

God's Children Sing

God, My Family and Me



Lesson Guide
with Activities
For Children Ages
15 Months to 3 1/2 Years

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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 *God, My Family and Me*, consisting of:

- Lesson Guide with Activities: 48 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*: 36-page book of activities with notes for parents on how to make music part of their home life
- *God, My Family and Me* CD, 32 songs, dances, chants, poems – musical activities from the lessons

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<i>Music Makers: At Home in the World</i>	- for Children from 4 to 6 years
<i>Music Makers: Around the World</i>	- for Children from 5 to 7 years
<i>Music Makers: At the Keyboard</i>	- for Children from 5 to 9 years
<i>God's Children Sing</i>	- for Children from 15 months to 5 years

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Nature's Music

For children ages four to seven:

My Neighborhood Community

Seashore

Nature Trail

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God's Children Sing

God, My Family and Me **Lesson Guide with Activities**

God, My Family, and Me contains 15 lesson suggestions and the accompanying materials for working with children ages 15 months to 3½ years. The activities are appropriate to be the basis of a 30 minute class 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. The lessons follow the development of the main topic – God and Family – starting with the child's self-awareness as a child of God and moving outward to family, pets, grandparents, friends, and the church family. In the *God's Children Sing* publication there is a second set of lessons for this age group, *God's Wonderful World*, focusing on God's Creation: birds, oceans, night/day, animals, and weather, along with the concepts of working together and growing up.

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 and the child's faith grows as it is experienced with significant adults 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, dance, 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 30 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 present, the adult is a reassuring presence as the child responds, and the music-making of the adult provides a model for the child both in class and 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. Bouncing activities provide not only an enjoyable rhythmic experience but facilitate eye-to-eye contact and facial communication of joy in the shared experience. Cuddling, hugs, and close contact between the child and adult are present in various rocking activities. Free dancing activities allow for paired movement expression to the music.

Other activities are designed to encourage the growing independence of the child. Whether 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.

Over time toddlers learn the joys of coming together for a group activity, especially when music is involved! The Listening Time, Prayer, and Singing Game at the end of the lesson encourage their incipient sense of 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 30 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:

- Greeting song in which each child is named.
- Variety of movement activities: bouncing, finger plays, body awareness, stationary movement, traveling movement, singing games.
- Unstructured dance to recorded movement.
- Several activities which involve steady beat.
- Variety of vocal activities: easy-to-sing songs, voice-building activities, songs for adults to sing for their children, call-and-respond songs.
- Rhythm and tonal echo pattern games.
- Variety of repertoire in terms of meter as well as songs in major, minor and church modes.
- Listening experiences that include sounds from the environment, human and non-human voices, folk music, and classical music.
- Playing instruments and working with accessories such as hoops and scarves.
- Ample opportunities for children to improvise through body gestures, ways of moving, adding verses to songs, exploring ways to play instruments.
- Closing song.

We encourage you to make substitutions and changes according to your needs.

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 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.

God, My Family and Me**Lesson Suggestions****WEEK 1****Materials**

Jingles

Rhythm Sticks

FL-CD (Focused Listening)

TDM-CD (Tap, Dance, and Move

GMF-CD (God, My Family and Me)

Title	Function	CD in class	CD as reference	Parent Book
Sing Hello	Greeting song			
Two Little Eyes	Body awareness		GMF, #2	6
There's a Little Wheel	Bouncing		GMF, #1	5
Duple	Rhythm patterns			
Give Me Joy	Traveling movement		GMF, #3	7
Major	Tonal patterns			
Peter, Go Ring the Bells	Jingles		GMF, #7	10
Waltz 1	Dance	TDM, #2		
Child of God	Rocking, name song		GMF, #4	8
Baby babbling, Baby laughing	Listening time	FL, #2, 3		
German Lullaby	Rocking		GMF, #6	9
	Prayer			
Do, Lord	Rhythm sticks			
Sing Alleluia	Singing game		GMF, #8	11
Sing Goodbye	Closing song			

Sing Hello

Johanna Burge

D Major



- Sing the song, lightly tapping the beat on your knees, one verse for each child in the circle.
- Change the motion from time to time. For example:
"Clap hello to Tommy..." "Wave hello to Susan...", etc.
- Observe the children and take ideas for motions from them. When the children are more familiar with the song, ask each child what motion he/she would like for his/her special verse.
- Change the text to "Wave goodbye" for the closing song of the class.

