

DISCOVER  
WORSHIP

5

SIMPLE WAYS  
TO  
TRANSFORM  
YOUR  
MUSIC  
MINISTRY...

RIGHT  
NOW!

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## INTRODUCTION

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No matter the size of your church, all music ministry leaders will have to wrestle with the task of strengthening and invigorating their team. Whether you're a choir director accompanied by an orchestra, a worship leader with a band, or even if it's just you and the organist, you are a leader of *people*. And with that comes responsibilities, joys, frustrations, and distractions.

Perhaps you're frustrated and at the end of the line just looking for something that will give you a glimmer of hope and convince you to stay with your music ministry. Or, maybe things are going well, but your intuition tells you there's a way to go from good to great. No matter what end of the spectrum you find yourself, we have assembled 5 simple ways you can transform your ministry.

Discover Worship has been working with church music, choir directors, and worship leaders for over 17 years. You can learn more about our online database of over 2,000 songs [here](#). In that time, our staff and partners have gained some powerful insights into working with music ministries of ALL shapes, sizes, and geographic locations. The awesome news is that if you start implementing these 5 strategies, you can begin to see results immediately.

So let's get right to it!

1

## BRING THE **WORD** INTO YOUR WORSHIP

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There can be a tendency as worship leaders and/or choir directors often create a hard separation between the “worship” (music) and the sermon (Word), as if the two are mutually exclusive. Even the flow of a typical Sunday morning or mid-week service is usually formatted with a separate time for worship setting up the message.

However, as “people of the Word,” it’s worth considering how much of the Scripture is actually included in our corporate worship experiences. If we really took time to analyze it, it just might be less than we think. There are, of course, Biblical references in the songs we sing and maybe in the prayers we pray. But the unfiltered reading and proclamation of the Word of God has power . . . power to comfort, assure, challenge, convict, and lead us to repentance.

Bringing the Word into worship is a powerful way to create impact in your ministry.

So what are some great ways to weave the Scripture into our worship? One way is to use it **as an introduction to a choir piece**. You may have to alter, adapt or expand the introduction to a choir anthem, but when that selection is based on, or strongly refers to, a scriptural text, hearing the passage read before the choir sings really helps to reinforce the message.

**Scripture as a responsive reading** is another great way to add the Word. Models for these type readings are easily found in most hymnals, or with a little effort, you can create your own. These can be dialogs between Choir and Congregation,

Leader and Congregation, Men and Women, or any combination of these. *[Hint: the larger the group that's speaking, the shorter their part should be.]*

Finally, **spontaneous participation**. Simply ask people to stand and quote (or read) a significant verse or passage of scripture. A prompt from the music minister as to the theme is the best way to handle this: God's promises, faithfulness, love, etc. are good starting points. You might want to introduce this idea at the beginning of the service and actually incorporate it several minutes later, or just do it "spur of the moment."

There's an undeniable comfort and assurance that's derived when our folks realize that what we're doing isn't based on our personal preferences or on popular opinion but on the timetested, unfailing Word of God. So, however you choose to do it, incorporate scripture regularly and as creatively as possible in the worship services you help plan and implement. After all, God's Word will never return to Him void. And that's a promise you can count on!

2

## RECRUIT THE **RIGHT** VOLUNTEERS

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The strength of your music ministry does not rest solely on your shoulders. It also rests on those with whom you choose to serve on your team. In that sense, the responsibility actually does fall back on you. Sorry! Don't worry though . . . here are some strategies that will help you find volunteers that are the right fit for your ministry.

First, be sure to place an ad or announcement in your weekly bulletin, but **be specific**. Detail is a must when describing your specific need. If your bulletin ad reads: "We need help in the music ministry," then you're casting a large net that probably won't help you meet your specific need. However, your ad may read like this: "The Music & Worship ministry is searching for carpenters, builders and other people with set building skills to help with our Christmas staging needs." As you see, *detail* is important.

Also, don't be shy in talking about it. In short—**get the word out**. If you have a worship choir and want more people to get involved, then tell your current choir members your desire. When you share your excitement with them about growing the worship community, it can create an excitement in their hearts, and they could become your best advertisement.

