



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

# Course Outline

*VTWP001 Exploring Worship in the UCA*

Course Administrator:

Mel Perkins

Lay Leadership Development Coordinator  
eLM – Equipping Leadership for Mission



equipping Leadership *for* Mission



## PLEASE READ THIS FIRST!

Greetings, and thanks for registering to be part of the **Worship** Units for lay leaders. In this Course Outline you will find details of the study requirements, the assessment and other helpful information.

The Units are intended for lay people who are called to prepare and lead worship in local settings. For those who are interested, there is also another course that has on preaching for those who are called to prepare and preach.

There are six (6) Units in Worship and six (6) Units in Preaching.

Some lay leaders will undertake the Worship Units only. Others will undertake the Preaching Units only. For those studying for Lay Preacher accreditation and those studying to achieve the Pastor competencies in Worship and Preaching, all twelve Units must be undertaken. Please refer to page 5 of this Course Outline for further information.

***The Units have been developed to be a time of discipleship-forming, faith-expanding learning in worship and preaching.***

These Units will provide an opportunity to learn and develop some practical skills in preparing and conducting worship and/or preaching.

We encourage you to approach your studies with a positive attitude and a willingness to be open to learning. Remember don't be daunted by what lies ahead, help will be available along the way.

Thanks again for committing this time to your journey of understanding.

We pray it will be a time of learning, with some challenge, and a time of deepening faith in God.

*A note for those seeking accreditation as Lay Preachers or gaining competency as Pastors:*

*For those studying toward accreditation as a Lay Preacher, this course covers most of the main content for the "Worship and Preaching" component of the Lay Preacher education requirements.*

*For those gaining competency for the Ministry of Pastor these Units address most of the "Worship and Preaching Competencies" numbers 1 and 2 ('Prepare and lead Worship', and, 'Prepare and present Sermons').*

HOURS OF ENGAGEMENT: Each Unit involves 5 to 6 hours of engagement in study, reading, and assessment preparation.

EXPECTATIONS OF ADULT LEARNERS:

- Participants will have computer abilities in research, assignment writing, and electronic submission OR will work alongside someone who can assist them with these tasks.
- Participants will take responsibility for their own learning – ask questions when uncertain or are unsure about what is required of them. Manage their time well/efficiently. Read the learning and assessment Task questions carefully. Read the Course Outline carefully to ensure they are familiar with all requirements for the Course. Seek assistance from their Presbytery, peers, identified local mentors/tutors.

It is recommended, for those studying towards Lay Preacher accreditation or completing the Pastor Competencies, that this course be completed within 3 months. It is structured in such a way that it can be completed within around 9 weeks. A Suggested Study Guide provided later in this Course Outline presents how this might be achieved.

***If someone is studying towards Lay Preacher accreditation undertakes this course early in their training – i.e. before their Biblical and theological study – it is strongly recommended they undertake their practical assessment for these Units (and possibly their theoretical assessment) after they complete Biblical and theological study.***

# INTRODUCTION

## OBJECTIVE

These Units introduce participants to the study of Worship. A key theme is the question

***“How do we worship God and encounter God’s Word in worship?”***

These Units act as a foundation for understanding how the Christian Church and the Uniting Church in particular, worship God. The Units are closely integrated with the study of scripture, and historical and contemporary scholarship on worship.

Through the study there is also an invitation to participants to deepen their response to, and faith in, Jesus Christ.

## OUTCOMES (from the UCA Assembly Standards and Competencies for Lay Preachers)

At the completion of this Course students should be able to:

1. Prepare material for worship
2. Facilitate shared planning of worship services
3. Set up and utilise worship spaces
4. Speak and lead in worship settings

## CONTENT

Understanding worship and its biblical and theological warrant

Patterns of worship in the church and in the Reformed and evangelical tradition (Uniting Church)

Elements of worship in constructing a service

Exploring and choosing resources for worship (UIW2, video, book and online resources)

Approaches and contexts for worship including multi-sensory and multi-intelligence

Ethics and knowing yourself as a worship leader

Communicating effectively

## METHOD

Depending on the ***mode*** (eg. face-to-face, online, blended) in which these Units are offered, participants will be exposed to these types of learning experiences:

- Lectures are delivered in class and texts of lectures will be available afterward.
- Lectures will be delivered online, with texts of lectures available online.
- Seminar, Workshop, and Webinar times will be focused on developing knowledge and skills.
- Video and online resources will be used to supplement information gathering.
- Key ideas will be discussed in class and in small group tutorials.
- Key ideas will be presented online and discussed through forums and Webinars.
- Ideas and interpretations will be discussed and debated in the learning community.
- Groups will construct some working definitions to better be able to articulate faith and talk about God.
- Course Participants will be encouraged to read the set text and become familiar with a broad range of other texts.
- Course Participants will have an opportunity to work with a range of resources and people in applied exercises.
- Course Participants will be expected to personally reflect on and respond to the course materials.
- Group presentations of debates and times of worship will reinforce learnings from lectures and workshops.

