

God's Children Sing

Friends of Jesus



Lesson Guide with Activities
For Children Ages 3 to 5 Years

Lorna Heyge • Catherine Mathia • Linda Robinson • Audrey Sillick

© 2006 Musikgarten/Music Matters, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be produced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of Music Matters, Inc.

Every reasonable effort has been taken to trace ownership of copyrighted material and to make due acknowledgement. Any errors or omissions will be gladly rectified in future editions.

Cover Art by Deborah and Allan Drew-Brooke-Cormack

God's Children Sing

Materials for children from 15 months to 3½ years:

God, My Family and Me

God's Wonderful World

Materials for children from 3 to 5 years:

Friends in God's World

Friends of Jesus

This book is part of **Teacher Resources** for *Friends of Jesus*, consisting of:

- Lesson Guide with Activities: 56 page book including 15 lesson suggestions with complete instructions
- *Focused Listening* CD, 93 listening examples with 16 full-color illustrated cards
- *Tap, Dance, and Move* CD, 28 selections
- *Living With Music at Home*: 32-page book of activities to help parents make music part of their home life
- *Friends of Jesus* CD, 30 songs, dances, chants, poems – musical activities from the lessons

The Musikgarten Music and Movement Series

Family Music for Babies

- for children from birth to 18 months

Family Music for Toddlers

- for children from 15 months to 3½ years

The Cycle of Seasons

- for children from 3 to 5 years

Music Makers

At Home in the World

- from age 4

Around the World

- from age 5

Around the World at the Keyboard

- from age 5½

At the Keyboard

- from age 6

Additional Programs

For children from birth to kindergarten

My Musical World

Nature's Music

God's Children Sing

All Together Now! Nimble & Quick

All Together Now! Twist & Turn

For children from age 4

My Neighborhood Community

Seashore

Nature Trail

Musikgarten/Music Matters 1-800-216-6864

507 Arlington Street

www.musikgarten.org

Greensboro, NC 27406

ISBN 1-885537-20-4D

God's Children Sing

Friends of Jesus

Lesson Guide with Activities

Friends of Jesus contains 15 lesson suggestions and the accompanying materials for working with children ages 3 to 5 years. The activities are appropriate to be the basis of a 45 minute period with a group of 8-12 children meeting once a week. Parents can be part of this class, however, the activities are not dependent on the presence of one adult for each child. Each lesson is centered around a scripture reading and a related story. *Friends of Jesus* focuses on stories from the New Testament. In the *God's Children Sing* publication there is a second set of lessons for this age group, *Friends in God's World*, with stories from the Old Testament.

Introduction

"Children live in a world of dreams and visions; they take chances and create. Until we teach them otherwise, they believe they can paint, dance, act, sing, and significantly, they enjoy doing so. Children openly expose their emotions and learn from experience. They find miracles believable and desirable. They can sense the presence of God, for they live in a world of gifts as well as achievements. They can imagine the Kingdom of God, for they live in seen and unseen worlds." (John H. Westerhoff, *Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith*, pp. 20-21.)

God's Children Sing reaches out to all adults whose lives intersect the lives of young children, whether in the role of teacher, parent, or caregiver. Through this publication you are invited to re-enter the faith-filled world of childhood. What is this world; how does it exist? How does the child perceive the world? How does faith develop in the life of the child?

For the young, life is a celebration

For the young child every day is new, fresh, exciting, and filled with new people, things, and events. Events that appear prosaic and ordinary to us as adults are a never-ending source of wonder and engagement for the child. With no sense of time but the present, the child lives each moment completely. The smallest happening is a momentous event for which there is no precedent in his/her life experience.

Children's intuitive intelligence is superbly tuned to the living world around them. They possess an extraordinary capacity for assimilation and have an innate ability to observe the tiniest things which hardly even exist for the adult. These capacities of early childhood will never be repeated in life with the same clarity and ease. The child's perception of and identification with all life forms and events will never again be possible with the same spontaneous enthusiasm.

Every young child has a sense of the sacred; if it is part of a parent/family model, it has a chance to blossom. The gift of faith is given to the child as well as to the adult. The spontaneity, creativity, and openness of childhood allow the child to experience God intuitively in relationships with others and with the natural world they encounter. Through these relationships, the child grows in knowledge of God. The child's faith grows as it is experienced with significant adults in the home and in the Christian community.

