

*Faith and Art: A Creative Exploration*

**Boston AGO Convention**

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# Outline

## A. What is arts ministry?

We want to give our church songs not yet sung, images not yet imagined, words not yet forged into poems, dances not yet rehearsed in our muscles and bones, and all the other dazzling testimonies to the creative power of God at work here within the creation. We long to bring the warmth and disclosure of art to worship; to bring a joy beyond words to the celebration of the sacraments; to incarnate... the pain and sorrow of the reality of crucifixion; to proclaim a promise of resurrection that evokes hope from the whole being, not merely the intellect.<sup>1</sup>

Nancy Chinn

### 1. Arts

#### a. Fine arts

- Music and Dance
- Architecture/Visual Arts/Environment
- Literary Arts
  1. Literature
  2. Poetry
- Dramatic Arts
  1. Theatre
  2. Film

The purpose of the fine arts is to help us to see, to feel, and to appreciate the world in which we live. They are concerned, not with prosaic facts, but with the poetic joy of discovering beauty wherever it may be found. In the landscape, the sea, the sky, the human soul and many another source, the fine arts discover and picture for those of us who would otherwise be inarticulate, the love, the light, the beauty of God so richly incarnate in Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Cynthia Pearl Maus

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy Chinn, *Spaces for Spirit: Adorning the Church* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Cynthia Pearl Maus, *Christ and the Fine Arts* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1938), p. 2.

## 2. Human Creativity

- Cooking, gardening, woodworking, collecting, crafts
- Living creatively – or artistically, becoming a whole person

Living creatively is much more than artistic activity. It is living all of life in such a manner that we fulfill the potential of our humanity.<sup>3</sup>

Calvin Johansson

## 3. Ministry

1. Arts ministry as an independent ministry area and/or a ministry that impacts all other ministry areas

Ministry is not an eight-to-five job but primarily a way of life, which is for others to see and understand so that liberation can become a possibility.<sup>4</sup>

Henri Nouwen

## 4. Definition:

*Arts ministry is an attempt to help human beings incorporate beauty into their individual and corporate lives in an appropriate fashion. It fosters the creative and artistic dimension of the life of God's people, empowering them to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as they manifest the full meaning of their creation in the image of God (the Imago Dei).*

## B. Who is engaged in arts ministry?

1. Laypeople
2. Artists
3. Churches
4. Sacred arts organizations

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<sup>3</sup> Calvin M. Johansson, *Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Creative Ministry* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), p. xxiii.

## 5. Arts institutions

### C. When and where does arts ministry occur?

1. In the church vs. in the world
2. Worship vs. extra-liturgical

### D. How does arts ministry impact our lives?

1. Arts as a means of fostering a whole life
  - a. Left *and* right brain
  - b. Reason *and* Intuition
  - c. Mind *and* Emotion
  - d. Spirit *and* Body
2. Arts as a means of fostering understanding

There are ideas, insights and experiences which only sound can communicate, others only communicated by movement, others which only color and line can capture. This is why the arts offer insight into God, each other, and ourselves which can be offered in no other way.<sup>5</sup>

Judith Rock

3. Arts as part of the process of *discipleship* - rehabilitating our relationship to ourselves, our neighbors, our world, and God
4. Arts as a means of fostering spirituality
  - a. Arts as a school for human intuition

The influence of music and art on spirituality is becoming increasingly apparent. Church members, recognizing the spiritual implications of the arts, are overwhelmingly interested in them.<sup>6</sup>

Robert Wuthnow

5. Arts as a means of fostering social justice: re-imagining - allowing us to act on the basis of a new vision of the world around us
6. Arts as a means of fostering community
  - a. Crossing generational, cultural, denominational, theological, and disciplinary barriers

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<sup>5</sup> Judith Rock, quoted in Nena Bryans, *Full Circle: A Proposal to the Church for an Arts Ministry* (San Carlos, CA, Schuyler Institute for Worship and the Arts, 1988), p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *All in Sync: How Music and Art Are Revitalizing American Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), p. 134.

