

A Checklist for Worship Leaders

The aim of this resource is to help those responsible for leading sung worship and/or choosing the songs and hymns that are featured to think together about the choices made. It can be run in a single session or expanded if participants are enthusiastic to discuss further. Alternatively, churches with a regular 'music practice' could set aside time to discuss one song or hymn per practice over an extended period.

Ideally, each participant will come prepared with some thoughts about a particular song or hymn. These could either be assigned from a list of those most frequently sung, or participants could choose a particular personal favourite or – perhaps more provocative for discussion! – a least favourite. The format is simple: use the questions below to guide a discussion about each song in turn.

At the end of the session or exercise, why not use Questions 4 & 5 to summarise in writing what you have observed about your collective choice of music as a whole. Together, you can use these lessons to help you make attentive choices in the future.

Opening Prayer (for example): *Holy Loving God, we thank you for the gift of music and the opportunity to worship you in song. We pray for wisdom as we think today about the words we use to do that. Show us how to see and celebrate what is true and good and beautiful about you, that our worship may be always for your glory and the blessing of our neighbours, made and loved by you. Amen.*

1. **Why did you choose this particular hymn / song ?**

- Primarily for the words or the music ?
- Do you agree with all the words?
- Do you think the congregation as a whole would agree with all the words ?

2. **Are there claims / metaphors / images in the hymn / song which leave you uncomfortable ?**

- What are these ?
- Why do they leave you uncomfortable ?

3. Are there claims / metaphors / images in the hymn / song which you don't understand or are ambiguous ?
 - What are these ?
 - Do you think the congregation would understand them ?
 - Is there anything elsewhere in the service which might clarify the meaning ?

4. What message would an outsider receive from this hymn / song ?
 - About God ?
 - About Christ ?
 - About the Church ?
 - About the Christian Life ?
 - About the World ?
 - About themselves ?

5. How does this particular hymn /song match up to what we know of Jesus ?
 - If what makes Christian worship Christian is the one Christianity confesses as the Christ, then worship is oriented to Jesus of Nazareth, and there are therefore a great number of things that cannot be justified as Christian in our worship.
 - What do you think some of these might be ?