



Suggestions for organizing a Social Action Worship Service

Put an announcement in the Sunday bulletin and newsletter announcing the proposed topic and meeting date for those interested in participating.

At the first meeting (please see below), and in consultation with those responsible for Sunday services, pick a Sunday several months away. Back up from that date and schedule at least one rehearsal the week before – a “dress rehearsal” that includes all participants and music. The order of service will need to be designed and printed (by the Wednesday before the service) and ushers identified so you might schedule these as well.

While you have everyone together, schedule at least four (4) meetings in addition to #5, the last rehearsal date.

1st Meeting: Get acquainted. Each person tells about her/himself and speaks to why the topic attracted them to the meeting. Share and distribute resources on the topic (UUA Study Action Issue packet, resource guides from local community-based organizations, etc). Homework is given to write the first response draft of feelings and experiences of the topic (see 2nd meeting). Consider letting your neighboring UU congregation know you’re doing this and invite them to the service. Schedule time and place of all future meetings

2nd Meeting: Each person reads aloud their written homework limited to five (5) minutes each. All writing is in first person. Allow time for constructive feedback, clarifications, and mutual regard following each presentation. The homework is to revise personal statements keeping within assigned timeframe.

(Over)

3rd Meeting: Revised statements are read aloud again. Discussion begins on what the experience of worship service might look like for the congregation. What mood? What music? Readings? *Hints:* Get advised about the standard order of Sunday services. What pieces are so dear that to abandon them would be too disruptive to the congregation? Beware of over complication; less is more. Organize a clear beginning, middle, and ending.

4th Meeting: Statements are finalized, shared, and no longer than 4-5 minutes each; 20 minutes total. The group then decides the best sequence and discusses the issue of intended audience response. Do you want space for reflection time in the service? Do you intend to encourage them to take some specific action in cooperation with local allies? If so, make follow-up materials available after the service.

5th Meeting: This is a full rehearsal with final planning tasks. Statements are read in agreed upon order of presentation. People volunteer for tasks supporting the service (design and print the order of service, ushers, organize chairs, etc).