

Diarylmethane Synthesis through Re_2O_7 -Catalyzed Bimolecular Dehydrative Friedel-Crafts Reactions

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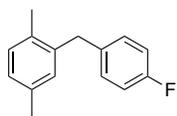
General Experimental Proton (^1H NMR) and carbon (^{13}C NMR) nuclear magnetic resonance spectra were taken on a Bruker Avance 300 spectrometer at 300 MHz and 75 MHz respectively, a Bruker Avance 400 spectrometer at 400 MHz and 100 MHz, a Bruker Avance 500 spectrometer at 500 MHz and 125 MHz. The chemical shifts are reported in parts per million (ppm) on the delta (δ) scale. for ^1H NMR, tetramethylsilane in CDCl_3 was used as reference: TMS = 0.00 ppm. For ^{13}C NMR the solvent peak was used as a reference value: $\text{CDCl}_3 = 77.2$ ppm. For ^{19}F NMR $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ was used as the reference: $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H} = -76.55$ ppm. Data are reported as follows: m = multiplet, s = singlet; d = doublet; t = triplet; q = quartet; p = pentet; s = sextet; dd = doublet of doublets; dt = doublet of triplets; ddd = doublet of doublet of doublets etc. Analytical TLC was performed on E. Merck pre-coated (25 mm) silica gel 60 F₂₅₄ plates. Visualization was done under UV (254 nm) or by staining (10 g Phosphomolybdic Acid, 90 mL absolute ethanol). Flash chromatography was done using SiliCycle SiliaFlash P60 40-63 μm 60 Å silica gel. Hexafluoroisopropanol (HFIP) was purchased from Oakwood Chemicals and used directly unless otherwise specified. Reagent grade ethyl acetate, diethyl ether, acetone, dichloromethane, methanol, pentane and hexanes (commercial mixture) were purchased from Fisher Scientific and were used as-is for chromatography. For low-ppm level reaction, all the reagents were purified according to "Purification of Laboratory Chemicals Sixth edition". Mesitylene was dried with CaCl_2 and distilled from sodium. *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol was purified by shaking with aqueous KOH and extracting with diethyl ether, then the extract was treated with saturated NaHS, filtered, washed and dried over CaO and then distilled under reduced pressure to obtain pure *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol. HFIP was redistilled from 3Å molecular sieves.

Preparation of $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$

A slurry of SiO_2 (1.55 g) and of Re_2O_7 (172 mg) in Et_2O (10 mL) was stirred in a round bottom flask at rt for 3 h, then solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The resulting powder was dried under vacuum overnight. The catalyst was transferred to a vial, wrapped in aluminum foil, and stored in a desiccator.

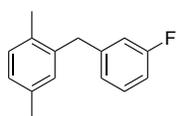
General procedure A for the $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7/\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ mediated Friedel-Crafts alkylation

To a solution of the substrate (0.2 mmol) and arene (0.6 mmol, 3 equiv) in HFIP (0.4 mL) was added Re_2O_7 (0.01 equiv) or $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (10% w/w, 0.01 equiv). The reaction mixture was sealed in a 1-dram vial (Chemglass CG-4904-05 with a polypropylene screw cap containing a PTFE faced silicone septum) and stirred at the indicated temperature for the indicated time. The reaction was quenched by Et_3N , then the solvent was partially removed under vacuum. The crude mixture was then purified by flash column chromatography.



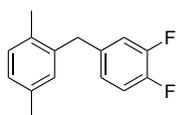
2-(4-Fluorobenzyl)-1,4-dimethylbenzene (3)

General reaction protocol A was followed with **1** (25 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified through flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (38 mg, 89% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.09–7.03 (m, 3H), 6.97–6.91 (m, 3H), 6.90 (s, 1H), 3.90 (s, 2H), 2.28 (s, 3H), 2.17 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 161.4 (d, $J = 243.6$ Hz), 138.7, 136.3 (d, $J = 3.3$ Hz), 135.6, 133.5, 130.8, 130.4, 130.2 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz), 127.4, 115.5 (d, $J = 20.7$ Hz), 38.8, 21.1, 19.3; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –118.8 (ddd, $J = 13.8, 8.7, 5.2$ Hz); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{14}\text{F}$ $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^+$: m/z calcd. 213.1074; found 213.1071.



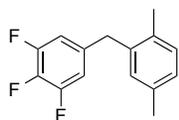
2-(3-Fluorobenzyl)-1,4-dimethylbenzene (6)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 3-fluorobenzyl alcohol (25 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (35 mg, 82% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.21 (td, $J = 7.9, 6.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.05 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 6.97 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 6.93–6.88 (m, 2H), 6.86 (td, $J = 12.7, 2.4$ Hz, 1H), 6.79 (dt, $J = 10.0, 2.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.93 (s, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H), 2.17 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 163.0 (d, $J = 245.3$ Hz), 143.3 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz), 137.8, 135.5, 133.4, 130.8, 130.3, 129.7 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz), 127.4, 124.3 (d, $J = 2.7$ Hz), 115.5 (d, $J = 20.9$ Hz), 112.8 (d, $J = 20.9$ Hz), 39.2 (d, $J = 1.1$ Hz), 21.0, 19.1; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –114.6 (m); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{14}\text{F}$ $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^+$: m/z calcd. 213.1074; found 213.1071.



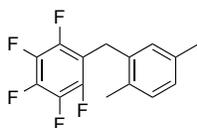
2-(3,4-Difluorobenzyl)-1,4-dimethylbenzene (7)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 3,4-difluorobenzyl alcohol (28 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (44 mg, 94% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.07–6.94 (m, 3H), 6.91–6.78 (m, 3H), 3.88 (d, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H), 2.15 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 150.4 (dd, $J = 247, 12.7$ Hz), 148.9 (dd, $J = 247, 12.7$ Hz), 137.8, 137.8 (dd, $J = 9.1, 3.6$ Hz), 135.8, 133.5, 130.8, 130.6, 127.7, 124.5 (dd, $J = 6.3, 3.6$ Hz), 117.5 (d, $J = 17.1$ Hz), 117.1 (d, $J = 17.1$ Hz), 38.7, 21.1, 19.2; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –139.3 (ddd, $J = 20.8, 12.2, 8.6$ Hz, 1F), –143.1 (dddd, $J = 20.8, 10.4, 6.9, 3.5$ Hz, 1F); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{13}\text{F}_2$ $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^+$: m/z calcd. 231.0980; found 231.0980.



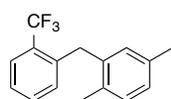
5-(2,5-Dimethylbenzyl)-1,2,3-trifluorobenzene (8)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 2,3,4-trifluorobenzyl alcohol (32 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (44 mg, 86% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.06 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.00 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 6.89 (s, 1H), 6.73–6.66 (m, 2H), 3.86 (s, 2H), 2.30 (s, 3H), 2.15 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 151.3 (ddd, $J = 248.9$ Hz, 10.0, 3.6 Hz), 138.3 (dt, $J = 248.9, 15.6$ Hz), 137.2 (td, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 4.0 Hz), 137.2, 137.0, 136.0, 133.5, 130.9, 130.7, 128.0, 112.5 (dd, $J = 16.3, 5.4$ Hz), 38.8, 21.1, 19.2; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –135.8 (dd, $J = 20.8, 8.7$ Hz, 2F), –165.2 (tt, $J = 20.8, 6.9$ Hz, 1F); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{12}\text{F}_3$ $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^+$: m/z calcd. 249.0886; found 249.0890.



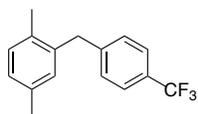
1-(2,5-Dimethylbenzyl)-2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzene (9)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzyl alcohol (41 mg, 0.21 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 h at 100 °C then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (54 mg, 92% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.05 (d, $J = 7.85$ Hz, 1H), 6.95 (d, $J = 8.20$ Hz, 1H), 6.74 (s, 1H), 3.96 (s, 2H), 2.34 (s, 3H), 2.24 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 146.4 (m), 144.5 (m), 141.1 (m), 139.1 (m), 138.8 (m), 136.8 (m), 135.9, 135.2, 133.0, 130.5, 129.1, 129.0, 127.9, 114.0 (td, $J = 27.8, 4.1$ Hz), 25.6, 21.1, 19.2; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –143.2 (dd, $J = 22.5, 8.6$ Hz, 2F), –157.9 (t, $J = 20.8$ Hz, 1F), –163.4 (td, $J = 21.6, 8.6$ Hz, 2F); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{11}\text{F}_5$ $[\text{M}]^+$: m/z calcd. 286.0781; found 286.0809.



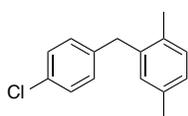
1,4-Dimethyl-2-(2-(trifluoromethyl)benzyl)benzene (10)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 2-trifluoromethylbenzyl alcohol (35 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (48 mg, 90% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.67 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.36 (t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.28 (t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.08 (d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.00 (d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 6.91 (d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 6.84 (s, 1H), 4.13 (s, 2H), 2.28 (s, 3H), 2.13 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 139.5, 137.4, 135.7, 133.8, 132.0, 131.3, 130.5, 130.4, 128.8 (q, $J = 29.7$ Hz), 127.6, 126.1, 126.0 (q, $J = 5.8$ Hz), 124.9 (q, $J = 27.4$ Hz), 35.6 (d, $J = 2.9$ Hz), 21.1, 19.1; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –61.6 (s); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{15}\text{F}_3$ $[\text{M}]^+$: m/z calcd. 264.1126; found 264.1147.



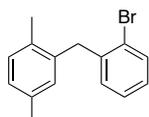
1,4-Dimethyl-2-(4-(trifluoromethyl)benzyl)benzene (11)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 4-trifluorobenzyl alcohol (35 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the products (47 mg, 88% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.51 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.21 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 2H), 7.06 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 6.99 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 6.91 (s, 1H), 3.99 (s, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H), 2.17 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 145.0, 137.7, 135.8, 133.6, 131.0, 130.6, 129.1, 128.5 (q, $J = 32.4$ Hz), 127.7, 125.6 (q, $J = 3.9$ Hz), 124.5 (q, $J = 272.3$ Hz), 39.4, 21.1, 19.3; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ -63.2 (s); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{15}\text{F}_3$ [M^+]: m/z calcd. 264.1126; found 264.1110.



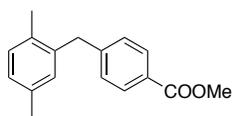
2-(4-Chlorobenzyl)-1,4-dimethylbenzene (12)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 4-chlorobenzyl alcohol (28 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (43 mg, 93% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.24–7.20 (m, 2H), 7.06–7.01 (m, 3H), 6.97 (dd, $J = 7.6, 1.3$ Hz, 1H), 6.89 (s, 1H), 3.90 (s, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H), 2.17 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 139.2, 138.3, 135.7, 133.5, 131.8, 130.8, 130.5, 130.2, 128.6, 127.5, 38.9, 21.1, 19.3; HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{14}\text{Cl}$ [M-H^+]: m/z calcd. 229.0779; found 229.0779



2-(2-Bromobenzyl)-1,4-dimethylbenzene (13)

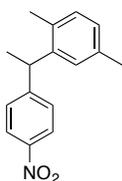
General reaction protocol A was followed with 2-bromobenzyl alcohol (37 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (46 mg, 83% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.57 (dd, $J = 8.0, 1.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.15 (td, $J = 11.2, 1.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.08 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.05 (dd, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 6.98 (d, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 1H), 6.84 (dd, $J = 7.6, 1.1$ Hz, 1H), 6.81 (s, 1H), 4.00 (s, 2H), 2.27 (s, 3H), 2.17 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 140.0, 137.4, 135.7, 133.8, 132.8, 130.7, 130.4, 130.3, 127.8, 127.5, 127.5, 125.2, 39.6, 21.1, 19.2; HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{14}\text{Br}$ [M-H^+]: m/z calcd. 273.0273; found 273.0278.



Methyl 4-(2,5-dimethylbenzyl)benzoate (14)

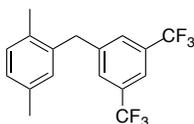
General reaction protocol A was followed with 4-carbomethoxybenzyl alcohol (33 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified through flash chromatography (100% hexane

to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (42 mg, 82% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.93 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 2H), 7.18 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 2H), 7.05 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 6.98 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 1H), 6.90 (s, 1H), 3.98 (s, 2H), 3.88 (s, 3H), 2.28 (s, 3H), 2.16 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 143.3, 136.4, 136.0, 133.3, 131.6 (q, $J = 32.9$), 130.7 (d, $J = 5.4$ Hz), 128.7 (d, $J = 3.3$ Hz), 128.1, 124.5, 122.4, 120.2 (Sep, $J = 3.9$ Hz), 39.2, 21.0, 19.2; HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{19}\text{O}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$: m/z calcd. 255.1380; found 255.1381.



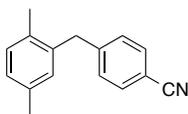
1,4-Dimethyl-2-(1-(4-nitrophenyl)ethyl)benzene (15)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 1-(4-nitrophenyl) ethanol (30 mg, 0.18 mmol), **2** (60 mg, 0.54 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (8.7 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.36 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (35 mg, 76% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.11 (dt, $J = 9.3, 2.3$ Hz, 2H), 7.30 (dt, $J = 9.3, 2.5$ Hz), 7.06-7.00 (m, 2H), 6.98 (d, $J = 7.3$ Hz, 1H), 4.38 (q, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 1H), 2.32 (s, 3H), 2.15 (s, 3H), 1.62 (d, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 154.3, 146.4, 142.2, 135.9, 132.9, 130.8, 128.6, 127.6, 127.5, 123.8, 41.2, 21.8, 21.3, 19.4; HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{18}\text{NO}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$: m/z calcd. 256.1332; found 256.1335.



2-(3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzyl)-1,4-dimethylbenzene (16)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl) benzyl alcohol (49 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), Re_2O_7 (1.0 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 23 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (48 mg, 73% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.71 (s, 1H), 7.56 (s, 2H), 7.09 (d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 7.02 (d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 6.90 (s, 1H), 4.06 (s, 2H), 2.31 (s, 3H), 2.17 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 143.2, 136.4, 136.0, 133.3, 131.7 (q, $J = 33$ Hz), 130.7, 130.7, 128.8 (q, $J = 4.2$ Hz), 128.0, 123.4 (q, $J = 270.4$ Hz), 120.2 (sep, $J = 3.8$ Hz), 39.1, 21.0, 19.2; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –63.7 (s); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{14}\text{F}_6$ $[\text{M}^+]$: m/z calcd. 332.1000; found 332.0990.



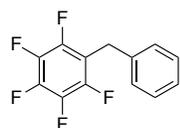
4-(2,5-Dimethylbenzyl)benzonitrile (17)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 4-cyanobenzyl alcohol (27 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), Re_2O_7 (1.0 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred at 80 °C for 48 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (25 mg, 57% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.55 (dt, $J = 8.4, 1.9$ Hz, 2H), 7.21 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.07 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H), 7.00 (dd, $J = 7.7, 1.2$ Hz, 1H), 6.90 (s, 1H), 4.00 (s, 2H), 2.30 (s, 3H), 2.15 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz,

CDCl₃) δ 146.4, 137.0, 135.8, 133.4, 132.2, 130.8, 130.5, 129.4, 127.7, 119.1, 109.9, 39.6, 20.9, 19.1; HRMS (ESI) C₁₆H₁₆N [M+H]⁺: *m/z* calcd. 222.1277; found 222.1276.

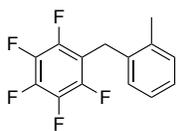
General procedure B for substituted arene nucleophiles

Unless specified otherwise, **18** (0.2 mmol, 40mg) was added to a mixture of the arene (0.6 mmol, 3.0 equiv), Re₂O₇ (1.0 mg, 0.002 mmol, 1 mol%) and HFIP (0.4 mL). The mixture was stirred vigorously at the indicated temperature and monitored by TLC until full conversion of the benzyl alcohol. The reaction was then treated with triethylamine (10 μL). Purification was performed by column chromatography using EtOAc/hexanes as the eluents.



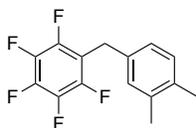
1-Benzyl-2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzene (**19**)

Prepared according to general procedure B with benzene (5.0 equiv.), at 100 °C, for 3 d. Purification by flash chromatography gave the desired product (47.6 mg, 92%). ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 7.32-7.27 (m, 1H), 7.26-7.20 (m, 2H), 4.04 (t, *J* = 2.0 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 137.6, 128.7, 128.2, 126.9, 28.0; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ -142.13 - -145.77 (m, 2F), -154.43 - -160.33 (m, 1F), -163.42 (td, *J* = 22.0, 8.3 Hz, 2F); HRMS (EI) for C₁₃H₇F₅ [M]⁺: *m/z* calcd. 258.0462, found 258.0464.



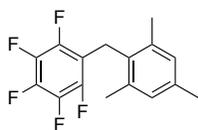
1,2,3,4,5-Pentafluoro-6-(*x*-methylbenzyl)benzene (**20**, *x* = 2, 3, or 4)

Prepared according to general procedure B with toluene (3.0 equiv) at 80 °C, for 24 h. Purification provided the desired product (53.9 mg, 99% yield) (*o*:*m*:*p* = 1.8:1:1.7). ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 7.31-6.71 (m, 4H), 4.02 (s, 0.8H), 3.99 (s, 1.2H), 2.37 (s, 1.2H), 2.30 (s, 0.6H), 2.29 (s, 1.2H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 138.5, 137.4, 136.7, 136.2, 135.3, 134.5, 130.3, 129.3, 128.9, 128.5, 128.1, 127.9, 127.6, 126.9, 126.1, 125.2, 27.9, 27.6, 25.5, 21.0, 20.6, 19.2; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ -142.9 - -143.1 (m, 0.8F), -143.7 - -143.9 (m, 0.4F), -144.0 - -144.1 (m, 0.8F), -158.0 - -158.1 (m, 0.4F), -158.3 - -158.7 (m, 0.6F), -163.3 - -163.7 (m, 2F); HRMS (EI) C₁₄H₉F₅ [M]⁺: *m/z* calcd. 272.0618, found 272.0622.



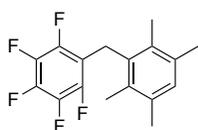
1-(*x,y*-Dimethylbenzyl)-2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzene (**21**, *x,y* = 2, 3 or 3,4)

Prepared according to general procedure B with *o*-xylene (3.0 equiv) at 80 °C, for 5 h. Purification provided the desired product (56.4 mg, 98% yield, 2,3:3,4 = 2:3). ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 7.09 - 6.73 (m, 3H), 4.04 (s, 0.8H), 3.96 (s, 1.2H), 2.30 (s, 1.2H), 2.27 (s, 1.2H), 2.21 (s, 1.8H), 2.21 (s, 1.8H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 137.1, 137.0, 135.3, 135.1, 134.8, 134.7, 129.8, 129.4, 128.6, 125.7, 125.5, 125.4, 27.5, 26.1, 20.4, 19.4, 19.0, 14.8; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ -143.0 (d, *J* = 13.8 Hz, 0.8F), -143.6 - -144.7 (m, 1.2F), -158.2 (t, *J* = 20.6 Hz, 0.4F), -158.4 - -159.1 (m, 0.6F), -163.1 - -164.3 (m, 2F); HRMS (EI) C₁₅H₁₁F₅ [M]⁺: *m/z* calcd. 286.0775, found 286.0780.



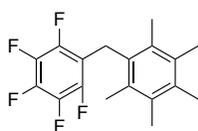
1,2,3,4,5-pentafluoro-6-(2,4,6-trimethylbenzyl)benzene (22)

Prepared according to general procedure B with 1,3,5-mesitylene (3.0 equiv), at 80 °C, for 4 h. Purification provided the desired product (59.8 mg, 99%). ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 6.85 (s, 2H), 4.03 (s, 2H), 2.24 (s, 9H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 136.9, 136.4, 130.7, 129.1, 22.97, 22.96, 22.94, 22.93, 20.5, 19.78, 19.77, 19.75; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ -142.7 - -143.0 (m, 2F), -158.9 (t, *J* = 20.7 Hz, 1F), -164.0 (td, *J* = 21.8, 7.9 Hz, 2F); HRMS (EI): *m/z* C₁₆H₁₃F₅ [M]⁺: calcd. 300.0937, found 300.0936.



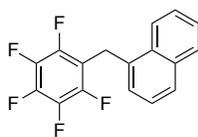
1,2,3,4,5-Pentafluoro-6-(2,3,5,6-tetramethylbenzyl)benzene (23)

Prepared according to general procedure B with 1,2,4,5-tetramethylbenzene (3.0 equiv) at 80 °C, for 4 h. Purification provided the desired product (61 mg, 97%). ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 6.91 (s, 1H), 4.12 (s, 2H), 2.22 (s, 6H), 2.16 (s, 6H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 133.7, 133.6, 132.9, 130.5, 24.0, 20.3, 15.5; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ -141.5 - -144.3 (m, 2F), -159.1 (t, *J* = 20.9 Hz, 1F), -164.1 (td, *J* = 21.5, 7.7 Hz, 2F); HRMS (EI): *m/z* C₁₇H₁₅F₅ [M]⁺: calcd. 314.1094, found 314.1091.



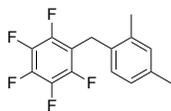
1,2,3,4,5-Pentafluoro-6-(2,3,4,5,6-pentamethylbenzyl)benzene (24)

Prepared according to general procedure B with 1,2,3,4,5-pentamethylbenzene (2.0 equiv) at 80 °C for 4 h. Purification provided the desired product (61.8 mg, 94%). ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 4.13 (s, 2H), 2.24 (s, 3H), 2.22 (s, 6H), 2.21 (s, 6H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 133.8, 132.62, 132.59, 131.1, 24.7, 16.8, 16.8, 16.7; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ -140.6 - -145.4 (m, 2F), -159.2 (t, *J* = 20.7 Hz, 1F), -164.2 (td, *J* = 21.8, 7.6 Hz, 2F); HRMS (EI): *m/z* C₁₈H₁₇F₅ [M]⁺: calcd. 328.1250, found 328.1248.



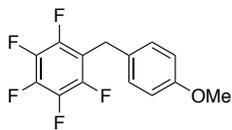
x-((Perfluorophenyl)methyl)naphthalene (25, x = 1 or 2)

Prepared according to general procedure B with naphthalene (3.0 equiv), at 80 °C for 4 h. Purification provided the desired product (60.1 mg, 97%, **1:2** = 3:1). ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 8.18 - 7.03 (m, 7H), 4.50 (s, 0.5H), 4.19 (d, *J* = 2.1 Hz, 1.5H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 135.0, 133.8, 133.5, 132.8, 132.3, 131.5, 128.8, 128.4, 128.1, 127.8, 127.7, 127.53, 127.47, 126.7, 126.5, 126.4, 126.3, 125.9, 125.8, 125.5, 125.4, 122.9, 28.20, 28.19, 28.18, 28.16, 25.2; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ -142.1 - -143.1 (m, 0.5F), -143.3 - -145.0 (m, 1.5F), -157.6 (t, *J* = 20.9 Hz, 0.25F), -158.0 (t, *J* = 20.7 Hz, 0.75F), -163.3 (tdd, *J* = 22.0, 13.7, 7.9 Hz, 2F); HRMS (EI): *m/z* C₁₇H₉F₅ [M]⁺: calcd. 308.0619, found 308.0618.



1-(x,y-Dimethylbenzyl)-2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzene (x,y = 2, 4; 2,6 or 3,5) (26)

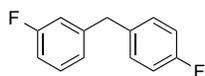
Prepared according to general procedure B with *m*-xylene (3.0 equiv) at 80 °C for 5 h. Purification provided the desired product (55.5 mg, 97%, 1,2,4:1,2,6:1,3,5 = 8.4:2.0:1.0). ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 7.14 – 6.76 (m, 3H), 4.07 (s, 0.35H), 3.97 (s, 1.47H), 3.95 (s, 0.18H), 2.49 – 2.13 (m, 6H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 138.35, 137.30, 137.1, 136.6, 135.9, 133.8, 132.2, 131.4, 131.1, 128.4, 128.3, 127.94, 127.92, 126.8, 126.7, 126.5, 125.9, 27.8, 25.10, 25.09, 23.3, 20.9, 20.6, 20.5, 19.88, 19.86, 19.85, 19.1; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ –142.4 – –143.0 (m, 0.35F), –142.9 – –143.6 (m, 1.47F), –158.3 (t, *J* = 20.7 Hz, 0.73F), –158.5 – –158.6 (m, 0.09F), –158.7 (t, *J* = 20.8 Hz, 0.18F), –163.6 (td, *J* = 28.7, 8.0 Hz, 1.65H), –163.9 (td, *J* = 22.1, 8.0 Hz, 0.35H); HRMS (EI): *m/z* C₁₅H₁₁F₅ [M]⁺: calcd. 286.0775, found 286.0779.



1,2,3,4,5-Pentafluoro-6-(4-methoxybenzyl)benzene (27)

Prepared according to general procedure B with anisole (3.0 equiv), at 80 °C for 24 h. Purification provided the desired product (56.5 mg, 98 % yield, *o*:*p* = 1.0:2.8). *para*-Isomer: ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 7.15 (ddd, *J* = 7.7, 1.5, 0.7 Hz, 1H), 6.92-6.53 (m, 1H), 3.96 (s, 1H), 3.75 (s, 2H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 158.6, 129.5, 129.3, 114.0, 55.1, 27.2; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ –144.20 – –144.3 (m, 2F), –158.4 – –158.7 (m, 1F), –163.5 (td, *J* = 21.8, 8.1 Hz, 2F); HRMS (EI): *m/z* C₁₄H₉F₅O [M]⁺: calcd. 288.0568, found 288.0571.

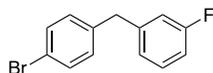
ortho-Isomer: ¹H NMR (501 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 7.22 (td, *J* = 7.9, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 7.03 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.86 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 4.00 (s, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ 157.3, 129.3, 128.2, 125.5, 120.3, 110.3, 55.2, 23.0; ¹⁹F NMR (471 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) δ –142.1 – –144.7 (m, 2F), –158.9 (t, *J* = 20.7 Hz, 2F), –164.3 (dd, *J* = 21.2, 13.7 Hz, 2F); HRMS (EI): *m/z* C₁₄H₉F₅O [M]⁺: calcd. 288.0568, found 288.0573.



1-Fluoro-3-(4-fluorobenzyl)benzene (30)

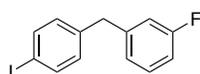
General reaction protocol A was followed with 3-fluorobenzyl alcohol (23 mg, 0.2 mmol), fluorobenzene (58 mg, 0.6 mmol), Re₂O₇•SiO₂ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired products as a mixture of regioisomers (16 mg, 40% yield, *p*/*o*=1.6/1). ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.75-6.85 (m, 8H), 4.07 (s, 0.75 H), 3.88 (s, 1.25 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 163.2 (d, *J* = 245.8 Hz), 163.2 (d, *J* = 248.6 Hz), 161.7 (d, *J* = 244.5 Hz), 161.1 (d, *J* = 245.5 Hz), 143.6 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz), 142.6 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz), 136.1 (d, *J* = 3.8 Hz), 131.2 (d, *J* = 4.5 Hz), 130.5 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz), 130.1 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz), 130.0 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz), 128.4 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz), 127.4 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz), 124.6 (d, *J* = 2.7 Hz), 124.5 (d, *J* = 2.7 Hz), 124.3 (d, *J* = 3.6 Hz), 115.9 (d, *J* = 21.3 Hz), 115.8 (d, *J* = 20.8 Hz), 115.6 (d, *J* = 21.5 Hz), 115.5 (d, *J* = 20.9 Hz), 113.3 (d, *J* = 20.9 Hz), 113.3 (d, *J* = 20.9 Hz), 40.9 (d, *J* = 2.1 Hz), 34.8 (d, *J* = 1.8 Hz); ¹⁹F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl₃; CF₃CO₂H – ext. std.) δ –114.3 (m, 0.62F), –

114.4 (m, 0.38F), -117.8 (tt, $J = 13.0, 5.2$ Hz, 0.62F); -118.7 (dt, $J = 12.1, 5.2$ Hz, 0.38F); HRMS $C_{13}H_{10}F_2$ [M^+]: m/z calcd. 204.0751; found 204.0715. The regiochemistry was assigned by analyzing the ^{19}F NMR spectrum.



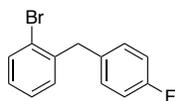
1-(4-Bromobenzyl)-3-fluorobenzene (32)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 3-fluorobenzyl alcohol (23 mg, 0.2 mmol), bromobenzene (93 mg, 0.6 mmol), $Re_2O_7 \cdot SiO_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired products as a mixture of regioisomers (25 mg, 46% yield, $p/o=1/1$). 1H NMR (500 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 7.57 (dd, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 1 H), 7.41 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.27–7.21 (m, 1.5H), 7.15 (dd, $J = 7.5, 1.4$ Hz, 0.5H), 7.10 (td, $J = 7.8, 1.4$ Hz, 0.5H), 7.05 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 1 H), 6.94–6.81 (m, 3H), 4.10 (s, 1H), 3.91 (s, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 163.2 (d, $J = 246$ Hz), 163.1 (d, $J = 246$ Hz), 143.1 (d, $J = 7.3$ Hz), 142.2 (d, $J = 7.3$ Hz), 139.7, 139.4, 133.2, 131.8, 131.3, 130.8, 130.1 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz), 130.0 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz), 128.3, 127.7, 125.0, 124.7 (d, $J = 2.7$ Hz), 124.6 (d, $J = 2.7$ Hz), 120.4, 116.0 (d, $J = 22.1$ Hz), 115.9 (d, $J = 21.3$ Hz), 113.4 (d, $J = 21.0$ Hz), 113.3 (d, $J = 21.9$ Hz), 41.6 (d, $J = 1.8$ Hz), 41.1 (d, $J = 2.1$ Hz); ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, $CDCl_3$; CF_3CO_2H – ext. std.) δ -114.1 (td, $J = 9.5, 6.9$ Hz, 1F), -114.3 (td, $J = 9.5, 5.2$ Hz, 1F); HRMS (ESI) $C_{13}H_{10}BrF$ [M^+]: m/z calcd. 263.9950; found 263.9967. The regiochemistry was assigned based on 1D TOCSY experiments.



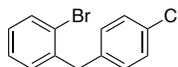
1-(3-Fluorobenzyl)-4-iodobenzene (34)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 3-fluorobenzyl alcohol (23 mg, 0.2 mmol), iodobenzene (122 mg, 0.6 mmol), $Re_2O_7 \cdot SiO_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired products as a mixture of regioisomers (38 mg, 62% yield, $p/o = 1.2/1$). A more polar product was recovered (16.8 mg) during the reaction. GC-MS analysis showed the second product is consisted of multiple dialkylated product. 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 7.78 (dd, $J = 8.0, 1.0$ Hz, 0.45H), 7.64–7.60 (m, 1.41H), 7.53 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 1.0H), 7.24 (td, $J = 11.2, 1.0$ Hz, 0.84H), 7.19–7.12 (m, 1.60H), 7.06–6.99 (m, 1.98H), 6.90–6.72 (m, 4.87H), 4.10 (s, 0.90H), 3.90 (s, 1.10H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 163.0 (d, $J = 245.7$ Hz), 163.0 (d, $J = 245.7$ Hz), 143.0 (d, $J = 7.3$ Hz), 142.8, 142.1 (d, $J = 7.3$ Hz), 140.0, 139.7, 137.7, 131.0, 130.4, 130.0 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz), 130.0 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz), 128.5, 128.3, 124.7 (d, $J = 2.9$ Hz), 124.5 (d, $J = 2.9$ Hz), 115.9 (d, $J = 21.3$ Hz), 115.8 (d, $J = 21.3$ Hz), 113.3 (d, $J = 21.3$ Hz), 113.2 (d, $J = 21.3$ Hz), 101.2, 91.8, 46.3, 41.1 (d, $J = 1.5$ Hz); ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, $CDCl_3$; CF_3CO_2H – ext. std.) δ -114.2 (m), -114.3 (td, $J = 9.5, 5.2$ Hz); HRMS (ESI) $C_{13}H_{10}FI$ [M^+]: m/z calcd. 311.9811; found 311.9796. The regiochemistry was assigned based on 1D TOCSY experiments.



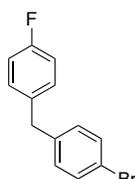
1-Bromo-2-(fluorobenzyl)benzene (36)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 2-bromobenzyl alcohol (37 mg, 0.2 mmol), fluorobenzene (58 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired products as a mixture of regioisomers (29 mg, 55% yield, $p/o=2.8/1$). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.56–6.94 (m, 8H), 4.13 (s, 0.53H), 4.07 (s, 1.47H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 161.7 (d, $J = 244.3$ Hz), 161.2 (d, $J = 245.9$ Hz), 140.4, 139.2, 135.3 (d, $J = 2.7$ Hz), 133.1, 133.0, 131.1, 131.1 (d, $J = 2.7$ Hz), 131.0, 130.5 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz), 128.3 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz), 128.2, 127.7, 127.7, 126.6, 126.5, 125.0, 125.0, 124.2 (d, $J = 2.7$ Hz), 115.4 (d, $J = 20.7$ Hz), 115.4 (d, $J = 20.7$ Hz), 41.1, 34.9 (d, $J = 2.7$ Hz); ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –117.9 (ddd, $J = 13.9, 8.7, 5.2$ Hz, 1.47 F), –118.2 (dt, $J = 12.1, 5.2$ Hz, 0.53 F); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{10}\text{BrF}$ [M^+]: m/z calcd. 263.9950; found 263.9971. The regiochemistry was assigned by analyzing the ^{19}F NMR spectrum.



1-Bromo-2-(4-chlorobenzyl)benzene (38)

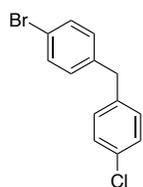
General reaction protocol A was followed with 2-bromobenzyl alcohol (37 mg, 0.2 mmol), chlorobenzene (66 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired products as a mixture of regioisomers (31 mg, 56% yield, $p/o = 2.2/1$). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.56 (dd, $J = 8.0, 0.9$ Hz, 0.33 H), 7.42–7.37 (m, 1.30H), 7.27–7.22 (m, 2.30 H), 7.13–7.08 (m, 1.30 H), 7.07 (m, 1.30 H), 7.02 (m, 1.30 H), 4.07 (s, 0.70 H), 3.88 (s, 1.30 H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3 , signals corresponding to both regioisomers are reported) δ 140.0, 139.0, 138.1, 137.3, 134.6, 133.1, 133.0, 132.3, 131.2, 130.9, 130.8, 130.4, 129.7, 128.8, 128.3, 128.2, 128.0, 127.7, 127.7, 127.0, 125.2, 125.0, 41.3, 39.5; HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_9\text{BrCl}$ [M-H^+]: m/z calcd. 278.9571; found 278.9578. The regiochemistry was assigned based on analogy of the chemical shifts for the benzylic hydrogens compared to other compounds.



1-Bromo-4-(4-fluorobenzyl)benzene (39)

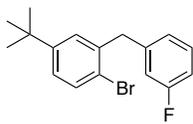
General reaction protocol A was followed with 4-fluorobenzyl alcohol (23 mg, 0.2 mmol), bromobenzene (93 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired products as a mixture of regioisomers (30 mg, 56% yield, $p/o=2/1$). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.56–6.94 (m, 8 H), 4.08 (s, 0.67 H), 3.89 (s, 1.33 H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 161.7 (d, $J = 244.7$ Hz), 161.7 (d, $J = 244.0$ Hz), 140.4, 140.1, 136.3 (d, $J = 2.9$ Hz), 135.3 (d, $J = 2.9$ Hz), 133.1, 131.8, 131.7, 131.1, 130.7, 130.5 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz), 130.4 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz), 130.2, 128.2, 127.7,

125.0, 120.2, 115.5 (d, $J = 21.2$ Hz), 115.4 (d, $J = 21.2$ Hz), 41.1, 40.6; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –117.8 (tt, $J = 8.7, 5.2$ Hz, 2F), –117.9 (tt, $J = 8.7, 5.2$ Hz, 1F); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{10}\text{BrF}$ [M^+]: m/z calcd. 263.9950; found 263.9979. The regiochemistry was assigned based on 1D TOCSY experiments.



1-Bromo-4-(4-chlorobenzyl)benzene (41)

General reaction protocol A was followed with 4-chlorobenzyl alcohol (28 mg, 0.2 mmol), bromobenzene (94 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired products as a mixture of regioisomers (30 mg, 53% yield, $p/o=2.2/1$). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.56 (dd, $J = 8.0, 0.9$ Hz, 0.33 H), 7.40 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1.30 H), 7.27–7.22 (m, 2.30 H), 7.13–7.08 (m, 1.30 H), 7.07 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 1.30 H), 7.02 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 1.30 H), 3.99 (s, 0.70 H), 3.80 (s, 1.30 H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 140.0, 139.0, 138.1, 137.3, 134.6, 133.1, 133.0, 132.3, 131.2, 130.9, 130.8, 130.4, 129.7, 128.8, 128.3, 128.2, 128.0, 127.7, 127.7, 127.0, 125.2, 125.0, 41.3, 39.5; HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_9\text{BrCl}$ [M-H^+]: m/z calcd. 278.9571; found 278.9579. The regiochemistry was assigned based on 1D TOCSY experiments.



1-Bromo-4-(tert-butyl)-2-(3-fluorobenzyl)benzene (43)

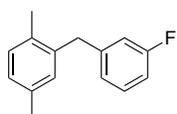
General reaction protocol A was followed with 3-fluorobenzyl alcohol (23 mg, 0.2 mmol), 4-tert-butylbromobenzene (127 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 2 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (28 mg, 43% yield). ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.47 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1 H), 7.24 (td, $J = 8.0, 6.1$ Hz, 1H), 7.19 (d, $J = 2.5$ Hz, 1H), 7.13 (dd, $J = 8.4, 2.5$ Hz, 1 H), 6.97 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1 H), 6.92–6.84 (m, 2H), 4.10 (s, 2 H), 1.27 (s, 9 H); ^{13}C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 163.2 (d, $J = 246.5$ Hz), 151.0, 142.5 (d, $J = 7.2$ Hz), 138.9, 132.7, 129.9 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz), 128.6, 125.6, 124.6 (d, $J = 2.7$ Hz), 121.8, 115.8 (d, $J = 21.8$ Hz), 113.2 (d, $J = 21.0$ Hz), 41.7 (d, $J = 1.8$ Hz), 34.7, 31.4; ^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 ; $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ – ext. std.) δ –114.5 (m); HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{18}\text{BrF}$ [M^+]: m/z calcd. 320.0576; found 320.0592. The regiochemistry was assigned based on 1D NOE studies.

Re₂O₇•SiO₂ release study

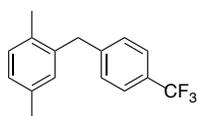
Re₂O₇•SiO₂ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol) was stirred in HFIP (0.4 ml) at 80 °C for 0.5 h. The mixture was filtered through PTFE (0.2 μm membrane) with an extra 0.1 ml of HFIP. 4-Fluorobenzyl alcohol (21.8 μl, 0.2 mmol) and *p*-xylene (74.0 μl, 0.6 mmol) were added to the filtrate. The reaction mixture was stirred at 80 °C for 2 h then the reaction was quenched with Et₃N. The crude mixture was condensed under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (hexane to 3% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the product (35.3 mg, 82% yield).

Reactions with low catalyst loading

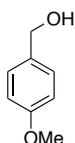
The following reaction were carried out in 20 mL scintillation vial (washed with KOH/EtOH and HCl (1 M) before use). Mesitylene was dried with CaCl₂ and distilled from sodium. *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol was purified by shaking with aqueous KOH and extracting with diethyl ether, then the extract was treated with saturated NaHS, filtered, washed and dried over CaO and then distilled under reduced pressure to obtain pure *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol. HFIP was redistilled from 3Å molecular sieves. Failure to purify the reagents properly leads to catalyst deactivation at very low loadings.



