

W o r s h i p M u s i c M i n i s t r y **T R A I N I N G C O U R S E**

Dan Ryker, © 2005 Ryker Studio, www.danryker.com

Preparing a Set

Planning ahead is good, but it's not as important for me to plan well, as it is to be deep with God so whatever I lead comes from a place of power.

How to

- ◇ Have a list of all your available songs to look over as you plan
 - ◇ This could be an organized notebook that you can flip through.
 - ◇ It could be a simple list of songs on paper or a word processing document.
 - ◇ I like to use a spreadsheet. (See 'Worship Ministry Organization')
 - ◇ One column lists the song names. Other columns list the date they were introduced, the 'feel', the 'freshness', what groups I've used them with, and if it's a 'communion', 'party', 'hymn', or 'holiday' song.
 - ◇ I can then sort this large list of songs by any of these categories to help me make choices more easily.
 - ◇ Ex: I would sort by 'date' to be reminded of any new songs that I need to be sure and do again so the congregation can learn them.
- ◇ Pray – Listen to God
 - ◇ Listen for specific song names
 - ◇ I will often scan down a list of songs and the Holy Spirit helps me suddenly know if a song is good for that set as soon as I see it.
 - ◇ Listen for topics. Then choose songs that fit.
 - ◇ Listen for what God wants to do, minister, or lead the group in. Choose songs that fit.
 - ◇ Ask God to lead your practical choices of songs. Then choose songs that you like, feel are anointed, or think would fit well.
 - ◇ Keep track of songs that have worked well in the past. You always want at least a few 'sure bets' in your set list.
 - ◇ Songs that people are familiar with will usually work better. Be sparing on the number of new songs that you do (1 or maybe 2).
 - ◇ Songs sung directly TO God instead of about Him really draw us in.
 - ◇ Is the song 'stylistically relevant' to the people? Do people relate to the musical and lyrical style? Not that we need to make everything fit one mold, but in general people should be able to relate to the songs.
 - ◇ It is also good to stretch people at times and play a song in a style that is maybe not exactly what they are used to. (Reggae, Jazz, Hymn, etc)
 - ◇ Songs that have lots of words are often difficult for people to follow or learn, and therefore slow them down in entering the presence of God.
- ◇ Worship through the set
 - ◇ Worship privately, but imagine that you are in front of the group you are preparing for. Let God lead you through the set. Take those songs, ideas, and topics and use them as your set list.
 - ◇ This is a good way to PLAN a set as well as something that you should do before leading any set if possible.
- ◇ Choose the right number of songs
 - ◇ Know how long of a worship set you are planning for, and how long it generally takes you to lead each song and therefore the whole set.

- ◇ Have an extra song or two that you can add in or substitute just in case you miscalculate or it is appropriate for you to go longer.
- ◇ Put the songs in the right order
 - ◇ What should the 'dynamic shape' of the worship set be?
 - ◇ Should it start out up-beat and loud leading to slower and softer?
 - ◇ Should it start out mellow and contemplative leading to a climax of praise?
 - ◇ Should it start out soft and intimate, transition to celebration, and then settle back into gentle worship?
 - ◇ All of these options and many others are appropriate at different times.
 - ◇ Think about the tempo and 'feel' of the songs you've chosen and how they would fit into the appropriate dynamic shape.
 - ◇ What are the songs about? How might these messages fit together?
 - ◇ Possibly, you want to just plan the set creating a consistent flow from one song to another based upon their topic, and not even worry about their tempo or 'feel'.
 - ◇ Consider what may be happening before or after the worship set.
 - ◇ This may effect the 'dynamic shape' that you choose or the songs topic that is right after or before that event.
 - ◇ Ex: The high schoolers are doing a crazy skit right after worship, so you don't want to end with a really deep and soft song. You may choose to still use a soft song, but go back to the chorus and do it loud and majestic, ending in a climax of praise. Or you may just want to choose a different song.
 - ◇ Consider placing songs that are in the same key next to each other. This will make your transition from one to the next easier.
- ◇ Plan the transitions from song to song.
 - ◇ The general goal is to have as little 'dead air' as possible.
 - ◇ Some songs can simply be ended and the next song started right away and it will sound good.
 - ◇ If you do this too often the set can sound choppy and you can end up 'jarring' people out of their flow with Jesus.
 - ◇ This technique generally works the best with up beat songs.
 - ◇ Songs in the same key:
 - ◇ If one song is in the same key as the next one, you can end the song, but not cut off the chord.
 - ◇ Then begin playing the chord progression for the next song with no silence in between.
 - ◇ Or start singing it right away since you'll already be able to hear the note from the previous songs tonality.
 - ◇ Songs in different keys transitioned with no silence in between.
 - ◇ This kind of transition requires a 'key change' or 'modulation'.
 - ◇ Types of 'key changes' or 'modulations'
 - ◇ 'Shazam! modulation'
 - ◇ This is a very fast way to modulate that works in any situation. I call it the 'shazam modulation' because it's not always very transparent. It gets you to the new key for sure, but people will probably notice that you are changing keys on them; like ... "Shazam! I took us to a new key!"
 - ◇ Go directly from the final chord of one song to the 'V' chord and then the 'I' chord of the next songs key.
 - ◇ Then begin playing the progression as you normally would.