

Teaching a Song is “Fun to Do”

SL Jordan Stake Primary Music, June 9, 2011

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Introduction:

Arianna Mortensen’s CD

My friend Brenda’s 4-year-old little girl, Arianna, could sing so many songs. We recorded her singing about 20 Primary songs. I asked her mom how she taught Arianna or how Arianna learned. Brenda said Arianna would first listen to her sing the song five times, and then Arianna could sing it afterward. Simple repetition. Not all children learn this way, but hearing the music first is important.

Magic of Repetition in 3’s and 5’s

3’s = learning triangle = varied repetition

1. View 2. Read (our loud) 3. Do (an activity)

5’s = 5 senses, multiple styles of learning

Involving more senses or learning styles brings a stronger memory for it

Children learn through play or “Fun”

“F” in F-U-N reminds us to FOCUS the children’s listening

1. A cappella is awesome
 - a. It is easier to focus when only the melody is sung by the Music Leader
2. Listening longer = faster learning
 - a. Don’t let the children sing until they have HEARD you sing the song multiple times.
 - i. If there is a chorus, you can divide the song into two large segments
 - b. Ask discovery questions
 - i. What word comes on the highest note?
 - ii. How many times do you hear the phrase “Teach Me”?
 - iii. Rhythmic patterns (short long short short long, “My life is a gift”)
 - iv. What do you want to share with your family? (my life with them through all eternity)
3. No-fail formula: AG + 3 ? (attention getter plus three active listening questions)
4. Learning through movement

- a. 2010 Outline for Sharing Time says, "Children will learn better and remember longer when they are engaged through physical movement"
 - i. EX: "He Sent His Son" (CS, 34-35) Have the children stand when they sing the questions and sit when they sing the answers
 - ii. Syncopation is often hard for children to wait for. Have them click their tongue, clap, stomp or do something to "feel" the space a rest takes up, especially when a rest occurs on the downbeat.
 - 1. "One in a Million" *Friend*, February 2011
 - a. a clap is written in!
 - 2. Chorus of "Scripture Power"
 - a. (Rest) "Scripture Power" (occurs 3x's)
 - 3. 1st line of "Families Can Be Together Forever"
 - a. (Rest) "They are so good to me"
 - 4. "Latter-day Prophets"
 - a. "Latter-day prophets are (rest) number one"
 - 5. "Oh, What Do You Do in the Summertime?"
 - a. "Is that what you do? (rest) "So do I"
 - 6. "Feliz Cumpleanos" last line
 - a. "But any way you say it" (rest) "it means Happy Birthday to you."
 - iii. Actions for keywords in the song
 - 1. Search, Ponder, and Pray (CS, 109)
 - 2. "Nephi's Courage" (CS, 120)
 - a. on the words "I will go" make a fist and push forward
 - b. on the words "I will do" make a fist and push up
 - iv. Pitch lead with the whole body
 - 1. "Sing a Song" (CS, 253)
 - a. Body follows what the pitches do (up down up, etc.)
 - 2. "Wise Man And the Foolish Man" (CS, 281)
 - a. "The rains came down and the floods came up" can use the whole body and not just the hands.
 - v. Swaying to the meter or pulse
 - 1. "I Lived in Heaven"
 - vi. Dance steps

1. "Follow the Prophet" chorus
 - a. Step cross step touch (with feet while arms are up ready to snap)
- vii. Two finger claps
 1. "Follow the Prophet" chorus (CS, 110)
 - a. First, clap the steady beat
 - b. Second, clap the rhythm of the words
 - c. Third, have two groups: one claps the beat, the other claps the rhythm
5. Power of pointing
 - a. Signals for "Your turn, My turn"
 - b. When using children to hold visuals, keep the children's attention on the part of the song by pointing or standing behind the child holding the visual.

