders by seeking unity and connection between differing musical groups, then we limit our ability to serve the congregation. We need to put aside our preferences and be an example to the people that we lead.*

*"This is what I like" is a personal statement. If the main argument for why we want to use a particular song in worship is "because I like it," it needs to be supported by:*

*Does it work for our congregation?*

*Does it fit within the theme of this service?*

*Are the words theologically sound?*

*Our goal is to strive for excellence as we serve. This excellence is not a reflection of our own abilities as a leader, but rather of our passion for people to meet with God through what we do.*



# PRACTICAL TOOLS

## What is F.L.O.W.?

**F.L.O.W. is a tool that has been developed to assist worship leaders from planning to delivery of a worship time. The 4 elements that have been identified look at musical and personnel leadership.**

**As you use the F.L.O.W. tool, you will find many topics apply in more than one area. For example, in OVER and OVER, you will reference part of the work you did in FORMATION to design your worship set. This crossover is part of the process and will be different for each leader and team.**

# F. L. O. W.



## 1. Formation

In forming your worship time, you need to identify what is most important to facilitate the congregation's interaction with God. Fostering an understanding of your congregation's needs informs your planning. Using tools like the sermon topic, Scripture passages and themes help us build this interaction within the context of a particular service.



## 2. Leadership

Decide who is leading your worship time. Your officer/pastor? A team member? In a worship context, leadership is both musical (the songs we present) and congregational (the transitions between songs). Leaders are responsible for communication with corps leaders and with your team, which includes technical/sound team members.



## 3. Over & Over (Rehearse)

Rehearsal ensures that you are prepared and any difficulties have been worked out beforehand. Distractions occur when there are consistent wrong notes, poor key choices and not knowing the lyrics. We rehearse to be our best, to eliminate those distractions, and to allow for a sense of freedom in worship.



## 4. Worship

As we come to a corporate worship time, our responsibility is to be aware of the congregation's interaction and reaction to songs, Scripture and other elements we are inviting them to worship through. This requires sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading and the engagement of the congregation. Attention also needs to be paid to how your team is playing as well as the functionality of technical aspects in your service.



**FORMATION**

# PLANNING FOR WORSHIP

Since we are first and foremost servants, the way we plan needs to reflect a servant attitude towards the needs of our congregation. Personal preference and style choices need to be put aside in order to best serve the congregation.

As you start planning, determine whether the song choices will be made by the corps officers/pastors, the worship team, or if it will be a shared responsibility. Your corps officers/pastors have been appointed as the spiritual leaders of your church and it is important to foster a good working relationship with them.

As you start selecting music, you need to be aware of the demographics of the congregation. Aim to serve all age groups represented.

Determine if there is a theme for the service. Is it a special focus Sunday, like Thanksgiving or a Senior Soldier Renewal? Is the officer/pastor speaking on a certain topic, such as holiness or repentance? A theme can drive the choices for songs, Scripture and transitions.

**Prayer is key as you plan the worship of God's people**

Figure out if you are planning an open or closed set. An open set will have songs that relate to the theme or particular elements of the service (eg. a dedication). A closed set will have songs that relate to one another, but not necessarily to a theme or event in the service. It aims to give the congregation a short time focused on a particular thought (eg. God's provision).

Place musical sets in the service where they help with the overall flow. Perhaps an upbeat chorus can help facilitate movement that may have to happen on the platform. A devotional style chorus can lead into a prayer time or the message.

People will come to worship with a variety of different feelings. You need to make sure you have a balance between upbeat and joyful songs and slow, reflective songs. A mix of tempos and atmosphere you present to the congregation will assist each person to meet with God where they are at.

Repetition of songs is important for congregational learning, but excessive repetition can quickly become frustrating, making worship stale and lifeless.

It is important to work with other music leaders at your corps. Try to find opportunities for blended worship with musical sections working together. This can be a great way to promote unity in worship, reduce "competition" between groups and provide musical diversity.

**Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3 : 5-6 KJV**

# HOW TO CHOOSE NEW SONGS

Congregations interact with God through the music we present. New songs can give energy and life to congregational worship. Songs that are new are not just the ones most recently written. A new song could be an older song that is new to your congregation. It can be difficult to introduce new music to worship because of independent factors that are specific to individual congregations.

