

Singing Together in Church

A Kids Friendly Resource



 Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

TIPS FOR CHOOSING MUSIC FOR ALL AGES TO SING TOGETHER

- Give careful thought to WHAT we are inviting children to sing. Also, WHY and HOW they are introduced and taught - much the same process as we would use when choosing any worship song.
- Make sure the words are telling the truth about God and allowing children to offer appropriate responses for their age and faith stage.
- Consider whether adults can sing the words without 'cringe'.
- Limit your range of songs so children get to know the ones your congregation love to sing.

"I think this is really important," says Malcolm Gordon, "If you want to sing together, you have to arrest the 'boredom' factor that largely comes from grownups. We aren't satisfied, or can't agree on what songs to sing, so we sing really widely. Many of the newer songs have a very short shelf life, and so 6 months after being introduced, we're over them. This dynamic is death to congregational singing, all the more with children present. When I lead the same programme for three weeks running at Preschool music, I find repetition increases the level of the kids' participation. They like to know what is being asked of them, Repetition and ritual increases their engagement, ownership and enjoyment (and is a blessing to their parents who aren't having to keep them on task when they're not interested).

- Choose melodies that are easy to pick up and words that live in our hearts beyond the Sunday worship.

"Don't be afraid to explore the hymn tradition of writing new words to well-known tunes. You could even write your own words that reflect your community's journey of faith to something your congregation already knows and enjoys," (Malcolm Gordon).

- Children's songs do not have to be action songs, but actions reinforce the words so they can be learnt quicker and help to give your whole self to the worship. Actions are also cues for non-readers.

"Engaging our bodies in worship also develops a deeper kind of learning in us. Faith is not just a head-thing. It's not just ideas and concepts. It's also action and movement. Our worship is most meaningful when it recognises and honours our embodied nature" (Malcolm Gordon).



- Generally upbeat songs don't tend to need actions, however Sign language with slower worship songs can be particularly effective and meaningful very moving worship experience for all. Adults often feel more comfortable learning and using Sign Language when adding actions to music.
- Some songs may not work in church, but they are great in the context of a children's programme to let off steam and have fun, e.g. Father Abraham, I just wanna be a sheep, baa, baa, baa, baa!
- Introduce some 'oldie but goodie' songs. Invite someone older to share a song with the children that is important to them including their memories of singing it as a child.
- Some "old songs" can be 'jazzed up' with a different music setting if musicians are capable. Make up new actions or accompany them with percussion.
- Try not to say: 'Now we will have a song for the children'. Children can enjoy a wide range of songs – so can adults. You can't please everyone all the time with music choices, but don't create a division between songs (just) for children and songs (just) for adults.

"I was sharing at a church one Sunday when the worship leader said: 'Well I suppose because we have the Kids Friendly coach here we should have a children's song'. He then dragged up some very embarrassed intermediate age young teens to lead us in an action song. It was obvious that this was alien to all in the church and so it really didn't work. And of course, I had to do all the actions against my will because all eyes were on me!" (Jill Kayser).

- Use modern technology sensitively – choose what is suitable in your context. There are some good iTunes and YouTube videos that introduce music with sound and visual quality that most church musicians could not replicate live and can enhance worship.
- If using a DVD have someone LEAD the congregation from the front too.
- Keep the volume at a comfortable level - so you can sing and hear yourself and the person beside you.
- Use CDs/video clips to watch and listen to as well, not just join in and sing with. Or as background to an activity e.g. during prayers or the offering.

TRIM TEST FOR CHOOSING A SONG

Teach- what does the song teach about God, Jesus, Christian faith practices? Is it biblically accurate and appropriate for the learning outcome?

Relevant- is the song relevant to the children in this context? (Mainly Christian/non-Christian children in Church, Kids club or CRE in schools)

Interesting- do the children enjoy singing it?

