THE
ESSENTIALS
IN WORSHIP
TOOLKIT



HOW TO LEAD WORSHIP
FOR BAPTISMS, BABY DEDICATIONS, SPECIAL HOLIDAYS, AND EVENTS

worshiptraining

INTRODUCTION

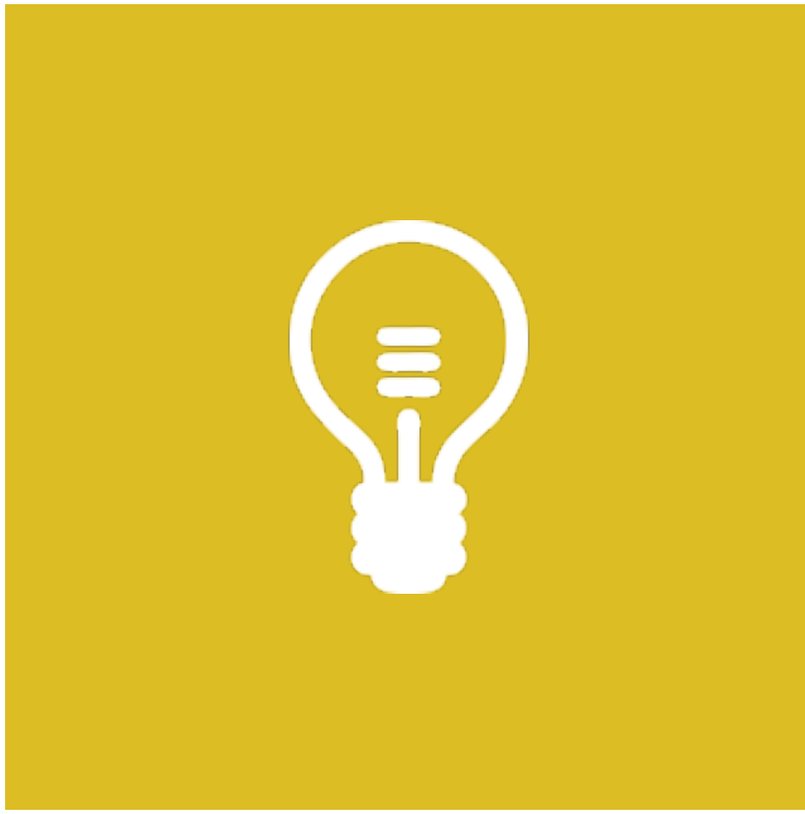
How do we lead worship for big days and special events?

Preparing sets for big days and special events should be approached differently than preparing a standard, Sunday morning worship set.

Here are some thoughts on how to lead worship for baptisms, baby dedications, holidays, and other special events.

INTRODUCTION

1. Baptisms
2. Baby Dedications
3. Outreach Events
4. Mother's Day/Holidays
5. Conferences and Retreats



IDEA 1 – BAPTISMS

Baptism is a day of celebration.

Baptism has been an important part of church history for thousands of years. It's the wedding of a soul to God. The early church understood baptism to be a celebration, and baptisms should be a time of extravagant joy for us today.

Select songs that give people a reason to rejoice. Depending on your church's traditions, there may be many people in attendance who have never entered your doors before. Use this opportunity to bring in some worship elements that might connect these guests with the story of your community.

Hymns like "Amazing Grace," or other very familiar songs can build a bridge to worship for the visitor. This will make them feel included and part of the worship experience. Whatever you do, keep a tone of rejoicing in the Person of God at the center of your set theme.

IDEA 2 – BABY DEDICATIONS

Baby dedications are for sharing joy and thanking God.

Baby dedication mornings are unique opportunities to lead worship. In larger churches there may be many children to be dedicated – or, if you're in a smaller church, maybe just one child at a time. These Sundays can move in many different directions, but, again, we have people attending who aren't necessarily there every week.

As with baptism, we want to celebrate, and at the same time, be hospitable. Maybe a few guests have come who know familiar, accessible hymns. Think about interlacing these in your worship set.

In a baby dedication setting, it's a time to remember God's gift of life, and a time to thank Him for His good gifts – so make thanksgiving a key theme in your worship set.

IDEA 3 – OUTREACH EVENTS

Outreach events are for building connections.

Outreach events can take on many forms. You might be giving away turkeys for Thanksgiving, or having an outdoor celebration for your city. There can be all sorts of ways we can express worship in more outreach-oriented events.

Think again about celebration, high-energy, and passionate worship. Bring in songs you may not normally include in a standard worship set. Even use popular songs that people may know, or might catch their ear, that are fun and have more playful and non-offensive themes. Some worship leaders need to lead outreach events in other languages. No matter the outreach event, each gives an opportunity to worship leaders to learn how to lead in a unique setting.

The higher the energy, the more pumping the sound system, the more musical colors and aesthetics that are involved, the more recognizable the songs that are used – the more readily you'll connect people at outreach events to your faith community.

IDEA 4 – MOTHER'S DAY/HOLIDAYS

Create accessible moments for special holidays.

Mother's Day, and other special holidays, can be very particular in their tone. Again, there may be people in attendance who aren't regular attenders, or others who are looking for a faster-paced service so they can spend the rest of the day enjoying time with their mothers/fathers.

People are in different states of emotion as the focus of these special holidays comes around yearly – some may have lost loved ones (this is often true on Mother's or Father's Day), while others may be challenged over their current relationship with a parent or sibling. Think about this as you are planning your worship set, and again, create accessible moments for people to connect who may be having a difficulty drawing near to God in worship.

For other holidays, try to match the theme with a biblical theme. If it's Independence Day, for example, you may want to focus on the idea of our true and complete freedom in Christ. Begin to think about the ways the community can celebrate and enjoy their day through worship. Also recognize that they may have other things on their mind surrounding these holidays.

IDEA 4 – CONFERENCES AND RETREATS

Create unity with well-known songs at conferences and retreats.

Conferences usually allow for extended musical worship times, and a worship leader can build out a wider set, allowing for a bit more diversity in the song selection and musical style. As worship leaders, we're always thinking about who will be gathering. What churches and traditions are represented? What is the goal of the event?

If it's an inter-faith, inter-church gathering, you may want to consider which songs/hymns a contemporary church and a conservative liturgical church would both know.

What songs will cause the congregation to sing together loud and strong – stirring a sense of unity? Those are important songs for these kinds of events.

Conferences aren't like normal Sunday mornings – much more rehearsal can be put into these, and variety in the end results. Expand the worship experience with some fresh ideas that you wouldn't ordinarily have the time to add into a shorter Sunday worship set.

Retreats, on the other hand, may be acoustically driven. Be thinking about your instrument choices. If you only have an acoustic guitar, have some source of rhythm to bring energy. Buy a cajon (a wooden percussion box with snares inside) and keep it handy. The energy level will rise quickly with a cajon being played. Make sure the majority of the set is made up of songs that people know, and then add some other elements to season the set.

ACTION STEPS

> Try at least one idea for the next time you meet.

Connect guests to your worship experience by building a set of joyful, passionate music. Lace in elements that will share your community's story. Be aware of people needing help engaging.

Incorporate popular or well-known songs that will build unity at conferences, and retreats. Use the instruments you have available to create an atmosphere that bridges the gap between modern contemporary, and conservative liturgical, congregations.

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