



Training of Worship Leaders

According to our Standing Orders (SO 68), a worship leader is a person appointed to take a leading and significant role in the conduct of worship within the life of a local church.

The Ministries Committee of the Methodist Church issued clarification in March 2018 on the requirements for training for those recognised by local churches as Worship Leaders. More information is on the Methodist website at www.methodist.org.uk/wl where you can also find an extract from the Ministries Committee paper.

Key to the clarification is an affirmation that a Worship Leader is appointed by their local church, and that in considering appointing worship leaders, the Church Council should consult with the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting about the suitability of candidates, the conduct of training, and the responsibilities of appointed worship leaders. This is entirely in accordance with Standing Orders (section 68) and no change to these has been made. You are recommended to familiarise yourself with the requirements of Standing Orders, which can be downloaded at <http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/governance/cpd/>. An extract covering section 68 can be downloaded [here](#).

The accredited standard of training for worship leaders is completion of modules 1-4 of Worship: Leading and Preaching. On the successful submission of a portfolio to the required standard a certificate is issued. This level of training is highly recommended for those who take a significant and regular part in the planning and leading of worship in their local congregation, and forms an ideal introduction to the essential skills of theological reflection as well as the theological basis of worship and Methodist practice. It should be noted that candidates for the Diaconal Order will be required to have completed modules 1-4 of Worship: Leading & Preaching and successfully submitted a portfolio.

The decision regarding the level of training that is appropriate in a given context however, lies with the local Church Council. The Ministries Committee recognised that "in some contexts a Church Council may deem that this amount of training (modules 1-4) will not be beneficial to the worship leader or congregation." A Church Council is free to make an informed selection of material from the authorised Worship: Leading and Preaching course to satisfy its local needs.

The expertise in formation and training of those who lead worship resides in the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting, and associated tutors. Church Councils are therefore strongly recommended to draw on the advice and guidance of the Local Preachers' Meeting in the selection of appropriate training and arrangements for assessment of worship leaders in training.

In order to assist Church Councils with choosing the appropriate options for training their Worship Leaders, the Connexional Team suggest the three levels of training described below. Together, these provide an accessible route into learning for prospective worship leaders of any background or ability.



Training Pathways for Worship Leaders

Worship: Foundations

Worship: Foundations provides a basic starting point for those exploring a role in worship in their church. It also provides a useful introduction to those called upon to facilitate Local Arrangements, or who contribute to other worship-related activities in the life of their church.

Worship: Foundations consists of a number of resources, including a workbook which guides the reader through the basic steps involved in preparing an act of worship. The workbook is sent to all students who enrol on the Worship: Leading and Preaching course and can also be downloaded at www.methodist.org.uk/wlp. Paper copies of the Worship: Foundations workbook are available free of charge (plus a small postage charge per order) from Methodist Publishing at <https://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk>.

You will also find at www.methodist.org.uk/wlp a series of four scene-setting videos by Revd Dr Calvin Samuel on Jesus which are ideal for use as discussion starters amongst those involved in worship or in small groups.

Worship: Foundations provides basic, introductory material that can be used in local churches and circuits to explore skills and understanding for assisting in worship. The material can be used as study material for small groups, or as a basis for continuing development for existing local preachers and worship leaders. No enrolment or registration is necessary to use this resource.

Worship: Foundations should be considered as a basic starting point for Worship Leader training, and a reference source for worship leaders and local preachers already in training, and should be combined with one the following.

Level 1 - Encountering God in the life of the church

The first level of training for Worship Leaders uses the materials in Module 2 of **Worship: Leading and Preaching**.

This module is called **Encountering God in the Life of the Church** and consists of three sections, which are all directly relevant to the role of the worship leader.

They are:

Encountering God in the Bible

Encountering God in the Church

Focus on Worship

Within each section are four parts, which contain different types of training resources:

Worship contains devotional material for study groups or private study sessions;

Prepare contains materials for 10 hours of self-guided study, but could also be used, if appropriate, as material for a locally-convened study group.



TRAINING FOR WORSHIP LEADERS: Guidelines for Church Councils

Explore contains ideas and activities for a local tutor to use in facilitating a study group

Apply & Reflect – contains creative ideas for students to build on their newly-acquired knowledge

The decision on how to arrange training locally will depend on the local context and need, but it might be an opportunity to gather a group of people interested in theological learning, as much of the material covered, whilst focussed on worship, is relevant to all disciples of Jesus.

Assessment will be carried out locally and should consist of:

1. One assessed service, with appropriate feedback
2. One media item, based on a suitable theological theme from the module.

No moderation of the items assessed will be carried out, but the regional DMLN Ministry Development specialist will be happy to advise on good practice for assessment.

Use should be made of the appropriate Cover Sheets from the course, which can be found at www.methodist.org.uk/wlp under the “Building and Submitting a Portfolio” tab. More guidance on assessment can be found in the **Guide to Portfolios**, which is also available for download from this website.

Following the requirements in the **Guide to Portfolios** will allow students who subsequently go on to complete the Worship: Leading & Preaching course to use the items they have produced in their portfolio. Nothing need be wasted.

Please note that anyone can access the **Worship: Leading & Preaching** course, including the video and audio material, using the username and password “guestaccess”. However, in order to obtain access to the “Module Reader”, which contains book extracts and other published reading material, students will need to be enrolled as students on the course. This is for copyright licencing reasons, for which the Methodist Church pays an annual fee per student.

There is no charge to individuals, churches and circuits for enrolment however, and this should be done via the Local Preachers’ Secretary using the Local Preacher Returns Form.

Level 2 – Encountering God in daily life

Level 2 extends the training to include Worship: Leading & Preaching Module 3, which is called **Encountering God in daily life** and consists of these three sections:

Encountering God for Myself

Encountering God in the World

Focus on Prayer



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The same processes for local assessment should be followed as for Level 2 above.

When Level 2 is complete, students will have completed two modules of Worship: Leading & Preaching, and will have gathered half of the material they would need for their Worship Leader Portfolio, should they choose to continue to Level 3.

Level 3 – Worship: Leading & Preaching – Modules 1-4 with Portfolio

Level 3 remains the accredited “gold standard” of training for worship leaders, and is highly recommended for those who take a significant and regular part in the planning and leading of worship in their local church.

The requirement is completion of modules 1-4 of **Worship: Leading and Preaching** and successful submission of a Worship Leader Portfolio. Completion of Level 3 is connexionally accredited, and a certificate is awarded.

We hope (and expect) that many of those who start with Level 1 and 2 will go on to Level 3. Students already studying using **Worship: Leading and Preaching** often say that once they have started, they are keen to continue their learning using the course. Items produced for local assessment at Levels 1 and 2 should be kept by the student, as these can form part of their Worship Leader portfolio at Level 3.

Students intending to complete Level 3 will need to be enrolled with the Local Preachers’ Office. This should be done by the Local Preachers’ Secretary using the Local Preachers’ Return form. These students will also require to have a Tutor and a Mentor, nominated by the Local Preachers’ Meeting.

Recognition as a Worship Leader

Anyone who has completed Levels 1, 2 or 3 as specified by their Church Council is entitled, subject to the confirmation of the Local Preachers’ Meeting, to be appointed as a Worship Leader in their local church. Note that the appointment is for a three year period, and is subject to a triennial review by the Local Preachers’ meeting in accordance with Standing Order 683.

More Information

The Worship Leader page on the Methodist Church website at www.methodist.org.uk/wl contains more information about Worship Leaders.

For any further information, please contact the Local Preachers’ Office at localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk or ring 0207 467 3774.