

Engaging our Children in Worship

Jeff Harmon, Edmonton, Alberta
Bethesda Church, Breakforth 2003



Breakforth 2003 was attended by many in our Western provinces. Judy Rempel was sent by Penticton Alliance Church and was challenged by seminar presenter, Jeff Harmon, on the importance of 'Engaging Children in Worship.'

Jeff spoke of the need to make worship relevant to our kids and defined worship by saying that, "Worship is an act of adoration or veneration, it is participative and its chief end is to glorify God. It is not entertainment. It is not me centered."

(Continued from page 1 - Better Together)

I'm thankful for this team of people and their passion to be involved in the big picture of ministering to God's kids! I'm pleased to announce that your National Children's Networking Team is:

Canadian Pacific District

Jan Heppner
Kelowna Alliance Church
(250) 860-2427
jankac@silk.net

Western Canadian District

Debbie Palsky
Bow Valley Alliance Church
(403) 288-2522
cdpalsky@hotmail.com

Canadian Midwest District

Monique Hodge
Moose Jaw Alliance Church
(306) 692-4616
mjac.hodge@shaw.ca

Central Canadian District

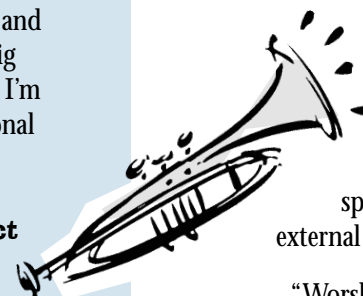
Jane Cushing
West London Alliance Church
(519) 471-8716
jane@wllachurch.org

Eastern Canadian District

Melodie Bissell
Toronto Chinese Alliance Church
CEF Ontario
(905) 475-9116
mbissell@cefontario.org

National Children's Ministry

Carol Wiebe - Facilitator
Unionville Alliance Church
(905) 477-1104
cmachildren@hotmail.com



"Worship is a verb – an action word. It is translated by many Hebrew words that describe various actions: to bow down, to serve, to make obeisance, to give reverence, to honor religiously, to kiss the hand. Worship is a lifestyle reflected in a daily close relationship with Jesus. It is an internal spiritual and heart matter reflected in physical expressions or external manifestations, whether individually or corporately."

"Worship is not music, although worship can use the vehicle of music, instrument, vocals, or bodily expressions. Worship is not limited by age or gender. Worship can be individual or corporate; it can be silent or loud. God is looking for those who, irrespective of age, will worship Him "in spirit and in truth (John 7)."

Jeff went on to explain that God has not left worship to guess work. "God has given, through Scripture, nine expressions of worship that we as believers can incorporate into our daily lives. These nine expressions can be separated into three groupings with three expressions for each key area of the body."

Use of the Mouth

- Singing (Psalm 47:6 - 7; Ephesians 5:18 - 20)
- Shouting (Psalm 32:11; 47:1; 98:4)
- Speaking (Psalm 35:28; 145:21)

Use of the Hands

- Clapping (Psalm 47:1; Isaiah 55:12)
- Playing instruments (Psalm 33:1 - 3; 150: 3 - 6)
- Lifting of Hands (Psalm 134:1 - 2; 141:2)

Use of the Feet/Body

- Standing (Psalm 135:1 - 3; Nehemiah 9:5)
- Bowing/ kneeling (Nehemiah 8:6; Psalm 95:6)
- Dancing (Psalm 30:11 - 12; 149:3)

Let's engage our kids in worship!

Worship That Works

they sang that week were ones we did in our church service, like 'Shout to the Lord' and 'Can You Feel the Mountains Tremble.' I thought this was going to really build up our worship times in Family Bible Hour.

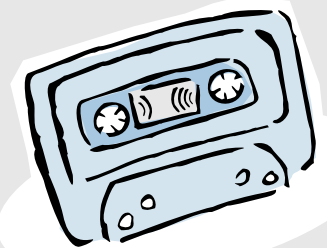
After a few weeks, I began to realize that our kids' singing and participation in worship was not improving, but rather getting worse. Our kids were so mesmerized by the instruments – and the teenage boys playing them that they could not concentrate on worship ... so I came to realize that worship that works for our kids was singing and worshipping to a leader on a tape or on a CD. With tapes and CD's, you get the full sound that you need, and the worship leader is not required to perform solos! The use of tapes, CD's and music videos is the venue that encourages our kids to lose themselves in worship. For our kids and our ministry, that is the worship that works.