"U" in F-U-N reminds us to USE a variety of appropriate teaching methods for children

1. Impulse control learned through games
 - a. Signal (Lights on/off)
 - i. Sing words when lights are on, clap the rhythm you would sing when the lights are off
 - b. Staccato vs. Legato singing
 - i. Short versus connected sounds
 - ii. Draw dots on a page for staccato and long curvy lines for legato
 - iii. Make sure the pianist also follows the signs
 - c. Red, Yellow, and Blue scarves (red = sing words, yellow = la, blue = ooo)
 - d. Insert a fermata (hold)
 - i. "Stand Up" (CS, 278): Put a fermata the words smile ("give a smile") and point to the children to make sure everyone is smiling before singing, "and then sit down"
 - e. Hide a note (Hot/Cold)
 - i. Have one child leave the room. Hide an object or music note in the room. Invite the child back into the room. When the children sing loudly, the child is closer to the object hidden. When the children sing softly, the child is farther away from the object hidden.
2. Listening and following directions in the song:
 - a. "Stand Up" (CS, 278)
 - b. "I Wiggle" (CS, 271)

- c. "My Hands" (CS, 273)
 - d. "Oh, How We Love to Stand" (CS, 279)
3. Give it a Twist
- a. Sing the words of one song with the tune of another
 - i. Words of "Heroes of the Scriptures" (*Friend*, June 1998) with "Scripture Power." Then sing the chorus of "Scripture Power"
 - ii. Words of "Hello Friends!" (CS, 254) with the tune of "Happy Family" (CS, 198)
 - b. "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" (CS, 275)
 - i. Wiggle parts (this takes a slower tempo)
 - ii. Mix up the parts (use visuals on magnets and a magnet board)
 - iii. Pick a vowel and sing the words with that vowel instead (similar to "I like to eat apples and bananas" song)
 - iv. Take away (like B-I-N-G-O)
 - v. Substitute other actions (jumping jack, tummy)
 - vi. Scientific words (cranium, etc.)
 - c. EX: "Pioneer Children Sang As They Walked" (CS, 214)
 - i. Substitute other action words for "walked" (jumped, danced, skipped, hopped, tip-toed, stomped)
4. *Teaching: No Greater Call* is a wonderful resource. The following sections are especially helpful for Primary:
- a. Methods of Teaching
 - b. Teaching Children
 - c. Age Characteristics of Children
 - d. Teaching Children in Mixed Age-Groups
5. *Behold, Your Little Ones*
- a. Artwork or drawings
 - b. Check the Index for list of Primary Songs
 - i. Flipchart for "I Am a Child of God"
 - ii. 2nd Verse of "I Pray in Faith"
6. *Gospel Art Kit* or *Gospel Art Book*
- a. Always great for mixing up the order and have children put pictures in order.
 - b. Consider the feelings you have when looking at a painting versus a drawing. A painting is more intense.
7. Using Chimes
- a. One pitch
 - i. "I Will Follow God's Plan" (CS, 164)

1. Listen for the words that I say when I chime (using the A pitch): "I will" work and "I will" pray. "I will" always walk in his way.
- b. Melody
- i. Use for entire song
 - ii. Use on repetitive melodic or bass patterns
 1. EX: "The Scriptures Can Lead Me to Jesus" by Clive Romney (*Friend*, May 1999)
 - a. Only chime the melody of the title
 2. Bass line of the piano
 - a. "A Young Man Prepared" (CS, 166)
 - i. Descending pitches C, B, A, G played under "Though a boy I may appear, Yet a man I soon will be... So I now prepare myself; I will serve my fellowmen."
- c. Simple harmony (two notes or one chord)
- i. D, A pitches for "Come With Me to Primary" (CS, 255)
 - ii. F, C pitches for "Sing a Song" (CS, 253)
 - iii. Any song that is a round can use the simple harmony or one chord. (See *Children's Songbook* index, topics, rounds)
 1. I like to involve as many children as possible so if a chord has D, F#, A, I like to use all the D's, F#'s, and A's in the chime set.
 2. "Come With Me to Primary" (CS, 255), D, F#, A
 3. "Our Door Is Always Open" (CS, 254), D, F#, A
 4. "Sing a Song" (CS, 253), F, A, C
- d. Chord Changes
- i. Two chords
 1. "You've Had a Birthday" (CS, 285)
 - a. F, A, C
 - b. C, E, G
 - ii. Three chords
 1. EX: "Stand For the Right" (CS, 159) chime chart
 2. Assign colors or shapes to each chord
 3. Give children an assigned colored sticker on hand or something for them to remember which chord is theirs
 4. Another option is to assign a number to each chord. Hold up fingers for which chord you want the children to play.

