

Guidelines—introducing the liturgy (mostly for teachers)

Christian Worship has always followed patterns.

These patterns have become known as *liturgy*.

This is a Greek word which means the 'work of the people'.

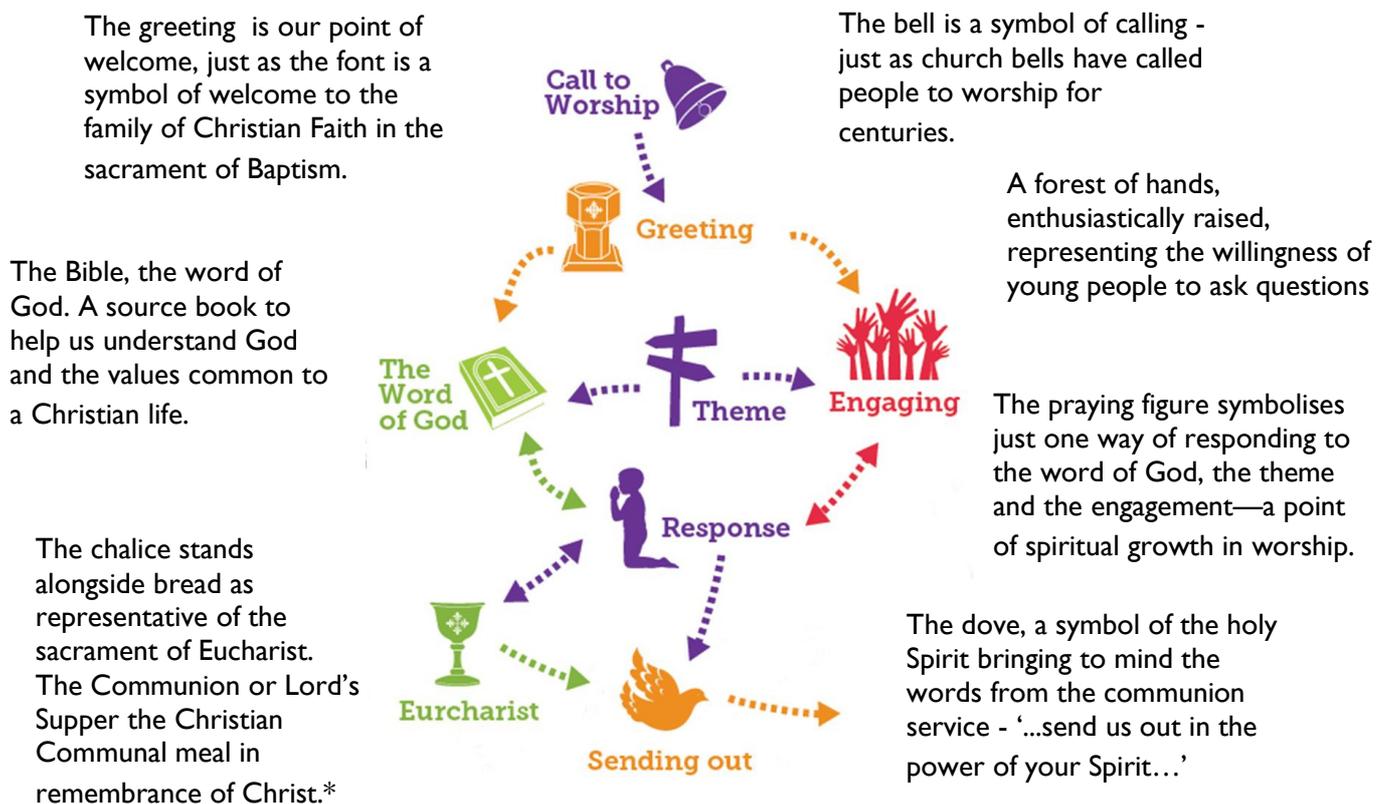
We use *liturgy* as a name for the patterns of worship which are found in Christian Churches. In the Church of England there are liturgies for all kinds of worship from the Baptism of Children to the Ordination of Priests.

Liturgy has developed into some very distinct patterns and the various liturgies found in Christian Churches are one of the ways in which Christian denominations demonstrate both their differences and their similarities. For example (in the English speaking world) not every denomination has a set of 'Eucharistic prayers' but almost every church uses 'The Lord's Prayer' in a form which is not found in the Bible but in an ancient 'liturgical' form. The Church of England has a huge range of services and liturgical elements which are found in Common Worship and New Patterns for Worship. Some of the words met in these texts are unusual so we have provided a glossary to help.

The use of liturgy is a very powerful way of making worship lively and meaningful. It provides each act of worship with substance and structure, and can empower many people to become contributors, participants and leaders. The work of worship truly becomes the work of the people, not the work of just one person!

The WorshipWorkshop resources will enable you to create a fund of worship material. The website provides prayers, songs, Bible readings and other useful words and ideas which are taken from the authorised liturgy of the church. These can be accessed through different indexes and provides patterns into which you can slot stories and other stimuli to suit your theme(s).

Our resources are arranged according to the 'map of worship' used by the website....



* Worship Workshop will not have any resources to support Eucharist in the first instance. These should be added during the first year of the project.



