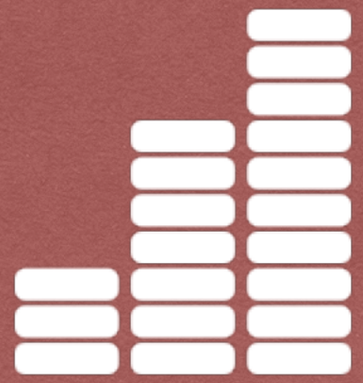
THE
ESSENTIALS
IN WORSHIP
TOOLKIT



4 WAYS TO MAKE SMALL GROUP WORSHIP POWERFUL

worshiptraining

INTRODUCTION

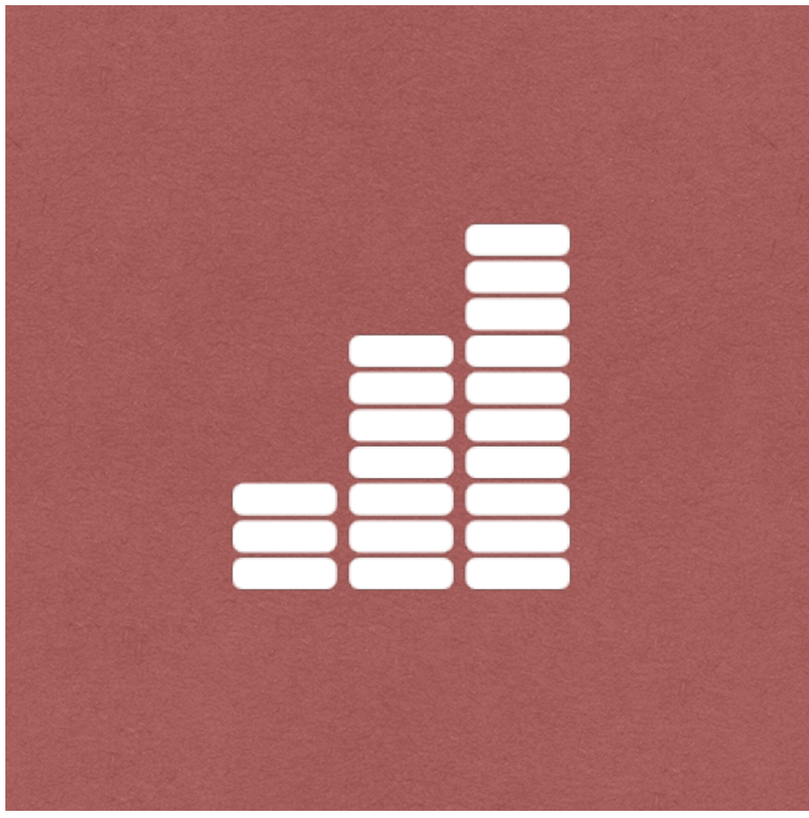
How can we create effective arrangements for small group worship settings?

No matter how long you've been leading worship, small group worship leading can always be one of the most rewarding of all the worship settings we lead in over a lifetime.

Leading worship in small groups – or on retreats, in hospital rooms, or in any small setting – allows for an special intimacy in the worship expression. So how can we lead small group worship more effectively?

INTRODUCTION

1. Less Can Be More
2. Rhythm = Energy
3. Master Song Tempos
4. Create Unique Sounds



1ST WAY - LESS CAN BE MORE

Less can be more.

Our goal in small group worship leading is not to try to mimic the sound or energy of a larger band. Our goal is also not to strip down the music so much that it lacks any energy at all! Our goal is to recognize that fewer instruments can still create a powerful worship environment in a living room.

First, learn to appreciate the beauty of acoustic instruments for small group worship if you don't already, and avoid plugging anything in or using speakers to amplify the sound. Small group settings provide great opportunities to give a mandolin a voice, a cajon a chance, or a banjo a place to sing.

Try something new and sweet the next time you lead, and intentionally shape an atmosphere of intimacy with the softer sounds of acoustic instruments.

2ND WAY - RHYTHM EQUALS ENERGY

Rhythm equals energy.

Small groups can be held in a large, cavernous room or in a cozy, intimate setting. No matter the size of the space – having just a guitarist leading the worship can lack the energy that the group intuitively wants to experience. The cajon is a percussion instrument that, unlike the djembe, can create a subtle groove that mimics a drum kit and creates a clean, crisp energy in the music.

A cajon is a wooden box that has snares from a drum inside the front of the instrument. It makes a nice bass sound when thumped, and a slightly higher snare sound when tapped in the middle. It doesn't dominate the sound in a small room, and enables the other instruments to stand out. Find someone who can play rhythmically and keep a strong tempo to accompany the guitarist. Rhythm will lift the energy in the more celebratory songs, and can be very sweet in the quiet, tender moments.

3RD WAY - MASTER SONG TEMPOS

Master song tempos.

Many people, while working on preparing to lead worship in a small group setting, think that any rhythm or tempo at all will work with a worship song that everyone knows and loves. This is a common mistake – songs work, usually, at just one tempo.

I.e. The pace or tempo of a song needs to come straight from the source. Practice the song to the tempo of the original recording before you arrive at the small group worship moment – so that it's locked in your mind when you begin to play alone. Guitarists often lean toward one of two extremes when leading alone: They either play too quickly, or they play the song far too slowly. The song wasn't designed to go that fast – to get those words out that quickly – or to move that slowly like a funeral dirge. Messing with tempo rarely works, and, participants will be able to feel that "something's not quite right."

Here's another tip. As you're moving through your songs in a set, focus on the chorus of the next song in your head; the chorus helps you hear, inside your mind, the new tempo – and you can start strumming that next song's tempo more accurately.

4TH WAY - CREATE UNIQUE SOUNDS

Create unique sounds.

Finally, in your small group setting, take the opportunity to create some unique sounds as part of the worship set. Maybe you have a ukulele player in your small group, a violinist, or someone who could learn to play a shaker. As your group learns to play together, small additions can become beautiful additions to the worship experience of all.

Think of the fraction principle. If there is only one musician, he/she gets the full sound of 1. If there are two musicians, both cannot play at 100%; the sound must be split and shared. If there are three musicians, each takes a third of the sound. Everyone together must add up to 1.

ACTION STEPS

> Try at least one idea for the next time you lead worship in a small group setting.

When you think about arranging, remember that less can be more. There's no need to overwhelm the space with speakers, amps, and electric guitars. Go acoustic, and let the instruments create those sweet, tender moments.

Incorporate rhythm into the set by trying a cajon or other soft percussive instrument. If you master the tempo of the songs, they'll come off just as powerful acoustically as they do in a larger context.

And, finally, feel free to create unique sounds in your set. Our goal is not to replicate a big band sound in a tiny way – it is to approximate the groove, the rhythm, and the feel of a song on acoustic instruments. Relax, and enjoy this special space for worship.

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