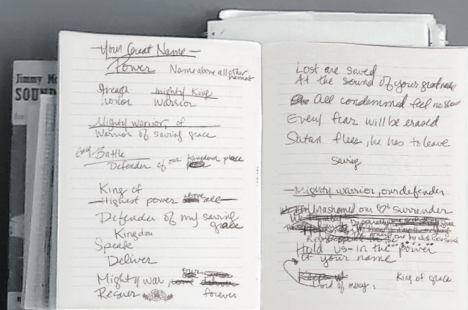


Krissy Nordhoff

Writing Worship



How to Craft Heartfelt
Songs for the Church

Small Group Leader's Guide

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WRITING WORSHIP SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

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Writing Worship

Small Group Leader's Guide

The purpose of this leader's guide is to equip the local church worship leader with a resource he or she can use with a worship team to create and cultivate a songwriting culture in their church. Walking through this book as a team will help establish a healthy foundation, as well as the right expectations, and will give the community a common understanding, language, and heart as it explores writing songs together.

Session 1

INTRODUCTION: Join Me at the Table CHAPTER 1: Songwriting Is a Journey

Please read these chapters before spending time together as a group.

WORSHIP

As you begin your time, take a few moments to worship together. For each session, I'll recommend a song and provide you with a link to my YouTube playlist (www.krissynordhoff.com/playlist), where the song will be listed.

My song suggestion: "See You Again." You can play this live or access the video and watch it together.

PRAY

Pray for your time together.

INTRODUCTION

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

We first learned that there is room for all of us at this table, and that there is no need for perfection or comparison. We heard about different "chairs" around this table, chairs that represent various

types and stages of songwriters, from the curious to the seasoned. No matter which kind of songwriter you are, please know there is room for you, and the community we are creating here is meant to be safe.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- What is your experience with songwriting?
- What are you looking forward to in this journey?
- What are your fears?

CHAPTER 1: Songwriting Is a Journey

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

Krissy shared the story of her songwriting journey from the early stages to where she is now. Persevering through the hard times brought breakthroughs she would never have seen otherwise, both in her career and in her mentoring. In fact, she believes part of the reason for her experiences is to encourage you!

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- What part of Krissy's story inspired or encouraged you?

- Is there anything about her story that you have experienced as well? How was your experience similar to and different from hers?
- Tell us about your songwriting journey up to now.

WRAP UP

Thank you for sharing your personal stories with us! As we continue, it will be beautiful to see how God weaves our stories together.

REMINDERS

Make sure you have all the resources you need moving forward: a Bible, a journal, your instrument (if you play one), and internet access. For the next session, read chapters 2 and 3.

Session 2

CHAPTER 2: The Need for New

CHAPTER 3: Worship Songs Begin in the Heart

Please read these chapters before spending time together as a group.

WORSHIP

As you begin your time, take a few moments to worship together. My song suggestion: “Your Great Name.” You can play this live or watch the video together (www.krissynordhoff.com/playlist).

PRAY

Pray for your time together.

CHAPTER 2: The Need for New

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

Many churches desire to write their own worship songs. There is always a need for more new songs because they (see p. 32):

- bring fresh praise and revelation,
- speak a dialect,
- bring unity to the church,
- minister to the congregation, and
- prepare congregations for the future.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- In what ways do you think new songs would benefit your church?
- What is the dialect of your church—important words, words you can't use, themes, or ways God is working?
- What situation is your church experiencing that you could sing about?

CHAPTER 3: Worship Songs Begin in the Heart

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

While styles, instrumentation, and trends change, what defines a song as “worship” doesn't change. It's the focus of the song. Many worship songs contain similar characteristics (see p. 41). They:

- are true and biblically accurate,
- speak with a community voice,
- feature simple melody and lyrics,
- remain close to an octave in range,
- contain elements familiar to the church (hymns),
- end with resolution and redemption,
- show a greater picture,
- tell the story of the gospel,
- include a call to respond, and
- provide reminders of what's to come.

Writing worship songs does not require a perfect heart, but it does require an honest heart. The most authentic worship songs originate at the intersection of honesty, love, discipline, and sacrifice (see p. 42). As we learned through the story of “Your Great Name,” although the sacrifice sometimes is great, the blessings can be much greater.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- What characteristics of worship songs stood out to you?
- Personally, what characteristics speak most to your spirit?
- Which characteristics do you feel are most important to incorporate as you write?
- Is your heart in the center of the intersection of honesty, love, discipline, and sacrifice—the birthplace of worship songs?
- What do you do to keep it there?

WRAP UP

Thank you for sharing your heart and perspective with us. In the next session, we will learn about another way to keep our hearts centered.

REMINDERS

For the next session, read chapters 4 and 5.

Session 3

CHAPTER 4: Staying in the Crossroads

CHAPTER 5: Clearing Boulders

Please read these chapters before spending time together as a group.

WORSHIP

As you begin your time, take a few moments to worship together. My song suggestion: “When I Say Jesus.” You can play this live or watch the video together (www.krissynordhoff.com/playlist).

PRAY

Pray for your time together.