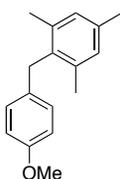
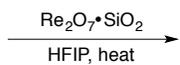
The general reaction protocol was followed with 3-fluorobenzyl alcohol (250 mg, 2.0 mmol), *p*-xylene (640 mg, 6.0 mmol), Re₂O₇•SiO₂ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (4 mL), but the mixture was stirred at 80 °C for 3.5 h. The reaction was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 3% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (315 mg, 73% yield).



The general reaction protocol was followed with 4-(trifluoromethyl)benzyl alcohol (350 mg, 2.0 mmol), **2** (640 mg, 6.0 mmol), Re₂O₇•SiO₂ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL), except the mixture was heated to 80 °C for 24 h. The reaction was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (45 mg, 9% yield).



+



1 mol% catalyst, 0.5 M

The general reaction protocol was followed with 4-methoxybenzyl alcohol (28 mg, 0.2 mmol), mesitylene (72 mg, 0.6 mmol), Re₂O₇•SiO₂ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL), except that the mixture was stirred at rt for 10 min. The reaction was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 8% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the monoalkylated product (43.0 mg, 90% yield) and (2.1 mg, 6% yield) of the dialkylated product. All spectral data for the monoalkylated product matched those in the literature.¹ Characterization data for the dialkylated product: ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 6.96–6.89 (m, 5H), 6.80–6.75 (m, 4H), 4.00 (s, 4H), 3.76 (s, 6H), 2.23 (s, 6H), 2.08 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 157.9, 136.4, 135.3, 135.1, 132.4, 130.1, 128.9, 114.0, 55.4, 34.7, 20.4, 16.3; HRMS (ESI) C₂₅H₂₈O₂ [M⁺]: *m/z* calcd. 360.2089; found 360.2101.

0.01 mol% catalyst, 0.5 M

To a flame-dried 20 mL scintillation vial filled with argon were added *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol (380 mg, 2.8 mmol), mesitylene (1.0 g, 8.3 mmol) and HFIP (5.5 mL). Re₂O₇ (1.3 mg, 0.0002

¹ M. Hofmann, N. Hampel, T. Kanzian and H. Mayr, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* 2004, **43**, 5402.

mmol) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred at rt for 7 h. The reaction was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 6% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the product (614 mg, 93% yield) and dialkylated product (27 mg).

0.003 mol% catalyst, 0.5 M

To a flame-dried 20 mL scintillation vial filled with argon were added *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol (843 mg, 6.1 mmol), mesitylene (2.20 g, 18.3 mmol), and HFIP (12 mL). Re₂O₇ (1.0 mg, 0.0002 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred in a 45 °C oil bath for 9 h. The reaction was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 6% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the product (1.41 g, 96% yield).

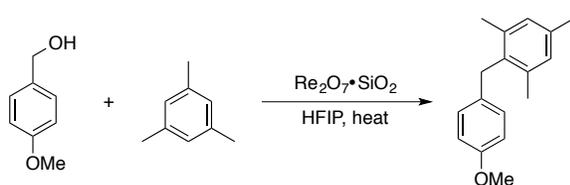
0.003 mol% catalyst, 2.5 M

To a flame-dried 20 mL scintillation vial filled with argon were added *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol (828 mg, 6.0 mmol), mesitylene (2.20 g, 18.3 mmol), and HFIP (2.4 mL). Re₂O₇ (1.0 mg, 0.0002 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred in a 50 °C oil bath for 9 h. The reaction was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 6% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the mono-alkylated product (1.40 g, 96% yield), along with 4% dialkylated product.

0.003 mol% catalyst, 5.0 M

To a flame-dried 20 mL scintillation vial filled with argon were added *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol (821 mg, 5.9 mmol), mesitylene (2.20 g, 18.3 mmol), and HFIP (1.2 mL). Re₂O₇ (1.0 mg, 0.0002 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred in a 50 °C oil bath for 9 h. The reaction was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 6% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the monoalkylated product (1.24 g, 87% yield), along with 8% dialkylated product.

Solvent studies



3:1 DCE:HFIP

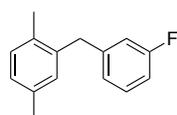
The general reaction protocol was followed with 4-methoxybenzyl alcohol (28 mg, 0.2 mmol), mesitylene (72 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), DCE (0.3 mL) and HFIP (0.1 mL), except that the mixture was stirred at rt for 10 min. The reaction was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 8% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the monoalkylated product (41 mg, 84% yield) and the dialkylated product (3.3 mg, 9% yield).

9:1 DCE:HFIP

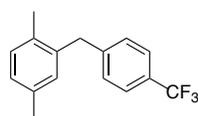
The general reaction protocol was followed with 4-methoxybenzyl alcohol (28 mg, 0.2 mmol), mesitylene (72 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), DCE (0.36 mL) and HFIP (0.04 mL), except that the mixture was stirred at rt for 1 h. The reaction was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 8% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the monoalkylated product (40 mg, 83% yield) and the dialkylated product (5.0 mg, 14% yield).

100% DCE

The general reaction protocol was followed with 4-methoxybenzyl alcohol (28 mg, 0.2 mmol), mesitylene (72 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and DCE (0.4 mL), except that the mixture was stirred at rt for 4 h. The reaction was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 8% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the monoalkylated product (30 mg, 68% yield) and the benzyl ether (7.4 mg, 29% yield).



The general reaction protocol was followed with 3-fluorobenzyl alcohol (25 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.3 mL) and DCE (0.1 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 17 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (27 mg, 64% yield).



The general reaction protocol was followed with 4-trifluorobenzyl alcohol (35 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), HFIP (0.3 mL) and DCE (0.1 mL). The reaction mixture was heated to 80 °C for 17 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the products (7 mg, 14% yield).

Leaving group comparison

Alcohol

The general reaction protocol was followed with **1** (25 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), $\text{Re}_2\text{O}_7 \cdot \text{SiO}_2$ (9.6 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture stirred at rt for 6 h then was quenched with Et_3N , concentrated under vacuum and purified through flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (37 mg, 85% yield).

Bromide

4-Fluorobenzyl bromide (34 mg, 0.18 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), and HFIP (0.36 ml) were stirred at rt for 6 h, then concentrated under vacuum to get crude spectra (bromide/product = 1/11). Then the mixture was purified through flash chromatography (hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the diarylmethane (27 mg, 69% yield).

Chloride

4-Fluorobenzyl chloride (43 mg, 0.30 mmol), *p*-xylene (96 mg, 0.9 mmol) and HFIP (0.6 ml) were stirred at rt for 6 h, then concentrated under vacuum. ^1H NMR analysis of the crude mixture with 4-dimethylamino pyridine (3.8 mg, 0.03 mmol) as internal standard showed a benzyl chloride/product ratio of 1/1.06, with an NMR yield of the product of 27.2 mg (43%) and 26 mg (40%) of the starting material.

Catalyst comparison

Re₂O₇

The general reaction protocol was followed with 2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzyl alcohol (41 mg, 0.21 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), Re₂O₇ (1.0 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h at 80 °C then was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (54 mg, 90% yield).

Re₂O₇•SiO₂

The general reaction protocol was followed with 2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzyl alcohol (36 mg, 0.18 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), Re₂O₇•SiO₂ (8.7 mg, 0.002 mmol), and HFIP (0.36 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h at 80 °C then was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (21 mg, 41% yield).

HOReO₃

The general reaction protocol was followed with 2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzyl alcohol (49 mg, 0.25 mmol), **2** (79 mg, 0.75 mmol), HOReO₃ (76.5 wt% in H₂O, 0.38 μL, 0.003 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h at 80 °C then was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (55 mg, 77% yield).

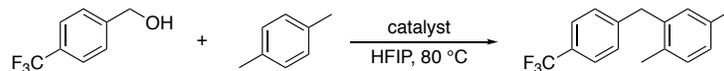
HOReO₃ with an unreactive substrate

The general reaction protocol was followed with 3,5-bis-trifluoromethylbenzyl alcohol (49 mg, 0.2 mmol), **2** (64 mg, 0.6 mmol), HOReO₃ (76.5 wt% in H₂O, 0.61 μL, 0.004 mmol), and HFIP (0.4 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for 21 h at 80 °C then was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 2% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the desired product (34 mg, 51% yield).

Low catalyst loading HOReO₃

To a flame-dried 20 ml scintillation vial filled with argon were added *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol (1.85 g, 13.4 mmol), mesitylene (4.8 g, 40 mmol) and HFIP (5.4 mL). HOReO₃ (0.20 μL, 0.0013 mmol, 76.5% in H₂O) was added and the mixture was stirred at rt for 9 h. The reaction was quenched with Et₃N, concentrated under vacuum, and purified by flash chromatography (100% hexane to 6% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give the monoalkylated product (2.96 g, 92%), and the dialkylated product (208 mg).

Kinetics studies

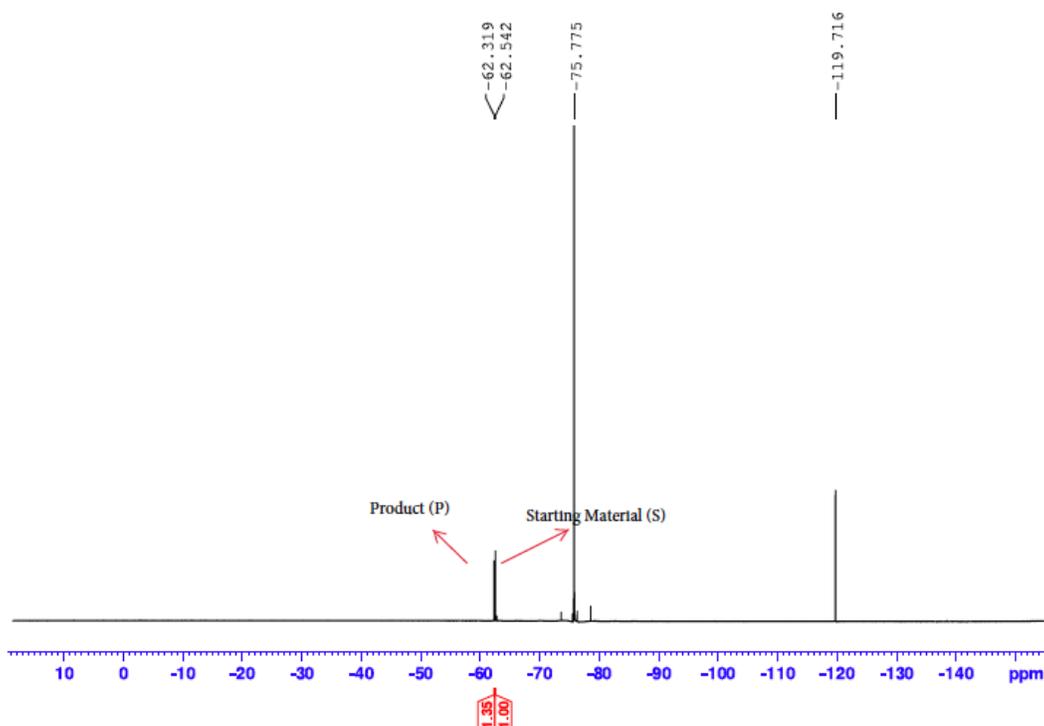


General procedure for kinetics experiments with a benzylic alcohol

A solution of 4-dimethylaminopyridine (0.5 M) and 1,4-difluorobenzene (0.5 M) in CDCl₃ was made prior to the reaction (solution A). To a 1 dram vial were added *p*-trifluoromethylbenzyl alcohol (1.0 equiv), *p*-xylene (3.0 equiv), the catalyst and the appropriate amount of HFIP to keep the concentration at 0.5 M. The vial was secured with a polypropylene screw cap containing a PTFE faced silicone septum (Chemglass CG-4904-05). The reaction mixture was stirred at 80 °C for 2 h. Every 10 min, 10 μl of reaction crude was drawn, then mixed with 500 μl CDCl₃ and 10 μl of solution A. ¹H NMR and ¹⁹F NMR spectra were taken at ambient temperature. The yield was calculated according to the following equation:

$$Y = \frac{P}{S + P} \times 100\%$$

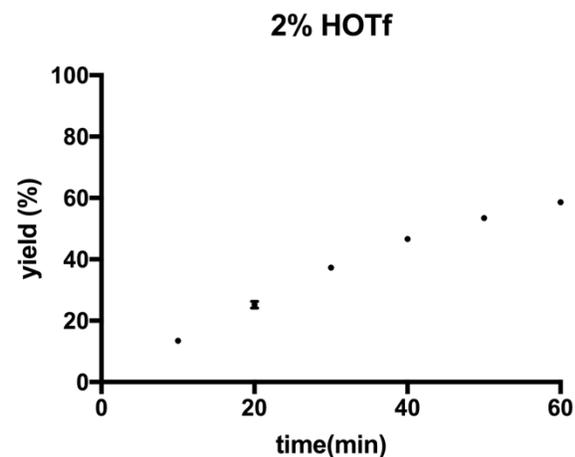
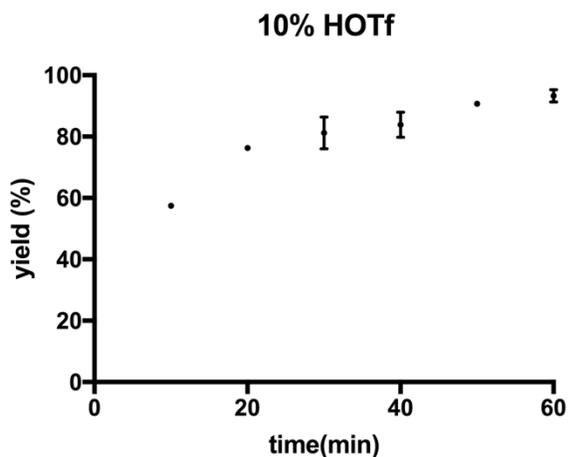
¹⁹F NMR was used to calculate the ratio between starting material (S) and product (P). S represents the integration for 4-trifluoromethyl benzyl alcohol, P represents the integration for 1,4-dimethyl-2-(4-(trifluoromethyl)benzyl)benzene.



Experimental data:

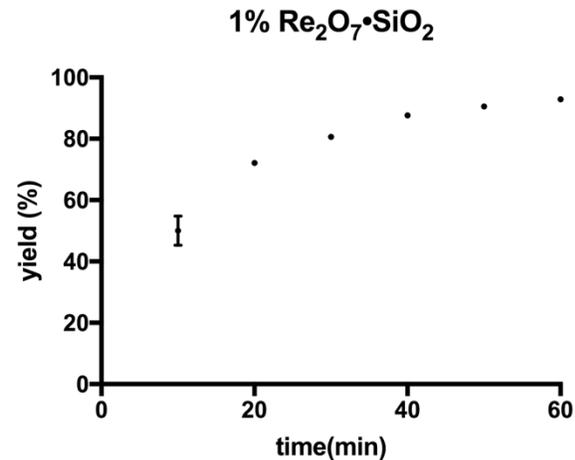
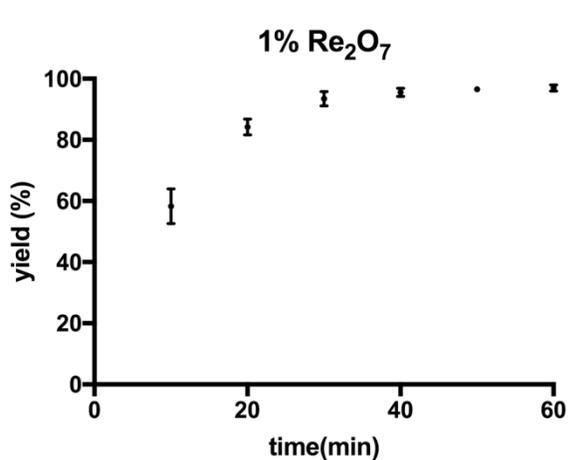
10% TfOH		
t [min]	Y (%) RXN 1	Y (%) RXN 2
10	57.4	57.4
20	76.7	75.8
30	84.8	77.4
40	86.7	80.9
50	90.9	90.4
60	91.8	94.7

2% TfOH		
t [min]	Y (%) RXN 1	Y (%) RXN 2
10	13.8	13.1
20	24.3	25.9
30	36.9	37.6
40	46.8	46.3
50	53.4	53.4
60	58.4	58.7



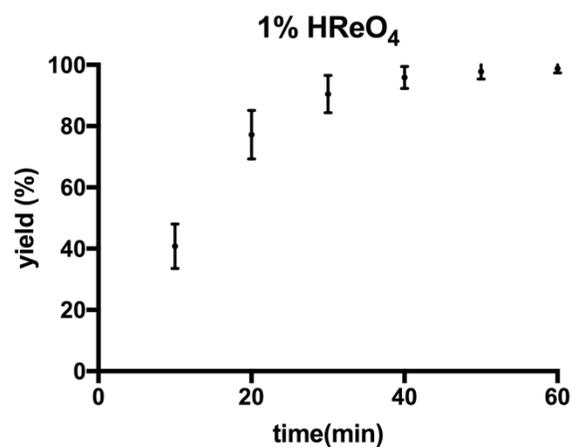
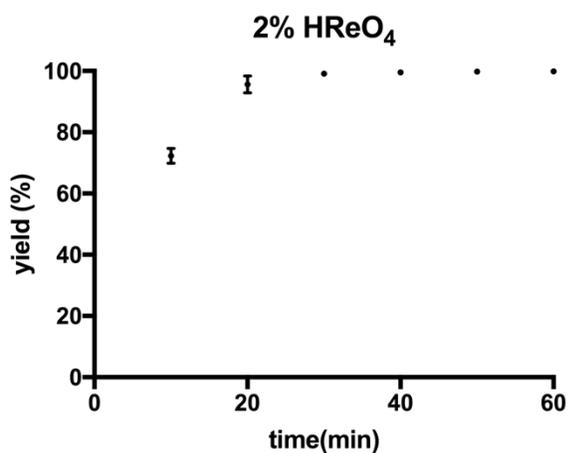
1% Re ₂ O ₇		
t [min]	Y (%) RXN 1	Y (%) RXN 2
10	62.3	54.2
20	82.4	86.0
30	91.8	95.1
40	94.6	96.4
50	97.0	96.1
60	97.6	96.2

1% Re ₂ O ₇ ·SiO ₂		
t [min]	Y (%) RXN 1	Y (%) RXN 2
10	46.7	53.3
20	71.9	72.3
30	81.1	80.1
40	88.1	87.0
50	90.0	90.0
60	92.8	92.8



2% HReO ₄		
<i>t</i> [min]	Y (%) RXN 1	Y (%) RXN
10	73.9	70.5
20	97.5	93.6
30	99.5	98.7
40	99.5	99.5
50	99.7	99.7
60	99.8	99.8

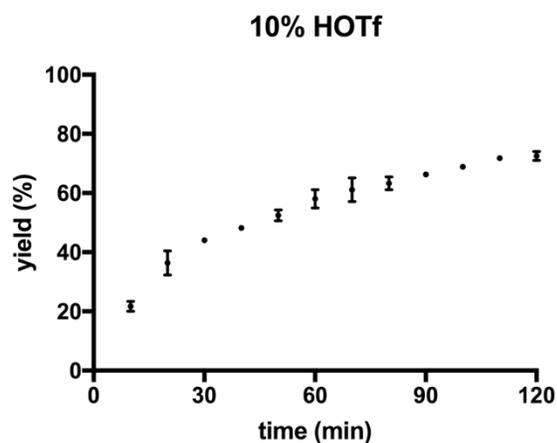
1% HReO ₄		
<i>t</i> [min]	Y (%) RXN 1	Y (%) RXN 2
10	35.6	45.9
20	71.6	82.8
30	86.1	94.7
40	93.3	98.4
50	96.0	99.5
60	97.7	99.7



General procedure for kinetics experiments with a benzylic acetate

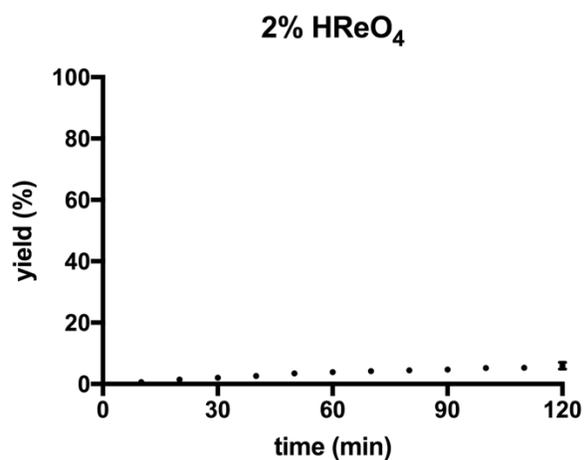
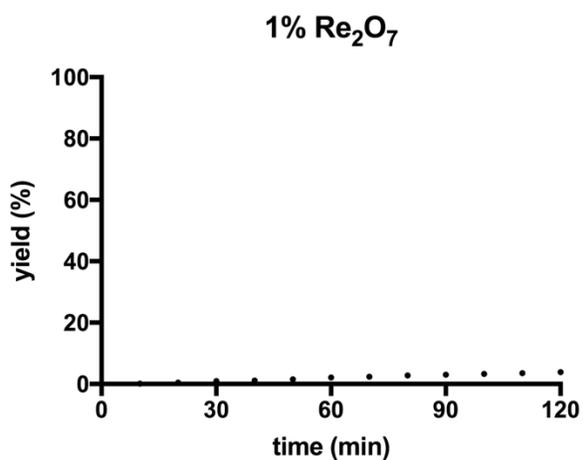
These experiments were conducted in exactly the same manner as for the benzylic alcohol except that *p*-trifluoromethylbenzyl acetate was used as the substrate.

10% HOTf		
<i>t</i> [min]	Y (%) RXN1	Y (%) RXN2
10	22.8	20.4
20	39.2	33.4
30	44.5	43.4
40	48.0	48.3
50	53.7	51.1
60	60.2	55.8
70	63.9	58.2
80	64.7	61.7
90	66.6	65.9
100	69.0	68.7
110	71.1	72.3
120	71.4	73.5



1% Re_2O_7		
t [min]	Y (%) RXN1	Y (%) RXN2
10	0.1	0.1
20	0.4	0.5
30	0.7	1.2
40	0.9	1.4
50	1.4	1.7
60	2.0	2.3
70	2.2	2.4
80	2.7	2.9
90	2.7	3.4
100	2.8	3.8
110	2.9	4.1
120	3.2	4.5

2% HReO_4		
t [min]	Y (%) RXN1	Y (%) RXN2
10	0.5	0.7
20	1.9	1.1
30	2.0	2.1
40	2.8	2.4
50	3.8	3.2
60	4.1	3.7
70	4.5	3.8
80	4.8	4.2
90	5.1	4.2
100	5.7	4.8
110	5.7	4.8
120	6.7	5.1



Competition studies

TfOH, low conversion

General reaction protocol A was followed with 3-(hydroxymethyl)benzyl acetate² **55** (35.0 mg, 0.19 mmol), *p*-xylene (143.7 μ l, 1.17 mmol), trifluoromethanesulfonic acid (1.7 μ l, 0.019 mmol) and HFIP (0.38 ml). The reaction mixture was stirred at ambient temperature for 1 h, then was quenched by 4-dimethylaminopyridine (3.1 mg, 0.025 mmol). The crude mixture was condensed under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (hexane to 5% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give 1,3-bis(2,5-dimethylbenzyl)benzene **57** (8.6 mg, 14% yield) and 3-(2,5-dimethylbenzyl)benzyl acetate **56** (11.1 mg, 21% yield). Increasing the eluent polarity (30% ethyl acetate in hexane to 50% ethyl acetate in hexane) led to the recovery starting material (22.5 mg, 64%).

TfOH, high conversion

General reaction protocol A was followed with **55** (30.1 mg, 0.17 mmol), *p*-xylene (123.6 μ l, 1.00 mmol), trifluoromethanesulfonic acid (1.5 μ l, 0.017 mmol) and HFIP (0.34 ml). The reaction mixture was stirred at ambient temperature for 2.25 h, then was quenched by 4-dimethylaminopyridine. The crude mixture was condensed under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (hexane to 5% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give **57** (39.4 mg, 75% yield) and **56** (11.1 mg, 21% yield). Increasing the eluent polarity (30% ethyl acetate in hexane to 50% ethyl acetate in hexane) led to the recovery starting material (3.2 mg, 10%).

Re₂O₇, low conversion

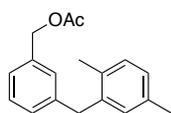
General reaction protocol A was followed with **55** (37.2 mg, 0.21 mmol), *p*-xylene (152.9 μ l, 1.24 mmol), Re₂O₇ (1.0 mg, 0.002 mmol) and HFIP (0.42 ml). The reaction mixture was stirred at ambient temperature for 1 h, then was quenched by 4-dimethylaminopyridine. The crude mixture was condensed under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (hexane to 5% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give **57** (1.2 mg, 2% yield) and **56** (28.6 mg, 52% yield). Increasing the eluent polarity (30% ethyl acetate in hexane to 50% ethyl acetate in hexane) led to the recovery starting material (17.2 mg, 46%).

Re₂O₇, high conversion

General reaction protocol A was followed with **55** (29.8 mg, 0.17 mmol), *p*-xylene (122.3 μ l, 0.99 mmol), Re₂O₇ (0.8 mg, 0.0017 mmol) and HFIP (0.34 ml). The reaction mixture was stirred at ambient temperature for 2.25 h, then was quenched by 4-dimethylaminopyridine. The crude mixture was condensed under vacuum and purified by flash chromatography (hexane to 5% ethyl acetate in hexane) to give **57** (9.3 mg, 17% yield) and **56** (34.7 mg, 76% yield). Increasing the

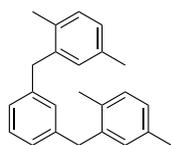
² M. Dow, F. Marchetti, K. A. Abrahams, L. Vaz, G. S. Besra, S. Warriner and A. Nelson, *Chem. Eur. J.* 2017, **23**, 7207.

eluent polarity (30% ethyl acetate in hexane to 50% ethyl acetate in hexane) led to the recovery starting material (1.7 mg, 5%).



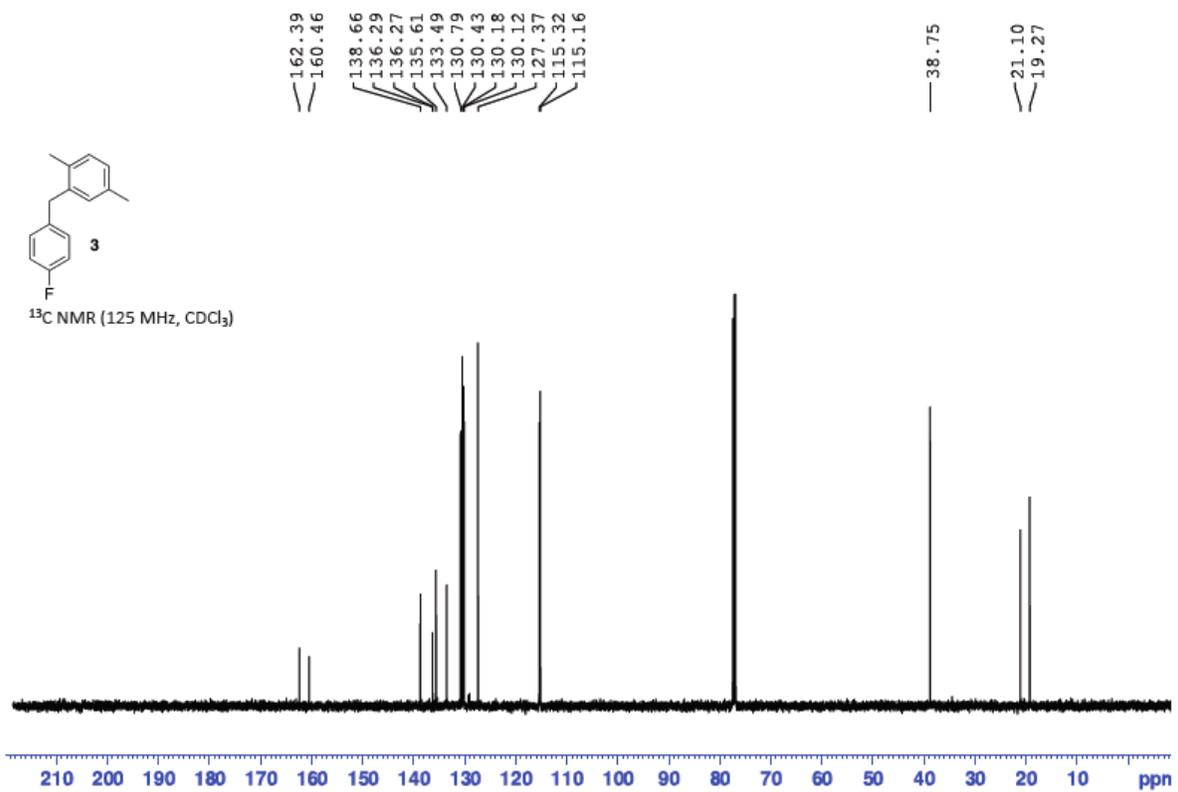
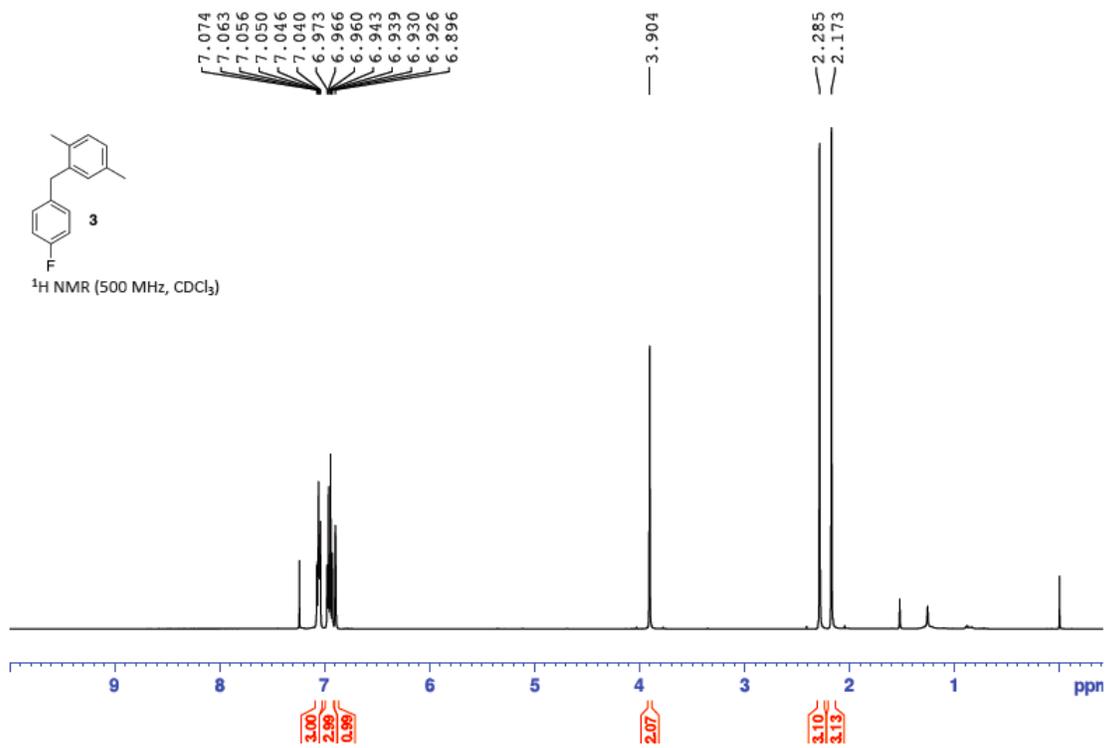
3-(2,5-Bimethylbenzyl)benzyl acetate (56)

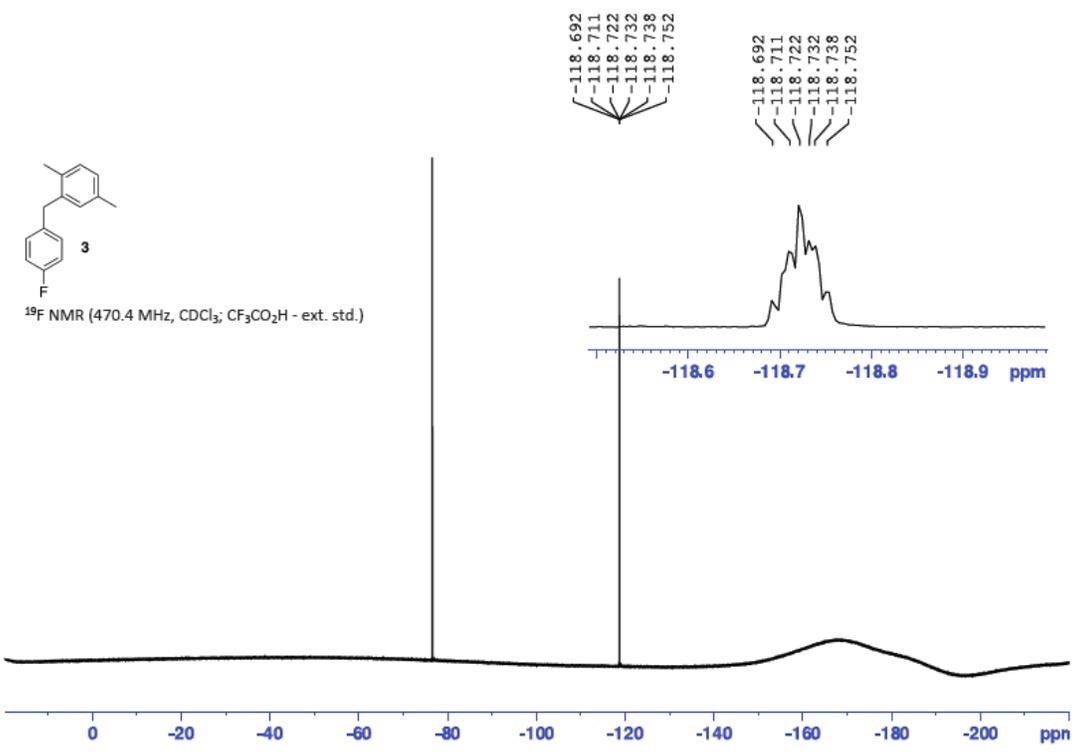
$^1\text{H NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.27-7.22 (m, 1H), 7.17 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.12 (s, 1H), 7.09-7.03 (m, 2H), 6.96 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 6.92 (s, 1H), 5.05 (s, 2H), 3.95 (s, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H), 2.19 (s, 3H), 2.08 (s, 3H); $^{13}\text{C NMR}$ (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 171.0, 141.1, 138.5, 136.1, 135.6, 133.5, 130.9, 130.4, 128.8, 128.7, 128.7, 127.3, 125.9, 66.5, 39.4, 21.2, 21.1, 19.3; HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{20}\text{O}_2$ $[\text{M}]^+$: m/z calcd. 268.1463; found 268.1489.

