

Children's Worship Seminar

I. Intro

A. Welcome. My name is Ivalene Still

1. I am a music educator and I get to share with you today some of my ideas concerning three of the coolest things you can combine -- music, worship and children!! I am excited.
2. My sincere belief is that....

B. Children are worshipers of today, not just worshippers of the future, so...

C. We will talk about ways to equip your elementary aged kids with worship tools that will help them be comfortable engaging in worship

1. Your church's worship can be more multi-generational if you give the children tools they can use to be more engaged.
2. I hope you will hear some inspiring ideas in this hour that will help you in developing your church's own unique program.

II. Worship toolbox

A. There are many Biblical ways to express ourselves in praise and worship

1. Kids can become increasingly comfortable participating in worship when they are given tools to use and when given "permission" to use them. They need to know when and how they can participate and that worship is not just for adults! It's OK to have fun in church!

B. So what tools are in my worship toolbox? I like to use a variety of creative, interesting, fun and engaging tools that include:

- a) Lots of singing
- b) Use of instruments such as:
 - drums and percussion;
 - Orff instruments;
 - handbells (color coded, kid sized, pitched)

Another very cool tool in my worship tool box is:

- c) Praise signing
- d) Dance, movement
- e) Choreographed processions
- f) Flags, scarves, banners, mattas (kid sized)
- g) Scripture memorization with signing

C. We will talk about all these elements in more detail. First, let's talk about some basic structural components of a children's worship program.

III. Structure

- A. Typically have two semesters coinciding with school or church's equipping class schedule/ calendar
 - 1. ex: fall Sept thru early Dec; spring Feb thru early May
 - 2. This gives you approx 10-14 classes per semester

3. In this scenario you would have no classes during winter break (Dec-Jan) or summer

B. Ages

1. Elementary grades 1-6 (or 1-5, depending on when your kids move up to youth)
2. Kindergarteners too young for a lot of these activities. They would require a separate class and a very adjusted curriculum
 - a) Professional educator Madeline Bridges said she never puts Ks on stage because it is above their abilities. We have let them participate in limited, age appropriate ways.
3. Divide classes by age depending on number of kids in each age group.
 - a) Two classes: grades 1-3 and 4-6
 - b) Three classes: grades 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6
 - c) All grades together, especially if you have a very small group or if you are doing a more traditional choir approach
4. Classes join together regularly for part of class time
 - a) Can be weekly, monthly, or only when preparing for a performance
 - b) Use the time to show other classes what you are learning; practice together for performances; let teachers team teach (one teacher may teach all classes a scripture, a dance, etc)

C. Performances or culminating events - options, ideas

1. Work towards helping lead worship in church at end of each semester. Being part of a worship team is a great experience for the kids!
 - a) Combine a variety of elements: processional; songs, maybe one with some instrumental color; scripture (or scripture response) with signing. Start with one or two elements and work up to more.
 - b) Make it flow, a cohesive part of the worship service.
 - c) Have a final rehearsal, with the worship team, in the church. Map out all kids movements
2. Choreographed Processionals, such as Palm Sunday w/ palm branches, is another of my favorites.
 - a) Processionals are easy to do with large groups of kids when it is well planned and rehearsed
 - b) Teach the motions/choreography with the music. Kids should know and recognize what to do when they hear the different parts of music (verse, chorus, bridge) so they can be flexible and follow along with the worship leader or team. [demonstrate]
 - c) Assign adult helpers (that have practiced with you) places at heads and ends of lines, and even in the middle if you have very long lines. Follow the leader!
 - d) Plan all details such as where to stand before beginning, when to begin, where to go as processing (which aisles, directions, where to loop around), when and where to end.
 - e) Practice with whole team -helpers, worship leader, musicians- in the church, with live music, before the event.
3. Special song for special occasion, in church or other event

4. Sing a song regularly in church ie: once every 4, 6, or 8 weeks
5. Service projects ie: sing at nursing home or homeless lunch
6. Use live musicians to accompany you, whether a guitarist, pianist, or a whole worship team. CDs as accompaniment will easily overpower your choristers. I would rather hear them sing acapella! I only use CDs in performances for very specific applications, such as a sound track for a kids musical theater production where each singer is miked.