The first thing to consider when choosing a new song is whether the lyrics have sound theology. You put praise on the lips of God's people as you lead them in worship. It is important that the lyrics they are singing are scripturally correct and fit within our doctrine.

While the lyrics are the most important part of a worship song, the melody carries those lyrics. It must be "sing-able." Make sure that the rhythms used in the melody are easily sung. Big intervals can be difficult for congregations to grasp and can hinder their participation. You don't need to avoid these types of songs all the time. You just need to be aware that they may take longer to learn. You may even need to adapt some of these rhythms or intervals to make the song more accessible.

Make sure that the song is in an appropriate key. Check that the pitch of the melody is not too high or low. Look at where the melody is most often sung during the song and be aware of the pitch you are asking the congregation to sing for a prolonged time. Make sure this is in a comfortable register. When you are listening to recordings of worship songs, remember that they are being presented by professional singers. Most of our congregations are not filled with people with this type of vocal range. You will likely need to change the key for congregational use. This will allow any singer in your congregation to be involved, no matter their level of ability.

Be aware of how much new music you are asking your congregation to sing. If they are always learning something new, their opportunity to engage deeply in worship can be limited.

Choose three or four songs (or whatever number works for your congregation) through a season that can be added to the collection of music you already use.

Start becoming more aware of how often you use specific songs. Does your congregation need a new upbeat song or are they just getting comfortable with the ones you have introduced?

Be aware of what is happening in the congregation. Are the lyrics poignant to a situation in your church's life? Will singing this song be beneficial to nurture the congregation? Are they participating? How are they reacting to new songs when they are presented?

**Sing a new  
song to the  
LORD! Let the  
whole earth  
sing to the  
LORD!  
Psalm 96 : 1 NLT**

# REHEARSAL PLANNING

After you have planned the material for your worship time, be sure to make a plan for your rehearsal.

A good rehearsal plan will allow time to cover the music you need to learn right away, but also ensures that you leave time to work on other repertoire. This can be new songs you want to use in the future or revising songs you have done in the past. This gives you a broader base of songs that your team is comfortable with. As well, it is helpful when you are called upon to present a song that you have not rehearsed for a particular service.

Start and end your rehearsal with a piece that is familiar. This helps your team ease into your practice time and get focused. Ending with a familiar piece establishes a sense of accomplishment. Warm up and tuning for individual instruments should be done before the group comes together to practice.



Rehearsal time is where communication with your group members is easiest. Face to face communication about logistics (eg. dates, times, places) is very effective, but this communication should also be followed up with emails or texts.

Where possible, find a regular rehearsal time that works for your group. Avoid always scheduling your rehearsal right before your worship times. A run through and a rehearsal are not the same thing.

Any musical section can function as a small group for members. Rehearsals should allow time for devotions, prayer and support. Rehearsal time is an ideal place to cultivate a sense of community in your group.

**It is important to identify the difference between a**



## Rehearsal

- > Breaking the song into different sections
- > Picking keys
- > Refining transitions
- > Deciding tempo, rhythm, style
- > Focused time to arrange songs

## Run Through

- > Playing a piece through to make sure you know it
- > Correct mistakes as they are noticed
- > Limited time to make sure songs work