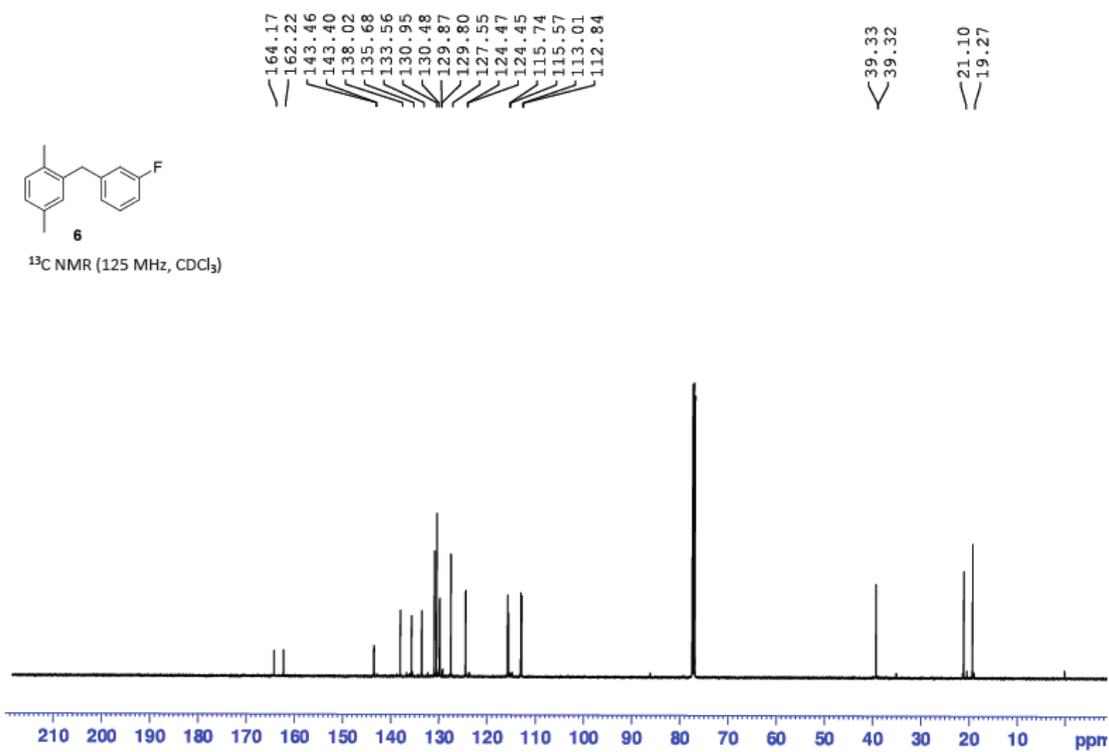
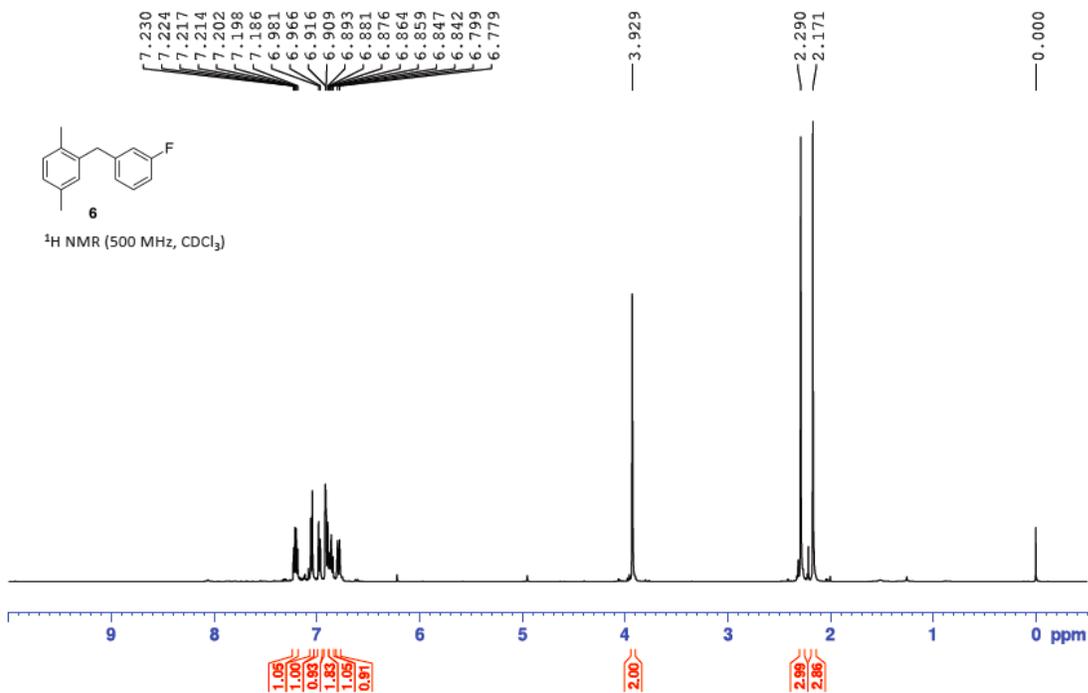


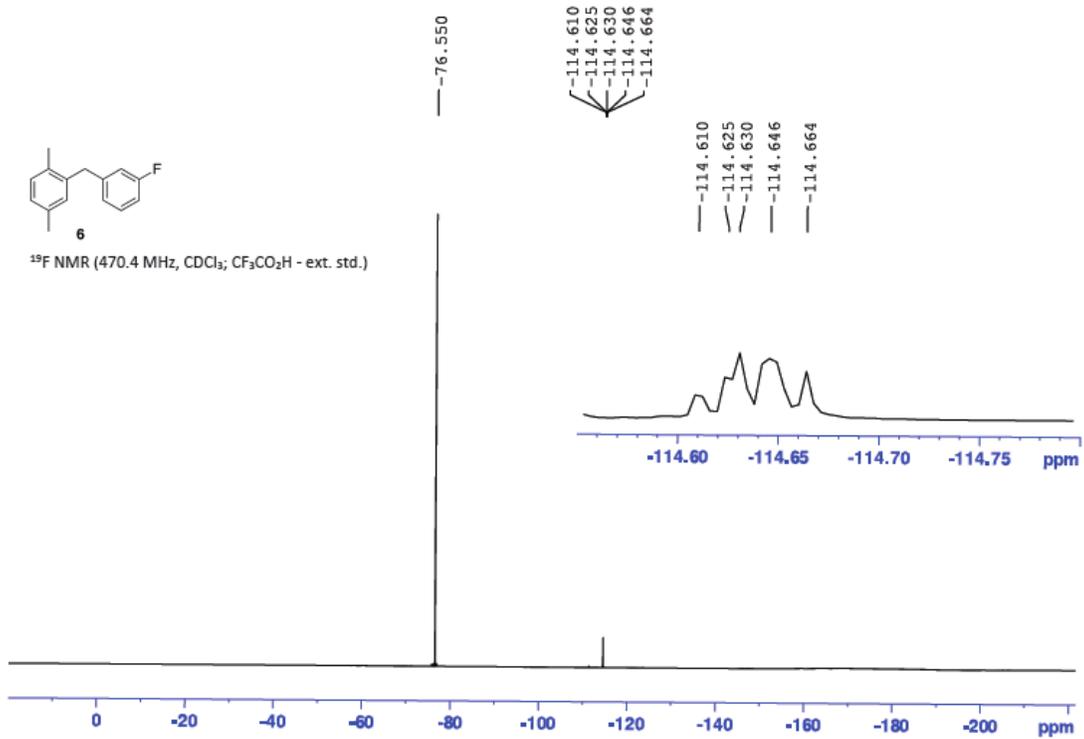
1,3-bis(2,5-dimethylbenzyl)benzene (57)

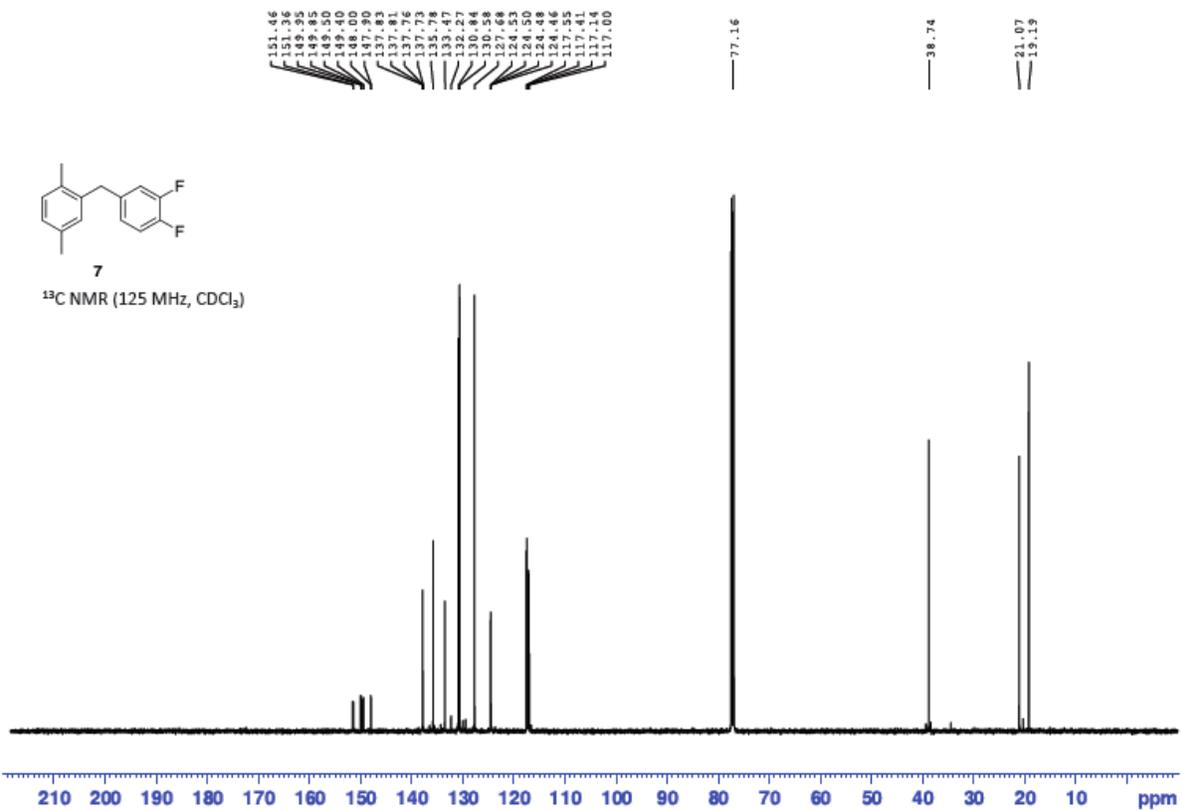
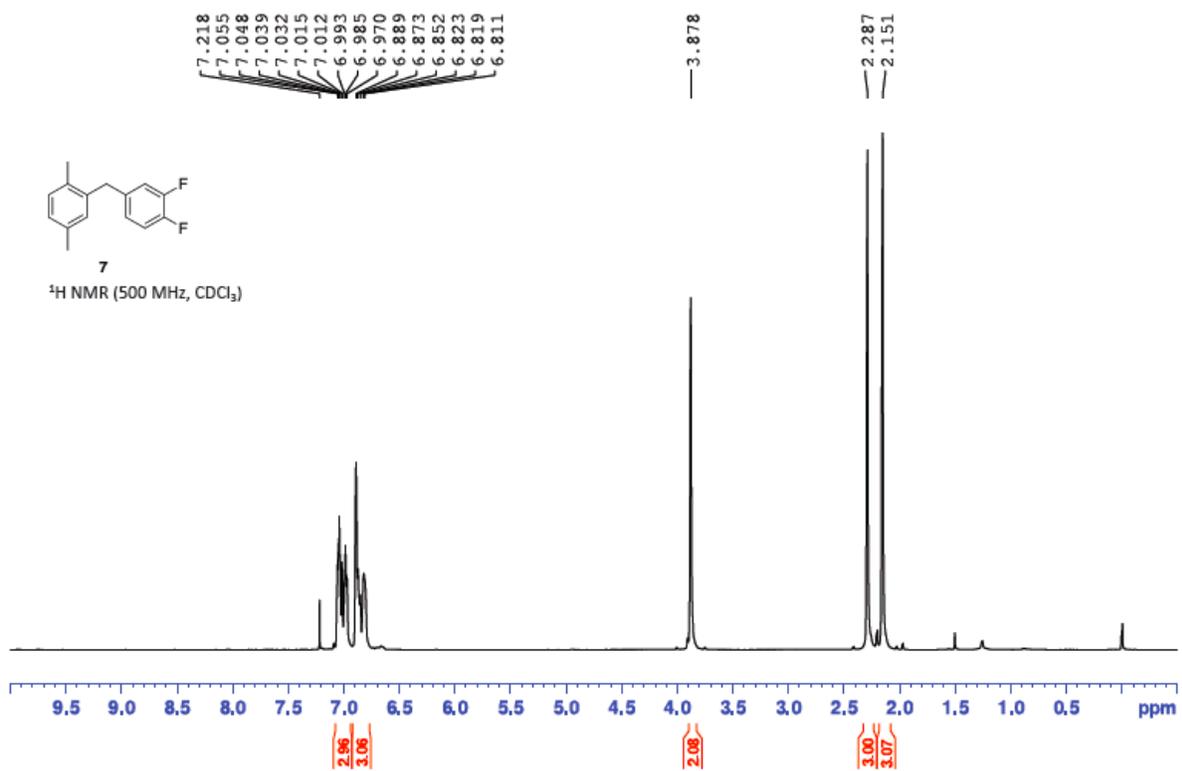
$^1\text{H NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.19-7.12 (m, 1H), 7.03 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 6.97-6.90 (m, 5H), 6.88 (s, 2H), 3.89 (s, 4H), 2.27 (s, 6H), 2.17 (s, 6H); $^{13}\text{C NMR}$ (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 140.6, 139.0, 135.4, 133.5, 130.8, 130.3, 129.6, 128.6, 127.1, 126.4, 39.5, 21.1, 19.3; HRMS (ESI) $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{26}$ $[\text{M}]^+$: m/z calcd. 314.2035; found 314.2044.

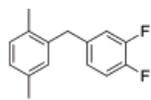






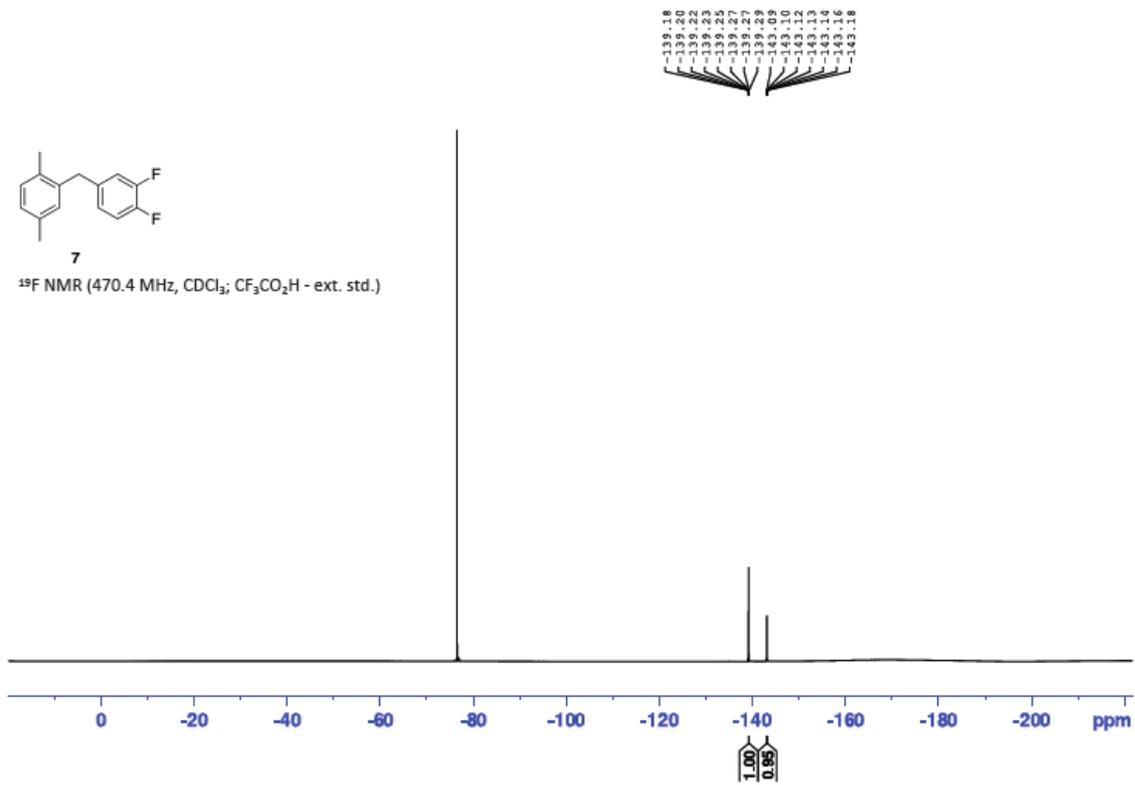


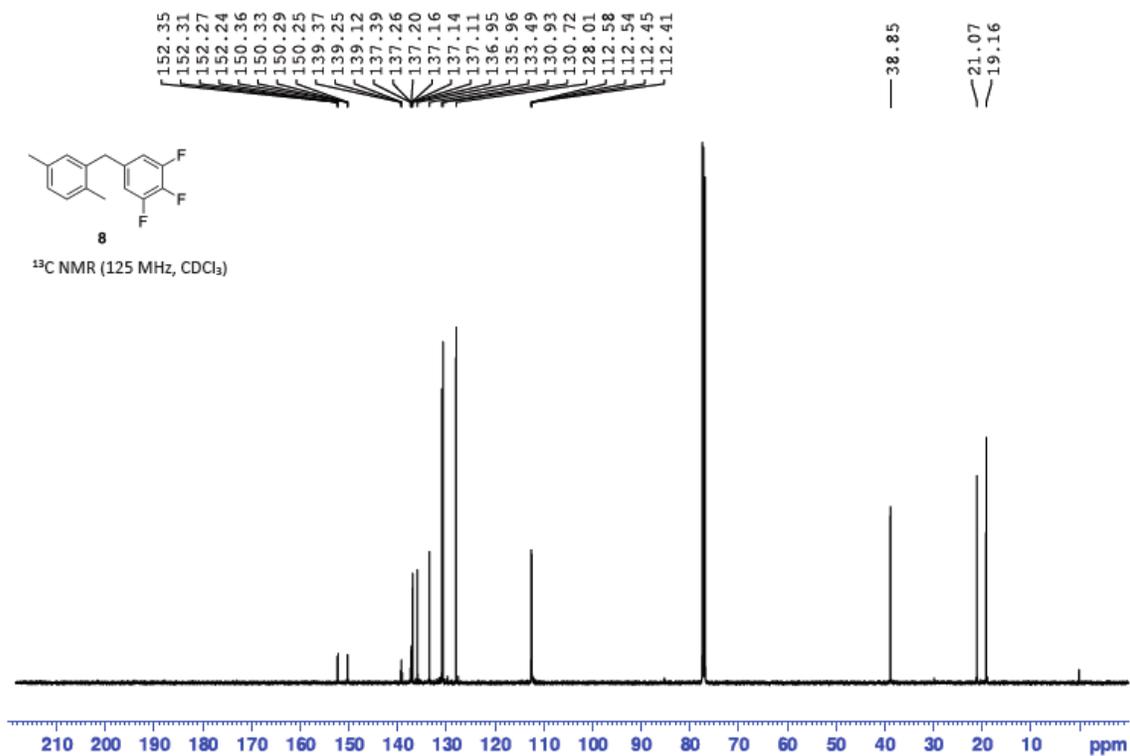
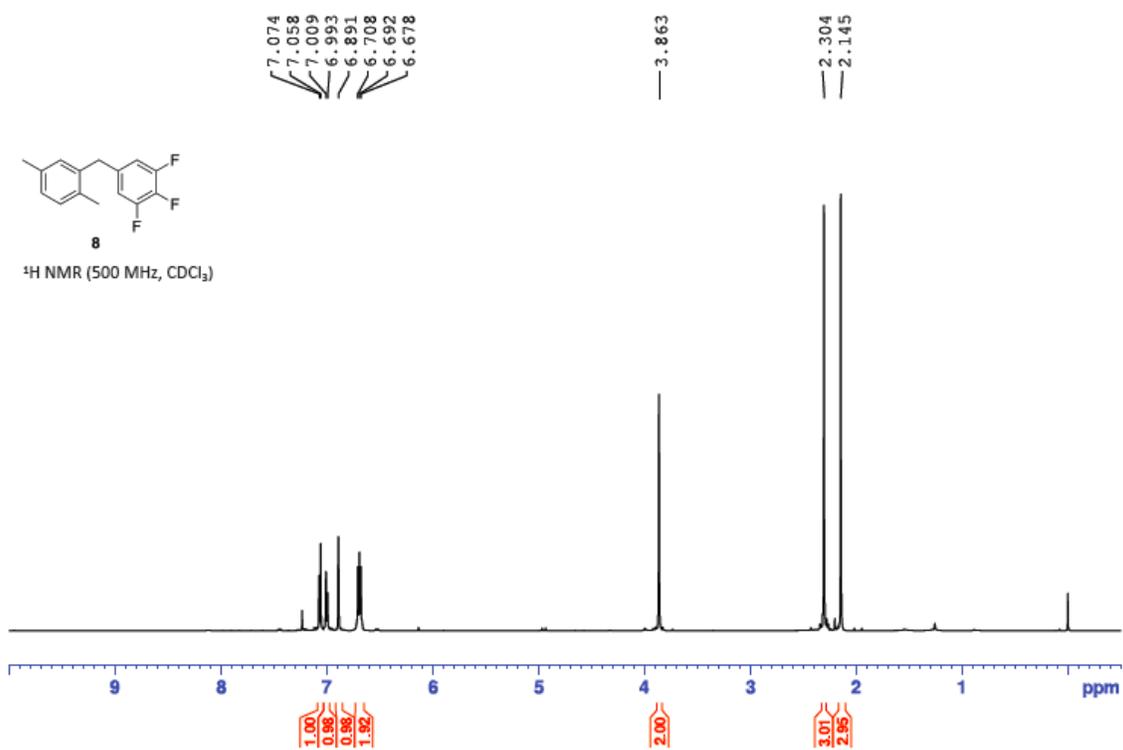


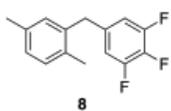


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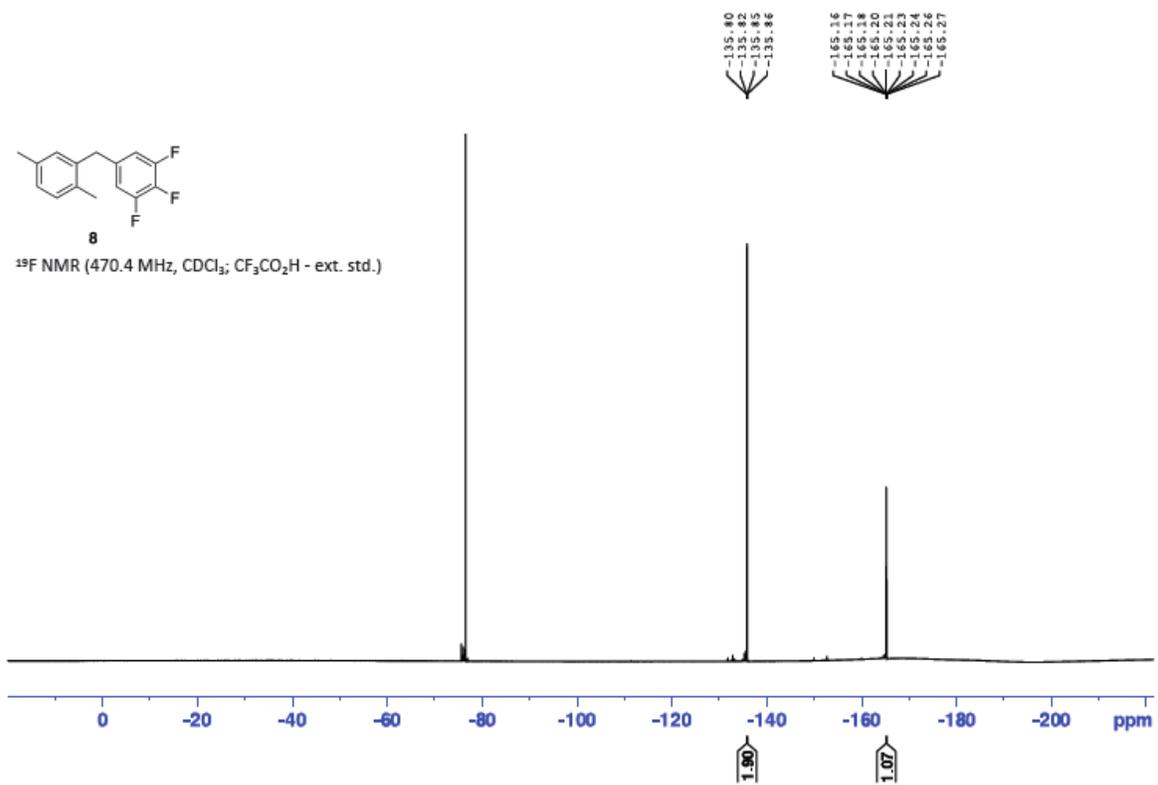
¹⁹F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl₃; CF₃CO₂H - ext. std.)

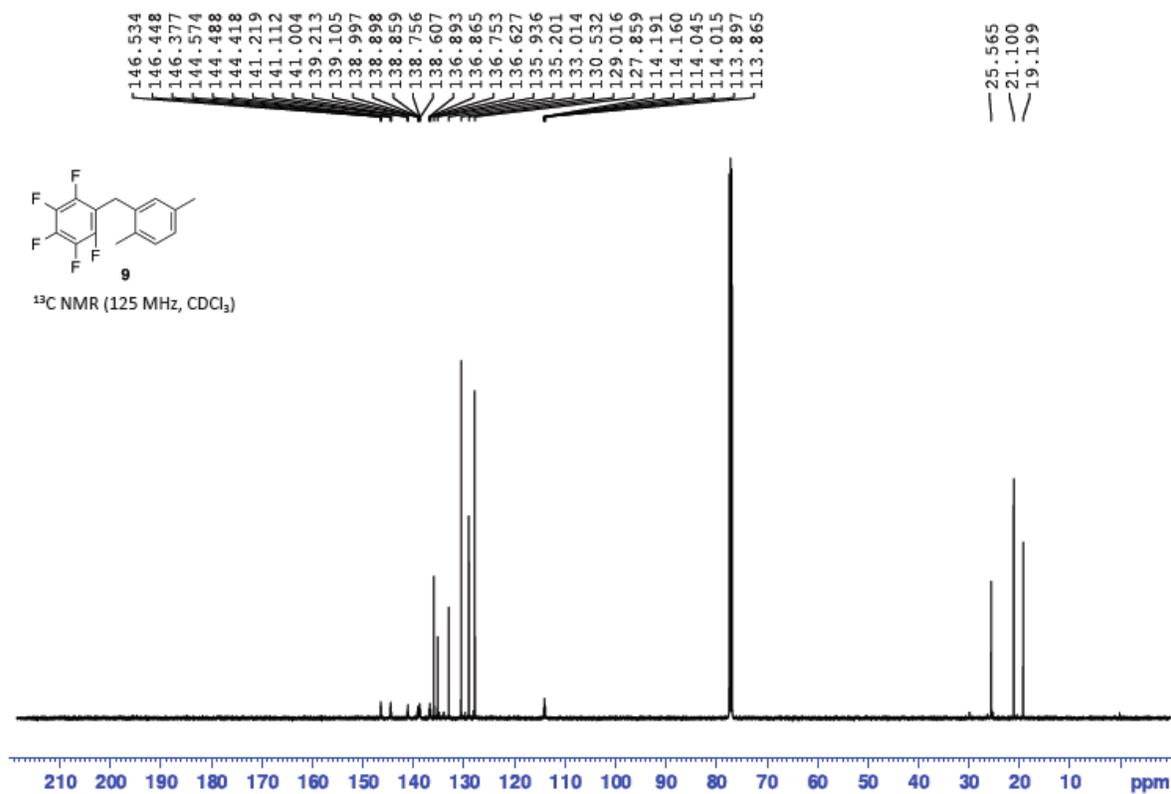
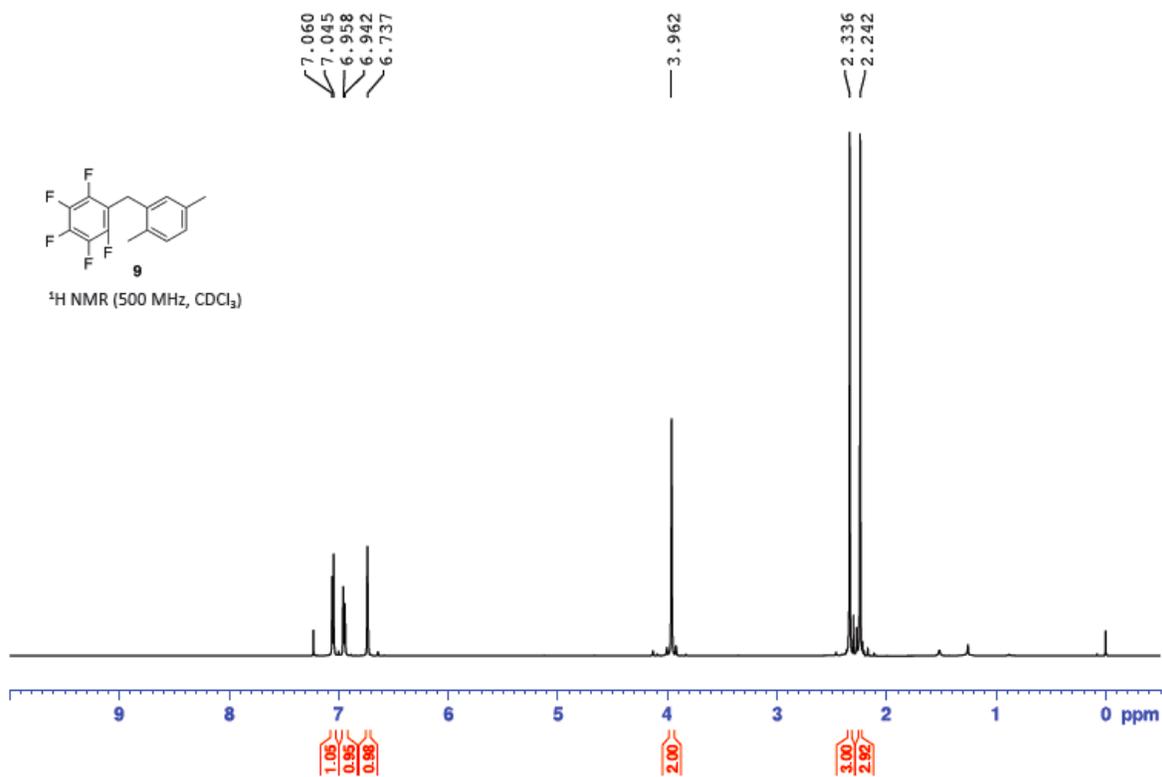


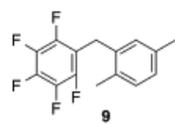




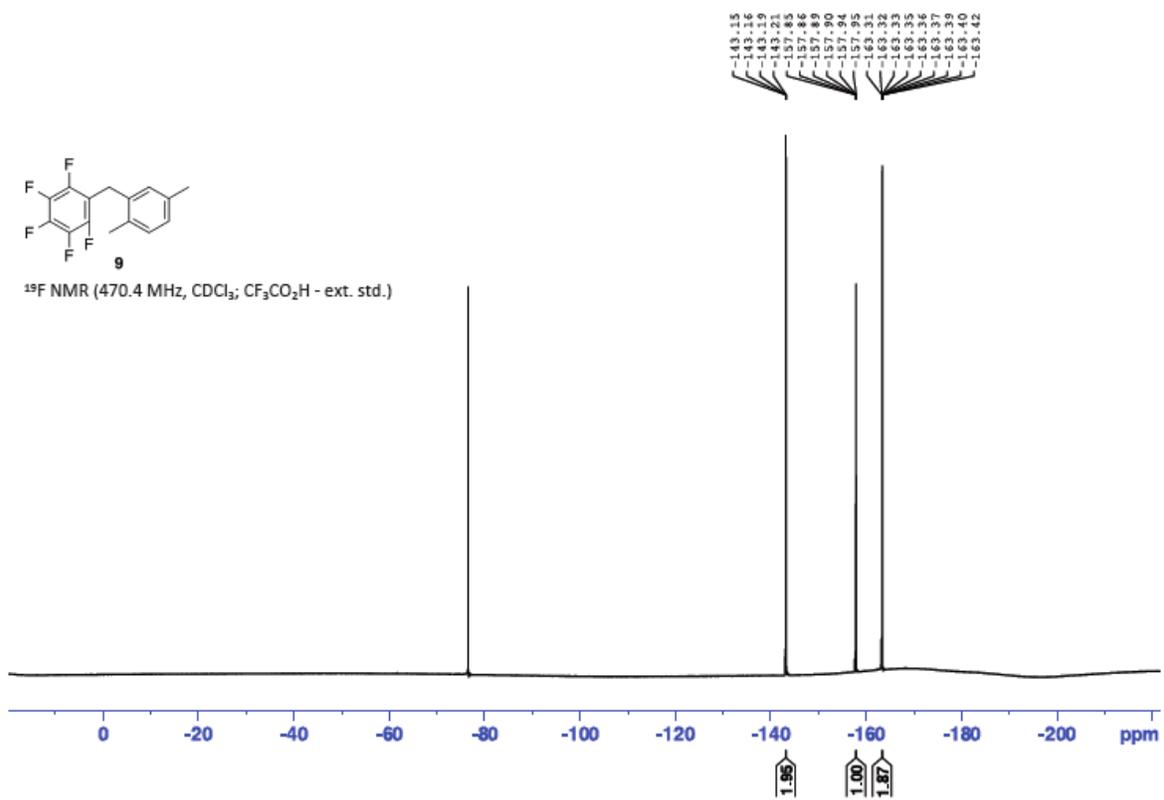
¹⁹F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl₃; CF₃CO₂H - ext. std.)

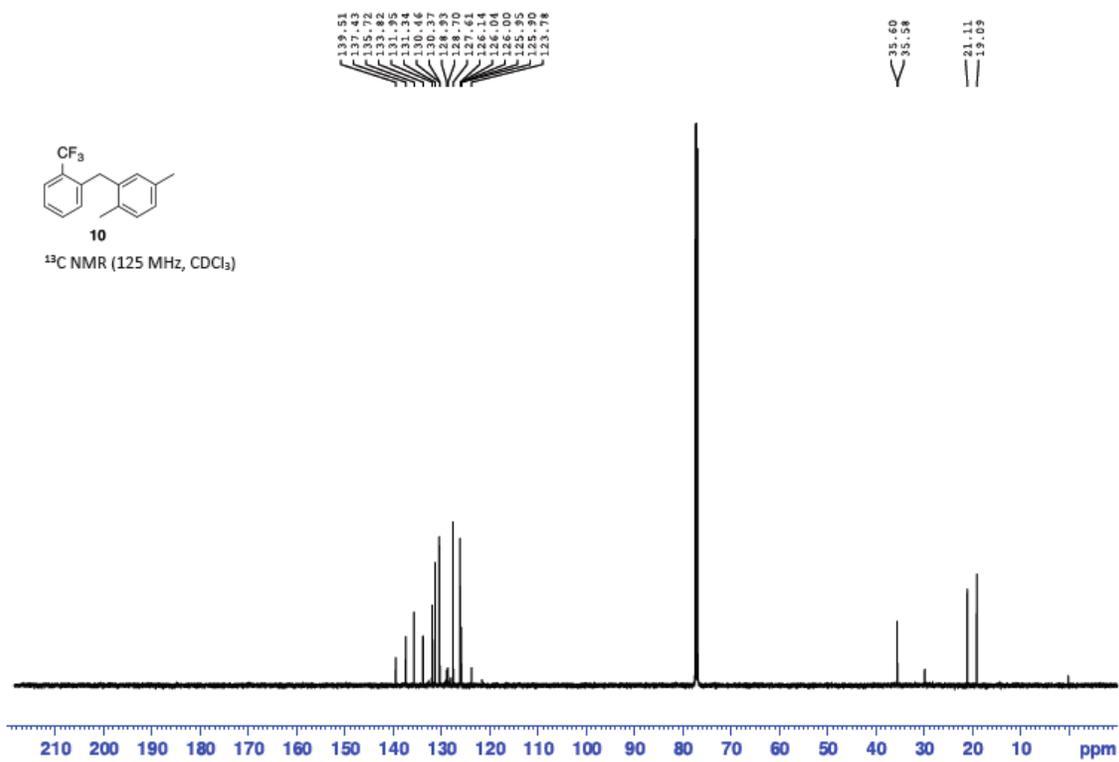
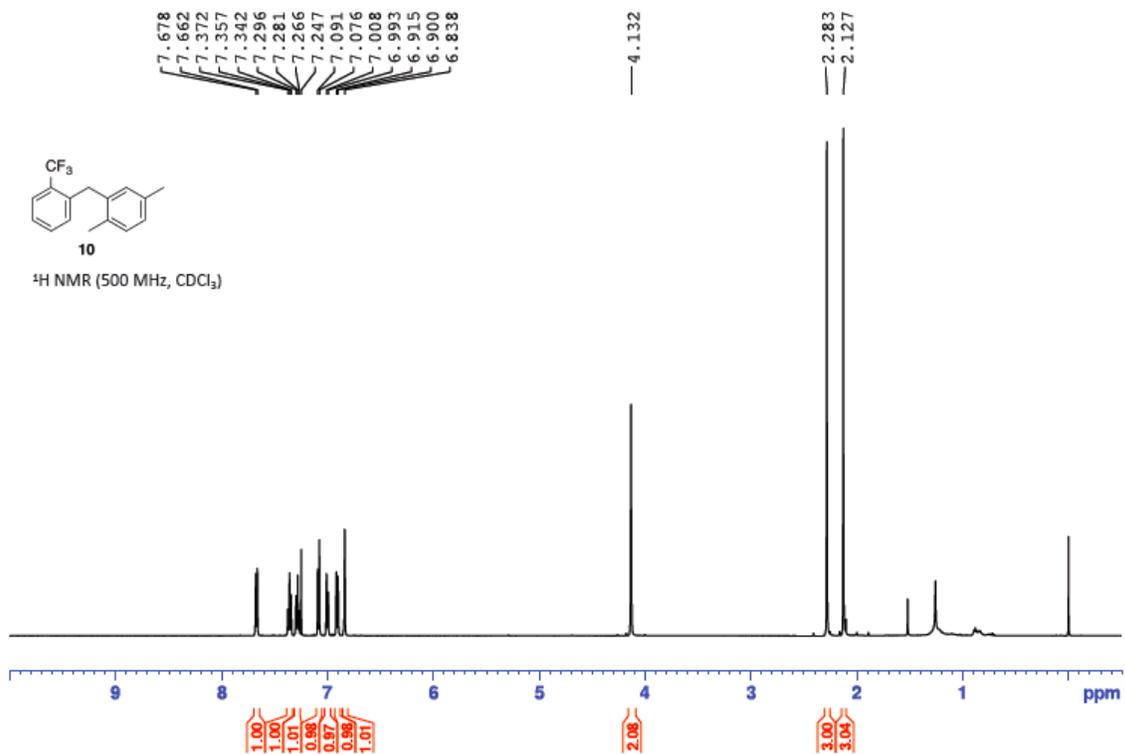


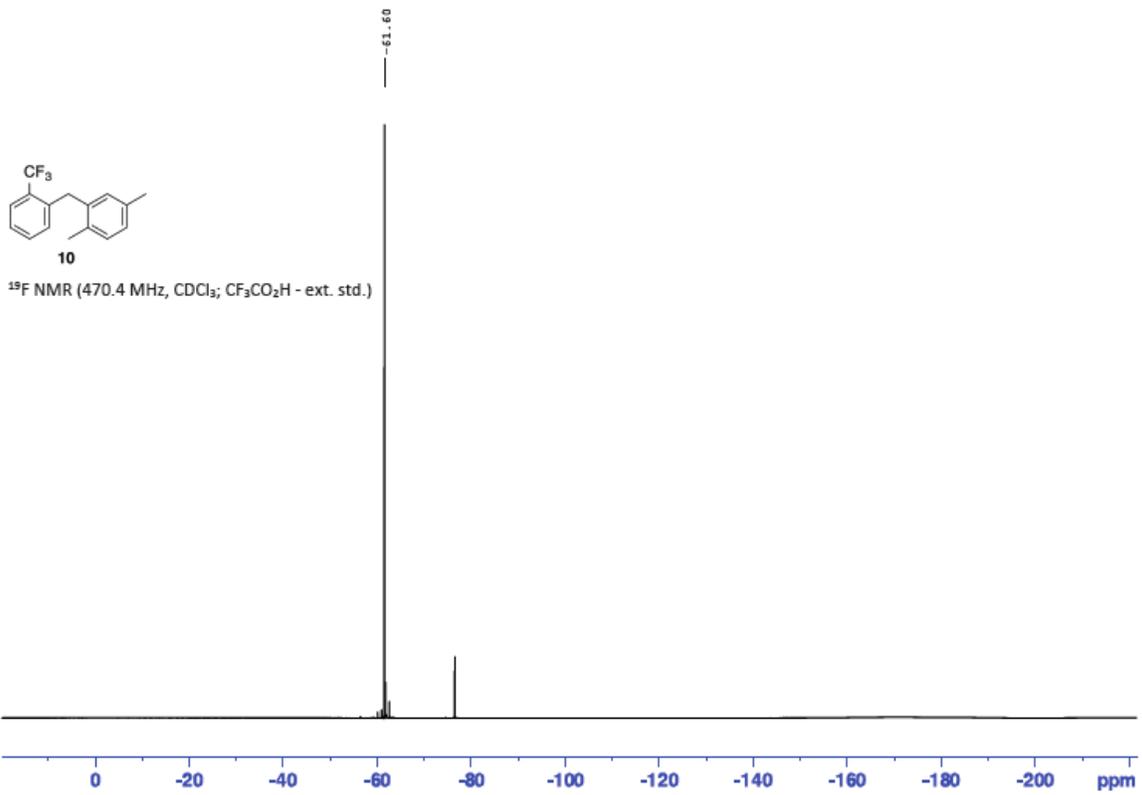


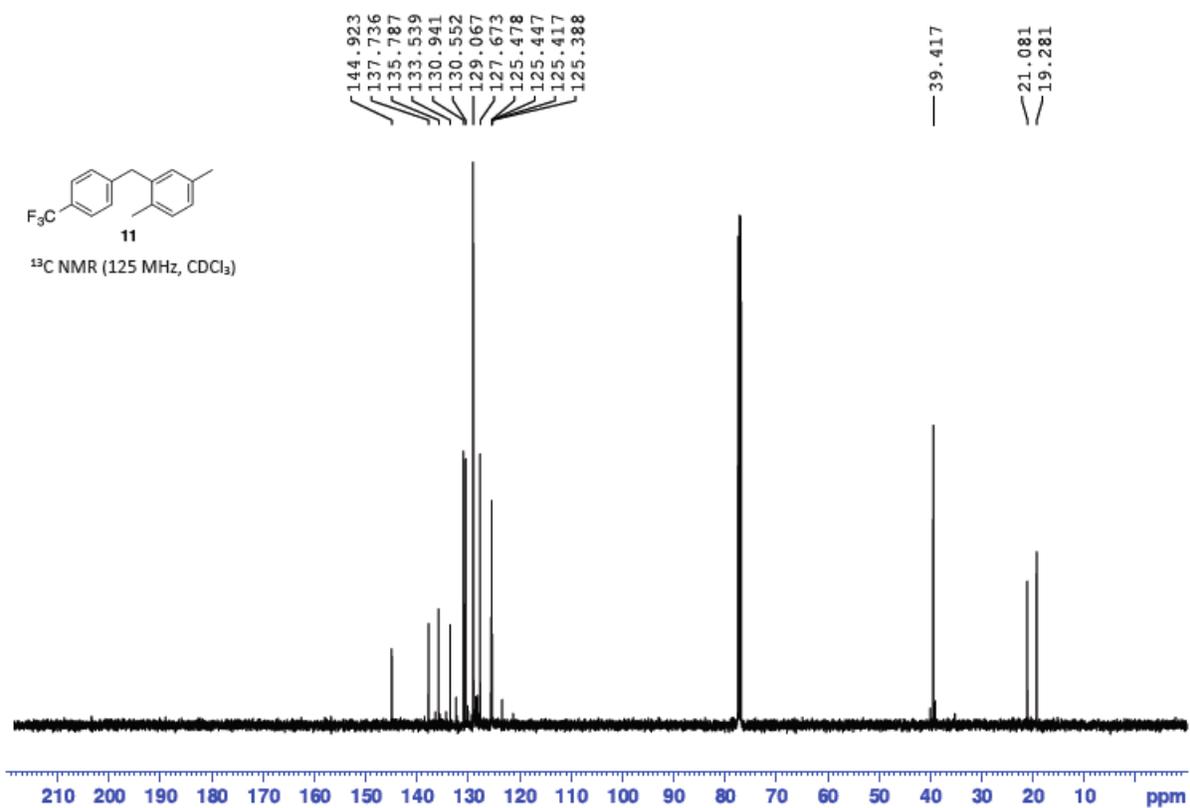
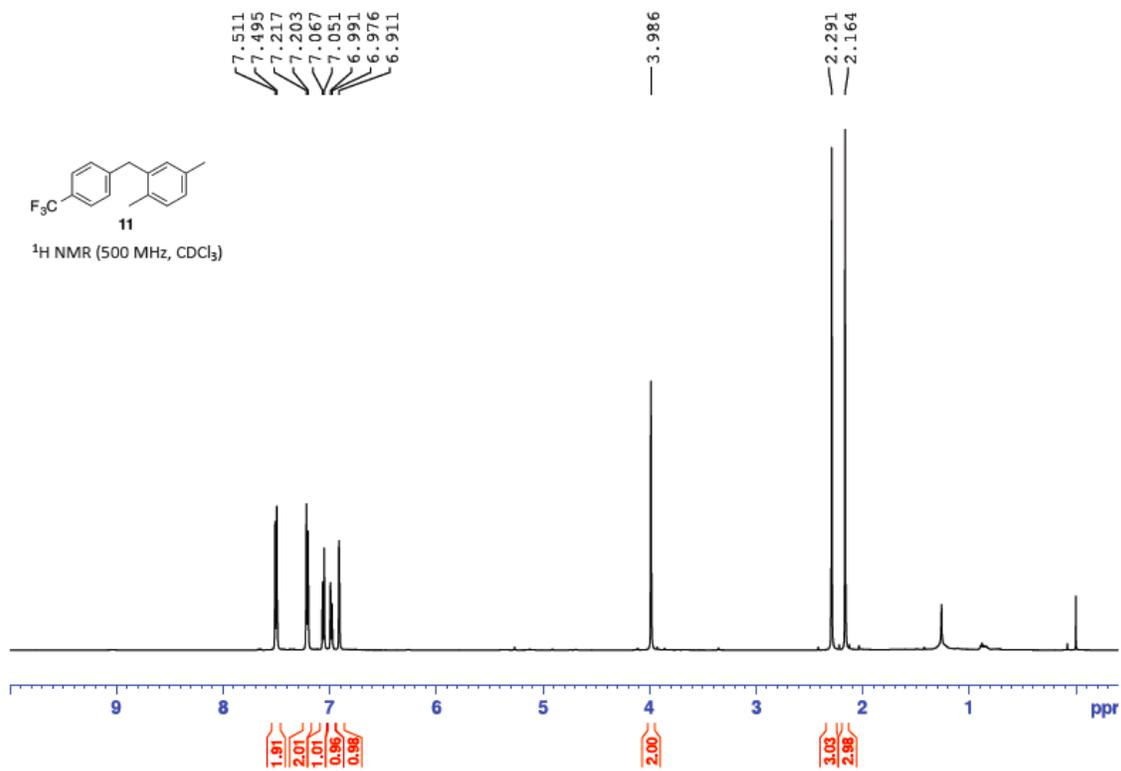