7. Arts as integral to liturgy
  - a. Ritual moments that enable us to experience transcendence

#### E. Case Studies

1. Cathedral Arts Project
2. Artist-in-Residence
3. Gardening
4. Fabric Art
5. Labyrinth
6. Concerts with a Cause
8. Art show/purchase pieces

#### F. Activities

1. Taizé dances
2. Art as *Midrash*: Ps. 42: 1-3, 11 - *Here* by Jennifer Armstrong

#### G. How does arts ministry happen?

1. Facilitator
  - a. Identifying gifts/interests: Questionnaire
  - b. Assembling
2. The Arts Committee
  - a. Functions
    1. Study
    2. Naming
    3. Focal point for programming
    4. Arts minister
3. Decisions
  - a. Culture of high art and/or popular culture
  - b. Fine arts and/or human creativity
  - c. Religious and/or simply artistic

#### H. Concluding Thoughts

The world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair. It is beauty, like truth, which brings joy to the heart of [people] and is that precious fruit which resists the wear and tear of time.... Remember that you are the guardians of beauty in the world.<sup>7</sup>

Paul VI

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<sup>7</sup> Paul VI, Second Vatican Council II, Closing Speeches and Messages (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/p6closin.htm>, accessed 6/13/2014).

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## Arts Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to provide a brief glimpse of the artistic tastes, background, and interests of the congregation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Age Group: Adult \_\_, High School \_\_, Junior High \_\_

### Visual Arts

1. Do you create visual art yourself? If so, please check the appropriate categories: (a) painting \_\_ (b) sculpture \_\_ (c) pottery \_\_ (d) photography \_\_ (e) fabric arts: quilting \_\_, needlepoint \_\_, embroidery \_\_, knitting \_\_, other fabric arts \_\_\_\_\_ (f) woodworking \_\_ (g) jewelry making \_\_ (h) stained glass \_\_, other visual art forms (specify):
2. Have you studied how to produce any of these visual art forms? Yes \_\_, No \_\_
  - a. If so, was it in: college \_\_ community \_\_ high school \_\_
3. Have you ever had an art history or appreciation course? Yes \_ No \_
  - a. If so, was it in: college \_\_, community \_\_, high school \_\_
4. Do you visit art museums: regularly \_\_ on occasion \_\_ never \_\_

### Literary and Dramatic Arts

1. Have you ever participated in a play? Yes \_\_ No \_\_
  - a. If so, was it in: college \_\_ community \_\_ high school \_\_ church \_\_
  - b. If so, in what capacity: act \_\_, costumes \_\_, set \_\_, lighting \_\_, directing \_\_, other:
2. Have you ever engaged in creative writing? Yes \_\_ No \_\_
  - If so, was it: poetry \_\_ plays \_\_ short stories \_\_ keeping a journal \_\_, other:
3. Do you attend plays: regularly \_\_ on occasion \_\_ never \_\_
4. Do you read: poetry \_\_ novels \_\_ science fiction \_\_, non-fiction \_\_ magazines \_\_ other:



5. Do you watch movies: regularly\_\_\_, on occasion \_\_\_\_, never \_\_\_\_
6. What type of movies do you most enjoy seeing:  
     art films\_\_\_ comedy\_\_\_ drama\_\_\_\_ action\_\_\_\_ horror\_\_\_\_  
     sci-fi\_\_\_\_, other:

## Music and Dance

1. Have you ever learned to play a musical instrument? Yes\_\_ No \_\_
  - a. What instrument did you learn to play\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What instrument do you currently play?\_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you ever sung in a choir? Yes\_\_ No\_\_
  - a. If so, what kind of choir? Church\_\_\_ Community\_\_\_  
     College\_\_\_ High School\_\_\_ Elementary School\_\_\_
  - b. Have you ever studied voice? Yes\_\_ No\_\_
3. During a worship service, can you sing an unfamiliar hymn correctly on the first or second verse simply by listening and reading the musical notation of the hymn? Yes\_\_ No\_\_
4. What style(s) of music do you prefer to listen to when you are at home or in the car? Please check only the styles which you listen to frequently: Rock\_\_\_ Folk\_\_\_ Classical\_\_\_ Country\_\_\_ Pop\_\_\_ Jazz\_\_\_ Other (please specify):
5. Do you attend concerts: regularly\_\_\_ on occasion\_\_\_ never\_\_\_
6. Have you ever taken a music appreciation, music history, or music theory course? Yes\_\_ No\_\_
  - a. If so, was it in: college\_\_\_ community\_\_\_ high school\_\_\_
7. How often do you dance: regularly\_\_\_ on occasion\_\_\_ never\_\_\_
8. Have you ever studied dance? Yes\_\_ No\_\_
9. Do you attend dance recitals: regularly\_\_\_ on occasion\_\_\_ never\_\_\_

### **Arts Ministry**

1. I might be interested in the following possible ministries: film/discussion series \_\_, concert series\_\_\_, visual art show\_\_\_, poetry ministry \_\_, drama ministry\_\_\_, dance ministry\_\_\_, bell choir\_\_\_, adult choir\_\_\_, youth choir\_\_\_, arts committee\_\_\_