- Group presentations of online forum debates or Webinar debates and (times of worship) will reinforce learnings from lectures and workshops.

**SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS:**

**Each Unit requires one Task A (theoretical) and one Task B (practical) to be submitted:**

<b>Exploring Worship Unit 1</b>	<b>(W1)</b>
<b>Exploring Worship Unit 2</b>	<b>(W2)</b>
<b>Understanding Worship Unit 3</b>	<b>(W3)</b>
<b>Preparing for Worship Unit 4</b>	<b>(W4)</b>
<b>Preparing and Leading Worship Unit 5</b>	<b>(W5)</b>
<b>Leading Worship Unit 6</b>	<b>(W6)</b>

## **The Course allows participants to engage in MULTIPLE LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT:**

1. Those wishing to dip into all, or part, of this course in order to create or supplement group studies, etc. You are encouraged to use the materials, including assessment questions, in creative ways that provide opportunities for faith and discipleship growth.
2. Those wishing to use these materials to learn more about worship leadership but not seek formal accreditation. In order to deepen your learning experience, you are encouraged to work through the activities, readings, and reflections in the Units, and to discuss, and work through, Task A and Task B activities.
3. Those wishing to study, update, or refresh their understanding but not seeking formal accreditation – perhaps a Lay Preacher looking for some continuing education. In order to deepen your learning experience, you are encouraged to work through the activities, readings, and reflections in the Units, and to complete all the Task A activities.
4. Those wishing to explore the course for their own learning, or to meet the academic requirements for the Specified Ministry of Lay Preacher - i.e. the person seeking formal accreditation. You will need to work through the activities, readings, and reflections in the Units, and to complete all Task A and Task B activities.

## Course Learning Materials

*The course has no set text.*

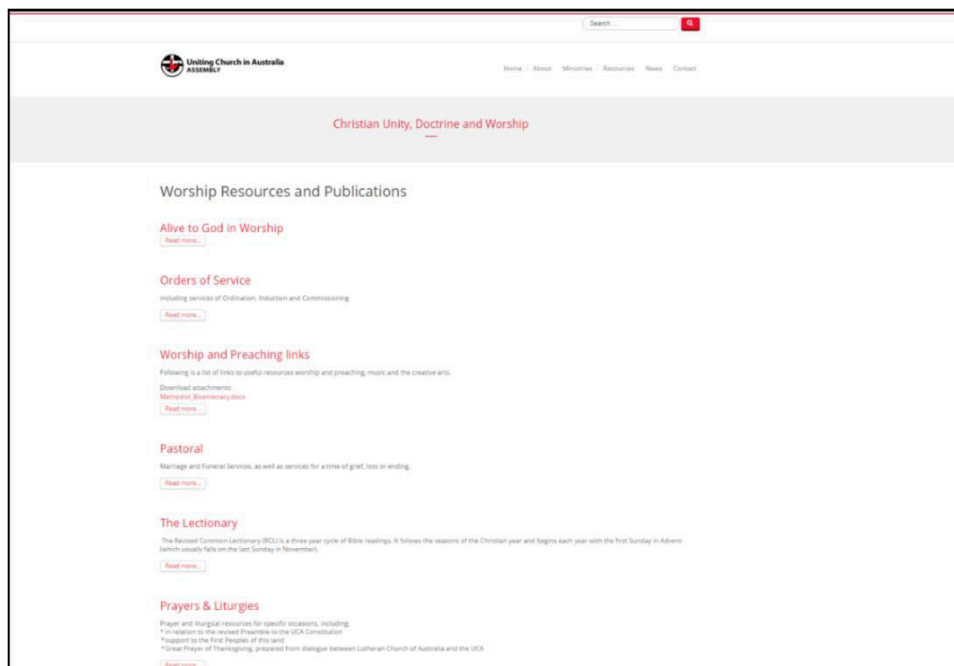
1. A key resource is **Uniting in Worship 2**, Uniting Church Press, Sydney, Second Printing 2010.



