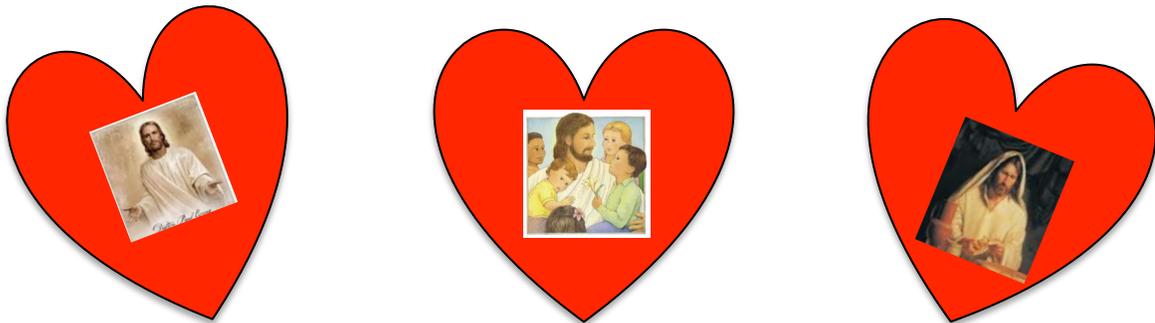


Fun with Music – Nursery and Jr. Primary

A child's time in Nursery is a great time to be introduced to pitch, melody, rhythm and the joy of singing and making music. They are not too young! But you need to understand that our littlest people need to hear, watch, and take in a song at least **seven times** within a short period before they will even start to participate. So, you will need some teaching strategies to get you to that point with the little ones. The songs will need to be short, have simple words and have visual clues, and a melody that falls within a few notes.

“Jesus Loves the Little Children” is a good example of just such a song. The melody falls within the five scale notes *do re mi fa sol*. It starts with a descending minor third which by all accounts is the first interval a child can hear and reproduce. Remember you must let them hear and experience the song seven times before they will begin to participate and try to sing it with you. A good way to start is by handing out to each child a little heart (*representing love*) that has a picture of Jesus on it.



As you pass them out, you sing the song. Depending on how many children are in the class, you may get to the magic seven times through just in this part of the activity. Make sure you have enough for each child to hold one and keep one for yourself. Explain how much Jesus loves each one of them. Continue singing, doing simple motions with the “heart” to see if the children will follow your motions. In the first verse, each time you sing the words **loves** or **children** or **me**, press the “heart” to your chest. On the word **bless**, press the heart to your head. On the word **help**, press the “heart” to the palm of your other hand. On the word **knee**, press the “heart” to your knee.

Now try leaving out a word such as **me** or **help** or **knee** when that part of the melody comes around and encourage the children to sing just that word. Always praise the children for their efforts, and then try it again. This entire activity should last only a few minutes, though. *(You can work on the second verse in another session. As they become accustomed to the song over the next few weeks, you can sing a couple of times through the first verse and then concentrate on teaching the second verse.)* While you gather up the “hearts,” tell them how proud you are that they were helping you sing the song and reassure them of how much Jesus loves each one of them. *(Don't expect all of them to be able to actually sing all the notes and words.)*

Musical Finger Plays and Wiggle Songs

Having a few musical finger play songs and wiggle songs ready at any time is a must for nursery. Some of these songs have been adapted for different times of the year and different parts of the country. Remember that young children love doing the same songs again and again from week to week.

“Birds in the Tree” pg. 241 Children’s Songbook

Let us find a little nest (*hands together forming a nest*)
In the branches of a tree (*arms out and upward like branches*)
Let us count the eggs inside (*hands together again, eyes looking into “nest”*)
There are 1, 2, 3 (*hold up first 1, then a 2nd, then a 3rd finger*)

Mother bird sits on the nest (*One hand forms “nest” the other fist with thumb out for “bird” sits on the “nest”*)

To hatch her eggs all three (*hold up three fingers*)
Father bird flies round and round (*connect thumbs and let hands fly around*)
To guard his family (*Turn hands into “nest” shape once more*)

“Rain Is Falling” pg. 241 Children’s Songbook

Rain is falling all around (*wiggle fingers like raindrops falling high to low*)
On the roof tops, on the ground (*shape hands like roof, bend to touch ground*)
Rain is falling on my nose (*wiggle fingers like rain to touch nose*)
On my head, my hands, and toes (*hands on head, touch each hand, touch toes*)