5. Hum the melody while you have children practice the chord changes and point to the chord.

“N” in F-U-N reminds us to NURTURE children and testimonies

1. Welcome children, remember names and birthdays
 - a. Welcome songs:
 - i. “We Welcome You” (CS, 256) I only sing the opening section
 - ii. “Here We Are Together” (CS, 261)
 1. Here we are a stomping, clapping, jumping, etc.
 2. Pick four names and have the children listen for their name to be called and have the child stand when he/she hears it.
 - b. Birthday songs
 - i. “Feliz Cumpleaños” (CS, 282)
 1. Keep dotted rhythm of the piano introduction throughout the song
 2. Have children use instruments or clap this rhythm throughout until the phrase “It means Happy Birthday to you!”
 - c. Baptism songs
 - i. “This Is My Beloved Son” (1st verse, CS, 76)
 - ii. “I Want to Be Baptized” (*Friend*, July 2005)
 - iii. “Baptism” (CS, 100)
2. Nurture testimonies of children through music
 - a. Define when you feel the Spirit
 - b. Bear your testimony of the gospel principles being taught, love of singing, and recognizing the spirit.

Nursery ideas

1. Provide a welcoming environment
 - a. Play the Music Only CDs of the *Children Songbook* as the children gather in nursery.
2. Routine for Music Time: Hello Song (“Here We are Together”) and “Goodbye Bell”
 - a. “Here we are a clapping, a clapping, a clapping. Here we are a clapping in our nursery/Primary”
 - i. Use actions you can do with your hands (clapping, swishing, patting, rolling, hammering, tapping)
 - b. Mystery Bags with objects for each song (use objects or actions)
 - i. Mini Book of Mormon (“Book of Mormon Stories”)

- ii. Flashlights ("Jesus Wants Me For a Sunbeam")
- iii. Rainbow pieces and an earth ("When I Am Baptized")
- iv. Shakers ("Do As I'm Doing")
 - 1. Tap as I'm tapping, Follow, follow me. Tap as I'm tapping. Follow, follow me. (Sing "And stop" so the shakers are resting and you can ask another child what he/she would like to do with the shakers)
- v. Smiley/Frowny Faces ("Smiles")
- vi. Picture of the Prophet ("Follow the Prophet")
 - 1. March around the room following the child holding the picture of the prophet (only singing the chorus)
- vii. Rhythm sticks ("If You're Happy and You Know It")
 - 1. If you're happy and you know it tap your sticks, roll your sticks, march your sticks, etc.
- viii. Snowman or Blossoms on the Tree ("Once There Was a Snowman" or "Popcorn Popping")
- ix. Jars of sand and rocks ("Wise Man and the Foolish Man")
- x. Paper plates, hula hoops, etc. ("I Hope They Call Me on a Mission")
 - 1. Pretend play: Have the children pretend they are driving a car on their mission, flying an airplane, riding a horse, riding in a boat, etc.

Opening or Closing Primary

Margene Conde (7th Ward) had the children sing "I Feel My Savior's Love" then said, "let's hum" until the chorus. Then the children sang the words.

Samples of teaching outline/schedule for the month and year

Sharing of Ideas

3rd Ward (Melissa Jones)

Melissa Jones made a covered wagon from wood, wire, burlap for "Covered Wagons" and filled it with items the pioneers would have taken on their journey (rice, flour, dishes, soap, etc.)

"The Lord Gave Me a Temple" – hand and glove idea with cut outs of hands for hand outs.

4th Ward (Traci Sutherland & Debbie Nance)

Singing "Praise to the Man" with live guitarist playing accompaniment

Emergency choosing items (seasonal: Example, kites for spring)

Let children lead (great for boys in the back rows)

Fish bowl (choosing)

Sing a song one word at a time (add-on)

6th Ward (Ashley Tappana)

Dress the teacher (no cross-dressing items): Primary Music Leader watches for a child that is singing well and has the child come up to pick an item for his/her teacher to wear. (Great motivator for pre-performance practice)

Give children pictures. Listen for their picture and then come to the front of the room to put in order. If out of order, sing again for the children to discover the correct order.

7th Ward (Joan Harding)

Eddie Spaghetti (singing meter). When children are singing well, Eddie slurps his spaghetti (yarn) quickly.

Beat the Teacher (Latter-day Prophets). Children sing and a teacher has to put pictures of prophets in order before the end of the song.

Final Thoughts:

Find a picture of yourself as a Primary child. Use as an attention-getter for your favorite Primary song or "Sing a Song" (CS, 253).

Coordinate if possible with the Primary Presidency so the same activity is not used during sharing time and singing time. Example: hot potato (passing an object around a circle from child to child and having the pianist stop randomly)

If the white board or chalkboard is used extensively for sharing time, try another teaching method in singing time (vice versa).