Sharing our faith provides the central theme for the activities.

God's Children Sing draws its central themes from the sharing of our faith with children and aims to bring the family into the music, movement, and faith experience. John H. Westerhoff set forth the following five guidelines for sharing our faith with children in his book *Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith*:

“We need to tell and retell the biblical story – the stories of the faith – together.

We need to celebrate our faith and our lives.

We need to pray together.

We need to listen and talk to each other.

We need to perform faithful acts of service and witness together.” (p. 36)

Through music, movement, story-telling, and praying experiences of parent and child together, the faith of both can be strengthened, enhanced, and enlivened. Opportunities for sharing the life of faith can be encouraged through songs, dances, and creative expressions, which are such a natural part of the young child's world.

Coming to know God as the Creator and Sustainer of all living things is encouraged through hands-on experiences and encounters with nature. To “know” a child must “touch.” A child's natural sense of wonder at plants, birds, animals, and insects leads him/her to explore and discover the world in which he/she lives and the God who created it.

This resource book presents materials for designing experiences that promote musical development in young children within the context of nurturing their life of faith. Through joyful participation in songs, stories, music-making, movement activities, and moments of worship in each lesson, young children will become more aware of God's love for them and for all of Creation. As a result of these musical activities experienced in a Christian community and family, children will grow to give voice to their developing musical expression, faith, and praise of God.

The Lessons

The lessons are structured to be the basis of a 45 minute class meeting once a week. The activities are designed to encourage joyful participation by both the child and the accompanying parent or caregiver; however, they are not dependent on the presence of one adult for each child. When the children experience the security of their accompanying adult in class, they can be relaxed, comfortable, and ready to learn. By experiencing the activities with the children, parents come to a fuller understanding of the value of the experience and are more ready to facilitate musical play at home. The children are allowed to respond in ways that are comfortable to them and are not required to meet expectations of others.

Many activities promote interaction between the child and the adult. Children and adults act together in a group, singing, dancing and playing instruments, providing not only enjoyable music and movement experiences but facilitating eye-to-eye contact, close body contact, joy in the shared experience.

Other activities are designed to encourage the growing independence of the child. During the thematic portions of the lessons, the teacher will work part of the time just with the children, separated from the adults. The adults observe, and join in after a few minutes. Whether hearing a story, going forth to get an instrument, coming to the listening place, repeating a rhythmic or melodic pattern individually, or taking a turn on an instrument, the child takes steps toward becoming an independent person. Invite individual adults to stay close to their children, if needed.

Over time children and adults learn the joys of coming together for a group activity, especially when music is involved! The Listening Time, the Scripture Reading, Prayers and Singing Game encourage their incipient sense of the faith community.

Lesson Suggestions

The Lesson Suggestions are intended as a guide for the teacher. The activities have been carefully chosen and sequenced according to the developmental needs of the children. Interspersing quiet and active times suits the children's growing capacity to really listen, to inhibit their movement, and then to relax and move about.

In the Lesson Suggestions we have attempted to:

- balance movement, vocal, listening, and playing activities;
- carefully plan the sequence according to children's movement needs;
- allow for ample repetition from one lesson to another;
- balance activities that promote independent action and those that lead to group involvement.

In constructing the lessons, the authors have specifically considered two basic formats:

- use by a music specialist meeting a group of children once a week for 45 minutes;
- use by a classroom, music or Sunday school teacher making music a part of the daily program.

Use in a once-a-week class.

Each lesson includes the following important elements:

- A song of greeting in which each child is named.
- Movement games for beat competency; finger plays; songs that emphasize body parts; activities that encourage stationary movement, traveling movement, and expressive movement; and singing games and dances.
- Varied vocal activities: easy-to-sing songs, voice-building activities, call-and-respond songs, patterns, and songs in major, minor and church modes.
- Listening activities: listening examples or games, listening to recorded music (songs, dance music, or stories,) and poetry.
- Activities that include playing instruments and working with accessories such as hoops and scarves.
- Opportunities for children to make suggestions, by improvising the text, sounds, or movements.
- A closing song.

