

Worship: ritual or spiritual?



Introduction:

The aim of this session broadens the young people's understanding of worship within the Anglican tradition. If possible this session can be hosted in the church (especially the closing reflection).

Aims & objectives:

- To explore worship and its purpose.
- To understand the relevance of the Eucharist/Communion and the sacraments in Anglican worship.
- To deepen young people's understanding of worship and its significance to Christian discipleship.

Materials: Lots of 'post-its' and felt-tip pens.



Activity...

What do you know?

Begin the session handing out post-its and pens to the group. Ask the young people to think about the word 'worship' and write down words on a post-it that comes to mind. Explain that the young people can use as many post-its as they like, but remind them to try and limit three words to each post-it: e.g. singing, raising hands, confession, bread and wine, prayers etc.

After several minutes, compare their answers on the post-its with a dictionary definition of worship, discussing any similarities or interesting discoveries (a dictionary meaning of 'worship' can be found on the next page).



Activity...

What do you know?



Engage...

What is worship



Explore...

The Last Supper



Going deeper...

Signs and symbols



Pause...

Setting the table



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Worship:

1. (a) The reverent love and devotion accorded a deity, an idol, or a sacred object. (b) The ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which this love is expressed.
2. Ardent devotion; adoration.
3. Often used as a form of address for magistrates, mayors, and certain other dignitaries: Your Worship.

wor·shipped or wor·shipped, wor·ship·ing or wor·ship·ping, wor·ships

1. To honor and love as a deity.
2. To regard with ardent or adoring esteem or devotion.

(source: www.thefreedictionary.com)



Engage...

What is worship?

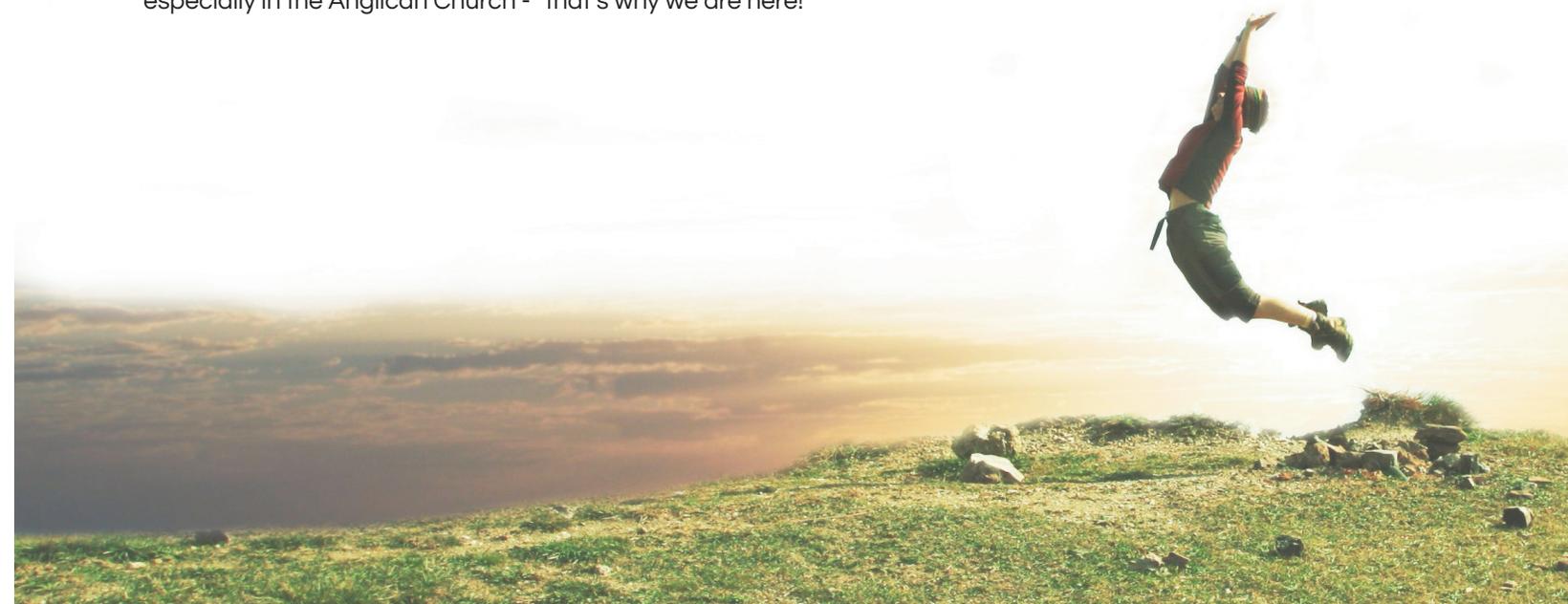
Materials: Laptop/equipment to play a You Tube clip.

