THE
ESSENTIALS
IN WORSHIP
TOOLKIT

5 BEST PRACTICES FOR LEADING WORSHIP FOR KIDS' EVENTS

worshiptraining

INTRODUCTION

How do we lead worship for kids?

Every worship leader should have the experience of leading worship for kids at least once. Even if you have a solid grasp on building Sunday morning sets, bringing together a congregation of children to worship is a new challenge that places different demands on the worship leader.

Here are five best practices for leading worship for kids' events.

INTRODUCTION

1. Leading is about teaching.
2. Younger = animated; older = model.
3. Alter songs for simplicity.
4. Make complex themes simple.
5. Have fun, and be real.

PRACTICE 1 - LEADING IS ABOUT TEACHING

Leading worship for kids is about teaching.

Kids are learning new, fresh ideas about who God is. They're learning who they are, what God's world is all about, and how these two are interwoven. We get to put this into song.

As we're leading them in worship, we are teaching them. We shouldn't expect kids to engage meaningfully in the same way that adults would. At the same time, we do want to encourage them to find an encounter with God in their early years. Choose songs that both lead and teach the kids.

PRACTICE 2 - YOUNGER = ANIMATED; OLDER = MODEL

For young kids, be animated. For older kids, be a model.

Be animated with younger kids. Have fun, smile, and make it very clear that you're happy to be with them. This will make the kids happy to be there as well, and the experience will be rejuvenating for everyone involved.

Older kids may take the animated approach as "over-the-top." At this age, you want to begin to model a more "connected" worship experience, encouraging them to meet with God through song. Try integrating some new ideas, like teaching them that songs are prayers, and they can pray through the words of the song.

In the junior high/early teen years, consider incorporating popular worship songs to connect them with God through music they may have heard in other settings.

PRACTICE 3 - ALTER SONGS FOR SIMPLICITY

Alter songs for simplicity.

Singing every verse and chorus of the contemporary worship song you love might not be the best way to lead kids in worship.

Try choosing one of the verses – the simplest or clearest – and then sing the chorus. Or, do a well-known kids' song and add in the chorus of a contemporary song. Piece together chunks of music to make this work We want the most accessible sections of a song to be there for the kids to hang their heart on when they're in a worship setting.

Then, when the kids are worshiping with the adults, they can connect with the pieces of songs that they've heard.

PRACTICE 4 - MAKE COMPLEX THEMES SIMPLE

Make complex themes simple.

We want to take the complexity of who God is and convey it in a way that kids can understand. How you can make a big theme seem simple?

It may be that using a simple phrase that's playful and memorable, or hand motions that mimic the song lyrics, will connect the kids to a grand theme.

Take the complex ideas of worship and work to make them relatable to children by using metaphors they will understand.

PRACTICE 5 - HAVE FUN AND BE REAL

Have fun, and be real.

Kids can spot an imposter from a mile away. If you're faking that you're happy to be with them, they can sense this and won't engage with your leadership.

If you're enjoying yourself as you're with them, they're going to see it as a fun time to be together, too. Show them that it's a privilege to be leading them in worship, and you're enjoying it just as much as they are.

ACTION STEPS

> Try at least one idea for the next time you meet.

While you're leading the kids, you're also teaching them a foundation for how to worship God. Be animated with young children, and show them that you're happy to be there. Model for older kids how to connect with God through song, and guide them into a gathered worship experience.

Try piecing together songs and choruses for a mix of well-known kids' songs and contemporary worship choruses that they might hear down the road. Break down hard or complex themes for kids in a way that they can understand by using metaphors. And, finally, enjoy yourself. Show the kids what a privilege it is to be spending time in worship with them.

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