CHAPTER 4: Staying in the Crossroads

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

This chapter revealed two ways to keep our hearts in the center of the crossroads of honesty, love, discipline, and sacrifice:

Reading the Word of God. While many of us know this is good for us, we simply don't make time. The truth is that even five minutes a day makes a huge difference in our lives.

Two-way journaling. This practice provides an opportunity for us to talk to God and to listen for what He may want to say to us. David modeled this for us in the Psalms. We also saw how the Lord can speak and move in many creative ways, including through conversations, word trails, visions, and analogies.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- How often do you read the Word of God?
- How is your life different when you read God's Word compared to when you don't?
- Did you try two-way journaling? What worked for you, and what was challenging?

CHAPTER 5: Clearing Boulders

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

Many times the enemy blocks our paths by throwing boulders intended to trip us up or weigh us down. Although this may alarm us, we simply need to keep clearing them. How do we do that? Two-way journaling is helpful with this. We identify the boulder (unforgiveness, fear, etc.), confess our part to the Lord, repent, and ask for His help to clear it. It's good to repeat this process regularly.

Knowing your identity also helps with keeping roads clear. The Word tells us our identity consists of two parts: who we are in Christ and who we are in the body (see p. 75). The two-way journaling exercise about water and buckets (see p. 76) may have helped you to focus on your identity.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- What boulders has the enemy used in your life to trip you up or weigh you down?
- How has Jesus helped you to clear them?
- When you did the two-way journaling exercise about identity, what did God say is your water? What is your bucket?

WRAP UP

I challenge all of us to continue regularly reading the Word and two-way journaling. Let's share with one another what the Lord is teaching us as we continue to journey deeper.

REMINDERS

For the next session, read chapters 6 and 7.

Session 4

CHAPTER 6: Understanding Your Songwriter Personality CHAPTER 7: Psalming

Please read these chapters before spending time together as a group.

WORSHIP

As you begin your time, take a few moments to worship together. My song suggestion: “Fighting for Us.” You can play this live or watch the video together (www.krissynordhoff.com/playlist).

CHAPTER 6: Understanding Your Songwriter Personality

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

We learned about the Songwriter Personality Test (see p. 82). This test helps identify our greatest songwriter skills and how we would best fit within a cowriting community. Writing alongside people with different strengths is key. The songwriter personality types include the following:

- Content
- Hearing/Prophetic
- Concept
- Structure

- Melody
- Producer/Track
- Chords/Arranging

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- What is your personality type?
- Was your result a surprise or what you expected?
- Who listened to the interview with a professional songwriter (on www.krissynordhoff.com/book) that corresponds to their songwriter personality type? What did you think?
- What types of writers will you be looking to cowrite with in the future?

CHAPTER 7: Psalming

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

Singing the Psalms will teach you more about worship than anything else. Over time, you will begin to notice elements such as:

- poetic devices,
- choruses,
- refrains, and
- patterns.

Psalming offers several benefits. You will begin to understand David's heart and learn techniques as you sing. Eventually you will

find evidence of them in your writing. Psalming also will give you great song ideas!

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- What writing technique stood out to you?
- If you tried psalming, did you enjoy it?
- What worked best, and what was challenging?

WRAP UP

It's amazing how clarity on who we are as songwriters can give us confidence and show us how our gift best fits into a cowriting situation. Let's continue this conversation as we move forward. Also, let's add psalming to our daily practice of spending time with the Lord. What an impact it will have on our hearts and our writing skills.

REMINDERS

For the next session, read chapters 8 and 9.

Session 5

CHAPTER 8: Song Mapping, Roots, and Resources

CHAPTER 9: Cowriting

Please read these chapters before spending time together as a group.

WORSHIP

As you begin your time, take a few moments to worship together. My song suggestion: “Back to Life.” You can play this live or watch the video together (www.krissynordhoff.com/playlist).

PRAY

Pray for your time together.

CHAPTER 8: Song Mapping, Roots, and Resources

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

We covered many songwriting devices which we called tools and roots. Like the mighty leaning oak in the poem shared in this chapter, much of the work we do will never be known or noticed. But doing the “dirty” work and using the tools does matter! The first tool we discussed, song mapping (see p. 113), organizes our thoughts on paper as we shape a song. Lyrical, musical, and impact tools (see

pp. 123–125) also add interest and depth to our writing. Focus on learning one tool at a time, and soon you will be using them without even thinking about it.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- How could song mapping help you organize your song ideas?
- If you tried song mapping, how did it go?
- Which lyrical, musical, or impact tools have you used?
- Did you start a song? If so, tell us about it.

CHAPTER 9: Cowriting

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

Cowriting is the musical expression of community. We learn so much when we combine our strengths and collaborate to write the songs we never could on our own. It's important to remember the songwriter personality types and who you would best pair with before you cowrite. Reading the advice for each songwriter type is a good idea before you meet, whether it's in person, via the internet or by email.

Before you start writing together, get to know each other a bit. Remember to communicate clearly and with both truth and love. Reference the cowriting tips and suggested ways to phrase feedback in a cowriting situation. If you have a good experience, nurture the relationship! If you didn't, don't take it personally. Keep going!

