

How to Carry Out Opening Time and Use the Songs as the Lesson

WAY BEFORE THE SINGING TIME

- **Get together with your serving partners** and take some time to read and pray over the blurbs, verses and songs for the message. This is the number one, most important thing that you should **do!**
- **Listen to the song and practice singing** along as many times as it takes until you are happily familiar with the song. Do this way ahead of time with your serving partners...not 15 minutes before the meeting. How about a week before?
- **Together dream up some hand motions ahead of time.** But also take time during the singing-lesson time to let the kids come up with some motions. Their ideas may be better or can be added to your ideas!
- **When you serve, there should be two leaders!** One on this side and one on the other. This way when a song is split into parts there is a leader for each side. The other leader can jump in at any time to help make a point or lead the meeting. It is a wonderful thing to serve together and prepare together!
- **Consider where the kids might have an opportunity to "echo"** For example Song 1 the word **besieged** can be echoed vigorously! Same for the words **captured and God gave and different.**
- **Look for some points you could discuss from the song.** For example, song 1, verse 1 talks about *"vessels from His house"* After singing the song, You could take a minute to ask if anyone knows what vessels from God's house are. Let them talk if they will. You could ask what idols *are "their strange gods were gold and stone, Not like Jehovah the living one"* ***These are teachable moments! Be brief in your talking and sing the song more once you have talked about it!***
- **Find a capable pianist and a few guitar players have a thorough pray and practice time(s) together.** The one leading the time ideally should not be playing the guitar too. He/She should be free to lead the hand motions and interact with the kids. It's better for the guitars and pianists to be on the side of the room. Please do not play the cd and sing along during opening. Live organic singing is much better!

DURING THE SINGING TIME

- **Choose a child to be the overhead switcher.** This is a coveted spot right next to the overhead machine or computer! Try to find someone who has not done it in an earlier meeting. Help them before how to do their job. ie: move transparency to the top of the screen, keep it straight, take it out of the sleeve and be ready if there are two transparencies to the song. We will have markers for you to underline or mark things on the transparency - where to come in on a round - when to echo - etc. You can mark them!
- **When teaching a new song, just learn the first verse.** Sing it several times. Have the boys try it, then the girls. Or let one half of the room sing and the other half do the echo. Don't be afraid to take some time to learn the song! Once they know the tune go on to the next verses. ***It won't take as long to learn it if you break it up into bite sizes.***
- **If the song is a round or two part song,** practice where each group should come in. You are the leaders, you need to know how to sing the songs in a round ahead of time! Practice Together and Come Ready! Challenge the kids to sing the harder songs! They will surprise you!

- **Refer to the "many ways to sing" list at the bottom of this document.** Choose what techniques you will use on each song and try to mix it up a bit with each song. ***Be prepared! You will have the best time if you come already knowing how you are going to sing each song!***
- **Whenever possible let the kids participate!** If you are using a pointer, let a child do the pointing...stand him on a chair if needed! Let them point to which side of the room should sing when the song is broken into parts.
- **If you are on one of the later meetings be familiar with and ready to sing songs sung in earlier meetings.** They will want to sing some of them again and this will warm up everyone. Start singing these songs once there are a reasonable number of kids are coming in. Interact with the kids and ask them to demonstrate what hand motions they used or how they echoed or when they jumped!
- **Don't be afraid to stop the singing and start over** if they are not synchronized. Have a relaxed atmosphere! Make it fun. Have the teachers sing and then the kids. They boys and then the girls. Sing by classes or groups. Have who is louder competitions. Sing soft, whisper sing...then sing loud and shout!
- **Bring or make some props to go along with the song.** Sometimes we make a sign for something we want to emphasize. (names of Books of the Bible) For example in these songs you could ask someone to raise up a sign that says **God** every time **He** is mentioned in a song. **Let a different child be the God sign holder-upper for each song.**
- **There may be a list on an easel or transparency** to write down any God points found in the songs. Count how many things about God are in each song. The story of Daniel is actually the story of God! Its about Him! These God points are all wonderful teaching opportunities.
- **Dramas are not as effective as singing is.** You can choose to use the kids to demonstrate a certain point. For example, let one put his hand in a day-glow glove then turn off or dim the lights and demonstrate the be the hand writing on the wall. Another child could use something to make the noise of knees knocking in the same song! Come up with these kinds of things for the kids to participate in.
- **Watch the clock! Plan how long you will take for each song.** Have someone in the audience watching for you and they can warn you when your time is almost up.
- **If you are finished singing the assigned songs** let them pick a song from a previous meeting.
- **Smile while you are singing.** They will smile back! Have a good time. Then they will have one too!
- **Discipline - this is not your job! You are leading the singing/lesson.** Discipline is the job of the shepherds of the various levels or ages. If a cluster of kids is cutting up to the point of distraction ask their shepherds to take care of it without embarrassing the perpetrators.
- **The responsible one for the meeting should be in or nearby** to take a child out of the room if he is too big a disruption. If the singing time is well organized and they are enjoying it there will be no issues!
- **You can teach the entire lesson in bits and bites while singing** the songs much more effectively than simply giving a lecture or a lesson. The kids remember more what they sing than what they only hear.
- **Write down what songs you actually sang** and any neat motions or singable moments you had for the next group to carry forward .

Many Ways To Sing - Have a Good Time Singing!

Use Motions or Actions
Use Hand Signing
Sing in a Round
Sing with Echos
Sing in Parts: Boys sing/Girls sing, Older sing/Younger sing, Teachers sing /Kids sing
Little Solos (certain phrases or echos)
Let the Kids Be Helpers (overhead manager, pointer, demonstrations, etc.)
Sing Staccato (short - like pizzicato)
Sing Legato (long)
Sing Grandioso (with gusto!)
Sing Slow
Sing Fast
Sing Loud
Sing Soft
Sing with Syncopation
Sing with a Calypso beat
Sing with Harmony
Sing a Counterpoint
Sing a Chorus Backward
Sing Faster and Faster
Modulate Between Verses
Sing a Big "Ooooooh" before singing
Have a Big Finish (Repeat and Slow Down)
Use Rhythm Sticks, Instruments, or noise making items
Body Percussion (Claps, Snaps, Stomp Feet, Mouth Pops, Clucks, Slapping Knees)
Sing with Syncopated clapping (or patty cake in teams of two)
Ostinato (Repeating Repeats)
Leave Out Words
Hum the tune
Whistle the tune
Try Some Musical Experiments!
Crowd Reviving Tips
Pointing to the group to sing
Using the On/Off Light Switch
Holding Out the First Note until your Breath Runs Out!
Singing Contests (speed, loudness, accuracy)
Involve the Trouble Makers!

Be a Three-fold Cord (*Chord!*) Don't Lead the Singing Alone!

Examples: Peter Standing Up with the Eleven, Paul and Barnabas, Moses and Aaron
Musicians Guitarists and Piano Players Should Practice (Plan Intro and the Key!)
Praying, Planning and Leading the Singing Together