Creative Worship

Corporate Worship Ideas

**Word association**

Select a group of five people to take part. Say the word ‘abundance’ or ‘life’ and ask the next player to quickly say a word that has some connection with the previous word and so on. Eg abundance … full … plenty etc. A player can no longer take part (or takes a forfeit) if they take more than three seconds to think of a word or repeat a word that’s already been said.

**Celebration banner**

Provide a long roll of paper to be a banner and colourful felt-tip pens. Play some uplifting, celebratory music and ask people to write or draw on the banner reasons they have to celebrate. You can narrow it down by asking them to write down what they’re celebrating in relation to the corps/centre.

**Past celebrations**

Select three people beforehand born in different decades to share what significant celebrations they remember, or what it was like to celebrate when they were young, eg typical foods, music, games etc. They can show photos or use any props to enhance their story. Encourage people to think about how we can celebrate life together today, as a community, in light of all that Jesus has done for us.

***Hesed***

This wonderful Hebrew word is rich in meaning and describes the unfailing love of God and his covenant making. Read the following verses that include this word *hesed* and either create a poster for one of the following verses or sketch an image that illustrates it:

* Deuteronomy 7:9
* Psalm 23:6
* Psalm 103:17
* Hosea 6:6

**Testimony**

One of the ideas behind the word ‘covenant’, from the Greek language, is that of a testament that stands as a practical witness to a reality or fact. Write out your testimony of how you have come to know and love God in no more than 100-200 words. What would you prioritise in this concise account of God at work in you?

**Holiness**

It is a core belief of ours that God’s full salvation involves our becoming holy in covenant relationship with himself and through the working of the Holy Spirit within and through us. If holiness involves us reflecting something of God in his everlasting covenant love and

faithfulness, take some time to reflect on what this practically looks like, write a list of some of them, and pray through for yourself and your Christian community.

**Old vs New**

Under the old covenant, humankind had to ‘prove’ themselves to God through their actions. Have everyone stand up and tell them they’ll receive a reward (name something that is safe and easy to share, eg prewrapped chocolates like Celebrations) if they can complete the task you set out. Instruct them to complete 66 jumping jacks … while reciting the books of the Bible backwards without hesitation. Give them five minutes. This should be near impossible for the average person – just as keeping the terms of the old covenant was. Once everyone has caught their breath – or given up – give out the rewards anyway to illustrate grace in the new covenant.

**A seal/stamp of approval**

Covenants of old could have been stamped with a seal. Each seal would be personalised with symbols representing the owner. While music plays, reflect on the new covenant Christ has welcomed us into, and design a seal to represent Christ’s work in your life. What has Christ written on your heart? Keep this as a reminder of the covenant relationship you are a part of.

**Deal or no deal**

Ask for several volunteers to come up to the front to participate in a game, but don’t tell them what it involves. You can allow as many people as you’d like to be involved, but keep any social distancing rules in mind. Explain to the volunteers that they can stop at any time, but they will lose out on a reward. Explain that there will be three rounds, and anyone who passes the first two can go on to the third round, which will determine who the winner is.

Round 1: In the first round, have everyone hold out both arms and stand on one foot for five minutes. Ask them beforehand ‘Deal or no deal?’ If they succeed, they go on to the next round. If they fail they are out!

Round 2: The second round is tougher. Explain it to them beforehand and ask again, ‘Deal or no deal?’ Get the contestants to eat Brussels sprouts dipped in Marmite (feel free to make up your own ‘meal’). The ones who complete the task go on to the final round, which is the toughest.

Round 3: Show the contestants a blindfold and explain they will not be able to see in this challenge. Again ask ‘Deal or no deal?’ Blindfold the contestants and ask them if they have any concerns about touching insects/creepy-crawlies. Once everyone is in, bring out bags/boxes with any of the items below inside (you can set up a speech about the horrors that lurk inside and get the congregation to play along by making disgusted sounds etc).

Your boxes can contain things like:

* Cooked, cold spaghetti noodles
* Peeled grapes
* Blanched, peeled tomato
* Slime
* Overcooked rice with raisins in cooking oil

*All of these mimic rotting maggots and bugs*

Each volunteer has to reach into a bag and touch the item for a minute to win.

You can include a tie-breaker activity if there is more than one winner, or share out a prize (eg chocolate coins).

(Game adapted from <https://thesource4ym.com/deal-or-no-deal/> and <https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/halloween-feel-box-game-1244730>)

In these games the volunteers must choose how far they will go to win the reward at the end. There is some risk involved, as in both scenarios their choices were based on the unknown. Christ has established a new covenant with us and we must choose how far we go. Are we all in? Even though we may not be able to see what’s ahead of us, Christ goes before us and guides us through. That’s the covenant relationship we have.

**Remembering a covenant**

For some people, to have an easy way to remember a covenant may be helpful. For example, an acrostic may help.

A covenant might look like:

Making a:

**C**ommitment of my life by

**O**ffering all there is of me, knowing I am

**V**alued by God and I have an

**E**ternal inheritance. Therefore I am a

**N**ew creation,

**A**ccepted by God,

**N**ow, as well as in the future,

**T**rusting God, by his grace, to help me live according to his ways.

Try writing your own acrostic to help with remembering a covenant relationship.

