



# SMALL GROUP OUTLINES



# TRANSFORMATIONAL WORSHIP

These Small Group Outlines are produced by the Youth and Children's Ministry Unit in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview). They are available every month from our website.

For more information and other resources, visit [salvationist.org.uk/resources/youth-ministry-resources](https://salvationist.org.uk/resources/youth-ministry-resources)

### SESSION ONE:

#### WHAT IS WORSHIP?

What is worship? In today's session we'll take time to consider the many different forms worship can take. We'll explore three meanings of the word 'worship' and think about how they impact our individual and communal worship.

### SESSION TWO:

#### DAVID THE TRUE WORSHIPPER

In today's session we explore the worship life of David, the true worshipper. We'll dive into the Psalms discovering more about David's perspective on worship through his poetry. We'll also consider those moments where we, like David's wife Michal, pass judgement on others for the way they worship and will discuss ways to encourage unity in our church around this topic.

### SESSION THREE:

#### IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!

As a worshipping community, we can sometimes get distracted and lose the focus of our worship. In today's session we take time to remember that worship isn't about us, it's about God.

### SESSION FOUR:

#### CREATIVE WORSHIP EVENT

In the first three sessions of this series, the opportunity is given to plan a creative worship event. The content of Session Four provides ideas and planning support that can be used as part of the Witness section of Sessions One-Three. The Creative Worship Event will take place instead of Session Four.

*Any text in italics represents notes for the leader. It gives more context around the Scripture/activity. You may choose to share verbatim, summarise or not share at all.*

## WHAT IS WORSHIP?

What is worship? In today's session we'll take time to consider the many different forms worship can take. We'll explore three meanings of the word 'worship' and think about how they impact our individual and communal worship.

## WELCOME

Play a 'Name that tune' game with old and new worship songs.

*You may like to prepare a playlist of songs your group will know and then play the first ten seconds of each song for them to guess.*

## WORD

The Word section for this session is based on the following article. Further explanation and supporting material can be found by following the link.

<https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/on-three-meanings-of-the-term-worship>


*Write the question 'What is worship?' on a large sheet of paper and place it in the centre of the group. Ask them to write down words and phrases that they would use to describe worship. It may help the group to discuss what worship is not, so that they can think through this topic. After ideas have been gathered, ask each person to write their own definition of worship and share it.*

The Greek word for worship is *proskuneo* which means to 'kiss with reverence'. The predominant Hebrew word for worship is *shachah* which means to 'bow oneself down'; to literally fall on your knees and touch the ground with your forehead! The Bible says God is the only one worthy of worship (Exodus 20:3). We worship in response to the awesome love and goodness of God, to glorify, honour, praise, exalt and please him. As your discussion probably highlighted, there are many different ways to worship and express our love for God. One of the stumbling blocks we face is that we only have one word in the English language to represent a multifaceted idea, and that word is worship.

The theologian John D Witvliet believes that there are at least three distinct meanings of the word worship, and we're going to spend some time exploring them.

### 1. We worship in all our life.

Read the following Scripture and quote together and discuss this question:

 What does 'worship in all our life' look like on a day-to-day basis?

**'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life –and place it before God as an offering.'**


— (ROMANS 12:1 MSG)


**“Worship is the believer's response of all that they are – mind, emotions, will, body – to what God is and says and does.'**


— WARREN WIERSBE

### 2. We gather for events, ritual practices or liturgies we call 'worship services'.

Events, ritual practices or liturgies are a fancy way of describing the 'stuff we do at church' when we gather for worship.

 What events, ritual practices and liturgies do we have in The Salvation Army?

 What is our main way of worshipping together?

 What do we value when we gather together to worship?

**3. We engage in specific acts of adoration and praise, which we also call worship.**


The perfect expression of this kind of worship is Psalm 95.

Read Psalm 95:1-7 in a range of translations (*The Message* paraphrase is shown below).

 What kind of worship is represented in these verses of Scripture?