# 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.**



**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.

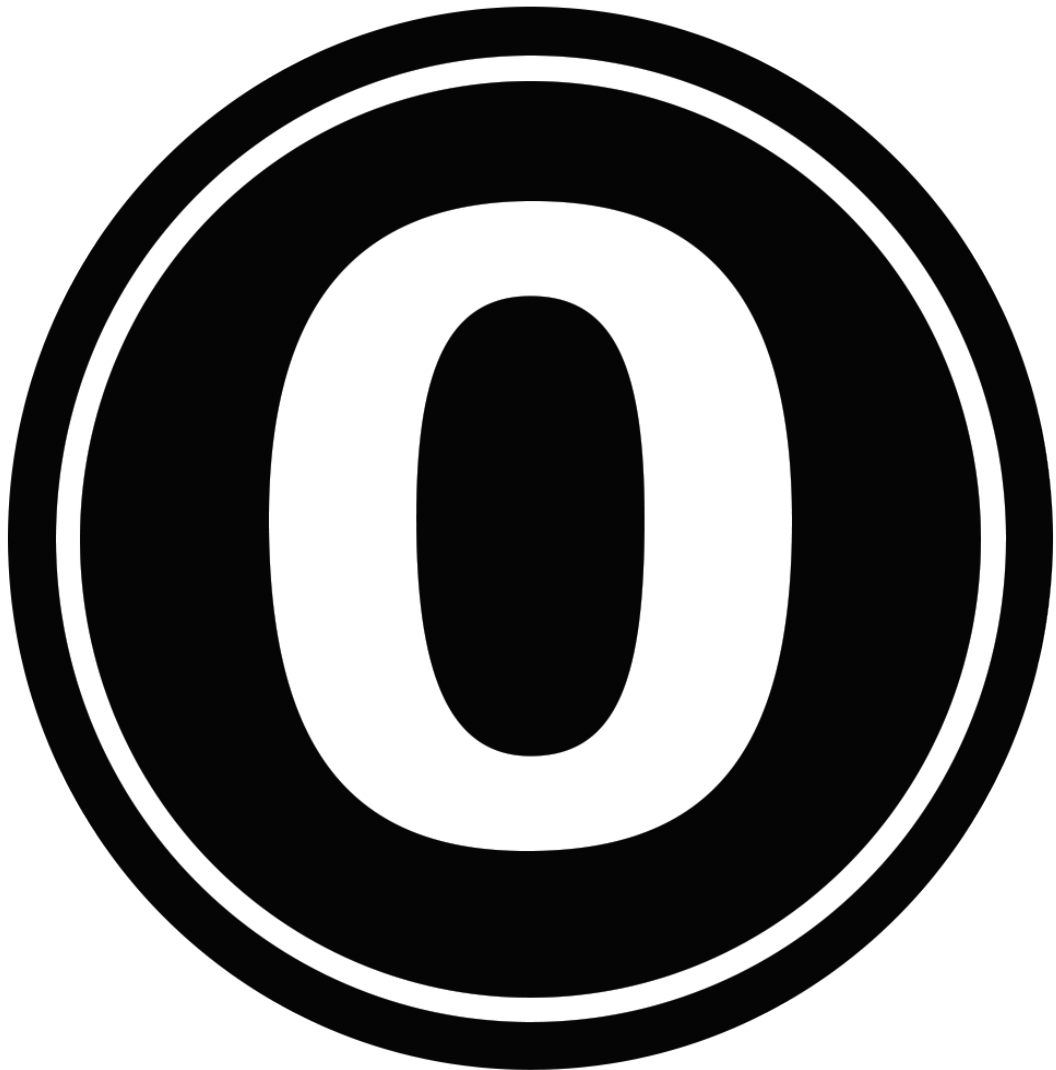
Arranging songs to suit the instrumentation and ability of your team will help you make the most of the talents they offer. Arrangements also need to work for the congregation.

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.



**OVER & OVER  
(REHEARSE)**

# RUNNING A REHEARSAL

Once the initial planning phase is complete, do your best to run a productive rehearsal with your group. People have given up their time and you don't want to take that for granted. By making sure they are properly prepared for what they are required to do, they will be more able to use their gifts.

In rehearsal, communication about the music needs to be clear. Practice the physical signals you will use to communicate to your team members so everyone is on the same page. Standing in a circle facing the other team members can be helpful as you work through gestures. This is not how your group will stand to lead worship, so be sure to rehearse these techniques in the formation you will have during worship.

Take note of particular sections of songs that need more communication and be very clear with your team. Show these changes as early as possible.

Encourage your team members to mark their music, especially places where you need them to watch. This avoids repeating the same sections over and over because of the same mistakes.

A break in your rehearsal can be an ideal time for devotions together, as well as any announcements or discussion. Some people feel rushed to leave once practice has ended so using your break time like this can cultivate relationship building in your group.

It is a good idea to finish your rehearsal with a familiar piece or run a piece that went well earlier in your practice. This helps the group to leave on a positive note and reminds them of what has been accomplished.

**Include a time for prayer in your rehearsal. This can be at any time during your practice but it is important that your group surrounds itself with prayer on a regular basis.**



# PLAYING TOGETHER

To be an effective worship team, it is important to understand each instrument's contribution to the group and how the individual parts fit together. Key elements to your worship songs like rhythm, melody and dynamics will be affected by the instrumentation you use.