Exploring Covenant

Read slowly through the following examples of covenants (The Soldier’s Covenant and the Methodist Covenant). What strikes you as being particularly significant? What elements are easy to say and to do? Is anything particularly difficult for you to say and to do? Are there any areas of your life which these are speaking directly to – maybe something you need to stop and maybe something you need to start?

* As you reflect on the various things below, you may want to share your thoughts with someone else. You may want to make a written record of your thoughts. It may help to share those written thoughts with someone you trust.
* You could ask a trusted friend to hold you accountable to the things you have promised to change in your life.

**The Soldier’s Covenant**

For soldiers in The Salvation Army, the Soldier’s Covenant will have been signed at their enrolment. This is a very deep and powerful statement of recognising who God is, and the beliefs concerning God, whilst also committing to live according to the promises made.

This includes promising to abstain from alcohol and tobacco. However, this is only a small part of a list of promises that are made.

What about these parts of the Soldier’s Covenant, for example?

* *I will make the values of the Kingdom of God and not the values of the world the standard for my life.*
* *I will uphold Christian integrity in every area of my life, allowing nothing in thought, word or deed that is unworthy, unclean, untrue, profane, dishonest or immoral.*
* *I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps, giving as large a proportion of my income as possible to support its ministries and the worldwide work of the Army.*

As you have opportunity to think on this covenant, have you considered the depth and significance of these words?

If you are a soldier in The Salvation Army, find your copy of the Soldier’s Covenant and read through the promises to which you have signed your name. What have been the challenges you have faced as you have tried to live out this covenant?

**The Methodist Covenant**

Part of the tradition of the Methodist Church is the annual Methodist Covenant service. This gives an opportunity, usually at the beginning of every year, to reflect on the following covenant prayer:

*I am no longer my own but yours.*

*Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;*

*Put me to doing, put me to suffering;*

*Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you;*

*Let me be full, let me be empty,*

*Let me have all things, let me have nothing;*

*I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things*

*To your pleasure and disposal.*

*And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,*

*You are mine and I am yours.*

*And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in Heaven. Amen.*

How do you feel when reading this set of promises?

Do you think this is a covenant you would be able to fulfil in the year to come?

What do you think of an opportunity to renew covenant promises every year?

**A personal covenant**

As a young man William Booth dedicated his life to a set of values which he covenanted to keep.

*I do promise – my God helping –*

*1stThat I will rise every morning sufficiently early (say 20 minutes before seven o’clock) to wash, dress, and have a few minutes, not less than 5, in private prayer.*

*2ndly That I will as much as possible avoid all that babbling and idle talking in which I have lately so sinfully indulged.*

*3rd That I will endeavour in my conduct and deportment before the world and my fellow servants especially to conduct myself as a humble, meek, and zealous follower of the bleeding Lamb, and by serious conversation and warning endeavour to lead them to think of their immortal souls.*

*4thly That I will not read less than 4 chapters in God’s word every day.*

*5thly That I will strive to live closer to God, and to seek after holiness of heart, and leave providential events with God.*

*6thly That I will read this over every day or at least twice a week.*

*God help me, enable me to cultivate a spirit of self denial and to yield myself a prisoner of love to the Redeemer of the world.*

*Amen and Amen*

What do you think of William Booth’s personal covenant?

Try writing your own personal covenant. What would you need to do to help you keep to these promises?

**Covenant in song**

Several familiar songs are basically an expression of covenant promises. Read through the following songs slowly. What strikes you as being particularly significant? What elements are easy to say and to do? Is anything particularly difficult for you to say and to do? Are there any areas of your life which these are speaking directly to, maybe something you need to stop and maybe something you need to start?

What other songs express your willingness to be in covenant relationship with God?

*SASB* 613

1 O Jesus, I have promised

To serve thee to the end,

Be thou for ever near me,

My Master and my friend.

I shall not fear the battle

If thou art by my side,

Nor wander from the pathway

If thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me feel thee near me;

The world is ever near;

I see the sights that dazzle,

The tempting sounds I hear.

My foes are ever near me,

Around me and within;

But, Jesus, draw thou nearer

And shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear thee speaking

In accents clear and still,

Above the storms of passion,

The murmurs of self-will.

O speak to reassure me,

To chasten or control;

O speak to make me listen,

Thou Guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, thou hast promised

To all who follow thee,

That where thou art in Glory

There shall thy servant be;

And, Jesus, I have promised

To serve thee to the end;

O give me grace to follow,

My Master and my friend.

*John Ernest Bode (1816-1874)*

*SASB* 623

1 Take my life and let it be

Consecrated, Lord, to thee;

Take my moments and my days,

Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

2 Take my hands and let them move

At the impulse of thy love;

Take my feet and let them be

Swift and beautiful for thee.

3 Take my voice and let me sing

Always, only for my King;

Take my lips and let them be

Filled with messages from thee.

4 Take my silver and my gold,

Not a mite would I withhold;

Take my intellect and use

Every power as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine,

It shall be no longer mine;

Take my heart, it is thine own,

It shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour

At thy feet its treasure-store;

Take myself and I will be

Ever, only, all for thee.

*Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879)*