

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

## 1. BEFORE THE CONFERENCE:

- **Get together with your serving partners** and take some time to read and pray over the verses and songs for the message. This is the number one, most important thing that you should **do!**
- **Listen to the songs 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 in front of both sides of the room. 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, some words can be echoed vigorously!
- **Look for some points you could discuss from the song.** For example, after singing the song, you could take a minute to ask if anyone knows what a portion might mean. Let them talk if they will. You could ask questions. ***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. 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 to the side of the room. Please do not play the music links as a sing along during opening. Live organic singing is much better!

## DURING THE SINGING TIME

- **Choose a child to be the computer slide switcher.** This is a coveted spot right next to the computer! Try to find someone who has not done it in an earlier meeting. Help them beforehand how to do their job.
- **When teaching a new song, just learn the first verse.** Sing it several times. Have the boys try it, then the girls. Or let 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 in tasks!** For example, if you are using a pointer, let a child do the pointing! 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. The boys and then the girls. Sing by classes or groups. Having louder competitions will work if concluded with soft, whispering.
- **Bring or make some props to go along with the songs.** 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** to write down any God points found in the songs. Count how many things about God are in each song. The Bible is actually the story of God! It's 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

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

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