

These Aren't Your Grandma's Bible Songs

Presented by Melissa McKenzie

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To a young child (infant, toddler, and preschooler) music inherently has power and meaning that go beyond words. Music enhances listening; invites intuitive and steady beat responses; and aids learning of vocabulary, sound and pitch discrimination, emotional responses, creative responses, and memory. (Carlton, 2000) Music evokes an emotional response through the words, melody, pitch and rhythm of a song. Music gives us the ability to communicate with young children in a way that makes sense to them. An infant, who can't yet sing along with you, is very capable of listening and recognizing many sounds especially the voices of the significant adults in his life. Toddlers will start to join in by repeating words or copying the rhythm of a song. Preschoolers begin to match the pitch and melody as well as remember the words to songs. Music is an amazing tool for aiding in the development of a child, with unlimited potential, as long as you choose to use it.

Now that you have some insight into the power of music, let's shift gears for just a minute while we look at another amazing power: God! You see, God has given us some very specific instructions regarding children. We are to teach children about God's love, about God's Truth and about God's mercy & grace. Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV) says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."* This is not just teaching children right from wrong but also teaching them about God. The Bible makes it clear that children are very important to God. Jesus said, *"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."* (Matthew 18:10, NIV) Our concern for children should equal God's treatment of them. Certain angels are assigned to watch over children and they have direct access to God. This is a huge responsibility but if God puts a child in your care, then God has a plan for you to make an impact for Him with this child. Research shows that the best time to have an impact for God on a person's life is when they are young. In fact, the religious beliefs a person develops by the age of thirteen are pretty much the set of beliefs they will maintain for life. Look at these statistics from research by George Barna & the Barna Institute: 32% of children accept Jesus Christ as their Savior by the age of 13; that number drops to 4% for children between the ages of 14yrs-18yrs; and 6% for people 19yrs and older. Early childhood is your biggest window of opportunity to instill a love for God into the hearts and minds of the children in your care. Let's look at how to do that by combining God's Truth with what we know about the power of music.

Music activates the whole brain which ensures much better retention. There are many wonderful, sweet, new songs available today that share the beautiful Truths from the Bible. You can increase your ability to have an impact on a child's knowledge of God by expanding your "Bible Song Library", learning some simple sign language and refueling your own passion for sharing God's Message with the little ones God has put in your care. Expanding your "Bible Song Library" is fairly easy, especially with the advent of iTunes. Give yourself a set amount of time each week/month to literally surf iTunes & the internet for new songs. The "set amount of time" gives you the freedom to run down bunny trails that you find and just stop when you're time is up. Otherwise, you could spend hours surfing, to

the point of neglecting other obligations you have. Also consider the following ideas: attending workshops and conferences that have sessions specifically addressing Bible songs; sharing ideas with colleagues; and investigating current/past VBS curriculum as they have some great music created just for kids. Once you've acquired some new music you need to spend time learning the songs. If you have a recorded version of the song, listen to it and sing along with it – over and over again. This is a very important step. You have to totally know the song before trying to teach it to your class. Once you've got the lyrics completely memorized it's time to think about adding movement to the song. You can add simple big body movements or specific sign language. You know your children best so you can decide how much or how little movement to add in order for your children to feel successful in learning the movements and the lyrics. After you are comfortable with the song and the movement you are ready to start teaching the song to the children. Introduce the new song by explaining the message that is being shared. This is where you start the process of instilling God's Truth into the sweet, accepting hearts & minds of your children. A song will take on so much more meaning to the children as they sing and move if they know what the song is saying. Then work through the movements and the song and above all else, have fun! If you're excited and enthusiastic, then the children will be. They feed off of your excitement and enthusiasm. The opposite holds true as well. If you don't seem happy or excited to learn a song with them, then the children won't be either. This is where you might have to take a step outside of your comfort zone (a big step for some of you) by going public with your singing talents. You've got to let yourself be silly. And you've got to let go of any apprehension you have about what others might think of your "performance". Just let loose and have fun with it. The more fun you're having, the more fun the kids will have with you!

