

# Our Heart

## Developing worship that helps the church to grow

### Opening prayer

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God of mission,  
Who alone brings growth to your Church,  
Send your Holy Spirit to give  
Vision to our planning,  
Wisdom to our actions,  
And power to our witness.  
Help our church to grow in numbers,  
In spiritual commitment to you,  
And in service to our local community,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### Getting Started

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'Man's chief end is to worship and glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.'

The Westminster Catechism

How do you react to this statement? Discuss your responses in groups of three or four.

### Bible

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<sup>1</sup> *Praise the Lord.  
Praise God in his sanctuary;  
praise him in his mighty heavens.*  
<sup>2</sup> *Praise him for his acts of power;  
praise him for his surpassing greatness.*  
<sup>3</sup> *Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,  
praise him with the harp and lyre,  
<sup>4</sup> praise him with timbrel and dancing,  
praise him with the strings and pipe,  
<sup>5</sup> praise him with the clash of cymbals,  
praise him with resounding cymbals.*  
<sup>6</sup> *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord.*  
Psalm 150 (NIV)

*The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.*  
Habakkuk 2:20 (NIV)

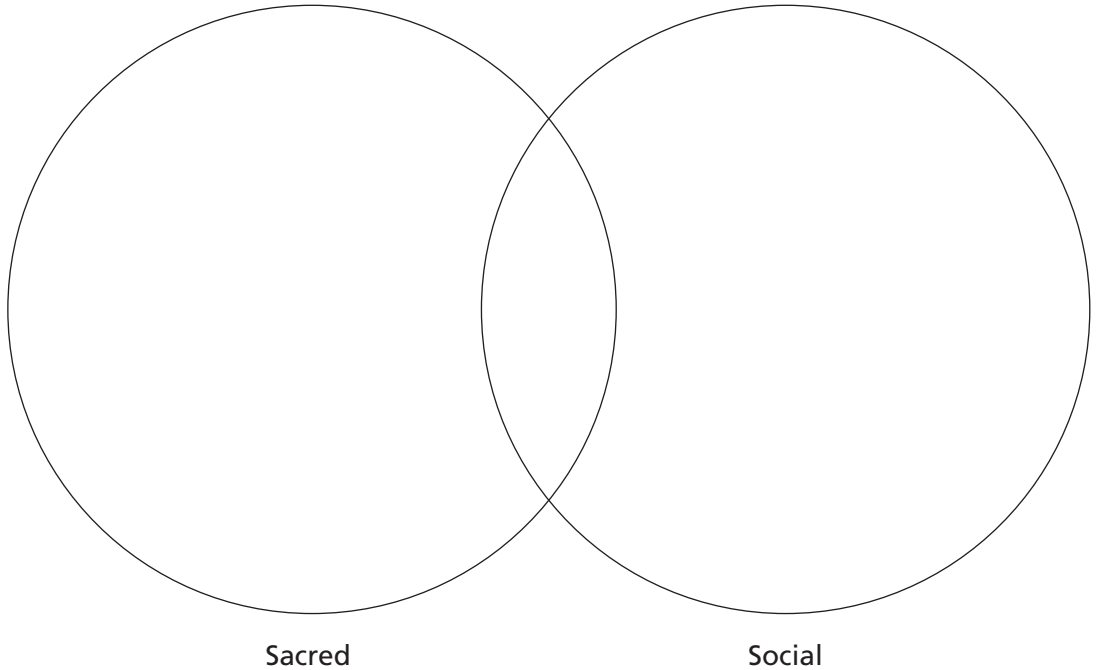
In your groups consider the following questions:

- What is joyful in your church's worship?
- Does the worship in your church convey a sense of awe and mystery?
- How does your worship help to build up your church?
- Reflecting on your own experience are you more likely to think, 'What did I get out of that service?' or, 'What did I contribute to the worship?'

## MSM6-2

### Exercise: Sacred and social

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In what ways is your worship a sacred activity and in what respects is it social?  
Write some ideas in the circles above.

### Exercise: My favourite things...

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What do you most value about the worship services you attend?  
What aspect of worship do you find more difficult?