<sup>1-2</sup> Come, let's shout praises to God,  
raise the roof for the Rock who saved us!  
Let's march into his presence singing praises,  
lifting the rafters with our hymns!  
<sup>3-5</sup> And why? Because God is the best,  
High King over all the gods.  
In one hand he holds deep caves and caverns,  
in the other hand grasps the high mountains.  
He made Ocean – he owns it!  
His hands sculpted Earth!  
<sup>6-7</sup> So come, let us worship: bow before him,  
on your knees before God, who made us!  
Oh yes, he's our God,  
and we're the people he pastures, the flock he feeds.

— (PSALM 95:1-7 MSG)

 What examples of this kind of worship have you experienced?


Read the following extract from Witvliet's article:

'The problem comes when we start confusing which meaning of the term we are using at a given point. Consider some of the problems that this confusion generates: Sometimes we are so focused on the worship service (2) that we forget the importance of the worship that happens in all life (1) ... Recently, we have experienced a third problem in our use of the term worship. In many cases, we have so emphasised praise singing that we think that the primary or only purpose of the worship service (2) is to worship (3). And so the praise team's microphones have replaced pulpits as the central piece of liturgical furniture in lots of churches. Quite often, our praise singing crowds out other acts of worship, such as prayers of confession, lament, creeds, and testimonies .... I would prefer to have three different words to speak of these three meanings, but we're stuck with one. All we can do is bear witness to each other about how important all three really are, and about how we need to keep all of them distinct yet related. We want to ensure that our life before God includes lots of all three.'

— JOHN D WITVLIET

<https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/on-three-meanings-of-the-term-worship>


Despite our best efforts, defining worship can be challenging.

 After discussing the three distinct meanings of the word 'worship', how, if at all, has your understanding of worship changed?

Give the group an opportunity to return to their worship definition. Discuss any changes they would like to make and share ideas with the group.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Discuss the following worship quotes.

 How do they add to your understanding?

“ ‘If you come to worship for any reason other than the joy and pleasure and satisfaction that are to be found in God, you dishonour him ... God’s greatest delight is your delight in him.’

— SAM STORMS

“ ‘Corporate worship is a regular gracious reminder that it’s not about you. You’ve been born into a life that is a celebration of another.’

— PAUL DAVID TRIPP

“ ‘Songs of worship arise from a life of worship.’

— TIM HUGHES

“ ‘We must never rest until everything inside us worships God.’

— A W TOZER

“ ‘When we worship together as a community of living Christians, we do not worship alone, we worship “with all the company of Heaven”.’


— MARIANNE H MICKS

### WITNESS

*In each of the Witness sections of this series, time will be given to plan a creative worship event together that will take place instead of Session Four. Ideas for this activity are included in the Session Four material. This week’s task is simply to decide which location the group would like to use for their creative worship time together. Discuss and plan the logistics of this event.*


### WORSHIP

Watch the clip where Francis Chan answers the same question we have considered in today’s session.

 **Watch: What is worship? (1:17)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7KeeM9lcgE>

Francis Chan mentions many things that can become the focus of our worship.

 Which ones do you relate to? Explain your thoughts.

Share the lyrics of Israel Houghton’s song ‘To Worship You I Live’.

Away, away from the noise  
Alone with you  
Away, away to hear your voice  
And meet with you  
Nothing else matters, my one desire is  
To worship you, I live  
To worship you, I live, I live  
To worship you

— SONGWRITERS: MELEASA HOUGHTON / ISRAEL HOUGHTON

To Worship You I Live (Away) [Trax] lyrics © Integrity’s Praise! Music, Sound Of The New Breed

*Give the group an opportunity to reflect on what has been discussed during the session as you play the song 'To Worship You I Live' by Israel Houghton. If possible, play the original version listed on most music platforms rather than using a Youtube clip with distracting images and poor sound quality. Share in prayer with the group when the song has finished.*

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

*Ask the group to share what helps them to focus on worship. It might be a poem, a place or a piece of music.*



## DAVID – THE TRUE WORSHIPPER

In today's session we explore the worship life of David, the true worshipper. We'll dive into the Psalms discovering more about David's perspective on worship through the poetry of the Psalter. We'll also consider those moments where we, like David's wife Michal, pass judgement on others for the way they worship and will discuss ways to encourage unity in our church around this topic.

