



Faith & Worship | How to Submit

When you have completed a Section of *Faith & Worship*, the following need to be sent to Local Preachers' Office, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, LONDON, NW1 5JR:

Connexional Assessment Cover Sheet

Copy of each assignment

Two exegesis passages

Worship Portfolio

- **Personal Reflection**
- **Order of Service**
- **Service Report Form** ~ completed by the local preacher 'on trial'
- **Service Report Form Summary Sheet** ~ completed by the assessor
- **Points for further work** ~ completed by the local preacher 'on trial'
- **Sermon Transcript**

Sections of *Faith & Worship* (sections A, B, C or D) can be submitted at any time during the year, they will be kept and submitted to the assessors for the Spring/Autumn deadline date.

There are two deadline dates for Connexional assessment:

Connexional Assessment Dates

March 31st | Spring Submission deadline

May 31st | Spring results *sent to Local Preacher Tutor*

September 30th | Autumn submission deadline

November 30th | Autumn results *sent to Local Preacher Tutor*

- No more than two sections can be submitted for marking per submission period (Spring/Autumn).
- Work received after these deadline dates will be kept ready for the next deadline date (submission period of Spring/Autumn).
- Resubmission can be submitted at any time during the year and will be marked separately from the connexional assessments dates throughout
- Results & Feedback sheets will be sent to the Local Tutor.
- We ask that you do not use a ring binder or multiple plastic wallets.

How to submit in further detail

Connexional Assessment Cover Sheet

- a completed **Connexional Assessment Cover Sheet** for this section of *Faith & Worship*

Copy of each assignment

- a **copy of each assignment** for this section of *Faith & Worship*,
 - to be marked by your Local Tutor
 - to have achieved a mark of 40% at least
 - to include any earlier drafts marked by the tutor
 - to have a Student Record Sheet (completed on both sides)

(Please keep a copy of each of your assignments for your own records.)

Two exegesis passages

- the **two exegesis passages** for this section of *Faith & Worship*
(Guidance on writing answers for exegesis passages is inside this leaflet (pages 5-8).)

Exegesis passages correspond to the year for which work is submitted; if you miss the September deadline, you must re-write your exegesis passages to correspond to the following March deadline when your work will be sent for assessment.

Exegesis passages can be found on the Methodist website local preacher pages www.methodist.org.uk/lp and in ICHTHUS magazine.

Worship Portfolio consists of:

- **Personal Reflection**
Your personal reflection on one act of worship where you were present but had no formal responsibilities

Paperwork for one act of worship you have taken during your study of this Section

- **Order of Service**
- **Service Report Form** ~ completed by the local preacher 'on trial'
- **Service Report Form Summary Sheet** ~ completed by the assessor
- **Points for further work** ~ completed by the local preacher 'on trial'
A brief account of how you have sought, or will seek, to address the points for further work identified on the Summary Sheet
- **Sermon Transcript**
A transcript of a sermon (or a detailed account of its alternative) delivered by you during your study of this Section. This may be from the service reported on above. If it comes from another service, please include an order of service for that act of worship. Bullet-pointed summaries will not be accepted for this part of the Worship Portfolio.

Guidance on completing a Worship Portfolio is enclosed (page 3).

WORSHIP PORTFOLIO

Your personal reflection on one act of worship where you were present but had no formal responsibilities.

Please give us a few facts that will help put your personal reflection in context eg: place, date and time, numbers, age range. Then write your reflection (300-500 words) remembering that the emphasis needs to be on your understanding and evaluation of what happened rather than just describing what happened. To do this well, try answering questions that start How? or Why? to show UNDERSTANDING and questions that start How well? or How appropriate? and even How do I compare? to show EVALUATION. If you're not sure what to comment on, a Service Report Form could give you some ideas. Here's an example of personal reflection on one act of worship. Can you spot evidence of understanding? Can you find evaluative comments? (Please note: there is no official form to record your reflection.)

*Somewhere Methodist Church, 30 May, 10.30am
Congregation of 75 people, ages about 40 to 80*

The bustle of people arriving and talking prior to the worship made personal preparation difficult, but did give a sense of people wanting to meet one another and share news. The worship leader was sensitive to this and in the call to worship and opening moments, sought to focus our thoughts upon the God who is present in the midst of all that is happening, in so doing creating a sense of being one body as we gathered for worship.

