

Guidelines about Leadership Roles in the Worship Service at Crossway

December 2025

Our goal

Our goal for participation in the various kinds of leadership roles in the worship service at Crossway has two parts: that those who lead would be worshiping and growing in the Faith through the process, and that our congregation would be led and supported in worshiping and growing in the Faith. And worship involves head, heart, and hands, which through the Holy Spirit are acceptable to God. So to worship as we lead involves:

- Head: thinking what is true, right, noble, and pure
- Heart: focusing on God in humility and awe and joy
- Hands: serving with skill and using the gifting that God has given

The core principles

These guidelines flow from our understanding of the **glory of God**, the **priesthood of all believers**, and the **grace of Christ**.

- **Glory of God:** *“...that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9)*
In worship, we declare the praises of God, within our own hearts, among God’s people, and to the world who has not yet bowed in worship to Him. We declare who He is and the wonders He has done in all of creation, in the lives of His people, and in our own lives. We are called to bring a **sacrifice of praise that is to His glory**.
- **Priesthood of all believers:** *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.” (1 Peter 2:9)*
Because we are all in the priesthood of God, we expect that God will be using each of His children in various ways to administer His grace to each other, and in particular, that he will use many different people to help lead the congregation in our worship service. It also means that He commands all of us to offer our lives as praise to Him. Accordingly, **many people will play various roles in our worship services to help us all to worship**. We long to have those who help lead in the worship service **reflect our vision** to be a church for, of, and by the peoples of many nations.
- **Grace of Christ:** *“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)*
Our worship is **acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ**. It is in His grace that we are welcomed into God’s presence and that the gifts we offer are acceptable to Him, including our head, our hearts, and our hands.

A variety of roles in worship services

There are many roles people may play in our worship services, with a range of expectations for participation. Examples include preaching, overseeing and serving Lord’s Supper and Baptism, leading worship, leading prayer, reading Scripture, singing, giving announcements, playing Instruments, sharing art, performing drama, running the sound system, controlling the PowerPoint slides, greeting people, set up/tear down, drinks, snacks, serving with children, and so on.

Guidelines for participation

Those who are interested in participating in these roles should speak with the pastor or the appropriate team leader. The following general guidelines express the thought process. Note that church membership is not required.

In Christ: We who lead are Christians

Motivation: We are worshipers who seek to give glory to God and to support others in worship in accord with the vision of the church

Integrity: We are living out the Gospel in daily life. That is,

- we recognize that **God is the holy Creator** who calls us to be holy in all we do
- we endeavor to be holy yet **we fall short** (that is, we sin)
- when we are (or become) aware of our sin, **we turn to God for forgiveness and transformation** through the work of Christ
- being forgiven, **we rise to walk in His ways again**

Ability (giftedness): We have a measure of ability appropriate for the role we play (e.g., music, concern for others, communication, prayer) with effort to continue to grow in these areas, including appropriate preparation (each week as well as over time) to serve in the particular role well. In addition, we try to discern a work of God that is through and around our skill, since He also works mysteriously, using people in ways that transcend our human abilities. All of these matter: good intentions, human ability/skill, and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. We work together to discern the wisdom of God for the roles that people play in order to honor God and edify His people.

Progressively: In general, we anticipate that people will participate with the worship team initially in small steps, such as practicing with the team, then participating in a service or two, then participating on a regular basis. More prominent roles, such as being the lead vocal or lead instrument, may then follow after that. Progress to each step will come by mutual agreement with the appropriate team leader and the participant.

With sensitivity to others: We want to be sure that those who are up front are not distracting to people in the congregation, and are not a 'stumbling block' for them. There are good ways to be seen and noticed, since God chooses to use people to help accomplish His work. In that sense, we can serve as models for people, and we can help guide people in recognizing the presence and work of God. So the genuine and noticeable response of people who are leading in worship can help lead others into a genuine experience of God in worship.

On the other hand, there are also problematic ways to be noticed. So we avoid wearing clothing that has words or symbols that are not specifically pointing to God. And we wear clothing that is consistent with an expectation of the holy presence of God. Our different cultures have different expectations for clothing, and we want to be sensitive to what might be problematic or distracting in different cultures. One particular example is modesty. We ask that clothing is long enough to cover the knees, that neck lines are not low, and that skin is not visible in between.

In addition, it is important to pursue reconciliation if there is conflict with others in the church (see Matthew 5:21-24). It would be better to wait for peace than to be in a position of leadership in worship when there are unresolved issues.

How these principles are applied

After initial participation, the above guidelines are primarily “self-applied” (that is, between the individual and God). Yet there are times when conversations with the appropriate leader (e.g., pastor or worship leader) will be helpful, both for near term decisions and for long term growth. Either the leaders or the participants may initiate these conversations, and our intention is that they be engaged humbly, positively, and for the good of the church and each individual.

About youth

College age and older are treated as adults

Children (Pre-K through elementary school) and **youth** (junior and senior high) may participate, although with different roles and at a slower progression than adults, and with their parents/guardians being active in the conversation. For example, youth instrumentalists or vocals might begin by participating at special events and practicing with the team periodically, then periodically participating in a service (perhaps once a month), and then in some cases (for older youth) weekly. **Children** will generally only participate at special events and as a large group.

Preparation times (aka, practice times) for the Worship Team

The goal of our worship practice times is musical as well as relational and spiritual, and while focusing mostly on the coming weeks, they will also include a consideration of the longer term. So we will play together, and also have times of sharing and prayer and planning.

In general, participating in the preparation times is required for participating on the worship team for any particular Sunday. For everyone, being a part of the Sunday morning practice and prayer time is essential. Whereas *practice* might seem needed only if one does not yet have enough skill to play without practice, *preparation* is always central to leading in worship.

Printing music: Each individual is expected to get access to your own music for the services when you will participate. If you need help getting access to printing, please let us know and we'll do what we can to help.

Missing a preparation time: A general guideline is that, once a person is established on the team, once a semester (January-April, May-August, September-December) you can miss a practice time and still participate in the worship services connected with that practice time.

Speaking/Vocal roles and other languages

We use multiple languages in our worship services, primarily being guided by the heart languages of people within our congregation. Our general approach is as follows:

- For individual speaking roles (such as reading Scripture or leading out in prayer), we generally ask that people only use languages in which they are fluent, especially when the language is heart language
- For vocal roles as a part of the worship team, we expect that people have at least a basic ability to pronounce the words of the songs in a way that is honoring to native language speakers and meets their approval. This generally requires significant practice to learn a new song and significant review when it is sung again. Most important is to be intentional about honoring the language and speakers of the language, which is expressed by doing our best to express it well. And at times it makes sense to step back from the microphone until there is greater confidence in being able to lead using that language for that song.

Special things related to our vision

When reflecting different styles (e.g., reflective, analytical, expressive)

With sensitivity to varying cultural norms (attire and behavior)