

STUDENT PRESENTATION GUIDE

WORSHIP TEAM & BAND

MISSION

To elevate the ability of those gifted and involved in the worship arts through information and recommendations that are both empowering and quickly accessible.

PURPOSE

By being better prepared for the experience of God's presence, leaders, vocalists, musicians, and worship team members will be able to use their God-given gifts more effectively, resulting in the changed lives of their listeners and furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ.

VISION

To come alongside pastors, worship pastors/leaders, youth pastors, and their churches, giving support to and having influence on as many musicians, volunteers, and technical team members as God has prepared worldwide.

CONTENTS

HOW TO USE YOUR STUDENT PRESENTATION GUIDE	1
SELECTION	2
COMMUNICATION	10
PRESENTATION/TECHNIQUE	20
EFFECTIVENESS	38
FINAL COMMENTS	45

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How to Use Your Student Presentation Guide

With your Student Presentation Guide, you now have access to a variety of materials. These materials allow you to access and learn valuable information related to your presentation—and your worship ministry as a whole now and in the future. Whatever your particular area of gifting, you can find expert tips and recommendations from worship and music industry professionals to improve your specific worship/arts gifts and skills.

Section 1 covers Selection—how to choose ideal song(s) for you or your team’s style, gifts, event, and audience. Section 2 offers help in Communication—ensuring you know the message you want to convey and can find the most effective way to do so. Section 3 deals with Presentation/Technique—not overlooking any aspect of how to employ the proper technique in your musical area to create the best possible presentation of your song(s) and message. Finally, Section 4 wraps it up with Effectiveness—how to assure you do everything you can to effectively bring God’s message to listeners through your performance.

You’ll find the information easy to access. Each chapter lists a number of steps in bold, with an expanded explanation following. These short, organized chapters are filled with tips, instructions, and help for all aspects of your musical gifting and potential future ministry. The table of contents lists each of the smart chapters so you can quickly locate what you want to work on at any given time.

One thing you’ll find in each Student Presentation Guide is repetition. Many areas of musical preparedness overlap, but it’s been proven that repetition is a great way to really learn! So, as you read through your guide, continue to take in all the tips and recommendations with determination and passion as you explore and improve your gifts.

Those who created this guide for you desire that this be a place to discover, develop, and deploy your gifts—and that as a result, your upcoming presentation gives you a goal to work toward as you press on toward God’s gifting and calling in your life now and in the future.

YOU ARE THE ONLY KING FO
ALMIGHTY GOD WE LIFT YOU



SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

Choosing the right song with the right arrangement is pivotal in song performance. Songs need to represent who you are as a team and what you want to say. In fact, nothing else reaches people more than presenting a great song and performing it well.

Choosing the right song for the right occasion is not only important for your team or band but for your audience. You should be prepared with material regardless of the environment in which you are singing. Having songs ready for any given occasion will bring value to you as a singer and/or band. So, make sure to listen to as many songs as possible to find the right ones for you. Don't exclude the possibility of writing it yourself! You'll never know until you try.

Sometimes you can find the right song but maybe it's not your style. Know you can always change up the style and look for another arrangement. Many songs are recorded in different styles with different arrangements. Make sure to choose a great song in a style that showcases you and your team best.

Last but not least, make sure you pay attention to lyrics. Make sure to bring a message that is powerful and relevant to your audience. Know what is appropriate and preferred in each scenario you have the opportunity to participate in and prepare all the selections well.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Selecting the best material that is appropriate for your audience is crucial to your ministry's success. The message you desire to send out and its success in fulfilling the vision and goals for every event is at stake.

01. PRAY BEFORE SELECTING ANY MATERIAL AND HAVE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE IN MIND AS YOU PRAY. ALL SONGS MUST RELATE TO YOUR AUDIENCE. THE MESSAGE IN EACH SONG SHOULD BE THE FOCAL POINT OF YOUR SELECTION PROCESS.

02. SELECT SONGS THAT THE AUDIENCE CAN LEARN EASILY SO THEY WILL PARTICIPATE. BE SURE THAT THE ENTIRE SET FLOWS WELL TOGETHER.

03. PLAN THE ENTIRE SONG SERVICE OUT IN YOUR MIND, KEEPING IN MIND YOUR AUDIENCE AND THEIR NEEDS. KEEP YOUR MOTIVES PURE BY REMOVING ALL PERSONAL AGENDAS. THIS WILL ADD TO YOUR TRANSPARENCY ON THE STAGE. PROMOTING THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL SHOULD ALWAYS BE A PRIORITY.

04. WORK ON YOUR TRANSITIONS DURING REHEARSAL TO ENSURE AN EASY FLOW. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SPECIAL MOMENTS DURING THE FLOW OF A SONG BY STAYING WITH IT AS YOU FEEL LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. START AND FINISH STRONG WITH EVERY SONG SET.

05. TRY TO ADD SOME ORIGINALITY TO THE SONGS YOU HAVE SELECTED BUT STAY TRUE TO YOURSELF AND THE SONGS. DON'T OVERDO IT, BUT MAKE MINOR CHANGES THAT WORK WELL WITH THE TEAM. CHOOSE SONGS THAT FEATURE OTHERS ON YOUR TEAM. PEOPLE ENJOY VARIETY WHEN OTHERS LEAD IN WORSHIP.

Appropriate

Whenever you are leading or participating in worship services or even performances of Christian songs in other venues, you should always choose pieces that reflect a Christian worldview and present them with ministry effectiveness in mind. Be aware of your target audience and dress and perform appropriately. But who exactly is your target audience and what is appropriate for them? “Ay,” as Hamlet would say, “there’s the rub.”

1. Determine your target audience by asking who’s attending and what the goals are for the event. Children, teens, and adults all have very different styles of learning and listening, and different styles of music they appreciate. No matter you listeners’ style, you must get your message across effectively. To do so, be intentional as you plan and prepare for that particular audience. Choosing the proper material for your audience will guarantee an effective response.
2. When choosing the material, make sure the subject matter is appropriate for the audience. Church congregations familiar with ministry will relate to songs geared toward the experienced Christian. However, outreach events that may include people who are not familiar with the gospel require styles of music to help this particular audience receive the message in song. All the music selected must present the message of the cross to invite those in the crowd to know Christ! Avoid presenting a message of condemnation but present a message of hope! Keep your message upbeat as you present the promise of eternal life in Christ.
3. Avoid personal agendas. You must take yourself out of the program. Every lyric sung and every note played is for God’s glory, not your own. People will appreciate your God-given abilities more when you truly give your all to Christ. We are not competing in a performance contest with the world; we are in a spiritual battle. It is all about Christ!
4. Make sure the motivation behind your ministry is genuine. People are looking for those who are consistent on and off the platform. Presenting the message of the gospel requires us to live like Christ. Be real with people. Read the Word of God and pray daily. The love you have for Christ will be felt by everyone around you.
5. Make sure your message is the focal point of your presentation. Keep the message of your song selection simple and true to the Word of God. Personal opinions and ideas not backed up by truth will get you into trouble and dilute the message of Christ. Ministry is about planting and watering. God will do the work by giving the increase.

Arrangement

1. Choose songs that your team and audience can pick up quickly.
Your audience will follow, enjoy, and understand songs that are recognizable and easy to sing along with. Don't let the audience be distracted by the lack of structure, poor dynamics, and lack of preparation. Presenting God's Word through music without creating distractions is the goal.
2. Check various renditions of the song you've chosen.
It is always good to know where you can take a song by listening to other interpretations of it. This will enhance your style and assist in being the most effective for the audience and your team.
3. Have consistent charts for your team.
Anyone can download charts and arrangements, but your team has to literally be on the same page. Various renditions of your songs are available, so you want your team all learning the same arrangement.
4. Select songs that fit the message of the event.
Song selection is everything in ministry. The wrong selections can lead to an uneasy flow during the event. Plan in advance to ensure the entire service is consistent with the message presented. Be sure the entire leadership team is aware of any substitutions that deviate from the original plan.
5. Select songs that fit the strengths of your team.
If you and your team cannot find a way to make a song really special and ensure a good flow, find another song! You need to be excited and confident about the songs you are using.
6. Work on communication during rehearsals.
Preparing to play live during rehearsal time goes a long way in establishing a great flow through the songs. Work on repeating choruses and bridges so that when a particular song is ministering really well, the flow of the song will be seamless. This is important, as you may go from chorus to bridge to verse and back again.
7. Make smooth transitions between songs.
Again, work on this during rehearsal. Keep the flow of the music consistent with the mood of the service. If you decide to change one song for another, your team's great preparation will allow you to do so without causing any distractions.
8. Don't try to fit too much into the song.
Find or create an arrangement of the song that fits your team. Complicating the arrangement can be enticing and fun, but lengthy solos, accents, and detailed turns can be distracting if done too frequently. Keep the structure of your song professional. Listen to what the pros do and incorporate that into your team. Doing too much with a song by complicating it will take away from the message you are trying to convey.