Two Little Eyes

Wales, Traditional

Parent Book p. 6; GMF-CD No. 2

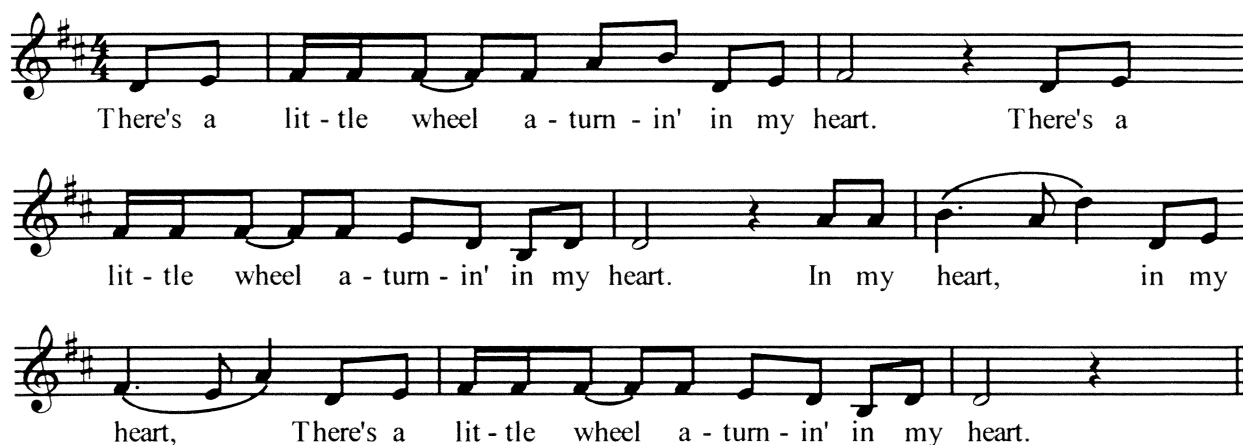
Two little eyes to look to God;
Two little ears to hear God's word;
Two little feet to walk God's ways;
Two little lips to sing God's praise;
Two little hands to do God's will;
And one little heart to love God still.

- Touch each body part before speaking the line of the verse. Speak slowly and expressively.
- Repeat the verse, leaving pauses before naming the body part, to give the children time to say it first.

There's a Little Wheel

African-American Spiritual

Parent Book p. 5; GFM-CD No. 1; D Major



There's a lit - tle wheel a - turn - in' in my heart. There's a
lit - tle wheel a - turn - in' in my heart. In my heart, in my
heart, There's a lit - tle wheel a - turn - in' in my heart.

Vs. 2 There's a little bell a-ringin' in my heart.

Vs. 3 There's a little drum a-beatin' in my heart.

Vs. 4 There's a little song a-singin' in my heart.

- Sing the song, keeping a light tapping beat on your knees.
- Start the song with extended fermatas on each of the words "There's a."
- Proceed by singing and bouncing on the beat.

Give Me Joy

Parent Book p. 7; GFM-CD No. 3; D Major



Give me joy in my heart, keep me prais- ing. Give me joy in my heart I pray. Give me
joy in my heart, keep me prais-ing. Keep me prais - ing 'till the break of day.
Sing ho-san-na, sing ho-san-na, sing ho-san-na to the King of Kings. King.

- Sing the song, tapping the beat on the knees.
- Encourage the children to suggest other movements, such as "... keep me walking," "... keep me jumping," etc. Stand and move freely to the new verses of the song.

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