

# **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**

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### **Leading Vocal & Band Rehearsals**

#### **General tips**

- ◇ Be prepared before hand
  - ◇ Be sure you musicians know they are supposed to be there.
  - ◇ Have clear charts or music ready for all players.
  - ◇ Know how you are going to arrange the song (or at least have a good idea).
- ◇ Start on time and end on time. This will set a pattern for your group quickly and will respect people's time.
- ◇ Keep a light-hearted, fun attitude, while still being business-like
- ◇ Rehearsal tempo – Keeping steady momentum throughout the rehearsal.
  - ◇ Know how to start songs effectively.
    - ◇ Count it off and use your head or hand to cue them when to come in.
    - ◇ Sing the 'pick-up' phrase so they can hear the tempo and know where you are easily.
    - ◇ Begin playing the song's 'vamp' and then cue the band when to come in.
  - ◇ Know what you want to fix or go over again before the song finishes or you cut it off. On the next beat after cut-off, begin talking. Say what you want to do quickly, and then kick off the song. Don't wait for people; just start. They'll be ready next time. This keeps 'chatting' to a minimum.
  - ◇ Be sure to ask for input or questions periodically. If people know that you will give them an opportunity to speak at some point, they will not mind when you keep a quick rehearsal tempo. This uses their time more efficiently and gets more done.
  - ◇ Expect to get a lot done. A worship team needs to have a very large repertoire. Most musical groups can tour or perform with 18-20 songs. A worship team needs many more. Many musicians are used to rehearsing only 2 or 3 songs in a rehearsal. This is OK when you only need 6 songs to be ready for the concert 3 months from now. But YOU may need to have 7 songs ready for THIS week and still have time left to look at brand new stuff. It IS possible!!! But people need to get used to a more efficient rehearsal where you don't stop on every little mistake. Hit the important parts and move on. The more experienced the group is, the less time it takes.
- ◇ Know how long to rehearse
  - ◇ The more experience the band or vocal group, the less time they will need. The reverse is also true.
    - ◇ The skill level of the individuals as well as how long the team has played together, both effect how long it will take to learn songs..
  - ◇ We can exasperate our teams by rehearsing things over and over that they already know.
- ◇ Expect people to practice on their own.
  - ◇ Rehearsal is for the group to put it all together. Practice is what individuals do on their own.
  - ◇ Let them know what new songs you will be doing ahead of time whenever possible.
    - ◇ Give them the charts and/or audio recordings ahead of time.
  - ◇ If there is something in particular that you want them to go over on their own be sure to tell them that.

#### **Band rehearsals**

- ◇ Try starting rehearsal with a 'jam session'. Just begin playing some groove and let the other musicians join in. You might let less experienced musicians know what key you are in or

what chords you are using to encourage them to play. If vocalists are present, you might sing a simple phrase that they could catch on to.

- ◇ It gives people a chance to sound check
  - ◇ Don't hesitate to just say on your mic what you need more or less of in the mix.
- ◇ It gets people 'flowing' together
- ◇ It invites a spirit of worship
- ◇ It lets the group practice improvising together.
- ◇ This is also a good technique to start a sound check with.
- ◇ Musicians can play music just for the joy of making music and never actually worship. Learn the difference between the feeling of a good musical experience and a good WORSHIP experience. Especially in 'jam sessions', it's easy to focus only on the music.
  - ◇ Spend some time during a rehearsal worshipping without instruments.

### **Vocal rehearsals**

- ◇ It is often a good idea to have a separate vocal rehearsal.
  - ◇ It is harder for many vocalists to figure out a harmony part with the whole band playing, and it usually takes them longer than the band to get their part down.
  - ◇ Have all vocalists come to all rehearsals even if they will not be singing in that week's service.
    - ◇ This way you do not need to re-teach songs with each new group of vocalists.
    - ◇ One compromise is to go over new songs at the beginning of rehearsal and then have just the singers for that week's service stay to review the songs for that service.
- ◇ Guys should almost always sing a tenor part or melody; bass just doesn't fit in contemporary worship styles.
- ◇ In general, the harmony parts should be 'interior' harmonies that are above the male melody, and below the female melody.
- ◇ Designate section leaders
  - ◇ You still run the rehearsal, but rely on them to teach and remember the parts
    - ◇ It's just too much brain strain for the leader to remember all the harmony parts accurately (at least for me it is).
    - ◇ You might need to either give them the recording or meet with them ahead of time for them to figure out the part.
    - ◇ If you don't have a section leader that can figure out the harmony part on their own, you might need to teach it to them or record it so they can listen to it over and over.
      - ◇ I have recorded myself singing and playing the song, and then overlaid it with myself singing one harmony part and then the other. You can then save 2 versions of the song. One with the tenor part loud and one with the alto part loud.
  - ◇ Anytime there is a question about how the part goes, have the section leader sing it for everyone.
  - ◇ Consider breaking up into sectional rehearsals where each voice part goes off on their own to learn their part and then have everyone come back to do it together.

### **Bringing a quality offering in worship**

- ◇ In the Old Testament they did not just bring any animal to be sacrificed, they brought a perfect animal to God because it represented something of value & therefore had more meaning from the person.
- ◇ It shows more meaning & sincerity of heart when we take the time practice & refine our gifts in order to bring God an excellent offering.