

SURFACE TO SOUL

Live Well | Lead Well | Coach Well

Using Frames to Reimagine Worship

Worship is typically a congregation's most important practice. Here a congregation and its members encounter God's gracious presence and come face to face with the frailty, goodness, and potential of their humanity. Here they are comforted, corrected, forgiven, healed, and challenged by the divine and one another. Here congregations and people are formed as followers of Christ and are sent by God into the world. Through the action of the Spirit, worship enlivens congregations and believers.

Worship results from the synergistic work of all its participants – God, worshipers, and leaders. Worship would be empty without **God's active presence** hearing, speaking, and inspiring our action. The mysterious and uncontrollable work of the Spirit is at the heart of genuine worship. **People** join the gathering and contribute their song, speech, silence, prayers, hearts, minds, and commitment. **Leaders** pray and prepare, select and arrange resources to enhance worship, and guide its flow.

When rethinking and re-imagining worship, planners often use **worship frames** to provide holistic perspectives of the worship experience. The worship frames listed below help leaders assess worship from multiple angles of vision and to identify the norms established by your congregation. Pay attention to norms related to how worship is planned, ways that people are invited to participate in worship, and which senses are regularly woven into the worship setting. Use the frames below to describe the norms and frames of worship. Share with other worship leaders which frames do we, as leaders, need to pay closer attention to in the future to make our worship experiences more Spirit-filled, engaging and transformational.

SPATIAL FRAMES

- o Building and/or worship space
- o Seating configuration
- o Flexibility of seating configurations
- o Positioning of worship leaders
- o Entrance/exit of worship leaders
- o Intimacy of worship space
- o Proximity to hospitality space
- o Proximity to nursery

TEMPORAL FRAMES

- o Dedicated worship time
- o Liturgical seasons
- o Tempo of music, speech, & action
- o Duration of gathering & dismissal

OPENING WORSHIP

- o Greeting & announcements
- o Introduction of songs
- o Gathering rituals
- o Opening prayers/invocations

VERBAL FRAMES

- o Greetings and announcements
- o Liturgical speech - call to worship
- o Liturgical speech - prayers
- o Liturgical speech - benediction
- o Patterns of liturgical speech (responsive, single voice, unison)
- o Expressiveness of speech
- o Words shared by ushers/greeters

SONIC FRAMES

- o Instrumentation & genres
- o Song genres
- o Individual, small, & large groups
- o Volume of words and music

PROCLAMATION/RESPONSE

- o Number & length of passages
- o Introduction to scriptures
- o Children's message
- o Preaching length, style, & content
- o Response to scripture message
- o Invitation to Communion/offering

SPECIAL FRAMES

- o Architecture - narthex/sanctuary
- o Location of worship leaders
- o Visibility of worship leaders
- o Symbols & images; liturgical colors
- o Gender, age, & ethnicity of leaders
- o Attire of worship/hospitality leaders
- o Attire of worship participants
- o Chancel furnishings (tables/fonts)

SOMATIC FRAMES

- o Demeanor of worship leaders
- o Physical activity of worshipers
- o Overall tone & formality of worship
- o Pace and pauses within activities

CLOSING WORSHIP

- o Closing hymns and prayers
- o Benediction (read/sung, etc.)
- o Closing announcements
- o Postlude music
- o Where pastor stands after worship



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