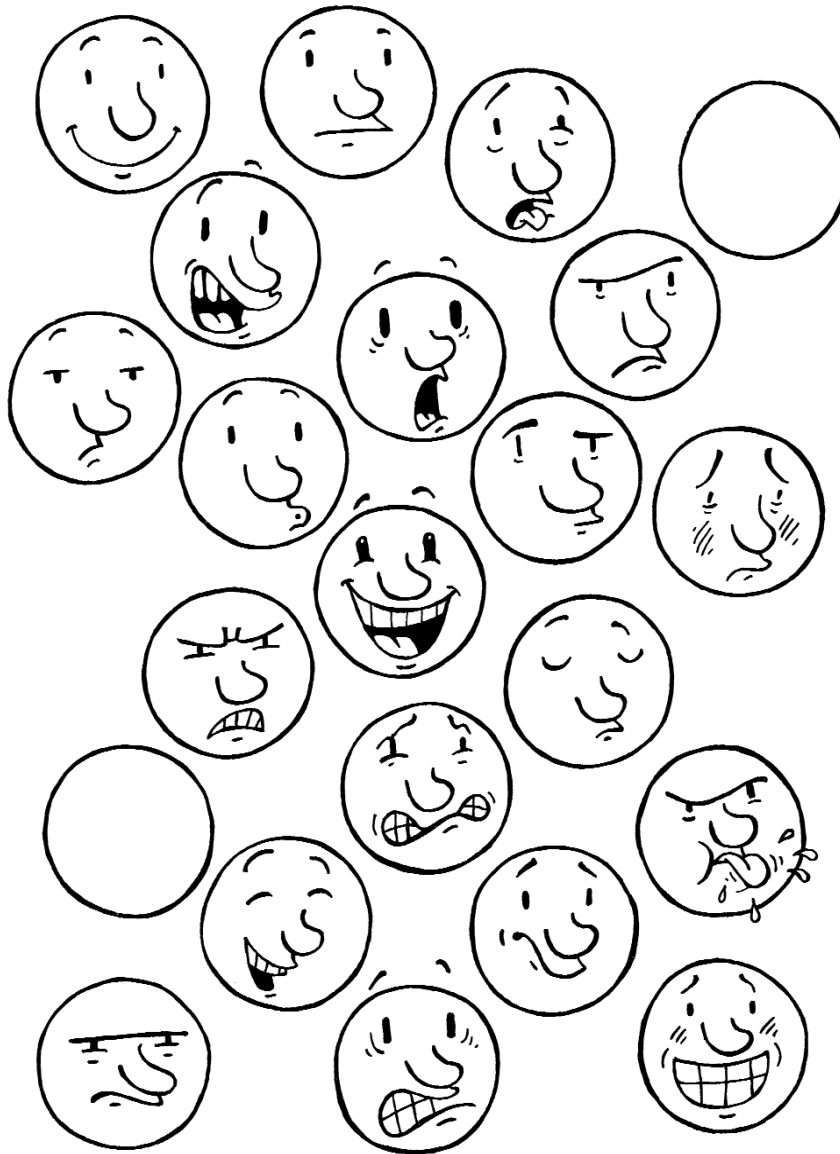
Record your thoughts in the box below.

### MSM6-3

## Exercise: User-friendly worship...



Imagine someone has come to one of your church's services for the first time, with little or no previous experience of church. How would they find the experience?



What might make them happy?

What might make them sad?

What might confuse them?

What might make them angry?

What might bore them?

What might interest them?

Discuss your responses in groups of four or five people.