IV. Curriculum and Planning

A. Curriculum. I create my own!

1. Each semester (or year) have theme or emphasis
 - a) Base scripture memory verses and Bible tie-ins on theme
 - b) Base some of your music or a special anthem on the theme
 - c) Consider seasons; current church focus or interests ie missions; upcoming events on the church's calendar
2. Choose a variety of music: worship songs, hymns, carols, scripture songs, rounds, songs in other languages. Let them experience variety!
3. Your planning choices may be influenced by your teachers' and helpers' interests, skills and talents
 - a) For example, you may have mom or dad or helper that is in to dance and can help with choreography, or an artist who incorporates visual arts as worship or a theater person to add drama

4. Start "listening" -- what sparks your imagination or inspires you? You will start thinking ooh, I can do that with the kids! You will start picking up creative ideas in unlikely places.
5. T-shirts are an option
6. Compile a Practice/Worship-at-home CD
 - a) Parents and kids love these and use them to learn songs and worship at home, in the car, at bedtime.
 - b) Check your church's licensing (CCLI). You may be able to reproduce songs for educational use only and not for sale.

B. Teacher's Tool Box

1. Always have more planned than you have time for. Have back up activities.
2. Plan in detail. A simple spiral notebook is great to keep and refer back to old plans.
3. I love flip charts. Low tech, flexible, portable. Make it colorful (markers). Hang at kids eye level (chart rack).
4. Books: signing, vocal warm-ups
5. Send home word sheets and scripture cards for kids to study
 - a) "At home this week you can practice tonight's new song, which is on page 3 of your word sheets & track 6 of your CD"
6. Communicate well with parents -- directly, repeatedly.
 - a) Send home letters and send emails. Do not count on the kids to remember details.
7. Chorister's Guild
8. Smile and have fun!!

V. Choosing Songs

A. The words we sing are important! Choose wisely!

1. Meaningful content, not fluff
2. Christ-centered, not me-centered.
 - a) The holy trinity worthy of our praise is Father/Son/Holy Spirit, not Me/Myself/I !!
 - b) You've heard the songs-- woe is me, I this, then I that, and I felt, and I need... there is a time for laments but they need to resolve quickly to truth. What is the focus and message?
3. Content is Biblically and theologically sound
 - a) Even kids songs, such as "I've Got the Joy (Love of Jesus, Peace that passes understanding...is scriptural)" vs "I'm inright outright upright downright happy all the time". I had fun with that song as a kid, but now I know it is not Biblical truth that we will be "happy all the time" when we become Christ followers.
4. The songs we learn as kids and teens are the songs we remember the rest of our lives
5. Be sure the kids understand what they are singing about and why it is important. Explain meanings of unusual words. Older kids may appreciate imagery or symbolism in lyrics.

B. Choose a variety of worship songs and music styles.

1. Use worship songs that are currently being used in church and the kids will start taking "ownership" of them. You will see them singing, praise signing, playing "air Orff", worshipping in the worship services.

2. Use a hymn or two each semester, especially if your church has contemporary services that use little to none of the wonderful old hymns.
 3. Seasonal: Christmas carols; Easter or Palm Sunday anthem
 4. Songs for processions or other choreography
 5. Songs in other languages, including Spanish, Latin, Hebrew, Romanian, Hungarian.
 6. Songs from other countries that have been translated into English, such as China, Peru, Africa
 7. Rounds; Partner songs
 8. Scripture songs help hide God's word in our hearts!
 9. Kids songs
- C. Use age appropriate ranges, keys and technical difficulty.
- D. Do most of your teaching of the songs without instrumental accompaniment and without CDs!
1. Keep it simple, clear, and easy to hear their voices and your voice.
- E. Conduct clearly, simply
1. Clear cut-offs
 2. Hand signals that communicate specific things (ie: louder)
 3. Practice in a mirror
 4. Conducting Patterns
 - a) 4/4 , 3/4
- F. Now that we have a big picture plan, let's look at some more detailed ideas for your weekly classes