Meaning- do the students understand the meaning of the words or is there too much Christian jargon? Does it ask the singer to make a faith confession that is not appropriate (see relevant context)

A SELECTION OF SONGS TO USE WITH CHILDREN IN CHURCH, HOLIDAY CLUBS AND SCHOOLS . A BEGINNING.....

- **Andrew Chinn** – <http://www.butterflymusic.com.au/>
Australian children’s song writer (for more than 15 years- many fun and faith songs for a Catholic school setting)
- **Doug Horley** - <http://www.duggiedugdug.org> UK, prolific writer and performer of children’s song- high energy and fun, but some lovely quieter ones too. Preview songs on iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/nz/artist/doug-horley/id30778985>
- **Colin Buchanan**- <http://colinbuchanan.com.au> 15 years and multiple albums and DVDs later, Colin is unquestionably Australia’s leading Christian children’s artist. Original and remixed versions of well-known tunes (see ‘Pharaoh Pharaoh’ in the table below)
- **Jules Riding** – a NZer –<http://www.julesriding.com> See Kids Time Vol 1 and 2. Popular with kids and parents. Lyrics free to download with CCL license
- **Johnny Burns** – <http://www.johnnyburns.com.au/> Check website for free download of lots of his music and lyrics.
- **Hillsong Kids** - <http://hillsong.com/kids> Well- known Australian church for producing worship songs- for all ages. Lots of YouTube videos e.g., ‘Never Give Up’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15R6SNZ-K1g>

- **Kids Vineyard Worship** - <https://itunes.apple.com/nz/album/kids-vineyard-worship-great/id23207659> Listen to the 3 songs listed below on 'Great Big God' top selling album (tracks 1, 5, 13)
- **Karen Henley**- <http://karynhenley.com/site/Product-family-pages/Music.html> specializes in play songs for 0-5 yr. olds (Many used by music and movement groups e.g. mainly music)
- **'King of the Jungle'** – an old favourite- origin unknown. There are many you tube versions! E.g.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJwUvjVq9k4>
- **Snack Music** - Snack Music is a Christian band for primary school aged kids, based in Melbourne Australia. Website has songs, CDs, games and fun stuff! <https://www.snackmusic.com.au/>
- **Fischy Music** – <http://www.fischy.com> produces memorable, easy to learn, fun songs that any child can learn – is a UK based charity that supports the emotional, social and spiritual well-being of primary aged children- great resource packages for schools. Download the 'Songs for Life' free taster
- **The Rizers** - <http://www.therizers.com> a band that sings Scripture verses in the form of upbeat, kid-friendly music. Name is short for "memorizers"- Videos, CDs downloadable resources
- **Go Fish** - <http://gofishresources.com/cd-music>



Song Title	Writer	Album	Age level	Notes	
If I were a Butterfly	Andrew Chinn	Together as One	Junior	An oldie and a goodie.	
I went walking	Andrew Chinn	This Day	Middle - older		
An Irish Blessing	Andrew Chinn	Wherever I go	Any age, used in ALL AGE worship	Good finishing song, work out a wee ritual during the instrumental	*
What love is this	Doug Horley	Lovely Jubbly	Any age, used in ALL AGE worship	A quieter reflective song	
I'm Gonna Jump up and Down	Doug Horley	Lovely Jubbly	Any age	Catchy clap beat in the middle. "I will follow" commitment	
Glory and Honour	Doug Horley	Funky Action Songs DVD Vol 4	ALL AGE	Learn the sign language actions for this moving worship song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FdNq221I3s	
God Loves Me	Doug Horley	Lovely Jubbly	Younger		
God's Love is bigger than a burger	Doug Horley	Chuffed	Younger	How big is God? And his love for us- a fun way to address this age old question	
Superhero	Jules Riding	Kids time 1	Any age		
Kia ora whanau	Jules Riding	Kids time 1	ALL AGE	Good welcome song for Sunday church	
Jumping for Jesus	Johnny Burns	How cool is that.	Any age, used in ALL AGE worship	Great action song, kids can add actions in	*