The geography of the worship area gave a sense of distance between the body of the congregation and those leading aspects of the worship. While this aided hearing, it tended to place the congregation in the role of spectator rather than participator. There was one exception to this in the way the prayers of intercession were led. We were invited to share issues for prayer, and each contribution was summed up by the leader so that all could hear. After this time of sharing, the prayers were led by the person coming halfway down the central aisle, standing as it were in the midst of the congregation to lead the prayers which included a congregational response.

There was a clear focus on God and a sense of God at work in the world. However, the key players in the worship were all male and the language of both the hymns and the prayers was dominated by masculine imagery which felt uncomfortable to me and potentially excluded many in the congregation. As a result, I felt personally challenged to reconsider the acts of worship I plan to see if there is a similar imbalance.

The sermon seemed overlong, although it was only 20 minutes! I felt unsure of what the aim or main point was. All the illustrations, while being inspiring, were remote from my experience and, I suspect, many others. Consequently, the overall effect was to say "So what?" This lack of connection with the world or the context in which we live meant that the sermon was soon forgotten. On reflection, I feel again the challenge to re-examine my own sermons – for how well I connect

them with the world and the lives of the worshipping community. Of course, there's also the danger of becoming too parochial!

Your personal reflection will be marked out of 20:

- 10 marks for understanding
- 10 marks for evaluation

Paperwork for one act of worship you have taken during your study of this section

This must include:

- A copy of the **order of service**

You will have prepared this anyway, so it's just a case of remembering to keep it in your Worship Portfolio.

- A **Service Report Form** for that service completed by you

You and each of your assessors should have a Service Report Form to complete after the service you have taken (as a normal part of reporting for the Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting). This helps each of you bring your own thoughts and perspectives when you meet to agree the Summary Sheet. Only the Service Report Form that you have completed needs to be kept in your Worship Portfolio.

- A Service Report Form - **Summary Sheet** for that service agreed by you and your assessors (normally a preacher and a church steward)

The Summary Sheet draws together the thoughts and reflections of the preacher and the assessors. This process is particularly helpful when all involved share their perceptions, consider their responses and come to an agreed evaluation. Some points on this sheet may be similar to the points you've made on your own Service Report Form, but others may be rather different. For example, there might be mention of something you've overlooked or taken for granted. There might be pointers for further development that were easier to spot in the pew than in the pulpit. There might be encouragement and praise that you would not have given yourself. A copy of this Summary Sheet will go to the Local Preachers' Meeting, but you'll also need a copy for your Worship Portfolio.

- A brief account of how you have sought, or will seek, to address the **points for further work** identified on the Summary Sheet

You could write this on the back of the Summary Sheet. It's worth discussing this with your assessors as you all complete the Summary Sheet anyway. For example, it's all very well identifying a need for voice projection but the assessors and/or the Local Preachers' Meeting should also suggest who could help you. Your 'brief account' on addressing the 'points for further work' will clarify who will do what by when (or who has done what already!)

Your Service Report Form will receive comments with reference to the order of service, the Summary Sheet and your brief account on addressing the 'points for further work'. It will be treated rather like your Personal

Reflection on another's service, but this time the Service Report Form's questions give you a detailed agenda to work to.

Assessors will look for understanding (of what the Service Report Form is asking you to make comment) and evaluation (your assessment of how well different aspects of the service went). They will offer comment, but not award marks.

- A **transcript of a sermon** (or a detailed account of its alternative) delivered by you during your study of this Section. This may be from the service reported on above. If it comes from another service, please include an order of service for that act of worship. Bullet-pointed summaries will not be accepted for this part of the Worship Portfolio.

If you have preached a sermon from a full script, then it's the full script that goes into your Worship Portfolio. If you have preached from notes, then the notes themselves are not enough. A tape-recording of the sermon given to an audio-typist would be the quickest way to get a transcript. If you have conveyed the Good News in alternative ways (rather than a sermon), then a detailed account of what was said and done needs to go into your Worship Portfolio. Whichever approach you take, this part of the Worship Portfolio offers evidence of how you share the Good News with a congregation.

