

Worship Development

Starter; *[in pairs]*

What have you ever made that you are proud of?

What is the loveliest thing you have ever seen?

Reading: Psalm 104: 1-24

Ideally the leader could organise a visual aid to accompany this reading. Read aloud, then allow time for everyone to re-read it for themselves along with the comment and the personal focus questions-and reflect alone

Comment: There are possibilities in every church, whatever its size or architectural merit. The imaginative use of colour and the visual arts can also be most appropriate. Both can contribute to an atmosphere in which the sense of mystery, of being caught up in something beyond ourselves, can be experienced...

Here are symbols to remind us

Of our lifelong need of grace:

Here are table, font and pulpit;

Here the cross has central place.

(HP 653 v.2)

These visual expressions of our faith enable a congregation to worship with all the senses, and these in turn can become a vehicle for responding to the presence of the transcendent God...

The real purpose of our Christian symbolism is to help us to gaze on God. Such gazing becomes possible when we can focus our eye on some symbol: the cross, a crucifix, a banner, an ancient embroidered symbol, a lighted candle. This gazing is about being confronted by his love, seen in Jesus Christ and experienced in the Holy Spirit.

[Let the People Worship Conference Report 1988]

8. Visual Aids

Personal Focus Questions:

1. What thoughts come to mind as you read this Psalm and comment? What might God be saying to you?
2. How helpful do you find it to have something to look at or focus on in worship?
3. If you use visual aids in worship, what kind of comments do you get from the congregation? Are they generally appreciative?
4. Think about the kind of visual aids you might use for an act of worship in a special season of the Christian Year, such as Advent or Passiontide.

Share together in threes the results of your individual reflection.

When you have finished your discussion, return together as a group and share any insights. Then look together at these applications.

Applications:

1. Brainstorm the different kinds of visual aids that might be possible and effective to use in worship, bearing in mind different sizes of building and congregation.
2. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of using purely *visual* aids, as opposed to those also relating to other senses (such as touch, hearing, smell, and taste).
3. What kinds of resources do we need to enable us to use visual and other aids in worship?

Review *(individual thought)*

As an individual how will you use the ideas you have heard in this session?

Follow up

If you would like to develop these ideas further then you could organise a workshop with Sandra Clack [01522 509324]

Worship

End with a time of worship that uses some visual focus. Close with this prayer:

Holy God, gathered in your presence we remember with thankfulness many things:

moments of insight when we have been lovingly drawn into your presence;

moments of vision when, through our imagination, you have shown us the possibilities of this world;

moments of glory, when your beauty has enfolded us beyond all that words, time and thought can tell.

Creator God, weave within us your patterns of joy and laughter, love and friendship, that together we may all share in the rich tapestry of your kingdom. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN.

[Source unknown]