

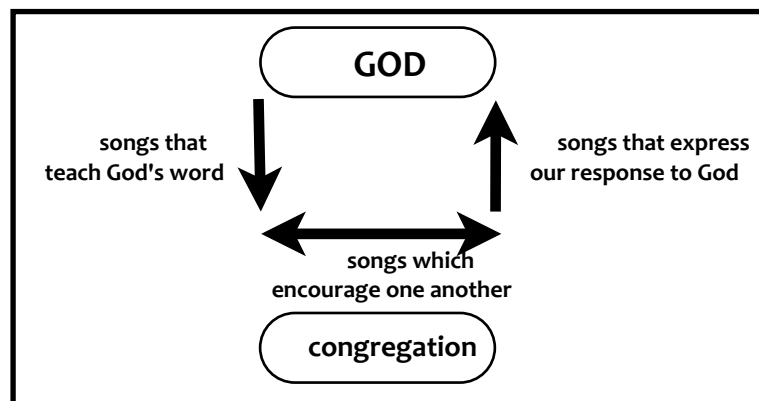
training time: **song leading**

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16 NIV)

Singing as Christians is a great joy & privilege. Letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly! Teaching & admonishing one another! The powerful combination of words & music gives opportunity for both our hearts and minds to be moved by truth. Of course the music matters but the words matter more.

Song leading is the ministry in which you lead our singing and help us to appreciate what we are singing and the privilege of doing so. What follows are some tips on introducing songs (when it is appropriate).

- Always plan how you are going to introduce a song long in advance; don't just say the first thing that comes into your head. It takes time and thought to ensure that you are familiar with the lyrics, you understand why the song has been selected to fit in at this point in the service, and you understand what teaching elements it supports or enhances.



The diagram helps us to appreciate how a song functions. Some songs teach us God's word. Some songs help us to respond to God. Some songs help us encourage & teach one another. Most songs are a combination of them. Identifying what the song is seeking to achieve will help you in constructing the most appropriate introduction.

- Ideally, say as little as possible unless this section of the service has been handed over to you to lead. Think through beforehand what you are going to say - one concise sentence is often sufficient. "Really think about this song", means nothing and leads nowhere, whereas a phrase like "The words in verse two point to..." directs thought.
- Vary the length of your introductions. You may want to respond in an appropriate prayer at the end of a song which invites such a response.
- If the service leader has already said something relevant then simply invite people to stand and join you in singing. Remember, it is not your role to preach a sermon every time you speak!
- It can sometimes be helpful to use a verse or 2 of Scripture to direct people's hearts & minds to the Word of God.
- If the musical introduction is lengthy, the song leader can give their verbal introduction while it is happening quietly.
- It is frequently the song leader's job to invite people to stand at the beginning of a song and to take a seat at the end. Try to use varied phrases when asking them to do this. You don't have to wait till the song has finished to ask people to sit down, and the singers don't have to remain out the front till the music stops either, but be careful also not to unnecessarily break the mood established by the song.

Over and above all this, seek to honestly share the depth and reality of your own faith as you humbly lead people in their corporate response to each other and their Lord in song!!

exercise (in pairs):

1. Choose a favourite song from the nightchurch song book.
2. Consider the lyric and decide how the song primarily functions. eg. teaching / response / mutual encouragement
3. What is the big idea of the song lyric? (What's the song about? What's the song say about what it is about?)
4. What scriptures does the song quote or allude to?
5. What scriptures does the song bring to your mind?
6. With all that done, write an introduction for the song that you would use in a nightchurch gathering.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.