

# **Creative Service Ideas**

From  
WorshipIdeas.com  
Readers



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**worship*ideas***

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### **>Forward from Don Chapman:**

I hope you enjoy this new exchange of ideas! In addition to singing and sermons, churches today are trying new methods that convey the Gospel message to their congregations. But beyond technological sparkle, there's also an effort to become more personal - to meet people's needs and help them connect with God.

### **>About:**

This special Creative Service Ideas report was compiled from e-mailed suggestions by WorshipIdeas.com readers from April 29 to May 17, 2002.

[WorshipIdeas.com is a website that features free music and practical tips for contemporary worship leaders.]

Feel free to copy and distribute this report in its entirety.

## >Graphic Arts

>A man who draws murals is in our congregation. Last Christmas he agreed to do a live, five minute drawing/sketch of his interpretation of the angel's first words to Mary. While he was drawing we had a flute quartet perform. The canvas was 6' by 4' and materials only cost \$35. He used charcoal.

The response from the congregation was overwhelming and people still remember that part of the service and the face of Mary surrounded by the hand of God and wings. Art is a very powerful way of expressing anew what we already think we know.

Melinda Williams  
First Baptist Church  
Amherst, MA

[editor's note: although this is a great touch to special holidays, why not try it all year long - perhaps having the artist illustrate a solo or choir special. What other people in your congregation could use their special gifts to enhance your services?]

## >Devotional & Family Prayer

>Besides the regular upbeat worship songs in the typical Latin styles (we are a predominantly Spanish church) we have a weekly reflection by our pastor's wife. What happens is, before the singing part of the worship is over, she comes up to read her weekly devotional. It's already printed in the Sunday program but it means just a little more to hear the author speak it. These devotionals are her reflection on certain Biblical passages and are applied to our daily lives.

>Also, we have a "family of the week" prayer. The pastor's wife has a little heart shaped box. In the box are the names of all the families of the church written on small, folded pieces of paper. She selects a random name each week. That family is called to the front and prayed for. Not only do we pray for them on that day but it is the church's responsibility to lift that family up in prayer all week.

I was so blessed when they prayed for my family. It's like God knew I needed my name called at that time. It seems that way for most families that are selected.

In addition to the prayer, each family is given a plant. This plant is to be cared for by the family. As the plant grows, so should our relationship with Christ. The same way we take care of the plant by placing it in proper lighting and watering it, we should feed our souls with the Word and place our lives in the Light of Christ.

Bert Bocachica  
Salem Temple Assemblies of God  
Bronx, NY

## >Congregational Confession

>Many evangelical churches do not set apart a time during the service for confession between the worshiper and God. In the churches I have served, I have always made this a part of worship. It follows the Isaiah 6 worship model of revelation and response.

As we go through our time of gathering (calls to worship, horizontal songs about God) and into the service of the Word (Scripture readings, dramas, congregational readings, responsive readings), we are aware of God's revelation of Himself to us. We are confronted by a holy God, and in light of that holiness, we are called to confess our sin before Him, that we may continue in intimate worship.

So many times we come to worship without preparing our hearts. It is during this time of confession that we allow a moment for those who have not prepared themselves for worship to do so. It is often the most meaningful time of worship for our participants. Afterwards we enter into a time of thanksgiving, praising God for His grace and mercy.

Clay West  
University Heights Baptist Church  
Huntsville, TX

## >Choir

>One simple thing we've done to change the beginning of the service is to have the choir sit throughout the congregation (for this Sunday, we do not wear robes.) The organist plays the prelude as usual, but ends in the key of Ab. At the prearranged signal, one strong singer stands and begins singing *Come, Christians, Join to Sing* (MADRID). As they come to the end of the first phrase, another singer stands and begins singing, then another, and another, etc.

Finally, the full choir is standing and singing by the end of the first stanza. In the middle of the second stanza, they move to the choir loft as the congregation stands and joins the singing (if they haven't already – mine started singing by the third phrase). You can't do it very often, but it is effective!

David A. Tatum  
First Baptist Church  
Madisonville, TX

[editor's note: I once tried something like this and can vouch for its effectiveness. Instead of our usual upbeat call to worship, the band quietly played the intro to Don Moen's *I Want to Be Where You Are*. The praise team, seated randomly in the congregation, then stood and walked to the stage. This sure grabbed the congregation's attention!]

## >Video

>We took the Hearts to God song *What A Savior* at Easter time and put video footage from the Jesus movie behind it. We used scenes from the Upper Room (last supper), Prayer (garden), Beating, Via Dolorosa (road of suffering) and Crucifixion. The words to the song just came to life. Had a great impact on the worshipers. Had several worshipers who thought it was the most beautiful song we did this Easter.

In our case we had been using the song for several weeks. First week used MIDI track coming from the organ w/choir, next week used CD accompaniment track and praise team, next week did it with live instruments and choir, next week had the praise team do it with choir backing them up, following week (Easter) we did the video track. Same song but something different each week. By the end of a few weeks, the congregation was able to sing along and go home humming the melody.

Another option would be to insert words over still photos of the same themes in PowerPoint or other presentation program. Here you just use still shots as backgrounds. Be careful to use contrasting colors, so words can be seen clearly.

Herb Stucky  
First Baptist Church  
Starke, FL

[editor's note: this technique can also be used all year long. Try using a good CCM song that would suggest strong visuals. Tim, one of our worship leaders, is handy with PowerPoint. He ran a stirring still image montage over the Twila Paris song *God Is In Control*. The band picked up where the track faded out and he then led the congregation in the chorus.]

## >Offering

>We just recently changed the way we take the offering. Instead of passing the offering plate and having music played on the piano, we have the praise and worship team lead a familiar, upbeat praise song while the congregation brings their tithes and offerings to the front of the church and places them in a basket.

This part of the service is also used as a fellowship time, leading into the praise and worship time. This has worked wonderfully. It gets the people excited and adds a joyful atmosphere to the remainder of the service.

Betsy Pettit  
Clarksburg Christian Church  
Vanceburg, KY

## >Sign Language and Mime

>At Boulevard Baptist Church, we have begun a sign language/mime ministry called "Expressions." This group ministers to music using sign language, mime and sometimes dance. The members always minister wearing full black, white gloves and face paint. When presenting at night, they present in total darkness with the aid of an ultraviolet light that causes the gloves and white face paint (when used) to glow in the dark. We also use brightly colored fluorescent paper to enhance presentations.

Ian C. Brown  
Boulevard Baptist Church  
Jamaica, West Indies

## >Beginning Prayer

>We have recently been focusing on prayer. We start our worship service with a prayer time around the altar. We don't put any time constraints on it - just wait for everyone to finish and return to their seat. This has definitely changed the dynamics of the service.

Sometimes it is quiet and reflective; sometimes it is more emotional with weeping; sometimes there is more of a vocal expression of worship and praise. The worship leader then can change the music to fit more appropriately the moving of the Spirit.

Don Auwarter  
Faith Temple  
Greenville, SC