Watch the clip 'Worship-Intro.mov' - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xokHAz-K7s0>

After the clip ask the young people if their understanding of worship has been influenced by the clip and, if so, how? If necessary, watch the clip again and at the end mention if anyone noticed the following words in the film;

“ That’s why we SING
That’s why we CELEBRATE
That’s why WE ARE HERE “

Conclude the activity stating that worship is not just about 'singing' songs, it is about how we individually and collectively 'celebrate' the love of God as expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. That is why Communion, also known as the Eucharist is so central to Christian worship, especially in the Anglican Church - "that's why we are here!"



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Explore...

The Lord's Supper

Materials: Spare Bibles in case the young people forget to bring their own.

Encourage the group to find 1 Corinthians 11: 23-29. Explain to the group that these verses are the words commonly used in a Communion service following Jesus example that he shared with his disciples at the Last Supper.

Invite the group to reflect on the passage, highlighting words that they feel are important, stand out to them or they are uncomfortable with or don't understand. If the group are unsure about writing in their Bibles have some paper and pens available. Afterwards, take a moment to talk through anything that has arisen from the discussion, in particular asking why and how the words relate to Communion.

1 Corinthians 11:23-29 (NLT)

On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me." In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people - an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.

So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honouring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgement upon yourself.



Going deeper...

Signs and symbols

Materials: Copies of the 'Going deeper' worksheet.

The act of Communion is central to the Christian faith. In smaller groups the next series of questions will help the young people understand the significance of Communion and reflect on what it personally means to them. The person leading the session may also want to look deeper into exploring and explaining other liturgies used in Anglican worship during the question time:

- 1) Why is Communion central to the Church / Christian faith?
- 2) Why did Jesus use bread and wine as symbols?
- 3) What do you think v26-29 are saying to us in preparation for Communion?
NB: an explanation of why we 'share the peace' may be needed here.
- 4) What three words would you use to describe worship?
- 5) What does Communion mean to you as you prepare for Confirmation?



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Pause...

Setting the table

Materials: A table, candle, water, loaf of bread, wine (or alternative) and Communion vessels.

This is a powerful closing reflection and an inclusive way of preparing the table for Holy Communion.

Start with an empty table with only the chalice and paten (Communion vessels) placed in the centre (using the actual sacred vessels used in worship will enhance the experience for the young people). Nominate several young people to bring up each of the items one by one and, as they do, say the text below - this can also be done in pairs to include more people in the reflection:

- Leader:** On the table we set symbols to remind us of God's promises.
- Person 1:** (Brings up a candle, places it on the table and lights it)
A candle, to remind us of Jesus who said "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."
- Person 2:** (Brings up the loaf of bread, breaks it and places it on the table)
Bread, a symbol of Jesus who said, "I am the bread of life....
The bread that I shall give is myself for the life of the world."
- Person 3:** (Brings up the wine and pours it into the chalice)
Wine, to remind us of the blood of Jesus.
- Person 4:** (Brings up a jug of water and places it on the table
- this can be added to the wine)
Water, reminding us that Jesus said,
"If anyone is thirsty let them come to me,
whoever believes in me let them drink.
For anyone who lives and believes
in me will never die."



Arrange the young people around the table (or in a circle) and encourage the group to close their eyes and read 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26 again. To conclude, share the 'peace' with one another and at the discretion of the leader/facilitator, the group can taste the bread together in an informal way to celebrate their time on the Confirmation course. Alternatively, leave everything on the table and finish the worship time together sharing the 'peace' with one another.