Monique Hodge, Moose Jaw Alliance Church, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

Tools of the Trade

- ★ **Free for You!** To say thanks for how you minister to kids, we are sending a complimentary copy of the Defining Moments audiocassette, 'Making the Most of Your Children's Ministry.' It will be a lifesaver!
- ★ **Money Saver Event!** Missions-In-A-Bag is now available for \$29.95 plus shipping and handling to help you make your missions mark in children's ministry!
- ★ **A Tool for your Foundation!** Plan to Protect is a necessary tool of the trade – it provides a foundation for a safe and secure environment for our children, our caregivers, our churches. Cost for Alliance churches is \$20.00 plus shipping and handling.

For these tools of the trade, contact the National Ministry Centre at (416) 674-7878, ext. 230 Canadian Ministries.



Kids worshipping Jesus – this is what we all want to see in our Children's Ministries, but the question is how do we best lead them in doing this?

About two years ago I was thrilled that I had been able to pull together different musicians from our church to form a Worship Band specifically for our kids in their Family Bible Hour Open Session. We had a guitarist, a pianist, a drummer and several of the FBH kids were the worship leaders. I specifically chose songs that the adults sang in big church so that we could help bridge the gap between 'Deep and Wide' and 'Days of Elijah.' I had recently been at a camp for grade 4 - 6 kids and all the songs

Simple Do's & Don'ts

Here are some simple do's and don'ts to consider as you engage children in worship.

Do's

- Lead by example with joy and expressions.
- Connect the songs to the children by relating the words to their level.
- Use actions to help children remember the words.
- Encourage children to use the nine praise expressions as they worship.
- Explain the meaning of the songs. (Amazing Grace)
- Let children communicate their feelings when they worship.
- Use older kids to help sing the songs or lead in actions.
- Use simple instruments to involve children in worship.
- Ensure that the worship environment is always positive, encouraging and joyful.
- Use sing-along videos or have older children or youth lead in worship.

Don'ts

- Don't let the music level be so loud that it drowns out the kids.
- Don't play the music so soft that the kids are conscious of their own voices.
- Don't sing too fast – you'll lose them.
- Don't sing long songs or songs with long phrases – keep them short and repetitive.
- Watch the pitch of the songs – keep within their vocal range.
- Don't sing too many new songs; let the kids become confident by repeating songs more often.
- Don't use commercial breaks between the songs – you lose the flow and the participation of the kids in worship.
- Don't use worship as a filler – always have a purpose in mind.

Jeff Harmon, Bethesda Church
Edmonton, Alberta, Breakforth 2003

Notes from...

Note from Judy Rempel – Penticton Alliance Church

'Parenting in the Pew' by Robbie Castleman challenges you to ask, "Do we take our children to church or to worship?" Although Judy doesn't agree with everything written by the author, she notes there are good ideas on how to encourage parents to engage their children in worship.

Note from Melodie Bissell – Eastern Canadian District Children's Point Person

Jana Alayra, a mom and Christian recording artist living in California, has a song to sing – and children love to sing it with her. At Toronto Chinese Alliance Church, we had a huge challenge trying to encourage our children to sing in Sunday School. They had no interest in joining in, but then CEF introduced us to Jana Alayra's music for children – today the kids love to sing! They know her songs by heart and you can hear them singing them as they drive home, walk along the sidewalks and hum to themselves. A highlight was when we were invited on stage with Jana at People's Church to sing 'Fix in My Eyes on You' this past April.

Jana has three children's CDs available, along with lead sheets, actions and song books: Jump • Dig • Believin' On

To order Jana's music in Canada, call the CEF Store (1-866-279-9116). Mention that you saw this in the June issue of Lifesavers and you will receive a 15% discount.

Note from Western Canadian District Attendees

In May, several children's ministry leaders from the Western Canadian District attended a 'Grow Up' seminar hosted by the KidStuf staff at North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. This church defines the family-friendly focus and believes that entire families need to grow together spiritually. The July/August 2002 issue of 'Children's Ministry' magazine says, "KidStuf was created so that parents and kids could have a shared experience learning about faith and character." The principles that shape their program are based on their belief that "parents need to have shared worship experiences with their kids and kids need to have a relevant place to go."

Note from Carol Wiebe – Unionville Alliance Church

'We Are United' by Pam Andrews, Jonathan Crumpton and Meredith Graham, arranged by John DeVries and distributed by Brentwood-Benson Music, enabled our kids to challenge the church about what it means to be united in Jesus Christ. It was a survivor-type theme where six castaways find themselves trying to conquer the challenges of island life only to discover the benefits of working together as a team. The songs hit the mark but we rewrote the entire script to Canadianize the content. I shouldn't be – but I'm surprised to see over these last three years how God has used worship with kids to reach out into our community.