When you have a clear plan for your song, it is easier to communicate the instrumentation you need to achieve this plan. Not every instrument needs to play all of the time. It is a matter of understanding the instrumentation available, abilities, and the needs of your congregation.

Musical contrast, like the rise and fall of dynamics, should be worked out in rehearsal so everyone makes those changes together. If dynamics should change during a live worship time, allow the leader to direct those changes. If a response time that has been rehearsed goes longer than expected, you may drop some instruments out to lower dynamics or have the melody played instrumentally, rather than sung, to allow people to respond. You will need to communicate this clearly to your team.

Common rhythms used by the rhythm section (mainly drums and bass guitar) lock the song together and give it a common style or groove. Finding a groove for the song to sit in is important as it establishes direction. When your whole group grabs a certain rhythm together, it can be a very effective musical technique.

Listen to the balance of your group. Ideally, you would include a sound technician in your ensemble who knows the group and can balance what the congregation hears. If you don't have someone to listen to you as you rehearse, record your practice times and listen to the balance. When you are playing or singing, you should be able to hear every other member of the group in a ratio that is appropriate to the song and overall sound. When one instrument is overpowering the others, it is a sign that you need to change the volume of certain instruments.

People worship through the lyrics of a song. Use the balance of the singers as a good reference point for the overall volume of the group. Once this is established, the volume of the other instruments can be set appropriately. Remember, you should be able to hear your congregation singing. If you can't, then you need to adjust the overall volume accordingly.

**When you have a clear plan for your song, it is easier to communicate the instrumentation you need to achieve this plan.**

# YOUR TEAM

Your team may have various combinations of the instruments listed below. This chart will help you manage your group and the instrumentation you use in each song.



Lyrics, Melody and  
Harmony

VOCALS



Chords, Melody and  
Rhythm

PIANO



Chords, Rhythm and  
Melody

ACOUSTIC GUITAR



Chords, Lead Lines and  
Melody

ELECTRIC GUITAR



Tempo, Rhythm and Groove

DRUMS



Root of the Chord, Rhythm  
and Groove

BASS GUITAR



Chords, Lead Lines and  
Rhythm

KEYBOARD / SYNTH



Lead Lines, Melody and  
Chords

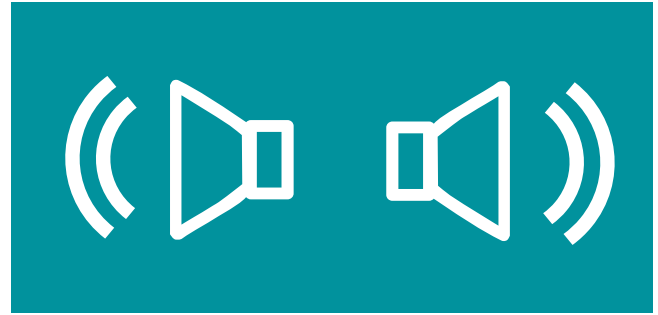
BRASS



Groove, Rhythm and Tempo

AUXILIARY PERCUSSION

# SPREADING OUT THE SOUND



Worship songs need to be clear and easy to follow. This doesn't mean you need to have simple arrangements. Most teams will have instruments that play in similar registers. You need to be aware of the instruments in your group and how they are contributing to the overall sound. Spreading out the sound ensures that multiple instruments are not playing the same notes regularly.

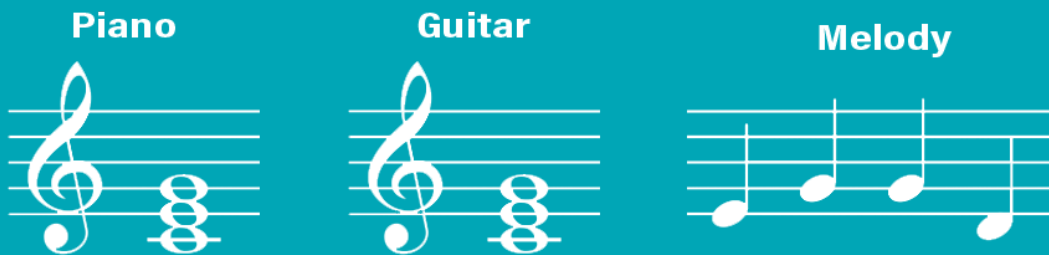
To spread out the sound of your group, you need to try to work in different registers. The register refers to the specific octave you are playing in. Doing this can accomplish two things:

- 1) Make a smaller ensemble sound fuller
- 2) Give clarity of sound to a larger group.

