

4 Ways Music Makes Your Teaching Stick

By Yancy



Music is a tool that can make church be an experience kids will not soon forget. The truth of the Bible is something we need planted deep into the hearts of kids. I believe music can help you create an atmosphere to accomplish that very thing. Here are a few ideas to help you effectively utilize music in your ministry to kids and families.

1. Set the atmosphere

When you attend a major event whether it's a concert or a ride at Disney, one of the things you'll notice is an atmosphere is set. This often times is done with a "pre-show playlist" that plays as the first person arrives. Many times there's video on the screens or slides, even a game or a way to interact. Lighting is another thing that can create a mood and a vibe for different segments of your large group time.

Music can help you create your environment in your classrooms and hallways. This is a great way to make every week special and to make your big events be set a part from the normal weekend. As kids enter your church lobbies, hallways and classrooms, let fun music that fits your theme be the soundtrack to that experience. Turn to iTunes, Freeplaymusic.com or Google "royalty free instrumental music" to help you. Theme your playlist to the subject of your teaching series or special event. Make your environment come to life before your class or service even begins.

2. Score your service

When we watch a movie there is a score. That score enhances and intensifies the emotional state of each scene. What makes a scary movie scarier? Scary music. What makes a happy scene even happier? Happy music. Music is a powerful thing. It can make the hairs on your arm stand up. It can give you goose bumps and make you swallow hard to fight back tears. Music moves you. I have experienced this watching movies many times. I'm sure you have too. The score of a movie is so integral to a scene. The music helps you feel the feeling the director wants you to experience through his story. Sometimes that's an intense scene like a storm or battle, other times it's something soft and tender (think Toy Story). One of the great storytellers of the movie world was Hitchcock. (I've never

seen one of his films but I know of the legend and he was obviously very good at storytelling.) Here's what he had to say about music's effect in his movies: "33% of the effect of Psycho was due to the music." Without Herrmann's all-string masterwork during the famous shower scene, Psycho wouldn't have made nearly the same impact. An artist is only as good as his tools and Herrmann was one of Hitchcock's most significant pieces of hardware.

You as a children's pastor or leader are an artist. Each week you're creating experiences for kids to feel, know and experience God's love.

When you teach a lesson or a Bible story, find music that can enhance it. When you welcome or play a game, play high energy music. For a memory verse or an icebreaker skit, play applicable music in the background. For a serious teaching moment, play something slow and soft in the background. Use music to help you communicate what you're teaching.

3. Eliminate awkward transitions

Nothing is worse than awkward silence in a program. Let's admit, it signifies that someone dropped the ball. Use musical bumpers or video as opportunities to transition from one thing to the next. TV shows from Sesame Street to the Tonight Show use music to transition from segment to segment. You can use short pieces of bumper music to score your service. Then mix it with a slide on screen. This combination will help transition from one teacher teaching to another or from a game into worship, etc.

Communicate to your volunteers the importance of being on deck, ready to go for what's coming next. I always encourage worship leaders to think through their transitions. What was happening before their song? What's coming next? All of these things play into what they will need to say and communicate to the kids to most engage them in the song they are about to lead and prepare them for what follows.

4. Sing about it

We all have memories that are tied to a specific song that triggers those memories. We can all remember the words to songs we haven't sang in a long time. Music has amazing power in our lives. I believe when we use relevant music in our classes to teach kids we are helping establish the word of God in their hearts. The Word will take root in their hearts to help them in the days, weeks and years to come. They'll remember what the Word says and what a teacher at church taught them all because they

can remember a song about it. It's how you make Sunday be a part of their Monday-Saturday.

Take the time as you plan out your worship set to choose songs that go along with what you're teaching. I love it when this takes place in a service. Often times it's being aware of the big picture and in some cases the Holy Spirit tied a bow on the service by leading multiple people to plan on a theme that wasn't even talked about. I love it when that happens. However, there is freedom in preparation so be focused in your planning. Allow each song and segment to build upon each other and reinforce the message being taught over and over. I'll admit some subjects are easier to do this for than others. But, when you can, align your song choices lyrically to fit what you're teaching.

Do you have a song that lyrically really fits what you're teaching? Consider it's placement. Maybe you position your worship songs in a different place than normal? Ask yourself how this song could best serve you? Some options could include: As you intro the day, before the teaching time, or in response to the teaching time. Don't just plan songs to do for the sake of saying you did them but use the songs to help you steer the ship (that is your service) where you want it to go.

In addition to praise and worship songs consider using:

- **Special songs or music videos** that are about what you're teaching. Use those songs to reinforce what you teach.
- **Scripture songs** to plant the Word in kid's hearts. Don't just teach them a memory verse but help them sing it so they can mediate it day and night (Psalm 1:2) Some of my favorites are:
 - The Rizers therizers.com
 - Mighty Spirit Kids mightyspiritkids.com
 - Seeds seedsfamilyworship.com
 - JumpStart3 jumpstart3.com
 - My "Roots for the Journey" scripture album.
- **Link parents to the music their kids are singing** at church so they can sing it in the car and at home. But please know, you can't just give away copies of the music without either buying CD's or getting proper licensing fees paid to make your own. The best way you can do this legally and at no expense to your church is with Spotify and Apple Music playlists. It's easy to make a list of the songs you use with their build-a-playlist functions and it automatically generates a

link for you. Then through your church website, email newsletters, social media or even a take home paper, provide the links to both services. **It's amazing how songs can become conversation starters in families to talk and discuss about what they are learning at church.**

Music is the glue that makes the message stick with us. I believe these ideas I've shared will help you more effectively program your services so kids sing about, experience and feel the message you want to teach them for years to come.

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