



Worship ideas for distanced youth.

When meeting online and in socially distanced groups with no singing, we've needed to be creative in facilitating moments of corporate worship with young people. Altering how we engage in worship has provided a great opportunity for a discussion on the role of worship (in its broadest sense) in our lives and its scope and power in our communities.

Worship is a key activity in our relationship with God that young people find both challenging and rewarding. Trying different ideas and allowing young people discover what works for them is really important. It's also important to help young people become comfortable with worship with others, sharing a degree of vulnerability and openness. So, let's be honest when it doesn't quite work and keep on inviting young people to share in the joy of worshipping the Lord together.

Here's a few ideas but get in touch to let us know how your congregation has innovated in inviting families to worship God.

Breath prayers

Write simple prayers that match your breathing. Ask young people to concentrate on simply breathing in and out slowly, asking them to compose prayers of praise that match the rhythm of their breathing. You can find a great example here:

<https://sheridanvoysey.com/coronavirus-is-going-to-demand-much-of-us-this-might-help/>

Using our hands

Some worship traditions make use hands as an outward expression of worship. Invite young people to try to express their worship with their hands, bearing with it even if it feels awkward at first. You could encourage the group to use their hands while reading prayers, or when listening to recorded music.

Open hands can act as a sign of openness to God and wanting to receive from Him. Chat about what it means to open up to God. How does it feel? What might happen when we do this?

Closing our hands focusses us on what we are holding onto, the good and the bad. Why is it a good thing to hold onto God during troubled times, how much can we hold onto at any one time, what might we need to let go of?

Surrender - Lifting our hands above our heads in a pose of surrender may feel unnatural and odd. Talk about what it means to surrender and discuss if the symbol may have significance as an action of worship. Play some music and invite the group to give it a go.

One word prayers

Take it in turns to say one word of praise to God. Allow everyone a few opportunities to share a word. Try it with things you are thankful for or words to express mood or how the week had been. Many young people feel self-conscious composing prayers out loud but saying a single word as part of a group activity is less intimidating. Experiment with different ways of doing this, like saying the first word you think of, or getting someone to write down the words and then read them back again.

Giving

Why is giving money such an important part of our worship? Talk about how money exposes our priorities and think together about how you might give (even if just a little) as an act of worship. Try reflecting on Luke 21:1-4.

Thankfulness message group/board

Start a worship Instagram story, WhatsApp group or similar. Ask the group to take it in turns to post and share pictures and words as expressions of worship each day for a week.

Air guitar worship

Play some upbeat music by a worship band and split the group up to play imaginary instruments, forming an 'air guitar' band. This could work as a funny ice breaker activity to begin with but if you do this for a whole song, the group will start to focus on the music, instruments and lyrics.

Writing Psalms together

Respond to a news event (or follow a conversation on what the group has been up to this week) by writing a psalm together. Perhaps read one or two from the Bible, then ask each person from the group to write one line themselves. Ask the group to send in their one line psalm and arrange into a poem (if you can do this without sharing who wrote what it will help those less confident). Read it together as worship, inviting God into the lives of each person who contributed.

Listening

Read together Kings 19 (11-12) and talk about the 'noise' that might get in the way of our relationship with God, our spending time with him, listening to Him and worshipping him.

Mind-map the groups biggest distractions, then play some recorded noises (a fire, an earthquake and a storm) followed by a time of silence.

How might being still be an act of worship?

Tell the group how long you will keep the silence for, 1 minute perhaps, and that it will be a time to pray and be still before God. Finish by asking if the group found this easy or difficult.

Bedroom disco

When meeting online, play an upbeat praise dance song and invite the group to dance where they are. Give the group time to prepare, you could even send them glowsticks in the post!