

Learning Styles for Worship

Auditory - Hear It!

In many of our churches, the worship service is heavily slanted toward auditory engagement.

Ways to engage this learning style in worship:

- Spoken liturgy and prayers

- Music, heard and especially sung

- Reading scripture aloud

- Spoken Sermon
 - Especially with repetition – either a refrain or the classic “tell them what you’re going to say, say it, and tell them what you told them.”
 - Call and response – Amen? (Amen) Why? (because God is love) Say it with me (grace abounds!)
 - Asking Questions and expecting a verbal response
 - Small group or “talk to your neighbor” sessions – Ex. “Turn to the person sitting next to you and talk about where you saw God this morning.”

Visual – See it!

has two sub-channels—*linguistic* and *spatial*.

- Learners who are *visual-linguistic* like to learn through written language, such as reading and writing tasks. They remember what has been written down, even if they do not read it more than once. They like to write down directions and pay better attention to lectures if they watch them.
- Learners who are *visual-spatial* may have difficulty with the written language and do better with charts, demonstrations, videos, pictures, and other visual materials. They easily visualize faces and places by using their imagination and seldom get lost in new surroundings.

Ways to engage this learning style in worship:

- Consider your worship space, banners, stained glass windows, arrangement of font, table, Bible, candles, etc.
 - What does it say about your worship?
 - Is there something you can add to the space (or remove) to better communicate the central theme or idea of worship? Ex. Flowers at Easter, a crown of thorns for Lent
- Written liturgy and prayers
 - Avoid the Ellipsis! (...) It takes a lot of bulletin space to include all the words to a prayer, a communion liturgy, a benediction and so we love the ellipsis. For a visual learner, it is an invitation to loose focus.
 - For people who have difficulty hearing, written liturgy, prayers, and even a copy of the sermon (if you use a manuscript, or an outline if not) can help them follow along.
- “Visual Liturgy”
 - Include pictures, videos, and/or art that communicate your theme or theological truth. A projector with pictures that you can change (or even keep them same) throughout the sermon or worship can be amazing! Consider printing a picture in the bulletin or using a large flip chart.
 - Check out The Work of the People – www.TheWorkOfThePeople.com for visual liturgy, scripture, prayers, and benedictions
- Encourage note taking and doodling by offering white space or extra paper
- Include outlines, concept maps, agendas, handouts, etc. for reading and taking notes.
- Encourage worshippers to picture the scene in their minds.

Kinesthetic - Do it!

Has two sub-channels: kinesthetic (movement) and tactile (touch). They tend to lose concentration if there is little or no external stimulation or movement. When listening to lectures they may want to take notes for the sake of moving their hands.

Ways to Engage this Learning Style in Worship:

- Standing, sitting, kneeling when appropriate.

- Communion
 - Eating, drinking
 - Intinction is great! Moving forward, breaking bread, dipping into the cup

- Offer simple motions to songs or liturgy

- Offer play dough or clay to sculpt freely, or give direction for specific objects (ex. Make a heart, break it, reform it into a cross....)

- Use scent to engage the senses – baking bread, incense, myrrh, flowers

- Similar to visual learning styles, space for and encouragement to take notes and doodle can help them stay focused and present in the worship experience.

- Coloring prayer mandalas is another way to keep the hands and the brain moving so the heart and brain can be engaged in worship.