
GUIDE FOR LEADING WORSHIP

"Worship provides the center when all else is confused"

- Gene Stoltzfus

The role of worship in team life undergirds the connection of immediate tactics and our transcendent vision. Giving good leadership to a solid worship experience for a group is a skill worth developing. The following guidelines can be helpful as you plan for and lead people through worship.

A HOLY PLACE:

A brief period of time (15-20 minutes), for people to focus and center is an invaluable part of every team's daily life. Whether it's called "worship" or "devotions" or "prayers" or "reflection time," it is important to establish a simple rhythm that gives people a sense of confidence so they can relax into it.

Throughout history people of all religions have reached out to the Divine in places of special significance. Many worship sites in Biblical times, and later churches, were built on these holy places of sacrifice, worship or prayer. In the field, teams may want to look for locally significant holy places to pray. Our team in Hebron gathered regularly for worship at the tomb of Abraham and Sarah.

In planning for worship, try to connect to all of the senses: sight, sound, smell, touch and taste in addition to the mystical "sixth sense." Help people to recall voices from the past, of those who have gone before us, as well as hope for the future.

ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP:

There are a variety of possible elements from which to choose when planning team worship.

- ◆ **Symbols:** try to have a specific place to gather around; if you are inside, a table with a nice cloth provides a visible center; choose a symbol or two that can help people focus – a candle, pictures, or other objects may be placed neatly on the table.
- ◆ **Songs & Music:** choose two or three songs that people know which relate to the theme of your worship; it's good to have one for opening and one for closing; tapes of selected music or an instrumental solo can also be incorporated.
- ◆ **Reading or Meditation:** a brief reading for inspiration and instruction can be selected from the psalms or other scriptures, devotional books, or quotes and excerpts from other sources; you may want to invite others in the group to participate in the reading. Someone may prepare a brief meditation on a particular passage to connect it to the current situation in which we are working.
- ◆ **Ritual:** a simple ritual, such as communion, can be the center of your worship experience; other ideas include passing the peace, giving a word of blessing, sharing bread, etc.; make sure instructions are clear.
- ◆ **Dance or Movement:** engaging the body as well as the spirit, movement or sacred dance can be a powerful component of worship; if everyone is to participate, keep it very simple.
- ◆ **Prayer:** one person may lead a prayer or there may be a written prayer read in unison; open prayer that allows for free participation from the group could include a common response to each person's petition (such as "Lord, hear our prayer").
- ◆ **Silence:** include plenty of silence in your worship; several short periods of silence can occur between other elements; a longer silence is often appropriate after a reading so people can reflect on the message.

Following is one recommended model for structuring team worship times:

WELCOME/CALL TO WORSHIP
SONG
READING or MEDITATION
SILENCE
PRAYER
SONG