### WELCOME

Today we will meet a Bible character who loved to worship. He sang, wrote poetry, played the harp, and even danced.

- 💬 What kind of music do you most like to dance to?
- 💬 How does it feel when you're dancing and lost in the music?

*The following clip is of stand-up comedian Judson Laipply chronicling the evolution of dance. Depending on your group, you can simply watch it together, or get them up on their feet to join in.*

- ▶ **Watch: Evolution of Dance (6 min)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMH0bHeiRNQ>

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

A group at the West Midlands Summer School created their version of the evolution of dance using the timbrel.

- ▶ **Watch: Rooted: West Midlands Summer School 2022 – Timbrels Main Study (8m 02)**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiiu1Fs\\_v0A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiiu1Fs_v0A)

- 💬 What expressions of worship through dance do you see in The Salvation Army?

### WORD

In the Old Testament, David is described as 'a man after God's own heart' (1 Samuel 13:14). Throughout history many monarchs have been assigned credit for great works of poetry and music. David is attributed to writing poetry and song that he may not have directly penned. Regardless, we do know that the poetry of the Psalter played an integral part in his worship.

When we read the songs of worship expressed in the Psalms, we see how worship was central to his life and relationship with God. He worshipped in times of difficulty, he worshipped when life was great, and even when he made massive mistakes he made sure he returned to God and worshipped. David didn't make worship fit into his everyday life; he lived his everyday life and offered it back to God. Today we're going to learn from David, the true worshipper.

*Give each member of the group a copy of the 'David – The True Worshipper Handout'. Ask them to explore each Scripture and quote and jot down what the Psalms teach us about worship. Gather together and discuss the group's ideas.*

The following Scripture references are included on the handout. The full Scripture is shown below, but only the reference is available on the handout. The group could add their own examples of David's expressions of worship.

**May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

— (PSALM 19:14)

<sup>1</sup> You, God, are my God,  
earnestly I seek you;  
I thirst for you,  
my whole being longs for you,  
in a dry and parched land  
where there is no water.  
<sup>2</sup> I have seen you in the sanctuary  
and beheld your power and your glory.  
<sup>3</sup> Because your love is better than life,  
my lips will glorify you.  
<sup>4</sup> I will praise you as long as I live,  
and in your name I will lift up my hands.  
<sup>5</sup> I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;  
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.  
— (PSALM 63:1-5)

I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you;  
I will praise your name, Lord, for it is good.  
— (PSALM 54:6)

<sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
for I am lonely and afflicted.  
<sup>17</sup> Relieve the troubles of my heart  
and free me from my anguish.  
<sup>18</sup> Look on my affliction and my distress  
and take away all my sins.  
<sup>19</sup> See how numerous are my enemies  
and how fiercely they hate me!  
<sup>20</sup> Guard my life and rescue me;  
do not let me be put to shame,  
for I take refuge in you.  
<sup>21</sup> May integrity and uprightness protect me,  
because my hope, Lord, is in you.  
<sup>22</sup> Deliver Israel, O God,  
from all their troubles!  
— (PSALM 25:16-22)

<sup>3</sup> When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
<sup>4</sup> what is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?  
— (PSALM 8:3-4)

<sup>13</sup> When those who were carrying the ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. <sup>14</sup> Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, <sup>15</sup> while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.  
<sup>16</sup> As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.  
— (2 SAMUEL 6:13-16)



Seven times a day I praise you  
for your righteous laws.

— (PSALM 119:164)

<sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.

— (PSALM 100:1-2)

<sup>17</sup> Evening, morning and noon

I cry out in distress,  
and he hears my voice.

— (PSALM 55:17)

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY








Using all you have discovered about David's worship, create a definition for a 'true worshipper'.

## WORSHIP

 Read 2 Samuel 6:13-16

<sup>13</sup> When those who were carrying the ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. <sup>14</sup> Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, <sup>15</sup> while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

<sup>16</sup> As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.