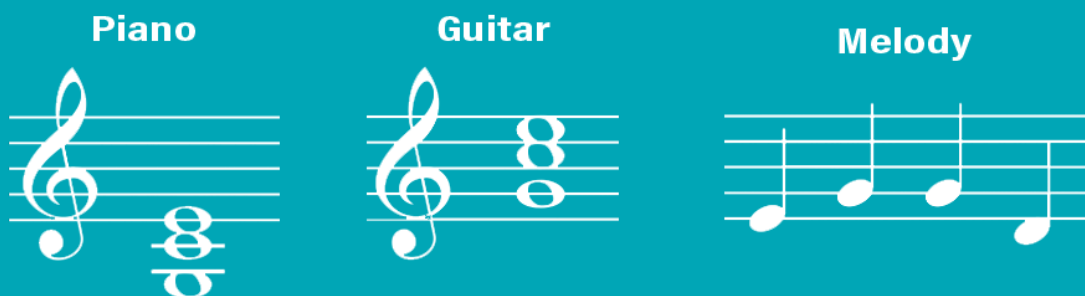
The chords used by piano and guitars, as well as the melody being sung, are usually in similar registers. This congestion can make a good arrangement sound muddy or undefined. If you can spread out the register (octave) that some of the chords are played in, or spread out the notes of a chord (playing arpeggios), there will be more definition to the sound. This clarity will help the congregation to easily identify the melody.

The more instruments you have playing the same notes, the greater the volume those notes will be. You need to be constantly aware of balancing the melody. The melody carries the lyrics which the congregation worships through. This, rather than the chords or rhythm of a song, is the most important part.

## *Chords played in the same register as the melody*



## *The same chords **spread out** and played in different registers*



*This gives the melody its own space in the music*



**WORSHIP**

# MY CONGREGATION ISN'T SINGING. WHAT DO I DO?

Servant leadership means we must facilitate worship and assist others in interacting with God. Sometimes, when we feel our congregation is not singing and interacting with the music, we can get frustrated in searching for a possible answer. The truth is, we can make a number of small changes or decisions to encourage and support better congregational singing.

## ***Keep the volume of your worship team in check.***

A person in the congregation should feel they are a participant, not just an observer. They should be able to hear themselves and those around them, not just the two or three people singing into a microphone.

## ***Choose music that your congregation sings well.***

If you are only using pieces that you like, but the congregation is not engaged in worship, the song choice needs to be adjusted.

## ***Be discerning as you introduce new music.***

If you only sing the same select songs over and over again, congregations may lose interest. It is important to introduce new music at a rate that your congregation is comfortable learning.

## ***Pick appropriate keys for congregations to sing.***

Be sure to pick keys that are in a comfortable singing register for both male and female voices, as well as age range.

## ***Be sure to make the melody clear to hear.***

Limit over-embellishing the music. This distracts from the words and melody. Make it singable.

## ***Be an encourager.***

Ask yourself, am I leading the congregation into the song or just expecting them to sing it? Stop encouraging the culture of singers versus non-singers. Anyone can sing!

## ***Use long instrumental breaks with caution.***

While a well-timed instrumental solo can be effective, if it is used too often, your congregation may not be responsive and may lose interest. This may make them feel isolated from the worship time.

## ***Have the instrumentation drop out occasionally.***

Allow the congregation to hear their voices singing together. It builds unity as a worshipping community.

## ***Give the congregation the music.***

Project music onto the screen, like a lead sheet for example, or print it off and give it to them. Projecting only the words doesn't teach people how to sing. They have to guess at the melodic line and what comes next.

**While these strategies may be effective, you need to be patient.  
Changing habits is a process that requires effort, time and dedication.  
You can't expect success overnight.**



# HOW TO INTRODUCE A NEW SONG

Introducing new songs can be a challenging task. Understanding your congregation's needs and putting them first as a servant leader needs to be your primary concern when introducing new music. A new song doesn't just have to be a song written recently. It could be an older song that is new to you or one you haven't tried before. You need to be sure that when introducing new songs you are not confusing new music with a new *style* of music.

