4 TIPS FOR WORSHIP IN YOUTH MINISTRY

If you're a youth leader, you know good music can completely change your environment. Slow, somber music usually helps teenagers focus and reflect, but it's probably not what you wanna go with for a game of dodgeball.

Now, it's pretty easy to incorporate upbeat music into a game or even at the start of a lesson, but how do you use music to lead your group in worship? It's actually a lot more doable than we might expect—it just takes a good strategy.

It's alright if bringing worship into your weekly routine feels intimidating. We get it. As ministry leaders, we've had our own share of trying to develop a vision and plan for worship in our services. We know what it's like to wonder which songs to sing or how to find engaging songs.

So, we want to help. **We've put together this list of four tips to help you add a time of worship to your weekly environment.** We hope you'll walk away with a few ideas for your ministry, so get ready to steal ours!

Sound good? Let's get started!

EVALUATE YOUR RESOURCES

Let's start by taking a look at your ministry's resources. Not every meeting space is set up for a live band every week. Even if it were, you might share the space with another ministry or need someone to run sound for you every time you schedule worship.

Then there are the rehearsals, lyric slides, and more that go into leading worship through music. Thankfully, **there's more than one way to add worship to your weekly environment,** you just need to focus on what you do have in your meeting space.

When you think of what makes a time of worship happen, you only need a few things: a list of songs... and a way to play them.

Yeah, worship can be that simple! Sure, we might have a band come in to lead our group in worship but we can also...

- Use a wireless speaker to play music
- Use a lyric video to guide the group
- Invite a student to lead the group in worship

So, yes, having a band can draw your teenagers' attention, but it's not the only way. You can design a weekly worship experience that works for you and your context.

To help you think about your resources, here are a few questions you can ask...

- Do I have a way to play songs?
- Is there someone who can lead this for me?
- Are there students who are interested in helping?
- Are there any sensory needs to consider?
- Do I have a way to show song lyrics for the group to sing?
- Do I have the software I need to show videos & lyrics or play music?

CHOOSE ENGAGING SONGS

It can be so hard to sort through all of the songs available online. When that seems overwhelming, you may be tempted to go back to the same song rotation your group knows by heart.

Here's the thing, having great music is only part of the equation. **The other part is making sure teenagers are actually interested in the music you're offering.** Each ministry is going to approach this differently, but we have some tips to help you get started.

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- **Ask your students and volunteers.** Your group might already have a list of their favorite songs. Ask for their input and search online for versions of each song to give them a new perspective.
- **Search Online.** With so many great content creators and artists, there's a chance that the next hit worship song in your ministry is a quick search away. Use your favorite search engine to find the "best student worship music" or "youth ministry worship videos."
- **Ask Online Groups.** Don't do it alone! There are hundreds of kids ministry leaders like you who are facing the same challenge. That's why we created this online community with over 50,000 youth ministry leaders. It's a space for you to share ideas, ask questions, and learn from other leaders all around the world!

KEEP IT SHORT (AT FIRST)

So far, we've talked about the resources you have (or need!) for your ministry and a few places you can go to find the best worship songs for youth ministry. So, **what does it look like to actually add a time of worship to your weekly environment?**

When you're starting out, keep your time of worship short. During these weeks, **focus on signing one or two songs** and make sure at least one song is the same each week. This will help your group learn the words and give them the space and time to connect with the song. If you keep shuffling through new songs, you might find it challenging for your group to learn the words or engage with what you're singing.

Teenagers need a simple way to process the songs they're being introduced to. Some of them might be all in from the beginning, but others might need some time to warm up.

To help them get comfortable with singing as a group, take time to ask them what worship means to them and why we do it *before* you play the first song. Take time to invite students to reflect on their experience by asking them follow-up questions, like...

- How did you feel before we sang these songs? How do you feel now?
- What was your favorite part of our time of worship?
- Were there any words you didn't know or understand?
- How can you make worship a habit?

GET INVOLVED

It's easy to let all the logistics of worship through music get in the way of the ways it brings everyone together. Organizing the setlist and lyrics usually requires all our attention, and just might take away from the best parts of the experience as a whole.

Remember to **be present during worship!** Yes, there are plenty of technical details to think about at the moment, especially when you have a student volunteer in charge of the slides for the first time. The possibilities are endless!

- A video might not play correctly
- Audio might be muted
- A musician might forget a word... or an entire verse

Try not to get so caught up in what "went wrong" because these hiccups can't possibly measure up to your teenagers' experience.

We totally get it—excellence is literally one of our core values! But we also know things happen. When they do, remember you've got this and worship is all about **creating moments for students to connect with and grow closer to God.** With each song, we're helping teenagers understand their relationship with God and shaping what they believe about their own value.

Knowing someone from your group was able to open up about their struggles or breakthroughs is a way more lasting experience than a seamless set. So, yeah, you can try to avoid accidents, but God's presence doesn't disappear when the audio cuts out, or a student volunteer doesn't change the slide fast enough.

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When we get involved, teenagers. That's right, youth worship isn't just about getting our groups to sing, raise their hands, or clap along with the song. It also means **we get to model what worship can look like** in youth ministry.

When we're most excited about incorporating worship into our weekly environment, it **shows students how to get involved.** Teenagers will naturally look around the room to see how their leaders are participating. Whether they see you holding a conversation during the first song or seeing you all in from the start, they'll match your energy.

So, even if there are dozens of things on your mind, try and do your best to model behaviors for your group. This is your chance to be pause and participate freely with your youth group.

There you have it! Four tips for adding worship to your weekly environment! We can't to hear your stories of how your students continue to grow their relationship with God.

Good luck exploring worship in your weekly environment!



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