

203 CREATIVE SERVICE IDEAS

Compiled by Dan Sigmon

1. Pre-Service

- Greet others (especially guests); greeter/staff nametags or lanyards
- Write down things for which you are thankful
- Read Scripture
- Pray for God to quiet & speak to your heart; praise, confession, thanks
- Pray specifically for someone, asking God to encourage or heal them
- Read a hymn & personalize it
- Listen to prelude music more intently; think about words if known
- Thank God for: role in life, job, loved ones, church, spiritual gifts, salvation, trials, health, scriptures; church staff and ministry leaders
- Pray for the person speaking -- for clarity, boldness, sensitivity, insight, freedom from distractions & worries
- Pray for all those involved in the service
- Pray with your pastor and team before the service
- Pray 'over' seats/pews and for those that will sit there

2. Prelude

- Pastor/Staff bowing in prayer on platform, down in front or on the side
- Congregation prayer
(opt slide for instruction: "As you enter today, please pray for...")
- Choir bowing in prayer
- Suggested prayer in bulletin
- Suggested scripture reading in bulletin
- Lighting moods and colors
- Instrumental – piano, flute, guitar, etc.
- CD/ DVD song
- Silent scripture reading (on slide or in bulletin)
- Scripture reading on CD with music background
- Slides – Scripture verse(s) – e.g. Ps. 8:1; 9:1-2; 18:46; 30:4; 33:1-3, 34:1,3; 42:1-2; 66:1-2,4; 84:1-2; 95:1-2,6; 100:2,4; 150:1,6; John 4:24; Col. 1:28; Rev. 5:12
- Pictures – person bowing in prayer, cross, family, creation, etc.
- Word or song phrases – e.g. "A Mighty Fortress is Our God", "Holy is the Lord"; "Cared for by Him...Committed to Him", "Speak, Lord, in our hearts today"
- Slide show with theme
- Slide/video presentation (e.g. missionary, youth or ministry activity/trip)
- Chorus/song singing
- Choir seated with congregation
- Choir walking in greeting others informally
- Banner or flag processional
- Prop or object on stage (lit)

3. Opening/Call to Worship

- Scripture verse – worship leader, 3-4 Praise Team/choir members from their place
- Different people stand & read verses
- Prayer (joyous/solemn)
- Sing a cappella
- Song/song medley
- Choir processional
- Choir sings
- Soloist
- Instrumentalist (eg. Trumpet fanfare, guitar, cello, flute); start soft/strong
- Everyone shake hands, greet others; say “God bless you”, “Peace to you”
- Verbally share the service theme
- Congregation sing antiphonally
- Reader’s theatre
- Drama/Skit (eg., person waiting for church to begin; first time visitor thoughts)
- Spotlight on person/lights dim
- Same opening song for 1 month
- DVD introducing service theme

4. Scripture

- Unison, Antiphonal, Small group, Leader/Congregation
 - Choir/congregation
 - Leader/choir/congregation
 - Balcony/platform/sides
 - People read on opposite sides or places on platform
 - Unison reading to read and take home
- Slides
- Print in bulletin
- Introduce opening song; worship leader or unison reading
- Say “Let’s read in full voice” for stronger participation
- Individuals in congregation “pop-up”/stand and read 1 verse
- Choir or individuals on platform “randomly” read/shout 1-2 verses
- Reader’s Theater – divided between 2-8 people; topically, theme, sermon text
- Back of hymnal
- Selected verses in a topical theme (eg, grace, light, peace, forgiveness)
- Off-stage microphone (opt. read with lights dim or off)
- Monologue in costume
- Acted out with narration
- Stand/sit
- Creeds
- Individual – elementary children, youth, college age
- Special Days (eg. Mother’s Day – have moms read)
- Sing scripture songs based on a theme or topic (eg, God’s holiness, praise, cross)
- Entire church memorize one verse for the month or sermon series
- Dramatic reading of a Psalm
- Two people read the same scripture in different translations (eg, Psalm 23)
- Read in a different language (read in English first; use of translator)
- Supplied on a special card – available on seats/pews

5. Prayer

- Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Board member, child, teen, young adult (or combo)
- Multiple family members (Father & son, Mom & kids, multi-generational)
- Church member or prayer team leader
- 2-6 persons pray for different things
- Mother/daughter(s), Father/son(s)
- Silent
- Guided
- With/without music background
- Prepared (written personally)
- Spontaneous
- Informal
- Formal -- ancient or Puritan prayers
- Prayer with another person or with a small group; turn to 3-4 others & form cluster
- Kneeling – Pastor, Congregation, Staff, Leadership
- Hands raised or palms up while seated
- Sit or stand
- Scripture passage (eg. Psalms, Jesus' words, Paul)
- Off-stage
- Come forward – pray individually or with another person
- Pray with Pastoral Staff/Elders/Deacons for needs after/during service
- Unison reading
- Laying on of hands for a group/individual different age groups
(eg. child, youth, senior, missions trip, outreach)
- Sing a prayer or Psalm (eg. “Be Still and Know”)
- Pray or say Scripture back to God (individually or as a group); opt. personalize
- Single candle(s) with all lights out
- Incense
- Unison singing (eg. “The Lord’s Prayer”; hymn or chorus)
- Everyone extends a hand toward a person as a sign of praying for/identifying with them
- Commissioning people before taking a missions trip
- Prayer team available at close of service