Christian Message

1. When choosing songs, keep the goals in mind for the event so you can best achieve them.
Discuss with the leadership team their goals for the service or event and plan accordingly. Unity is very important for a successful worship event. You must be on the same page as leadership and vice versa.
2. Be able to musically articulate the Christian message through the songs you select.
Style, energy, dynamics, and mood of the service can be easily attained when the leadership has planned according to the event's theme and purpose. The band and leadership will be more effective when all are on the same page.
3. Prepare for the response you are seeking from the audience.
From the start of the service to the middle to the closing, everything should be planned in advance to create the best possible flow for the event, beginning to end. The close of the service is a crucial time, so be sure to have a great song prepared.
4. Make sure your motivations are true.
You must leave no doubt in the audience's mind regarding your intentions. Be true to who you are, but more importantly, be true to Christ! Living a consistent life on and off the stage is mandatory.
5. Make yourself transparent.
People love to hear how you came to know Christ, how He changed you, and how He brought love, peace, and joy to your life. Many people are searching for this in their lives, and if they see what Christ has done in you, they may desire to know Him and experience that walk with Christ for themselves.
6. Promote the hope of the gospel.
You will not have all of the answers to people's problems, situations, addictions, etc., but presenting the truth of the gospel through worship songs may draw them to Christ and He will direct their path. Keep the entire experience simple and real!

Musical Transitions

A large part of what makes for an effective worship experience is how the songs flow from one to the other, what happens between songs, and how well the team and band work together—particularly in the openings and closings of each individual song. Here are some suggestions for keeping your musical transitions smooth, which will maintain the overall theme and mood you want to establish for the service or presentation.

1. Work on transitions during rehearsal.

If you sense that your transitions in rehearsal are sticky, then they are! Work this out as a team and smooth it out. Poor transitions create distractions.

2. Keep transitions short and smooth.

Keep the transitions smooth, especially during the high energy material! You want to capture everyone's attention while you have it, and too much delay between songs may cause minds to wander. Once people have their minds on what is going on, don't allow them the opportunity to concentrate on cell phones, what people are wearing, etc.

3. If you encounter a special moment of worship between songs, don't hurry to the next selection.

It is very important not to break the moments when people are locked into God's presence. This can be a decision time for many people, so play reverently during this time and gently proceed forward.

4. Start and finish strong!

Confidence comes with preparation. Transitions are smooth when each member of your team is familiar with each other and the material. Starting songs, finishing songs, and flow are all mastered when each member of your team strives to perfect his or her skills daily. Musical awareness and spiritual integrity from each worship team/band member will ensure effective transitions.

Originality

You have a God-given gift and it is important that you work on perfecting it! Seek ways to use your particular gifting and creativity to express your own original approach to leading worship.

1. Ask for God's will for music in your life and how to apply it.

God has given you your talent and chosen you to use it. Seek His plan for your life and how to apply His plan for music in your life and ministry. Seek out a mentor who can help steer you in the right direction. It will take commitment and hard work, but never underestimate where God can take you musically.

2. Be sincere about your motives to minister through a song.

Play every note with the greatest effort, recognizing where God has placed you. People will feel your passion to serve Christ through your skill. Work on this both at home and at rehearsals. When you pray and spend time with God on your own, that passion to praise Him will be obvious as you lead others in worship.

3. Practice singing and playing every day.

Secular musicians and singers are very serious about using their gifts. We are using ours for eternal rewards with everlasting effects. Originality comes from preparation in prayer, reading the Word, and perfecting your music skill. The Word of God is fresh every day, as will your music be when you allow God to use you to your fullest potential!

4. Stay true to yourself!

Many musicians and worship leaders try to incorporate a musical style they love into a song or service, but then don't perform particularly well. While nothing is wrong with that, it's likely you will struggle if you continue to try to be something you're not meant to be. Listen to yourself and discover the style God created in you. Being in His will bring originality.

Selection Notes

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COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a worship team is to communicate God's Word through a song without distractions. It starts with leadership sharing a vision and a goal for a particular service or Christian event. Every song selection and motive are geared toward supporting that goal. Knowing who your audience is and what will communicate well is crucial to selecting songs that they will most likely relate to.

Daily devotion and preparation will transform your rehearsals into a more focused and efficient time together. Confidence, cohesion, and passion will spill over into your live performance. Unity, body language, boldness, and anointing will increase within your team as you communicate God's Word through music. These things are necessary to present the gospel effectively through song.

Speak to your audience from your heart and share your passion and desire as you encourage them to get involved. Many people with various needs and challenges in life are seeking something that is real and genuine. Living a consistent life on and off the platform is necessary in when communicating the message of a song.

Play and sing every note skillfully, giving your best for Christ because He gave His best for you!

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Communicating the gospel through a song is all about preparing yourself and your team. There are seven chapters in this section, each of equal importance. Introducing these concepts to your team and encouraging them to apply it to their own lives will bring great results.

- 01.** DETERMINE YOUR TIME FRAME AND AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHIC. PRAY ABOUT THE MATERIAL YOU WISH TO SELECT. SEEK OUT THE VISION YOUR LEADERSHIP IS LEANING TOWARD. COMMUNICATE TO YOUR TEAM THE AGENDA FOR THE EVENT AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME.
- 02.** WORK ON YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS DURING REHEARSALS AND ON YOUR OWN. WORK ON MAKING EVERY NOTE THAT YOU SING AND PLAY COUNT. TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF YOUR TIME TO PREPARE SO YOU CAN BE FULLY PRESENT WHEN YOU MINISTER AT THE EVENT.
- 03.** MAINTAIN GOOD POSTURE BY LOOKING CONFIDENT. PRACTICE MOVING AROUND, AND MAKE SURE YOUR GEAR IS WORKING PROPERLY TO AVOID DISTRACTING BODY LANGUAGE.
- 04.** PLANNING OUT EACH SONG AS IF YOU ARE ONSTAGE WHILE YOU REHEARSE WILL INCREASE EFFECTIVE STAGE PRESENCE DURING THE PRESENTATION.
- 05.** ESTABLISH UNITY ON THE TEAM BY SIMPLY GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER. THIS WILL KEEP EVERYONE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE DIRECTION AND GOALS OF THE TEAM, MAKING PREPARATION TIME A BREEZE.
- 06.** WORK ON YOUR VOCAL PHRASING BY RECORDING YOUR REHEARSALS SO YOU CAN LISTEN BACK TO YOUR PERFORMANCE. THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE CONVEYING THE MESSAGE YOU WANT TO SHARE THROUGH THE SONG. IF YOU VIDEO YOUR REHEARSALS, YOU CAN ALSO SEE HOW YOU COME ACROSS. YOU MAY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ELIMINATE DISTRACTING HABITS, POSTURES, BODY LANGUAGE, OR INTERRUPTIONS WITH THIS OPTION.
- 07.** EXAMINE EACH SONG AND DETERMINE IF THE LYRICS ARE SOUND AND IF THEY WILL IMPACT YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE. MAKE SURE THE LYRICS MOVE YOU AND YOUR TEAMMATES TO ENSURE THEY WILL MOVE THE AUDIENCE ALSO.

Communicative Skill

1. Choose the right song.

If you choose a song you can identify with, it will be much easier for people to identify with the song as well.

2. Overcome shyness.

One of the hardest things to overcome as a musician or worship leader is stage fright. The best way to conquer this fear is to remember that our audience is really Christ. Imagine He is sitting on the front row, and how awesome it is to worship and glorify Him for what He did for us on Calvary! Be bold for Christ and make the most of this opportunity to share the gospel through song. It may be someone's first time hearing the message of Christ's love and redemption.

3. Use dynamics to communicate a song.

Many familiar worship choruses are simple and consist of three to four chords played over and over. Using dynamics—becoming louder in certain places and softer in others—will help capture your audience's attention and point their hearts toward God.

