

Terri Gaeddert, Roseann Penner Kaufman

Calvin Symposium on Worship 2019

A12: Making Worship a Verb for All Ages:
Cultivating Worship Awareness and Inviting Response



Worship Arts is a time for children in K-5 grades to respond to worship, ask questions, and learn more about the language, ritual, movement, sound and art incorporated in worship.

“We come together as worshipping communities, not because we are perfect but precisely because we are not. So, week after week, we gather to draw the holy into life. We expect to hear, to taste, to see, to touch, to remember, and to imagine God in our lives.”

Janet R. Walton

Our Goals

- Fostering relationship / a sense of belonging
- Facilitating authentic participation in the worship service
- Encouraging reflection and response to worship
- Integrating what we learn from the children’s perspective into the broader context

A word from Pastor Ruth –

“Knowing that adults and children of Rainbow gather around these questions every week after worship has changed how I prepare for worship. I ask myself: I wonder what the children in the room will notice, see, hear, touch? Might I do or say something with younger ones in mind? Overall WorshipArts has been an important encouragement for me as a pastor to see children as a significant part of the Rainbow ecosystem. We would do well to pay attention to them as fully as we can, especially if we ask them to pay attention to what is going on Sunday after Sunday.

. . . I want to draw in one of my favorite Scripture passages involving children. In Genesis 33:13-14, brothers Jacob and Esau are in the process of reconciling. They decide to turn home together, but Jacob fears that his tender children (and livestock) would not be able to keep pace with the rugged Esau. So Jacob, still walking with a limp himself, decides it would be best to slacken the pace for the feet of the more tender pilgrims – the children. In other words, big folk keeping step with small feet.

“Let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, according to the pace of the children.”

Influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach

Seeing children as capable and curious; interested in relationship, constructing their own learning, and interacting with their environment.

Seeing the teacher and parent as researchers and co-learners with the child.

Seeing identity and community as providing an important context for learning, whereby a culture of dialogue is established and can flourish.

Seeing the theories and ideas of children as one basis for emerging learning projects.

Seeing documentation as integral to the process, providing opportunities to revisit, analyze and propel the learning for all.
(Gandini; Haigh)

“We need to define the role of the adult, not as a transmitter but as a creator of relationship – relationships not only between people, but also between things, between thoughts, with the environment.”

(Loris Malaguzzi)

reggioalliance.org

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High. . . by the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1:76-79

Space for Reflection...

What do you remember about worship services from your childhood? Which elements of worship speak to you most directly? (then and now) What constitutes “art” to you?

Resources

The Hundred Languages of Children: the Reggio Emilia Experience in Transformation / Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini, and George Forman, Editors

From Teaching to Thinking: A Pedagogy for Reimagining Our Work / Ann Pelo and Margie Carter

Chatter with the Angels: An Illustrated Songbook for Children / Linda S. Richer and Anita Stoltzfus Breckbill, Editors

The Goodness of Rain: Developing an Ecological Identity in Young Children / Ann Pelo

Attuning Fork



Seen/Heard	I Wonder...	Possibilities

WORSHIP RESPONSE

General Reactions:

What helped you worship today?

What interfered with your worship experience today?

Are there words or phrases that you will take with you into the week?

Reactions to specific worship elements:

Scripture

Music

Visual Resources

Prayer

Offering

Preaching

Involvement of the worshipping body

Community Building time

Call to service

For Consideration:

*Imagine a program that works for your unique goals and context – don't aspire to replicate, but rather to create.

*Determine your guiding values or objectives

*When planning, think about changing your emphasis from anticipation to reflection, from teaching to learning, from instruction to inquiry.

*Keep a record (documentation) of your observations and conversations – write it down, take a photo, make a diagram, or save a representation of the moment or the child's product. Include the date for reference!

*Try framing reflections into a narrative - for example, "A Noticing Story"

*Create a ritual or a consistent element for your time together
an opening practice
a useful phrase
a favorite game
a closing song

*Keep it simple: Learn parts of a hymn or anthem, the refrain to a litany, a rhythm instrument ostinato

*Narrate the action as it occurs so those who haven't "rehearsed" can still take part.

*Promote the idea of "our turn to be worship leaders" as opposed to performers.

*Embed elements into various parts of the Worship service structure - not just the Children's Story or anthem.

*Find roles for those who are uncomfortable with visibility –often helping with a necessary task such as carrying instruments, or "will you watch for..." type requests can ease anxiety.

*When in doubt, Listen! Observe!

*Keep an inspiration list - potential ideas to explore based on what you've heard/learned from the children.

*Consider using a worship journal - for children and for adults!

*Does your worship committee include parents of young children?

*Can we improve the way we put together the children's worship bulletin? Might it interact with the worship service planned for that morning?

*Is there a way to work on hymns, choral responses, and other musical aspects of worship in order to enable kids to lead or participate visibly in an integral part of the service as opposed to doing only special performances?

*In your worship bulletin do you use verb forms rather than nouns and titles in the order of worship so that children read about worship as something to do rather than as an abstract concept?

*Is there a way your pastor or worship leader might offer simple and short explanations about the meaning of various parts of worship?

*Is there a way you can encourage ushers and greeters to be attentive to kids? Learn their names and be sure to hand children a bulletin.

*Could you develop a group of well known hymns which would be taught in SS and used regularly in services, so that certain portions every service are familiar to kids already?

*How might you encourage those in visual arts to include children in the process or elicit children's response to visuals?

Created by Rainbow Mennonite WorshipArts Team