Access to a copy of this book is required. You may know a Minister with a copy you can borrow, or your church may have a copy that is available for loan. Please note an educational copy is provided solely for your use as you study this course.

If you are, or intend to be conducting worship and/or preaching regularly, you may consider purchasing a copy from MediaCom Education Inc [www.mediacom.org.au](http://www.mediacom.org.au)

2. The Uniting Church's **Assembly website on Worship** is another key resource for this course.



It may be accessed at <http://assembly.uca.org.au/cudw/worship-resources-and-publications>

**A suggested week by week study guide for 9 weeks:**

<b>Worship Modules and Units</b>	<b>Study Week</b>	<b>Assessment Guide</b>
<b>1. Exploring Worship 1</b>	Week 1 & 2	Task A Task B
<b>2. Exploring Worship 2</b>	Week 3	Task A Task B
<b>3. Understanding Worship</b>	Week 4 & 5	Task A Task B
<b>4. Preparing Worship</b>	Week 6	Task A Task B
<b>5. Preparing and Leading Worship</b>	Week 7 & 8	Task A Task B
<b>6. Leading Worship 2</b>	Week 9	Task A Task B



## COURSE UNITS

### **Unit 1: W1 Exploring Worship 1 -**

What is Worship?

Biblical warrant for worship

Patterns of worship in the early church

Uniting Church perspective

Communicating Effectively 1

### **Unit 2: W2 Exploring Worship 2 -**

Rhythm and flow in and between worship elements - the Dialogue of Worship and the narrative of Worship and how the elements link together

Worship in the Reformed and Evangelical tradition

Exploring the Lectionary and other approaches

### **Unit 3: W3 Understanding Worship -**

Theology of worship

Multi-sensory and multi-intelligence approaches to worship through images/media, music, dance, and their application to all ages and cultures

Uniting in Worship 2 (UIW2); "Ordered Liberty"; SLD 1/2/3 and Wisdom; UCA worship resources UIW and People's book

### **Unit 4: W4 Preparing Worship -**

Prayer-making for Public Worship

Constructing orders of worship/service appropriate for context and different settings

Resources for worship planning – UCA Assembly site and links. Choosing appropriate resources from within and outside of the UCA for worship.

## **Unit 5: W5 Preparing and Leading Worship**

Prayer as meditation

Ethics in worship leadership – privacy/manipulation, emotion, integrity

Linking worship to the Lectionary or theme for the day

Communicating Effectively 2

## **Unit 6: W6 Leading Worship 2**

UCA as an inclusive worshipping community

The Focus of the Liturgy

Self-Care and knowing yourself

After the Worship

## A Guide to Study:

**The Course Outline above is your key guide to studying each Unit in Worship and Preaching.**

A suggested approach:

1. Read the **relevant materials provided in the Unit** highlighting the key points made and making notes to assist you in understanding. This will assist with your assessments listed in the Course Tasks section of this Course Outline.
2. Some **readings** are provided to support your learning. These will provide a Uniting Church perspective and/or a different viewpoint to the main texts.
3. Become familiar with your **Course Completion and Course Assessment Tasks** (see “Course Tasks” section of this Course Outline) and what is required. Keep this in mind when you are working through your readings for each Unit. You may be required to reference these readings as part of your assessment.
4. If you are studying alone, seek support and advice for your study from other sources:-
  - a. Approach a local minister as a mentor/tutor for you – someone you can talk to about the course materials and any questions you may have.
  - b. There may be someone in your congregation that has completed a degree in Biblical studies or Theology. A recently accredited Lay Preacher in your congregation may also prove helpful.
  - c. Pair up with someone else undertaking the course as ‘study buddies’. Your Presbytery can help you link up to another course participant.
  - d. Join the [Dalton McCaughey Library](https://library.dmlibrary.org.au/). Staff are very helpful and will provide assistance. Contact them on <https://library.dmlibrary.org.au/>. Or join the theological library in your Synod.
5. You must reference your sources in those tasks that require this. Please refer to guidelines in the online section: **“Assessment Tasks Information”**.