Coming together for worship is important in itself - it is a response to a summoning. This summoning has been traditionally performed by the ringing of bells. You may like to experiment with some ways of calling the community to worship.

Drums: a drum call can be begun at a distant part of the building and other individual drummers or small groups join in as they hear the rhythm. As classes hear the sound they process to the hall—or wherever worship may take place.

Ringling Bells: handbells or even chimebars can mimic the effect of church bells.

Singing: an a'capella group can process through the building and be followed by others as they pass.

There is a multitude of possibilities, do not be afraid to experiment.



Greeting

The greeting is a way of recognising the gathering of the community. There are two kinds of gathering:

- One is an assembly of the members of the community for any purpose;
- The second is a specific gathering for the purpose of worship.

When gathering for worship any general social comments such as 'good mornings' would come before the *liturgical* greeting. These are important because they serve to reinforce the social context of the gathering but the liturgical greeting marks the beginning of worship.

The words of greeting may be accompanied by an action such as the lighting of a candle or the laying of a table.

If a candle is to be lit it does not need to be accompanied by words. A scramble of hands responding to 'Who would like to light our candle...?' tends to disturb the mood of worship.

Worship Workshop has a variety of forms of greeting for various seasons and themes for you to choose from.



Theme

The theme is a common part of worship today. Schools often have a list, or pattern, of themes and Churches also have 'Sunday Themes'. Worship Workshop offers two thematic indexes based on Church Seasons and Christian Values - these may help you to more easily identify appropriate prayers and songs.



Engaging

Engaging is a little bit of a misnomer. It is not the case that the rest of the worship is *not* engaging but rather this is the part of worship which creates the engagement of those who are gathered with the theme or purpose of the gathering. It is very likely that there is a dynamic relationship between the engagement and the use of scripture in many acts of worship.

This part of worship is the story or the play or the poem ...

The part which is the equivalent of a 'sermon' in a church service



The Word of God

The inclusion of the Bible in Christian worship is a vital aspect of that worship. The exact role of the Bible can vary but in all cases it is the primary link between the gathering and the source of faith - God. Thus it is important that any reading of the Bible is *liturgically* distinct from the reading of any other material. This is achieved by the use of specific introductory words which may also be accompanied by specific actions.

Worship Workshop offers a selection of introductions to the Bible readings and some suggestions of actual Bible passages related to seasons and values. The 'message' or 'lesson' of an act of worship is a response to what God has done or said so it is usual to read a section of the Bible *before* the message is given. It is rarely appropriate to read the Bible afterwards as an *illustration* or *example*. Liturgically the Bible is the *source* of a message or lesson. These responses may be appropriate at the beginning or end of a Bible reading. The Word of God does not have to be long and complex it is sufficient that it is seen (understood) as the source or catalyst of the response that is being offered.



Response

The response of the gathered community to the ideas encountered in the engagement and the Bible reading can take a multitude of forms, whatever forms of response are adopted for a particular act of worship there should always be an opportunity for **prayer**. It should be noted that the response is also part of the engagement.

Worship Workshop has a range of prayers, in particular there are 'collects' which are prayers appropriate to particular seasons, though they also have links with various values.

A vital response found in regular church worship is **offering**. This can take many forms but most commonly is that of money gathered at the *offertory*. Children in particular are often very good at 'giving', this is not to suggest that there should be a collection at school but in instances where money is gathered at say Red Nose Day or another charity event it is appropriate that the donation be both celebrated and blessed as a gift of the Christian community drawn in the first place from the wealth of creation which is in turn the gift of God. Thus it is that offering is within and from the community and is an offering to each other based on God given values. Harvest is an obvious time for an offering liturgy; BUT also the common Friday afternoon 'celebration' assembly can easily be seen as an opportunity to offer the fruits of our work and to give thanks for the skills and abilities with which we have been blessed.

For those schools where parents are regularly invited to a 'family service' at the church then a standard 'collection' would not actually be out of place...

The physicality of the **peace** is a contrast and compliment to the traditionally verbal and auditory world of worship. The exchange of *appropriate* touch is both a binding and learning activity for the community. Try to encourage children and students to use a well defined touch to enhance the impact of the sharing. Worship Workshop has some suggestions for the act of sharing the peace as well as words of introduction.



Sending out

Sending out is part of the worship which typically should include a conclusion and dismissal which includes an sense of commission thus reinforcing the impact of the worship on those gathered *and* the implications of that impact for the coming day (assuming that worship occurs at the beginning of the day!).

A good way of thinking about this is to see the sending out as 'sealing' the worship both bringing it to a close and setting up the context for any activities which follow. Worship changes us and when we leave it is to live as the new people we have become.

Song

Worship Workshop has an extensive bank of songs for use in worship. Sacred song has been part of human worship from the very earliest times and became a central part of Christian liturgy very quickly.

The words of songs contribute to worship in various ways:

They help us to

Reflect on our behaviour

Remember stories from the Bible

Think about who God is

Consider different attributes of God

Celebrate

Respond with praise

Fit into the historical sweep of faith and worship

Learning and singing songs is a powerful way of bringing a community together. The songs in Worship Workshop are linked by the same keywords of season and value as the rest of the parts of the site.