4. Use body language to communicate.

Never stand or play as if you were bored with a song or what you're doing. Keep your energy high and on point. People will notice when you are sincere and passionate about what you are ministering. The way to become comfortable in your calling and worship is to do it every day privately, practice with your group, and take opportunities to participate when scheduled or invited!

5. Play skillfully. Always use tasteful licks while performing.

Do not run over the singers with excessive soloing, drum accents, and bad effects choices. There will be appropriate places for you to do your thing. Be patient while the vocals pass the message on to the crowd. Then use your moment to enhance the song.

6. Acknowledge your audience.

Make sure not to ignore your audience when you are ministering in song. Acknowledge and address them. You can introduce yourself and your song as well. Express why the song means so much to you.

7. Make eye contact.

Don't be afraid to make eye contact with your audience. It can make them feel like a part of the song and engage them in the worship experience as a whole.

8. Be yourself! Be confident about who you are in Christ and let your light shine.

Passion comes from the heart and not your mind. Thinking about what you do, say, and play too much will make your ministry through worship sound mechanical.

Expressiveness

You can let the audience know that you are the real deal. In a society where people are skeptical of Christians, you have what it takes to convince them—a genuine, sincere passion for Christ that comes through in your worship leading. Part of that is allowing your passion for Christ to come through the songs you lead together as a team/band.

1. Move around the stage in a way that captures the emotion of your song.

Your body language will say a lot about how you feel about your song. The audience will be able to connect to the music if you move with it. Let your face show that you care about this very moment, and that every word matters to your heart and mind.

2. Don't hesitate to play and move with confidence.

Make sure you practice with your performance and ministry goals in mind. How you practice is how you will play! Athletes train for many hours between events just to remain competitive and sharp. If they don't train, eat right, and focus, someone else will take their place. If you don't take the same approach to your worship team, the results will be disappointing.

3. Make every note count.

As you play with passion, your audience will notice how each note you play has been thought out beforehand and chosen by you to play. When you consider every note beforehand in rehearsal, each song will feel fresh for your audience no matter how many times you've played it.

4. Use techniques specific to your instrument to make sections of the song stand out to the audience.

As you perform techniques on your instrument, do not hide your instrument from the listeners. Instead, let them see and connect to what you're doing. This will excite them and may encourage others in your audience to join a worship team.

5. Be in the moment.

A lot of hard work went into preparing for this worship moment, so really enjoy it and try to connect with everything that is happening in the room. Ministry is a powerful thing that changes lives, so take advantage of this opportunity! Ask the Holy Spirit to lead your heart and attitude so you can then lead others to worship God,

Posture

Posture can help your singing or playing to a certain degree but doesn't have to be perfect. Here are a few tips to help you relax onstage while still keeping a stance that will maximize your ability to perform as you lead in worship. It is important to plan and think about clothing, shoe, and accessory choices that work for the venue and audience you will be presenting to, and to prevent distractions or hazards because of these choices. It is not wise or effective to have to keep adjusting your garments, untangle a piece of jewelry, or not move because you may lose your balance because of your shoes.

1. Musicians—relax your shoulders, elbows, and wrists.
This will keep you at ease and will help your playing stay consistent.
2. Move around.
Even a few short steps can keep you loose and relaxed. As you and your team or bandmates move around, communicate occasionally with each other if/when the situation permits.
3. Don't lock your knees and don't stand in one place.
Move to the music and experience it. Avoid looking like you are frozen—you should enjoy the music.
4. Keep all of your gear in order.
All accessories, effects, spare parts, and instruments should be nearby and handy to prevent unnecessary movement and distractions.
5. Feet should be slightly apart, one a little in front of the other.
The weight of your body should be slightly forward to keep yourself balanced and make it easier to move.
6. Shift the weight of your body.
Move forward until almost standing on tips of the toes. Try to establish a feeling of buoyancy for optimum movement and the best execution of your song.
7. Stand with confidence.
You have rehearsed for hours and perfected your skill. Now go out and execute your worship service and get into it!

Stage Presence

Commanding the stage takes a lot of practice and experience. As a young musician, you can best attain command of the stage through passion and practice. If you believe in what you are doing—and the gifting God has given you—you can confidently take the stage and feel you belong there.

1. Practice at home as if you're onstage.

Playing onstage is much different than playing in your practice space at home. You must find creative ways to put yourself in that situation. Ask family members to watch you rehearse and seek their opinion. This can be a useful way to gain confidence as you allow those who are most familiar with you to evaluate you.

2. The stage is a chance to minister for Christ.

Take full advantage of this. The stage in this case is a ministry tool for your team to use. Spread out and enjoy the space. Arrive early and go through the material. Trust in God, but make sure to continue to go back over the goals your team set for this event.

3. Go to the venue in advance and put together a setup/teardown strategy.

Getting familiar with new territory in advance will help prevent last-minute glitches. No surprises and a bit of familiarity will benefit you when you arrive on the day of the event and prepare to lead worship.

4. Play as close to the front of the stage as possible.

The audience will want to see you and they will likely feel more at ease with you closer to them. Several people attending a worship service or concert may feel a little apprehensive due to various needs in their lives—problems, emptiness, loneliness, helplessness. As your team creates a relaxed atmosphere, it will spread to the audience and perhaps some hearts will be more open to let God help them in their need.

5. Ministering through songs with excellence will fuel the audience's interest in the message you are giving.

People will recognize your preparation, passion, and skill when they see that you are invested in their lives and want to deliver a message of hope. God has compassion for us, and He wants us to have compassion for others.

6. Plan out your onstage movements, if possible.

Full choreography is not necessary for your performance, but it would be wise to practice moving around as you play in rehearsal to avoid any mishaps on the platform. Be strategic about the use of stage space.

7. Plan an orderly and unified way to enter and exit the stage.

As a group, you need a way to get on and off the stage without any accidents. Talk through this before you hit the stage. The goal is to look unified and respectful, not showing or independent.

Unity

The more unity you create within your worship team or band, the more effective your worship leading can be. The audience will sense your united purpose in sharing the gospel through music, and this will help engage them in the experience.

1. Get to know each other.

Discover common interests with those on your worship team. Find out about each other's families and backgrounds. The better you know each other as people, the greater the bond will be when you create and lead worship music together.

2. Do things together away from music.

Experiencing outings together for simple fun and enjoyment are effective in establishing unity.

3. Set a standard of excellence.

Create an atmosphere of excellence because Christ is excellent. This will set the standard high and challenge team members to focus on that goal. A common goal must be attained.

4. Clearly define each ensemble member's role.

Let everyone know the goals and expectations of the team from the beginning. People like knowing what is expected of them and will respond positively.

5. Help each other shine.

Christ became a servant while here on earth. Serve each other on the team to enhance unity with each other and your individual relationship with Christ.

6. Pray for each other.

Share in the needs of your team members. We hold each other up when things aren't going well, and this starts with praying for each other's needs.

7. Come to rehearsal prepared!

Rehearsal is a time to perfect the material, not to learn it. Everyone's time is valuable, so being organized will go a long way in building unity, respect, and trust.

8. Accountability—set the standard high.

Be accountable to one another and to God for how you develop and use your musical gifts and how you fit in the worship team/band. Your team's responsibility to the audience is crucial to presenting the gospel in a song. People's needs, problems, and lives are at stake as you present a message of hope. So be accountable, remain unified, and stay focused.

Worshipful Lyrics

1. Fundamentally sound lyrics.

Verify that your chosen songs and any worship-related transitional comments are biblically sound. Though it's been sung, preached, written about, and recorded for years, King David never wrote Psalm 42:1 that states, "As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God" (NLT). The Sons of Korah wrote it. Be sure of your biblical facts as well if you use them in transition moments. Remember, your purpose is to lead the audience to worship the God of Truth, and therefore your chosen songs should contain lyrics that are true to God's Word.

2. Songs should be relevant.

Lyrics that contain words from the King James Version of the Bible may cause a disconnect with many in your audience. An unchurched audience will require a well-thought-out strategy for the selection of worship material.

3. Children, youth, and adults are different audiences.

Knowing who your audience is will determine the types of songs and lyrics you choose for leading them in worship. These different age groups desire material that fits their style and points of interests, and lyrics that do not exceed or fall short of their developmental or educational level.

4. Lyrics should flow with the message of the event.

Music that promotes a theme will enhance the purpose for the particular event or service and will help in the ministering to those in attendance.

