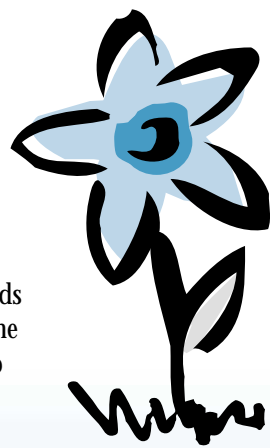


Growing Them Up in Worship



Now don't think we've always had a band, nor that it hasn't been a 'battle of the bands' to bring people into the vision – but over the years, we've persevered. Our current picture is that we use Grade 5/6 kids (usually girls) to sing, we have what we affectionately call the 'back row boys' (grade 4 guys) who we sometimes get up to do 'movement' and then our key musician/leader is a high school student. Why? 'Cause we're growing them up in worship! We spend time praying together, we talk about what worship is and why we do it. They are being trained and those leading in worship in Kid's Ministries often move on to lead in Youth and Young Adults and in Adult Worship. Our kids have even led our adults in worship – Psalm 8:2 gives great reason for why that should happen more often! No, it's not always easy to gather and help people catch the vision for worship with kids (not sing-song), but it's amazing, and praise-worthy, when they do!

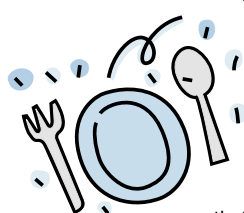
*Shirley Love-Rayburn, North Shore Alliance Church
North Vancouver, B.C.*

Worship Defined; Worship Experienced

What is worship? Once it was called 'weorthscape,' then, it became 'worthship.' Today, we use the word 'worship.' Worship is recognizing the worth of God in our lives. In worship, we celebrate God.

Children learn by seeing and doing, so every time a child participates in worship, that child is being educated. In our church, our children grow in their faith as they are encouraged to participate in the Sunday Worship Service. Children are significantly included in our first service each week and are dismissed only during the sermon time to participate in Children's Church. On the first Sunday of every month the children are kept in for the entire service and the sermon is written with children in mind.

*Rhonda Maccarone
Scarborough Centre Alliance Church
Scarborough, Ontario*



Worship, in many ways, is like a family meal. Individuals in a family can, and sometimes do, eat separately. However, there is deeper enjoyment in a meal when we share it with other members of the family. Likewise, we worship independently at times, and it is important to worship spontaneously in any place. But if we never worship as a church family, then we miss the depth of love between the members that can grow in corporate worship. Our children are very much a part of that church family.

On another note, ask the average church goer "What is worship?," and they will most likely respond with something like, "It's the time when we sing songs of praise to God." While this is true that worship can be expressed through music, it may also be seen in every other aspect of the worship service. This year our Children's Church has focused on 'Children in Worship.' We are following a curriculum designed specifically to teach children that 'Worship' is expressed in many more ways than just singing to God. We focus each week on specific expressions of worship such as: Music (singing, flagging, physical gestures, etc); God's Word; Communion; Baptism; Prayer; Offering and stewardship; Creeds and statements of faith; Symbols such as the C&MA Logo; Global and C&MA Missions.

On Mother's Day, we concluded our curriculum by holding 'Children's Worship Day.' On this special day, our kids actually led our adults during the Sunday Worship Services. We began with a great procession of children expressing worship through flagging and creative movement. The experience was totally exhilarating for everyone and the presence of God's Spirit was undeniable. The children were exhausted by the end of the second service, but our church will never be the same again!

THE NEXT LIFESAVERS

Our next issue of Lifesavers will be a milestone – it will be our 25th edition of Lifesavers! So, together, we want to "Celebrate the Wins!" Let's celebrate what we see God doing in and through our kids and our ministry to kids. This is your opportunity to brag about your kids and to brag about God's work!

Please send your submissions to:
Carol Wiebe
Unionville Alliance Church
4898 – 16th Avenue
Unionville, ON L3R 0K6
Phone: 905-477-1104, ext. 208
Fax: 905-477-5847
Email: cmachildren@hotmail.com

(Please send ideas before September 15th so that we can include them in our October 2003 issue of Lifesavers.)

Lifesavers subscriptions are available!
Contact Canadian Ministries at
the National Ministry Centre.
(416-674-7878, ext 230)

The Right People in the Right Places

*Anne Arseneau, Sherwood Park
Alliance Church
Sherwood Park, Alberta*

The 'Before' picture at Sherwood Park Alliance Church found worship with kids to be uncomfortable or non-existent, because who can do it all? The 'After' picture is one to celebrate as all of our kids are led in worship – we've got the right people in the right places!

Psalm 150:6 proclaims "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." In order to accomplish that challenge to worship, we also looked at Ephesians 4 where God has called each of us to do our part so that the body of Christ will be built up. Each week, a community of children – a church – comes together to praise and worship God. We realized the importance of developing creative teams who had the responsibility of using their gifts to communicate God's truth through a variety of art forms.