VI. Lesson Plan Components and Ideas

- A. Keep it moving, varied, interesting, age appropriate
- B. Build on concepts throughout the semester and year.
- C. Now, I want to show you a lot of specific things that can be included in your classes. So, since we are talking about kids, let's pretend for awhile. You can be the kids, maybe 3rd or 4th graders. And I will be the teacher!
- D. Psalm 150:6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!
 - 1. Put your hand up- and blow on it-- what do you feel?
Do you qualify?
 - 2. But... are you too young?
- E. Psalm 148:12 Young men and young women, old men and children -- praise the Lord!
 - 1. All ages!! Don't have to wait 'til you are an adult or a worship leader or a parent or an old person. You can worship now! It also says if we don't praise Him the rocks will. Do you want the rocks to have to do your job?
 - 2. Welcome to my class....
- F. Include in class times:
 - 1. Welcome, ice breakers (a question with a quick answer)
 - 2. Prayer. Helps them reign in, set aside their day, and focus.
 - a) Kids voice prayer requests, progress to kids praying
 - b) Popcorn prayers - concise, quick; topic
 - c) Sing prayers

(1) ie: Father, I Adore You [show signs]or Thank You For Loving Me

3. Physical Warm-ups

- a) Stretches
- b) Write alphabet or name with shoulders or feet, both sides
- c) Silent shout numbers 1-10, exaggerate facial energy
- d) Facial academy awards - and the winner is... - hands at face, face slo-mo surprise
- e) Be silent, still and focus to count of 10, then wiggle.

4. Echo Clapping and Body Percussion

- a) echo rhythms in time
- b) "call to attention"
- c) Snap, Clap, Pat, Stomp

5. Vocal Warm-ups

- a) Use minimal accompaniment
- b) Draw patterns of shapes on white board or chart, vocal sounds that match the shapes
- c) Breathing exercises such as gasp; sip in, hiss out; sizzle (sh sh sh sh to increasing counts); with hand in front of mouth, sing one pitch as count to 8 (12, 16, 20 ..)
- d) Vocalises in appropriate ranges. Examples:
 - (1) mee may mah moh moo (legato) OR yah hah hah (staccato)
(1-3-5-3-1)
 - (2) Alleluia, alleliua, alleluia, amen
 - (3) Lips teeth tip of the tongue, Beady beady beady beady eyes
 - (4) Seven Siamese sailors sailed the seven salty seas (descend; increase speed)
 - (5) Doo Bee Doo Bee

- (6) Apples and Bananas (aht, eht, oht, ayt, oot)
- (7) Zinga zinga zinga zinga zoo (5-3, 4-2, 3-1, 2-7, 1)
- (8) Hip hip hip hip hippopotamus OR Doo doo (5-5 5-5 5-4-3-2 1)
- (9) Ha ha (12 12 12)
- (10) Sighs
- (11) Cat Purrs (Lip Trills)
- (12) Hooty owl, Caw crow

6. Singing and Learning Songs

a) Proper breathing

- (1) Essential to singing beautifully and on pitch
- (2) when fill lungs, middle of body expands, shoulders & chest stay still & quiet
- (3) need round open pathway through airways (windpipe, throat, mouth) to let the air out when singing. Think of ping pong ball floating in lungs, needs space to get out when sing.

b) Singing posture

- (1) Good posture helps produce good singing, like an athlete (choir team!)
- (2) Feet in "modified V" (heels slightly apart), about shoulder width apart
- (3) Knees flexible, not locked or will be tense
- (4) Back straight, Shoulders relaxed and natural, ribcage needs room to expand
- (5) Arms relaxed at side, hands loose at sides
- (6) Head with chin parallel to floor, not raised nor jutting
- (7) Eyes on director. Keep weight balanced on both feet. Smile!!

c) Matching pitch

d) Vowel sounds, diction - focused (not spread), precise

e) Phrasing, breath marks

f) Choral singing- blend, staggered breathing

7. Instruction and use of instruments, dance, other worship tools

- a) Alternate the use of Orff, perc, bells, scarves, and dance as time allows and as your current curriculum plans require
- b) Have simple rules and guidelines to respect and keep safe your worship tools
- c) Teach correct use of instruments, mallets
- d) Play instruments only when teacher asks you to. If an instrument "misbehaves", it will have to be put away.