5. Keep songs simple.

The average people attending a worship event are not cruising around listening to your favorite worship tunes. Songs that are easy to pick up lyrically will attract more participants.

6. Play worship songs before and after the event.

This is a quick way to familiarize the audience with some of the songs you are doing in the worship service or event.

7. Sing like you believe.

Leading worship is not the time for an off day when ministering God's Word through a song. Sing the lyrics with the meaning they really have in your life. Get focused and prepared to sing these songs with feelings. These lyrics are alive. They communicate things found in God's Word. That is why the songs selected and the lyrics of those songs need to match up with the Bible. The Holy Spirit can work in your heart and life as well as the audience at the same time when the truth is proclaimed!

Vocal Clarity

1. Energy is everything—sing with enthusiasm and passion.
Do not take any song for granted but sing as if you were in the studio laying down a track. To avoid singing sharp, don't push too hard.
2. Avoid lazy phrasing.
Try to give every section of a song the same care. Great talent and ability still require great effort. A singer must not take certain phrases off in a song either. Your pitch can turn flat, so work to avoid being lazy.
3. Keep the message of the song clear with proper pronunciation of words.
Singers, even professional artists, can be difficult to understand. With their message and audience, they can sometimes get by, but your goals in ministry are more important. Drawing more people to the knowledge of Christ is the highest call anyone can fulfill. The message has to be clear, so make sure your words can be understood.
4. Sing with the song, not against it!
A song with a full band, perhaps even an orchestra, requires you to sing to a higher level of energy and volume. Doing the same song with just an acoustic guitar requires you to adjust your phrasing, volume, and tone. Passion remains the same, but you have to keep the song in balance with the style in which you are singing it, the type of instruments used, and the feeling you seek to evoke with that particular worship song.
5. Avoid oversinging.
Too much ad-libbing, overpronunciation of lyrics, and sustaining notes can give your audience ear fatigue. Just like the guitar player who thinks he is the only one playing in the song, everyone now wants to turn him off. The same goes for vocalists too.

Communication Notes

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PRESENTATION/TECHNIQUE

INTRODUCTION

The importance of technique cannot be stressed enough. Technique will only enhance your style, consistency, dependability, and delivery to the point that God can move in a mighty way through the gifts He has given you. Having good vocal technique only adds to your musical future and ministry.

Good vocal technique will result in better performance, more endurance, more vocal range, a clear and better tone, more power in your voice, and more longevity in the years to come. It will lead you to work less as a singer than someone who does not have technique. It will prevent vocal damage such as nodes or polyps, which are calluses on the vocal cords that will cause you to lose your voice. It also can take years to recover from surgery to remove nodes or polyps, and people must relearn to sing. So, think of vocal technique as an investment in your gift, which will pay dividends in the future.

Technique ties into presentation—you can have a wonderful gift but not have good presentation, therefore won't be received well by the audience. Technique will help create proper presentation through a relaxed and controlled stage presence.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

The Presentation/Technique section deals with how your team executes onstage. Everything that happens during a performance becomes a factor in how the audience receives your team and the worship you lead.

01. ARRIVE EARLY TO DO A PROPER SOUND AND EQUIPMENT CHECK. THIS WILL HELP YOU TO REMAIN TRUE TO YOUR STYLE AND CONFIDENT. THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO RELIEVE TENSION THAT A MINISTRY EVENT MAY CAUSE YOU AND YOUR TEAM.

02. DO A PROPER SOUND CHECK TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE MIX. LISTEN TO WHAT EACH TEAM MEMBER IS DOING DURING A SONG TO MAINTAIN EXCELLENT MUSIC CONTENT. LISTEN CLOSELY TO MAKE SURE THAT THE TEAM BLENDS.

03. WORK ON BREATHING PROPERLY TO ACHIEVE GREAT VOCAL TONE AND PROPER PITCH.

04. KEEP YOUR MUSIC GEAR MAINTAINED AND WELL KEPT. PROPER INTONATION IS EASILY ATTAINED WHEN YOU PURCHASE QUALITY GEAR AND TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT. GREAT TONE AND SOUND WILL GET THE ATTENTION OF YOUR AUDIENCE.

05. MAKE YOUR TRANSITIONS BETWEEN SONGS SMOOTH AND PROFESSIONAL. THIS WILL AID IN PREVENTING UNWANTED DISTRACTIONS DURING YOUR PERFORMANCE. THE TIMING AND FEEL FOR EACH SONG SHOULD BE SOLID AS LONG AS YOU ARE RELAXED AND HAVE PREPARED YOUR TEAM.

06. PLAY SONGS THAT ARE SIMPLE AND TASTEFUL AS IT PERTAINS TO PHRASING. THIS WILL HELP YOUR AUDIENCE CONNECT AND PARTICIPATE IN THE WORSHIP TIME.

07. EACH PERSON HAS A GOD-GIVEN TALENT AND STYLE. YOU WANT TO UTILIZE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS' GIFTS TO THE FULLEST EFFECT TO BRING UNITY TO YOUR TEAM AS YOU LEAD THE AUDIENCE IN WORSHIP TOGETHER. ONE WAY YOU CAN PREPARE FOR EXCELLENCE IN YOUR WORSHIP EVENT IS TO EVALUATE YOUR SONG SET IN ADVANCE. DEVELOP THIS PROCESS BY RECORDING YOUR TEAM IN REHEARSAL (AND EVEN DURING EVENTS) AND JUDGING THE CONTENT TO IMPROVE AND EXCEL IN YOUR NEXT PRESENTATION.

Articulation

Articulation is the ability for your team to communicate a song in a technically correct and natural manner, giving it the best chance to move listeners closer to God. Many things affect articulation such as sound, lights, vocals, band, and environment. Here are some suggestions for improving articulation with your team.

1. Relieve tension!

Tension affects everybody's performances. The entire team will work better when they are relaxed and have the confidence of the leadership. Meet together before every worship event to go over set goals and then pray. Relax as you go forward.

2. Emphasize consonants.

You have rehearsed, and now it is time to put everything else aside and minister through the songs with excellence. A simple thing like making sure your consonants are heard will keep the message clear. Even though you are relaxed, don't let details like vocal pronunciation, timing, and flow get sloppy.

3. Complete a thorough sound check.

Be sure to spend several minutes making sure your team can hear themselves and each other comfortably with no major distractions. Once every team member does a sound check, go through the song at full volume then adjust the sound again as needed.

4. Stay true to your style and your goals.

You know the event, crowd, and the goals, so do not attempt anything that the entire team is not prepared for. Any uneasy or unprepared feeling that team members may have will be difficult to hide from the audience when there is any second-guessing.

5. Lighting and graphics are an effective way to articulate songs.

The mood of any song can be enhanced with lights, staging, graphics, and lyrics on screens, but be careful not to fall into the entertainment trap. It is a very fine line, so follow your heart as you follow God.

6. Stay confident!

Articulation is best achieved with confidence. This simply means you want to be heard and understood. Vocalists should never mumble, and musicians should not be searching the halls of music theory to find that phantom chord. Preparation increases confidence, and preparation then enhances articulation.

7. Good sound equipment and technicians are crucial.

You must have confidence in the person running your sound. Few things are more unnerving than poor sound quality. This holds true for your equipment too. Reliable people and equipment are very beneficial, especially in a church setting where they are part of the team. Sometimes you will have to adjust what is provided for you in certain venues. Be prepared to be flexible if necessary.

Breathing

Nothing will help your vocal performance like learning to breathe properly. Correct breathing will affect the tone quality, sustainability, and pitch of vocals as well as the tone of woodwind and brass players, making your songs more effective in reaching the audience as you lead worship. Breath control is not only for vocalists and woodwind/ brass musicians—it will also help other instrumentals play more effectively. Here are some suggestions for learning to breathe properly before you ever hit the stage.

1. Relieve tension by rehearsing breathing.

Vocalists and musicians who breathe properly are more relaxed, sound better, and are usually understood by the audience better. Begin to practice breathing techniques in your individual and team rehearsal times. Once correct breathing becomes a habit from practice, it will come more naturally when you are leading.

2. Muscles will be relaxed.

Breathing correctly helps your muscles relax, allowing you to give a stronger effort. Athletes work on breathing to improve their game, so worship teams should as well.

3. Take a deep breath.

Do this during your prayer time, pre-service, and practice to maintain focus. If you find yourself taking these deep breaths during your performance, you are most likely struggling to breathe right. Your tone, posture, and appearance will suffer when breathing incorrectly.