You will be supported by your Presbytery and eLM in multiple ways. If you require any assistance, please initially email your Presbytery contact person, and we can go from there.

## ASSESSMENT TASKS

For each Unit there is a Task A (theoretical) and a Task B (practical)

Task	Nature of Task	Length	Due
<b>Task A</b>	Describe an aspect of Worship for a group in the church.	As indicated in the Task	At the end of each Unit using the upload page provided online
<b>Task B</b>	Prepare and lead worship	As indicated in the Task	W1 and W2 will be uploaded online. The delivery, uploading, and evaluation of other Task B assessments will be negotiated with the Course Facilitators

*To assist you with each of these tasks, a criteria sheet for each assessment has been developed. You will find these in the folder called "Criteria Sheets" in the Assessment Tasks Information. Please ensure that your Task takes these criteria into account when preparing your submissions. Please also pay attention to the referencing information provided.*

**When uploading your submission, please put your full name, and the assessment task in the file name. For example: *JoanBloggsW1TaskA***

**Your submissions also need to be either able to be opened in Microsoft Word, or in PDF format.**

**Grading is based on reaching Competency Achieved (C) or not yet achieved (NYC). Please negotiate with your assessors about resubmissions.**

Unit Number	Unit Title	Tasks Task A Task B
<b>W1</b>	<b>W1 Exploring Worship 1</b>	<p><b>A</b> You have been asked to speak to a young adult's group about worship. How would you define 'worship' in 250 words referring to the Unit materials and the readings you have covered?</p> <p><b>B</b> Choose one of the Services of the Lord's Day (SLD) from Uniting in Worship 2 and develop an order of service for your Sunday worship context.</p>
<b>W2</b>	<b>W2 Exploring Worship 2</b>	<p><b>A</b> Choose one of the 'core' or 'essential' elements of the SLD. In 250 words, explain to a new worship leader how this fits within the flow of Christian worship.</p> <p><b>B</b> Using the Revised Common Lectionary identify the season of the Christian Year the church is in at the time you are doing this assessment. Choose a group in the church to be the focus of this assessment eg. Ladies Fellowship, Men's Shed, Youth Group. (a) In two sentences, briefly state the purpose or function of that particular season as part of the</p>

		RCL in language appropriate for your chosen group. (b) Referring to one of the Services of Lord's Day, prepare essential/core prayers for worship that are suitably themed for that season, and in language appropriate for your chosen group.
<b>W3</b>	<b>W3 Understanding Worship</b>	<b>A</b> In 250 words (or the equivalent) show/describe/demonstrate to a worship team how "Ordered Liberty" allows for varieties of worship formats in the UCA. You may do this through words, verbal, dance, or artwork. <b>B</b> Prepare and lead a worship service of at least 20 minutes that involves multi-sensory and multi-intelligence elements. Alternatively, create a form of worship that would involve fresh expressions in your area.
<b>W4</b>	<b>W4 Preparing Worship 1</b>	<b>A</b> Peruse five worship websites provided in the Assembly's Worship Working Group area. If you were teaching another worship leader how to find worship material online, what criteria would you use to evaluate a website for its usefulness in your preparation for leading public worship in the UCA? (250 words) <b>B</b> Prepare and lead a Worship service for use in a community setting of at least 20 minutes.
<b>W5</b>	<b>W5 Preparing and Leading Worship</b>	<b>A</b> You have been asked by your Church Council/Minister to discuss the importance of ethical worship leadership with new worship leaders. Demonstrate your understanding of this topic by discussing the main points of your presentation in 250 words. <b>B</b> Prepare and lead worship with others based on a reading from one of the lectionaries (RCL or Narrative Lectionary). Also describe <u>how</u> you work together and how you <u>evaluate</u> your experience of working together.
<b>W6</b>	<b>W6 Leading Worship 2</b>	<b>A</b> In 250 words, prepare and deliver a short case study for your church council that identifies ways in which a more inclusive approach to worship could occur in your worshipping community. <b>B</b> Prepare and lead a Worship Service suitable for formal Sunday worship. As part of your preparation and leadership, focus on how you set up and utilise space.

### Important Note on Referencing:

In all tasks, where you use material from a book, website or other resource you must ensure that it is referenced in the required manner. For information how to do this in the "Assessment Tasks Information" area in the online course.