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- Miller, Sue., Staal, David (2004). *Making Your Children's Ministry the Best Hour of Every Kid's Week*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

Other Great Resources:

iTunes

www.kathiehillmusic.com

<http://yancynotnancy.com>

<http://www.janaalayra.com>

<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/Sites/aslweb/browser.htm>

<http://www.aslpro.com/>

L-O-V-E

By Karyn Henley (“Five Little Ladybugs” CD, available on iTunes)

Why does God put the rainbow in the sky? *(4 fingers arch overhead in shape of rainbow)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why does God make frogs jump high? *(move hands up high)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why does God make grandmas to hug? *(hug yourself)*

Why does God make such fascinating bugs? *(wiggle fingers)*

Why does God put the twinkle in your eye? *(point to eyes with index fingers)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why does God send stars at night? *(open/shut hands up high)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why does God give birds their flight? *(flap your arms)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why does God give the snail a house? *(make house overhead)*

Why does God give a tail to a mouse? *(wiggle index finger)*

Why does God make snow so white? *(flutter fingers down like snow)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why did God send Jesus to die? *(sign for Jesus – 1 finger to other palm & reverse)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why on the 3rd day did he rise? *(3 fingers then 2 fingers rising from palm of hand)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why does Jesus live again? *(L-shape with both hands rising up)*

Why did he forgive my sins? *(wipe palm of hand then make fist)*

Why do I lift praises high? *(lift hands up & up)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Why do I lift praises high? *(lift hands up & up)*

L-O-V-E love that’s why. *(give yourself a hug or spell LOVE with sign language)*

Dancing Feet
By Karyn Henley (“Five Little Ladybugs” CD, available on iTunes)

Snoring... (*head sleeping on closed hands*)

I woke up this morning with dancing feet, dancing feet, dancing feet. (*dance your feet*)
I woke up this morning with dancing feet, dancing feet, dancing feet.
And I danced all day long.

CHORUS:

God made my feet (*touch your feet*)
God made my toes (*touch your toes*)
God made fingers (*wiggle your fingers*)
God made my nose (*touch your nose*)
God made my eyes so I can see (*point to your eyes*)
I'm glad that God made me! (*hands out, then touch chest with both hands on “me”*)

I woke up this morning with clapping hands, clapping hands, clapping hands. (*clap hands*)
I woke up this morning with clapping hands, clapping hands, clapping hands.
And I clapped all day long.
(Chorus)

I woke up this morning with tapping toes, tapping toes, tapping toes. (*tap your toes*)
I woke up this morning with tapping toes, tapping toes, tapping toes.
And I tapped all day long.
(Chorus)

I woke up this morning with a smile on my face, a smile on my face, a smile on my face. (*point to smile*)
I woke up this morning with a smile on my face, a smile on my face, a smile on my face.
And I smiled all day long.
(Chorus)

I went to bed this evening with a yawning mouth, a yawning mouth, a yawning mouth. (*big yawns*)
I went to bed this evening with a yawning mouth
And I slept all night long.
Snoring... (*head sleeping on closed hands*)

Hosanna Rock

by Yancy (“Little Praise Party: SpringTime” CD, available at <http://yancynotnancy.com>)

Hosanna, ho-ho-hosanna. *(clap, clap, twirl, twirl – sign for “Hosanna”)*

Hosanna, ho-ho-hosanna. *(clap, clap, twirl, twirl – sign for “Hosanna”)*

Hosanna, ho-ho-hosanna. *(clap, clap, twirl, twirl – sign for “Hosanna”)*

Hosanna, ho-ho-hosanna. *(clap, clap, twirl, twirl – sign for “Hosanna”)*

Everybody praise the Lord. *(open hand, slowly pull down in front of face & close fingers)*

Everybody praise the Lord. *(open hand, slowly pull down in front of face & close fingers)*

Everybody praise the Lord. *(open hand, slowly pull down in front of face & close fingers)*

Everybody praise the Lord. *(open hand, slowly pull down in front of face & close fingers)*

So clap your hands.

Wave your arms.

Play the drums.

Rock the guitar.

So clap your hands.

Wave your arms.

Play the drums.

Rock the guitar.