-  How does Michal react to David's way of worshipping?
-  How could this have made him feel? Do you think he cared what Michal thought?
-  In what ways can we be judgemental about the way other people worship?
-  In what ways do you judge others about the way they worship? If you feel comfortable, then share with the group.
-  Discussions about the styles of worship can often cause divisions. Why do you think that is?
-  In what ways do we need to be careful not to join Michal in her judgement of the worship of others?
-  What can we do to create unity in worship, rather than foster division?

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

*Spend time as a group praying for your church. Encourage the group to ask forgiveness for the times they have stood in judgement of others and ask God for the wisdom to understand the different ways he has created us to worship. Pray for unity within the church community and thank God for his faithfulness.*

## WITNESS

In Session One, the group spent time agreeing on a location and date for a shared creative worship experience. Use this time to continue planning the content of your worship event. Depending on what you have planned, allocate different tasks together so that the group can take responsibility for the event. Try to incorporate all that the group has discovered about worship into the planning and preparation of the event.

PSALM 19:14

PSALM 63:1-5

PSALM 54:6

PSALM 25:16-22

PSALM 8:3-4

**DAVID  
THE TRUE  
WORSHIPPER**

2 SAMUEL 6:13-16

PSALM 119:164

PSALM 55:17


PSALM 100:1-2

## IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!

As a worshipping community we can sometimes get distracted and lose the focus of our worship. In today's session we take time to remember that worship isn't about us, it's about God.


### WELCOME

Back in the day, the pop band McFly recorded a love song called 'It's All About You!' One caring nurse took it upon herself to do something amazing with the song. Watch the clip to discover more.

 **Watch: Singing nurse performs McFly to patients at Great Ormond Street – ITV News (2:11 min)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgyDAueEjDI>

 In what ways does Beth's story inspire you to transform someone's day?

Beth took the opportunity to transform the hospital experience of the children she met in her everyday job.

 What opportunities do you have to brighten up the lives of the people you meet throughout your week?

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Decide on one thing you will try and do this week to make someone's day all about them, rather than all about you.

### WORD

Throughout these sessions we have explored different expressions of worship and looked at the example of David as a true worshipper. Today our focus is on the one we are worshipping, and the distractions that sometimes get in the way of our worship.

We're going to watch a clip that answers the question: what is true worship? When we've watched the clip, we'll spend some time unpacking and discussing what it has to say.

*Give each member of the group a copy of the 'What is true worship? handout' so that they can take notes during the clip. After it is finished, work through the discussion points and questions.*

 **Watch: What is true worship? Got Questions Ministries (4:12 min)**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7xslMCSG\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7xslMCSG_M)

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

In the next clip, the Christian comedian Tim Hawkins shares his observations of different ways we worship in church.

 **Watch: Tim Hawkins on Hand Raising (2:29 secs)**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TK2\\_ezOBa2A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TK2_ezOBa2A)

 Can comedy be an expression of worship? If so, how?

### WORSHIP

In our first session, we looked at three distinct meanings of the word 'worship'.

 Can you remember what they are? If so, share with the group.

*Refer to the notes from the first session and share the three meanings of worship with the group.*

1. *We worship in all our life.*
2. *We gather for events, ritual practices, or liturgies called 'worship services'.*
3. *We engage in specific acts of adoration and praise, which we also call worship.*

The theologian John Witvliet emphasised the importance of all three aspects of worship. Ask the group to look at these three descriptions again and describe what they might look like if God, rather than ourselves, is placed at the centre. Discuss how our individual and communal worship would stay the same, or change, if everything was centred around worshipping God. Give the group the opportunity to ask for God's wisdom to guide them to address areas of their life where he is not the centre of their worship. As the group spends time reflecting, play the instrumental version of McFly's 'It's all about you'. The group do not need to see the video clip; it is only included to listen to the music.

 Listen: 'It's All About You' by McFly Cairn String Quartet cover (2:54)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1C0WMPp5tM>

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Discuss the following quote:

**“**Worship has been misunderstood as something that arises from a feeling which “comes upon you”, but it is vital that we understand that it is rooted in a conscious act of the will, to serve and obey the Lord Jesus Christ.’