6. Drama

- Short sketch/skit
- Reader’s theater
- Set up for sermon
- Illustration during sermon
- Monologue, duet, ensemble
- Scripture Reading (Old or New Testament)
- Dramatic (Scripture; modern day)
- Biblical character
- Poetry
- Children, youth, singles, young adults, seniors

7. Visual

- Banners – Scripture phrases, characteristics of God, worship words (eg, God is Holy, King of Kings, Prince of Peace, love, joy, Worship God)
- Banners -- Sermon series or seasonal theme
- Smaller welcome or Scripture banners in lobby
- Welcome banners on parking lot poles
- Missions flags
- Colored drapes, squares or various shapes & sizes
- Candles – candelabra; different shapes & sizes; layered on boxes (use nice material covering old books or hymnals)
- Paint/Draw – individual(s) paint/draw picture on platform (or down in front)
- Photography – large pictures (nature, faces, different nationalities for missions conference); hang on front, side and back walls
- Arts weekend focus -- kids, youth, adults paint, draw, pottery, ceramics with theme (Christmas, Easter, spring, missions, joy, Fruit of the Spirit)
- Art Gallery – rotating work of professionals; introduce them the first Sunday of exhibit
- Change choir/Praise Band from regular set-up (use risers or raised platform sections)
- DVD -- start service, announcement, sermon illustrations
- Slides – moving backgrounds
- Flowers, trees, plants
- Special lighting
- Set design
- Hang something from ceiling or truss
- Large center screen or additional screen on platform
- Single prop
- Table with objects

8. Dance/Creative Movement

- Solo, duet, ensemble
- Mime
- With solo instrument: piano, guitar, violin, cello, etc.
- With Praise Band
- With accompaniment trax

9. Music led by....

- Praise Team
- Choir
- Solo, duet, small vocal group
- ‘Simplistic feel’ – led by guitar, piano or keyboard
- Guest artist or band
- College/young adults group
- Deaf Interpreter

10. Instrumental Music

- Prelude, postlude
- Underscore Scripture reading, drama, prayer, invitation to come forward
- Transition (eg, after prayer or song)
- Solo
- Group, Praise Band (includes original songs)
- Family of musicians
- Meditation time

11. Songs/Singing

- Antiphonal -- Choir with congregation or half of congregation sing to the other half
- Use of different worship leaders
- Soloist sings first verse of song (good for introducing new songs)
- Hum while instruments play softly
- Different accompaniment – organ, piano, guitar, brass
(start with one instrument and use variety on verses; all join in on last verse)
- Eyes opened/closed
- A cappella (option to start this way and build musically)
- Variety of positions: Stand, kneel; join hands (unity)
- Lead worship from a different location –
center, side, next to piano, front row (i.e. unseen)
- Sit, kneel, stand
- "Free worship and praise" – Leader encourages spontaneous singing;
May be followed by a time of quiet meditation, prayer
- Rounds
- Leader sings phrase and congregation repeats (technique for learning a new song)
- Spontaneous well-known song (eg, Doxology, How Great Thou Art, Amazing Grace)
- As a response (to sermon, offering, etc.)
- Choir/Praise Team enters from back of room
- Choir/Praise Team sits with congregation, then comes to platform informally on cue
- Begin pre-service with songs (ie, start singing earlier than the usual time)
- Children's choir/ensemble
- Children's ensemble with adult ensemble/choir
- CD or DVD to watch and sing with
- Share background or history of a song
- Explanation/emphasis of song words; why important to praise, thank, worship;
what to think about or remember when singing
- Dance (creative movement) – individual or team sings with dancers
- Signing by interpreter; congregation participate by learning song or phrase
- Evening of worship (eg, "Ignite")
- Write a new song (personally; ask individual or team)
- Use familiar hymn tune with a different melody (eg, 'Amazing Grace' tune with
'The Lord's My Shepherd' words; see back of hymnal for changing meter)
- Teach/sing a simple song in another language