(repeat whole song)

Jesus is My Best Friend

by Little Praise Party (“My Best Friend” CD, available on iTunes)

Jesus *(tap 1 finger to one palm, then reverse)*

is my best friend. *(Index fingers hug, flip, hug again)*

my best friend, my best friend. *(Index fingers hug, flip, hug again)*

Jesus *(tap 1 finger to one palm, then reverse)*

is my best friend. *(Index fingers hug, flip, hug again)*

He's always there for me. *(point thumbs to yourself)*

(repeat)

(tap knees then clap hands to the beat)

On Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,
Friday and Saturday.

Jesus is my best friend.

He's always there for me.

(repeat whole song again)

Goin' to the River

by Jana Alayra (“Look Out Now” CD, available at <http://www.janaalayra.com>)

I'm gonna run to the river. (*run*)

Dive in the river. (*dive*)

Swim in the river. (*swim*)

The river of life! (*make “L’s” with both hands and move from low to high*)

(repeat)

I'm gonna say bye-bye (*small, sassy wave*)

I'm goin' to the river. (*“wavy” arms out in front*)

Jesus (*tap 1 finger to one palm, then reverse*)

You renew my heart. (*touch both hand to heart*)

Fill me up till I overflow. (*lift hands up high*)

And You give me a brand new start. (*hands out, then swipe one hand over the other arm*)

Wash me clean till I'm white as snow –ooooohhh (*flutter fingers down like snow*)

Here I go - uh-oh, uh-oh (*hands on hip & shake it with attitude*)

Goin' to the river. (*“wavy” arms out in front*)

Watchin' Over You

by Group VBS ("Pandamania" CD, available at

http://store.grouppublishing.com/OA_HTML/gpCtpSctDspRte.jsp?section=23405)

When you're jumping, jumping up and down. (*jump*)

When you're spinning, spinning round and round. (*turn around*)

God's seeing everything you do. (*point to eyes with index fingers, then spread arms out*)

'Cause He's watching, watching over you. (*point up, then with 2 fingers on each hand point to your eyes then out to the audience – this is the sign for "watch"*)

God is watching, watching over you! (*point up, then sign for "watch"*)

24-7 watching over you. (*spread arms out, then sign for "watch"*)

Your life is in His hands (*make "L's" with both hands and move from low to high*)

whoa-ooohh (*bring hands together & down with a shake/wiggle*)

He's got great big plans (*point up, then move hands together left to right 3 times for "plan"*)

'Cause He's watching over you. (*sign for "watch"*)

When you're waving, your hands up in there. (*wave hands high*)

When you're shouting, no matter when or where. (*shout really loud*)

God's seeing everything you do. (*point to eyes with index fingers, then spread arms out*)

'Cause He's watching, watching over you. (*point up, then sign for "watch"*)

(Dance it out)

God is watching, watching over you! (*point up, then sign for "watch"*)

24-7 watching over you. (*spread arms out, then sign for "watch"*)

Your life is in His hands (*make "L's" with both hands and move from low to high*)

whoa-ooohh (*bring hands together & down with a shake/wiggle*)

He's got great big plans (*point up, then move hands together left to right 3 times for "plan"*)

God is watching, watching over you! (*point up, then sign for "watch"*)

24-7 watching over you. (*spread arms out, then sign for "watch"*)

Your life is in His hands (*make "L's" with both hands and move from low to high*)

whoa-ooohh (*bring hands together & down with a shake/wiggle*)

(Give the "look" with a sassy "watching" sign)

These Are My Glasses

by Laurie Berkner Band (“Whaddaya Think of That?” CD, available on iTunes)

These are my glasses, *(make eyeglasses with your fingers in front of you)*
this is my book. *(close hands in front of you like a closed book)*
I put on my glasses *(make eyeglasses with your fingers around your eyes)*
and open up the book. *(open hands, palms up in front of you)*
Now I read, read, read. *(hold “open book” and bounce book 3 times)*
And I look, look, look. *(finger eyeglasses and look 3 times)*
I put down my glasses *(carefully remove eyeglasses and put gently on floor)*
and Whoop! close up the book. *(close hands with a clap)*