



Worship Service Guide for
Big Sky Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
January 2010

Dear Lay Leader,

As a lay-led ministry, we rely on members, friends and others to volunteer to lead a spiritual worship service every Sunday from September through May. These guidelines are intended to assist you in preparing and leading a meaningful worship service. If you've never led a service before, please read these guidelines, then contact Bill to discuss scheduling and to have any additional questions answered.

Thanks for considering or agreeing to lead a Worship Service for the Big Sky Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (BSUUF).

Worship Committee

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Tools to help you prepare and lead your worship service

We've provided this guide and a worship service template. Please follow these guidelines and use the template. They describe components of the BSUUF worship service that members and friends have grown to expect and love as part of their Sunday ritual. The Worship Committee welcomes feedback about your lay leadership experience and this worship service guide.

Pre-Sunday Preparation

Planning your worship service can begin weeks or even months before the service. But a month before your service is a good target to have preparation under way.

1) Theme - Spend time identifying and focusing on the theme of your service. As soon as you have a title and short description of your service/sermon, notify the Worship Committee so they can notify the newsletter/website editor and the preceding week's presenter, or notify those people yourself. Remember that the newsletter attempts to give a tentative service topic for each Sunday of the upcoming month. Don't worry if you're still a little tentative; you are not bound to a tentative topic or title at this time.

2) Assistance - Determine if you would like assistance planning and presenting the Sunday Service. A member of the Worship Committee is assigned as your liaison, and will help or advise you as much as you wish, including helping you put on the service. Of course, you may select a co-presenter who is not a member of the Worship Committee if you wish.

The Welcoming Committee is responsible for name tags, sign-in sheets, literature and greeting duties. They also organize the potluck for the first Sunday of each month. They schedule greeters to welcome people to church, handing out name tags, and signing in visitors. This is not something you need to do.

3) Gather Materials - With a general plan in mind, locate readings, meditations, music, a sermon, and other elements that you feel will enrich your theme. Here are some resources to assist you: BSUUF lending library – located in a small office at the top of the back stairs. It includes tapes of sermons, UUA books, journals, inspirational readings.

- BSUUF website: <http://www.bigskyuu.org> -- has an archive of past services from 2006 and sermons written or given by our lay leaders, and links to other resources.
- UUA website -- <http://www.uua.org/> -- has a host of material intended for lay leaders:
- <http://www.uua.org/worshipweb/> (a resource library, amazing search function for sermons, etc.)
- Discuss ideas w/ members of worship committee or other BSUUF members.
- BSUUF is a member of the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) which has numerous materials useful to lay leaders. If you're interested in accessing this password-protected site, send an email to [Bill Kronholm](mailto:Bill.Kronholm) with your request.

4) Music for the Service – A separate advisory is posted on the website with guidance on music. In brief, however, begin by choosing two hymns that fit with your theme. They do not have to be from the hymn book, but that should be your first choice for reference.

Once you have made your hymn selections – aim for at least two weeks before your service -- contact Music Director [Ginny Nicolucci](#) at 443-1397 home, 441-1044 work. She will look at your hymn selections for singability. If it is not singable, she will assist you in choosing a different hymn. It may also be that she has other music in her collection – UU music not in the hymnal – that would be even more relevant to your topic, which she will suggest to you. The goal is to work together to make your service the best it can be.

She also will select special music to be performed during the offertory. Once a month, the choir performs. Or, it may be that special musicians or soloists are brought in. Ginny will make every effort to make the special music composition relevant to your topic. to arrange music for your service,

5) Story for all Ages - Include a children's reading or youth component to your service – called a Story for All Ages in the Order of Service. Online UUA resources can help find a relevant children's story, as can the children's librarians at the Lewis and Clark County Library. Some members of our congregation also are good resources and willing to help in selection and presentation of the children's story. They include Becky Warren, Peg Hunter and Katie Campbell. You may elect to substitute an appropriate activity some kind of mini-activity for the kids, or other creative options

6) Chalice Table: Plan for any special objects you may want to bring for the chalice table as part of your Sunday worship service. (Flowers, candles, pictures, etc.)

7) Practice reading your message aloud. Read through the entire sermon at a slow and measured pace. One of the most common problems of service presenters is reading too quickly. Deliberately try to read slowly, pausing a bit after each sentence. Time yourself. **The sermon itself should last about 20 minutes.** Plan on a 55 minute service beginning at 11:35 (after intros).

8) Order of Service - Please print out and fold 50 copies of the order of service – template is available for download. Staples is open on Sunday morning at 10 a.m. and makes copies for 8 cents per page (16 cents front and back). If you would like to be reimbursed for the cost of making copies, save your receipt and submit to our Treasurer.

9) Sunday Morning Preparation:

- Plan to arrive at the church at 11:00 a.m. along with your co-leader. The greeter will be there to put out the nametag board, sandwich board on the sidewalk and prepare to greet people at the door.
- Find worship materials in the Plymouth sanctuary behind the internal wall on the north side of the altar area, and in Room 7 in the Plymouth Sunday school wing.
- Display BSUUF banner in the altar area.
- The sound system should still be turned on from the Plymouth service. Get the hand-held wireless microphone for announcements, joys/concerns and reflections, and the lapel microphone for the children's story presenter.

The Plymouth minister frequently leaves the lapel mike on the pew nearest the entry.

- Get out chimes and place on the speaker's lectern to mark certain moments – worship service beginning, end of Greet Your Neighbors, beginning and end of moment of silence.
 - Set up chalice table w/ cloth, collection plates, chalice w/ candle and matches, flowers or sermon-related item if you wish
- If you have not already done so, solicit people to light and extinguish the chalice and collect the offering

10) During service:

- A board member or other member will welcome the fellowship and introduce you. They will read the opening statement about Helena UUs. This person could also remind people to silence their cell phones.
- It's important to honor the time – service begins at 11:35 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m.
- If the people need more time to reflect on the sermon, encourage the continued discussion during the Coffee Hour or Potluck after the service.
- Invite visitors in general to introduce themselves, but do not single them out or put them on the spot. Some people prefer to try out churches anonymously.
- During announcements, point out those in the order of service without repeating them, and ask if there are any additional. Encourage people to go across the hall for Coffee or downstairs for Potluck.

11) Ending the service:

- We gather hands and form a circle and sing Shalom, or an alternative you have selected.
- At end of service, put away worship items. You will get help with this as people usually stay to help out. A board member is responsible for making sure all is in order before we leave and for locking the doors.

Shalom, and thanks again for your lay leadership.