Use through the week in the early childhood classroom.

Every classroom is organized to meet the specific needs of the situation. The following ideas are offered so that you can feel comfortable with adjusting the lesson plans while paying close attention to balancing the needs of the children, as suggested above:

- Divide the material suggested for each week into two or three music-circle periods.
- Plan each music-circle time to be 20-25 minutes long and to include a variety of activities: singing, beat development, movement, listening, and a special focus.
- Plan the sequence carefully to be sure that there is enough variety, movement, and activities in which all the children can be involved.
- Repeat single activities throughout the week, at times when they would fill a special need or when the children request them.

Follow the children

The authors encourage you to use these lesson suggestions as a point of departure. Each meeting with children will have its own dynamic, its own needs. You may wish to use the lesson suggestions simply as the basic structure to plan your own lessons. Keeping the developmental needs of the children in mind, observe them carefully and adjust your lesson plans to the golden opportunities that children always present to us. Keep the wonder alive.

Listening

Listening activities have two primary goals: to develop auditory acuity and memory, and to focus attention and listening ability. Consider the following guidelines:

- Invite the children to come together in a designated listening area. Remind them that “in the listening corner you will need your ears.” Allow them to sit comfortably, as close as possible to the sound source.
- Tell them what sounds they will hear, for example, “We are going to listen to the voice of a cicada.”
- Play one section of the recording; listen to the responses of the children (after you have stopped the recording). Ask the children some questions, such as “How did the cicada sound?” Invite the children to imitate the sound. You may want to play the selection again.
- *Friends of Jesus* includes 2 sets of four listening cards. Present the cards in the following steps:
 1. Name the animals or instruments, one at a time, showing the illustration. Listen to the children’s comments, add some of your own and repeat the identification at the end.
 2. Ask the children to identify the picture when you name the animal or instrument. Mix the card order every time you repeat the exercise.
 3. Point to an illustration and ask the children to name it.
 4. Announce which sound you are going to play. Hold up the picture, and play the recording.
 5. Encourage vocal imitation of the sound.

Prayers

Prayers bring the child into communication with God. Through “talking with God,” the child begins to build a relationship with God that is special to his/her own level of understanding. By encouraging children to participate in the prayer life of a faith community, children begin to feel a sense of identity and belonging in the community.

Each lesson contains a prayer time following the singing game. The prayers should use simple language and relate to the central theme for the lesson. A sense of ceremony and awe is appropriate to make this a special time of sharing. Encourage everyone to hold hands together in the circle.

Some lessons suggest a specific prayer. If a specific prayer is not listed, a response form of praying is suggested, where each phrase is spoken by the teacher and then repeated by either the children or by the children and adults. The prayers should consist of several short phrases, such as:

Dear God, (*children repeat*)

Thank you for making a wonderful world, (*children repeat*)

With crickets and cicadas, (*children repeat*)

With bees and beautiful flowers, (*children repeat*)

And with prickly and tickly things. (*children repeat*)

Help us remember to take care of your world, (*children repeat*)

Amen. (*children repeat*)

When the children are more experienced, invite them to give suggestions for prayers or to lead the group.

Dance and Recorded Movement Stories

The *Tap, Dance and Move* recording includes several dances of various kinds. Invite adults and children to join you in moving freely to the music. Parents and children may dance together holding hands, dance individually, or in small groups with other children and parents.

The recorded movement activities combine listening and moving in a new dimension. The music suggests actions to express a story line. The dual role of the ear – the auditory (listening) and the vestibular (movement) functions – is thus greatly enhanced when the children’s feeling response to the music is expressed in movement.

Patterns

Rhythm and tonal patterns should be built into every lesson. They give the child the possibility to hear and practice brief motifs which can easily be remembered. Patterns are understandable building blocks for children with which they can later create their own music.

Through playing with rhythm and tonal patterns the child builds his/her own musical vocabulary. The experience with patterns leads to the understanding of musical syntax - pitch and rhythm. Syntax in music, the sequence of tones and rhythms in a phrase, is the counterpoint to syntax in language, the sequence of words in a sentence. Just as language is learned from sounds to words and later to writing and reading, so musical understanding begins first with musical patterns and develops later to an understanding within a wider framework and on many levels.

Patterns of every kind are of interest to children. From experience we know that even the youngest children enjoy echoing short rhythmic and tonal patterns. Often children who otherwise do not yet sing individually or even those who do not speak at all will take part in the echo pattern games. Start out with echo games for the group. Note the following:

- Practice your patterns before you teach them.
- Speak or sing the patterns musically and expressively.
- Keep the patterns simple, so that both children and adults can experience success and joy.

After a few weeks invite individual children to offer an answer. Use a hand gesture or an object such as a rhythm stick (microphone) to indicate whose turn it is. When you start individual patterns remember:

- Not all children will be ready to take a solo turn. The child should be allowed to choose to do this activity and not be pushed to participate.
- Many children wish to come to the teacher; others prefer to answer while sitting with their adult partner.
- Accept each child's answer. It is always correct, even though it may not be an echo of your phrase. If the child's echo differs from your pattern, take time to echo the child's pattern.
- Adjust the difficulty of your pattern to the needs of the individual child.

Rhythm Patterns

The first experience with echoing patterns should be on a neutral syllable, such as "ba, ba." This syllable gives a clear starting point to the sound and is an easy syllable for young children to form. As the children build their vocabulary of rhythm patterns and become comfortable and more accurate doing them individually, change to a rhythm language.

The neutral syllable is appropriate for children ages 15 months to 3 years. If 3 year olds have had considerable experience with the neutral syllable, it is appropriate to introduce a rhythm language. When starting with children 4 years and older, a few weeks on the neutral syllable may suffice before changing to a rhythm language.

Remember the following:

- Keep the patterns of any one lesson in the same meter (duple or triple).
- Be sure to alternate between duple and triple meter over several weeks.
- At first, chant patterns which are 2 beats long; later extend the patterns to 4 beats.
- Do approximately 4-6 patterns in a series.
- It is helpful to use the meter of the previous song or chant as the basis for the patterns.
- Set the beat by tapping lightly with both hands on your knees.
- Procedure: All keep the beat going without interruption. The teacher chants one pattern. The group repeats without pause. The teacher chants the next pattern without leaving out a beat. The group answers. Continue, following this procedure.

Friends of Jesus**Lesson Suggestions****WEEK 1****Materials**

Jingles

Scarves

Resonator Bars

Cards: Chickadee, Grasshopper, Donkey, Goat

FL-CD (Focused Listening)

TDM-CD (Tap, Dance, and Move)

FJ-CD (Friends of Jesus)

Title	Function	CD in class	CD as reference	Parent Book
Come on, Everyone	Greeting song			
Praise God, All You Little Children	Stationary movement		FJ, #1	6
Major	Tonal patterns			
Mark 10: 13-14, 16	Scripture, response			
Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy	Jingles			
O Little Ones	Scarves	TDM, #22	FJ, #8	10
Triple	Rhythm patterns			
Animals I Know: Chickadee, Grasshopper, Donkey, Goat	Listening time	FL, #78-81	FJ, #4	9
Jesus and the Children	Story			
Oh, How I Love Jesus	Stationary movement, rocking			
Old Betty Larkin	Traveling movement		FJ, #9	11
Come to Me	Resonator bars		FJ, #3	8

Conclude with 1 or more of the following activities:

The More We Get Together	Singing game
	Prayer
Goodbye, Everyone	Closing song

Come on, Everyone

D Major



Vs. 2 Hello, (name), Hello (name),
Hello, (name), God loves you.

- Sing the song, tapping the beat on your knees.
- If there are many children in the class, three different names can be used in the second verse.
- Change the motion from time to time; for example,
“Clap for Susannah ...”
“Wave to Grandma ...,” etc.
- Observe the children and take ideas from them.
- When the children are a little more experienced, ask each child what motion s/he would like for his/her special verse.