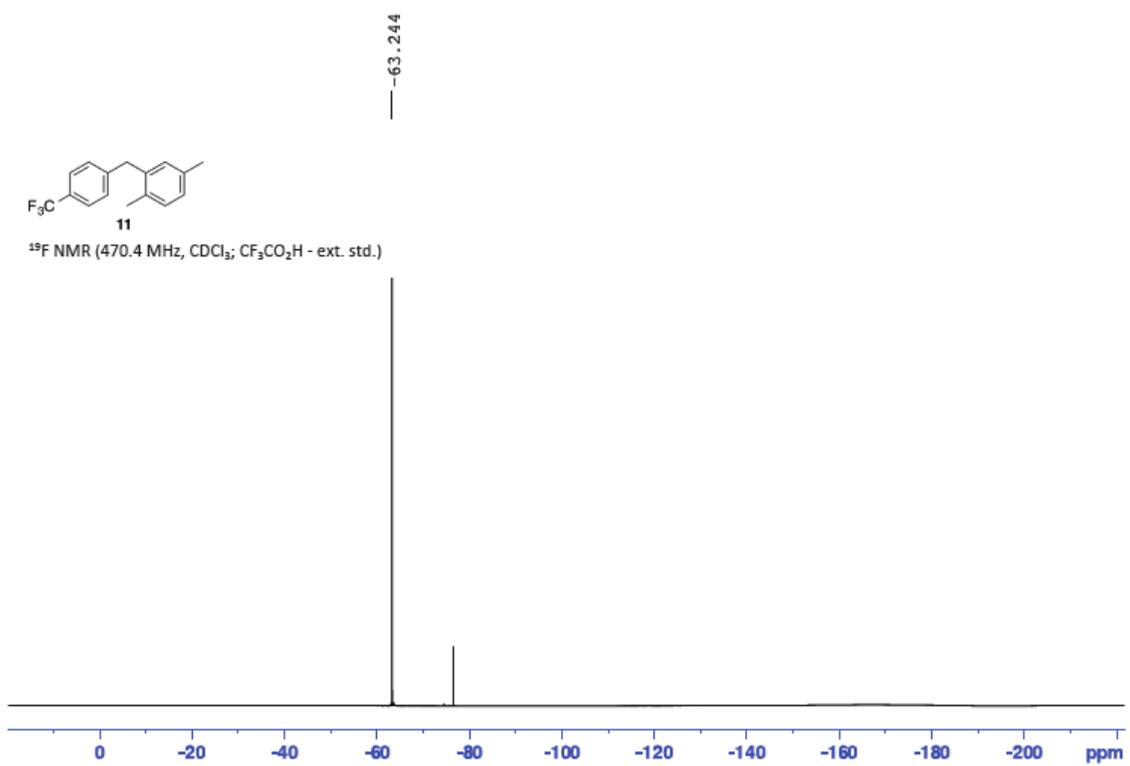
^{19}F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl_3 , $\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ - ext. std.)

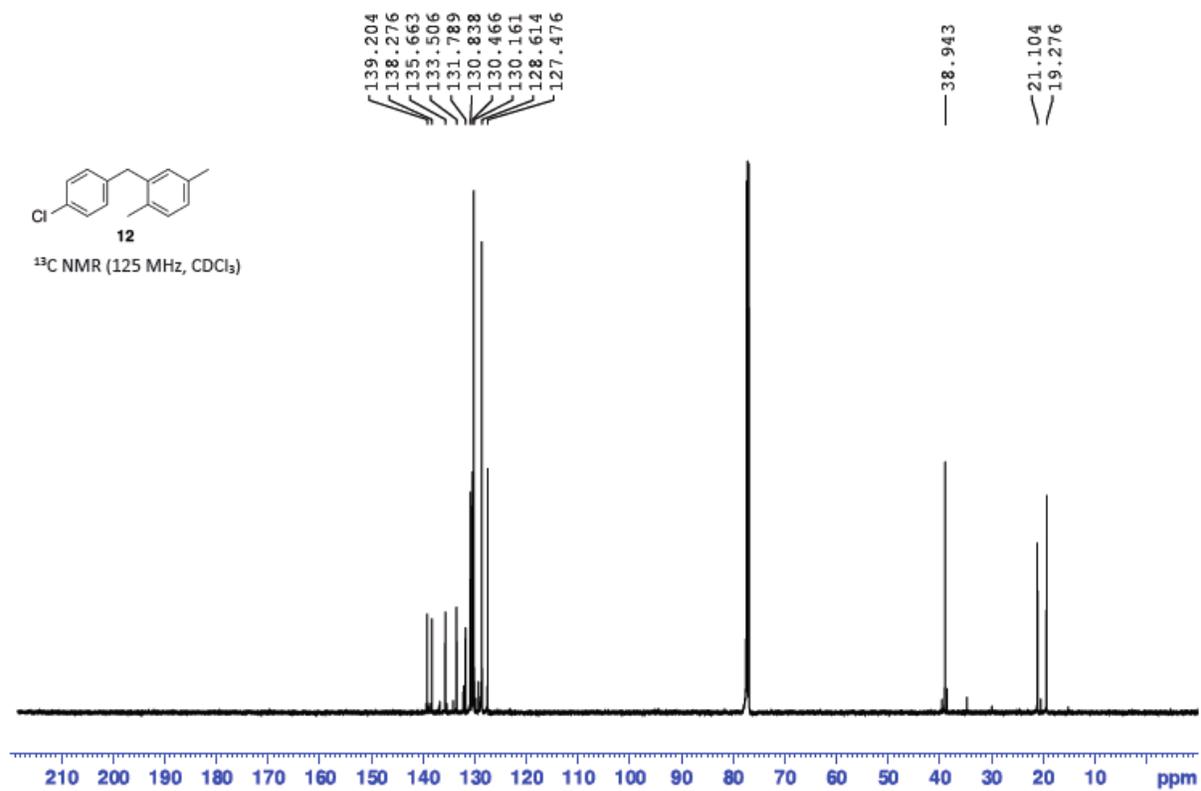
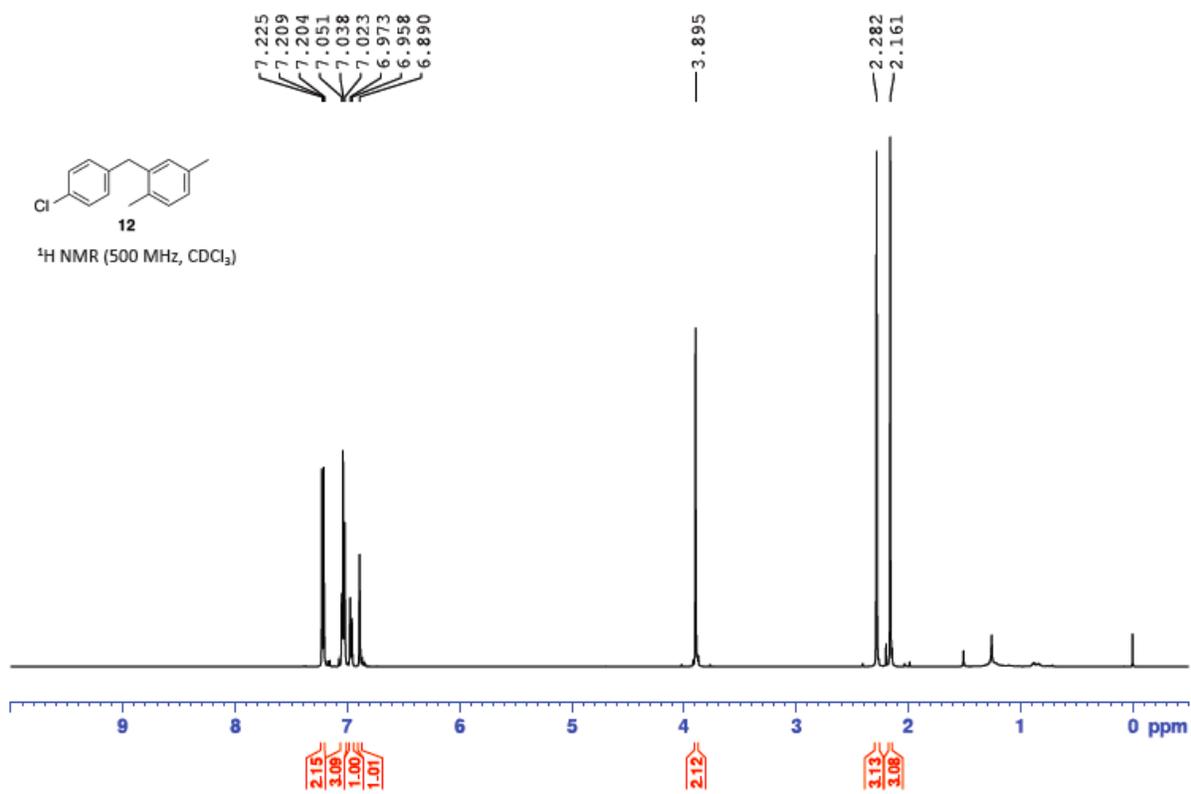


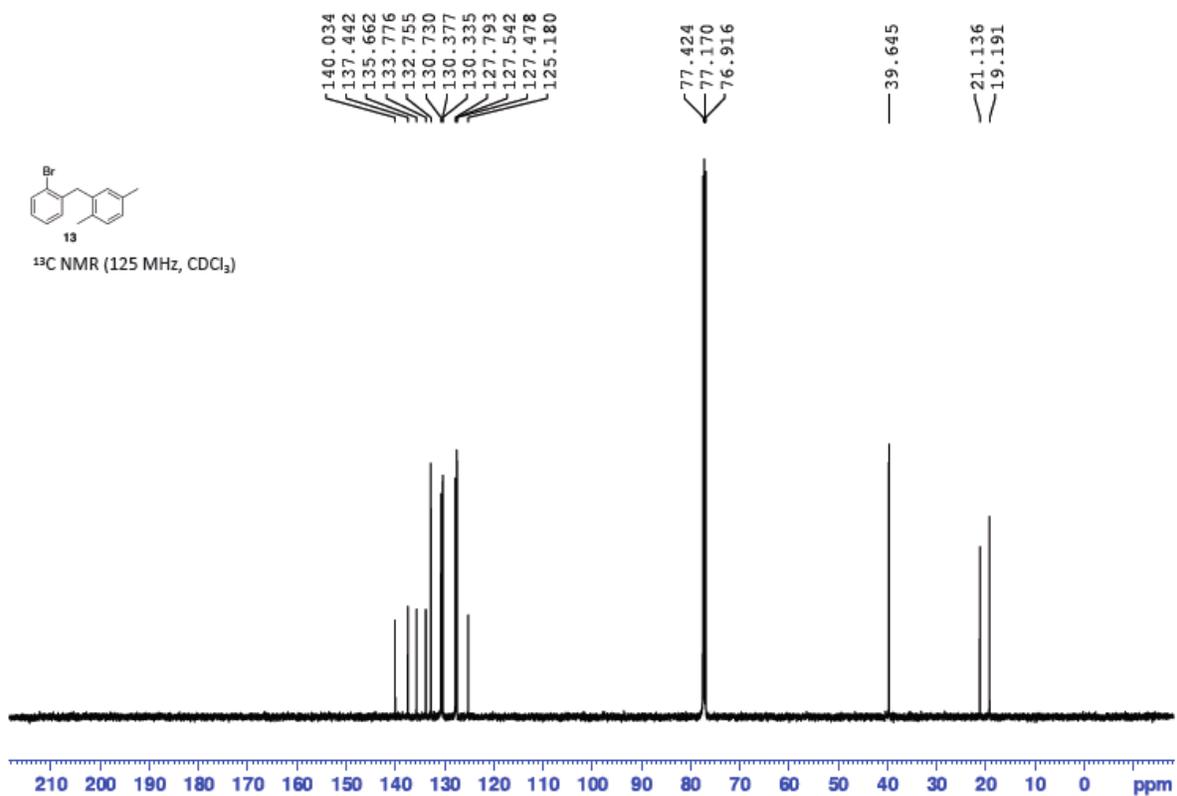
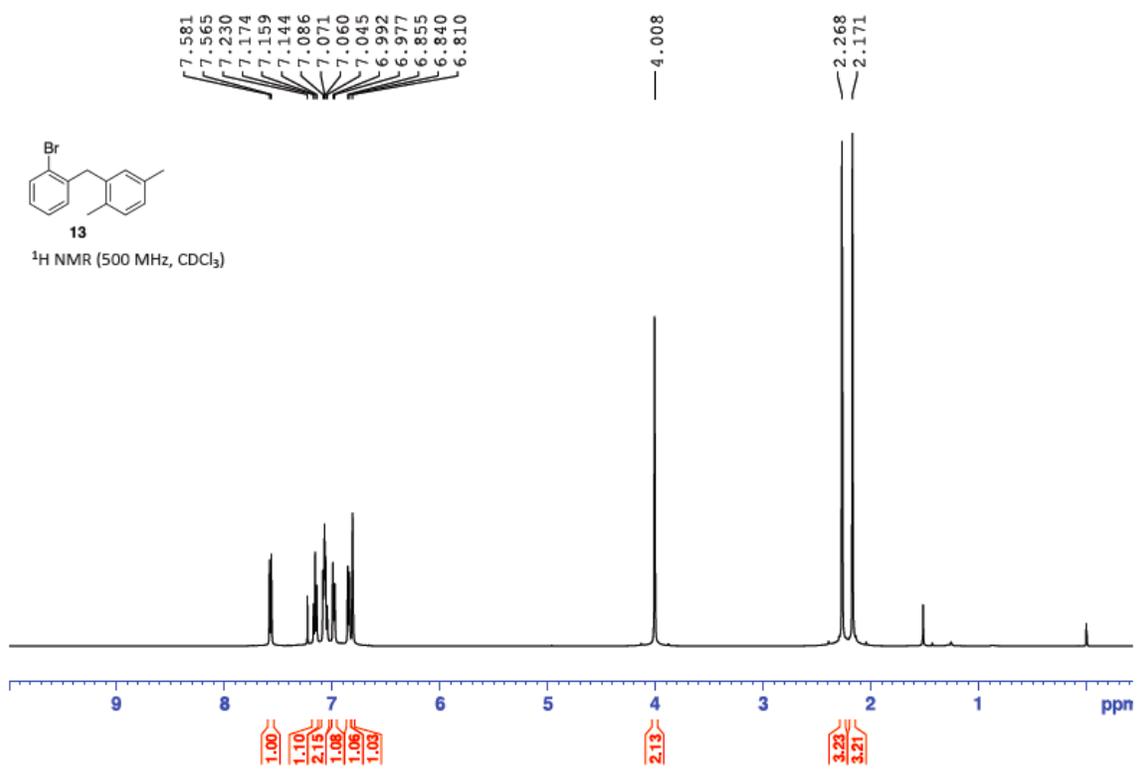


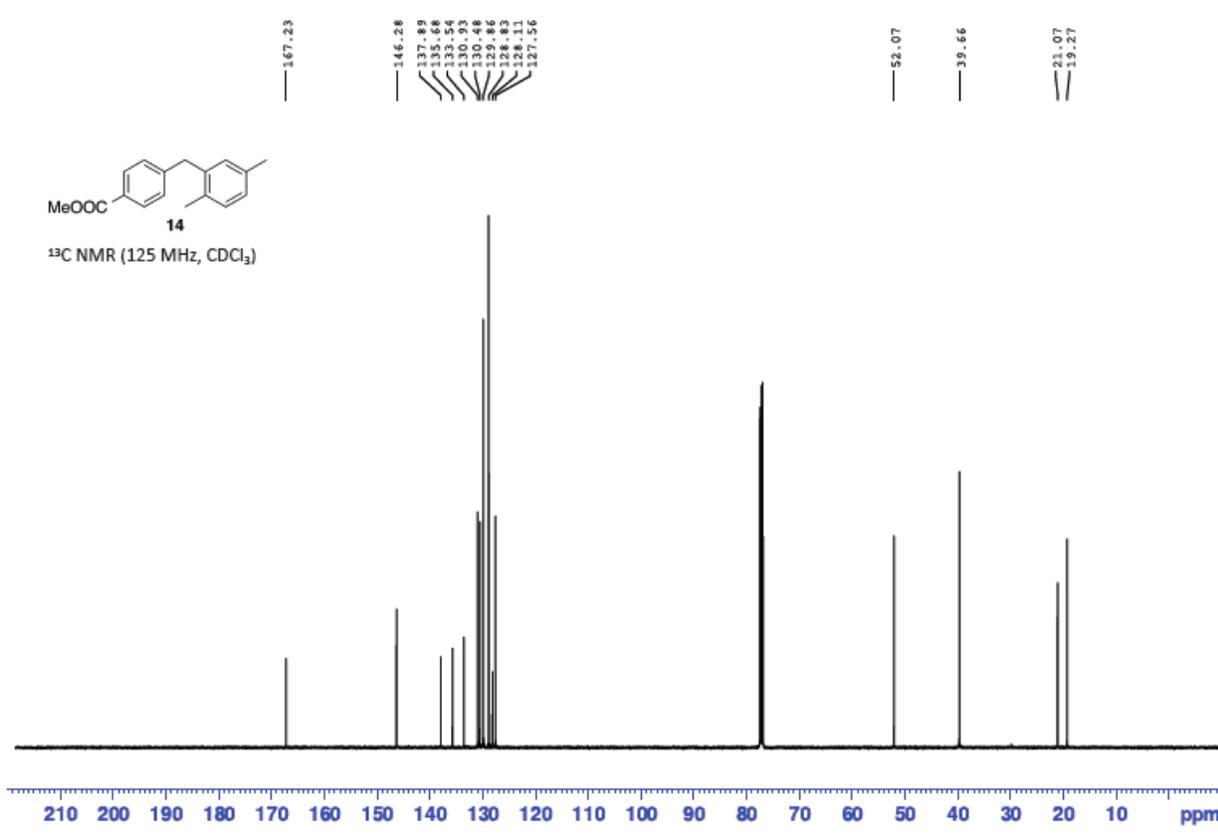
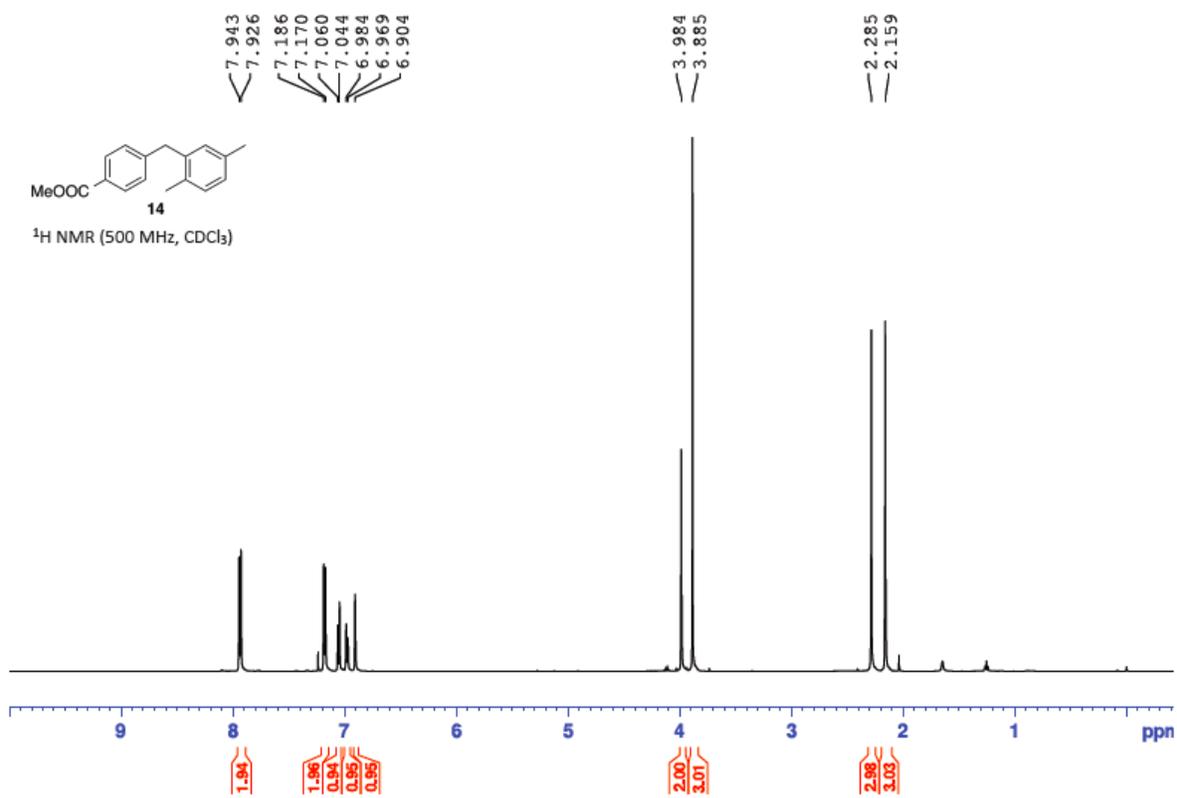


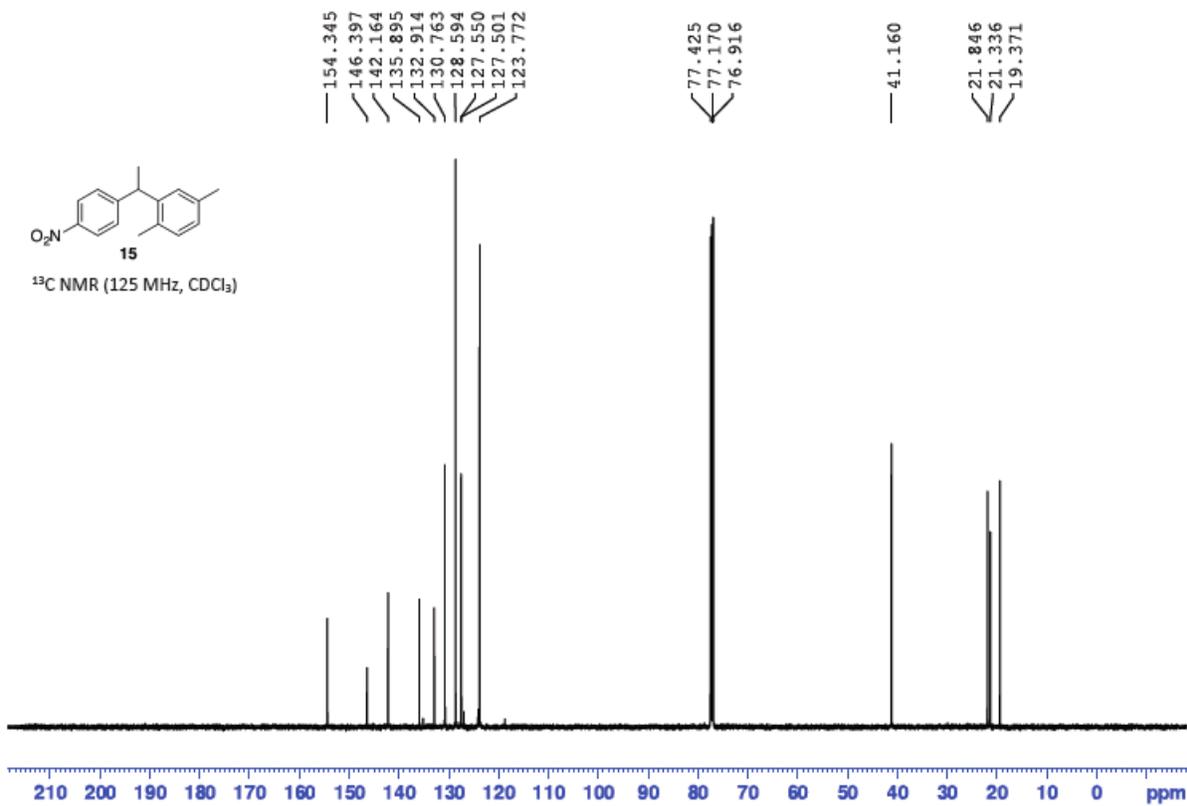
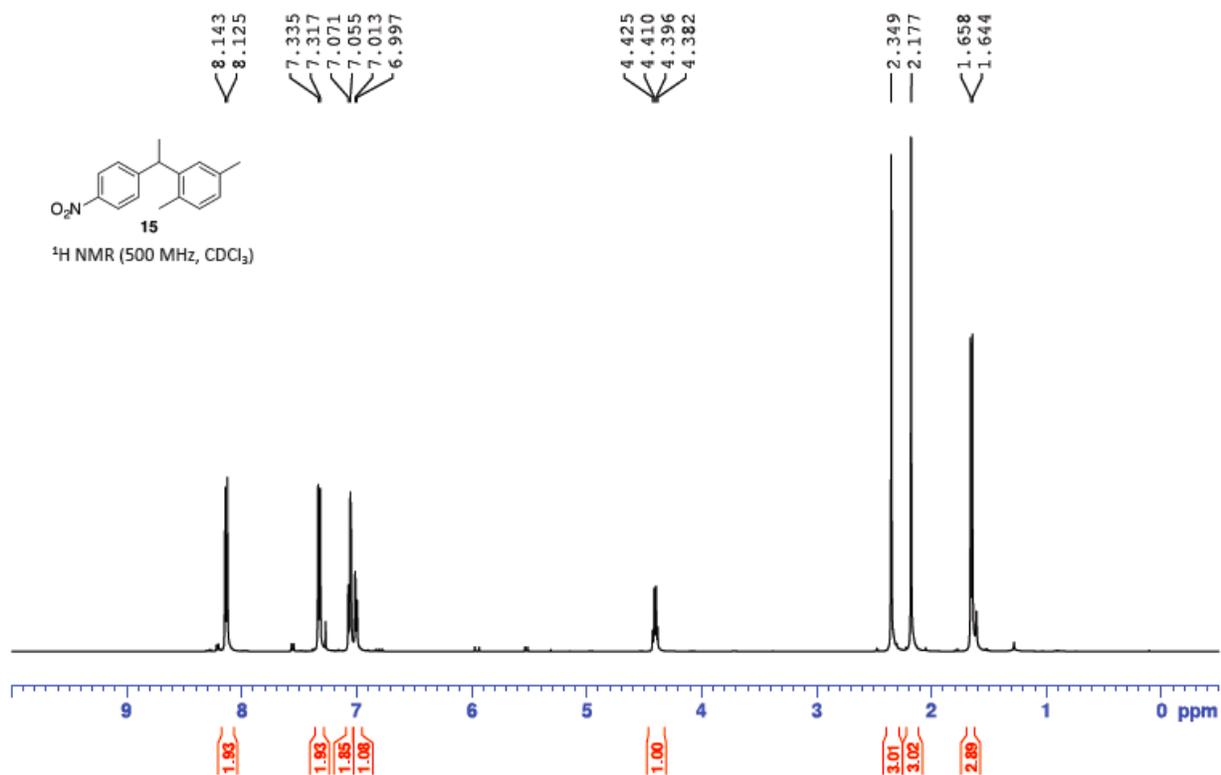


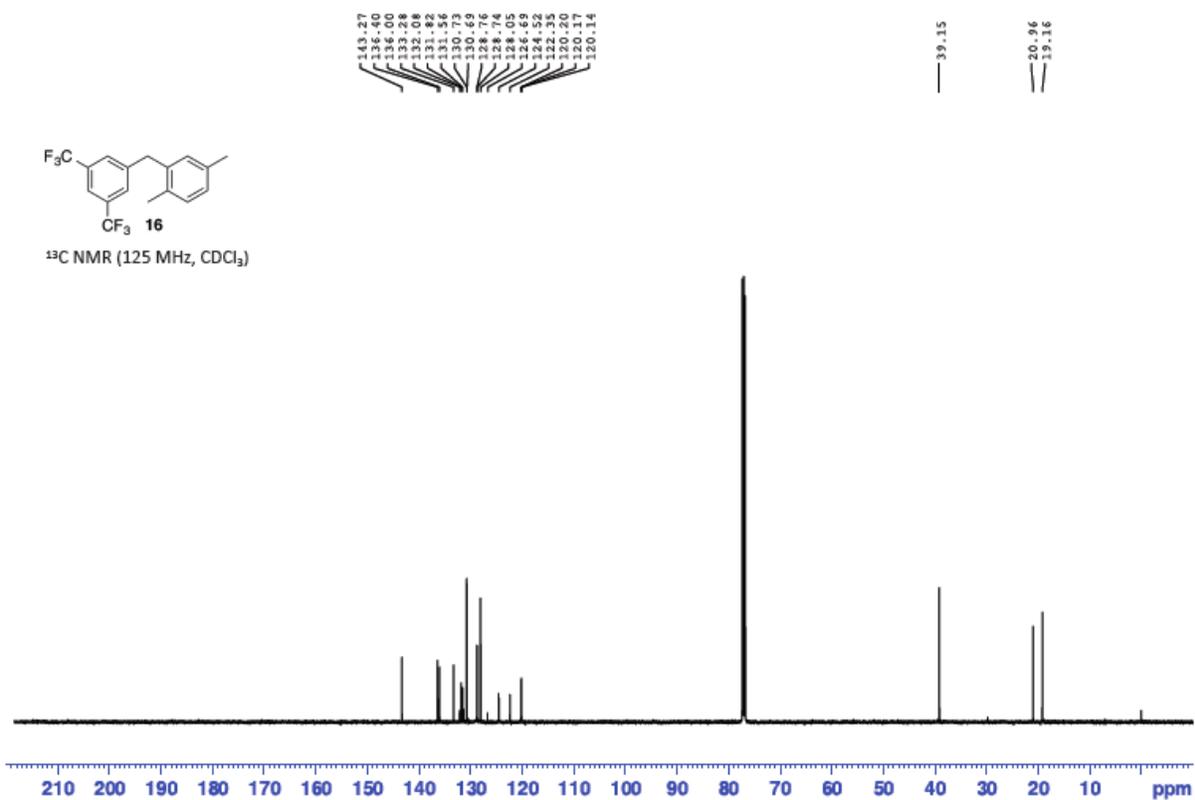
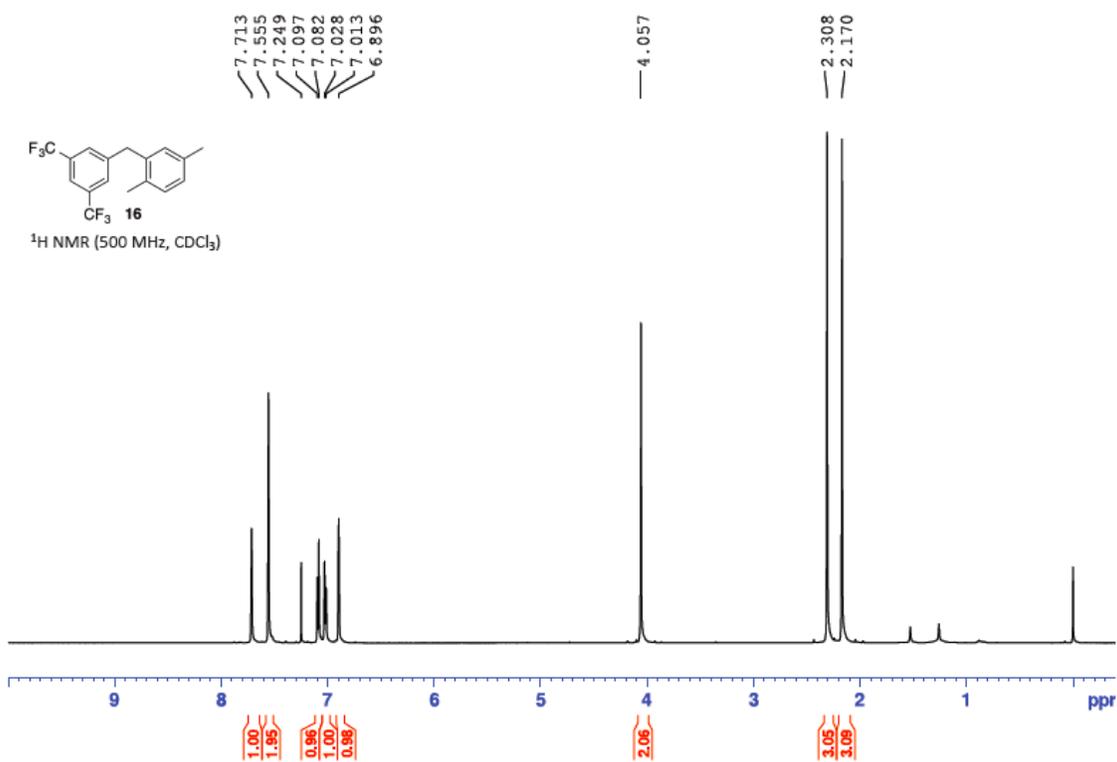


