

Conversations in Worship

Welcome and introductions

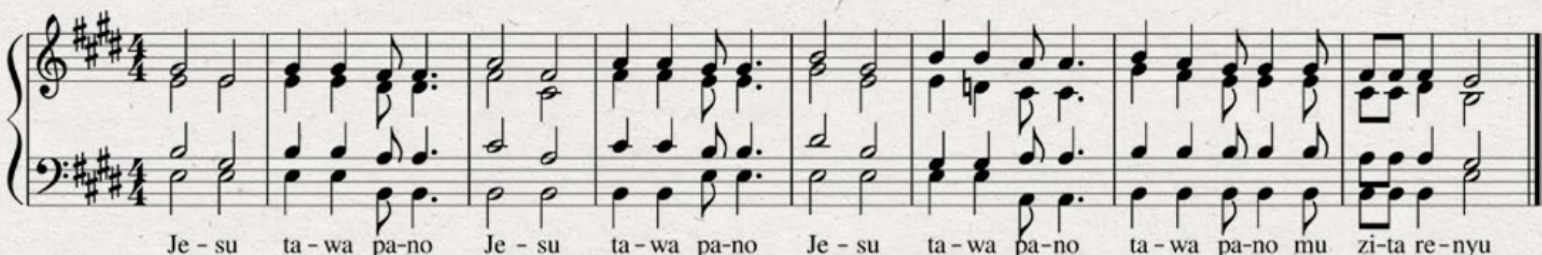
When everyone has arrived give them a short time to enjoy some refreshments, settle and say hello to one another. Welcome people and invite them to turn to the person next to them and share briefly one memorable moment from the last week. Include yourself in this exercise. Then invite people, one at a time, to introduce their neighbour to the group, saying their neighbour's name and briefly retelling their neighbour's chosen moment from the week.

Explain the process

The following paragraph may be a helpful way to explain the process to the participants:

"We will have five questions put to us, one at a time and will then have 15 minutes for each conversation, to share our responses with others sometimes in pairs, sometimes in groups. The conversations invite us simply to tell stories from our own life experience and reflect together on those experiences, so there are no right or wrong answers. Share as openly as you choose and listen with respect to what others choose to share.

After each time of sharing, we will sing the song 'Jesus We Are Here' which we will teach now."



Je - su ta - wa pa - no Je - su ta - wa pa - no Je - su ta - wa pa - no ta - wa pa - no mu zi - ta re - nyu



Je - sus we are here Je - sus we are here Je - sus we are here we are here for you

Opening Prayer

Invite everyone to join in an opening prayer.

A printable copy of this prayer and the closing blessing can be found in the Conversations in Worship section of the website:

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship

We recommend that you print a copy for each participant.

Open with prayer

Leader: God of the story,
God of the conversation,
we are here.
We are here to hear your voice
in each other's voices.
We are here to see you
in each other's insights.
Jesus, we are here

All: We are here for you.

Leader: We are here -
we who are tired
and we whose energy is
boundless;
we who are burdened with worry
and we who are excited about the
future.
We who are strangers
and we who are old friends.
Jesus, we are here

All: We are here for you.

Leader: We are here -
we who have come
full of questions
and we who have come
full of faith;
we who have come eagerly
and we who are reluctant.
We creatures of habit
and we who are restless.
Jesus, we are here

All: We are here for you.

Leader: God of the story,
God of the conversation,
meet us here,
in silence and sound,
in stranger and friend,
in challenge and comfort,
in new and in ancient,
in the mundane
and in the surprising.
Jesus, we are here

**All: We are here for you.
Amen.**

Conversations

1. Share a story of a time when you have had a meaningful experience of God.

Give people the agreed length of time to share in their pairs or groups. Then start to sing "Jesus We Are Here" allowing people to join in as their conversation draws to a close. If you have 15 minutes, begin the song at 14 minutes. Allow a brief silence before moving on to give the next question.

Repeat the pattern for the subsequent questions:

2. When has your involvement in worship with others been particularly memorable?

As above, give time to talk and begin singing when appropriate.

3. What was going on within you and around you to make it memorable?

As above, give time to talk and begin singing when appropriate.

4. When has worship felt less than what you longed for?

As above, give time to talk and begin singing when appropriate.

5. What have you found important or what have you valued, from this time together?

You may want to use the song once more here or move into the closing blessing on the next page.

Closing Blessing

Invite everyone to join in a closing blessing.

As with the opening prayer a printable copy of this closing blessing can be found in the Conversations in Worship section of the website:

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship

We recommend that you print off a copy for each participant.

Close with a blessing

Leader: God in our stories
 and in our conversations.
 We have met with you
 as our journeys have come together for a time.

We have each heard
the story of another,
holding for a while
that which is not ours.
Seeing you in the face of another,
hearing you in the voice of another,
knowing you in our midst;

and so,

**All: May we continue to see you,
 hear you,
 and know you,
 as we journey on.
 Amen.**

What Next?

What happens next will largely be guided by who gathered together and how the conversation unfolded, but there are a number of possibilities that may feel like the natural next steps.

Worship develops most naturally when we learn to talk about it with one another.

We would recommend exploring ways of hosting these conversations more than once – to allow for as many people as possible to take part.

Perhaps you would simply invite a second group to gather and take part. Perhaps one or two people from the first group would be interested in leading, or co-leading with you. Perhaps you have led a conversation with the Kirk Session – would some of them now like to host a conversation with members of the congregation?

It might be worth considering running them at different times – evening, lunch groups and prayer breakfasts or as part of a training or retreat day.

It may be worth considering inviting specific groups to take part in a conversation – what groups meet or gather? Would this process allow them to get to know one another in a different way?

Think creatively too – we have seen these conversations have a profound effect on home groups, Kirk Sessions and committee meetings. It could also be used in a more social gathering, like a café style service or hill-walking groups.

This resource is for you to use in any way that you find helpful.

We would be delighted to hear about the conversations you have been having, what has been valuable, what changes could make this more valuable and how we can support you in your “what next?”.

Email: mandd@churchofscotland.org.uk

Sign up: Conversations in Worship section of the Church of Scotland website
www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship