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HOW TO: USE LOOPS IN WORSHIP

1. START SMALL AND SIMPLE.

Choose a specific song to which you would like to add a loop. The sounds of shakers, tambourines and effected drums are good places to start. Using unprocessed drum sounds (sounds that are similar or the same as your regular drum sounds) can make it difficult for the drummer to know what to play with the loop – so start simple.

2. FIND A LOOP.

If you're new to "looping" you're probably not ready to make one yourself, although you probably could do it with the right tools. Thankfully, loop "libraries" are available for less than $20.00 at most music stores and are full of great loops (and also some loops that should probably never enter the worship circle). There are also many websites where loops can be downloaded for free. Try to find a loop that compliments the song as well as blends in with your instrumentation – adding to the overall sonic range of your band.

3. CARE FOR THE DETAILS.

Now that you've found a loop you're going to have to play it. Your computer, mp3 player, or CD player are just a few tools that are good for looping. Regardless of what you use to play your loop make sure the person setting the tempo (most importantly the drummer) can confidently hear the loop when all the instruments are playing. You'll also need to have someone start and stop the loop – often the drummer is a good person to handle this responsibility.

4. INTRODUCE THE LOOP TO YOUR BAND.

Commit to rehearsing before you try to use the loop in a live worship context. During rehearsal, have the drummer start the loop and let it play for 3 measures, then count the band in on the 4th measure. Once the band comes in, play the verse over and over, allowing everyone to get accustomed to playing with the new sound.

This is the perfect time to adjust monitors! After running through the song, end the song as you typically would, then have the drummer fade the volume down slowly while you gently strum the final chord (to give the end of the song time to "simmer").

5. REMEMBER WHY WE DO THIS.

Loops and technology are intended to enhance our worship experience – not to distract us from our main focus. Always be prepared to ditch the new technology (regardless of how cool you think it may be) if you feel it's getting in the way. Just as we practice our instruments to lead worship, we must also practice our implementation of technology to make it a natural extension of our musicality.



Robbie Reider is a worship leader, songwriter and producer based out of Vineyard Music USA in Stafford, Texas. He is a self-professed techno-geek, and can be seen doing loop seminars across the country in unsuspecting churches everywhere.