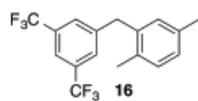




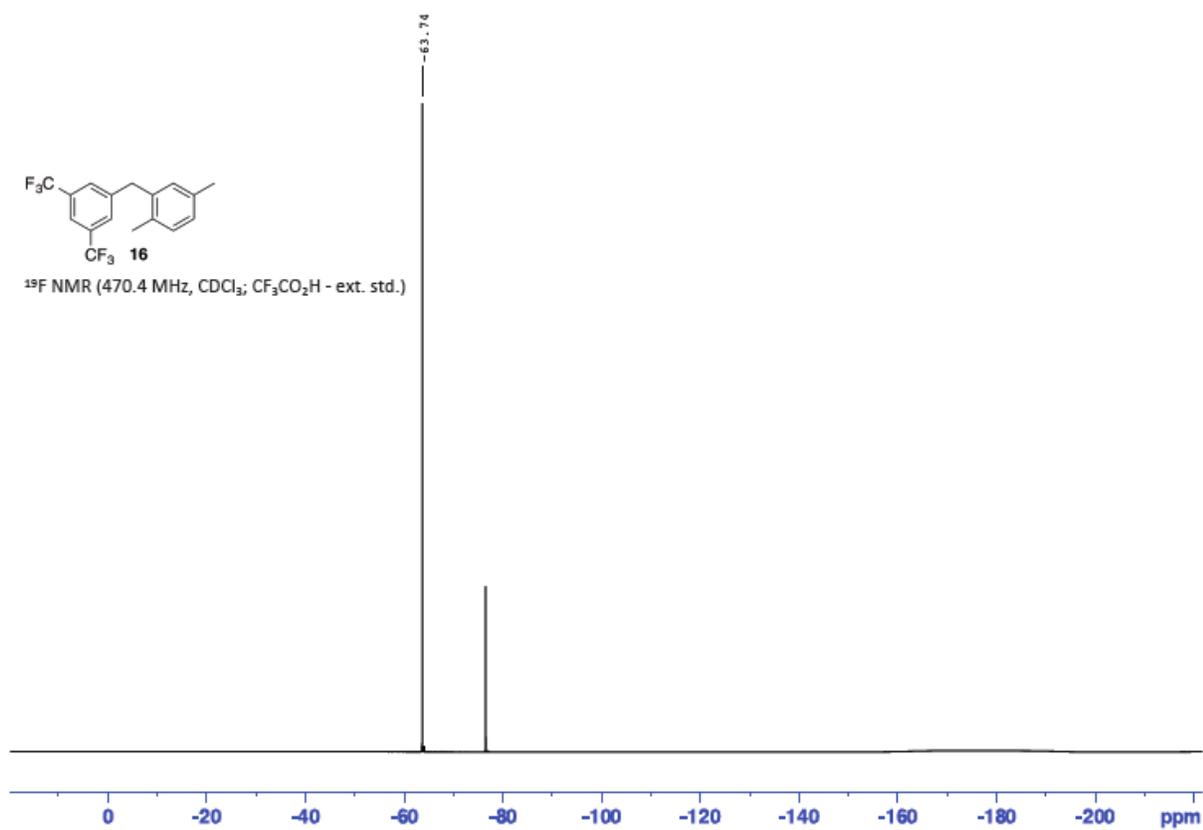


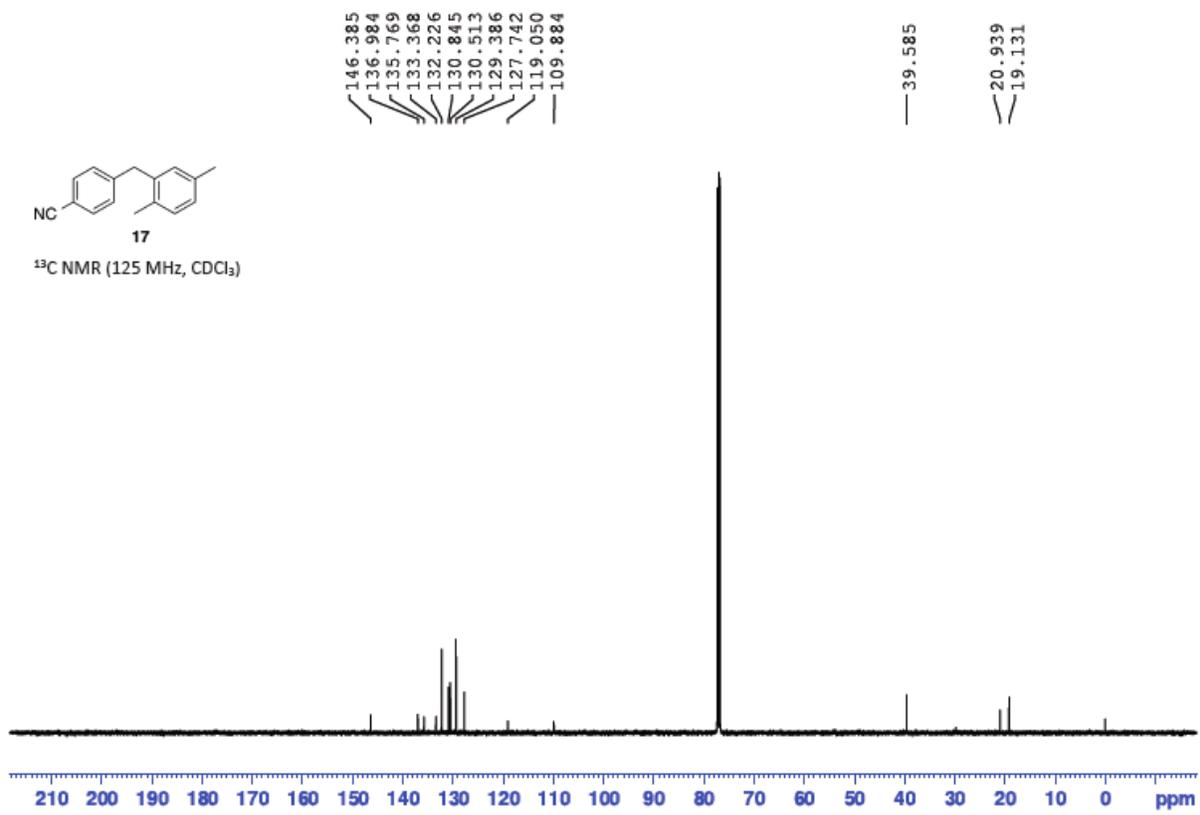
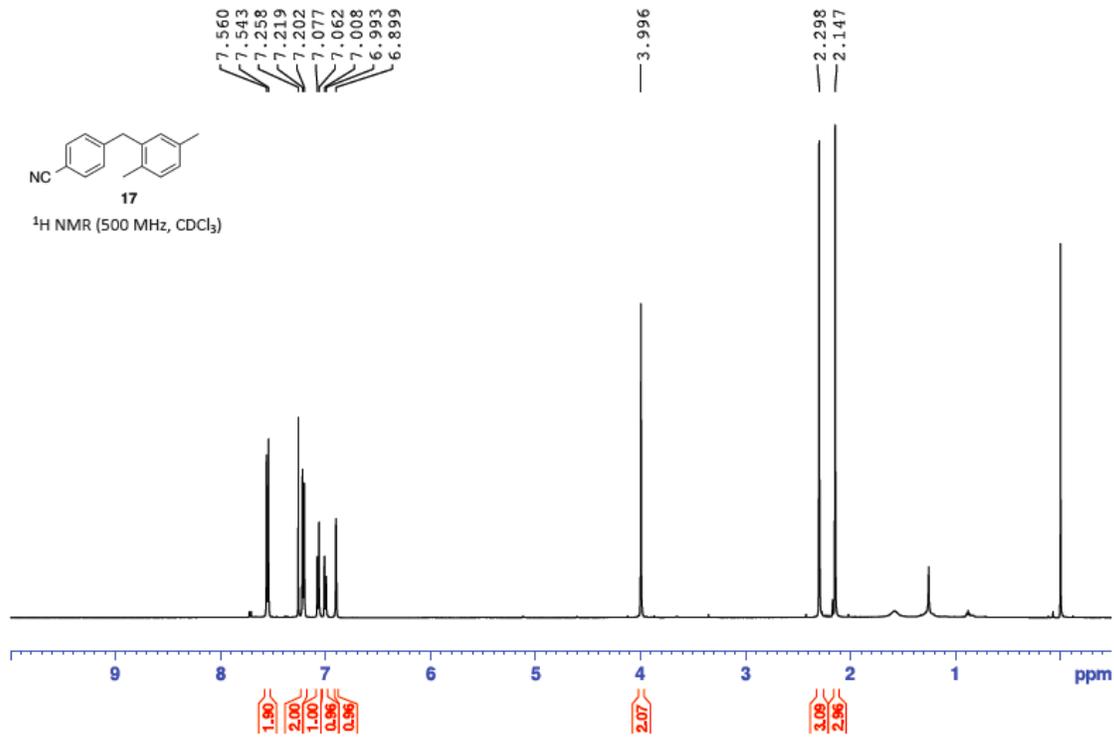


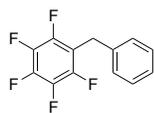




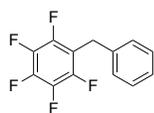
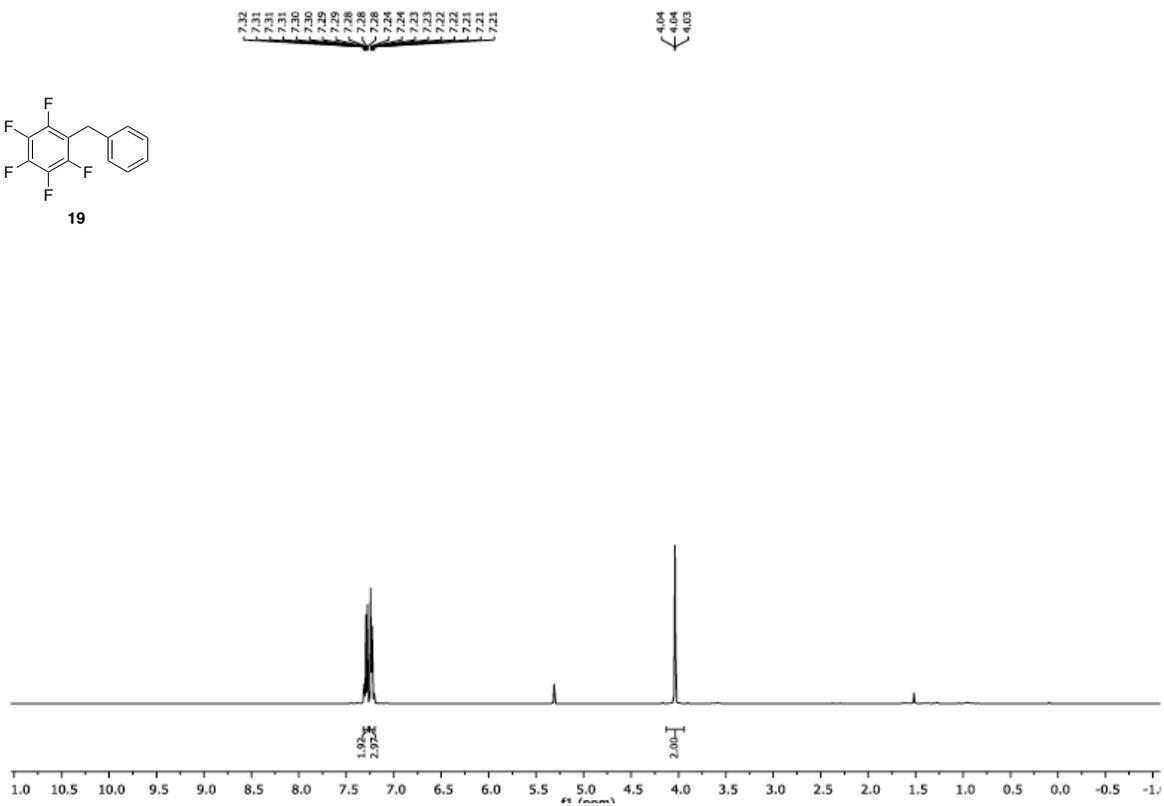
¹⁹F NMR (470.4 MHz, CDCl₃; CF₃CO₂H - ext. std.)



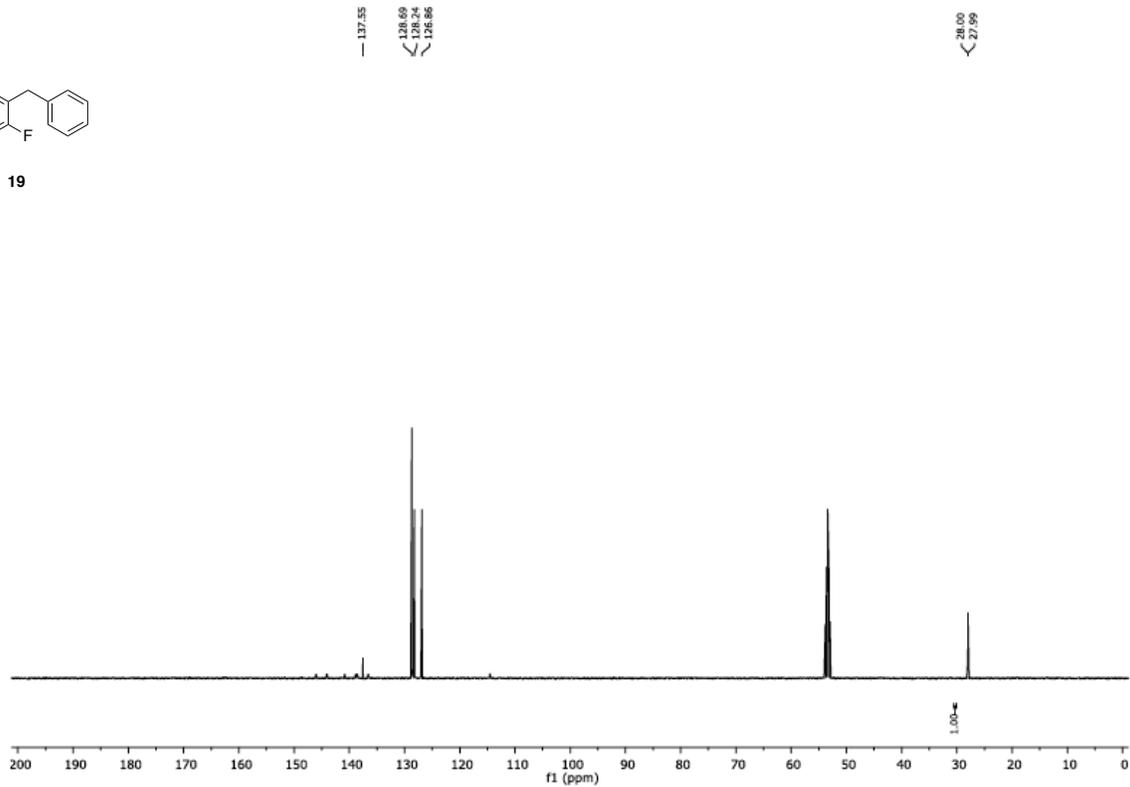


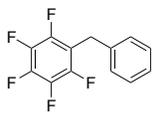


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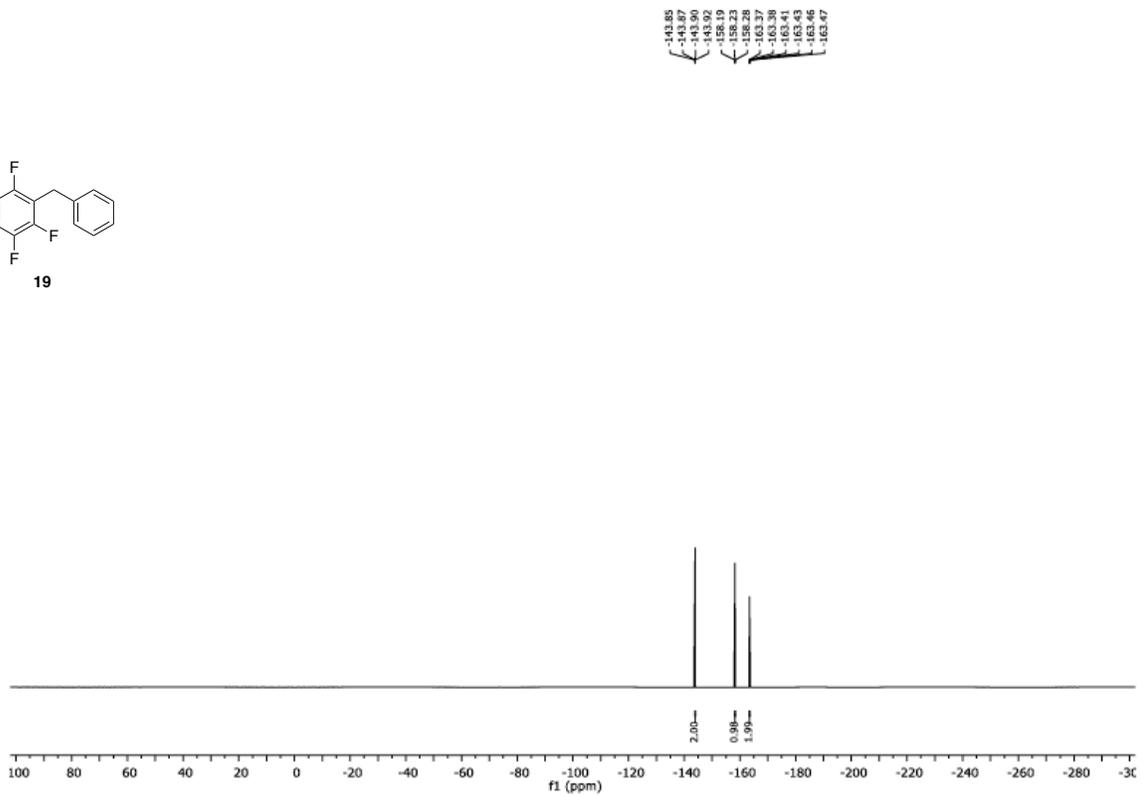


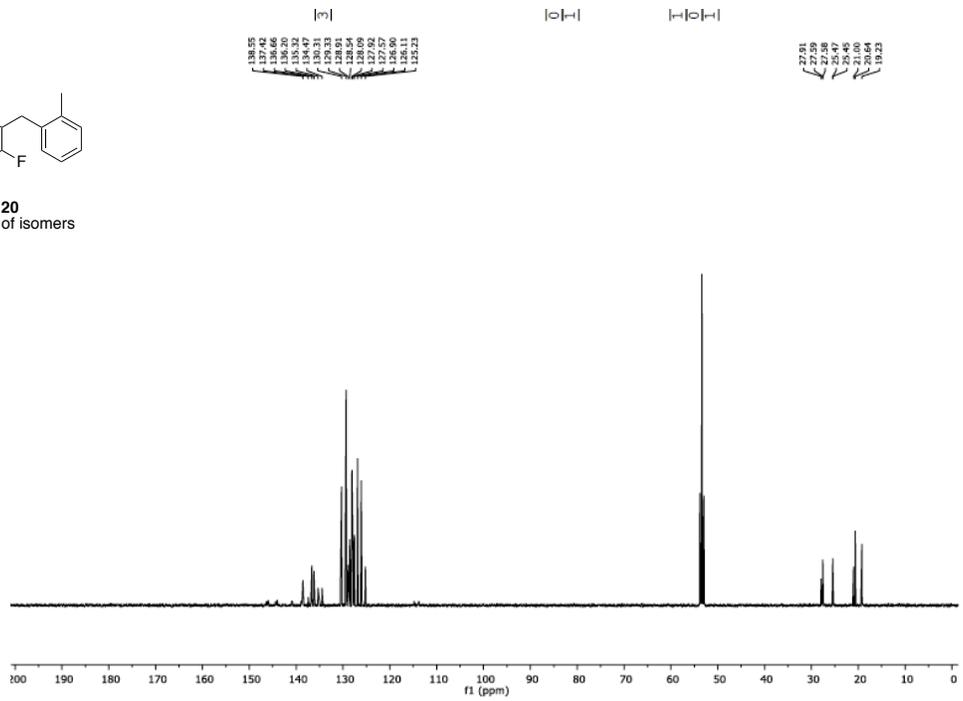
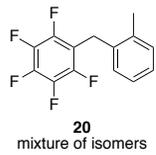
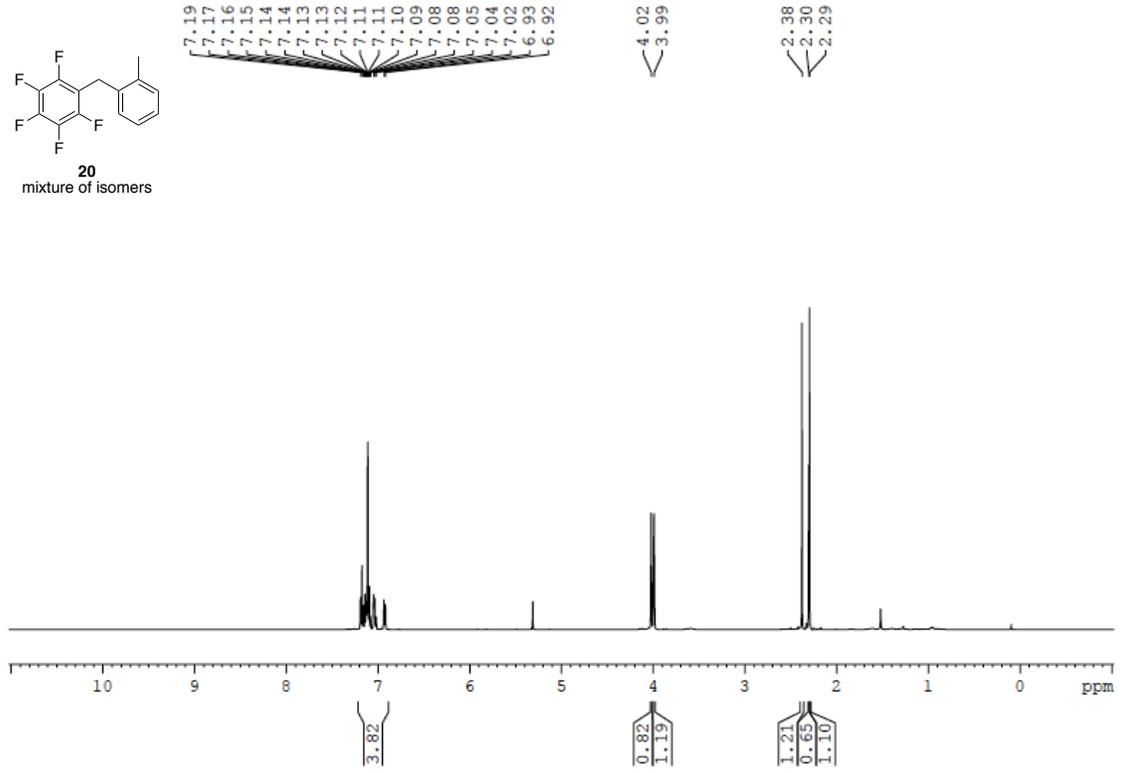
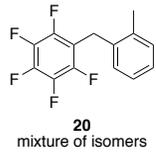
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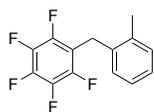




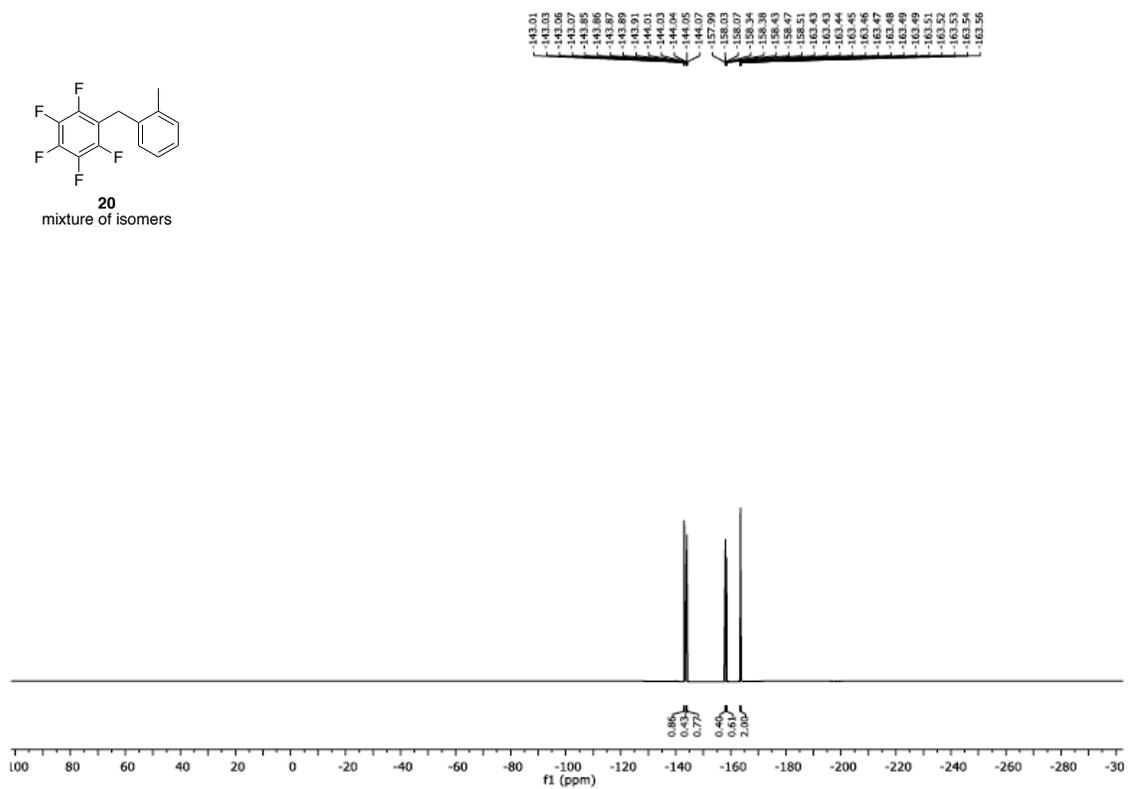
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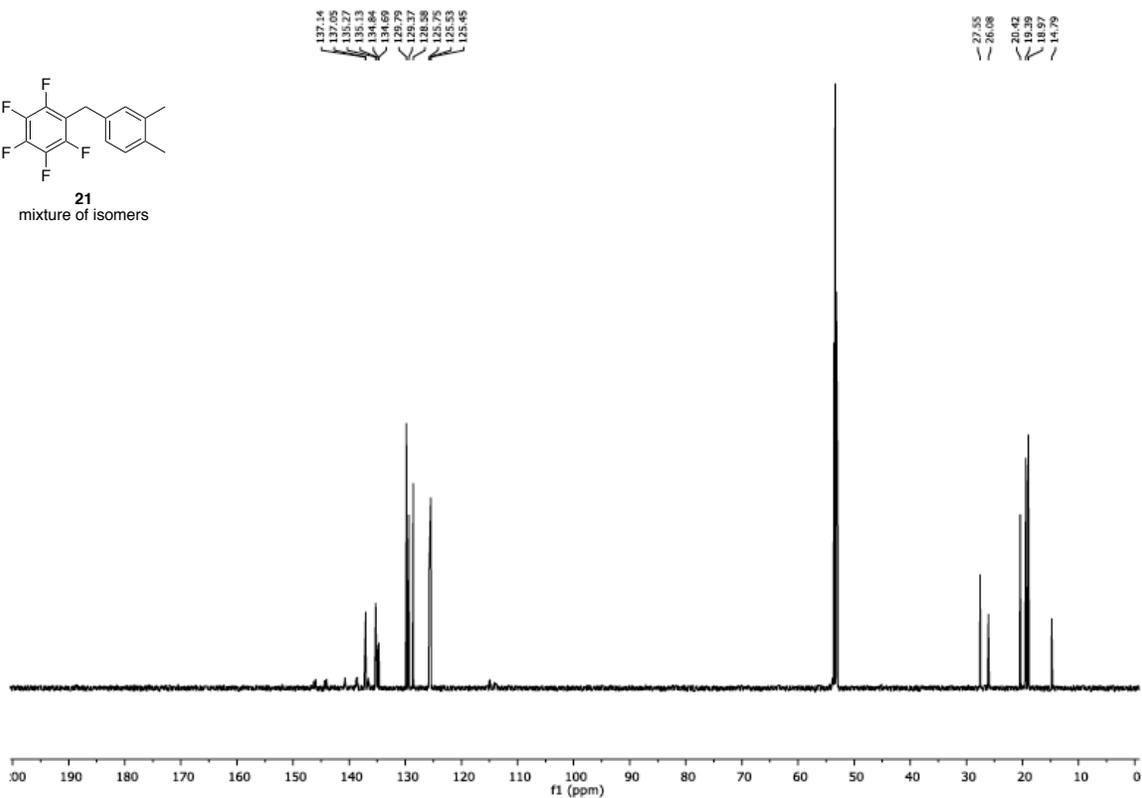
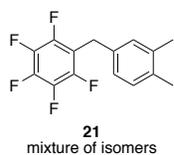
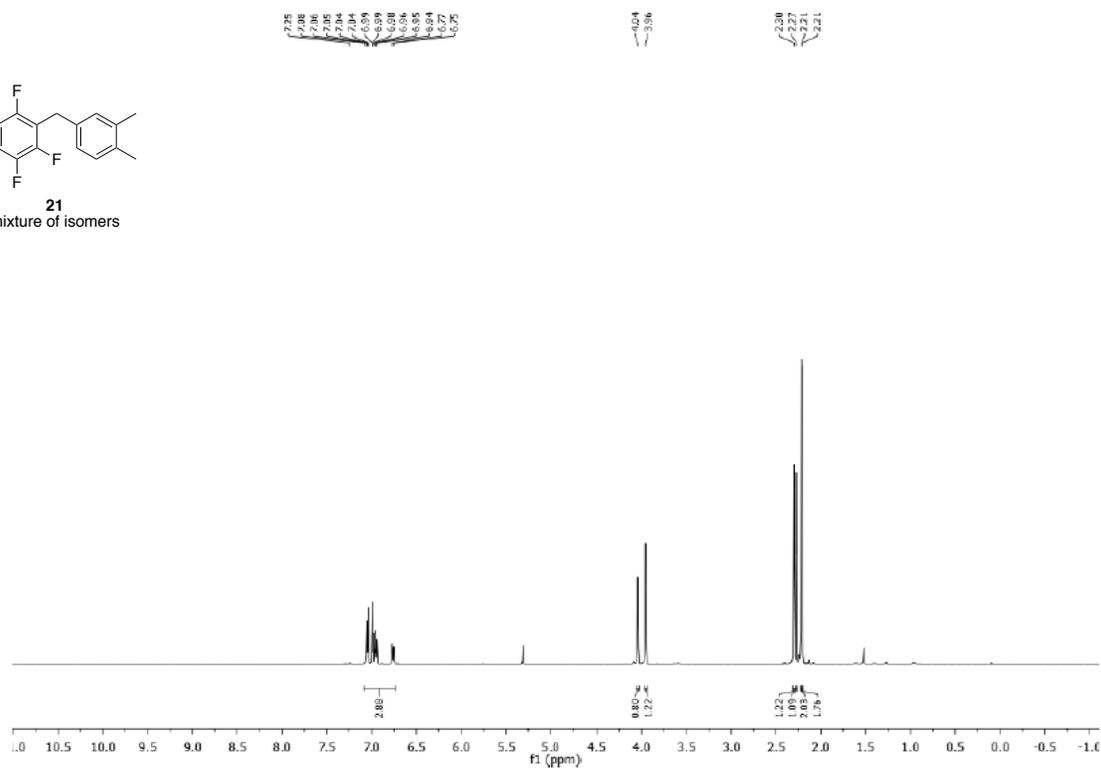
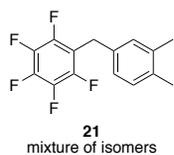


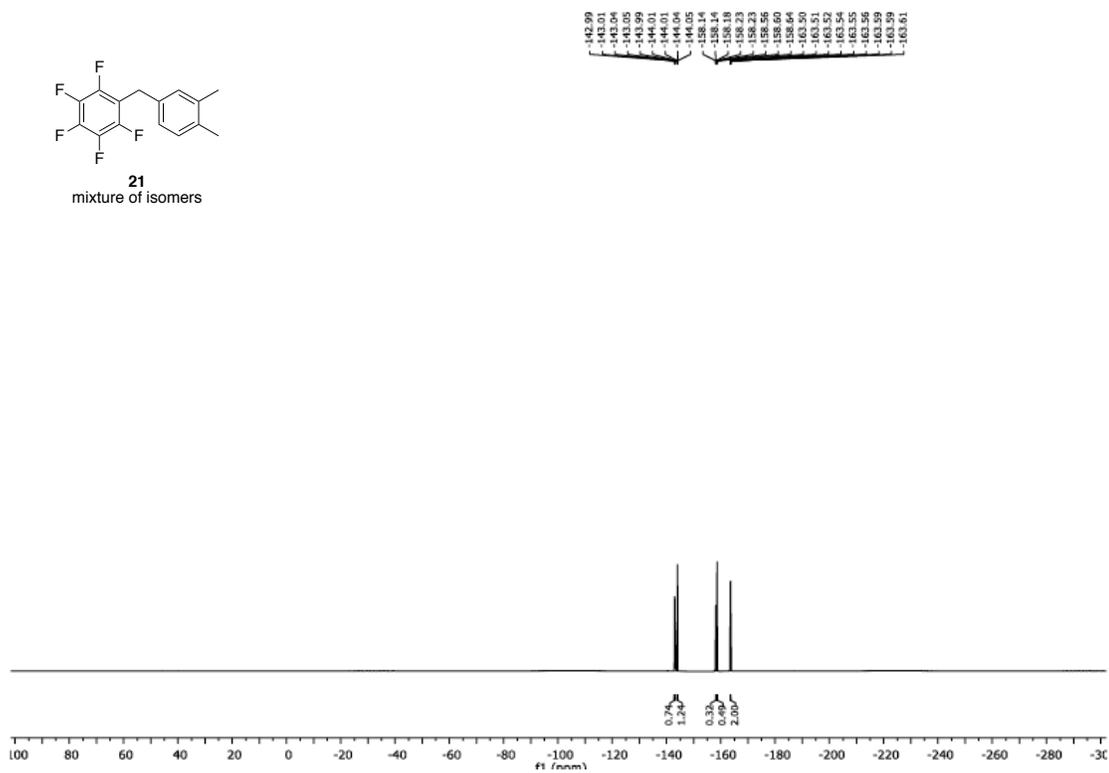
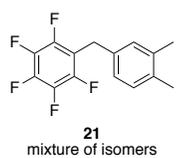


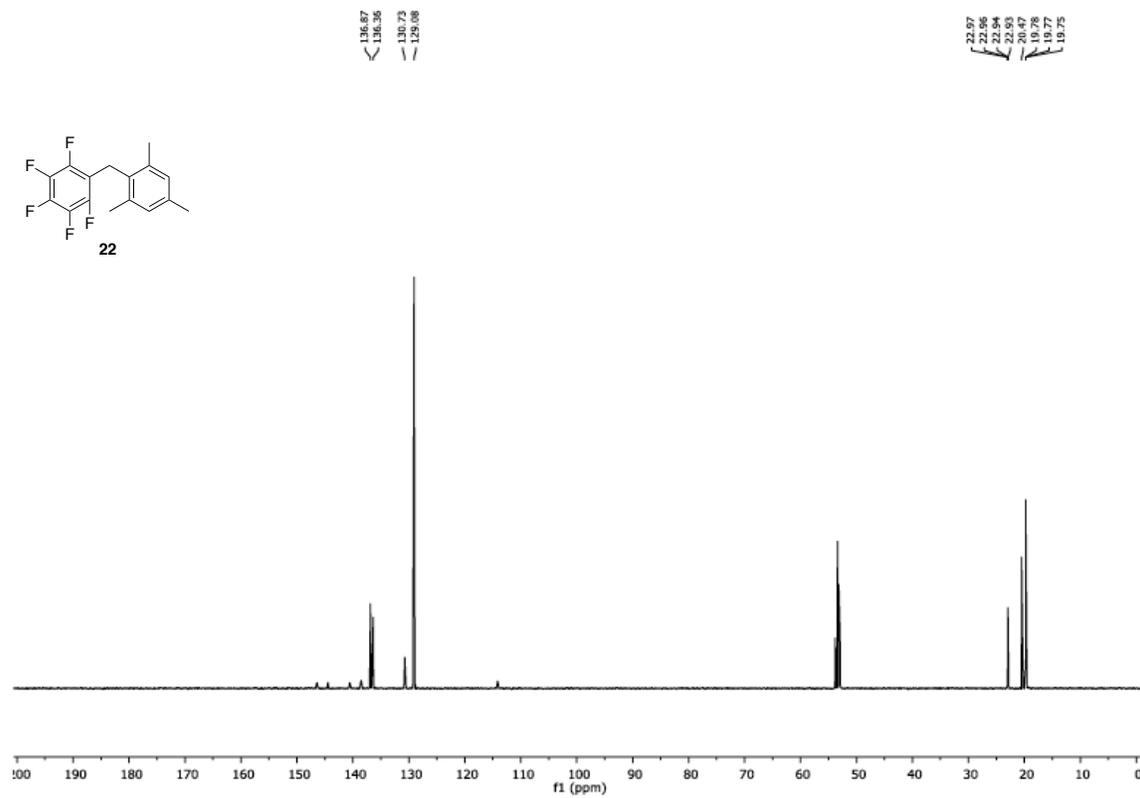
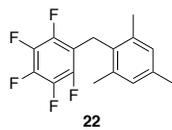
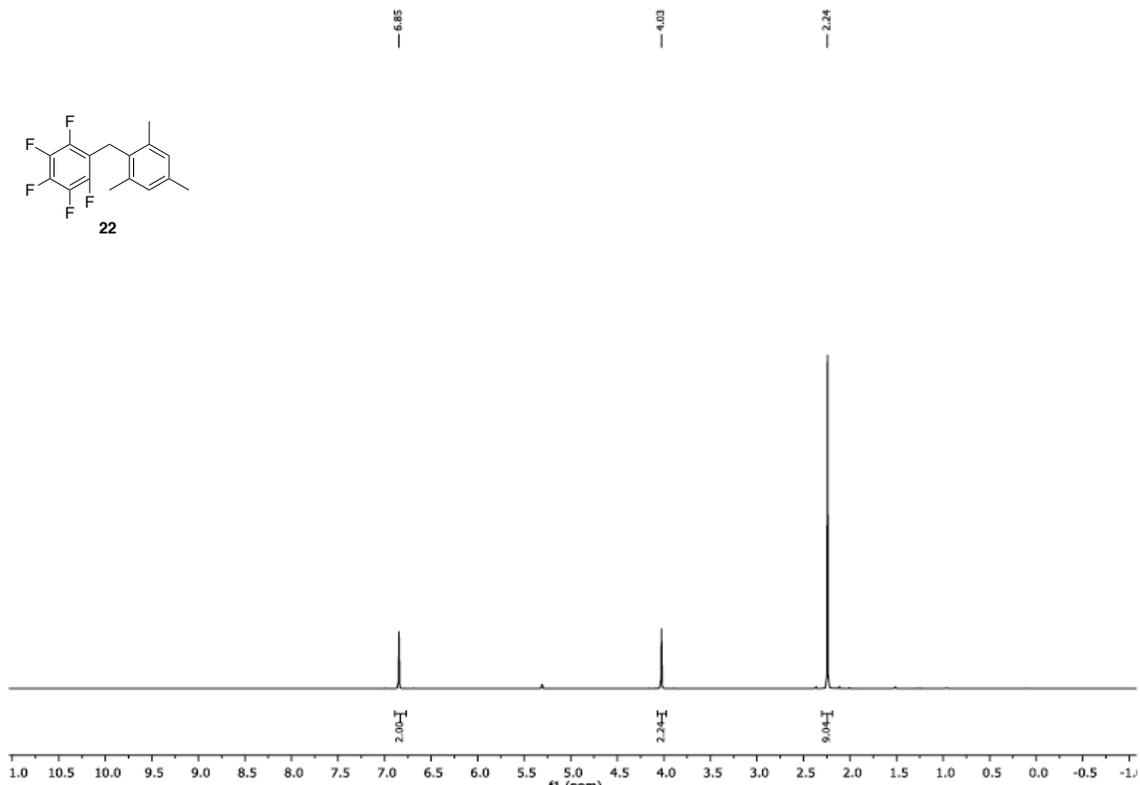
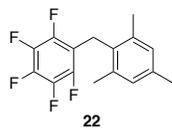