4. Vocal coaching.

Singers should seek lessons from a vocal coach to further shape their voices. You will be amazed what a difference it will make learning basic breathing techniques from a professional, then rehearsing and applying those lessons personally.

Diction

“The term articulation refers to the actions of the glottis, lips, tongue, teeth, hard palate, velum (soft palate), and jaws that combine to form word sounds. Diction is the precise formation and arrangement of these sounds into language patterns that accurately convey both the literary and the musical meaning of a song. If a song is sung with poor diction (faulty articulation of vowels and consonants), much more than the literary meaning is lost; the quality of the singing voice is also impaired, resulting in a musical loss.”

— Fundamentals of Singing by Charles E. Lindsley

1. Listen to singers with good diction.

Diction is basically word choice. One great way to learn is to listen to singers with good diction. Many classical singers have good diction.

2. Practice speaking clearly!

One way to practice good diction while singing is to practice speaking clearly and slowly.

3. Practice speaking correctly.

- ⚙ “Got to” should be “have to.”
- ⚙ “Woulda/coulda/shoulda” should be “would have”/“could have”/“should have.”
- ⚙ “Uzshly” should be “usually.”
- ⚙ “Gonna” should be “going to.”
- ⚙ “Wanna” should be “want to.”
- ⚙ “Cancha” should be “can’t you.”

4. Study the language.

If you are singing in a foreign language, study that language and look to join a conversation group. Visit the country that speaks that language if possible, and if not, listen to movies or recordings of people speaking that language.

5. Work on your accent.

Some Southerners and Northeasterners of the United States, for example, must be careful of their accents when singing and speaking. Listen to people like news reporters to learn to speak more generically.

6. Articulate!

Practice articulating all vowels (A, E, I, O, U), then all consonants (all the other letters) correctly.

7. Practice tongue twisters.

Try saying, “A big black bug bit the big black bear, made the big black bear bleed blood.”
Or “Sudden swallows swiftly skimming sunset’s slowing spreading shade, silvery songsters sweetly singing summer’s soothing serenade.”

8. Modify vowels on high pitches.

Instead of singing pure vowels, you will sing modified vowels on the higher pitches.

9. Ask others to be honest with you.

After you sing or record a song, you can ask an unbiased party if they understand the words you are singing.

TIP

TRY THIS EXERCISE THAT RADIO ANNOUNCERS DO TO ENUNCIATE AND SPEAK CLEARLY: FIND A LIST OF TONGUE TWISTERS ON THE INTERNET. TAKE A CLEAN GAUGE OR TIP OF A TOWEL BETWEEN YOUR FINGERS AND HOLD THE TIP OF YOUR TONGUE OUT. NOW SAY SOME TONGUE TWISTERS SLOWLY WITHOUT PULLING YOUR TONGUE BACK IN YOUR MOUTH. AS YOUR TONGUE, NECK MUSCLES, AND SHOULDERS RELAX, WORK UP TO SAYING THEM FASTER AND FASTER. YOU WILL BE SURPRISED HOW CLEAR YOU BEGIN TO TALK AND SING AS YOU PRACTICE THIS.

Blend

To create great balance among the team as you lead through your worship songs, follow these suggestions:

1. Seek musical awareness.

Each team member must be aware of and listening to what everyone else is doing. Try to match your voices to one another in volume, pitch, style, pronunciation, and harmony balance. The sopranos should not always overshadow the tenors or altos or vice versa. It is a good idea to practice songs in unison to see if any members sound louder or stick out and then work on sounding like one voice before splitting off into harmony. This will prevent a solo competition and help the group blend. Listen to what is going on around you!

2. Be aware of dynamics.

Everyone must pay attention when performing volume swells to ensure the increase in volume moves together among the musicians and vocalists. The same thing applies when taking a song to a quiet reverent moment. Blend on the way up and on the way down.

3. Don't overload your sound technician.

The better your team blends together, the less work your sound technician will have to do. Vocalists should use the space between their mouth and the microphone to control volume. Musicians should avoid over attacking the instruments, which causes quick bursts in volume. You could invest in a quiet compressor/limiter to avoid this, otherwise, the sound tech will likely really have to work the faders, which is not the best way to do things.

4. Conduct a stage sound check.

Doing a proper sound check will help everyone blend. You must hear each other in order to blend properly. This is necessary if you are going to have musical awareness too. You are only as effective as the mix you're projecting into the space.

5. Be aware of complicated turns and riffs.

Musicians must execute these to perfection to keep the blend and avoid becoming a noisemaker. You should also consider limiting the amount of complex turns and riffs to avoid sounding too technical, which could compromise the message of the song.

Dynamics

Few songs are performed at the same dynamic level throughout. The ebbs and flows of volume in songs convey certain moods and emotions to the audience. Effective dynamics can also provide smoother musical transitions from song to song. Dynamics executed well can help drive home the feeling you want to convey and engage the audience in the song and its message. Try these tips to keep the dynamics of your songs in a worship event flowing effortlessly and effectively.

1. Develop musical awareness and trust.

Each team member must be aware of what everyone else on the team is doing. Strive to build chemistry so you develop confidence in each team member's abilities. Chemistry will aid the team in perfecting the dynamics in each song. Building trust with each other will really impact your effectiveness as you perform live!

2. Work for unity in volume swells.

Everyone must pay attention when performing volume swells to ensure the increase in volume goes up together with order. The same thing applies when taking a song to a quiet reverent moment. The dynamic of this must be done together to achieve the impact you are working toward.

3. Help your sound technician.

The better your team stays unified with changes in dynamics, the less work your sound tech will have to do. Vocalists must use the space between their mouths and the microphone to control their volume. Musicians must play consistently, avoiding quick bursts in volume. Consider investing in a quiet compressor/limiter to smooth out your volume. Keeping the sound tech from having to overwork the sound board is evidence that your worship team is prepared!

4. Be aware of dynamics during your stage sound check.

Work on your team's dynamic during the sound check to ensure that everyone can hear each other well. Any issues that come up when doing this can quickly be solved.

5. Be careful with complicated turns and riffs.

Bad timing and rhythm equal bad music, and bad music is not dynamic. Keep it tight!

6. Work on dynamic vocals.

Staying together, whether singing vibrato or straight tone, will help your dynamics flow more smoothly. If half of the team is signing one way and the other half is singing another way, this will likely result in poor dynamics and a distraction for your audience.

Harmony

Harmony is the combination of two or more simultaneous, similar-sounding musical notes to produce chords or pitches for a pleasing sound. Harmony is different than melody because harmony builds on the melody line— it cannot exist without a melody.

1. Choose the right music.

Choosing a great song with an excellent arrangement can help showcase your group's ability to sing and blend in harmony.

2. Maintain good vocal technique.

In order to blend with other singers, learn to take direction from your director, especially in matters of dynamics, diction, and phrasing. Everyone in the ensemble must sing with the same volume, pronounce words the same way, and begin and end together. However, good vocal technique should never have to be compromised while singing in a group. A singer should never have to brighten or darken their tone. Singers should always maintain a clear tone with normal speech-like singing. Your vocal technique should never change while singing in a group—only the vocal expression should vary as you blend. In a good ensemble or choir, no one person should stick out. A singer shouldn't want to stick out though, since then it would no longer be considered an ensemble.

3. Learn how to blend.

Putting good lead singers together to sing as a group doesn't mean they will sound best as a group. Voices might stick out in different parts of the music because a lot of lead singers are not used to blending their voices with other vocalists. In order to blend, you need to sing with a balanced tone that is not too harsh or strident, and with neutral (not wide) vowel sounds. There are certain subtle vowel sounds you can all use on certain words to blend better together. Another blend issue is the amount of vibrato you use. Since some styles of music require a straighter tone while others require more vibrato, a great idea is to match vibratos with the other singers in the group. A good exercise is to take a major triad, have each person sing one part of the chord, then practice holding out a word for four counts while you match vowel sounds, tone, and vibrato.

4. Practice blending with recordings.

Good harmony singers need to learn to sing the different nuances of one style as one voice. So, practice singing along with vocalists or vocal groups that you like. You can also record yourself singing along. Play it back and listen to see if you are phrasing with them and if your vibrato matches with theirs. Are you pronouncing your words the same as them? How about the phrasing and dynamics? Keep working to develop these skills, and you will improve as a group singer.

