



WORSHIP WITH TEENAGERS: ADOLESCENT SPIRITUALITY AND CONGREGATIONAL PRACTICE

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The question of how to incorporate young people into the worship life of the church is a vital one. Worship, after all, is an essential means of grace, a way in which God shapes us to be his people. And while worship can and does happen in the youth group, inviting young and old to gather together in worship can be particularly transformative.

In *Worship with Teenagers*, Mathis brings together the areas of youth ministry and worship ministry to explore the theology and practice of including adolescents in worship. The book is divided into three parts. In part one, Mathis explores 'cultural perspectives' on youth ministry and worship, exploring studies of teenage faith in America, a historical survey of young people and worship, and a discussion of the theological purpose or 'telos' for worship. In part two, Mathis offers a series of 'liturgical perspectives', exploring the role of Christian worship in the life of teenagers, the importance of 'adoptive worship' which embraces teens in the life of the church, and a discussion of how worship is expressed in different cultural and ecclesial contexts. The final part of the book turns to 'pastoral perspectives', seeking wisdom on

worship from philosophy, sociology and anthropology, as well as offering a 'guide to change' for congregations and a 'guide for formation' for youth group worship with teens. Two useful appendices include a 'letter to teenage worship leaders' and a 'worship planning toolbox'.

This is a great book for anyone thinking about helping teenagers to engage more deeply in worship. Mathis does a brilliant job in bridging academic discussion of worship among teens with practical suggestions of how churches can do better in this area, although some readers may prefer to skip to the later chapters which focus on the practice! While the discussion tends to be quite US-focused, Mathis' work can be easily adapted for a British context and contains some great insights, including his suggested 'ecology of worship for youth ministry' (chapter 9) which shows the many ways in which churches might help teens connect with God.

Reviewed by Dr Ed Mackenzie, Lecturer in Biblical Theology and Mission at Cliff College.