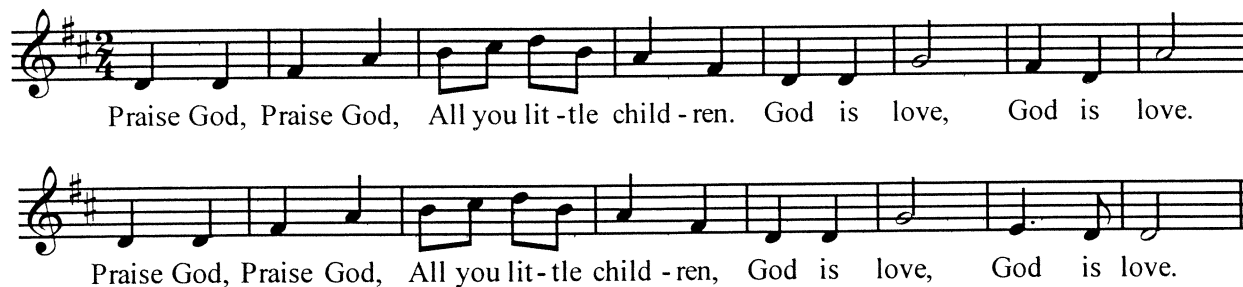
Variation

At the end of a lesson, sing “Goodbye, everyone, ... I’m glad you came.”

Praise God, All You Little Children

Traditional

Parent Book p. 6; FJ-CD No. 1; D Major



Vs. 2 Love God, ...
Vs. 3 Thank God, ...

Traditional Text: Vs. 1 Praise Him, praise Him.
Vs. 2 Love Him, love Him.
Vs. 3 Thank Him, thank Him.

- Sing the song, keeping a light beat on the knees with the fingertips.
- Show the children movements to represent some of the words in the song:
 - Lift the hands up to show “Praise.”
 - For “All you little children,” point to the children in the class.
 - For “God is love,” cross the arms over the chest.
 - Fold the hands in prayer for “Thank.”
- Sing the song again, inviting the children to do the movements and sing with you.

Index

		FJ	Other			FJ	Other
Title	Page	CD	CDs		Page	CD	CDs
Angel Band, The	20			Little Bird, Little Bird	49	28	TDM 28
Animals I Know	13			Little Drops of Water	21	9	
Boat Song	35	16		Little Rabbit	45	22	TDM 25
Canada Goose	52	27	FL 91	Mary and Martha	28		
Charlie Over the Ocean	33			Mary Wore a Red Dress	28		
Chickadee	13	4	FL 78	More We Get Together, The	15		
Chopping			FL 83	Mustard See, The	51	26	TDM 27
Come on, Everyone	11			My Turtle	44	20	
Come to Me	15	3		Mystery Bag	31		
Donkey	13	4	FL 80	O Little Ones	12	5	TDM 22
Downy Woodpecker	52	27	FL 92	Oh, How I Love Jesus	14		
Fishpole Song, the	36	15		Oh, John the Rabbit	46	21	
Follow Me	37	17		Old Betty Larkin	14	6	TDM 23
Goat	13	4	FL 81	Owl	52	27	FL 90
God Bless the Animals I Love	42	18	FL 87	Parable of the Mustard Seed, The	51		
God is Great and God is Good	30			Peter Follows Jesus	36		
Good Samaritan, The	18			Praise God, All You Little Children	11	1	
Grasshopper	13	4	FL 79	Rejoice in the Lord Always	48		
Great Day	38	30		Response to Scripture	12		
Halleo, Hallelujah		11		Robin	52	27	FL 89
Hands a-Washing	30	12	FL 82	Scrubbing			FL 85
Hey! Let's Dance Together	25	10	TDM 7	Small Things	46	23	
Hop, Old Squirrel	48	19		St. Francis, the Troubadour of God	43	25	
Horsey, Horsey	44	24	TDM 26	Thank You for the World So Sweet		29	
I Have Decided to Follow Jesus	35			There Goes the Turtle	45		
I Have God's Love in Store	23	8		Tiny Seed, The	52		
I'm On My Way	54			Trampin'	24	14	
Instrument Game	20			Trees	52		
I've Got the Love	21	2		Water Sounds	37		
Jesus and the Children	13			Weave	31	13	TDM 24
Jesus Visits His Friends	29			What Shall We Do?	19		
Jesus, Jesus	18			Whisking			FL 84
Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy	12			Wolf			FL 86
Kumbaya	23	7					

FL = Focused Listening CD
TDM = Tap, Dance and Move CD
FJ = Friends of Jesus CD