Assessors will look for and comment on some or all of the following:

- clarity of aim
- creativity
- how the content relates to Biblical material
- how the content relates to today

EXEGESIS

Each year in the August letter to Local Tutors will appear a list of two Bible passages for each Section of *Faith & Worship* for the following calendar year's Connexional Assessment (31 March and 30 September). The list will also appear in the magazines *Ichthus* in early autumn. Please note that exegesis passages are section and year specific: if you miss the deadline for any September assessment, you will need to re-write your exegesis passages to match those set for the following year.

On page 28 of Unit 2 of *Faith & Worship*, there is a diagram for sermon preparation. The notes on the next few pages explain how the diagram relates to exegesis in assignments and in Connexional Assessment. The following format is used:

For a given passage:

- a. *outline its context and background*
- b. *indicate its original meaning*
- c. *consider its message for us today in the light of its context, background and original meaning*

In the Connexional assessment, each Bible passage will be marked out of 30:

- a. 8 marks (knowledge)
- b. 10 marks (understanding)
- c. 12 marks (application)

You have to reach the pass mark of 40% (12 marks out of 30) for each Bible passage. This guidance aims to help you do much better than that!

A suggested word count is 600-1000 words for each exegesis.

a. Outline its context and background

This part refers to the first and third set of questions in the 'Exegesis' segment of the diagram on page 28 of Unit 2:

- **Context:** Why is this Bible passage where it is?
What comes before it and after?
- **Background:** What is the cultural background of this passage?
What type of literature is it?
What do we know of its author and the audience for whom it was intended?

Here, your answers are assessed for KNOWLEDGE.

You may choose to deal with **background** first eg:

- Author: who was speaking/writing when, about what

- Type of literature: eg: law, history, poetry, prophecy, gospel, letter, eschatology, parable, saying, miracle story, argument
- Audience: who the audience was

There is no need for great detail. Usually, a few sentences will be enough to provide the relevant information.

Once this is done, you can deal with **context**:

- Before and after: what ground the previous and subsequent verses cover
how this passage affirms/contrasts with the verses around it
- Sources: in some cases there may be a need to mention where a passage comes from, or how there is a similar passage to this elsewhere, or how an editor's hand is evident

Again, this can be done concisely. It is helpful if descriptions of context throw light on the passage in question rather than restate in detail what comes before and after. It is also worthwhile simply noting information about sources that help show the particular emphasis or tone of the passage. Avoid delving into fascinating facts and comparisons.

b. Indicate its original meaning

This part of the question refers to the second set of questions in the 'Exegesis' part of the diagram on page 28 of Unit 2:

- **Meaning** What might it have meant to the original hearers/readers?
 What reactions did it provoke then and why?

Here, answers are assessed for UNDERSTANDING. Answers are likely to cover at least some of the following points:

- what the author may have meant or what the audience may have understood
- (especially referring to how key words/themes appear in the passage)
- what theological ideas appear in the passage

It may not be possible to keep these elements separate. In fact, it may be better if they are closely linked. For example, to say 'kingdom of God' is a key idea without explaining meaning(s) of the phrase makes it hard for a local tutor or a Connexional Assessor to give credit for understanding. Many passages offer more than one theological idea, so an answer which limits itself to one point and misses others is weak, even if the one point is explained well.

Answers are strong when they show that not only has the Bible passage been read and considered, but also that views and understandings of others (for example, in the unit and in commentaries) have been taken into account as well.

c. Consider its message for us today in the light of its context, background and original meaning.

This part of the question needs to draw on the 'Preacher' and 'People' segments of the diagram on page 28 of Unit 2.

- **Individual ('Preacher')** What echoes are there in this Bible passage for me?
Are there links with my own story?

Does this passage raise questions for me?
Does the passage challenge, confront or confirm me?

- **Community ('People')** What echoes are there in this Bible passage for a congregation or community?
Are there links with these people's own story or experience?

What words or ideas may stand out for those who hear it?
What questions might be raised by this passage?
Does the passage offer a critique or confirmation to the contemporary world?

Here, answers are assessed for APPLICATION (how well the message is applied to the contemporary [and perhaps local] situation yet with due care to honour the sense of direction and purpose learned from considering the passage's context, background and original meaning).

Although the questions addressed to the 'Preacher' may throw fresh light or searching questions for the preacher on the passage, these should only be used to alert the preacher to how the message can be applied to the contemporary circumstances the congregation is facing. They might spark an idea for an illustration from personal experience, but the focus should be primarily on the 'People' questions.