## MSM6-4

### Exercise: The painter's palette

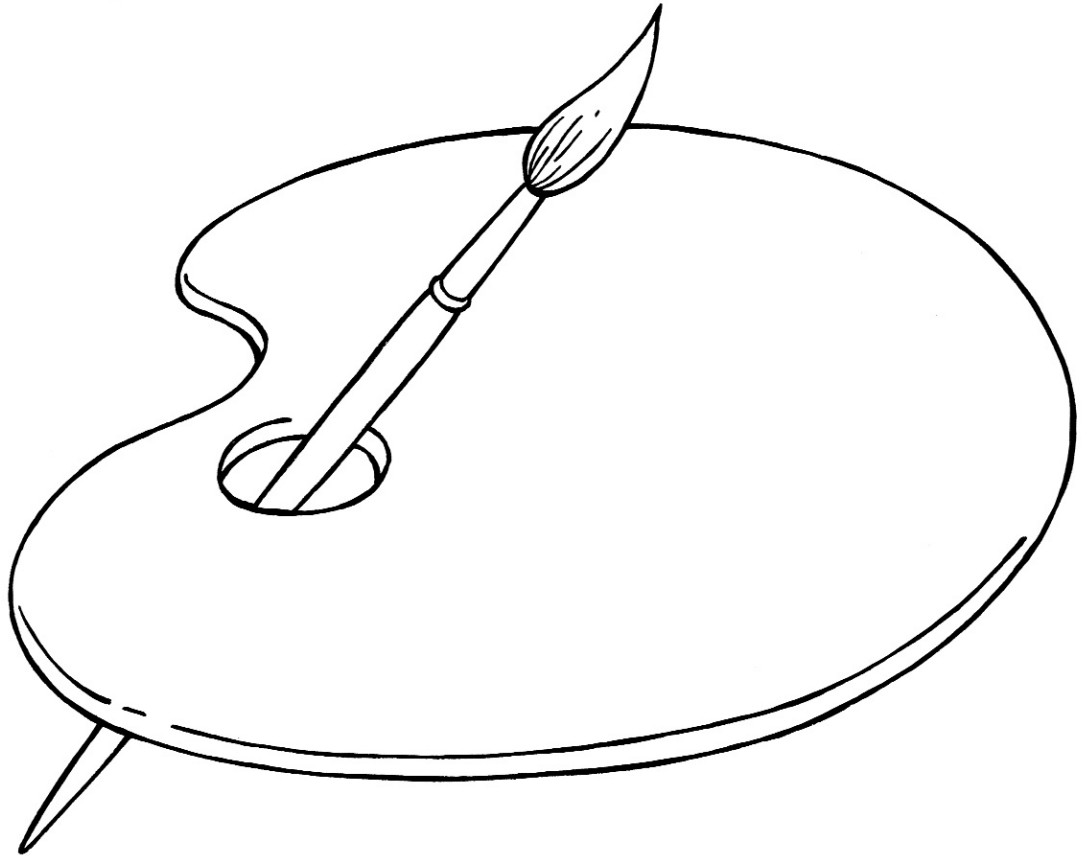
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When a research group asked people to describe church worship as a colour the two most common answers were grey and beige – hardly the most vibrant of colours!

How could the 'colour' of the worship at your church be enriched?  
What would you add or take away to improve things?

Write some ideas on the palette below. You could also use some of the suggestions in the check list on MSM6-5.



## MSM6-5

### Exercise: Worship checklist



Using the list below identify some aspects of your church's worship that must, should or could be improved. Can you identify five priorities?

	Must	Should	Could	Done (tick when you've done this)
Shorten the length of your service				
Move it to a better time				
Install a dimmer switch				
Use spotlighting				
Tidy up the church building				
Improve the sound system				
Purchase a CD / MP3 player				
Make the space more comfortable				
Encourage people to sit closer together				
Bring the 'action' closer to the people				
Find and commission church welcomers				
Serve decent tea and coffee				
Develop use of visuals				
Smile				
Vary your tone of voice				
Look smart				
Use times of silence				
Improve your music				
Do some intensive work with church musicians				
Shorten readings				
Use fewer and better words				
Improve the quality of sermons				
Establish or improve arrangements for children				
Make receiving Communion a stronger experience				
Provide decent, clean toilets				
Tackle access issues: ramps, hearing loops etc.				

## MSM6-6

### Response box

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What things have struck you during this session?

- What should I be doing as an individual?

- What should we be doing as a church?

Your group leader may ask to collect responses from you so that some anonymous feedback can be given to your church leadership team.

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### Reflection and prayer



*<sup>1</sup> When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. <sup>3</sup> When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying,*

*“He is good; his love endures forever.”*

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 (NIV)