### Uploading and Naming your assessments:

When uploading your submission to the relevant assignment upload area in the online course site called "Assessment Tasks Information", please put your full name, and the assessment task in the file name. For example: **JoanBloggsW1TaskA** (this reads... **[YourName][W]orshipUnit[1]Task A**)

Make sure you upload your assessment to the correct area of each Unit.

Your submissions also need to be either able to be opened in Microsoft Word, or in PDF format.

## **Task A:**

**W1 Task A:** You have been asked to speak to a young adult's group about worship. How would you define 'worship' in 250 words referring to the Unit materials and the readings you have covered?

This short response, which may be in dot point form, will reflect the Uniting Church perspective as indicated in the readings for this Unit. Your response also needs to reflect appropriate language for this group.

**W2 Task A:** Choose one of the 'core' or 'essential' elements of the SLD. In 250 words, explain to a new worship leader how this fits within the flow of Christian worship.

You should identify the reasons why the Uniting Church places this element within this particular part of the flow of worship. Your response should also refer to the relevant readings and materials in the online Unit W2.

To assist you in your response, refer to Uniting in Worship 2 pages 148, 186 and the "Key Resources Used in this Course" module in the online course. Your response should be suitably referenced if you are quoting from readings, *UiW2* or other sources.

**W3 Task A:** In 250 words (or the equivalent) show/describe/demonstrate to a worship team how "Ordered Liberty" allows for varieties of worship formats in the UCA. You may do this through words, verbal, dance, or artwork.

Read 'Ordered Liberty' from Uniting in Worship 2 (page 13-14) and make reference to it in your response.

You should identify what 'ordered' means for planning and conducting worship, as well as reflecting on what 'liberty' also means for worship. You should conclude your response by stating how flexibility and imaginative approaches have their place in worship.

**W4 Task A:** Peruse five worship websites provided in the Assembly's Worship Working Group area. If you were teaching another worship leader how to find worship material online, what criteria would you use to evaluate a website for its usefulness in your preparation for leading public worship in the UCA? (250 words)

Choose the "[Worship and Preaching Links](#)" from the Assembly website. Choose a selection of Uniting Church and other church websites. Your evaluation should include; the overall suitability of the site's resources for use in UCA worship; appropriateness of language; where they might be included in the four parts of worship.

**W5 Task A:** You have been asked by your Church Council/Minister to discuss the importance of ethical worship leadership with new worship leaders. Demonstrate your understanding of this topic by discussing the main points of your presentation in 250 words.

Your response should consider the UCA's expectations and responsibilities (refer to the Lay Preacher Code of Ethics and Chapter 3 - "Ethics in Worship Leadership" in the study materials) worship leaders have towards the worshipping community and the impact of their behaviours on others, both positive and negative.

**W6 Task A:** In 250 words, prepare and deliver a short case study for your church council that identifies ways in which a more inclusive approach to worship could occur in your worshipping community.

Briefly describe the range of people who, in some way, are associated with your worshipping community and identify and discuss the inclusive practices that may be incorporated into worship.

## **Task B:**

**W1 Task B:** Choose one of the Services of the Lord's Day (SLD) from *Uniting in Worship 2* and develop an order of service for your Sunday worship context.

You are asked to develop an order of service using as a guide the Service of the Lord's Day (without Eucharist) in a context where you are likely to be asked to lead worship. Give particular attention to the context of the Congregation and provide a short explanation of this context (i.e. make it relevant to their life issues and situation). Ensure that the elements you choose for the service link to each other, with a theme flowing through it. The theme may be taken from the readings for the day, or the special occasion or event (e.g. Advent) for which the service is prepared.

Your order of service should clearly show all the resources you will use. Non-original resources (songs, prayers, images etc), including any adaptations you make, as well as any original material should be included in the order and in a bibliography at the end of the written materials. Please be careful to address all of the 'core/essential' elements of a Service of the Lord's Day in your order (check the notes in *Uniting in Worship 2* – Note 23, page 143 - for guidance).

Note: You are not required to construct or provide a sermon or provide resources for the Eucharist section which is not required.

**W2 Task B:** Using the Revised Common Lectionary identify the season of the Christian Year the church is in at the time you are doing this assessment. Choose a group in the church to be the focus of this assessment eg. Ladies Fellowship, Men's Shed, Youth Group. (a) In two sentences, briefly state the purpose or function of that particular season as part of the RCL in language appropriate for your chosen group. (b) Referring to one of the Services of Lord's Day, prepare essential/core prayers for worship that are suitably themed for that season, and in language appropriate for your chosen group.

