

LEADING THE WAY

Way of Life - a pattern for Christian Living

Journeying Up Worship- adoring God



“Tree”. Bridget Macaulay. Used with permission

Leaders’ Guide.

Leading the Way is a resource produced by the Diocese of Truro Discipleship Team. It is designed to help individuals, congregations and communities to explore the way of life which will enable them to flourish in Jesus Christ.



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These resources undergird and expand the principles identified within the ‘Way of Life’ framework for discipleship. Whilst the ‘Way of Life’ booklet was intended for individual use and development, we have come to recognise the need for churches to consider the same framework for themselves as a body. Equally, we have come to recognise the need for individuals and churches to look beyond themselves, and see how this framework for discipleship might lead to the flourishing of their local community.

This material might be used by a house-group, a working-party, a PCC, or even a whole congregation. The need to consider this particular area might have arisen through Accompanied Ministry Development, through a perceived need within the congregation, or through a concern of the PCC/Ministry Team. There is probably more material here than can be used in one session, so tailor it to your context, or let it spill over into another time.

* Other Resources

See the back of the ‘Worship - a Simple Guide’ leaflet.

The Pilgrim series ‘A Course for the Christian Journey’ Has a 6-session course on ‘The Eucharist’, and also on ‘The Creeds’:

www.pilgrimcourse.org

There will soon be a ‘Windows Into’ course on ‘Christian Worship’ available.

<http://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/vision-strategy/discipleship/windows-into/>

* Prayer

To draw together all that you have done in this session, pray together the prayer on the front of *Worship a Simple Guide*. It could be done responsively like this:

May none of God's wonderful works
keep silence night or morning.
**Bright stars, high mountains,
the depths of the seas, sources of rushing rivers:**
May all these break into song
as we sing to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
May all the angels in the heavens reply:
Amen! Amen! Amen!
Power, praise, honour, eternal glory to God,
the only giver of grace.
Amen! Amen! Amen!

* Beginning where we are

Light a candle and place it on a table in the room.

This prayer can be used:

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.
To you be glory and praise for ever.
From the rising of the sun to its setting
your name is proclaimed in all the world.
To you be glory and praise for ever.
When the time had fully come
you sent the Sun of Righteousness.
In him the fullness of your glory dwells.
To you be glory and praise for ever.

* Icebreaker

If you were allowed just three words in which to say something about God, what words would you use?

Allow people time to think, and give them **post-it notes** to write their 3 words.

If people feel comfortable they can stand, read out their words, and then stick the post-it around the candle. (Alternatively, just put the note around the candle).

Spend some time in silence offering to God all that is in those words. (And if it feels appropriate, repeat the opening responses again).

* Introduction

Worship is the beating heart of the church, and of each and every Christian disciple. It is always connected with our everyday lives. In all that we do, if we are continuously lifting up our heads to remember that God is creator, sovereign and holy- then we are worshipping. This attitude of our lives returns us again and again to our relationship with God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our communal acts of worship are a gathering up of this attitude of worship from during the week and also a re-orientation of ourselves to live worship-fully for the rest of the week.

God calls us to worship with the whole of our human being, because we are created by God in all our humanness. As we worship we are caught up in God through the engagement of the whole of ourselves, body, mind and spirit. This involves all our senses; sight and sound, touch, taste and smell. There is therefore a place in worship for music of all kinds, movement of worshippers, colours of flowers, vestments and artwork, smell of flowers or incense, taste of bread and wine, and the touch of greeting we offer to one another. William Temple, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, said: 'Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable.'

Christians have been worshipping God in Jesus Christ for 2000 years. Over time there have been many different ways to express our love for God and to engage with the journey of human wonder to holy obedience. These differences express our different understandings of humanity, our different understandings of God, and/or our different cultural contexts.

• Community

How does worship serve the community?

- ⇒ How might local worship opportunities be used to build relationship and enhance peoples' sense of belonging?
- ⇒ Do we make the most of baptisms, weddings and funerals in helping people to include God in the milestones of their lives?

In what ways could our worship show its relevance to the community today?

- ⇒ In what ways might church and community work together to meet the spiritual needs of others?
- ⇒ How do we cater for those who worship in informal ways (through such things as wayside shrines, prayer boards or requests) for whom spirituality is important, but who cannot connect with our regular worship?

Are we confident in feeling we have something to offer the world today?

Are there discussion groups or courses that I might join to deepen my understanding of the worship we share in?

Spend some time considering what God might be calling you to do in the life of the church and in his name in the community.

- **Congregational.**

How does our worship cater for the needs of all in the congregation?

- ⇒ Reflecting on the acts of worship held in church. Whom do they cater for?
- ⇒ Whom, if anyone, do they exclude and why is that the case?

How accessible is our worship for those who do not normally come to church?

- ⇒ What support do we offer to visitors?
- ⇒ How might we help people to engage more fully in our worship?
- ⇒ What would need to change to attract others to join us in our acts of worship?

How does our worship refuel us to go out in the world?

- ⇒ Do we find that our worship spills out from the building into all that we do?

The material above is taken from the 'Worship- a Simple Guide' leaflet - give each participant a copy if they don't already have one, and encourage reading (again). If you feel that more teaching is needed in this area, you could go through the simple guide leaflet in more detail - but don't just read directly from it!

- * **Bible 'conversation'**

We are going to spend some time now listening to God through a passage from the Bible.

Psalm 96

Participants will find the full text in their booklet

Explain to the group the full process for this Bible conversation before you begin. Ensure people know that they will not be made to say anything if they don't want to. The process is this:

Have someone read the passage aloud, followed by a time of silence (at least long enough for people to read it again for themselves).

People are encouraged to note a word or phrase that particularly strikes them, and to stay with that word/phrase, being open to what God might be saying to them through it.

Give everyone an opportunity (by going around the group) to say what their word/phrase is (and no more). People can 'pass' if they wish.

Have a different person read the passage again, followed by a time of silence, in which people can consider further the meaning of their word/phrase.

Going around the group, invite people to say something briefly about what it was in the word/phrase which struck them. People can 'pass' if they wish.

Have the passage read for a final time, followed by silence, during which people are invited to make a personal (silent/written) response to God if they wish.

Now that you have explained the process, use an opening prayer and go through each step.

Holy Spirit of God;
open our ears and our minds,
our hearts and our spirits,
that we may hear you speaking to us
through these words of Scripture.
May we be ready to be encouraged and challenged,
guided and changed.
For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

*Questions

In the light of this Bible passage, and what it has been saying to people, consider one or more of these groups of questions (also in participants' booklet). It would be possible to split the participants into 3 groups, to consider one category of questions each, and to report back to the rest.

Alternatively, you may wish to allow people to consider the personal questions themselves later, alone or with a spiritual guide.

If the people of the church are struggling to know what they are about, perhaps it would be best to focus on the congregational questions.

Or if you feel your congregation needs to learn to look beyond themselves, perhaps the community questions will be most appropriate.

These resources are here to be used by you in whatever way feels most appropriate for your particular context.

• Personal

How am I enriched by my experience of worship?

⇒ Might having more input around the prayers of intercession help me to say Amen more fully?

How connected do I feel to the gathered community of the church?

⇒ In what ways could I be more fully part of the congregation, and feel like 'we're in it together'?

Where are the opportunities for me to have creative input into parts of the service?

⇒ Who could I ask about this?