5. Sing in tune.

Harmony singers need to be able to sing in tune together, creating chords. You can take some basic ear training at a local college or music school, learning to sing arpeggios of various chords and their inversions. Again, singing along with any kind of harmony vocals will help. Try to find recordings from the 1940s through 1980s that have a lot of vocal harmonies. See if you can hear the different harmonies and try to sing each part. Practicing recognizing all the parts will help you understand your tone and pitch. Also, good vocal technique can greatly improve your pitch. You might have a difficult time singing your part with accuracy and in tune with others if you are tense or too breathy. One singer singing off-pitch can adversely affect the whole group.

6. Pay attention to the groove.

Good singing is not just about melody; rhythm is just as important. Different songs have different rhythms or “grooves.” Again, attending a music class may help you with the foundation. You can also get together with someone who plays a percussive instrument such as drums, congas, or bongo and have them record various beats. When you sing any style, you want to learn the basic rhythms of a groove and its subdivisions, such as eighth or sixteenth notes. That way, what you sing goes with the rhythm or groove of the song. All singers in a group have to lock into the groove together. A cappella groups create their own rhythm vocally. Again, listening is key.

7. Choose the right voice for the right part.

Sopranos should be able to sing G below middle C and F above high C. Altos should be able to sing C below middle C and C above high C. Tenors should be able to sing C below middle C and E above high C. Baritones should be able to sing G below middle C and B above middle C. Basses should be able to sing E below low C and G above middle C. All voices should be able to maintain a connected tone throughout these registers. However, the most reputable voice teachers say the basic quality of the voice is the most important factor to consider. Assuming a person’s speaking voice is clear and unforced, the singing part should be based on the quality of the speaking voice. So, make sure sopranos sing the soprano part, altos sing the alto part, tenors sing the tenor part, etc.

Energy

Giving your best when it comes time to lead a worship service or event is not solely dependent upon how prepared you are musically. You must also be ready with your full potential of energy.

1. Begin the day going through things in your mind.

Have a clear mindset as you prepare to minister. Starting with prayer is a great way to increase your energy level. Exercising regularly and good consistent sleep helps increase energy as well.

2. Stay clear! Don't surround yourself with people and situations that drag you down.

Especially avoid any programming, activities, or people that tend to leave you feeling bad or disconnected from God. This distracts your focus from what God is attempting to do through you and your gifts.

3. Choose a healthy diet.

Physically you want to feel your best, so try to avoid foods that could cause you to suddenly have an energy crash or have to make a quick exit during the event. This is one distraction you want to avoid!

4 Arrive early.

This is a great time to warm up and go over anything you feel needs attention. Talk to your other team members and enjoy these moments.

5. Open strong.

Your audience will feel your energy, preparation, and most of all, your sincere relationship with God. Anointed worship music will soothe the soul and can stir people's hearts to seek Christ. Set the right worship tone immediately.

6. Passion radiates energy.

These two go together and are extremely effective for the audience. It is important that you and your worship team/band are infused with energy and passion as you represent God. The Spirit of God is everlasting joy, peace, and love—which are far more rewarding than any other message—and will catch on in the audience if you bring high energy!

7. Finish strong.

Leave the audience desiring more, and most of all, leave them with the knowledge of the truth—the gospel of Christ.

Intonation: Vocals

Intonation is the pitch and tone of your voice or instrument. A variety of factors can affect proper pitch and tone. Practice the following techniques for excellent intonation.

1. Practice singing on pitch.

Record yourself singing alone, with and without an instrument. After judging the recording, be mindful of areas where you need to improve your pitch and try again. Be persistent, and through hard work you should be able to fix your intonation.

2. Take lessons.

A quality, professional vocal or music coach can offer great benefits to fixing any intonation challenges you're facing since they are trained in these areas. Roger Federer was the number-one ranked tennis player in the world for years—and he has a coach. Imagine that! It is always a positive thing to enroll in and continue with lessons.

3. Purchase quality instruments.

Great musicians use quality equipment. The right gear and instruments can make the difference between playing with authority and sounding like an amateur. Equipment that stays in tune, once it has been set up by a professional, will seldom cause intonation problems.

4. Exercise your God-given gift.

Your voice, fingers, and feet are all used to create music and should be exercised daily. If you exercised only one day per week, you would likely struggle each time you exercised. Your musical gift needs to be worked daily too. Your ear will then become familiar with good sound and pitch, and you'll improve your overall intonation.

5. Warm up and tune up regularly.

Your instrument should be tuned up and ready to go right before rehearsals, services, and any other music venues you are participating in. Air conditioning and changing room temperature can cause guitars and other instruments to go out of tune. It is essential to keep an eye on it.

TIP

GREAT SINGERS AND MUSICIANS ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR HARD WORK, TONE, AND INTONATION. WHEN YOU ARE IN REHEARSALS OR A CERTAIN VENUE, NOTHING IS MORE DISTRACTING THAN ONE PERSON WHO IS FLAT OR OUT OF TUNE. TUNING YOUR INSTRUMENT CONSTANTLY DURING A SERVICE OR PERFORMANCE IS ALSO DISTRACTING AND REPRESENTS LACK OF PREPARATION. SET THE TONE BY KEEPING YOUR INTONATION SPOT ON! SING AND PLAY SKILLFULLY!

Phrasing

When performing, you want every note to count. Phrasing is all about how you deliver each note. Take the time to think through your song in the planning, rehearsal, and performance. Think about phrasing as sentences within the song. You will stop or pause for emphasis sometimes. You may insert more words when others pause. This is true when you are creating musical sounds and phrases as well as with the notes you play and the rests or pauses you insert. The licks you put together and where you place them can create a signature sound and create interest for the audience.

1. Make each note count.

Play or sing each note with the same effort and level of concentration, but keep it simple too. Complicated bunches of notes put together to show off mechanically doesn't necessarily make you musical. Playing the right notes in the right way to improve on the song is the goal.

2. Develop style in your playing.

Memorable solos sound like the instrument is the singer. There is space to breathe, move, and articulate a phrase by incorporating feeling into your playing, just like a great singer can do with their voice.

3. Keep it simple and tasteful.

Listen to professionals perform solos. Most of the time their styles are very distinct—easy to recognize and tasteful. Search for musicians whose style fits your interest and learn from them.

4. Use the appropriate scales.

Playing a blues scale to a major-dominated ballad will disrupt the meaning and vibe of the song. Applying the scale that fits the particular style of the song will create much better phrasing.

5. Record yourself.

This is where you will truly find out how effective your phrasing, style, note choice, and taste really are. Hearing what you've done will help you recognize the improvements you need to make.

6. Listen to quality artists.

Listening to great music performed by great artists will create a solid library of music in your head. This will transfer to your own style as you continue to grow in your gift. Phrasing will become noticeably better when you surround yourself with quality music.

7. Utilize chord fragments.

Playing parts of chords (two or three notes) can really enhance phrase and taste. Experience doing this and avoid overplaying on rhythm.

Rhythmic Precision

Besides being out of tune, bad rhythm is the next wrong thing audiences will pick up on. Everyone can tell when something is “off.” Don’t let this be your story. Apply the following practical advice to stay on the right rhythmic track.

1. Identify and study the time signature and tempo of your song.

Take time to make sure you understand the time signature of the song. If it does not make sense to you, seek guidance regarding that information from vocal/instrumental coaches or mentors. Counting the music will be nearly impossible without a clear understanding of the time signature.

2. Feel the groove and connect with the song.

A good way to master any given song is to have the song playing in your head after listening and playing along with the track for any length of time. Concentrate on the count and timing of the song until it is built into your memory.

3. Let the tempo of the song become permanent in your mind.

The goal here is to become so familiar with the tempo of the song that you can’t forget it. If you allow the tempo to become engrained in your memory through repeated practice, you will notice when it is too fast or too slow.

4. Develop a consistent motion when clicking off a song to get it started.

Stay with the same click count for each song you start. Don’t click off an eight-count one time and four-count the next.

5. Intensify your playing without speeding up the song.

As you get louder due to the dynamic requirements of the song, you must maintain the same timing while increasing your volume. Avoid speeding it up. This is something that you would do well to practice in rehearsals together, as it is easy to speed up as intensity or volume increase, and conversely to slow down when decreasing intensity or volume.

6. Rehearse with a track at home.

Another way to work on tempo is to have someone shut off the track you are playing with for twenty seconds. Then have them turn it back on and see how well you kept time.

