WITH ONE ACCORD
A Team Approach to Worship Planning

Getting Started

*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.* -Proverbs 15:22

Every corps has the opportunity and challenge of creating a worship experience that has the potential to touch lives each Sunday morning. This curriculum has been created to help your corps form a team of individuals into a fully functioning worship committee that can creatively plan and participate in relevant and vibrant worship.

In order to take the first step in this process, corps officers must in faith face the two great fears of worship committees: Loss of control and loss of spontaneity in worship.

**Loss of control**
Make no mistake about it: Corps officers cast the vision and plot the course in response to the needs of their people. Designated individuals or an entire committee may plan and structure a service outline based on an officer’s sermon theme and scripture, but even best-intended plans are subject to final adjustments and revisions by the officer - the one who has the most collective picture of the service from start to finish.

**Loss of spontaneity**
When structure is sacrosanct it becomes ritual. Ritual can soon evolve into what Jesus referred to as “vain repetition.” Earnest worship planners are always prepared to be overridden by the Holy Spirit. To state the obvious, worship is not about us - it’s about God. As long as this mind-set is evident within a worship committee, officers need not fear worship becoming a slave to form and structure.

*A worship committee offers many benefits:*

- A group of people who can support and share the corps officer’s vision for the spiritual health of the corps.
- This group can join in the creative process of planning worship services.
- More individuals are involved in identifying those who can participate in worship and can contribute their talents or gifts such as music, drama, media, organization, etc. [This group should include leaders of any vocal or instrumental music groups.]
- Committee participants feel a greater sense of purpose, and commitment to the ultimate mission of each service.
- Sundays cease to be rituals and become celebrations of God’s goodness and faithfulness.
At the direction of the corps officer, this team must devote itself to:

- Identifying the spiritual needs of the congregation.
- Seeking God’s Word and Spirit to speak to these needs.
- Developing personnel and resources to present God’s truth effectively.
- Establishing a regular time for the team to meet and coordinate services.
- Developing the service elements around chosen sermon themes, including congregational singing, scripture and other readings, prayer, special music, drama, etc.
- Building services with effective flow, direction and purpose, transitions, as well as opportunities for impactful moments of meditation, worship and response.
- Establishing a regular "huddle time" prior to Sunday services allows participating members to be clear on their respective responsibilities and to take the time to pray for each part of the service.
- The materials contained in this resource are designed to help implement and teach the above goals.
What’s Included?

Session 1-5 materials – Downloadable, reproducible handouts are contained on the DVD. Five agendas are provided to guide the worship committee through a variety of subjects, exercises and discussion questions. Each outline contains the following components:

🔍 **Evaluate**: Evaluation should be part of every meeting. We must look back before we look forward. Without the discipline of feedback, the committee will never grow in excellence and effectiveness.

👓 **Focus**: this is the theme of the committee meeting. Focus materials will be provided for each session. This theme is often the subject of the reading materials included for members to read prior to the next meeting. This part of the meeting looks at the next few weeks of worship services.

💬 **Follow-up**: Identify and recruit service participants. Assignments and deadlines are determined for committee members.

⚙️ **Fundamentals (Homework)**: Downloadable, reproducible handouts are contained on the DVD giving guidelines on a variety of subjects. Reading materials are included predominately from the book *The Beat Goes On* - Music as a Corps Ministry by Dr. Harold Burgmayer. These are intended to help teach members of your committee worship concepts.
Suggested Format/Schedule Options

This material contains four sessions which should never be spaced more than four weeks apart. Session 1 and 2 could be grouped fairly close, but all others should happen once every other week. There are four recommended approaches to scheduling; one that begins in early fall; the second starting at the beginning of the calendar year; the third involves planning for Advent; and the fourth involves planning for Lent. Exploring and adopting an existing worship series can provide materials for an encouraging start. This gives a theme and outlines for committee members to view and adapt as needed.

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<tr>
<th>Option #1: Program Year</th>
<th>Option #2: New Year Start</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>September 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Session 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>September 15 (worship series)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Session 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Session 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>October 15</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Session 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>November 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Option #3: Advent</th>
<th>Option #4: Lent (Adjust to align with Easter)</th>
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<td><strong>Session 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Session 3</strong></td>
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Once this committee has met for the five sessions, it should become evident to all that having a functioning worship committee is very helpful to the worship at your corps. If the committee is interested in continuing, a once a month or once every other month committee meeting is recommended. If the committee decides to continue, sermon themes/titles along with corresponding scripture will need to be developed by the corps officer so the committee can plan appropriately. It would be ideal for the corps officer to try to stay 6-8 weeks ahead of the actual meeting date. These themes should be published by the corps officer in a grid format (see sample below). This worship grid should include the worship resources and personnel from your corps and should be given to all members of the committee at each meeting.
It’s very possible that the corps officer will be the planner in the early stages of a worship committee formation. As the members of the committee evolve and mature, involve these members as planners. The corps officer is encouraged to utilize worship series such as the Advent and Lent materials produced each year by the Central Territory. These weekly outlines can be given to members of the committee to plan and adapt. Together as a group the corps officer can then work with the planners to help finalize how the service should look. This gives the corps officer opportunity to teach members of the committee how a service should flow, etc. Additional guidelines are available on a variety of subjects, such as song selection, etc. The corps officer is encouraged to use these materials to share worship concepts to the members of the worship committee.

If the corps officer is the weekly worship planner, encourage the committee to brainstorm ideas for the chosen themes. If the services are already planned, bring them to the meeting for the committee to review, similar to handing out the service outlines from a published worship series.

**What’s Next?**

1. **Familiarize yourself with the tutorial.** Examine the session outlines, as well as the discussion questions. Study the section called Fundamentals. Members of the committee will be assigned to read this material as homework before the next meeting. Follow-up questions will be discussed in the next week’s session. This material is included to help you teach your committee the fundamentals of effective worship.

2. **Gather a team.** There may be an obvious group of people to invite, such as staff, volunteers or music leaders. Perhaps you have been running the whole show in your ministry. Now is a great time to gather a group of people around you who are ready to be encouraged and challenged in helping to shape and own their corps’ worship services. You may wish to include young emerging leaders or students who can step up to take leadership in coming years.

3. **Schedule your sessions.** This tutorial is set up in five 2-hour sessions. Agendas are included for each of these sessions. The corps officer or worship planning leader should adapt these agendas for his own situation. Planning meetings should never go longer than 2.5 hours. Set dates for all sessions and do not cancel them.

4. **Gather materials for the session.** Each agenda will identify the needs for that particular meeting.
5. Prepare for sessions in advance. Read through the appropriate pages in the handout and pray for clarity and insight about the topics you and your team will be discussing.

Now is the chance for you and members of your corps to take the next vital step in laying a strong foundation for effective worship. May our ministry be blessed and impacted by the skills and knowledge gained by your team members as you re-ignite your dedication to changing lives through effective worship.