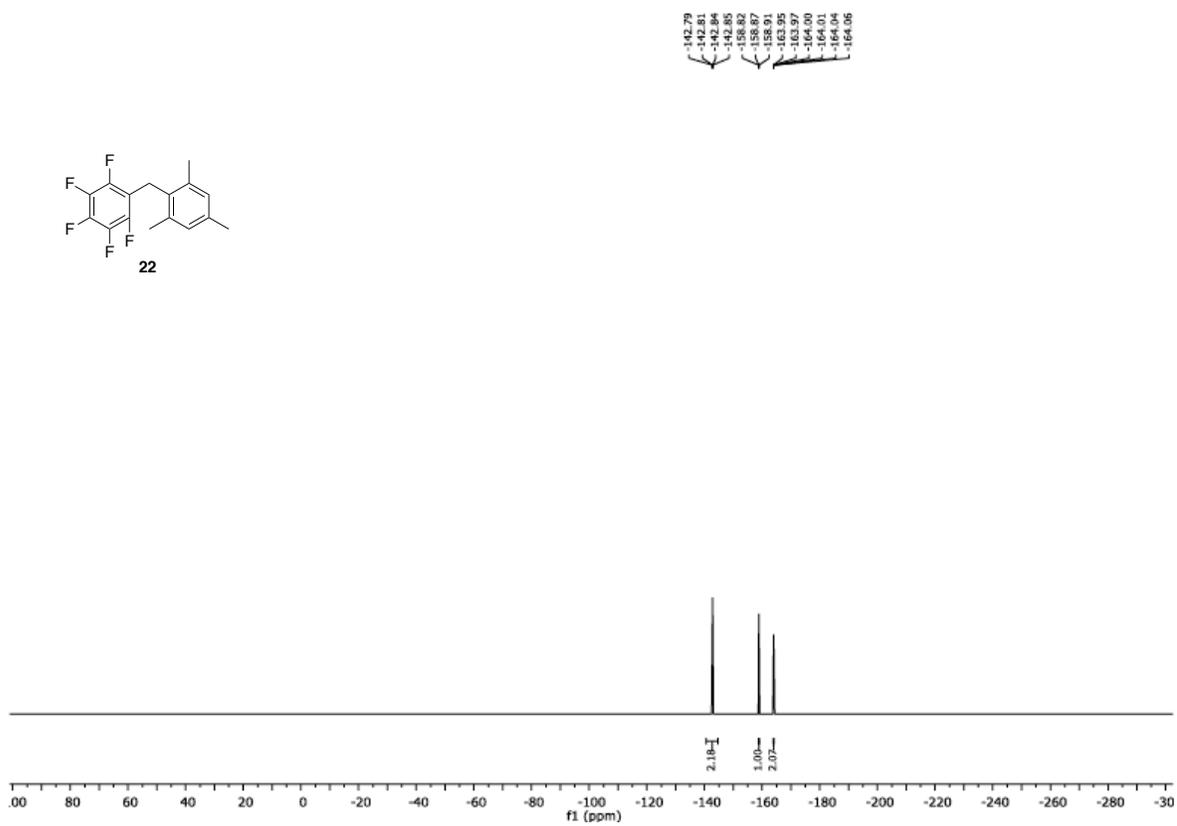
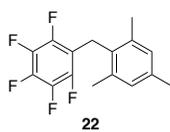
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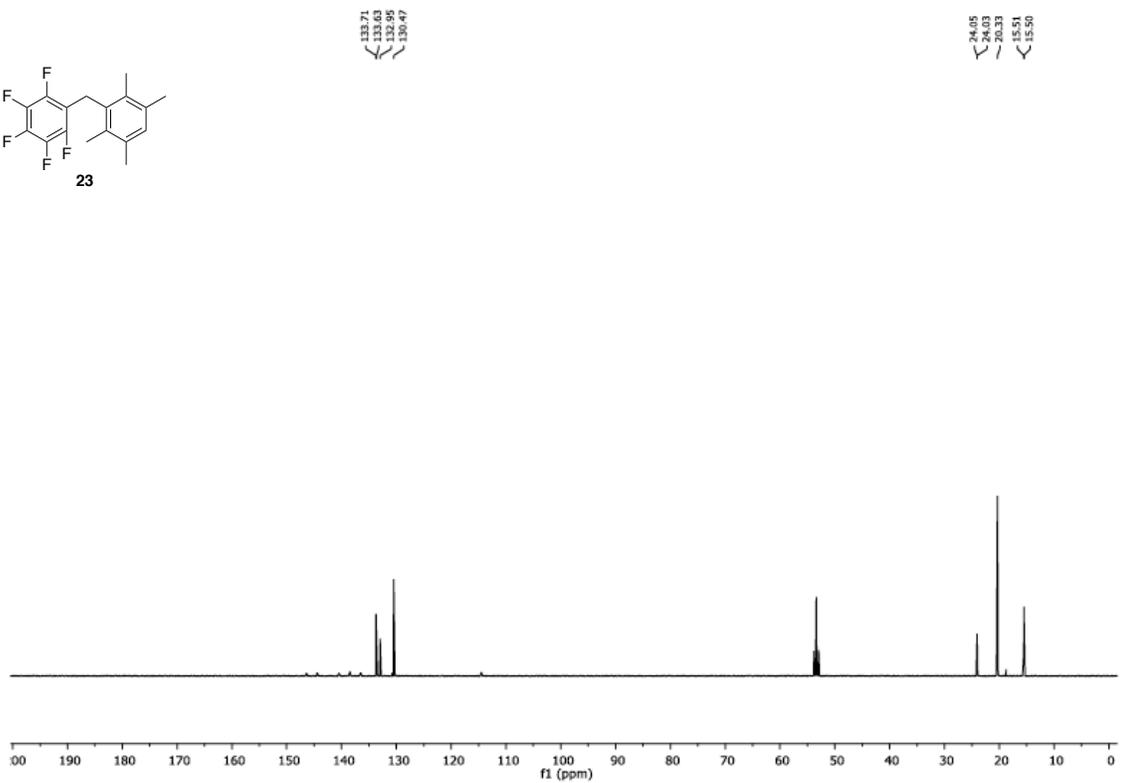
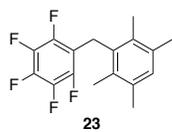
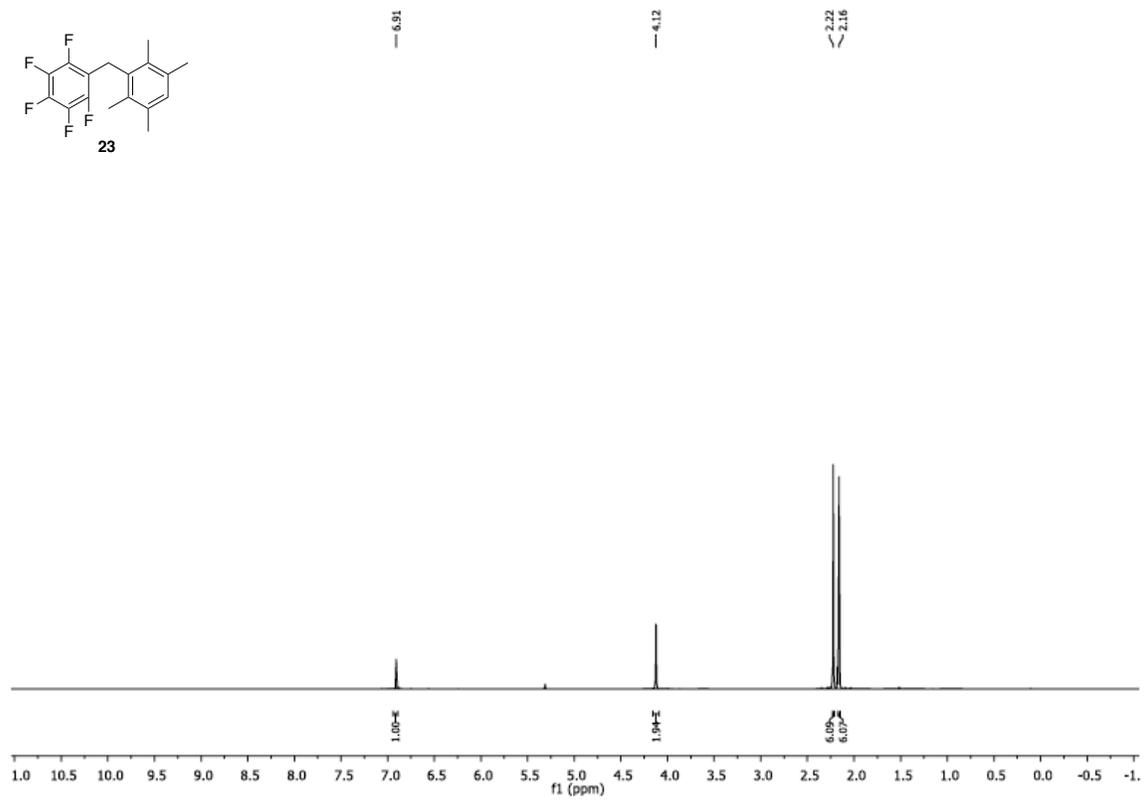
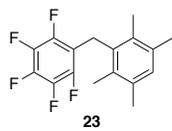


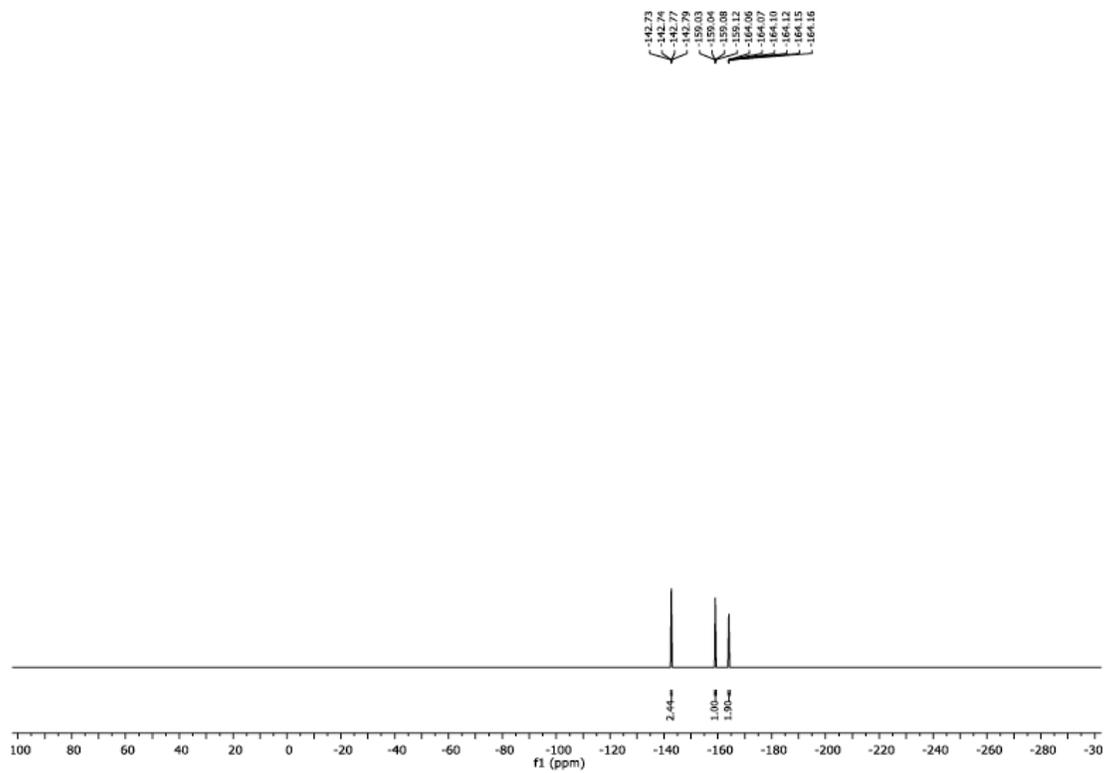


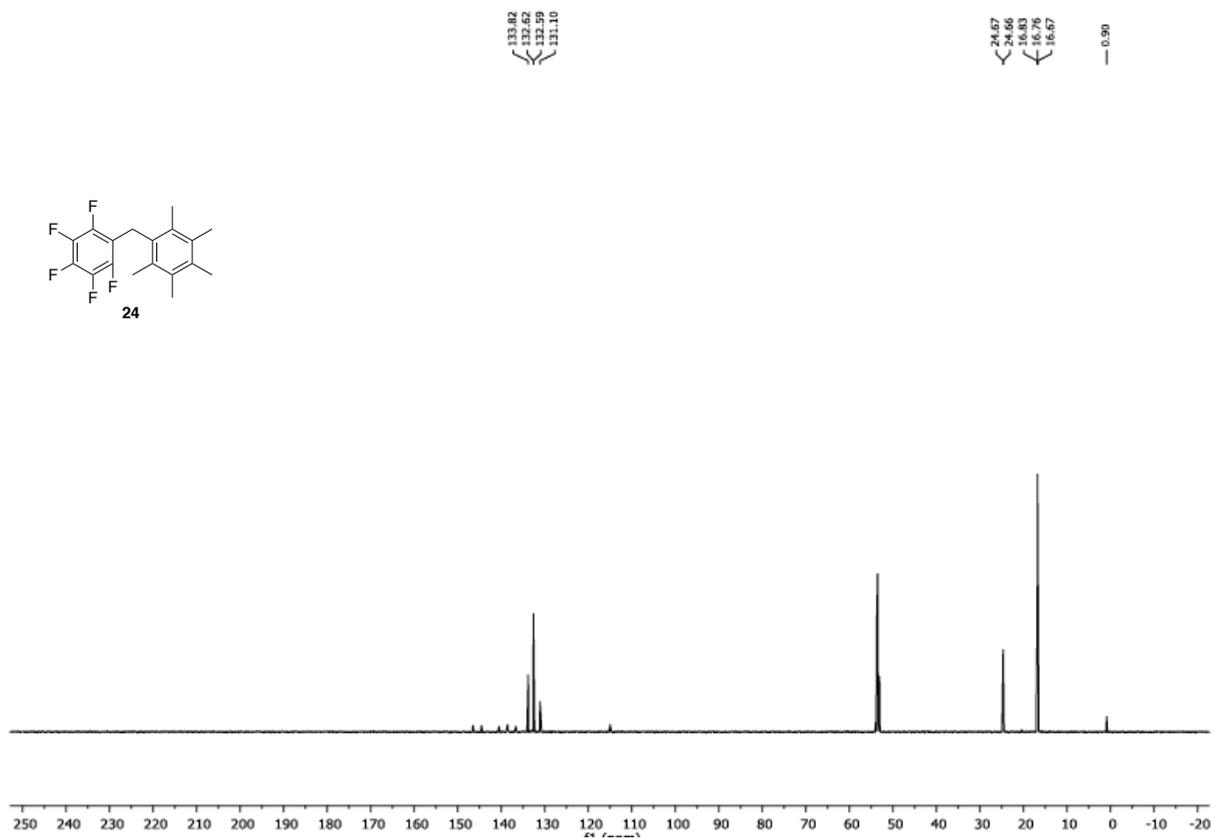
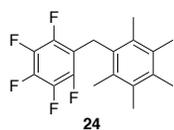
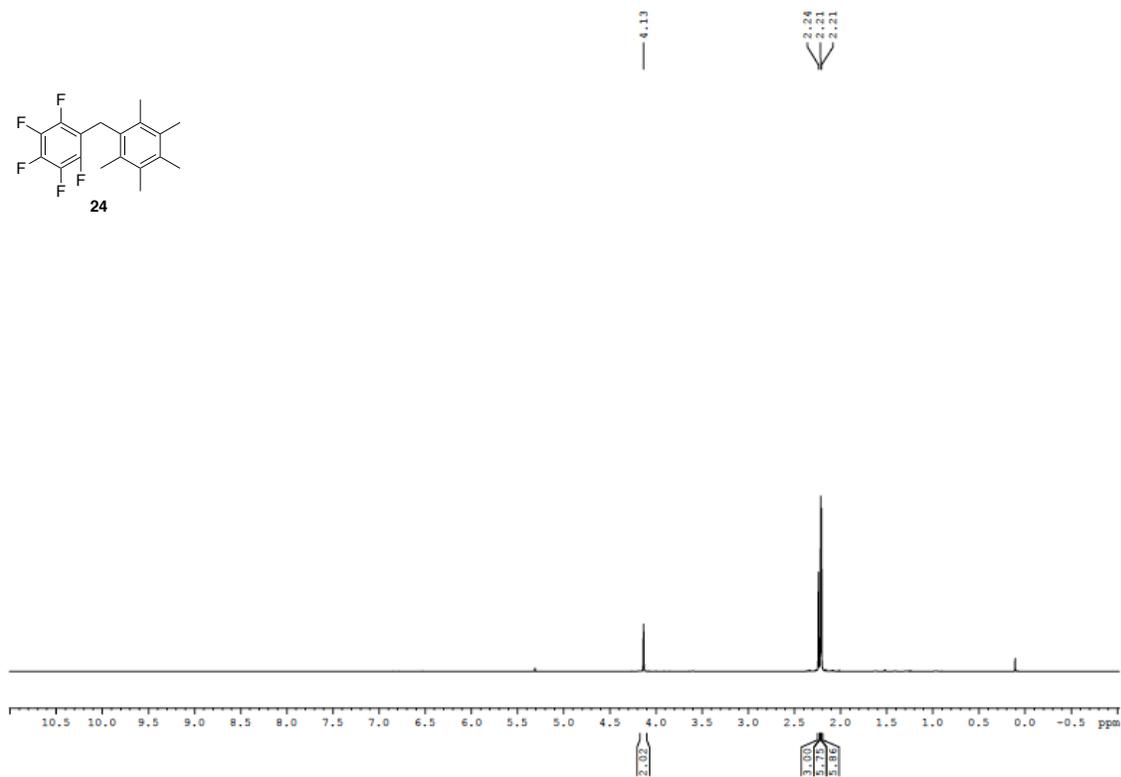
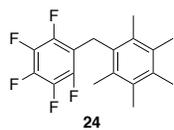


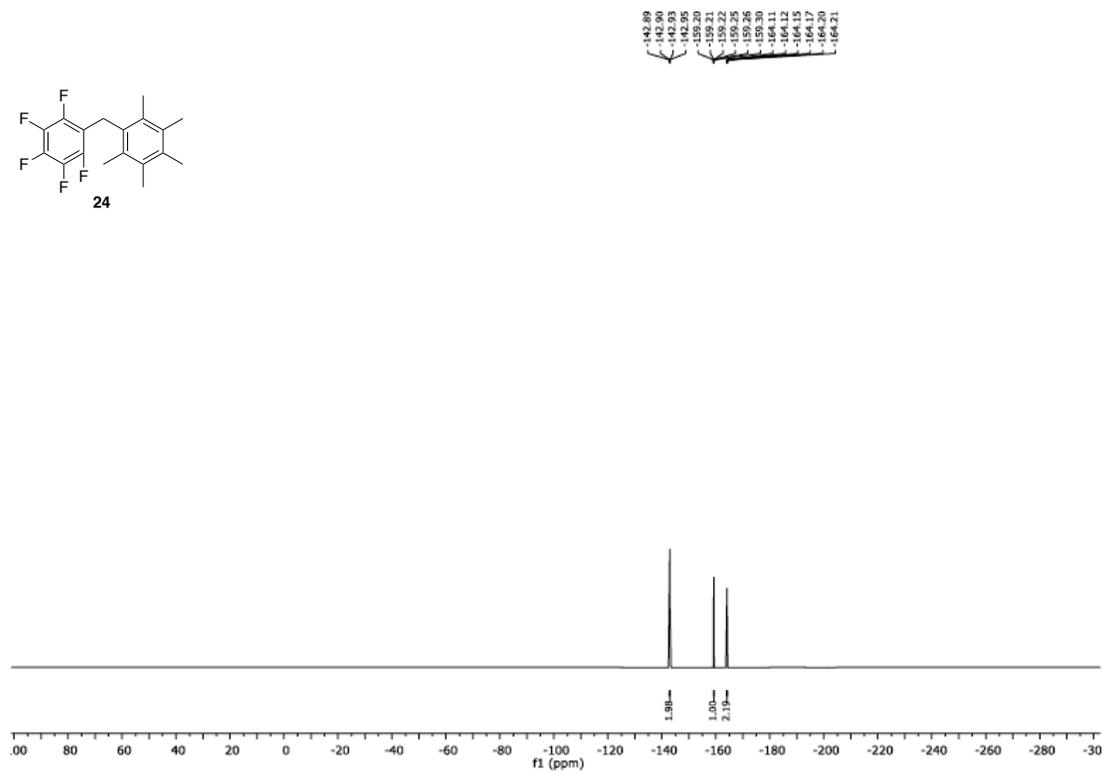
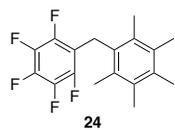


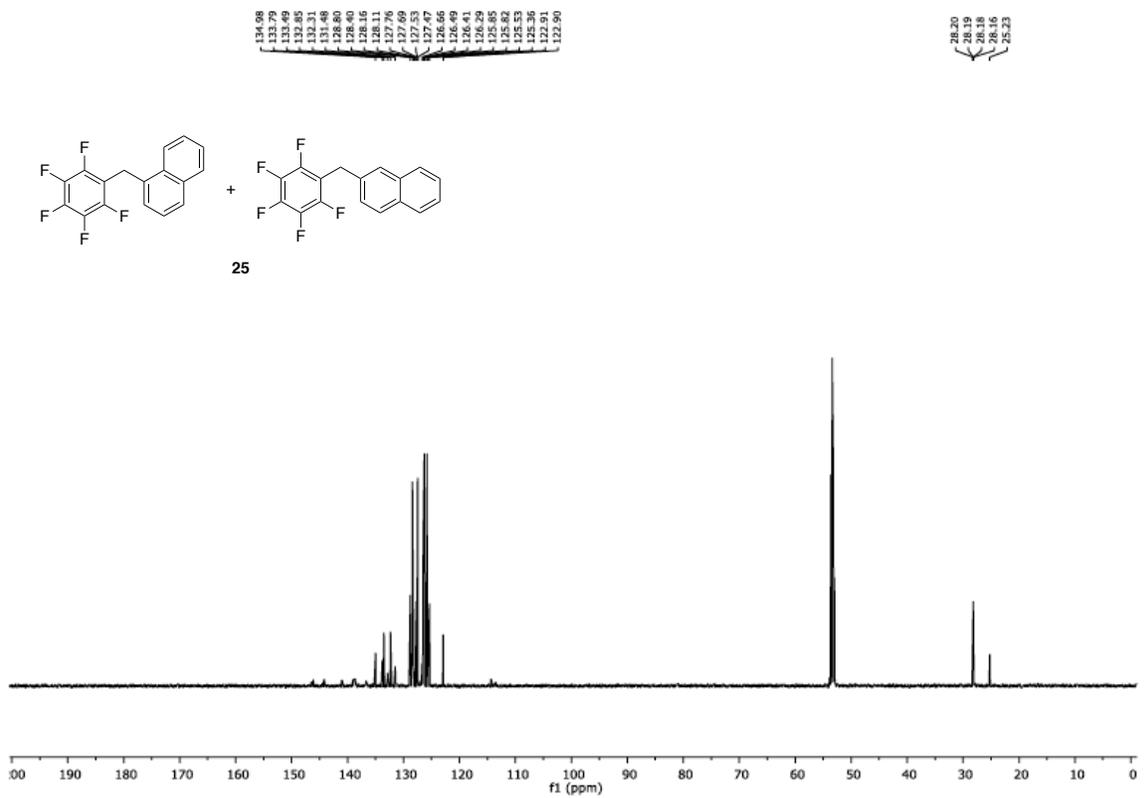
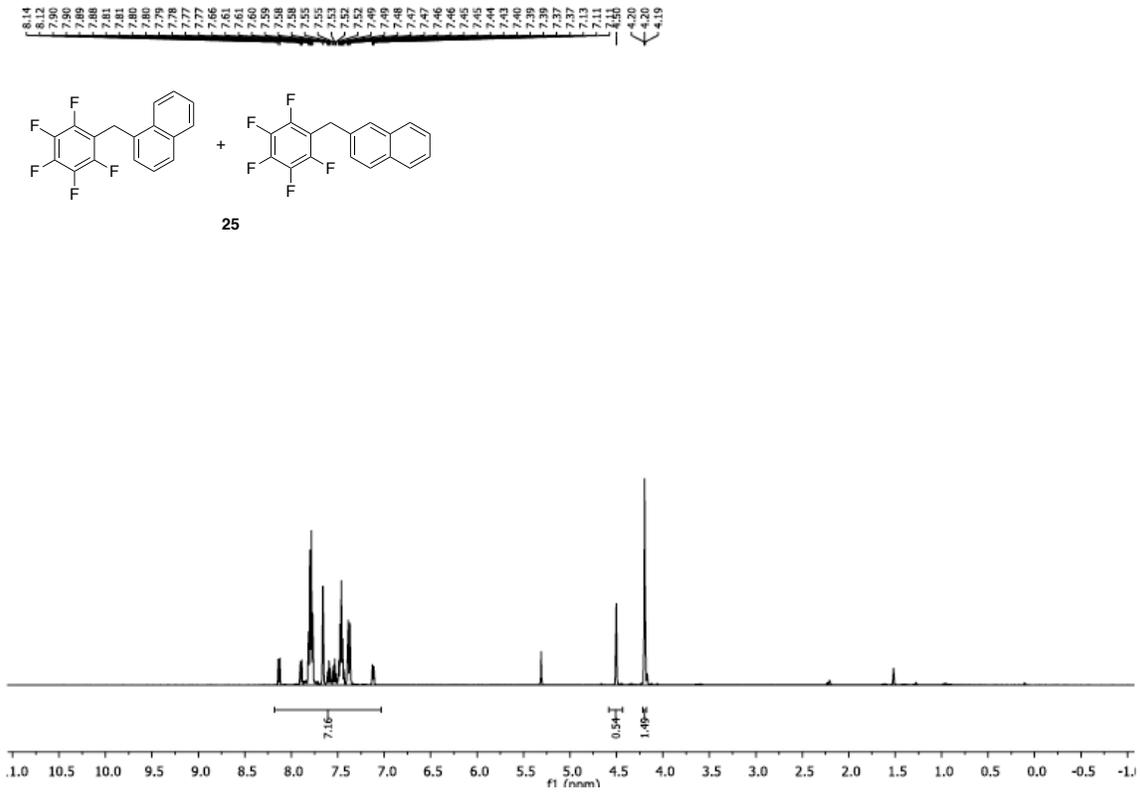


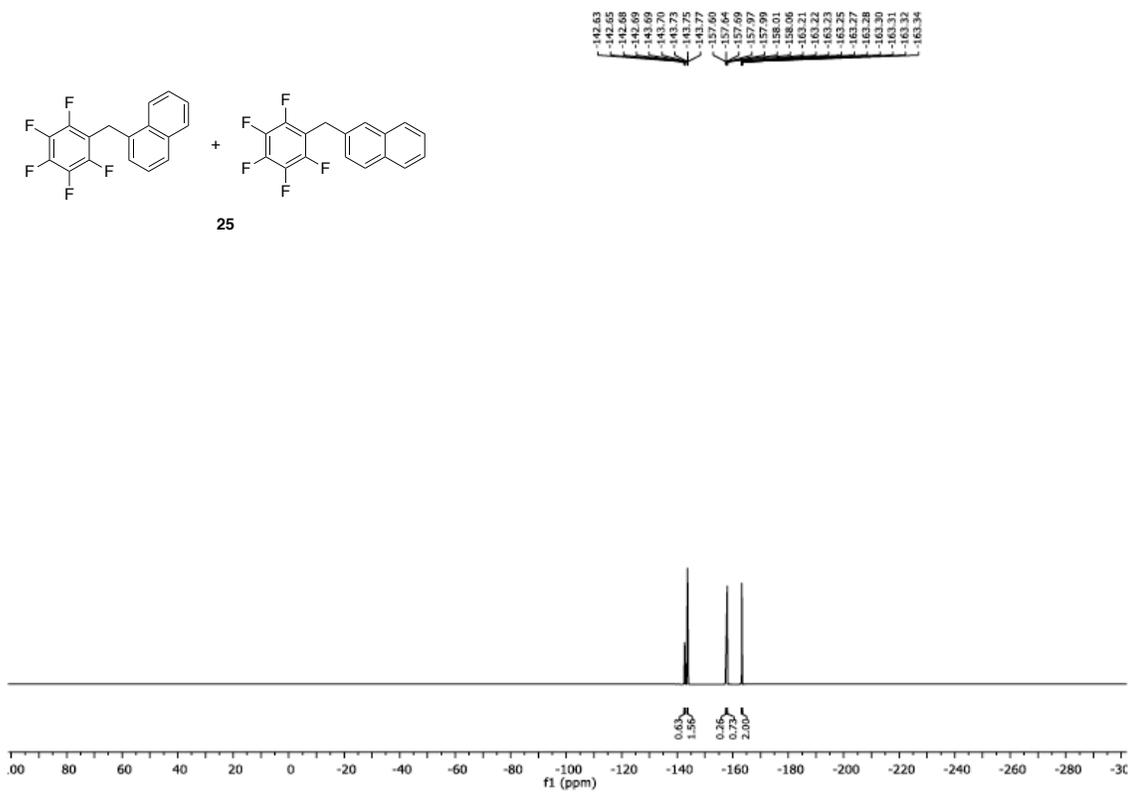


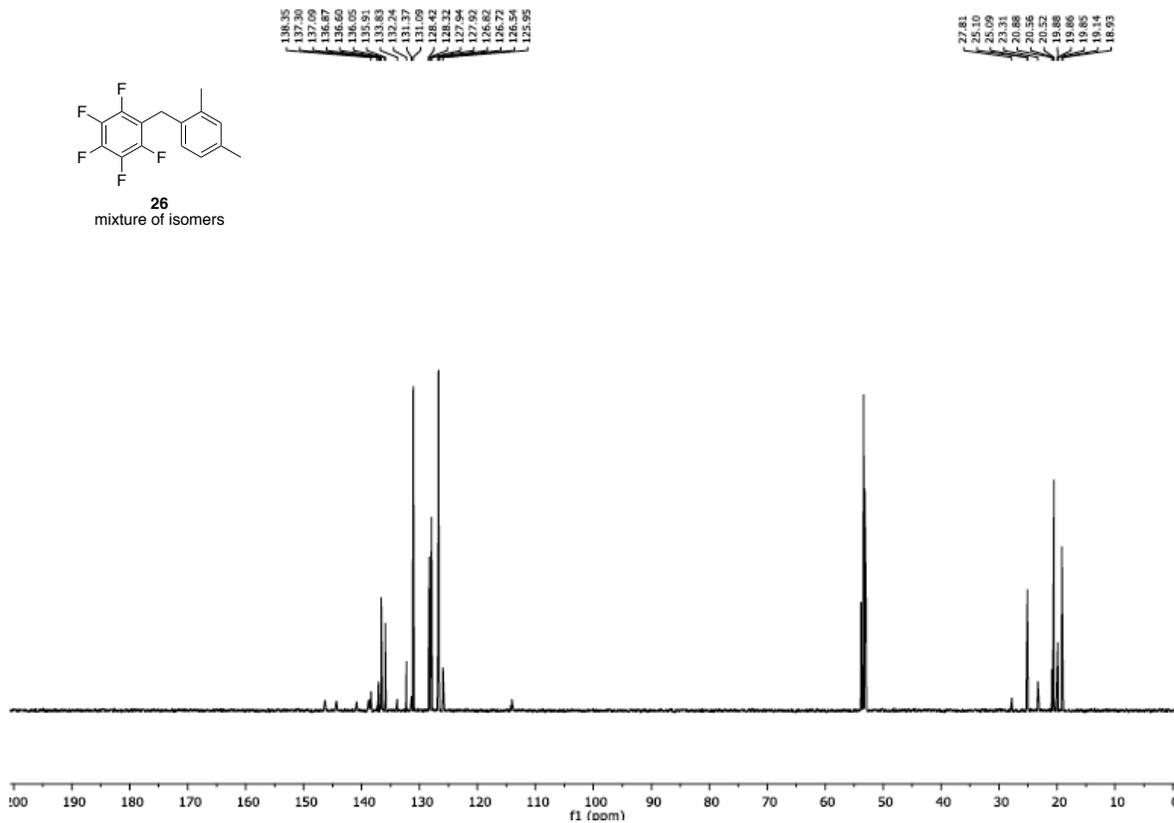
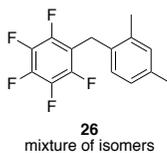
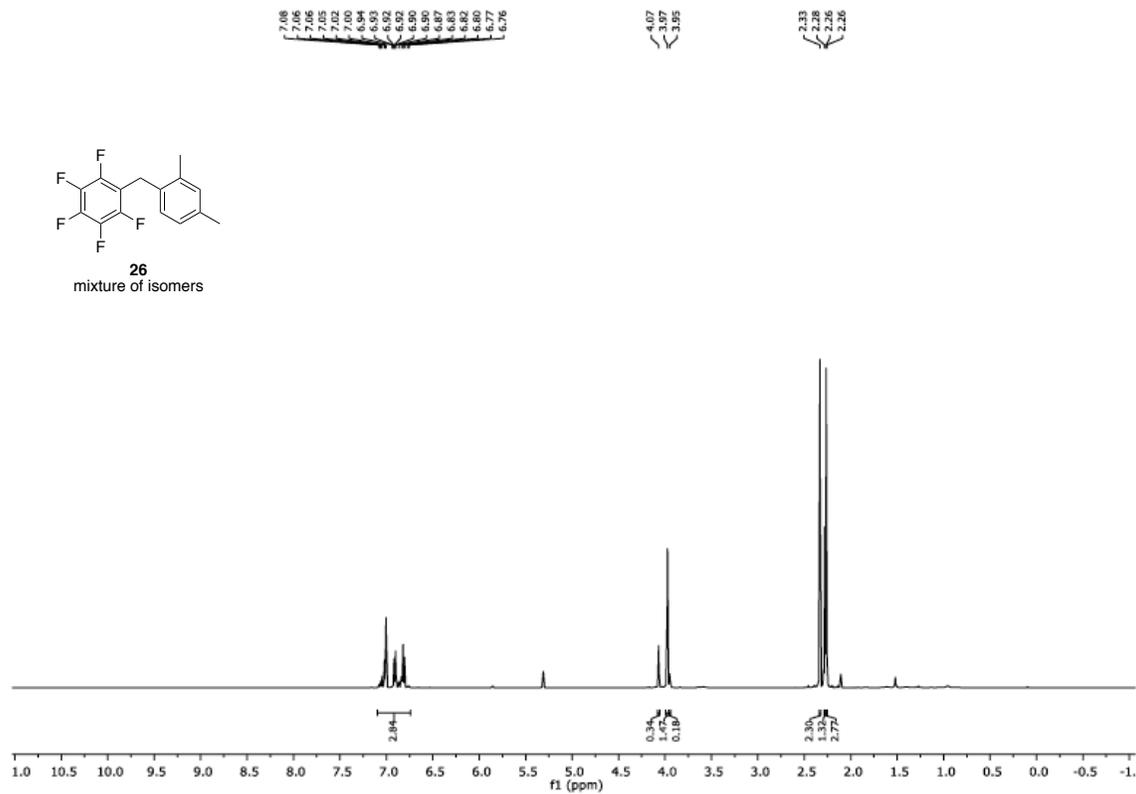
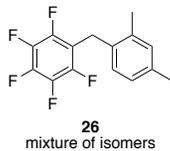


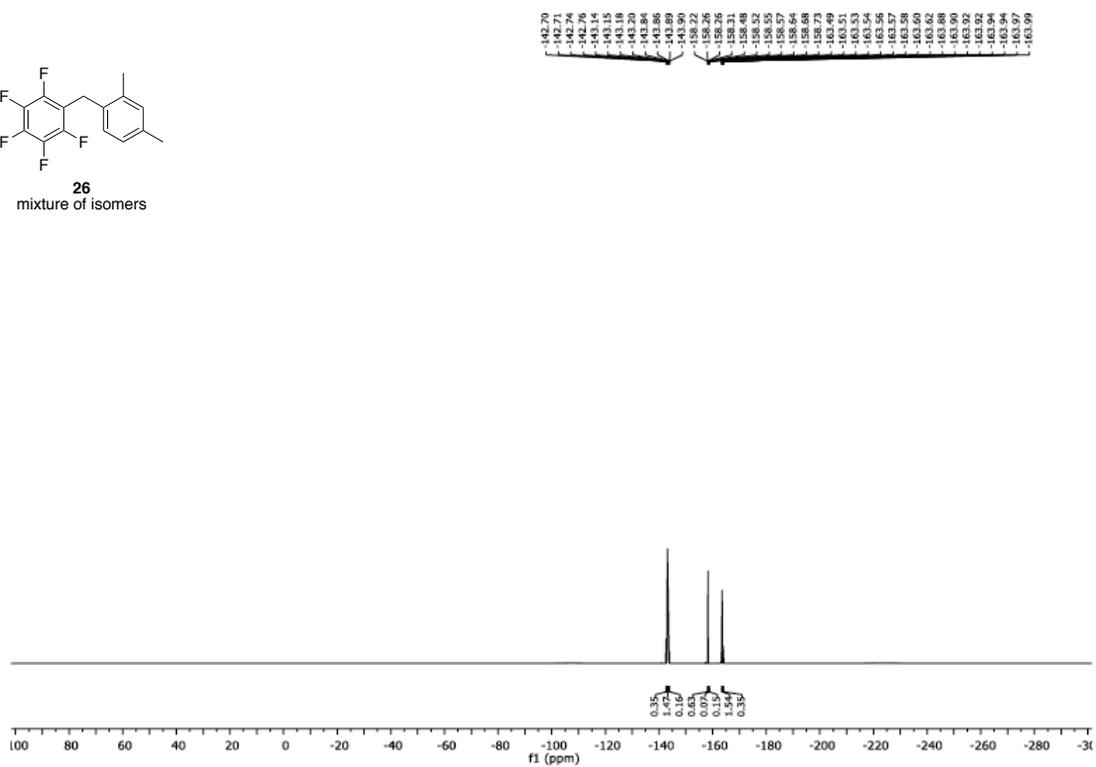
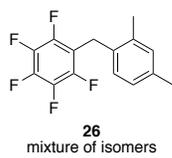


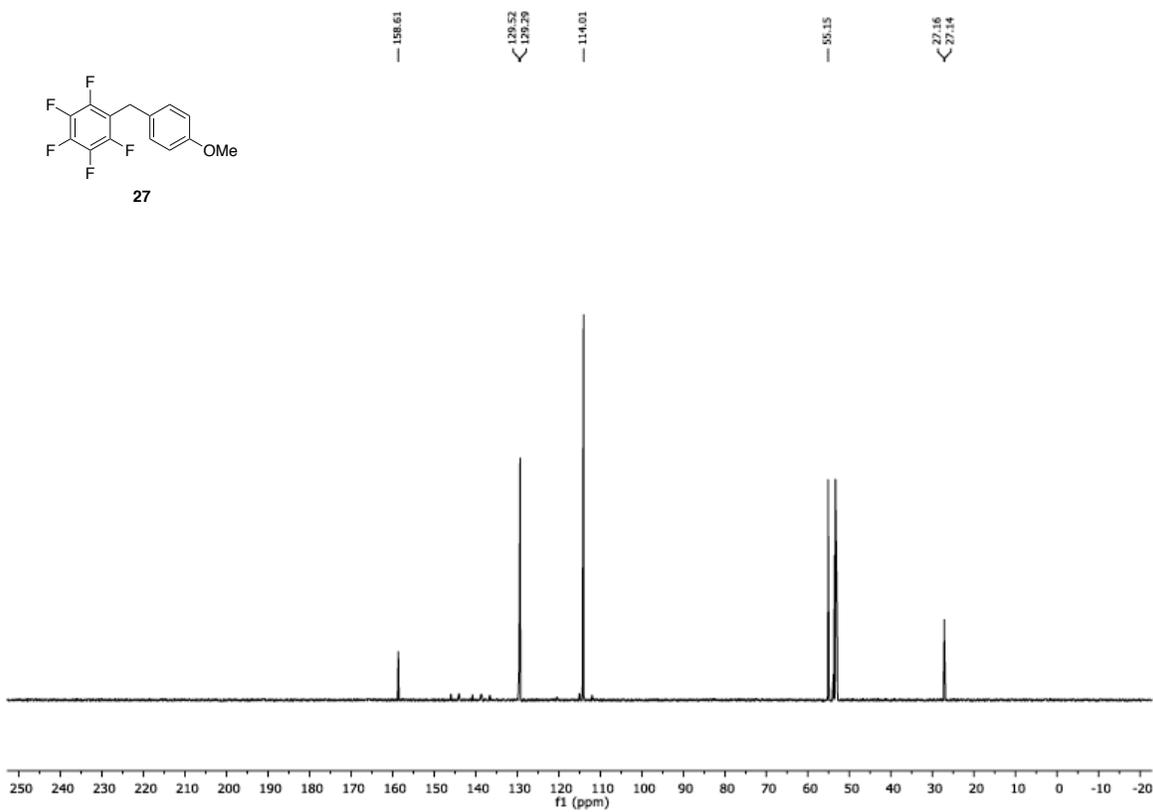
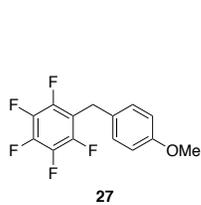
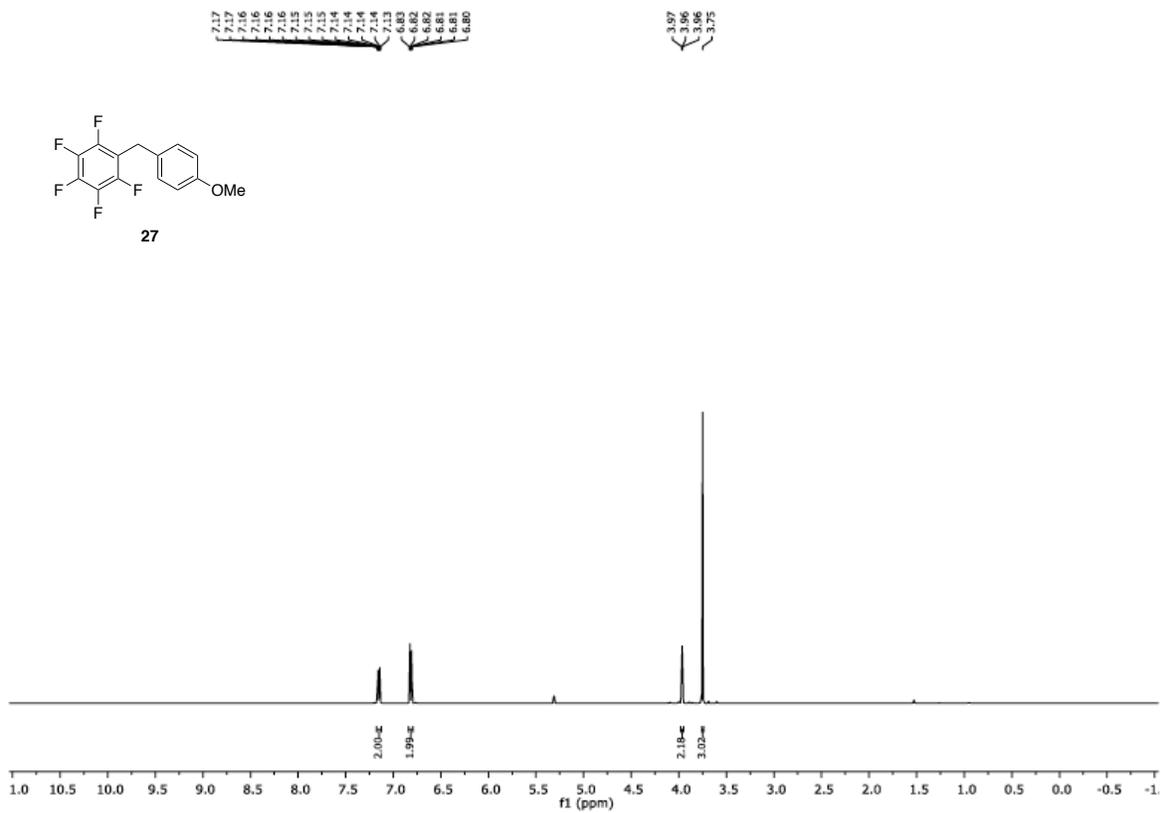
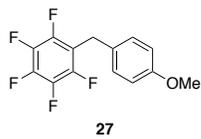


