

spend a lot of time in cafes that it can be one way of relating to people. Look at all the bars and cafés in town, some churches would actually take over a *Starbucks* or *Costas* and hold some kind of worship there, actually get outside their church building, instead of expecting people to come to us. All alternative worship grows out of thinking about the incarnation. God shows up on our turf speaking our language so that we might understand; so alternative worship uses popular culture in worship.

It's not proposed that this would take the place of a normal service; it's something completely different and would be held in addition to the normal services, maybe a different time of day or day of the week.

At the venue I found lots of round tables with tablecloths and chairs around them on the tables were crisps, fruit and fruit juice. People arrive, eat drink and chat, there is something about eating which puts people at ease and helps them relax, which is why the alpha course always begins with food. A musician was playing a guitar and singing in the background,

We had a gathering prayer, night lights were lit and then an activity. This would vary but people were invited to mould a small piece of play-doh into a symbol of something they wished to bring to God. A kind of visual confession. Next they were asked to mould the play-doh into something good and give it to someone else in the group. The leader then said some words of absolution.

We sang and read a bible passage round our tables and reflected upon the passage together with the help of some mirrors - what we might see darkly at the moment, some of the mirrors gave a distorted picture – what is distorted in our lives.

More prayers and singing, then as we left we blessed each other in any way we felt was appropriate. Elsewhere it was stressed that not all ideas would work in all churches – but actually of course there is the Saturday coffee mornings - could they ever on occasion be used for a type of cafe worship?

My second worship session was **Grace Academy**, the name made me think of fame academy, so I was intrigued by the title. In fact there had been a workshop on it which Jenny went to so she experienced the theory and I the practical.

Going in I didn't know what to expect, there were lots of round tables and chairs, but this wasn't like cafe worship, there was a large screen with a mixture of images being projected – pictures of everyday life, busy high streets, the countryside, every-day objects and instrumental music playing with the words 'chill' on the screen. A deliberate mixture of traditional and modern images.

The leader explained we would be using the theme of Lent and there would be three parts to the worship – chill, wisdom and movement.

- Chill being preparing ourselves
- Wisdom - when there would be a reading and reflection
- Movement when we would move to God in prayer

First the chill part - probably because most of us were feeling rather weary by this time there was a look of delight on everyone's face when we were invited to relax and chill out. The