12. Offering

- Instrumentalist(s) – piano, organ, guitar; child, youth
- Soloist, duet, trio, quartet
- Group
- Praise Team/Choir
- Silence/Prayer (giving oneself to God)
- After the sermon (as a response to God’s word or act of dedication)
- Congregational song of thanks
- Bulletin title: “Worship in Giving”, “We Give Thanks to God”
- Congregational song (opt. start with soloist)
- Hands raised (in silence or singing)
- Watch DVD – music or drama

13. Communion

- Candles on stands or votive candles
- Dim lights
- Harp, guitar, flute, cello
- People read suggested Scriptures (with or without music)
- Silent prayer/confession
- Sing songs & hymns focusing on the cross (begin with reflective song; end with joyful song in celebration)
- Introduce with creed
- People kneeling (opt. benches)
- Before/after sermon
- Foot washing
- One loaf shared; matza bread; wafers; crackers
- Passing tray to one another – served in seats
- Intinction (dipping bread into juice)
- People come forward to receive bread and juice from people holding trays
- People come forward to take piece of bread and juice cup individually (opt. “come when your heart is ready”)
- Families take together (opt. father serve family)
- Multiple tables/stations in room
- Pastor(s) or servers say “God loves you”, “Christ died for you” as people take bread/cup
- On small pieces of paper, people write sins & then nail to a wooden cross
- Multiple large crosses in the room
- People paint a red stripe on a large cross (Isa.53:5)
- Optional participation -- come forward after the service has concluded

14. Announcements

- Start service
- Before prayer
- After opening call to worship/first song
- During offertory
- End of service
- In bulletin
- Flyer/insert
- Everyone shake hands, greet others; say “God bless you”, “Peace to you”
- Bulletin Titles: “We Worship Through Sharing”, “Church Body Life”, “Community”
- Give a gift (CD, book, certificate) to a visitor or earliest person; promotional item; may relate to sermon or series
- Slide presentation
- Creative video to highlight upcoming or previous event; ministry emphasis
- Interview ministry worker and what they enjoy about serving in an area

15. Sermon

- Individual or shared (eg, 2 people present different sections on same theme)
- Message divided into sections (eg, song>sermon section>drama>sermon section)
- Faith stories/ testimonies
- Interview – individual, family, group
- Props for illustrations
- Larger props for thematic series
(set design; different signs attached on ladder rungs, door, airplane glider)
- Ask a question – congregation answers
 - a) random, shouted responses from where people sit
 - b) hand mic
- Spontaneous time of thanks or testimonies
- DVD illustration
- Drama illustration (before, during or after sermon)
- Dramatized (speaker role play as a biblical character)
- Use of maps
- Reverse order: begin service with sermon & respond in worship
- Song medley as response
- “Take-Away” – rock, candle, pen, heart, hand, 3x5 card, etc.
(have on seats as people enter)
- Speak on floor level or in mid-aisle (if people are sitting more in back rows)
- Pastor or person as biblical character
- Main points/outline on sheet of paper for note taking (opt. 3-hole punch)

16. Benediction/Close/Postlude

- Pastoral prayer/blessing
- Congregation sing hymn/song/chorus
- Congregation meet one another
- Leave in silence (eg, Good Friday)
- Instrumentalist or group
- Soloist
- CD/DVD – play as people leave
- Scripture (eg, Num. 6:24-26; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 13:20-21; Jude 24-25)
- Read a contemporary prayer, expression or paraphrase
- Encouraging verse, poem or thought for the week
- Take-away item explained or re-emphasized
- Invite people to come forward for prayer team interaction

17. Bulletin

- Scripture verse heading
- Divide worship order with headings – topics, scripture phrasing (eg, “We Praise God in Song”, “We Honor God with our Offering”, “We Share”)
- No bulletin – order of service only; bulletin handed out after the service
- Scripture reading for meditation before service begins
- Include Scripture to read in preparation for next week’s message
- Scripture verse of the week/month
- Print words to a song (include copyright info)
- Sections divided into church vision words (eg, Connect, Grow, Serve)
- Song titles and sermon theme on one side of a half sheet; sermon notes on other side

18. Other

- Testimonies – individual, family, group (eg, Missions trips)
- Missionary or missions organization update
- Ministry updates (children, youth, young adults, adults, seniors)
- Door Greeters – husband/wife, youth, families, young adults
- Parking lot greeters/helpers for young families; umbrellas for rain
- Ushers – families, kids/youth hand out bulletins & collect offering
- Nametags or lanyards for greeters and staff
- Resources for further study or purchase (books, CD’s, DVD’s)
- Child dedications
- Baptisms – inside, pond or lake; family members or friends stand near for support
- Baptisms – testimonies on DVD (opt. if people are shy)
- ‘Stations’ – different places in room to express and experience worship (draw, write, create)
- New people meet Pastor or staff in room after service (light refreshments)

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Please send additional ideas or suggestions to include for updates to dans@manorchurch.org