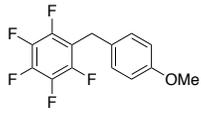




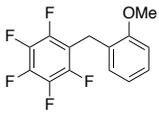
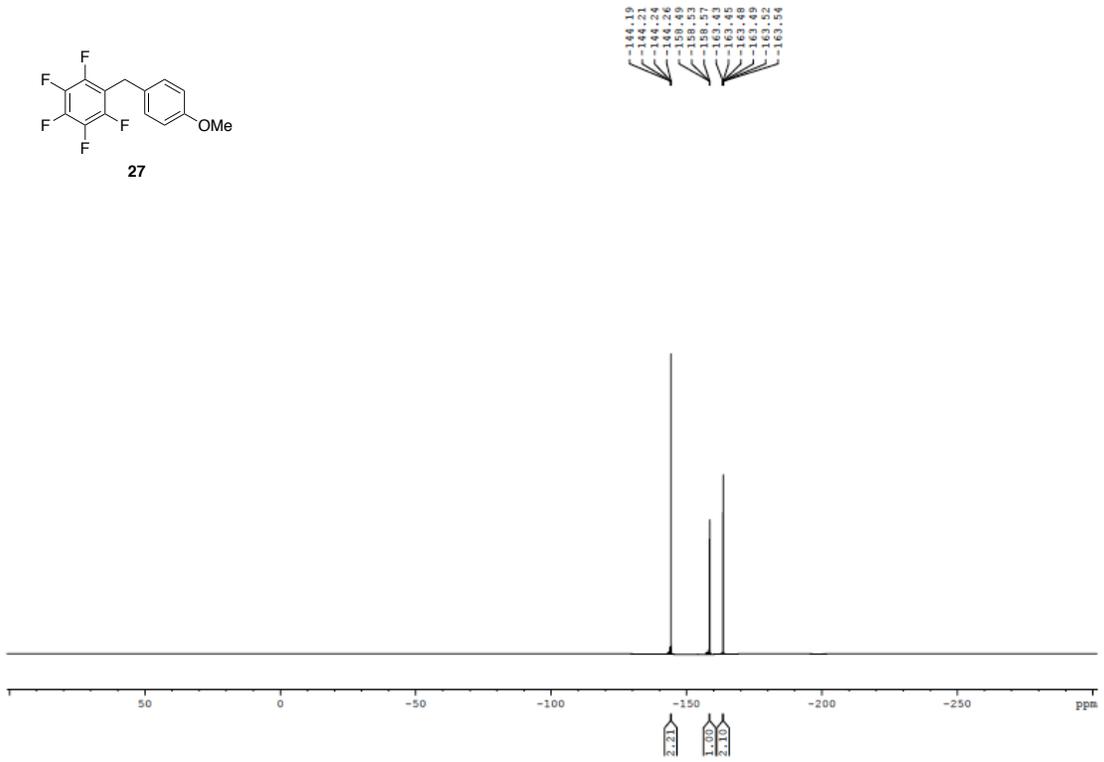




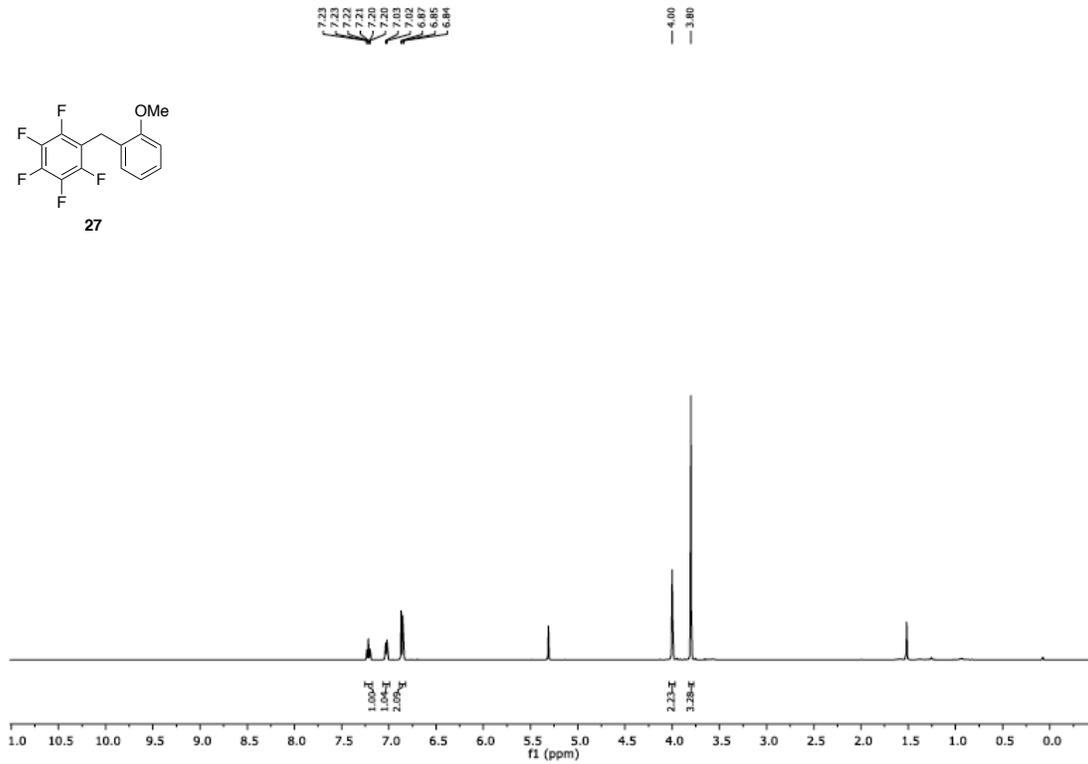


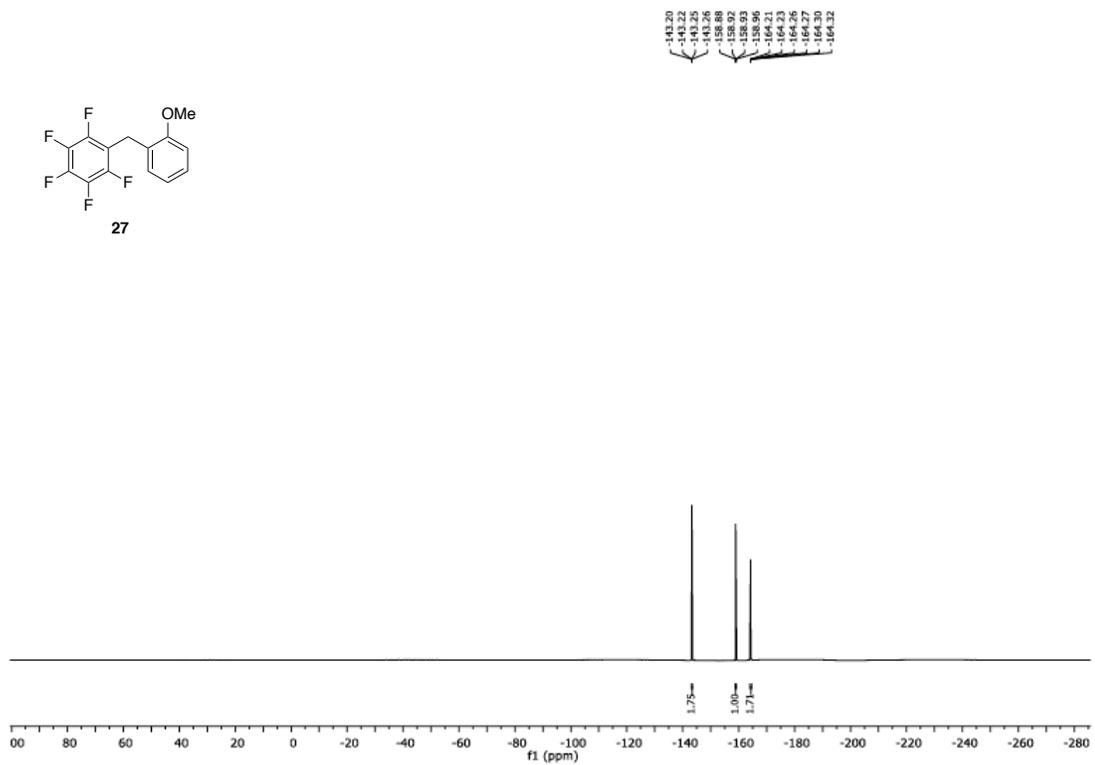
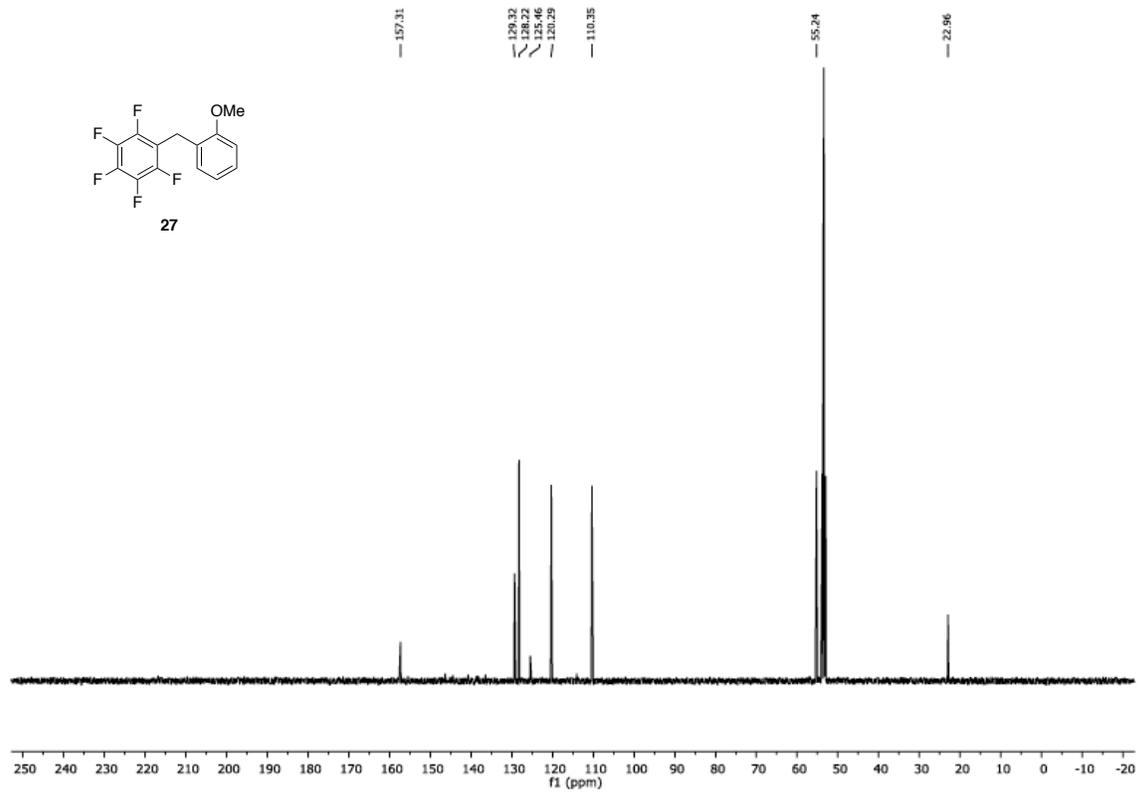


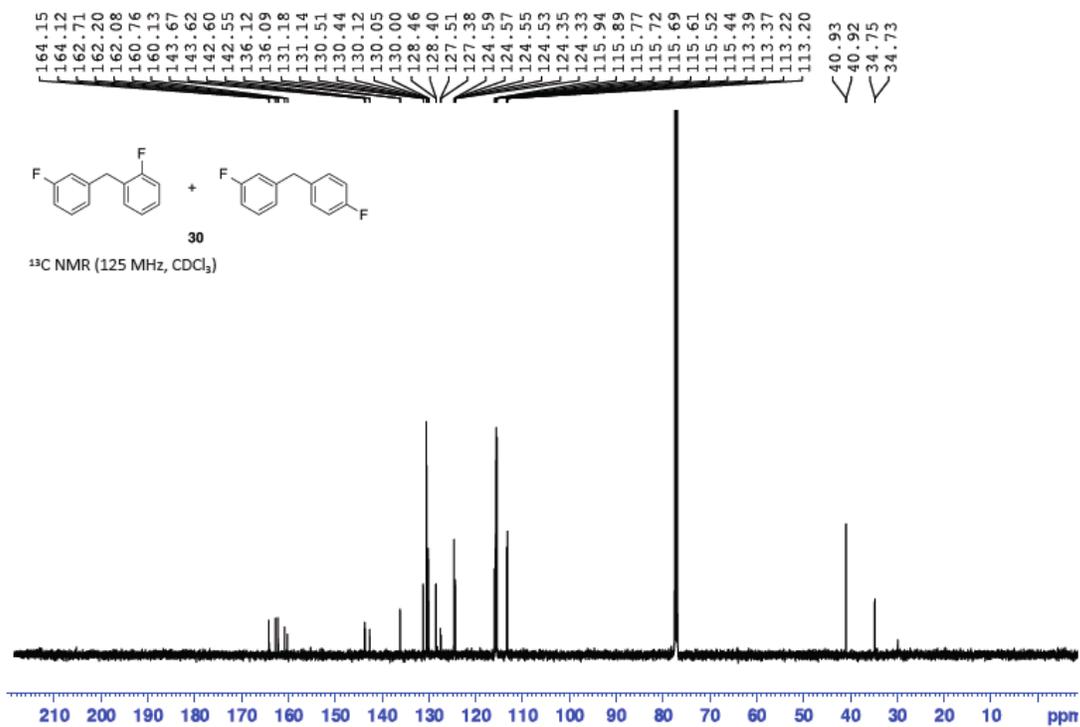
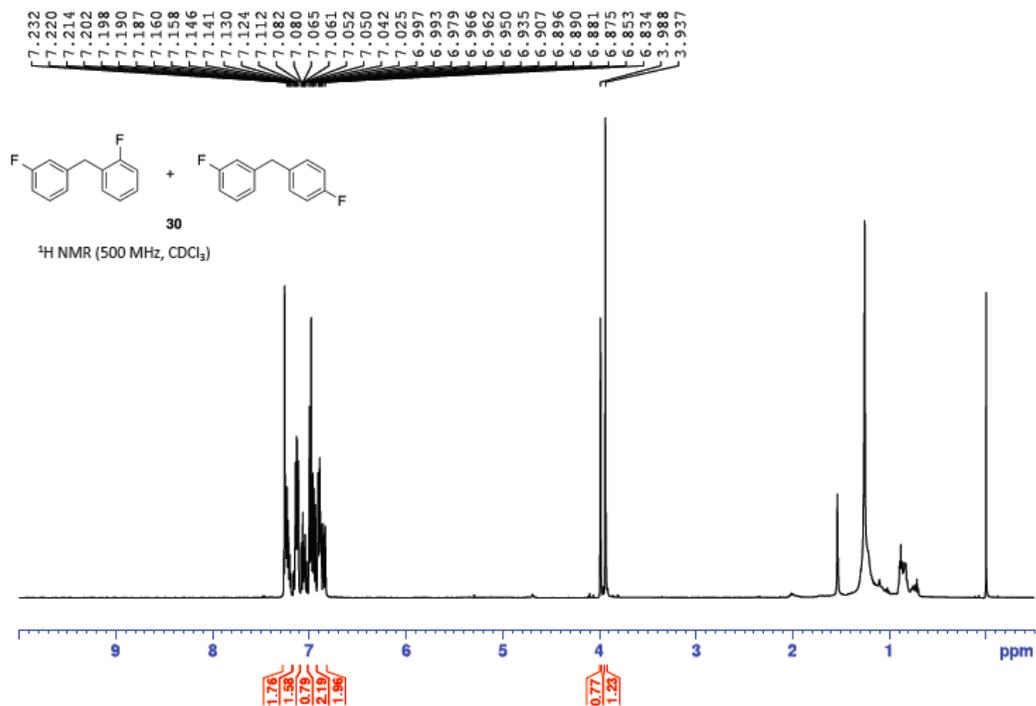
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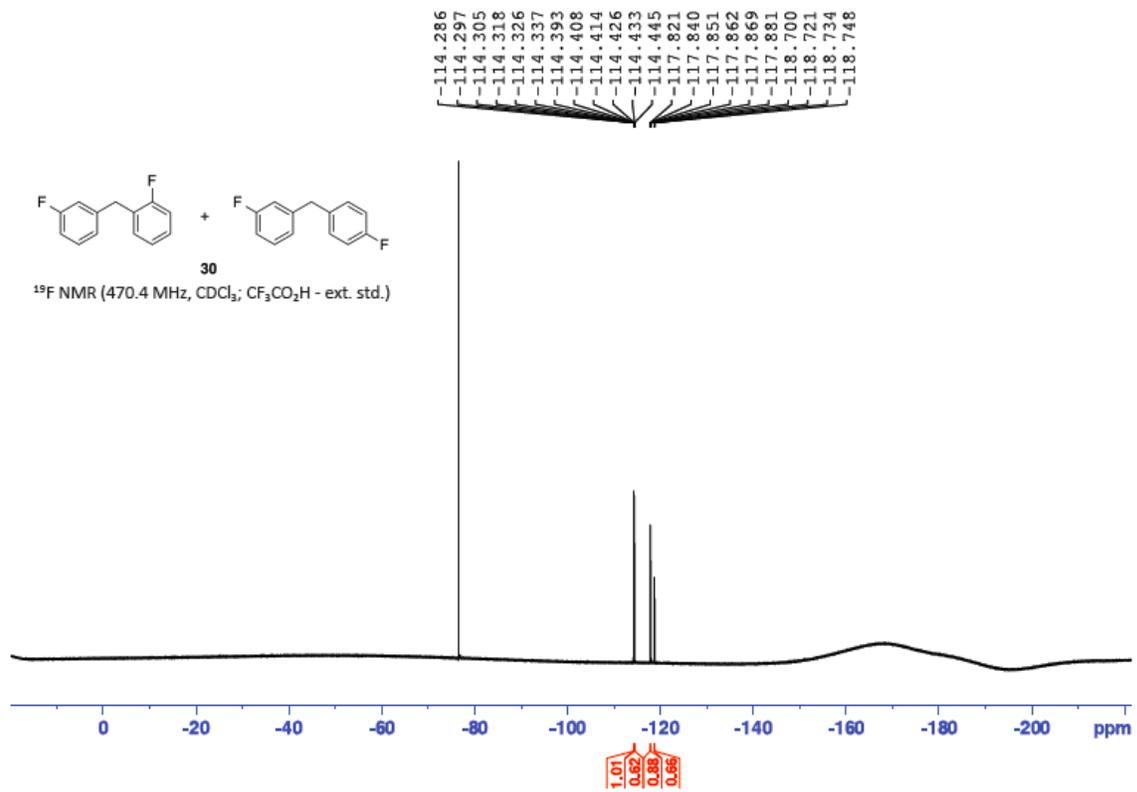


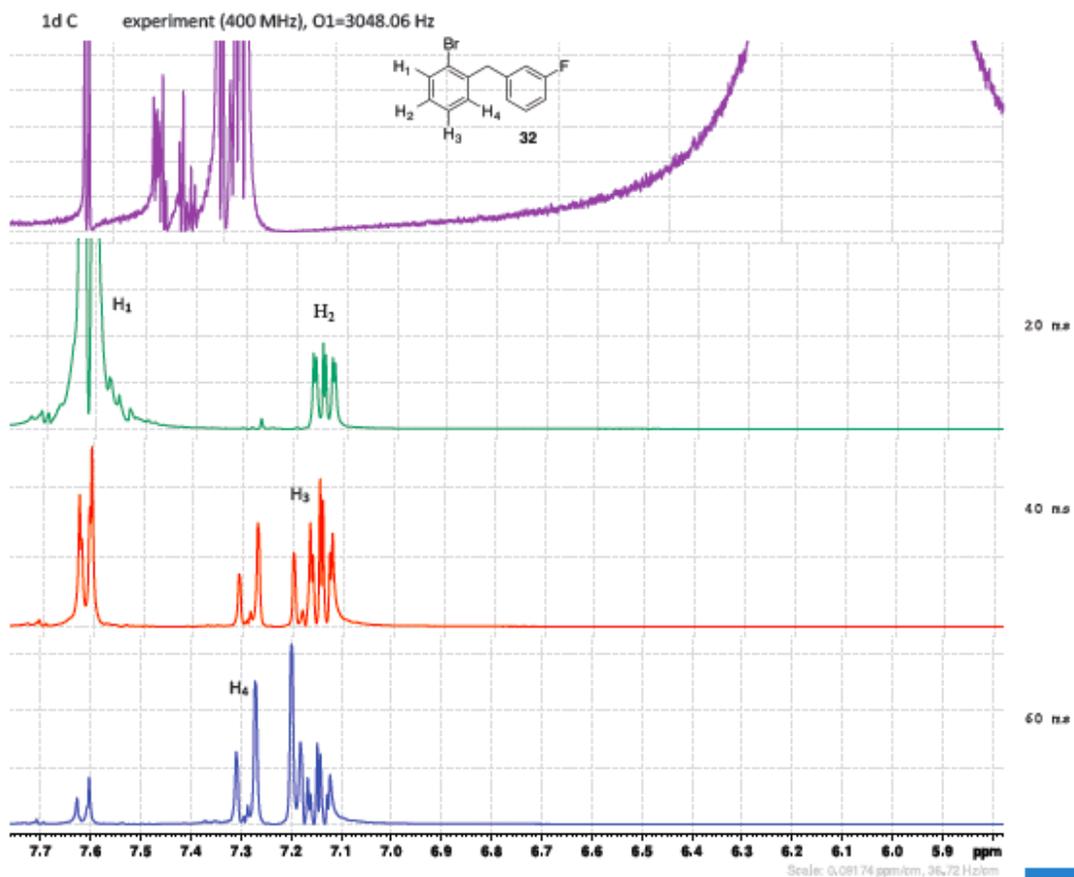
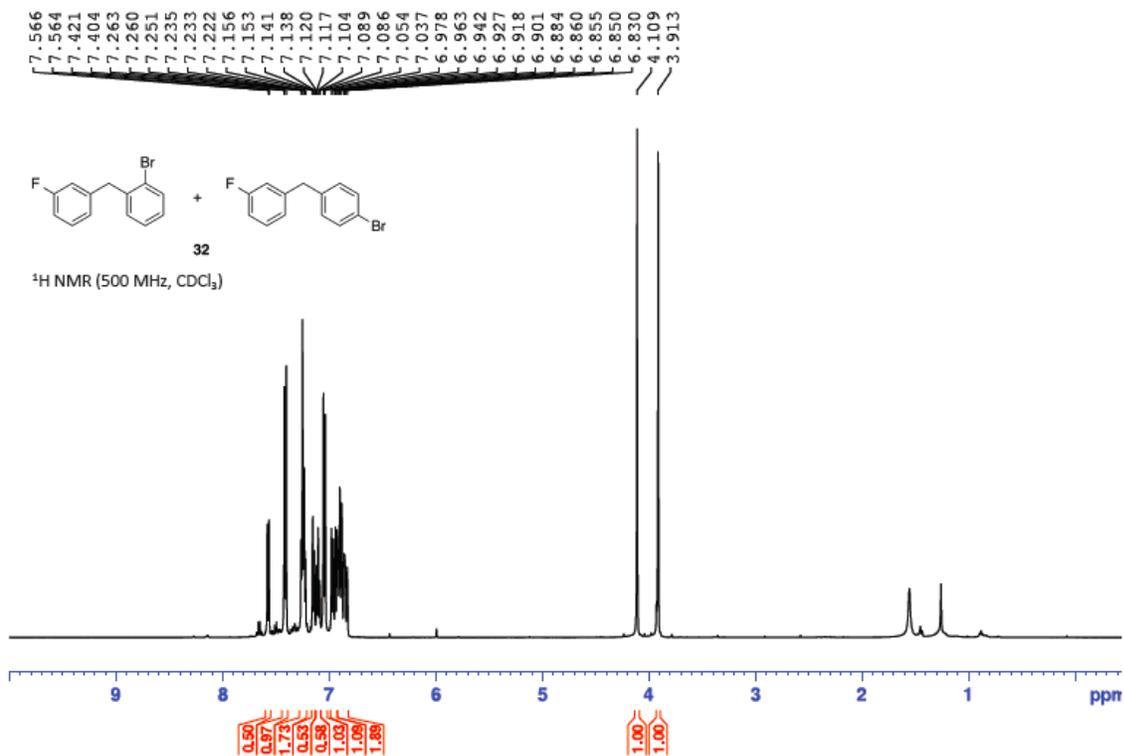
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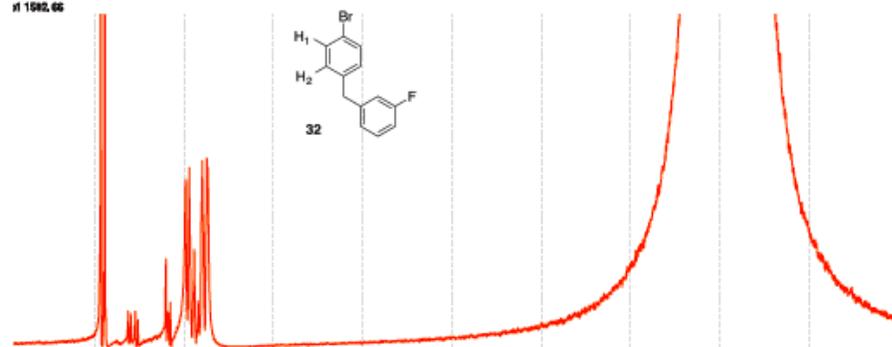




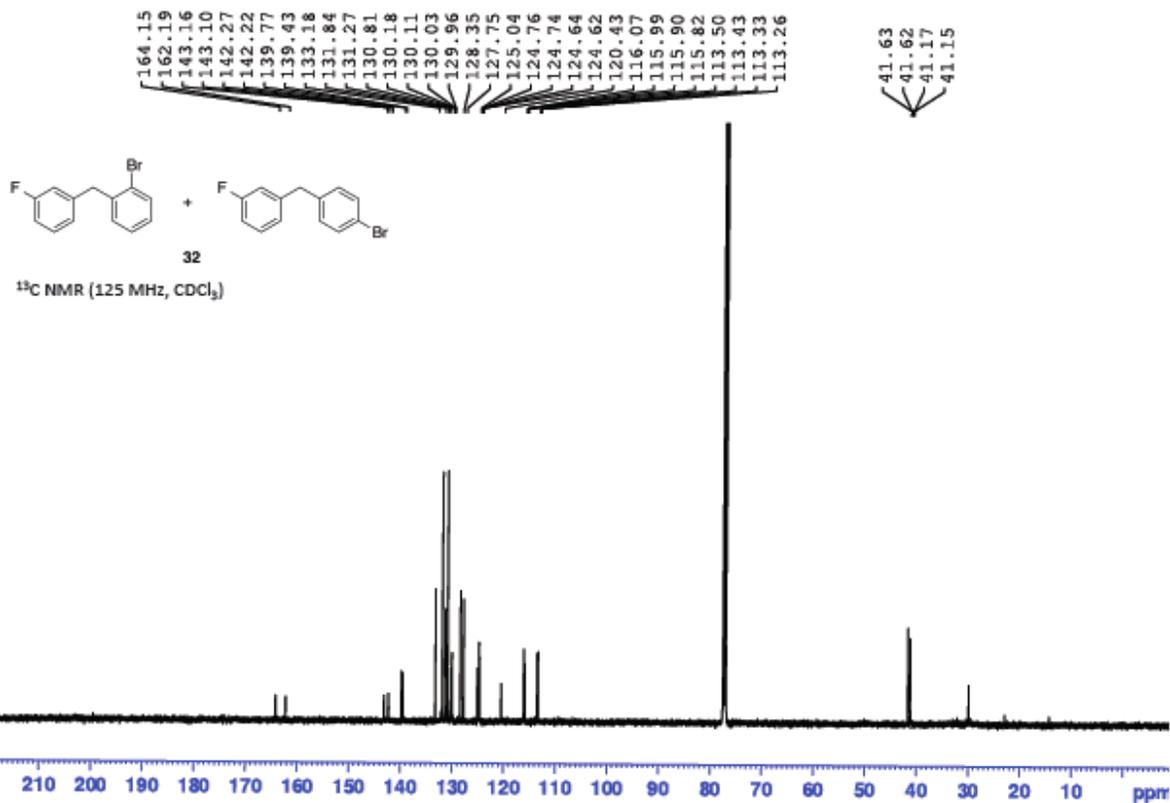
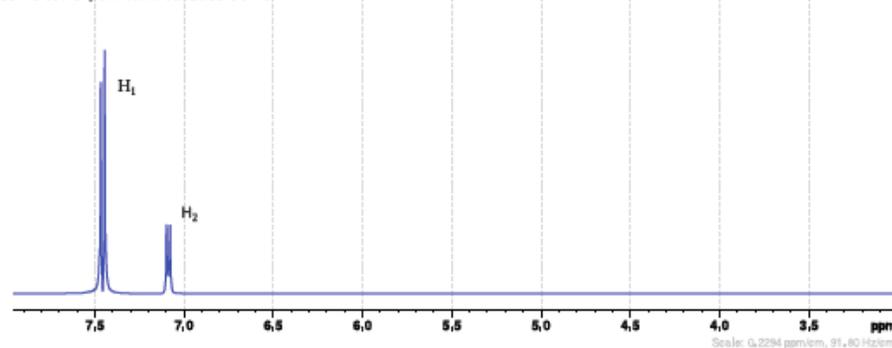


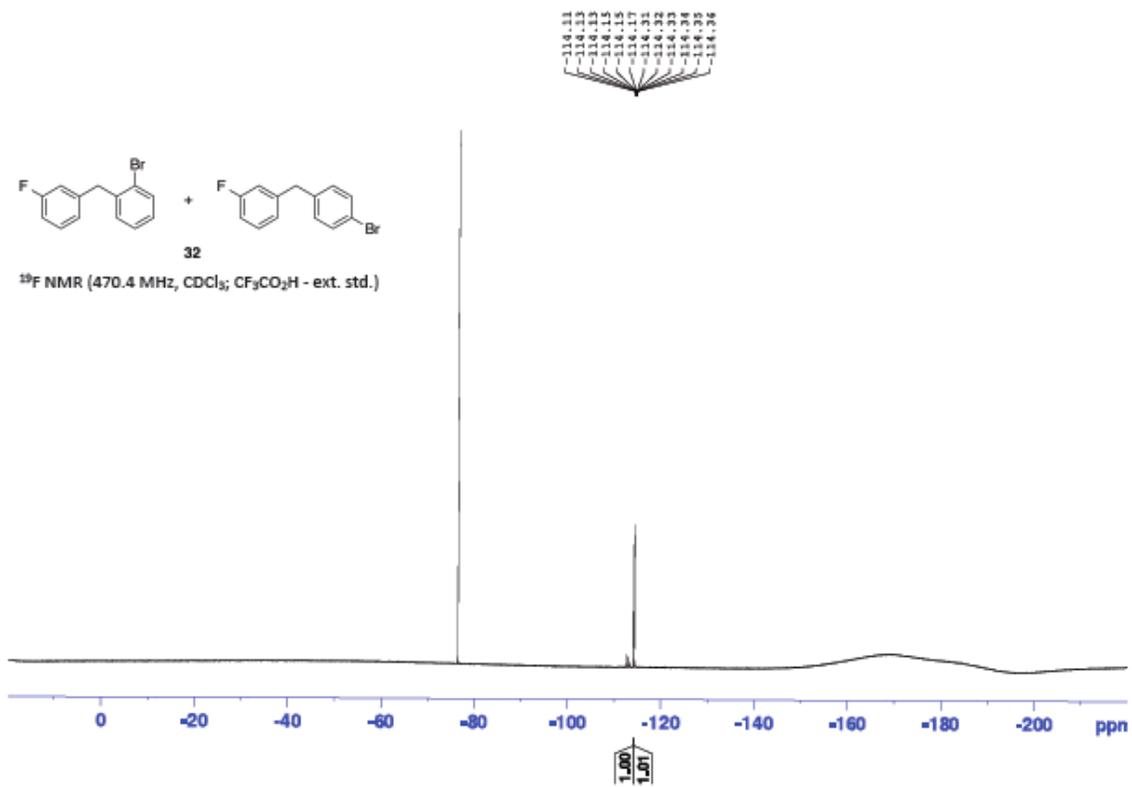
1D TOCSY experiment $\omega_1 = 1582.66$ Hz

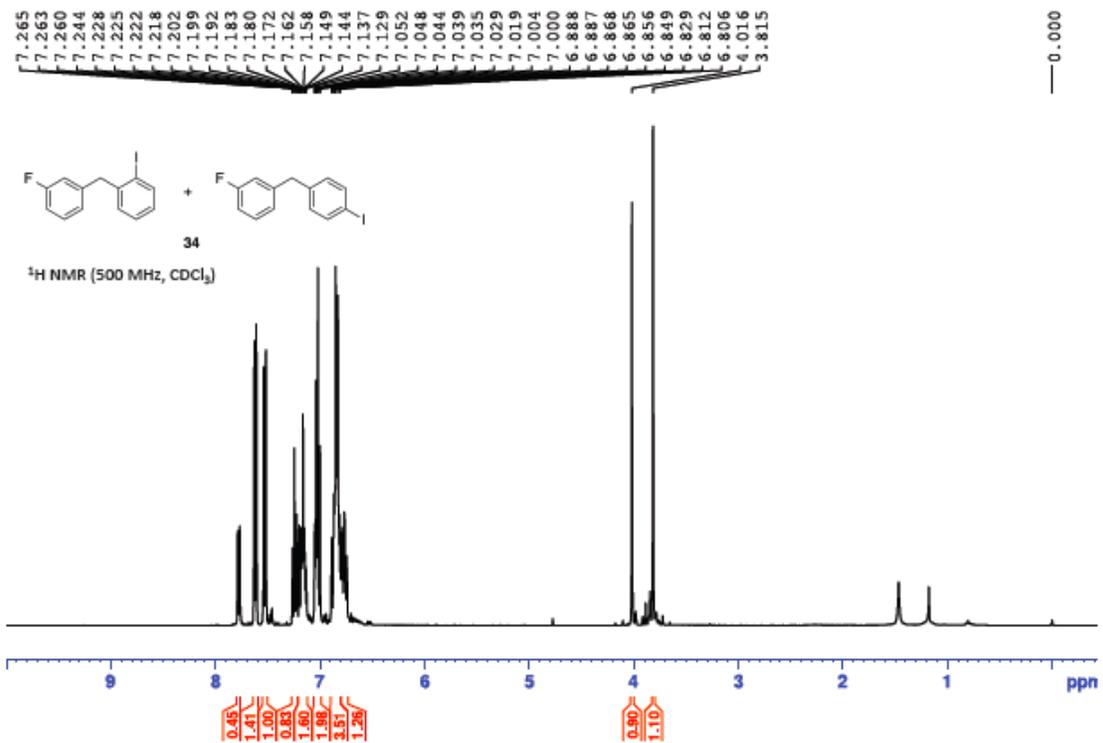
ω_1 1582.66



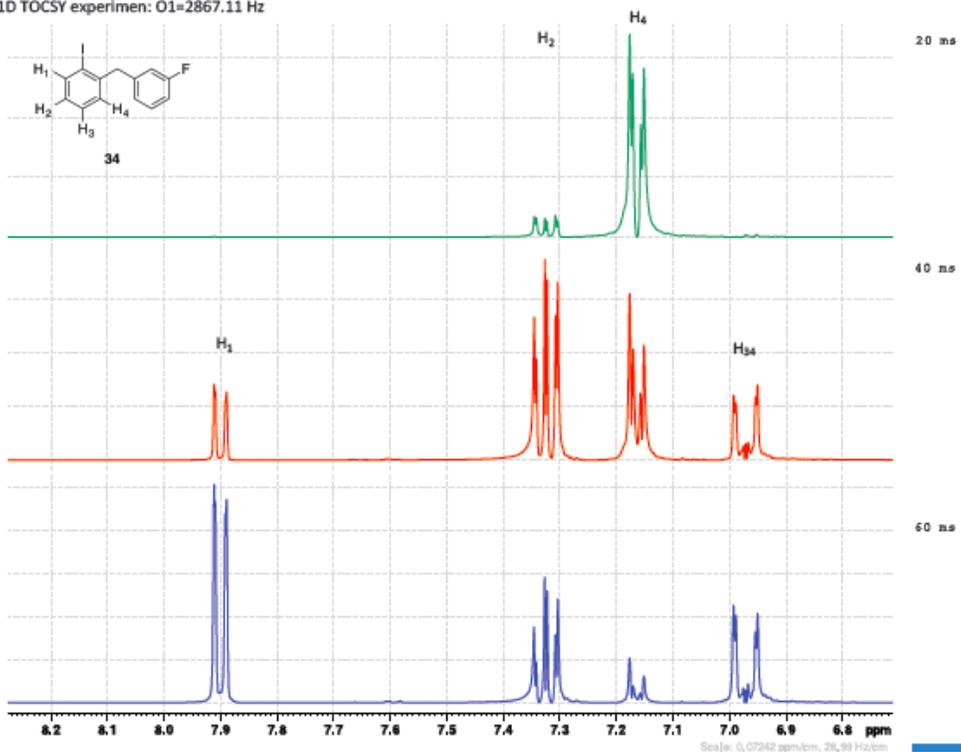
1D TOCSY experiment: $\omega_1 = 2983.56$ Hz