Above all . . . **pray**. This is the most important step in the process. We know prayer changes things, right? But often we depend on our own ability or strength to get the job done. Obviously there are announcements to be made and communication is important, but prayer is a necessary part of growing our community of worshippers. What is needed most in our worship communities are

people *passionate* about worship. Passion matters whether they are helping with set building or playing in the band. A bunch of people is one thing, but ask God to send you the *right* people who are passionate about worship. Get your team praying together, and with you, for God to send those who feel called to join your worship ministry. There's something powerful about a group of committed people passionate about worship. Always take the responsibility of recruiting the right volunteers seriously. It's one of the most important aspects of your position and it can set you up for great success.

3

## POUR *LIFE* INTO YOUR TEAM

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Recruiting new members and volunteers for your choir or worship team is one thing, but leading them and serving them well is even more important. Your team looks to you for guidance and wisdom. Take this opportunity to pour *life* into them in various ways. Here are some proven methods to invigorate your people.

**Learn new music.** Have you noticed an increase in number as you're preparing for Christmas? It's a festive time of year, and there is new music to be learned. It's part of what makes people excited to get in on the action. Obviously this doesn't mean learning 2 new songs every week but teaching new anthems or worship songs keeps rehearsal exciting.

**Choose music that will help them succeed.** If you have a volunteer choir, this can be difficult. Some read music but many do not. It is important to choose music styles that will be flattering for your particular group, but also don't be afraid to challenge them from time to time, and be intentional about focusing on musical growth as a group. They will only be as good as you allow! If you give them a variety of styles, the really good singers will help the inexperienced ones come along at a better and faster rate.

**Encourage personal growth.** This is a must because it helps everyone get on the same page and makes more effective leaders of worship. Try including a scripture to start rehearsal and encourage everyone to make this a part of their daily life. Start a private Facebook page and post encouraging thoughts for each day of the week. Take time to think about your church's music ministry, and come up with other encouraging ways to get people plugged in. When a choir and/or team



commits to a personal and growing relationship with Christ, it has a powerful impact on growing your ministry in significant ways.

Another incredible way to watch growth and community happen is to **encourage prayer among your members**. It's difficult to explain, but when people start praying for each other something sort of magical happens. Suddenly skipping choir rehearsal is more difficult because there is greater excitement about seeing the person they have been praying for. You may consider offering this time 1/2 way through your rehearsal or a few minutes before you close. Try this: 15 minutes before you end rehearsal, give your team 10 minutes to connect with someone across the room (soprano with alto, tenor with bass, drummer with acoustic), and then close your rehearsal with a song of worship. It will help make a wonderful rehearsal and keep people wanting to come back.

**Above all, love the Lord, and love your congregation.** It just doesn't come any closer to sanctification than attempting to fulfill the two greatest commandments. The congregation can tell when you are genuine in both. Build relationships, even with those who have no intention of joining your choir or worship team. Work extra hard to love those who do want to be in your ensemble. If you'll try following these simple steps, and be intentional about pouring life into team, you just may notice growth taking place that will eventually lead to more people.

4

## CREATE A *HEALTHY* ENVIRONMENT

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People want to be part of relationships that are healthy and life-giving. No one has ever chosen to be a part of a difficult and/or draining relationship. This is a basic life principle, and it's definitely true when it comes to our music ministries. Most people would much rather be a part of a healthy music ministry, than a talented one only. Strong teams are made up of people who strive to live in spiritual health, and they adopt practices that encourage personal and "professional" health for the sake of the task of leading the church in worship. So what are some ways to create a healthy environment for your ministry?

**Communicate the vision of why you gather each week.** There is perhaps no better way to get your team focused than to help them understand why the church gathers for worship each week. If you ask them, you'll probably hear all kinds of answers, and each one of those answers informs not only their view of the worship gathering but also their role in facilitating it. Spend time with your church's leadership in cultivating a clear understanding as to why your church gathers for worship each week, and then communicate that to your team. This will help your team members understand how their roles and actions fit (or perhaps do not fit!) into the vision of what worship is in the life of your church.

**Be attentive to problem members.** Every now and then there will be people who join your team that are a detriment to the group. This may mean their attendance is sporadic at best, which sets a poor example for others. They may sing loudly and tremendously off-key. While each situation is different, our first recommendation is to address it with personal prayer.