— GRAHAM KENDRICK

### WITNESS

Finalise the details of your creative worship event that will take place instead of Session Four. Encourage the group to incorporate all they have learned about worship during the sessions so far.

# WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

Based on material from the Got Questions YouTube Channel

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7xslMCSG\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7xslMCSG_M)

**Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

— (ROMANS 12:1-2)

This passage of Scripture contains all the elements of worship.

What is our motivation to worship?

What is the manner of our worship?

What part of Romans 12:1-2 shares wisdom about the way we can present our bodies as a living sacrifice?

How do our emotions impact the way we worship?

True worship is a result of conviction + affection + truth. It is not a response to any external stimuli. How does this information change your understanding of worship?

What kind of things do people get caught up in when it comes to worship?

What is your response to this quote from the clip?

**“Worship is not limited to one act but is done properly when the heart and attitude of the person are in the right place.”**

It sounds like an obvious question, but who should be the focus of our worship? Is that always the case when we worship? If so, how can we keep God at the centre of our worship?

## CREATIVE WORSHIP

In the first three sessions of this series, the opportunity is given to plan a creative worship event. The content of Session Four provides ideas and planning support that can be used as part of the Witness section of Sessions One to Three. The creative worship event will take place instead of Session Four.

The final session in this series provides an opportunity for the group to share in a creative worship event. After planning the arrangements of the event throughout each session, today is their opportunity to gather together in worship.

*The following information can be used to aid the planning process and evaluate the experience.*

Allow your group members to have as much input as possible into this planning. You can stick to a traditional form of worship that your group enjoy – maybe invite your corps worship leader to lead you – but don't be afraid to think outside of the box and go for something different, maybe push your group members out of their comfort zones a little! You could have one person lead your worship time, or you could ask each person to bring a different form of worship for you all to experience. Perhaps you would have the opportunity to share your worship experience with your corps during one Sunday service.





Here are a few ideas:

1. Invite your local worship leader to facilitate a time of worship.
2. Invite someone with another skill, such as art, to come and help you use that skill in a time of worship.
3. Choose a form of worship that you have never tried before to have a go at.
4. Ask each person to plan and lead a five-minute worship experience for the group.
5. Go out somewhere to look for God's creative nature at work and to connect with him a new and fresh way. Go out in an attitude of prayer and worship and with eyes open to discover God in different surroundings.

For example:

- |                     |                          |                            |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| * Woodland          | * Local market           | * Museum                   |
| * Local park        | * Beach                  | * Watch the sunset/sunrise |
| * Moorland          | * Sporting event         | * City centre              |
| * Shopping centre   | * Art gallery            | * Stargazing               |
| * Coastal cliff top | * Wildlife reserve / zoo | * Farm                     |

Consider these four questions:

-  Where can I see God's creativity on display?
-  Where can I see man's God-given creativity in evidence?
-  How does what I have discovered allow me to see/experience something new of God?
-  How does this inspire me to creatively express myself in prayer and worship to God?

### STRUCTURE:

You can structure your time out together however you wish. You could allow people time to go off on their own to consider the above questions, or in small groups. For example, if you are walking in a woodland, perhaps ask people to walk in silence for five minutes to notice what is around them, then maybe five minutes where they walk and talk in pairs. You could stop every 15 minutes or so to pray and worship inspired by what people share in relation to the above contemplations. If you are in an art gallery you may need to view the whole collection or just a specific part of it, and then gather together in a local park or at your normal venue to share and pray together.

Encourage people to gather 'evidence' of their contemplation of the above questions. For example: collecting a piece of nature that has shown something of the intricacies of God's creation; taking photos on a phone or camera of a view that has inspired them; a sketch they have made; even jotting down their thoughts and prayers.

Don't forget to use all five senses!

### FEEDBACK:

At the end of the worship event, it would be good to allow time for feedback and prayer together as a group. Let the group learn from each other as they share what they have seen of God and ask people to express their worship in new and creative ways.