Bethlehem Bop	Johnny Burns	Praise Crazy	Any age	Christmas song	*
How cool is that	Johnny Burns	How Cool is that	Any age	Easter Song	
Never give up	Hillsong Kids	See YouTube	Any age-older chn can make up actions	Suitable words and themes for school setting	*
Rainbow song	Hillsong Kids	Super Strong God	Any age	Use rainbow props	
Superhero	Hillsong Kids	Jesus is my Superhero	Any age	Actions enjoyed	
Let your Light shine	Hillsong Kids	Superstrong God	Any age	Light theme song- good for Light party	
Great Big God	Great Big God	Kids Vineyard Worship	Any age, used in ALL AGE worship	Good action song OK in school too	*
Man looks on the Outside	Vineyard UK	Kids Vineyard Worship	Any age used in ALL AGE worship	Important message that gets 'home' with the repetition	*
I'm gonna clap my hands to say I love you	Vineyard UK	Kids Vineyard Worship	Any age, used in ALL AGE worship	Sign Language- quieter middle part. Commitment type song for church kids	
God made me to jump and hop	Karen Henley	Five little Ladybugs	Younger	Good action song	
Dancing Feet	Karen Henley	Five Little Ladybugs	Younger	Get your dancing feet on	

Song Title	Writer	Album	Age level	Notes	
King of the Jungle	Original unknown-many variations	Great worship songs for kids	Younger - middle but also used in ALL AGE worship	Oldie and goodie	
All night, all day	Religion in Life	Jump for Joy	Any age, used in ALL AGE worship	Do this with actions, partner song with Swing low sweet chariot for the adventurous congregations/groups!	
Jesus loves me rap Remix - jazzed up	Christian Religious Education	Sounds and Songs CRE	Any age, used in ALL AGE worship	Slightly different version in link here but gives the idea http://missionbibleclass.org/songs/songs-i-p/jesus-loves-me-remix-song/ (you can also echo each line of the verse before going into the 'na na na' chorus.)	
Pharaoh Pharaoh	Colin Buchanan version	On sound cloud from "I want my Mummy" album	Middle - older	Kids love it, even the boys	*

*(NB choose lyrics carefully if using in schools. Don't ask children to make a faith declaration in songs. The ones with * could be suitable)*

BELOW IS A LIST OF SOME SONG FAVOURITES FROM THE KIDS FRIENDLY TEAM FROM OVER THE YEARS.....

- Every Move I Make by Hillsongs Kids
- 10, 000 Reasons by Matt Redman
- The Heart of Worship by Matt Redman
- Blessed be the Name of the Lord
- Here I am to Worship by Hillsong Worship
- God Of Wonders by Chris Tomlin
- Open the Eyes of My Heart by Paul Baloche
- Jesus Loves Me (Traditional and Remixed)
- Millennium Prayer by Cliff Richards
- Christ Before Me by Malcolm Gordon
- Hey Mary by Malcolm Gordon (Christmas Song)
- I Could Sing of Your Love Forever by Hillsong

WHERE TO LISTEN TO SONGS BEFORE PURCHASING AND KNOWING IF SUITABLE?

Play lists of Kids Worship Songs can be found from internet searches for example, YouTube or Spotify and are a great way to hear what is current and familiarise yourself with new worship music that children will enjoy.

You may like to open an iTunes or Spotify account, then search for an individual song and listen before purchasing.

Internet searches will usually indicate where you can purchase the Lyrics and Music, or it may be that your church already has a Christian Copyright License (CCLI) that allows you to use the music under this agreement.

Organic Resources

All our Kids Friendly resources are ever-evolving "works in progress". So, if you have ideas, websites, resources and stories to share or ad please let us know.

This document is intended as a resource for the Church. The information it contains is not prescriptive. The Book of Order and its subordinate standards contain the Church's official rules and directions. Any perceived conflict between the information contained in this resource and the Church's Book of Order and subordinate standards is entirely unintentional.

**To contact a Kids Friendly Coach or Advisor
check our Website:**

<http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/about/contact-us/>
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