Scripture implores us -

**Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds among all peoples.**

**Psalm 96 : 1-3 NIV**

The point is not to sing new songs just for the sake of it.

New songs, new worship, should be a response to the "marvellous deeds" that God is doing "among all peoples" "day after day." It is your responsibility as a worship leader to share that response with your congregation as you present new music.

**Only introduce one new song at a time to avoid overwhelming the congregation.**

**Use a new song at a time when the congregation isn't singing (during the offertory, prelude or as a choir selection) so that they can hear the song.**

**Introduce a portion of the song. Sing the chorus one week and then bring in the verses later so that there is something familiar about the song.**

**Repeat sections of the song. Repeating a verse can help the congregation learn the melody before moving on to another section.**

**Slow the tempo of the song so that people can grasp the rhythm and melodic line.**

**You may need to simplify some of the rhythms if the congregation is having trouble fitting in the lyrics.**

**Print or project the music for your congregation. Those who read music will help others to learn the song more quickly.**

**Explain to your congregation why you chose this song for them. Talk about the message of the song.**

**Surround new music with familiar pieces. People are more inclined to sing out if it is a song they know.**

**Be aware of your congregation's posture as they learn a new song. They may be more comfortable sitting while they are singing something unfamiliar.**

Once you've introduced a new song and your congregation is comfortable with it, don't forget about it. This doesn't mean you should sing it every Sunday. However, if it remains unused for months at a time, it will be like teaching a new song all over again when you revisit it.

Sometimes, a piece of music just doesn't work with your congregation for any number of reasons. Let it go. It's okay. There is a lot of music out there. You just need to find what it is your congregation needs.

# EVALUATING YOUR WORSHIP SET

There are two main areas of evaluation to be considered after leading worship.

## Your Team

How did you sound?  
What went well?  
Were there any obvious moments where things weren't working?  
Did the elements you rehearsed go as well as expected?  
Is more rehearsal needed?  
Were transitions effective?  
Was communication clear and followed by the entire team?

Asking these questions as a team holds everyone accountable to put forward their best effort.

## The Congregation

Were they singing?  
Did they participate and engage?  
Did they look lost or confused?  
Can you identify specific moments where something did or didn't work for them?

Pay attention to your congregation as you lead. Make sure you have your eyes open so you can see. Be an active listener to what you hear. This will help you evaluate the congregation's reaction and engagement.

You need to develop a healthy working relationship with corps officers/pastors, other leaders and members of the congregation who can assist you in evaluating congregational worship that you have led.

How effective was your pre-planning in ensuring success? Did you communicate with your corps officers/pastors effectively?

Be open to the feedback you are given and discern what will help you to be a better servant leader. Not all feedback is positive, but it may be something we need to hear if we have not done our best.

Hearing from others will help you to understand a different perspective and provide you with ideas on how to make improvements in your leadership. You should be constantly trying to do this for yourself, your group and the congregation.

**Giving your best is the least you can do  
as you try to steer your congregation toward  
an encounter with God through worship.**



# ASSESSING YOUR TEAM

What does your team do well?

How can your team improve?

Are you aware of your congregation's needs?

Are you responsive to feedback?

Are you growing spiritually?



# NAVIGATING CHANGE

**Patience is an important virtue as you attempt change in WORSHIP**

## change is HARD

No matter where we are trying to make change, it can be difficult. This is especially true in worship music. A person's connection with God through worship songs can be linked to significant spiritual moments. Changing style can be interpreted as a departure from these treasured moments, or making them seem redundant, as we replace these familiar songs with new ones.

Care needs to be given as we lead a congregation through a change of style in worship music. Your attitude needs to be similar to that of a missionary. You are trying to bring something new into a context that has a defined culture. Understand your congregation and their needs. Be present in community with them and they will be more comfortable as you lead them into a new expression of worship and experience of God.

## change is a JOURNEY

Change is a journey, not a destination. You need to walk with your congregation through new and different experiences.

In most cases, change will **NOT** happen quickly and there will be resistance. The way you react to the process, and possible resistance, will be important to your congregation.

During the journey of change, you will not always be progressing. Designing opportunities for familiar songs to be used in times of change can help the congregation handle new ideas.

**Do not make change for change's sake. As with everything you do as you lead worship, you need to put prayer and thought into the reasons and motive behind your decisions.**

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