Answers are strong when they show that the passage can become a lens through which contemporary situations are seen in sharp relief.

Applying the diagram to an assignment or examination question

An assignment or examination question might offer only one or two verses for exegesis and interpretation, so the following answer is based on 1 Samuel 3:10-11 (NRSV):

“Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ And Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’ Then the Lord said to Samuel, ‘See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears it tingle.’”

Context and background

This passage, written by a historian of Israel, describes the call of Samuel by God. The event dates from about 1000 BCE, but it would not have been recorded until later. The passage is part of a history which at this point is told in story form with dialogue.

The story depicts a corrupt priesthood (2:12-17; 3:13) and a lack of encounter with God (3:1). Even in this setting, the boy Samuel encounters God, is called to be a prophet (rather than a priest) and hears how God is about to act. This story is one example of many in the Old Testament that show how the Jews have valued their history as a way of discovering more about the relationship between God and people.

Original meaning

The lack of righteous leadership in Israel and the dearth of religious experience are clear themes in the opening chapters of 1 Samuel. The authors of this account of Samuel’s call want to describe a just God who is overseeing the life of the people and who raises up a new leader with divine authority. By the end of the chapter, the boy being groomed for priestly activities has become the ‘trustworthy prophet of the Lord’ - a leader known throughout the land. The key point in this transition comes in these verses where God calls Samuel by name, the boy has a vision of God’s presence, recognises the call, responds and receives an oracle of divine intent.

(continued overleaf)

The story conveys how God continues to engage with the people even when they are blind and deaf to God's presence. If the aged, ineffective priest has lost the plot, God speaks directly to the alert, responsive boy. God's demands for righteousness and pure worship are ear-tingling and will lead the people closer to God once again.

The story also conveys how Samuel, who is familiar with being a servant to Eli is now in the service of God. The boy who has been attentive to the summons of the priest, now listens out for the voice of God. Like other prophets, once he has responded to the call, Samuel is given a difficult message, especially for those who have been around him at Shiloh. The role of prophet is not easy.

A message for us today

Today, we can continue to expect God to be active, to meet with and call attentive people even in unlikely circumstances.

Attentive people today include those who are young. While national leaders and multinational companies (who all exercise power) look after their own particular interests, many young people (without power) are registering alarm and concern about what is happening to the environment for everyone. They see Babel, but seek Eden. The call of Samuel is a reminder to the Church (and to the world) about how inattentive and unresponsive we can be to an ear-tingling message - in this case, for justice and beauty in creation. God is still active, and if the Church will not see or hear God's purpose for creation, then we can expect that others who are more attentive will be called and used.

Attentive people today include those who are servants. Good waiters in restaurants notice quickly what you need and help you in a friendly way. Good shop assistants know their stock and help you get just what you want in no time. Waiters, shop assistants and other people who serve us are not well paid and are often overlooked, ignored or treated badly by their customers. Not many people aspire to become servants. The call of Samuel is a reminder to the Church (and to the world) about a servant-king, about a God who comes to serve humanity. Here is an ear-tingling message about a call to be part of this service of God. God is still active, and if the Church will not be God's servants in the world - perhaps because we are preoccupied with church business - then we can expect that others who are more attentive will be called and used in God's service.

Attentive people today especially include those who have a continuing, loving relationship with God. At a time when attendance in mainstream churches in the West is declining, there is a concern that we who are the Church have lost the plot. Somehow, the Good News is in danger of appearing irrelevant not only to a prosperous society at large, but to the congregation within. We pursue maintenance at the expense of mission. The call of Samuel is a reminder to the Church (and to the world) about how inattentive and unresponsive we can be to an ear-tingling message - in this case, for 'a closer walk' with God. God is still active, and if we will not see or hear God's purpose

for the Church, then we can expect that others who are more attentive will be called and used.

Today, we rejoice that God is indeed active. We delight that many young people are still hearing God's call and are being used as a Christian presence in tackling environmental and social concerns. We delight that many are glad to serve God selflessly in inconspicuous ways in church life and in the wider world. We delight that many enjoy a deepening spiritual life which overflows with love and peace for all. We pray that each of us may become more attentive, more ready to be drawn into the activity of a just, righteous and loving God.

Sanya Strachan | Administrator

The Discipleship & Ministries Cluster | The Connexional Team

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