7. Always practice with a track or metronome.

Rhythm and timing are the foundation to great music. Build a solid foundation!

Vocal Tone

Vocalists in your worship team or band carry the lyrics, which carries the message to the heart of your audience. Proper vocal tone will ensure that message is conveyed effectively.

1. Use the right voice for the song.

Most bands today need to be diversified and having more than one lead vocal is beneficial. Be sure to use the person in your group who will give a particular song the best chance for success. Style, comfort, and tone will dictate who you should choose.

2. Blend with everyone.

Multiple vocals during a song sound best when each person is working to blend with the others rather than trying to stand out alone. Let the lead vocalist worry about standing out with the main lyrics while the rest of the vocalists practice sounding like one voice.

3. Determine when to use vibrato versus straight tone.

Vocals should stay unified when it comes to the use of vibrato or singing straight. One person singing vibrato while another doesn't does not sound pleasing. Work on listening to each other and strategize in rehearsal what you are going to do regarding vibrato.

4. Develop proper vocal resonance.

Many lead vocalists use different techniques to project their tone. Good tone comes from good technique. To develop your voice as an artist, especially learning how to develop resonance in your voice, seek the help of a vocal coach. If you are struggling to find yourself and your tone, take lessons to help you master your voice. The texture of your voice will really improve!

5. Choose songs people will believe in when you perform them.

Attempting to perform a song by an artist with a voice that doesn't accomplish a particular style well may be a difficult sell. Some songs are so defined by a particular artist that it may be wise to avoid them. Plenty of material is available out there, so select songs that you and your group can perform well. Certain people do certain kinds of songs better than others. That is fine, but you should learn to recognize what works and what doesn't.

6. Listen to quality vocalists.

Listening to great singers creates a solid library from which your own style can develop. This will allow you and your team to continue growing in your tone quality. Phrasing will become noticeably better when you listen to quality vocalists and their music.

7. Breathe correctly.

Proper breathing technique is absolutely essential for quality tone! Lessons, if possible, will ensure that you improve on this.

Tone Quality: Musicians

Tone quality is not just a concern for vocalists. Every musician in your worship team or band must learn how tone quality is affected in their particular instrument.

1. Play accurately and with precision.

All worship team/band members must play their part without unwanted noise, wrong notes, needless sustain, and inconsistent attack. Keep your energy level up as you head into it.

2. Maintain your equipment properly.

A major source of frustration during a performance is worn or poorly maintained equipment. Although the audience may be unaware of the source, they will likely notice when something is not right which can detract from the worship experience. Invest in your equipment to maintain great tone overall as a team. You are only as prepared as your gear is.

3. Use dependable equipment.

Purchase gear that has a proven track record, warranty, and accessible replacement parts. You get what you pay for, so invest wisely.

4. Use online resources.

Today many websites offer professional tips regarding tone, enhancements, tricks of the trade, etc. There are endless product reviews by current users, so check them out! Be sure to seek out users with years of experience when reading reviews. Make sure the review is professional as well.

5. Constantly pursue great tone.

As technology improves and techniques evolve, never give up on the pursuit of improving tone. Every great musician has great tone—it may not be the same tone, but it's still great tone! You may find yourself constantly intrigued by the number of great sounds you hear from other well-trained musicians.

Musical Transitions and Flow

1. Rehearse your transitions.

Smooth transitions from song to song should be practiced and perfected during rehearsals. Make the time to work on this; it's important, so don't brush it aside. Everything is magnified during a live performance and you want to remain professional at all times.

2. Relax throughout the event.

If you feel uptight and stressed, your audience will detect it and most likely your effectiveness will weaken. Relax between songs and trust each other. There should never be any second-guessing when you have properly prepared to minister through your songs.

3. Review the set list.

For each and every event, be sure to go over the agenda during warm-ups. Prepare copies of the agenda to give to your entire team. This will assist in ensuring smooth transitions between songs.

4. Handle a change in style or substitute one song for another song in the middle of an event.

Use the confidence you have cultivated through hard work and preparation to communicate what you are doing to the audience. Speak from your heart and convey the reasons why you are changing things. This will help both the audience and your team feel at ease.

5. Avoid attempting unperfected material live.

This is a sure way to create an atmosphere of uneasiness. Unless you are prepared to go solo and relieve the band for this one song, do not try this onstage! Remain humble and avoid creating situations that will humble you quickly in front of others. Christ was always prepared to minister to others; you should be prepared as well.

6. Work on slowing and speeding up the pace of a song live.

Sometimes when performing live the adrenaline is pumping and the song is a little too fast. What do you do now? Practice this with your team by intentionally starting too fast or too slow, and then increase or decrease the time together as a unit. Working on this will ensure a steady flow during a performance and will largely go unnoticed by your audience.

7. Transition and flow should meet the goals set by leadership.

Theme the set list and consider the audience and the desired goal for the event. Different venues, demographics, and ministry leaders all require varying approaches to the venue and event or service. Having an open mind, the ability to be diversified, the ability to adapt, and the willingness to serve others will guarantee success for your ministry.

Presentation/Technique Notes

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EFFECTIVENESS

INTRODUCTION

Someone once said you know you are called when people call. In other words, you know you are meant to do something when other people ask you to do it. While this may be true to a certain extent, greatness can come out of every person. Some just have to dig a little deeper than others.

Ultimately, every Christian is called to ministry. The question is, to what capacity and to which ministry? Finding your ministry is the key to effectiveness. Your most successful ministry is what you are most passionate about and able to express with utmost sincerity. If you believe what you're called to with your whole heart, other people will believe it too. If you are excited about it, then others will be as well.

An effective vocal performance takes a great deal of preparation, so it is important you have a singing gift. If you do, then it is only a matter of honing your gift and making it better. Some people might ask, "If God has given me a gift, why should I have to work at it?" It's because God wants you to. The Bible says, "Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval" (2 Timothy 2:15, NLT). The kingdom of God calls us to excellence. Besides, why would you want to give any less than your best? Why wouldn't you want to be the best you can be? A little work goes a long way.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Effectiveness is simply re-examining everything you desire to communicate through the worship service or event. Each event has a different set of goals and vision in mind, so you will want to look at every detail.

01. AS YOU ARE PREPARING, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU BE YOURSELF AND NOT TRY TO EMULATE OTHER PREACHERS, WORSHIP LEADERS, MUSICIANS, ETC. THE CONTENT OF YOUR CHOSEN MATERIAL SHOULD BE ALIVE IN YOU, SO YOU CAN EXECUTE THE WORSHIP SONGS WITH THE PURPOSE OF CHANGED LIVES IN MIND.

02. REVISIT THE GOALS AND VISION WITH YOUR TEAM AND ALLOW THE SONGS TO DO THE TALKING. STAY FOCUSED ON THE MESSAGE OF THE SONGS AND KEEP THINGS FRESH WITH YOUR ENTHUSIASM.

03. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO DETAILS SUCH AS MEMORIZING LYRICS; CREATING AND DIRECTING STRONG INTROS AND ENDINGS; USING CONSISTENT CHORD CHARTS; AND DISPLAYING EXCELLENT MUSICIANSHIP. MEMORIZE THESE THINGS BY WORKING ON THEM DAILY.

04. ALL TEAM MEMBERS SHOULD PREPARE INDIVIDUALLY IN THEIR PERSONAL TIME SO YOUR TEAM CAN PERFECT THE MATERIAL DURING REHEARSAL. YOU WANT TO AVOID TEAM MEMBERS LEARNING THE MATERIAL AT REHEARSALS BECAUSE THIS WASTES TIME AND AFFECTS PRODUCTIVITY. AVOID SPENDING NEEDLESS TIME ON THINGS THE TEAM HAS MASTERED. THE GOAL IS TO MAKE EACH SELECTION SOUND NATURAL, CREATING A SEAMLESS FLOW DURING EVERY EVENT.

05. WORK ON YOUR DYNAMICS BOTH VOCALLY AND INSTRUMENTALLY. TRY TO ADD SOME ORIGINALITY TO THE MATERIAL. KEEP THEM SIMPLE AND STRATEGIC TO MAXIMIZE THE ATTENTION OF YOUR AUDIENCE. LEARN TO PLAY THROUGH ANY MISHAPS ONSTAGE USING YOUR PREPARED SKILLS WISELY.