Use your chosen SLD as the framework for the Order of Service for this assessment, to identify the prayers that are essential in each of the three parts of the SLD (do not use part 3 – The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper). Refer to the Lectionary, a copy of which can be viewed at the Assembly website, to choose a Season of the Christian Year. *UiW2* has many prayer resources that will provide ideas for prayers and the Worship and Preaching links on the Assembly website will also be helpful. The prayers you write must be your own original work and in language appropriate for your chosen group.

You must submit an Order of Service which includes all written material (prayers etc).

**W3 Task B:** Prepare and lead a worship service of at least 20 minutes that involves multi-sensory and multi-intelligence elements. Alternatively, create a form of worship that would involve fresh expressions in your area.

Prepare an order of service based on the format of the Service of the Lord's Day (SLD). If you are creating a form of worship that involves a fresh expression, indicate which basic sections of the SLD you are using. Each element of the order of service will be written. Visual material, songs, videos etc that you use may be provided by hyperlinks.

Do not provide material for Holy Communion or a sermon - neither is required.



You must plan and lead multi-sensory elements in prayer and indicate, on the Order of Service, where specific multiple intelligence approaches are used.

Worship and Preaching links on the Assembly website will also be helpful.

You must submit an Order of Service which includes all written material (prayers etc).

All material that is not your original work must be acknowledged in a bibliography to appropriately recognise another's work.

You will arrange with the course facilitators for you to deliver your worship service and be assessed according to the Criteria Sheet.

**W4 Task B:** Prepare and lead a Worship service for use in a community setting of at least 20 minutes.

Prepare an appropriate order of service. You may find the format of the Service of the Lord's Day (SLD) helpful. Each element of the order of service will be written. Visual material, songs, videos etc that you use may be provided by hyperlinks.

In brief notes at the beginning of the Order of Worship, describe the context of the community setting (e.g. Retirement Home Christmas service), the range of people attending (e.g. young families, grandparents, local councillors), and any specific considerations you needed to take into account (e.g. outdoors).

Do not provide material for Holy Communion or a sermon - neither is required.

You might consider elements of multi-sensory and multiple intelligence approaches in your Order of Service.

You must submit an Order of Service which includes all written material (prayers etc).

All material that is not your original work must be acknowledged in a bibliography to appropriately recognise another's work.

You will arrange with the course facilitators for you to deliver your worship service and be assessed according to the Criteria Sheet.

**W5 Task B:** Prepare and lead worship with others based on a reading from one of the lectionaries (RCL or Narrative Lectionary). Also describe how you work together and how you evaluate your experience of working together.

This can be a service in your local congregation, or a service in another congregation.

You must submit an Order of Service which includes all written material (prayers etc).

Describe the process of choosing which reading you are going to use, and how you work together as a group to prepare and lead the service. Spend some time evaluating the service together, and then describe the process you used to evaluate the service and your experience of working together. (No more than one A4 page in total for this section.)

Worship and Preaching links on the Assembly website will also be helpful for ideas.

All material that is not your original work must be acknowledged in a bibliography to appropriately recognise another's work.

You will arrange with the course facilitators for you to deliver your service and be assessed according to the Criteria Sheet.

**W6 Task B:** Prepare and lead a Worship Service suitable for formal Sunday worship. As part of your preparation and leadership, focus on how you set up and utilise space.

This can be a service in your local congregation, or a service in another congregation.

Prepare an order of service based on the format of the Service of the Lord's Day (SLD). Each element of the order of service will be written. Visual material, songs, videos etc that you use may be provided by hyperlinks. As part of your preparation and leadership, pay particular attention to how you set up and utilise space.

Do not provide material for Holy Communion or a sermon - neither is required.

You might consider elements of multi-sensory and multiple intelligence approaches in your service.

Worship and Preaching links on the Assembly website will also be helpful.

You must submit an Order of Service which includes all written material (prayers etc). You must also include a short discussion (less than 200 words) on how you have utilised the worship space and connected it to the theme/s for the day.

All material that is not your original work must be acknowledged in a bibliography to appropriately recognise another's work.

You will arrange with the course facilitators for you to deliver your worship service and be assessed according to the Criteria Sheet.

# ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

## SUBMISSION OF TASKS

All Learning Tasks are to be submitted by uploading to the online course or by email (if emailing your assessment, please confirm this with your course facilitators) in accordance with the timetable indicated in the Course Outline and online.

Make sure you read the relevant Criteria Sheet (in the section “Assessment Tasks and Learning Activities Information”) for each Assessment Task BEFORE beginning the Task, so you know what is expected of your submission.

**When uploading your submission, please put your full name, and the assessment task name in the file name. For example: *JoanBloggsW1TaskA***

**Your submissions also need to be either able to be opened in Microsoft Word, or in PDF format.  
Grading is based on reaching Competency Achieved (C) or not yet achieved (NC).**

**Please negotiate with your assessors about resubmission of Tasks.**

**Course participants are advised to keep a copy of all work submitted.**

This is an important safeguard in case your submission somehow goes astray.

(It is also a good idea to make regular backups of work being done on a computer at each stage of your work – saves many headaches)

## LATE WORK and EXTENSIONS

We will certainly try to be flexible and generous about getting work in on time, but this is part of the discipline that students need to develop – this Course must be completed by the end of **your agreed time**.

Extensions on submission of Tasks will be considered where reason is provided. But it is essential that your Course Facilitator/s be contacted well in advance of the due date to allow planning for ongoing assessment of the task.

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using another person's work without acknowledging it either by referencing the author in your writing or in your bibliography. This is unacceptable and does not honour the work another person, such as an author of a book, article or website, has done to provide information that you choose to use. Students who plagiarise another's work will be asked to re-submit their tasks in an appropriate form.

## INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The Uniting Church in Australia has a policy on inclusive, or careful language.

The following guidelines have been provided to assist the process of using inclusive language. You will be expected to follow these guidelines in written and spoken presentations in this unit.

### 1. The Spoken Word

Language is a means of communication and needs to convey meaning in ways which are intelligible and acceptable to the listener. People will not hear the message if they feel excluded, patronised, denigrated or stereotyped by the language used. Such feelings are a barrier to effective communication.

Whether in conversation or in more formal situations, we can be better communicators if we are more aware of our audience and more intentional in avoiding the use of language which may cause offence. Non-discriminatory language is considerate. It values and includes all people.

### 2. Written Expression

It is hard to change the habits of a lifetime, but constant self-criticism can bring about a more careful use of language. The generic use of the word "man" and male pronouns makes women invisible and may give the impression they are inferior. Such impressions can usually be avoided by rephrasing, using inclusive terms, or using both feminine and masculine terms. In rephrasing, be careful to avoid grammatical errors. Apart from syntax, the general context should be considered, to ensure that men and women are equally represented, where appropriate. Quotations from texts using language which is sexist or otherwise exclusive should be acknowledged as such or paraphrased; for example, "All men [sic] are loved by God", or "All [people] are loved by God".

### 3. Liturgy

#### (a) Bible Reading

Choose a translation (such as the NRSV) which best expresses the meaning of the original text. Where there is a cultural bias, a brief explanation which sets the reading in its historical context should be given. Inadequate affirmation of women and minority groups in the lectionary may be acknowledged and compensated for in other parts of worship.

#### (b) Hymns and Songs

The "Australian Hymn Book" has some limitations in its language. "New Journeys Song Book" and "Sing Alleluia" are more sensitive. The updated edition of the Australian Hymn Book "Together in Song" pays particular attention to careful language. Various other sources may be used. Copyright considerations limit alterations to words, apart from minor ones announced orally. Often this is all that is needed to make a significant impact.

#### (c) Prayers

The language and content of public prayers provide an excellent opportunity to emphasise the inclusiveness of our faith and the richness of the imagery by which God may be known, understood and worshipped.

#### **4. References to God**

The social and historical context in which the Bible was written and translated colours its meaning and has produced a traditional emphasis on the masculine imagery of God. This imagery has been perpetuated by much of the theological language of the past.

Exclusively feminine images of God may be appropriate in certain situations but can be just as offensive as exclusively masculine images. Inclusiveness is not satisfactorily achieved by making God impersonal. Combining or alternating feminine, masculine and inclusive images can more nearly express the reality of our relationship with God. By the use of appropriate language people can be helped to recognise that God is personal but beyond our categories of male and female.

The historical Jesus was male, and it is appropriate to refer to him as such. But the redemptive role of Christ is not associated with his masculinity and should be expressed in terms which emphasise his humanity.

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