

## Best Practices for Worship Leaders

You're here because you want to be, so you're conveying

- Gratitude for this moment
- Connection to BUF
  - compassion for those in attendance
  - trust that they want you to succeed
  - confidence that they can hear and learn today

Tone

- Use inclusive language, be careful with insider jargon
- Be careful with pronouns: you/we/they/I...everybody/nobody/many/most
  - and implications that BUFsters are homogenous in theology, race, class, and political party
- Informality and/or lack of preparation do not equal warmth

Technique

- Responsive Readings — pause, then read aloud with the congregation's part
- Eye contact — pick a couple of people who are with you, others will feel it
- Enunciation, pace — it may feel slow to be heard well, practice with someone
- Microphones — be prepared to hear yourself louder than you may wish
- Write more simply for something to be heard (compared to that which is read)
- Print in at least 16 point font with 1½ line-spacing
- Mark up text with pen or highlighter to make it easier to find your place
- Begin each paragraph with emphasis (use a mark to remind yourself)
- Memorize those parts of the service (such as transitions) that are two sentences or shorter.
- Memorize your first and last sentence (or more)
- Prepare an outline or script for any parts that are two minutes or longer.
- Say it like you mean it

Content

- Tell a/your story
  - use emotion and/or humor
- Explore deeper meaning, tie to UU principles
- Speak for yourself
- Acknowledge perspective of the audience, but don't over-qualify/apologize
- Say more about what you do believe than about what you don't believe
- Use a simple outline, be careful of tangents
- Know what you're talking about

What doesn't work

- Winging it
- Forced participation (invite rather than tell)
- Surprise/strangeness for its own sake

Ask yourself

- What are some specific fears that you have about speaking in this setting?
- What are some results of these fears? (getting quiet, mumbling, emotionally flat or absent)