TRAINING WORSHIP LEADERS
Junko is a gifted singer. She also loves to sing praise songs. So her small group leader asked Junko to use her talents and gifts by becoming the worship leader for their small group. However, Junko has struggled in this role. She tends to wait until the last minute to plan for worship and sometimes she does not plan at all. Junko says she does this because she wants to let the Holy Spirit lead the group’s worship. But some of the other small group members have come to the small group leader to complain. “We do feel like we are really worshipping,” they say. “Can you help Junko?” The small group leader has tried to talk with Junko, but she becomes defensive and refuses to talk about the situation. Junko also seems to be struggling spiritually. She says that she seldom prays and reads the Bible by herself.

If you were Junko’s small group leader, what would you do to encourage her?

When a small group meets for worship, what they experience together will reflect what they are experiencing individually everyday. If each person is worshiping God everyday, then they will also worship God together when they meet as a small group. If individuals are not worshiping God daily, they may not experience true worship when they meet with their small group.

Actually, the spiritual condition of small group members constantly changes. At any given time, some will be experiencing worship in their everyday lives and others will not. The small group worship provides the opportunity for those who are walking closely with Jesus and worshiping Him daily to encourage those who are not.

It is not enough for small group worship leaders, like Junko, to be talented in the area of singing. It is also not enough for them to be good at planning and leading a worship time for their small group. Unless small group leaders are walking closely with Jesus and worshiping Him everyday, they will not be effective in leading small group worship.

Because of this, it is essential that training for small group worship leaders begins on the spiritual level. Small group worship leaders must be trained to walk closely with Jesus, to worship Him daily and to glorify Him. This will provide the spiritual foundation for them to become effective worship leaders.

Read Romans 12:1-2

According to Romans 12:1-2, what is “spiritual worship?”

Spiritual worship is offering ourselves as “living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1). God expects us to give ourselves completely to Him for the purpose of
doing His will. This is expression of our love for God. As Jesus commanded us, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30)

True spiritual worship means living for God rather than living for self. This kind of true worship cannot occur only one or two hours a week when Christians gather for worship. It should happen 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The people you are training to become worship leaders will not develop this kind of lifestyle by only hearing you talk about it. They will only understand how to apply this principle to their everyday lives when they SEE you living as a sacrifice that is “holy and pleasing to God.”

What is preventing you from becoming a “living sacrifice” who will be an example to the people you are trying to train?

According to Romans 12:1-2, there are three things that you must do in order to become a “living sacrifice.”

1. Set yourself apart for God. According to Romans 12:1, you should be “holy and pleasing to God.” In order to accomplish this, the top priority in your life must become doing what pleases God. This is possible when your personal relationship with God is based on love.

A relationship based on love is very different from a relationship based on obligation. When a relationship is based on obligation, you will only do what is necessary to meet the requirements of the relationship—no more and no less. When a relationship is based on love you will do everything possible to show your love for the other person. In this case, you will do everything possible to show your love for God. Your motivation for doing this should be that God has done everything possible to show His love for you. Because of God’s love, He has given His own precious Son so that you can have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

In practical terms, this means that in every situation you should ask yourself, “What should I do to please God?” Then act on the basis of the answer to this question.

Many times this question will be simple to answer. But sometimes it may difficult to understand what you should do to please God in a situation. In that case, you may need to take some extra time to determine God’s will. You may need to pray, read the Bible and ask for advice from other mature Christians. More information on the how to find God’s will can be found in the unit Hearing God’s Voice.

2. Set yourself apart from the world. As Romans 12:2 states, “Do not conform any
You will become like what you think about. If you only think about money or material things or sex, these things will become most important to you. If you always think about the opinions of other people, you will live to please other people rather than living for God. If you are going to live in a way that pleases God, then you will have to stop thinking only about these worldly things. Instead, you will need to "renew your mind" (Romans 12:2) by thinking about things that please God. As Philippians 4:8 tells us,

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—think about such things."

In order to think in this way, you need to focus your attention those things that will influence you to think and act in a way that glorifies God. For example, read the Bible and Christian books that will encourage you to grow spiritually. Do not read books that encourage thoughts and acts that do not please God. This includes books that advocate other religions, secularism and pornography. Listen to Christian music rather than secular music. Watch Christian movies and videos rather than secular movies and videos. Do everything possible to focus your thinking and affections on God.

3. Focus on God’s will. The conclusion of Romans 12:2 is that if we focus our thinking on God and His will the result is that we will be able to understand and do God’s will. “Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” It is by understanding and doing God’s will that you glorify Him. In this way, your life will become a “living sacrifice” to God.

When those who are you training see your example of living sacrificially for God, they may try to follow your example. This will give you the opportunity to explain the principles, which are taught in this lesson, that are the basis for a life of spiritual worship. As a result of hearing this teaching, watching your example, and trying to do what they see you doing, the people you are training will become people whose way of life glorifies God.

Application
1. Take some time for prayer and reflection. Ask God to help you see yourself as you really are. Reflect on these four questions:
   (1) Do I really love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength?
   (2) Is every area of my life set apart for God?
   (3) Is every area of my life set apart from the world?
   (4) Am I completely committed to knowing and doing God’s will?
2. Confess your sins to God. Ask God to forgive you of areas of your life that were not set apart for Him. Make a fresh commitment to know and do God’s will.
3. Prepare a lesson based on this session and what you have learned from your time of prayer and reflection. The lesson should conclude with a time of prayer and reflection for the people you are training.
4. Teach the lesson that you have prepared to the people you are training. It is important that you include the time of prayer and reflection so that they can begin to apply these principles to their own lives.