One of the areas of challenge for people with the gift of creative communication is working at being a team player. But to worship with kids is to first worship together as a team and to invite God into the celebration. Leaders need to discover together fresh ways to express the Lord's message while creating a focused spirit of worship. The children's creative team has a unique place of service where each team player can bring their ideas and spiritual perspective on music, stories, and movement to present God's truth. The creative team needs to have the ability to choose age appropriate material along with a willingness to mix and match in a flexible and sensitive environment. Sometimes this might be noisy shouts of joy and celebration while other times might include moments of quiet in the presence of the Lord. In '101 Creative Worship Ideas for Children's Church,' author Jolene Roehlkepartain says, "This is your opportunity to instill in children the idea that God is loving and fun-loving and that our all-powerful God cares deeply about the prayers and worship of even the youngest child."

We're thankful for God's design in our 'Before' and 'After' shots of worship for kids. God has placed the right people in the right places – and God is being praised!



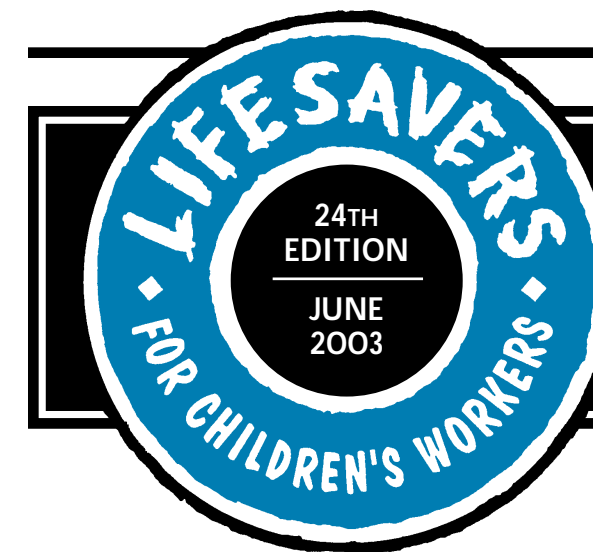
Every other month, our kids have a chance to be involved in an outreach event to other kids. The event is called 'WOW!' and focuses on an amazing characteristic or truth about God. We hold these events on Saturday evenings from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. and have kids invite their friends. And, in case parents want to join in the fun, we invite them too.

The great thing about WOW! is that it involves our own kids in service. Kids make up the puppet teams, dance troops, drama teams and worship teams. The kids do a great job and they have a chance to use their gifts to serve others. I have seen our kids really grow as they have served in WOW!

I have particularly enjoyed seeing kids lead kids in worship during our WOW! outreach services. Through this medium of service, kids are learning how to worship themselves and lead others in worship too.

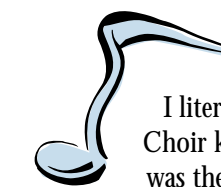
Whenever, or wherever possible, I would encourage you to use your kids to help you lead. By doing this, we teach kids that one of the greatest ways we can give God our worship is by serving Him using the gifts He has given us. When they start doing this, there's no telling what God will do! Just watch and see, and be ready for the WOW! factor!

Jane Cushing, West London Alliance Church, London, Ontario



children in worship!

PRODUCED BY THE NATIONAL CHURCH EDUCATION COMMITTEE - CHILDREN'S DIVISION

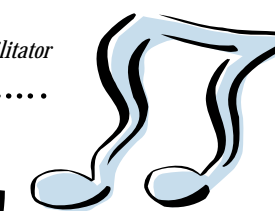


I literally still get goosebumps on my arms when I think of it. Anyone who has heard and seen the African Children's Choir knows that God connects with people's hearts through the worship of these children. But what moved me to tears was the worship I experienced with them in the prayer time before their concert. Their 'aunties and uncles' spent a few



moments encouraging them and then they moved to prayer and worship. I watched these little orphans break out in a chorus and everyone would join in, I saw them drop to their knees in worship and others laid flat on their faces in thankfulness to God. And I asked myself – for what? I, who have so much, know so little about worship.

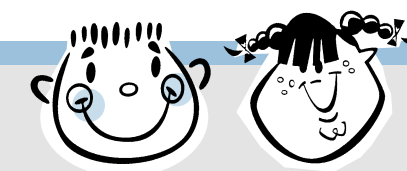
*Carol Wiebe
National Children's Ministry Facilitator*



Better Together!

I announced in our last Lifesavers issue that changes were around the corner because we want to continue to be at your service. As we recently revisited the who, what, when, where and why of our Committee, it was agreed that our purpose should remain constant, but that our focus and our structure should change.

Our goal is to work together as Districts to develop coaching connections, coaching clusters and weekend walkabouts to lend support to the people who have the responsibility to carry forward a vision to minister to children within their churches. We believe that we can do this better together! At a recent National meeting of these District Point People, we celebrated the fact that 'how' this is accomplished looks different in every District. We have changed to meet the needs of children's ministry leaders by establishing a National Children's Networking Team made up of District children's ministry leaders. We agreed that we can be better together at meeting your needs. Our District Point People want you to know that they are available to serve you. *(Continued on page 2)*



OUR VISION, OUR PRIORITY

Our vision and our priority is to:

- Disciple children's ministry leaders, *who will*
- Disciple children's ministry volunteers, *who will*
- Disciple children.

"The purpose of the National Children's Networking Team of the National Church Education Committee is to affirm and promote the importance and value of reaching and discipling children, and to inspire local Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches to enhance the quality of their ministries to children.

This purpose will be accomplished by utilizing communication tools, resource information and personnel, as well as assisting the networking of individuals involved in children's ministries."