Ask yourself these questions: *Is there a reason this person is in the ensemble? Why is their behavior abrasive? Is there a way this can have a positive outcome for all parties involved? Is there another area of your church family that would benefit from the time and energy this person has to offer?* As much as it's possible, live Psalm 34:12-14: "do good, keep your tongue from evil and seek to live in peace." Remember that scripture teaches us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). When the time arises (and it will at some point!) to address a problem member, pray and ask the Lord for wisdom. Then pull that person to the side and have that difficult discussion one-on-one and full of bold truth wrapped in love.

Another way to promote a healthy environment is to **be clear about your expectations**. If you are leading the team, you probably have certain expectations about how the people on your team should prepare for and perform the tasks they have volunteered to do. You should do your best to communicate these expectations clearly to your team members. They should know what you expect on the front end so they can agree to strive towards these expectations or choose not to take on the task. You should also take some time to hear what they expect from you as a leader. This up-front communication provides great accountability and can prevent hurt and disappointment over unmet expectations on all sides.

With that said, also **teach your team how to prepare and not just how to perform**. Your team members should understand the task at hand for them both as individuals and as a team. But understanding the task is not enough; one must also know how to *prepare* in order to accomplish the task. Help your team understand that preparation is a part of stewardship, and equip them as best you can with the skills they need to prepare well. Doing so may mean more work on your part, but it's your job to set them up for success. Giving them access to equipment, planning sets and charts early, and even one-on-one training, may be a part of helping your team prepare to lead. Just remember: investing in these things early will pay huge dividends in the long run.

Finally, **remember that people come first**. The people on your team are not a means to an end. They are participants in the life and mission of God *with* you. Treat them as such! Take time to love and mentor the people on your team. Pray with them. Speak truth to them in love. Make room for them to be as messy as you are, and be gracious when their mess spills over into team life. Build in times of rest from the jobs (like a service Sabbath) and help them prioritize when

needed, knowing that both too much and too little time given to the team could be a problem. Remember that your time together with the team is not just to make good music, but is purposed for your collective sanctification. Invest in who they are, not just what they can do for you. And remind them that all you do together is not just for their sake, but is for the sake of the world and to the glory of God.

5

## STEWARD YOUR **TIME** WELL

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Those of us in ministry often love the devotional and worship aspects of our roles but may be challenged by the management responsibilities involved. Managing limited resources, difficult people, and daunting deadlines can take the joy out of ministry.

But what if God is using today's challenges to increase our capacity to be more effective with tomorrow's opportunities? Jesus tells a parable about the significance of stewardship. Three managers are given different gifts (talents) to invest, and each one is expected to bring back more than he was given. Two stewards are successful, and to each their master replies, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21,23)

The effective managers were not only commended and rewarded, but they also experienced the joy of their Lord. Contrast the promise of joy with the anxiety that accompanies poor management. Which will you choose? When you manage your time and duties well, you're able to serve your team in a much greater and more effective way.

Here are 5 "D's" to help you increase your capacity to effectively manage people and priorities:

- ➔ **DO IT:** Some tasks are so central to your mission that you should immediately add them to your "to do" list, and allocate the time and resources necessary to accomplish them.

- **DELEGATE:** If you have the luxury of paid staff, make sure you clearly communicate your expectations as well as when you will “inspect” their progress. If you have volunteer staff, share with them how their help will benefit the mission--then “expect” and “inspect.”
- **DELAY:** Sometimes the idea is great, but the timing’s off. Keep great ideas simmering on the back burner till the time is right.
- **DENY:** Just because you can doesn’t mean you should. We’ve all heard that “the good is the enemy of the best.” So determine if the task is truly worthy of the time and energy required to implement it. Kindly saying “no” may be the wiser choice.
- **DISCERN:** And above and before anything, seek godly counsel and the Lord’s guidance as you make management choices.

## CONCLUSION

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We hope you've found value in these 5 simple ways to transform your music ministry. Implementing them and giving them priority can make a big difference. Think about how you can start to build these into your ministries on a weekly and/or monthly basis. Get a plan together, and start taking action this week. Don't put it off!

Our company, Discover Worship, provides valuable resources for music ministries of small to medium sized churches. You can download sheet music, audio tracks, lyric videos, orchestrations and more from our huge database of over 2,000 church music and worship songs. The best part? You only pay one yearly membership fee and not per item. That's right...you can make as many copies or burn as many CDs as you need...no restrictions or limitations!

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