5. Conclude the training time with a time of sharing impressions and testimonies. Ask participants to share with the group what God has taught them through this experience. Also, ask them how they plan to apply what God has taught them to their everyday lives.
Session two emphasized the development of small group worship leaders. A strong spiritual foundation is the most important aspect in the training of worship leaders. Once they are growing spiritually, however, it is also essential that you provide them with the practical training that they need for planning and leading small group worship.

Small group worship has the same goal as the Christian life: to glorify God. When people come into the small group they should be drawn to worship Him because they experience His glory.

Read Ephesians 5:19-21

Ephesians 5:19-21 describes worship in which participants experience God’s glory. This kind of worship has five characteristics.

1. Worship is offered to God. This passage speaks about “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs . . . to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). However, this can be expanded to say that every act of worship is to be directed towards God. The songs, testimonies, prayers, fellowship and Bible teaching should all have as their purpose to glorify God. While worship benefits the human participants, it is not really for us. In worship, all of the human participants are the actors and God alone is the audience. Everyone worships together before God.

Worship is for God.

2. Worship is from the heart. True worship is neither an obligation nor a ritual. True worship is an act of love towards the God who loves us. Just as we are to love God “with all our hearts,” we are also to worship God “with all our hearts.”

3. Worship influences everything. Those who worship God in this way “always give thanks to God the Father for everything” (Ephesians 5:20). When a small group experiences God’s glory in their worship, they begin to see God’s hand at work in every part of their lives. As they become acquainted with how God is at work in their lives, they learn to give thanks to God for every circumstance in their lives (Philippians 4:12). They are able to do this because they “know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

4. Worship is “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20). Christian worship is worship of Jesus Christ as God. This makes Christian worship distinct from the worship of other religions. This needs to be clear to everyone who participates in the worship. Otherwise some participants will become confused about which god you are worshiping! Prayers, praise songs, and testimonies should all glorify Jesus as Lord, God and Savior. Even creation should be explained in relationship to Jesus.
5. Worship should result in mutual submission to one another. True worship will change the way people act towards one another. Just as Jesus came to earth as a servant, those who worship Jesus will imitate Him by serving other people. The practical result will be acts of service done for other people, both inside and outside the group. No matter how exciting and refreshing worship may cause the participants to feel, until this fifth point occurs worship has not yet reached its purpose: that God will be glorified in every part of people’s lives.

In order to train leaders to develop this kind of small group worship, you will need to emphasize the following points in training:
1. The use of short testimonies as a means to praise God
2. The selection of songs and Scriptures that are appropriate for their small group
3. The basic elements of prayer and how these fit into small group worship
   (for more information on prayer see the units Basic Prayer and Praying for Other People)

The basic materials that you need to use to train small group worship leaders are found in two units, A Life of Worship and Leading Small Group Worship. If you are not familiar with these materials, you need to study these units now before trying to use them to train someone else. Your study of these units should include the application. The best way to train other people to lead worship is by your own example.

TRAINING PROCESS FOR WORSHIP LEADERS
As with other areas of discipleship and ministry training, training for worship leaders should include a combination of modeling and practical application. An example of what this process should look like is described below. Use this description as a model to help you develop a training process that meets the needs of your own worship leaders. Remember, they need to both SEE IT and DO IT before their training is complete!
1. Have small group worship with those you are training. You should lead the worship with the trainees as participants.
2. Discuss what took place during the small group worship with the participants. Use the materials from the Leading Small Group Worship unit, session one as a guide for this discussion. Try to make certain that they understand why each part of the small group worship is important.
3. Plan a small group worship together with trainees taking responsibility for the various parts of the worship time. For example, one may be responsible for fellowship, one for prayer, one for Bible study, one for praise, etc.
4. Do the small group worship time that you have planned together.
5. Discuss what happened during the small group worship time and answer the trainees’ questions about small group worship.
6. Repeat steps 3, 4 and 5. This time have the trainees take responsibility for
different areas of the small group worship than they were responsible for the first time. For example, the person who led praise may lead the Bible study. The person who led pray may lead the fellowship, etc.

7. Have each person plan and lead worship for their small groups. If two people are from the same small group, they may plan and lead the worship together.

8. Meet together after all of the trainees have had the opportunity to lead their small group worship time. Talk about what happened, what they learned, what mistakes they made, and what questions they may still have.

9. If trainees are comfortable leading their small group in worship they can begin to lead their groups in worship by themselves. In this case, they may occasionally return to you for encouragement and advice. If a trainee is NOT comfortable repeat steps 7-8 two or three times until they are necessary. This should be decided on a case by case basis rather than the whole group continuing to repeat the training.

By meeting together with those you are training once per week, this whole training process can be completed in about one month. If you meet once every other week, the process will require about two months. If at all possible, you should try to meet for training at least once every two weeks. Only once per month is too seldom for people to really learn and apply what is being taught.

Application
1. Study A Life of Worship and Leading Small Group Worship units if you have not done so already.
2. Lead a group of potential small group worship leaders through the process described in session two.
3. Talk with your encourager about what God taught you through this experience.

Reflection
1. What has God taught you about training small group worship leaders?
2. What questions do you still have about training small group worship leaders?
3. What is your plan to share with someone else what you have learned through this unit?
4. Share with your encourager or accountability group about what God has taught you through this unit?