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- What are your fears about cowriting?
- If you've cowritten, what was your experience like?
- What advice will most help you as you approach cowriting in the future?

WRAP UP

As you are inspired with more and more song ideas, remember to incorporate the song map as well as lyrical, musical, and impact tools to shape your songs. Many times, walking through the process of songwriting with a companion adds strength and joy, so don't be shy about asking others to cowrite!

REMINDERS

For the final session, read chapters 10, 11, and 12.

Session 6

CHAPTER 10: Song Critiquing

CHAPTER 11: The Songs in Your Blood

CHAPTER 12: The Blessings

Please read these chapters before spending time together as a group.

WORSHIP

As you begin your time, take a few moments to worship together. My song suggestion: “Watch What He Will Do.” You can play this live or watch the video together (www.krissynordhoff.com/playlist).

PRAY

Pray for your time together.

CHAPTER 10: Song Critiquing

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

A large part of writing is rewriting. While it's easier to have someone else critique your songs, it's best for you to learn how to do that yourself. As you learn, you will eventually critique the song in real time, as it's being written. This will save you and your cowriters time in the long run. A great way to learn this skill is to print out the Song Critique Checklist (see p. 148), a collection of the many tools we've learned, and begin to compare its guidelines with what you

have written. Try to unemotionally go through your song and then decide on any changes that need to be made. Be sure to invite any cowriters into the process of rewriting.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- Did anyone use the Song Critique Checklist to rewrite a song?
- If so, what distractions did you remove? What additions did you make?
- What details have you found yourself noticing in other songs you hear?

CHAPTER 11: The Songs in Your Blood

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

Sometimes we think we know the purpose behind a song we've written, only to later discover a much bigger perspective on it. Krissy believed she wrote "Your Great Name" as a response to being healed of Lyme disease, but it turned out to be the song of her ancestors! We learned that we can't control what happens with a song; God does. We are just faithful in the crafting, and He blows the wind on the sail. We also learned the five purposes of worship songs (see p. 159) and how every one of them—not just the worldwide hits—is important in the kingdom.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and invite everyone to answer:

- What themes or topics do you feel are in your blood that you could write about?
- Which one of the purposes of worship songs reassured you most about your writing?
- Do you feel like you can trust God with your songs? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 12: The Blessings

Read the following aloud or discuss the topic in your own words:

Your voice is needed in God's kingdom. Know there is room for you! Take a few moments as we wrap up to read The Songwriter's Prayer and The Songwriter's Commission. Let God's purposes for you sink in deeply as we pray.

The Songwriter's Prayer

Lord, make ready the writers! Let them see You in detail, left completely awestruck. Let them accurately write from hearts of wonder. Let the songs carry Your Spirit, changing hearts and lives with even one line. Let them write from the joy and freedom You give, all the while keeping in mind and upholding the truth. Then, Lord, use these messages, these songs, to have an impact on not only our generation, but also on those to come. Above all else, may the songs be

a pure and fragrant offering to You, and bring only You glory. As we are blessed with song, may You be the most blessed by hearing them.

The Songwriter's Commission

Now go ... and keep your heart in the birthplace of worship, the crossroads of honesty, love, discipline, and sacrifice.

Now go ... and don't let the enemy trip you up with boulders; keep your path clear.

Now go ... and don't forget who you are and what you're called to do.

Now go ... and focus on your strengths and work to build the areas of weakness.

Now go ... and sing aloud the ancient songs, letting the Holy Spirit teach you as you sing.

Now go ... and be detailed in the process, and you will see great fruit.

Now go ... and remember that the true kingdom is built side by side.

Now go ... and be flexible, teachable, and open to more growth.

Now go ... and trust the Holy Spirit to be your wind.

Now go ... and write the songs in your blood.

Now go ... into all the earth. Into churches, hospitals, schools, and businesses. Into subways, planes, trains, and buses. Into villages, the countryside, towns, and cities.

Now go ... into every nation, to every people, every tribe, and every tongue.

Now go ... and tell of the good news. The forgiveness, the grace, the mercy, the joy. The comfort, the healing, the kindness, the peace through your song.

Now go ... from today until He calls you home. Don't stop ... just go!

WRAP UP

Thank you so much for being a part of this experience. God bless you all.

Krissy Nordhoff

NEXT STEPS

To continue learning, a course and a mentorship program are available on www.krissynordhoff.com.

The Writing Worship Course: This is a series of four videos in a worship team setting. It dives more deeply into the topics discussed in *Writing Worship*. It offers a great way for the individual to see the conversations of this book come to life, and in a worship team setting, will help to build a foundation for the worship songwriting culture of a church. Available at individual or group rates.

The Worship Songwriter Mentorship: This is an intensive nine-week course and includes working in small groups that are guided by a small group leader who was personally mentored by Krissy. An instructive platform for video teachings with Krissy is used, along with weekly video discussion calls with your small group and leader. Cowrites and other exercises are assigned and shared. Individuals who sign up will be placed in a group that meets at a time that is convenient for their schedule. Worship teams can sign up as a group. Becoming part of the mentorship community is a gateway to future writing days and writing trips. Available at group or individual rates.