

Learning Together, Musically!

General Assembly 2011 – Thursday, June 23 @ 2:45

Presenters – Dale Brook, Donna Fisher, Jan Gartner, Kathy Smith



Ideas for Multigenerational Worship Settings

- Some standard elements of your service, like the chalice-lighting or meditation, can be sung.
 - Chalice lighting: Rise Up O Flame, Gathered Here, Vieni Spirito Creatore, Circle Round for Freedom, When Our Heart is in a Holy Place, Return Again
 - Meditation: Meditation on Breathing, Comfort Me, Voice Still and Small
 - Offertory: From You I Receive (as a round), We Give Thanks
- Include music in your Message for All Ages, e.g., add a musical motif as a character enters, build the message around a song, or teach about a hymn or composer.
- Minister/Music Director/DRE develop a list of a dozen hymns that the congregation sings regularly and make a point to use them in worship when the children/youth are present (as the first hymn or during multi-generational services).
- Incorporate hand motions, clapping, and/or body movements to engage people kinesthetically.
 - Spirit of Life sign done in language available on youtube
 - Add motions to Peace Like a River, I Know This Rose will Open, or others – ask children to help!
 - Teach the movements to Love Surrounds Me (available through Tapestry of Faith)
- Easy rounds create beautiful harmonies. One way to teach/sing a round is for each section to repeatedly sing a different line. (Section 1 sings first line, Section 2 sings second line, etc.)
 - Longer rounds (Gaudeamus Hodie, Dona Nobis Pacem, Where Do We Come From) work better when taught this way
- "Zipper songs" (zip a different word into each verse) are fun and easy to learn.
 - In classes or informal circles, have children call out words to "zip" in; in worship, have words prepared ahead of time
- "Partner songs" can be sung at the same time, creating harmonies and adding texture.
 - From the supplement, Ancient Mother, Mother I Feel You, On the Dusty Earth Drum, Evening Breeze, The Earth is Our Mother, all work together (use 2 or all five!)
- A simple descant is another way to provide harmony and variety.
 - **Hymn Descants** – Composed Vocal Descants to be used with *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal. Ed Schell available at UniUniques <http://www.uniuniques.com/main.html>
 - Joyce Poley sells sheet music for When Our Heart is in a Holy Place that has simple descant that can be copied for a congregation
- Let your children teach a song to the congregation!
 - Comfort Me, Turn the World Around
 - Let them sing first verse and have congregation join on succeeding verses
- Bells/tone chimes can enhance a hymn.
 - Parent/child teams can play simple chords.
- Simple rhythm instruments add interest and invite participation.
 - Soft shakers are easier for beginners than tambourines and drums.
 - Before you sing, practice feeling the beat so rhythm instruments will come in where you want them.

Ideas for Children's Settings (Chapel or Religious Education Classes)

- Music and song can be used in many ways – to gather children, as instruction, as play, as part of worship, as closure to time together.
 - Use the same songs each week to set a ritual for opening and closing
 - Vary the ritual over time!
- Kids love to move!
- Simple two-part songs allow kids to create harmony and interesting texture.
 - Szekely Aldas, Meditation on Breathing
 - Ask second adult or strong group of child singers to lead second part
- Call-and-response songs are fun and easy for kids to learn.
 - Allelu, Now Let Us Sing, We Give Thanks (echo each line after it is sung)
- Introduce children to other languages and cultures through song.
 - Szekely Aldas, Open the Window, Die Gedanken Sind Frei, Soon the Day Will Arrive, Turn the World Around
 - African American Spirituals – We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table, Guide My Feet
 - Look up and teach the background/cultural context for the music you lead
- Whenever you teach a new song, look for words or concepts to use as teachable moments
 - When you use a song that uses religious language, explain it in UU terms. Faith, love, soul, God, holy, spirit ... all these are powerful words! We need to teach our children what they mean in a UU context.
- The UUA's on-line *Tapestry of Faith* curricula have songs woven throughout. If teachers shy away from using songs, invite musicians from the congregation (or perhaps your religious educator) to help.
- A musician in your congregation can make a guest appearance in a classroom or at chapel – to teach songs and/or to augment a lesson or theme.
- Consider employing a minstrel to visit classrooms and/or participate in chapel on a regular basis.
 - If the minstrel comes in to visit and then leaves, use a quieting song to set the stage for the children to then pay attention to the teacher. Meditation on Breathing works well as a closing song, getting quieter with each repetition.

Resources

- ***Come Sing a Song with Me – A Songbook for all Ages*** – Skinner House Books – available at UUA Bookstore
- ***Hymn Descants*** – Composed Vocal Descants to be used with *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal. Ed Schell, available at UniUniques <http://www.uniuniques.com/main.html>
- ***Let Your Heart Sing*** Joyce Poley available Songstyle Music <http://www.songstylemusic.ca/>
- ***May This Light Shine – a Song book for Children and Youth*** - UUMN – available at UUMN@uumn.org OR UUA Bookstore
- ***Rise Up Singing - The Group Singing Songbook*** words and chords to 1200 songs we know and love - available at <http://www.singout.org/rus.html>
- ***Singing the Journey*** – UUA – available at UUA Bookstore
- ***Singing the Living Tradition*** – Beacon Press Boston, UUA - available at UUA Bookstore
- ***Songs for Earthlings: A Spirituality Songbook*** – Julie Middleton available at UniUniques <http://www.uniuniques.com/main.html>
- KidsPlay Combined Handbell/Deskbells available at www.grothmusic.com

