



## **Creative Listening / Worship Sharing**

“Worship Sharing” is a term used to define a technique whereby members of a group talk with each other in a manner midway between that of a Meeting for Worship and discussion. This is sometimes called ‘Creative Listening’.

The creative listening/worship sharing can be done in small groups during a young people’s event. A small group is a place where every member can feel free to share personal thoughts, feelings, anxieties, joys, etc, and to know that every other member of the group is listening to this offering. In listening to things shared by others, there should be no formulation of opinion about what is being said, just acceptance of it as a gift. No advice, judgment, question or discussion should follow one person’s contribution. There should be a brief period of quiet, in order for the whole group to sit with and accept what has been said. It may feed into what someone else has been thinking, just as in Meeting for Worship the ministry of one person may trigger a thought in someone, or contribute to thoughts forming which may become part of someone else’s ministry. Unlike Meeting for Worship, there is no ‘divine compunction’ - everyone should feel free (and be encouraged) to share on a personal level. However, they should not be pressured to share if they do not wish to.

It is the facilitator’s role to create an atmosphere in which everyone feels free to speak, to gently encourage contributions from those who seem reluctant, and to gently persuade people who want to talk often or at length (or debate) to allow time for others.

Facilitators should not be afraid of silence. There may be long periods of silence, and it may be that someone is getting up the courage to speak. On the other hand, it may be that everyone is bored or listening to something happening in another room. This is where the facilitator must be sensitive, and act according to need. It is always good if a small group can begin with a period of quiet, to gather energies and attention inward to the group.



### **Setting up the Group**

- 1) To begin the session it is helpful to arrange the seating in a circle and have either the question cards, or a small object that acts as a token, that can safely be passed from hand to hand around the circle.
- 2) Allow 20-30 minutes for the session depending on the size of the group. Experience suggests that a group/s of around 4--8 persons work best, however this has worked well with much larger whole groups.
- 3) A set of about four questions, each separately written on small card that can be easily passed around needs preparing. The questions must relate to the subject/theme being explored.

### **Beginning the Session**

- 1). Outline to the group that one of the greatest gifts we can give each other is to really listen to each other in this worship sharing session.
- 2). Explain that a set of questions on cards will be passed from person to person. Only the person actually holding the card/object can speak by answering the question, what they say is not to be answered or discussed as this is not a discussion but a time for deeply listening to each other. When they have finished speaking and they feel it appropriate that person passes on the card/object to the next person. If the person doesn't feel they wish to answer the question, this is fine but that person is asked to "hold the silence" for the whole group for a couple of minutes instead. When they feel it appropriate, they then pass their card/object to the next person.
- 3). Advise the group/s that whatever is shared within the group is to remain confidential to the group, not only whilst the group is together but also after everybody has gone home. However, if somebody felt the need to share an issue raised during the session they could come and speak with an adult afterwards.

### **Closing the Session**

Experience has shown that it is often a good idea to follow this session with as drinks break, so that any unfinished business can be quietly dealt with if needed, whilst also allowing a change of mood.

### **Suggested Questions**

Start with a simple question, before moving onto more personal and thought provoking ones. This exercise is about helping people to reflect in general on their relationships, not to confess their darkest secrets! Here are some suggestions, but you may want to think of your own, depending on what has come up so far at the event.

- What personal qualities do you bring to your relationships / friendships?
- What qualities do you look for in others in your relationships / friendships?
- What makes a person attractive to you?



- How has your parents' relationship (or that of other people you know) influenced your own relationships/ friendships?
- How do you know if you're in love?
- How do you move on after a break up?
- How do you know when you are ready?