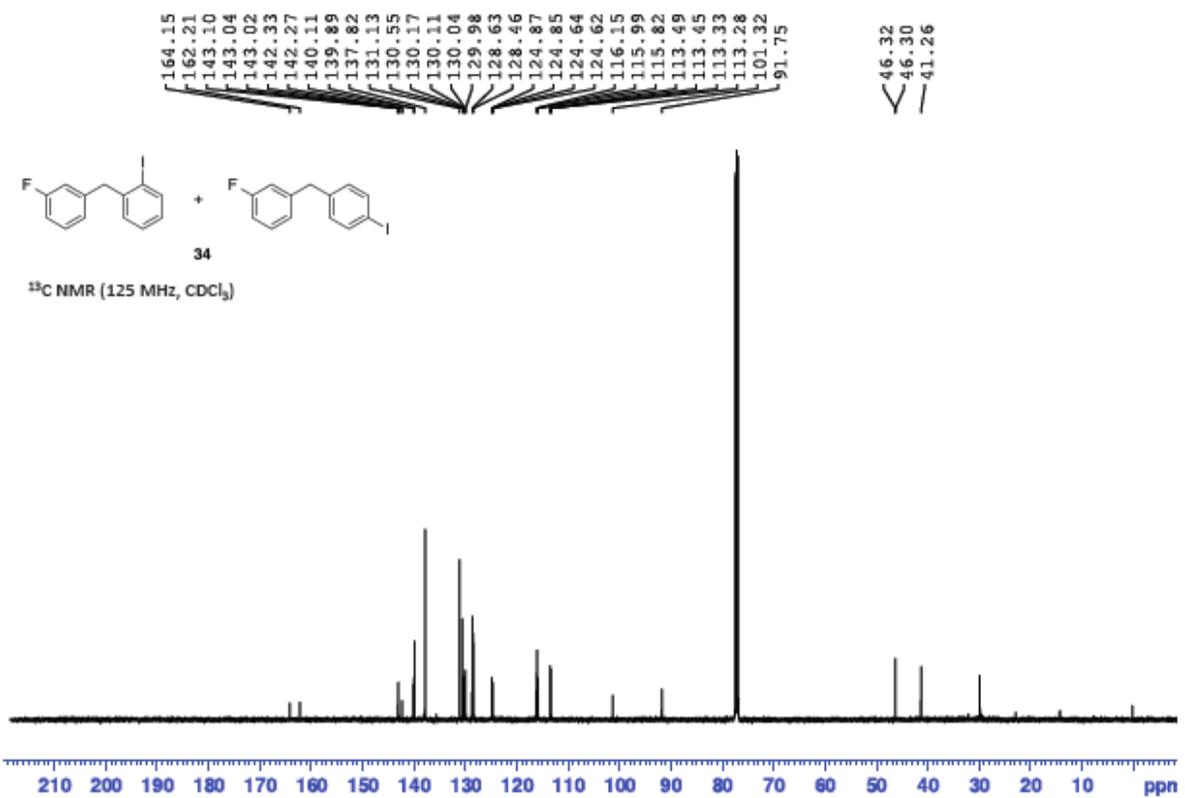
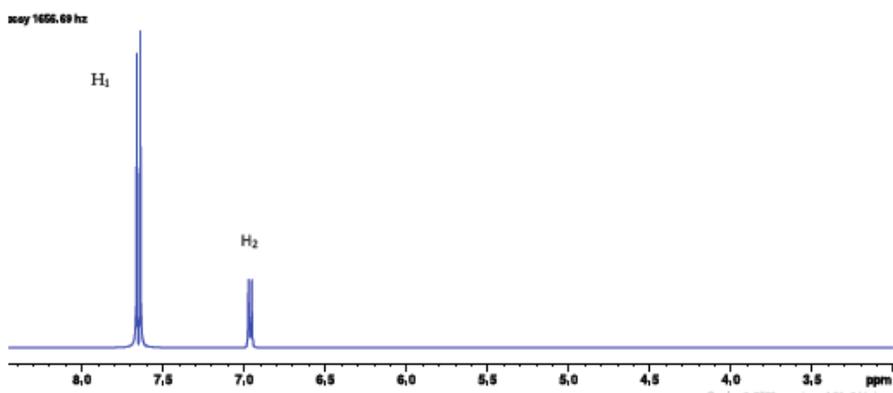
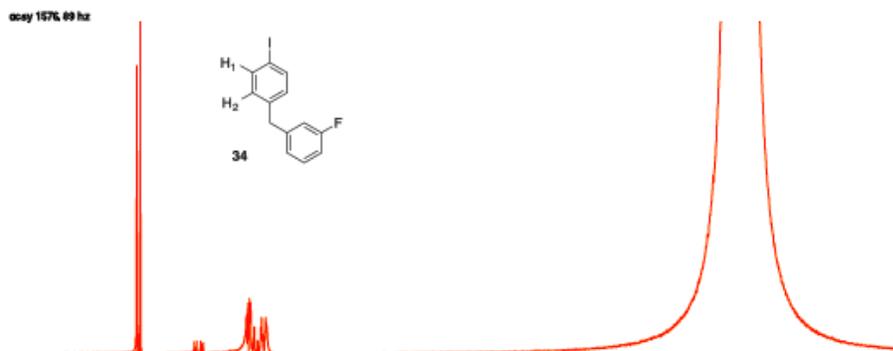


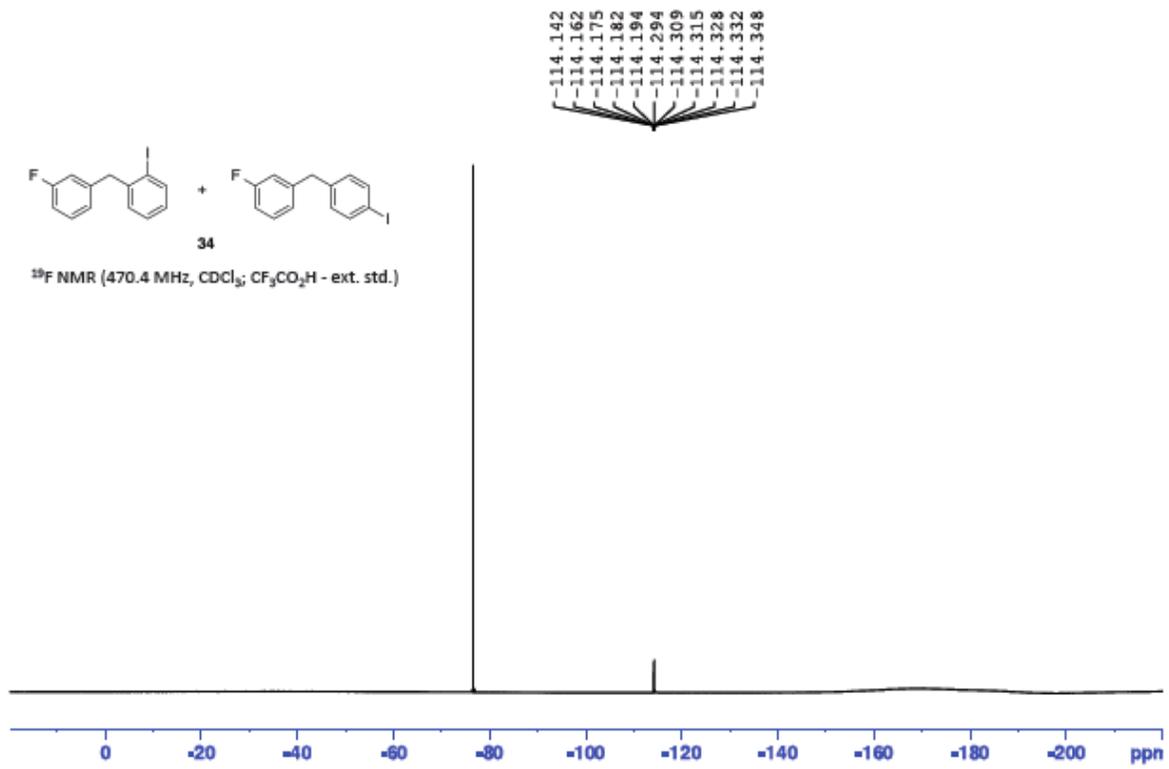


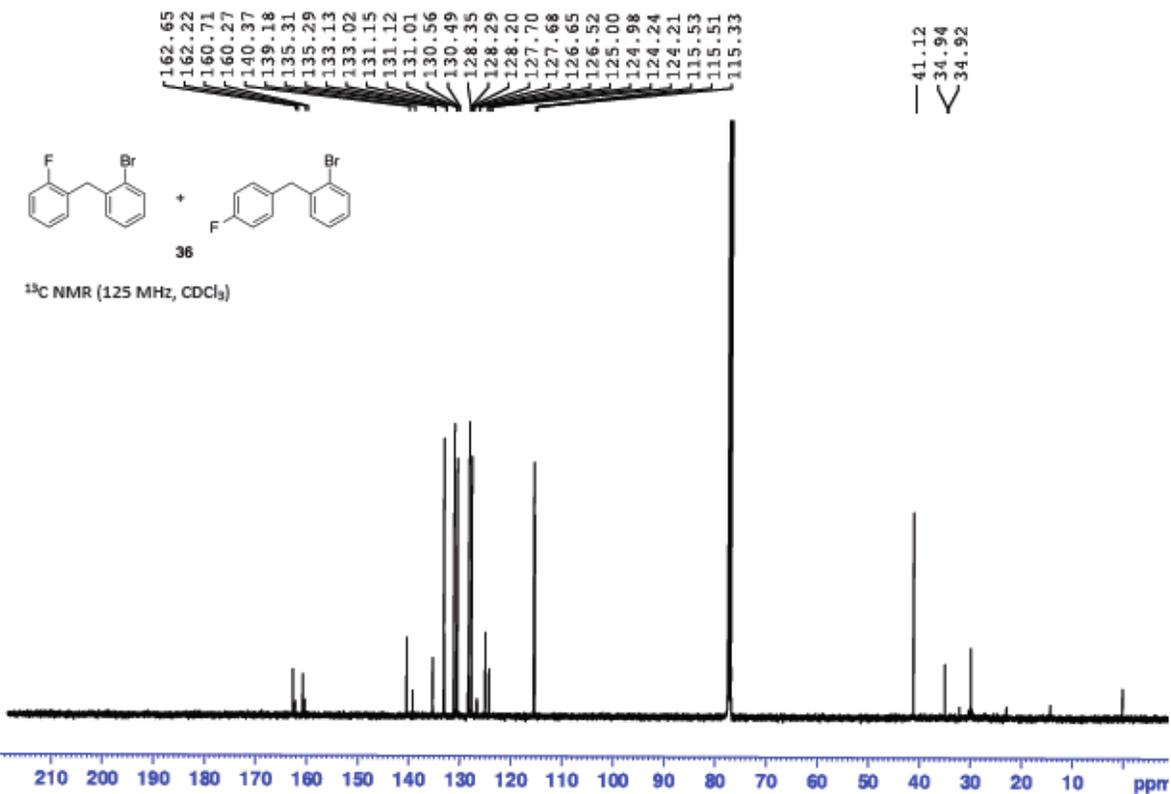
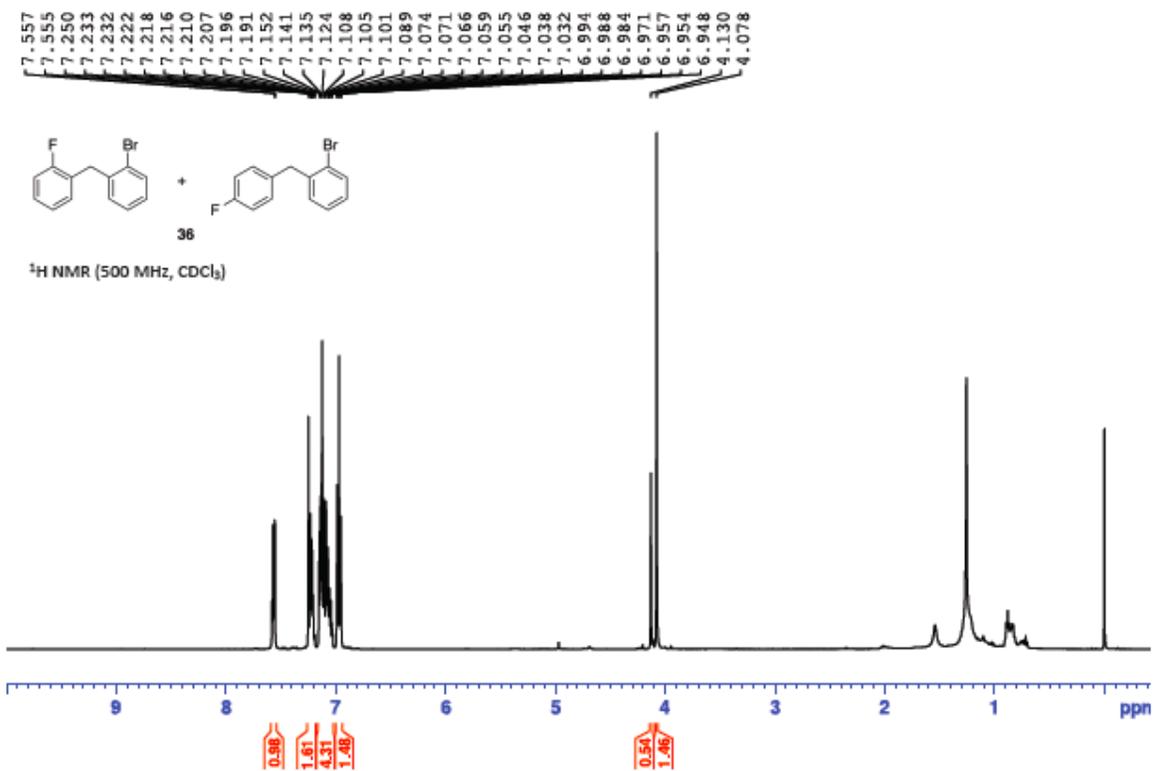


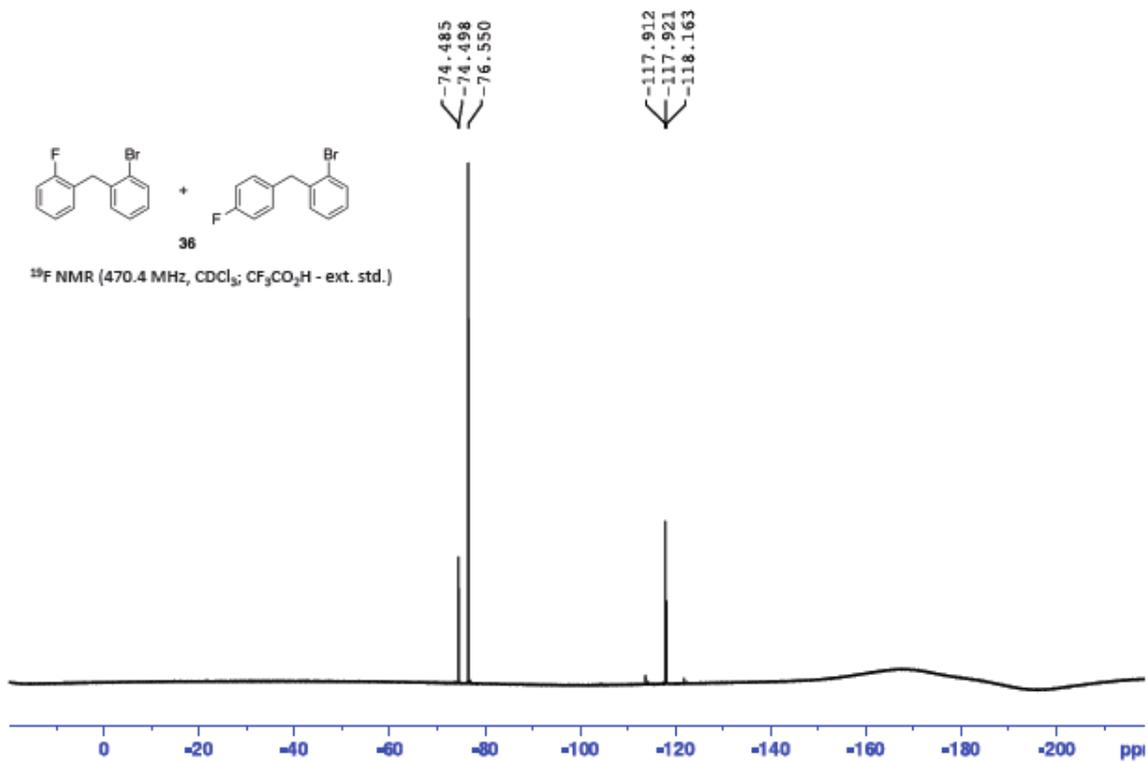
1D TOCSY experimen: O1=2867.11 Hz

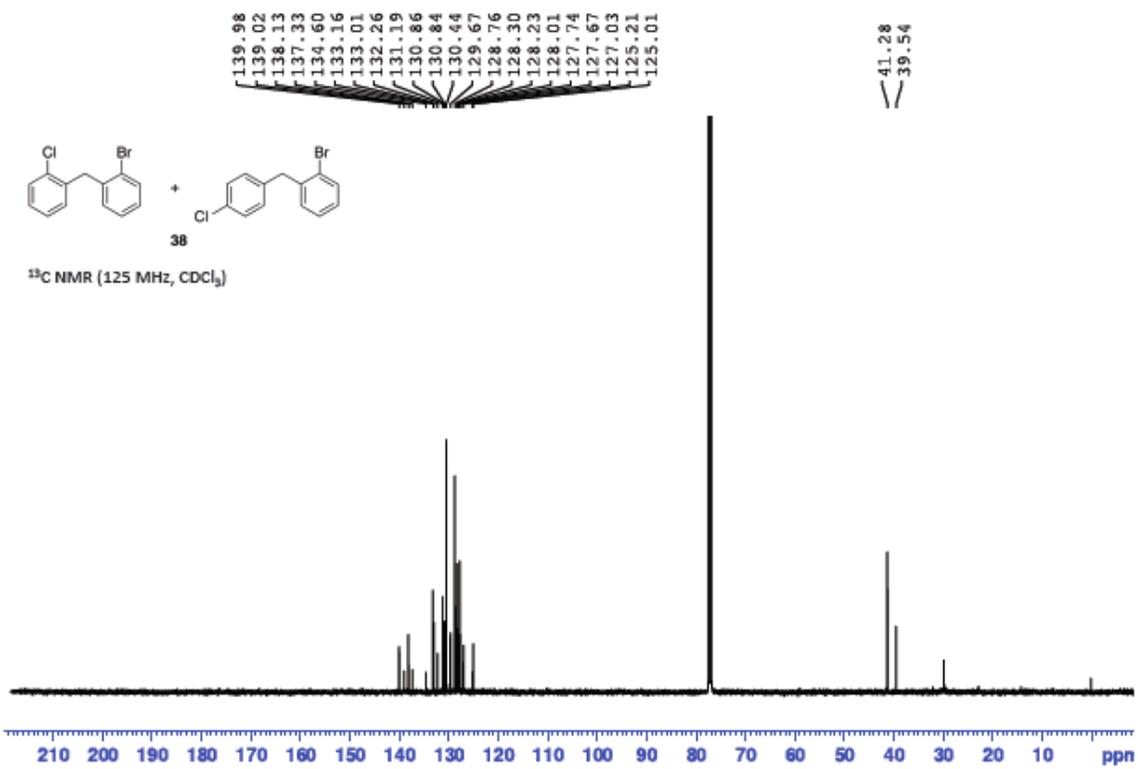
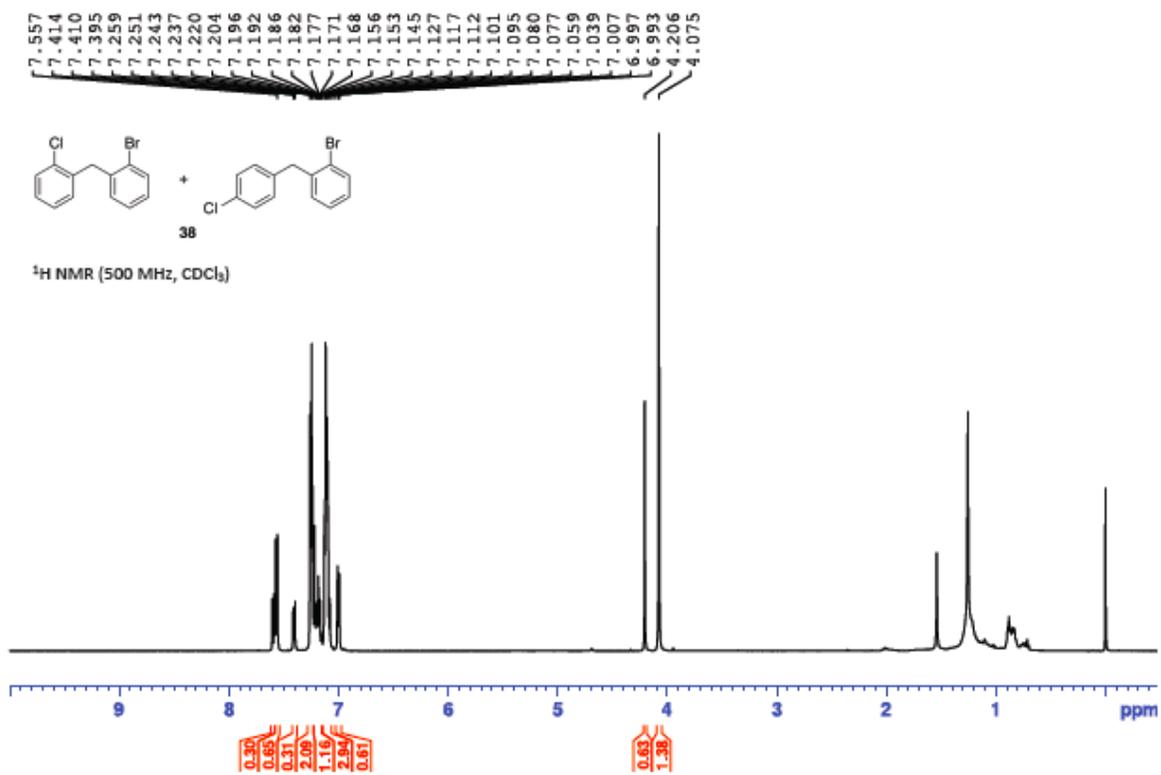


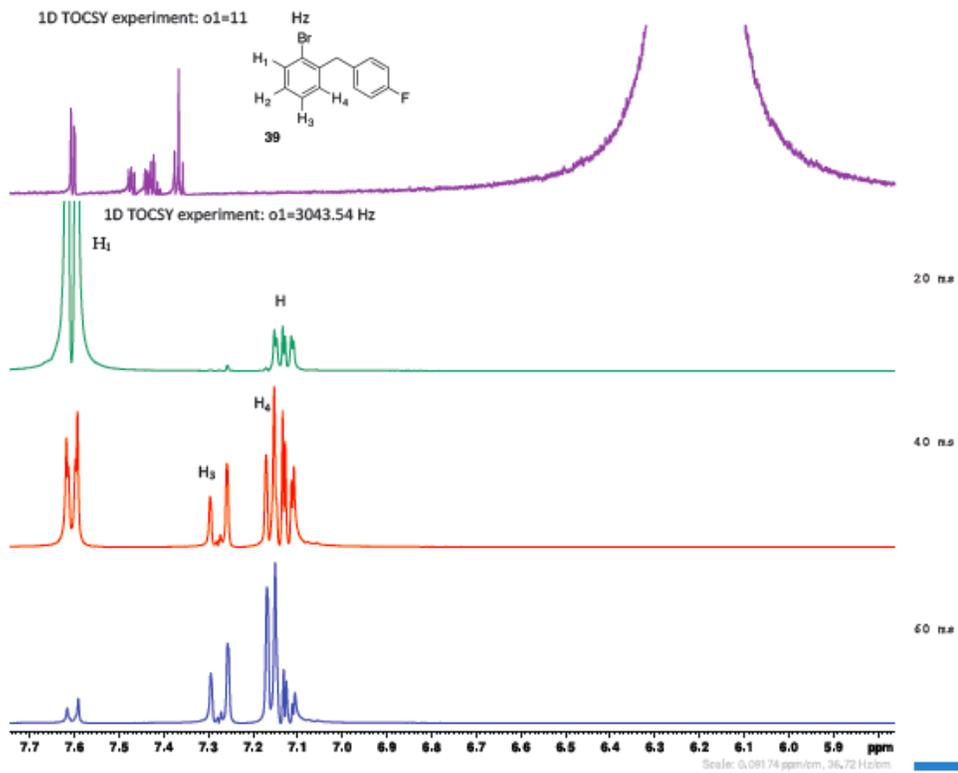
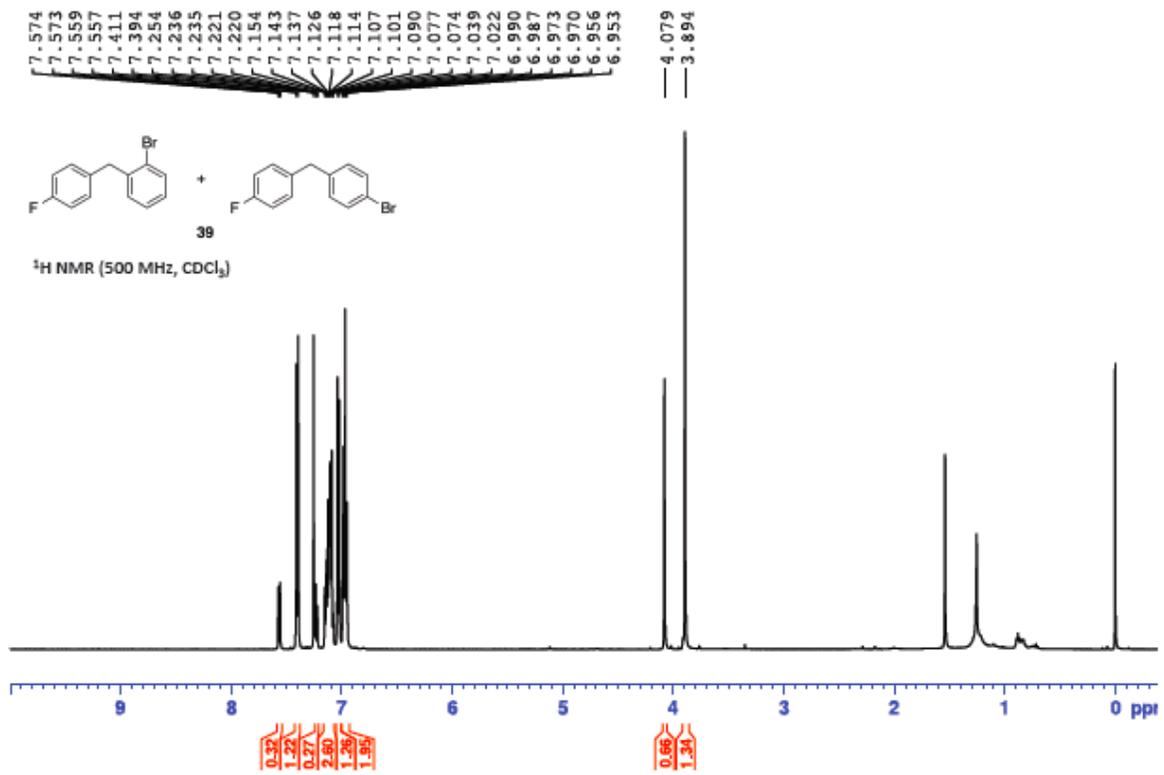


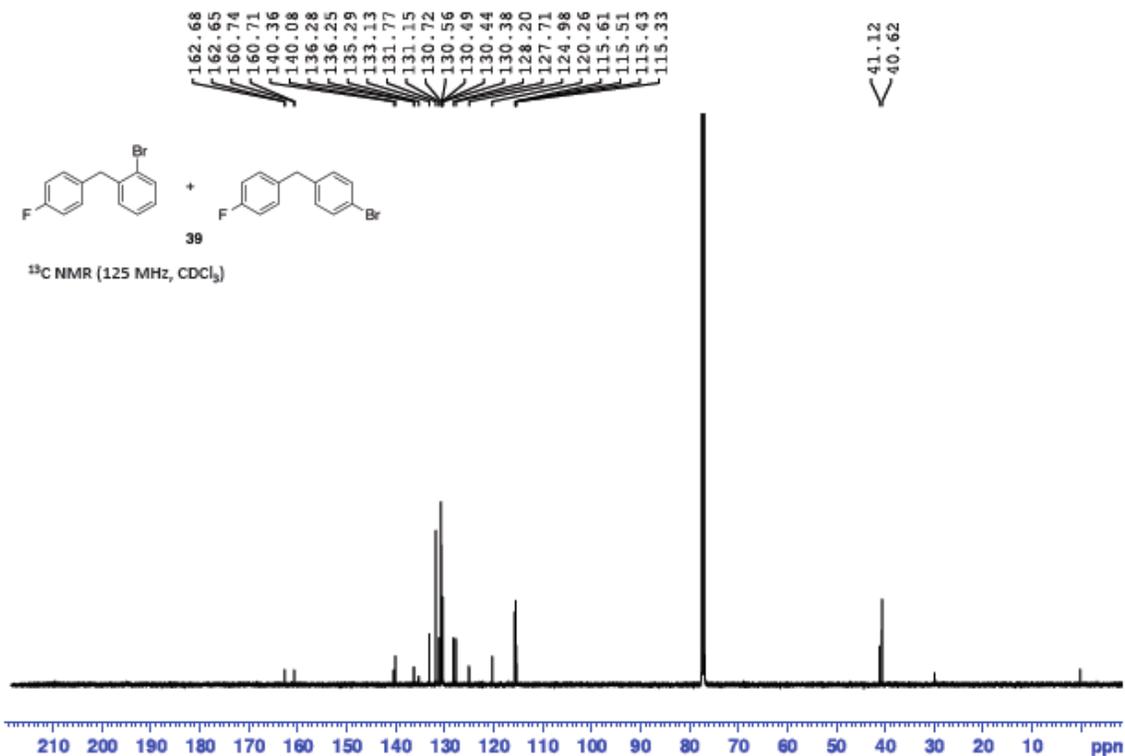
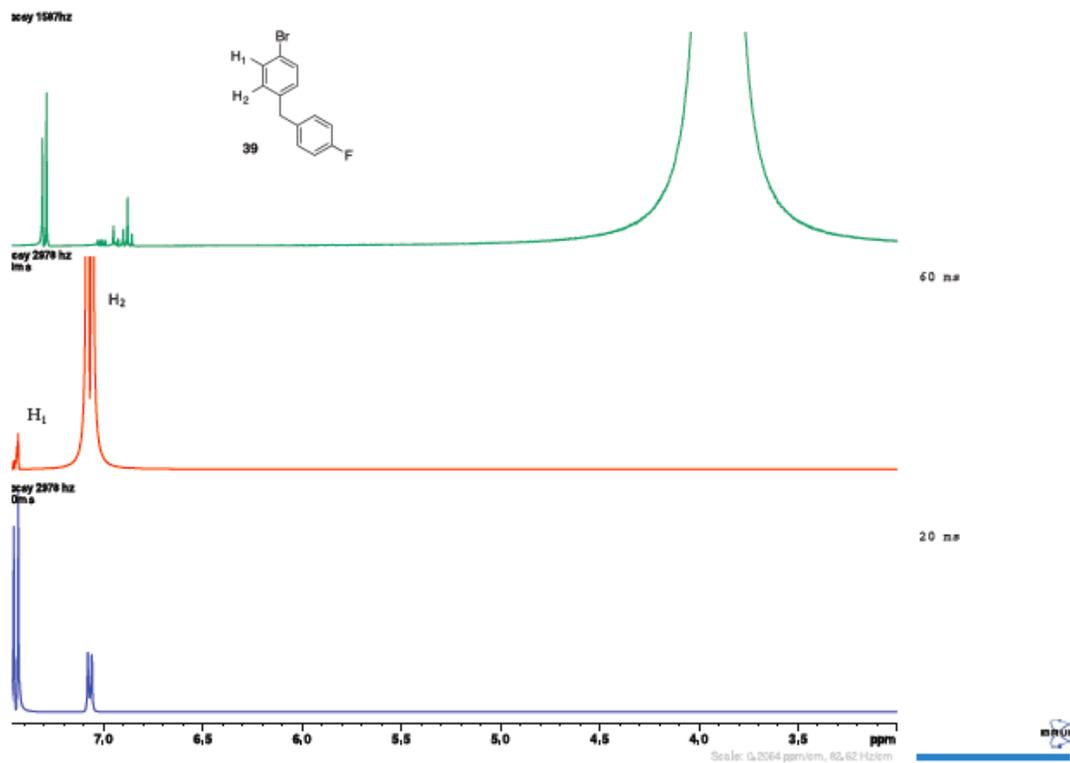


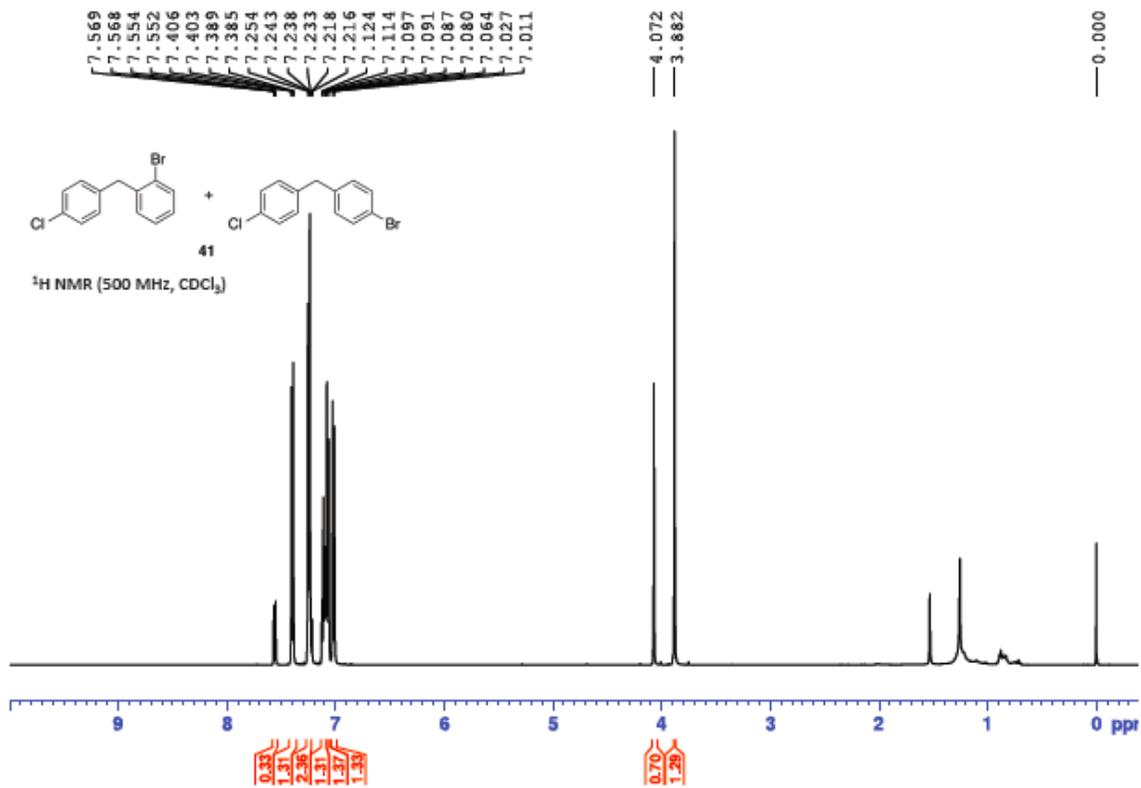




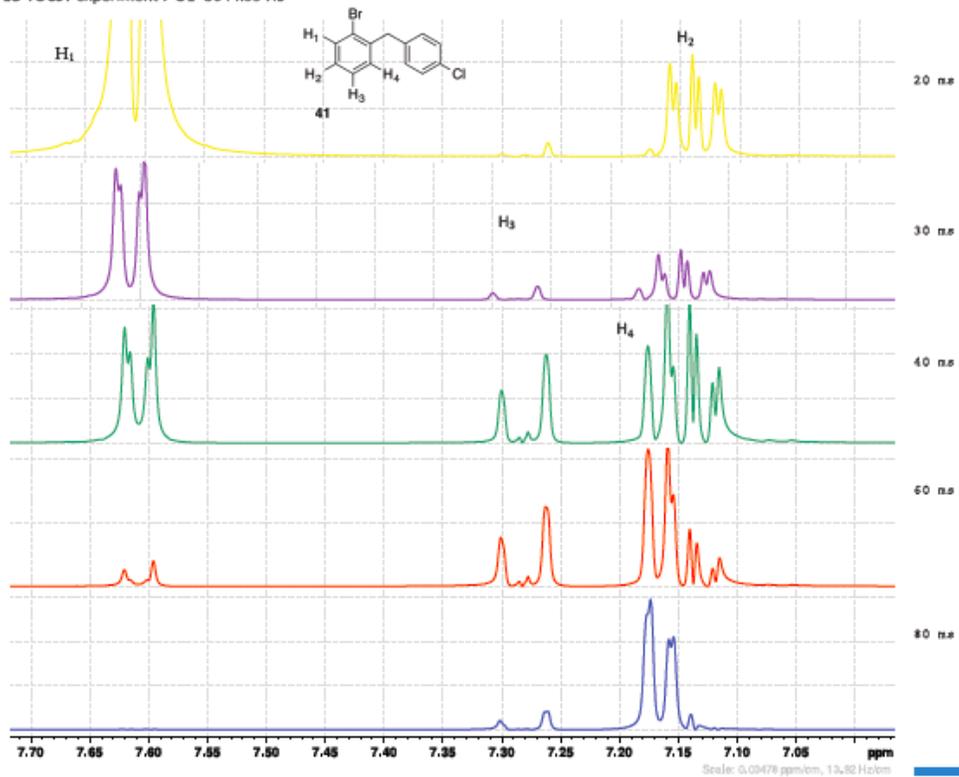




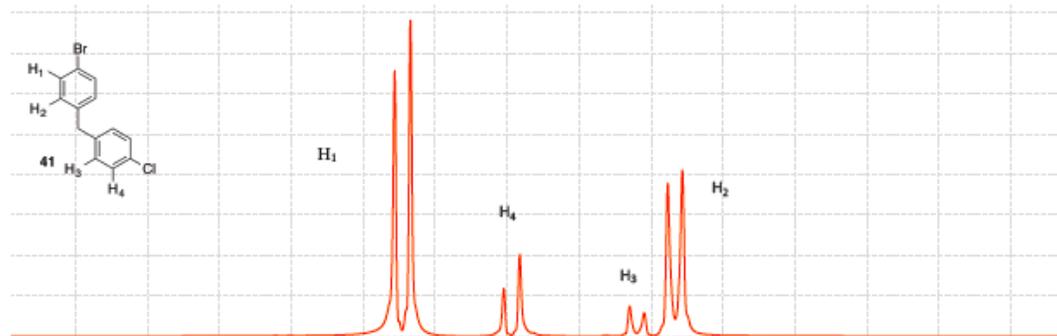




1D TOCSY experiment : O1=3044.99 Hz



1D TOCSY experiment: O1=2828.21 Hz



1D TOCSY experiment: O1=2979.54 Hz