8. Rhythm Games

a) Peter 'Postle picked a pack o' praising prophets

- (1) Say with expression and a smile!
- (2) Find beat- pulse, steady rhythm
- (3) Beat - alternating left snaps, right snaps
- (4) Ostinato -pat clap pat clap on quarter notes
- (5) Rhythm of words - two-finger hand claps
- (6) Play different rhythm perc on specific words ie Peter, picked, praising
- (7) Orff- different instruments play random tones on quarter or half notes

b) Sorrida Que Pasa? Aloha Guten tag

Bonjour Good Day Konichiwa Shalom

- (1) Hello in 8 languages. World Map.
- (2) Which word is easiest to remember? Remove or erase it and say again. Repeat until all removed and have said whole thing without words. (Can use this technique when learning songs, too)
- (3) Snap, clap, pat - on the beat; on 1 and 3; on 2 and 4

c) Stomp

- (1) Four separate piles of instruments, ie glocks, drums, triangles, claves, finger cymbals. Have rhythm cards (1 or 2 measures) at each station. Play cards. Rotate groups of kids around to each station..
- (2) Can also use note value flash cards with blank rhythm cards to create their own measures with correct number of beats.
- (3) Can also use found items such as keys, tins & boxes instead of instruments.

d) Bubble Game

9. Music theory-- age appropriate; aides in music reading skills and expression; gradually build on concepts.

a) Staff, bar lines, measures, grand staff, bass clef, treble clef, time signatures

- (1) hymnals - identify parts of the grand staff, etc; learn to read the verses down the page

b) Note and rest values- whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth

- (1) Note values flash cards activities: Put flash cards up in measures.
- (2) Clap a measure. Kids pick out the one you clapped.
- (3) Call on someone to clap and count a measure, other kids pick out which one
- (4) Whole class count and clap all measures.
- (5) Clap a 4/4 measure without one beat to make it 3/4. Remove that card.

c) Steps, skips, intervals

- (1) dots

d) Beat, rhythm, how to count musically

e) Music elements: dynamics, tempo, staccato and legato

f) Form (“road maps”)

10. Solfege

- a) Echo solfege: listening skills; matching pitch; introducing songs, intervals in songs
- b) Intervals - ie: 5th, Do Sol, as in "alleuia" of Jubilate Deo and "our Father" and "thy kingdom come" of Our Father

11. Scripture memory, with signs. Send home scripture memory cards with the verses you have worked on to date.

12. Bible tie-ins that go along with your plans, ie: scriptures found in songs, meaning of praise and worship, Shabach, Psalms, prayers and blessings

13. Closing song ie: Go In Peace, Shalom, Go Now In Peace

14. Have an activity available (or have kids help put away instruments) in case you have to wait for parents

G. More On Orff

1. Versatile, creative, appropriate for all ages, can play them immediately even with no experience.
2. An investment, but a great one.
3. Glockenspiels (small metal removable bars, hard mallets), Metallophones (large metal removable bars, soft mallets), Zylophones (large wood removable bars, soft mallets).
Many sizes - soprano, alto, bass
4. Mallets- handlebar grip, not tight. Wrists loose.
5. Strike middle of bar. "Bounce" gently with your mallets to let sound resonate. "Pull" sound out of instrument.
6. Warm-ups, Skills, Activities
 - a) Walk up then down scale, quarter notes, alternating mallets, crossing over.

- b) One note (on one bar) repetitions, alternating mallets; two note reps (on 2 adjoining bars), alternating mallets
- c) Echo Orff- have removed 4 and 7 (F, B) so no dissonance. Clap a measure, kids echo the rhythm on any bars.
- d) Have each kid make up a 2 measure melody. Have them all play their melodies in succession to create a song. (no F,B)
- e) Read aloud a scripture, Psalm, or Lord's prayer. As read again, have kids listen, think, choose a phrase or word. Have them create a melody for the phrase, then sing or say the phrase as they play the melody on the Orff instrument. Go around the room and play phrases for each other.