

# music for children

How to create an exciting and meaningful music ministry time with kids

## Group Think #1

"When singing with kids, **confidence** and **enthusiasm** are as important as ability."

Discuss.

What gifts / character traits do you need to minister to children with music?

## sing why?

Why sing with children?

- Singing is natural to children
- Singing is a natural part of the Christian life
- Singing gives structure to a meeting time
- It can build group traditions
- Brings warmth between teacher and kids
- It helps to let off steam
- Singing is a great memory aid
- Useful and appealing way to tell stories
- Helps children make connections between everyday life and God
- A good way of talking about fears and joys
- It's just fun!

## sing when?

Different contexts for music:

- Sunday School
- School RE
- Youth group
- Playgroup
- Home

## sing where?

The physical environment is very important for all age groups. In my experience, singing works best with young children when they are sitting:

- On the floor
- In a clearly defined space
- with leaders sitting on small chairs at the front - with everything needed in their reach
- With other adults thoughtfully placed

With older children or bigger groups there are more variables, but look to limit distractions and have everyone with clear view of the song leader.

## sing what?

### 1. Little kids in the Sunday School context

- Mostly, but not exclusively, christian songs
- Songs that fit in with your lesson
- Songs that teach something solid
- Songs that have well written, memorable words
- Songs with appealing and easy to sing tunes
- Songs that you've written yourself
- Songs that you like!
- Songs that connect bible stuff with everyday life



## Group Think #2

What are the pros and cons of singing:

- unaccompanied
- cd
- backing track
- guitar
- piano
- band

### Group Think #3

Write a song, retelling the story of Mk 1:30-31 to the tune of "Miss Polly had a Dolly"

### Sample Sunday School Lesson

**Lesson Topic** - Mark 1:30-31 "Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them."

1. Hello song

2. Singing : I Belong to Him, Who made my arms (God did)

3. Open the Box

Sing the OTB song and then open the box. Inside box is a toy doctor's kit, a doll and a blanket. Talk about people who look after us when we're sick and the equipment that they use. Then say "My dolly is feeling sick. What should I do? Put her to bed and call the doctor.." Then sing song while playing with doll.

4. Miss Polly had a dolly

Talk about sickness. It feels horrible and if you get very sick you can die

5. Story: Peter's Mother in Law [Mk1:30-31, Lk 4:38-39, Mt 8:14]

6. Talk to children about story - how do doctor's fix people? How did Jesus fix Simon's mother in law? Why could Jesus do that?

7. Song - to tune of Miss Polly with words retelling the Mk1:30-31 story.

8. Worksheets / craft

9. Prayer

10. Goodbye Song

### 2. Little Kids in the Playgroup context

In our playgroup we sing mostly secular songs with a few very well chosen Christian songs. The Christian songs we sing must:

- Be very good (at least as good as the secular songs)
- Be absolutely on topic
- Be free from Christian jargon
- Not get up the noses of parents any more than needed
- Not be Christian-culturey
- Be placed thoughtfully in the program
- Connect bible stuff with everyday life

### 3. Five to eight year olds in a school or church context

With this age group, singing works very well if you are confident and keep it fun. I chose songs that:

- children can sing without the words (many of them won't read confidently yet)
- have actions
- give the children the chance to move around
- relate directly to the lesson (I generally have a theme song for each unit, then a few more general songs)

I often also use nonsense songs in contexts where kids aren't used to singing to get them warmed up and keen. (Look up the Duck Song on YouTube)

#### 4. Nine to twelve year olds in a school or church context

- The key to getting this age group singing is ownership. They need to feel involved with the music making process. Get kids up the front playing instruments and leading. If it's a big group, give someone a microphone! Get them in early to practice (and feed them lollies during rehearsal!)
- We have had large groups of kids (200 at a time!) involved in the songwriting process. This has worked really well. I bring in the bones of a song and each week we add more to it. This has worked really well.
- Be familiar with the kind of music that your kids like to listen to. Chose something (not everything!) in that genre.
- Don't ever sing a bad song.
- Get kids to do performance items. If well done, these make singing cool.
- Chose songs that fit really well with your lesson material.
- If a song is obviously not working, don't keep going with it! Learn to think on your feet and change things as you go.

## sing songs!

Great songs to sing with kids!

#### Group Think #4

Write a list of songs suitable for 5-8 year olds.

Write another list of songs you'd like to try with older kids.

