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Worship Leader

Session 6 – Group Course

*Material adapted from 'Living and Learning: Pastoral Visiting'
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Session 6: Reflecting on your experience

Worship Leader Training Course

One of the important ways in which we learn as disciples of Jesus Christ and ministers of the Gospel is through a process of reflection. We learn by reflecting on our practice and making improvements to the way we undertake our work. This process of reflection is often represented by the 'pastoral cycle'.



In this cycle, **experience** (of a situation or event) is explored so that the various elements can be better understood. A number of questions can help this **exploration**. They can be used as a checklist, although not all of the questions will be helpful for each visit.

1. There are questions about the situation.
What was the worship designed to do? Who prepared and delivered it? Was it well planned? Was the worship well delivered? Were there parts that worked well? Were there parts that worked less well? How long did it last? Did we use the building effectively? Who was present? Did anything unexpected occur?
2. There are questions about those involved.
Who planned and delivered the service with you? Did you work well as a team, or were there difficulties? Who delivered the worship with you? Did they do their part well, or were there difficulties?
3. There are questions about the leader.
What did I do in the worship? How did I feel? Was I well prepared? What were my expectations? How did the congregation react to me? Did I know my limitations? Did I do what I intended to do? Was there anything I omitted to do? Did I do a good job?



4. And there are questions about the interaction.

What was happening between the people present at the service? Did they all join in? What was the atmosphere like? Was there a mutual understanding of what we were trying to do together? Were there people who felt unable to join in, and, if so, why? Were there people who particularly enjoyed the worship and, if so, why?

Once we have a clear idea about what happened during the worship, we are able to transition into a period of **reflection** on our own practice.

We may ask the questions:

What can I learn from reflecting on this act of worship? What can I learn from the way I prepared the worship? What can I learn from the way I delivered the worship? What can I learn from those who helped to prepare and/or deliver the worship with me? What can I learn from the way the congregation reacted to the worship?

And because this worship was led on behalf of the church and as a disciple of Jesus Christ there will be a need to address the questions:

How did I serve Christ by preparing and/ or delivering this act of worship? Are there ways in which I could have done that more effectively?

Finally, a **response** can then be formed by asking:

What have I learned from the service? How might I do things differently in the future? Are there skills or knowledge that I lack? Who might help me develop my skills and/ or increase my knowledge?

The Pastoral Cycle is arranged as a spiral simply because each new experience is changed in the light of previous reflection. Variations on this model are common and can be helpful in exploring how the reflective process works.

The best reflections are often undertaken as prayer. Reflection on the worship can lead both to meditation and intercession as we offer the whole experience to God and place before him the needs of the congregation we served. Reflection can lead to confession as we recognise our own inadequacies and the desire to improve our practice can lead to thanksgiving and supplication as we give thanks for the opportunity to serve Christ and seek God's guidance as we move forward.

God calls us to service in many different ways. As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to witness to his life, death, resurrection and ascension in every part of our lives. Through our baptism we are called to explore the way of Jesus, to grow in friendship with God and in love for his people and in service to others. As disciples



of Jesus Christ we do this in our homes, in our places of work, in our times of leisure and through the membership of his church.

There are many ways in which God calls us to serve, and helping with leading worship is one of those ways. It is a ministry that grows out of our journey of discipleship and is part of our Christian witness. It is sometimes difficult to know quite what God is calling us to be and do during the next part of our lives and we often discover the right way forward for us by trying different avenues of service.

This session is designed to help you to discern whether leading worship is right for you at this point in your life. In order to do this we will ask you to honestly and prayerfully reflect on the work that you have done on this course and the service(s) you have planned and led in your ministry area.

It may be that you are busy with other duties that you feel are more pressing either in the church, at work, or in your family. It may be that you feel that this new work is so rewarding that you decide to give up other forms of service to concentrate on this area of ministry. It may even be that God is calling you to explore this ministry further and you would like to go on and explore Licensed Lay Ministry or ordination as a deacon or a priest.

Indeed, the life-long journey of faith demands that we constantly seek God's guidance on the path that he wants us to take so that we can become the person he wants us to be.

When we undertake a task on behalf of the church the discernment for that task is the responsibility of both the individual who takes on that work and the church in whose name the ministry is undertaken. Therefore, at this stage it will be important for others to engage with you in a discernment process to prayerfully identify whether leading worship is right for you at this time. You will have thought about this before undertaking this course of training and others in the church will have supported you on this journey.

However, you now need to reflect on the work that you have been undertaking with those responsible for leading worship in your church and need to come to a joint decision about the way ahead.



Group Work Discussion

1. Gathering

Spend a few minutes in silence, offering any worries or concerns from everyday life to God, and acknowledging God's presence among you as you meet together.

**God our Father, Lord of all the world,
through your Son you have called us into the fellowship
of your universal Church:
hear our prayer for your faithful people
that in their vocation and ministry each may be an
instrument of your love,
and give to your servants the needful gifts of grace;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
Amen.**

2. Reflecting

In groups of 2-3, reflect together on the experiences you have gained planning and leading public worship:

- Were there services you felt went particularly well?
- How did this feel? What were the factors that made this a fulfilling experience?
- Were there services that didn't go as planned, or engage the congregation in the way you'd hoped?
- What difficulties did you encounter, and what lessons have you learned as a result?

Come back together as a group, share the key points from your experiences and reflections.



3. Exploring

Continue reflecting together, now sharing as a group:

- Reflect together on the experiences you have had of leading worship.
- Share your positive and negative experiences, and explore what made them so.

4. Responding and Concluding

- a. Each share briefly your one most significant piece of learning from the whole training process.
- b. Make arrangements for each member of the group to have a conversation with the appropriate member of the Ministry Team, to agree whether you will go forward to be fully commissioned as a Worship Leader.
- c. Finish by saying the Grace together, or some other form of prayer.

