

Notes for Course Leaders

These notes explain the Lay Worship Leader training course and the different ways in which the material can be used, together with the responsibilities of the course leader.

Shape of the course

The course consists of ten sessions, each intended to last around two hours. There is also a 'Taster' session to enable people to reflect on whether Lay Worship Leader training is right for them before beginning the course and a concluding session for those who have completed the course and are ready to be commissioned as Lay Worship Leaders.

The ten sessions are designed to be spaced at least two weeks apart to allow for some active learning and reflection in between.

Each session is in six sections:

Introduction - a time of gathering, with something relevant to the session to reflect on such as a reading, poem, hymn, film or audio clip followed by prayer, ending with the Collect for Trinity 14.

**Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.**

Then four blocks of material each ending with either an exercise or a topic for discussion.

Each session concludes with some work to be done in preparation for the next session.

Course outline

'TASTER' SESSION: IS LAY WORSHIP LEADER MINISTRY RIGHT FOR ME?

SESSION 1 – UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP

SESSION 2 – TRADITIONS OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

SESSION 3 – THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

SESSION 4 – THE WORSHIP LEADER

SESSION 5 – THE DAILY OFFICE

SESSION 6 – BREAKING OPEN THE WORD IN WORSHIP

SESSION 7 – PRAYER AND INTERCESSION IN WORSHIP

SESSION 8 – INCLUDING MUSIC IN WORSHIP

SESSION 9 – MULTI GENERATIONAL AND ALL AGE WORSHIP

SESSION 10 – WORSHIP AND OUTREACH

CONCLUDING SESSION: GOING FORWARD

A more detailed outline is available on the Diocesan website

Using the material

You will need to decide whether you want group members to have their own copies of the course booklet. These need to be ordered in plenty of time from the Learning for Discipleship and Ministry Team office. Each course participant can purchase their own copy directly from us or the course leader can order the copies for everyone. We only charge for the cost of producing the booklet.

You may prefer to print off the material yourself from the website or ask each course participant to do this for themselves and bring it along to the session. Ideally the material should be printed off in colour to retain the look and quality of the original.

Learning together

Your learning group may contain people who need to learn at different levels. Some people find training of any kind a bit of a challenge – they just want to get going! Others quite quickly discover that they want to go deeper and will feel short changed if there isn't enough to bite on. The material is designed to be used flexibly, enabling groups and individuals to find a way of learning that is right for them.

Each session contains quite a lot of material – enough to cover all the ground that needs to be covered. But you can use it in different ways. Group members could be asked to read some or all of the material before the session. Or you could look at some or all of the material together within the session. A course leader might want to draw on other material which covers the same ground but in a different way and use that instead. An experienced course leader might simply use the exercises and discussions to draw out themes and insights and leave it up to group members when and how they engage with the material. For those wanting to explore some aspects in more detail there is a booklist on the Diocesan website or the course leader may also want to recommend further reading.

The course leader should ensure that the group has covered all the sections of all the sessions in some appropriate way by the end of the course.

Assessment

Lay Worship Leader ministry is a locally focused ministry exercised under the supervision of the incumbent. So the judgement about whether someone is suitable to be a Lay Worship Leader in a particular church is for the incumbent to make, with the PCC. The responsibility of the course leader is to ensure that course participants attend all the sessions and engage with the learning including the preparatory work. It is important that you keep a record of who attends each session and who is absent. A template with expandable boxes is available on the Diocesan website and this should be completed session by session and returned to the Learning for Discipleship and Ministry Team office at the end of the course. If you have any concerns about a course participant these should be raised with the Learning for Discipleship and Ministry Team in the first instance.

Course participants are asked to make notes of the material they prepare for each session and this could be kept in a file for future reference but it does not need to be submitted. Participants are asked to produce a single piece of written work on completion of the course to be shared with their incumbent. Details of this assignment are on the Diocesan website.

There are no formal learning outcomes for the course but the material is structured in a way that indicates the areas to be covered. The acid test is not whether someone can complete a course of study but whether they will be an inspiring leader of worship at the end of it. We are unashamedly looking for high quality. For some people who come along to a service this may be the first encounter they have had with a particular church, or it may even be the first time they have been in a church at all. For others, sharing in the worship of their local church is central to their spiritual life. So worship has got to be good. It's a privilege and a responsibility to lead others in worship.

Preparing to lead a session

The course leader is responsible for the overall delivery of the course but you may want to invite others to lead some sessions or parts of sessions. If you are a co-leading a course or session, make sure you set aside enough joint planning time beforehand.

Responsibility for whatever venue is being used rests with the course leader unless it has been agreed that someone else is responsible for this. If you are hoping to show a film clip or use powerpoint make sure that the right equipment is available and that you know how to use it. If refreshments will be provided it is a good idea to ask someone else to take responsibility for this.

Although all the material is supplied you will need to look through it well in advance and decide how you want to use it. For instance, it may be helpful to draw up a session plan. How long do you need to allow for each section? Will there be a break at some point? What about leaving space at the end to discuss what needs doing for the next week? If you wish to use additional or alternative material it is up to you provide it, together with copies for the course participants if needed.

All expenses of running a course, including course leaders' expenses, should be met locally. It is a good idea to agree in advance how this will be done.

Got more questions?

Contact the Learning for Discipleship and Ministry Team on 01722 411944 at any time