

# Understanding worship through art and music

## AIMS AND OUTCOMES

- To understand that worship can be extravagant.
- To understand that God uses seemingly insignificant people and places to continue his work in the world.
- To explore the fact that there is continuity in the response of God's people to his loving kindness from the earliest times through to today and that as individuals, churches and Parishes we are part of the worshipping people of God across time and across the world.

## RESOURCES

### Using art

- A meeting room with tables and movable seating.
- Bibles or printed copies of the verses to be discussed.
- Digital projector, laptop and screen or printed copies of pictures.
- Paper, pens, pastels, crayons, paint, clay etc.
- Flip chart and pens.

### Using music

- A meeting room that has reasonable acoustics.
- Bibles or printed copies of the verses to be discussed.
- CD/ MP3/or video clip of music based around Luke 7:36-50 eg Worship Song 'I will Worship, with all of my heart' David Ruis, 'The Mystery of Mercy' Andrew Peterson, etc. or around Psalm 148 e.g. Vivaldi's Beatus Vir, Georg Riedel: Psalm 148; Judith Weir Psalm 148 (2008), Leonard Bernstein (A Jewish Legacy) or another appropriate piece
- CD player, computer with speakers or similar.
- Paper and pens
- Flip chart and pens.

When using this activity make sure you explain to the participants what is to happen. People get very worried about their creativity, or lack of it! Ensure that everyone knows and understands that the responses they make are personal to them, that the end result does not need to look like anything, nor does any creative writing need to be particularly coherent or laid out in any particular way. This is between them and God. At the end, if they wish, there will be time to share what they have written/made, but only if they want to.

Before you meet together:

- (a) Consider room and it's layout. You will need easy clean tables and a good number of chairs. Initially there is a time of study and discussion, followed by time for creative responses through the media provided and at the end there will be a plenary/worship. Place some chairs into a semi-circle, as well as around the tables.
- (b) Prepare 2 people to read Psalm 148 and Luke 7:36-50. Or show this video of the second reading <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN7mUDyuHml> )



## SESSION PLAN

How to: You can choose to leave out the parts inside [ ] and spend more time in reflection and response.

1. Read Psalm 148
2. [Discuss in small groups those things that stand out to you from this well-known Psalm, analysing the phrases, words and ideas used.]
3. Read or show the video of Luke 7:36-50.
4. [Discuss in the same small groups the complexities of the situation, the woman's position within her own family and culturally at this time.
5. In small groups talk about how this might have viewed herself as part of God's story prior to this engagement, what was she looking for? How might this woman have related to the sentiment of Psalm 148 before and after her encounter with Jesus.]
6. For quiet reflection: In what ways have you seen God's mercy and greatness displayed in your own life, the life of your church and Parish?
7. [Come together to share thoughts.]

### Using Art:

1. Ask the participants to choose a medium through which to respond to either or both of these readings. (Include the opportunity to respond through creative writing as well as other media.) Allow 30-45 minutes for this.
2. Brainstorm using flip chart and pens answers (and dreams) in response to this question. 'In the future how might we celebrate God and his mercy?'

### Using Music:

1. Explain the piece you will be playing and ask participants to reflect on the readings whilst listening to it.
2. Play your chosen piece and allow a time of silence following it.
3. Ask participants to write down some of their responses, give plenty of time for this.
4. Give people opportunity to share any insights they had.
5. The woman in the story understood little if anything of God's plan for her but she came to Jesus trusting that her offering would not be rejected.
6. Ask, how happy do you feel about the idea of trusting God and playing a part in his plan? (Allow time for participants to respond, writing down their thoughts.)
7. Discuss together what evidence you believe there is of trust in and journey with God in the life of your Parish?

When your creative session is complete spend time praying together or use this Canticle.

1 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, •  
slow to anger and of great kindness.



2 He will not always accuse us, •  
neither will he keep his anger for ever.

3 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, •  
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

4 For as the heavens are high above the earth, •  
so great is his mercy upon those who fear him.

5 As far as the east is from the west, •  
so far has he set our sins from us.

6 As a father has compassion on his children, •  
so is the Lord merciful towards those who fear him.

7 For he knows of what we are made; •  
he remembers that we are but dust.

8 Our days are but as grass; •  
we flourish as a flower of the field;

9 For as soon as the wind goes over it, it is gone, •  
and its place shall know it no more.

10 But the merciful goodness of the Lord is from of old and endures for ever on those  
who fear him, •  
and his righteousness on children's children;

11 On those who keep his covenant •  
and remember his commandments to do them.

*Psalm 103.8-18*

**All**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**