My daughter uses this song for the seasons. In the **Winter** she hands out **two little foam snowflakes** to each child and has them do the same actions but say *“Snow is falling all around...”*

For **Autumn**, she hands out **orange colored leaves** to the children and has them sing *“Leaves are falling all around...”*

“Once There Was a Snowman” pg. 249 Children’s Songbook

Once there was a snowman, (*improvise motions rolling snowballs and mounding snow for a snowman*)
Snowman, snowman
Once there was a snowman, (continue mounding and forming snow
Tall, tall, tall. motion taller, and taller, and taller)
In the sun he melted, (*Indicate bright sun up in the sky, squint eyes*)
Melted, melted Take the shape of a snowman
In the sun he melted, sink down as if melting
Small, small, small. lower, lower, melt into puddle on the floor)

I have a friend from the South, where it is hot most of the year and never snows. Here's how she teaches this song:

Once there was a tulip,
 Tulip, tulip *(cup hands together like bulb of a tulip)*
Once there was a tulip
 Small, small, small. *(crouch lower and lower as if in the ground)*
In the sun it grew up,
 Grew up, grew up *(start pushing upward, blossoming, toward the sun)*
In the sun it grew up
 Tall, tall, tall. *(arms and body higher and higher until on tippy toes)*

She changes the second to last note to a treble C so that the word painting of "tall" goes higher and then ends on the Tonic note of F Major.

"I Love to Go to Grandma's House" – (from the old More Songs for Children orange book or the orange Activity Songs and Verses booklet – try your Primary closet or Ward Library stash to find them!)

I love to go to *Grandma's house *(walking or driving motions)*
'Cause Grandma always reads to me. *(form hands into book shape)*

Before she reads, I know she needs *(index finger tapping forehead)*
Her glasses so that she can see. *(rounded fingers at eyes in glasses shape)*

"Wherever can my glasses be?" *(aged voice, hands at waist)*
Grandma always questions me. *(one finger pointing and shaking)*

We look in drawers, *(pull out drawers and look inside)*
Behind closed doors, *(open door and look through clothes)*
We check the closet shelves *(pat hands along high and low shelves)*
And floors. *(pat hands along floor)*

Then Grandma finds the hiding place *(suddenly straighten up, hold 1 finger up)*
A smile breaks out upon her face. *(make wide grin on face with bright eyes)*

I sit gently on her knee *(bend slightly and pat knee)*
And then my Grandma *(both hands out, palms up)*
Reads to me. *(form hands into book shape)*

I actually like to use *Grandpa instead of Grandma because we can use a silly low voice when he asks, "Wherever can my glasses be..." and besides, in my family my dad, the Grandpa, always did the reading.

Other favorites are: “My Hands,” “Wheels on the Bus,” “Popcorn Popping on the Apricot Tree,” “Fun to Do,” “Do As I’m Doing,” “Roll Your Hands,” “Book of Mormon Stories,” “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes,” and “If You’re Happy”

Some of the best songs in this category absolutely require visual aids, such as “**Smiles.**” You simply have to have a paper plate with a smiley/frowny face drawn on it. And for “**When We’re Helping**” you really should have the little girl helper don a frilly apron, and the boy helper absolutely must wear a work hat or a tool belt. The children in my Primary refused to sing “**A Happy Family**” unless the got to hold the cut-out family faces. After the first time we sang “**We Are Different**” using the egg shakers, we could never sing it again without them. The kids in my Primary thought that the singing of “**Lift Up Your Voice and Sing**” absolutely required the use of colored scarves. I made finger puppets from the fingers of a cotton *work glove to use for “**I Have a Family Tree.**” We did the finger play using all of our fingers to represent the different members of the family, but the little children loved having just one “family member” to hold (*especially the sister puppet with the long yarn braids*).

** I have seen commercially prepared glove puppets with family faces on each of the five fingers. The problem with using a full-sized glove for little children was two-fold. First, it was too big for their tiny hands. Second, it is too distracting to deal with so many figures at once. The children in nursery were happy just to hold and manipulate the one finger puppet. With many choices of moms, and dads, and grandmas, grandpas, brothers, sisters and “uncle, aunts and cousins” we could trade around and everybody got many turns. And I met my goal of singing the song many times through!*

Remember that every time you use a song in Nursery you will be re-teaching it. There are always new children coming into nursery who will have never heard it before.