Evident Ministry

1. Examine the spiritual content of your material.

Each song you prepare and perform must represent the truth of the gospel. It may be a simple message, but it must be clearly communicated to your audience in how you present the songs. The gift of eternal life is at stake and staying true to God's Word is the formula for those seeking Christ and finding Him. Never forget the eternal importance of what you're doing when you and your team lead in worship.

2. The songs you choose to minister with must impact your life too.

Singing the Word, knowing the Word, and believing the Word in your heart is the only way people will see Christ in you as you minister through worship. People are passionate about different things such as fitness, sports, and music. Just as you believe their passion for those things when they talk to you, people will also believe your passion for the things of God as you lead worship. The difference between those other things and God is that God offers the peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7). Joy, love, hope, and abundant life are the eternal benefits of knowing Christ, while other things are temporary moments of fulfillment.

3. Keep your discussion with the audience simple, meaningful, and to the point.

There is not always a lot of time to get your message across, so it's important to make the most of what time you do have. Stay positive while conveying what God has done in your life. The songs have to be done the same way. Present a solid message of hope to your audience.

4. Don't try to sound like a preacher.

Everything you do is preparing the environment for the preacher so the message they bring has the most effective impact. Everything done in the service should point to the close when people are making steps to know God and draw closer to Him. By leading worship, you are setting up the preacher's message to succeed—there's no need for you to preach ahead of time.

5. Changed lives must be your purpose.

To run a race well means you finish the race. The songs, message, and prayer at the close of service should all urge people to change and to want to know more of God. The service should also encourage you as worship leaders to change as well. At times your preparation may leave you feeling a little dry; however, the service can still impact you and your team just the same. Stay strong and remain open to what God is saying to you in the service. When people observe you drawing closer to God, they will be encouraged to seek Him out for themselves too.

Memorization

1. Know your lyrics.

Work to know all of the lyrics by heart, but don't underestimate the value of a projector or video screen that is dedicated to the stage. Planning ahead is a must to avoid the risk of someone going blank during the performance.

2. Know the melody. There is no reason to miss on this.

By the time of the event, you should have gone through the songs numerous times between individual practice and team rehearsals. It is very difficult for an audience to be led on a song when no one is singing lead. Ad-libbing or hearing harmony parts over the melody line can throw a crowd off.

3. Know your vocal harmony parts.

The better prepared you are, the better you sound. Hard work and dedication always pay off. Committing to this will help prevent your vocals dropping out and any stumbling around for your part.

4. Chord charts are not a bad thing as a fail-safe!

Some people feel more relaxed with a chart. Large bands, such as those you see on singing competition shows usually follow sheet music to keep in time all together. A large number of talented musicians performing various songs with limited rehearsal time requires the use of sheet music to attain the style the producers want. The typical four- to five-piece band that is well rehearsed can get by without sheet music or charts, but allow those who wish to use their charts to have them. (For Fine Arts, music sets should be memorized.)

5. Prepare for complicated turns and riffs.

Some musicians who don't have a strong ear will require a more detailed chord chart or number chart to accurately perform a certain lick, musical phrase, and some tricky turns. Utilize tools that make every team member feel at ease, comfortable, and prepared. There are videos online that will break down each part of a song for each instrument and may help you learn parts that are hard to hear.

Preparation

1. Practice what you play and play what you practice.

Your performance should be a reflection of your rehearsals. Poor rehearsals that include bad habits, such as tardiness, lack of effort, and a “wing it” mentality, are sure to creep their way into the performance. Practice does make perfect!

2. Prayer.

Rehearsals and performances should always begin with prayer. This will shift the focus from you and your team to where it belongs—on Christ!

3. Select the proper songs—that’s 50 percent of your success.

Selected songs must always meet the criteria your event dictates. “Wrong choice of song” is a common term heard on singing competition shows and usually with good reason. Sometimes it’s the only reason why a contestant doesn’t perform well. Make sure your songs are appropriate for the event, the audience, and the overall message that will be presented.

4. Add originality.

Try to make the song sound fresh by changing some basic things like intros, the beat, or adding minor variations to the melody. Be sure to ask someone who is musically skilled to give you honest advice on your interpretation of the song. However, if you are not careful it may work against you.

5. Don’t try to fix what is not broken.

Once the team has perfected a song, avoid spending unnecessary time on it and move on to work on the next selection. Overworking a song, or even just a portion of a song, will not further accomplish anything.

6. Practice, practice, practice!

You should set aside time every day to work on your craft. This is part of the preparation process. Each member of the team will benefit from it because you are only as good as your weakest link.

7. Allow the songs to become second nature.

When performing, you should be able to play the songs without having to think about them. You will know when you have hit this point in preparation when everything comes with ease and flows seamlessly.

Understandable Concept

1. Select appropriate songs.

Each member of your team must understand which music selections will and won't work, and why. The venue will help dictate that, but everyone should be on the same page.

2. Pray about communicating the songs.

There is no perfect formula that will guarantee every person will love every section you have planned. However, prayer will absolutely make your ministry more effective. Continue praying!

3. Plan out your songs.

The goal here is to bring your performance to a powerful and effective close. Planning for each venue to meet goals set by leadership will largely depend on the songs you have selected and when you use them in the worship service or event.

4. Dynamics can affect the audience immensely.

A great worship song can really impact people by simply taking the loudness of the song down to a "voices only" sound level. Hearing people sing a song together with passion really can put things in perspective. At this point, hopefully everyone is locked in and is open to experiencing a defining moment in their lives. Presenting a song using this technique is a powerful way to get the message of the song across.

5. Use your skills wisely.

Playing things that only attract the ears of musicians could cause you to lose your audience if most of them are not musicians. Play tastefully without overdoing it so everyone can enjoy and appreciate the skills God has given you. Stay true to who God has created you to be, and your audience will be touched by your presentation of the gospel in song.

6. Do not duplicate everything like the original!

Listen to various versions of the song for inspiration. Use them to find your own style and sound when communicating this song.

7. Play through any mistakes.

When a mistake is made by any member of the team during a song, play through to the next common point of reference where everyone is back on point. Occasionally mistakes happen. Proper preparation will help your team quickly and smoothly transition through it, and it will go mostly undetected by your audience.

Interpretation

1. Be determined about the message you wish to send.

Sometimes the message is inherent to a selection of music you've chosen to perform, or you may wish to add your own song to incorporate the message into. Either way, the message should not be forced but flow naturally according to the vision for the event. This will keep you from overspeaking and stumbling for words.

2. Seek those with fresh ears.

Ask two or three people who have never heard the song you are performing to sit in on a rehearsal, and then ask their opinion. Do this well in advance to give you time to make changes or adjustments if needed.

3. Go over the message with the team in advance.

Rehearse this together and remind each other what you are truly working to accomplish. Teams are most effective when unified. Keep everyone on the same page by communicating the message you intend to convey in the service or event.

4. Keep things fresh, even if you have played the songs multiple times.

Always consider that there may be people in the audience who have not heard most of today's worship songs. Play and minister through the songs as if the songs are brand new to you too. The message will have a greater impact.

5. Don't get sidetracked with your theme—stay on point.

Many things will pop into your head either in preparation or during the worship service or event. Prayerfully consider any direction you may take in response to this and make sure anything you do is from the Holy Spirit. Have you ever listened to someone speak and then ask yourself what that person said? Don't get sidetracked and risk the audience losing focus too.

6. Let the song do the talking.

Anointed songs proclaim the gospel. They do not always need your assistance—instead be still and silent when appropriate to make the point. Precious moments like these deserve reverence and patience, so try to embrace these anointed times when they occur and enjoy them. This is why you prepare so hard.

7. Sing clearly and effectively when presenting the gospel in song.

Every scene in a movie is thought out in great detail to emphasize and bring attention to the details. Use this same approach with each song in your set.

Final Comments

Worship is the act of preparing your heart daily and offering your best for Christ. Effective, anointed worship music is accomplished by taking the passion you have for God and sacrificing the time required to enhance, grow, and perfect your skills.

Music is a very powerful and influential tool that has its stamp on everything in society. TV, radio, and film all use music to influence their audiences. Music has the same effect on people in a worship service. We do not aim to impress our audiences with enticing words of wisdom of men, but we aim to move people through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Removing personal agendas, selfish ambitions, and unfruitful desires are key factors in establishing an atmosphere of worship on your team. A small group of people coming together to bring their best for God through music will have an everlasting impact on your audience. Compromising this will simply leave most of your audience feeling as empty as when they arrived. Always give your best for God because He gave His best for you!