

# Worship Innovation Cohorts 2025

*An invitation-only, intergenerational initiative in worship and the arts,  
made possible by funding from Lilly Endowment, Inc.*



**Samford University**  
Center for Worship and the Arts

# OVERVIEW

The teenagers in your church are gifted—in music, visual arts, communication, dance, poetry, theater, leadership, and so much more. Let's invest in them!

Do you want to empower their ministry, but don't know where to begin?

Consider partnering with The Center for Worship and the Arts at Samford University for the 2025 cycle of our Worship Innovation Cohorts.

Here's the heart of our cohort program in a nutshell: An intergenerational group, united by a common goal, working together toward an attainable project that strengthens their ministry—for the glory of God, for the good of the Church.

If you can assemble a small group of people, we will help you imagine the project and walk alongside you in reaching your goal.

1

**PROJECT**

*attainable*

4-12

**PEOPLE**

*intergenerational*

1

**YEAR**

*2025 (Jan-Dec)*

## FUNDING

**\$3,000**

to support the completion of your project

**\$3,600**

for your entire cohort to attend Animate 2025



# WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT?



## From the Cohort:

- A willingness to work on a project related to strengthening worship in your context. You don't need a "big idea" beforehand - we'll help!
- Five meetings with CWA—a mixture of on-site and online.
- Find ways to share your project with the big "C" Church - we'll help!
- Attend Animate 2025 and connect with other cohorts.

## From the Adult Cohort Leaders:

- Invest in young people who have a passion for worship and the arts.
- Coordinate meetings where cohort members can attend in-person.
- Communicate with students and parents the aims of the cohort.
- Support the completion of the project, with our help.

# WHAT DOES THE CWA OFFER?

- An extensive network of consultants and coaches.
- Project management to help your team meet their goals.
- A distribution method for resources your cohort may produce.
- \$3000 in funding to help you meet your goals.
  - *Can be used for paying consultants, purchasing equipment, renting a retreat center, etc. (must be tangible things that we at the Center can purchase/arrange for you).*
- \$3600 toward attending Animate 2025 .
  - *Can be used for expenses related to registration, travel, and/or meals.*
- Connection opportunities with other cohorts to share your projects.

# Cohort Timeline | '25

## Identify Your Team

1. Nov '24 - Jan '25: Identify your team. Meet with representatives from the Center for Worship and the Arts.

## Cast Vision for Project

2. Jan/Feb 2025: initial site visit with CWA Director. Discern worship-related project for cohort. Develop plan.

## Put in the Work

3. Year-Round | work on your project, interact with relevant consultants, and check in virtually with the CWA.

## Attend Animate as a Team

4. June 23-27, 2025: Experience Animate, grow in your skills, and meet with other cohorts to learn about their projects.

## Continued Work / Conclude

5. July '25-Dec '25: Continue the project. Schedule second site visit in Fall '25. Conclude by December '25 and evaluate next steps.



# WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

When pastors and mentors invest in the creative gifts of teenagers and empower them to lead, we know there's a stronger chance these students will remain connected to the Church in their adulthood. We want to come alongside you in empowering young people to lead the church of today.



## PROJECT EXAMPLES:

- Training liturgists (for scripture reading, public speaking)
- Writing original songs
- Empowering visual artists to lead
- Building a youth group band
- Incorporating drama and biblical storytelling into worship
- Thinking theologically about worship
- Developing a discipleship program for a worship tech team
- Creating custom tracks with Ableton Live
- Writing prayers and liturgies
- Producing a podcast about intergenerational worship

# ABOUT THE CENTER

## Mission:

Equipping congregations to engage intergenerational and artistic worship practices that glorify God, honor Christ, and join the transformative work of the Spirit in the world.

## Vision:

Through programs, research, and scholarship, we are creating a national platform for conversations about worship, the arts, and the relationship between youth ministry and worship ministry. While the CWA shares common goals with centers and institutes on campus, in the region, and around the United States, our work with congregations to bridge the gap between youth ministry and worship ministry is unique.

# ABOUT ANIMATE



Animate is our 5-day summer program in worship and the arts for teenagers and their adult mentors that takes place on the campus of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. Through Animate, teenagers become conversant in multiple styles and expressions of worship, connect with both adult mentors as well as their peers, and catch a vision for intergenerational worship – then carry these new skills and ideas back to enrich the life of their own church congregation.



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Worship *and the Arts*

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