



Songs

unpacked



Volume 30

Imagine if your group lived out the message of each song you sang.

These resources are designed to help you do that.

For each song there is a:

Song lyric focus

Exploring the rich language used in one of the lines of the song.

Leader's guide Warm-up

Giving background information and a creative way to prepare your singers' voices.

Bible verse Prayer Thought

A short devotional based on the song lyric. Why not ask a young person to lead this - they may even wish to write their own.

Activity

A quick, easy game or exercise with minimal equipment needed.

Personal challenge

For individual spiritual growth - revisit these each week, so they become a faith habit.

Group challenge

To empower your group to make a difference.

Contents

Do not be anxious

In my quiet times

I give you my praise

Stopped in my tracks

Shout for joy

A humble King

Do not be anxious

Leader's guide

A catchy tune often helps to fix an important message in our mind; TV jingles rely on this. Jonathan Mead has written a bright song that will help us remember the promise of Philippians 4. He also suggests the fun of a hand-jive sequence during the piano solo.

The peace of God which passes understanding

Warm-up

Don't be fooled – this snappy tune isn't necessarily as easy as it might seem. It is in a minor key, so take time and care learning the pitches of the notes, and the intervals between the parts where they split into harmony. Carefully divide your singers as you reach the end of bar 29 so each entry is confident and balanced.

Bible verse

'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 4:6-7

Prayer

Dear Jesus,
You know each of us – all our thoughts and feelings. You know what makes us feel happy and what makes us feel nervous. Thank you for always being by our side. Please calm our minds and help us make sense when things become difficult, and show us the way forward. In you we trust, Jesus. Amen.

★ Activity

Get rid of your fears

Equipment: a piece of flipchart paper and pen.

List a time recently when you were really worried about something. Something which made your heart beat fast, or your breath get deep or rapid, or even gave you a nervous tummy! This might have been a big test at school or losing something precious. Then cross off the worry if you feel better about it now. Those you haven't crossed out – what did you learn about how to cope when you feel worried?

We can all feel worried and anxious about different things all the time. Pray together about the worries that are ongoing.

⚠ Thought

Someone once said, 'If you're in a fix, Philippians 4:6.'

Whenever you feel anxious, you have a choice either to face it alone or to let God help. This verse from Philippians helps us to see the bigger picture and reminds us that God's peace is always there. Next time you're feeling afraid, remember the rhyme and talk to God about your feelings.

🚩 Personal challenge

This week, try to memorise the Bible verse. Then whenever you're in a fix, you will remember Philippians 4:6. See how many of your group can recite it by the next practice.

👥 Group challenge

Don't just sing this song together in practices. Sing it and remind yourself what to do in times of difficulty.

Share in your group when you have had to put this verse into practice. This helps to remind everyone that they are not alone.



In my quiet times

Leader's guide

Members of the Music and Creative Arts team, Stephanie Lamplough and Nicholas King have penned this simple song which reminds us of some of the ways and places where we can see God and know that he sees and is looking out for us too. You will note there is an optional part for B flat cornet or concert pitch instrument on page 32.

I know he's watching over me

Warm-up

With its repeated phrases and strong imagery, perhaps this song creates an opportunity to learn and use sign language to emphasise the lyrics. This will not only allow you to engage with those who may rely on this method of communication, but will also help your group to remember those places we can find God.

Bible verse

'You are all around me – in front of me and behind me. I feel your hand on my shoulder.'

Psalm 139:5, ERV

Prayer

Dear God,
As we meet together today, we know that you are with us, watching over everything we sing. Thank you for keeping me safe through your love and comfort. Please be with everyone who feels alone and remind them that you are always there. Amen.

Activity

Wink murder

Everyone stands in a circle and the leader picks one person to be the detective. Have everyone close their eyes, while the leader silently picks a 'murderer'. Then the detective stands in the middle of the circle and tries to watch everyone. If the murderer winks at anyone, that person sits down and is out of the game. It is the detective's job to work out who the murderer is by catching the murderer winking.

The detective had to work hard in that game to watch everyone and work out who the murderer is. God watches over us with the same amount of detail and care – not to catch us out but to protect us.

Thought

When people go bird watching, it can take a long time before they see anything interesting. It can mean a lot of waiting quietly and patiently. However, they know that it will be worth it when they catch a glimpse of the birds.

Psalm 139 tells us that God watches our every move and knows our every thought. He is always watching over us, caring for us, protecting us, and loving us. Sometimes it can feel like we are completely alone and we can't sense God. But he is still there watching, in the busy, noisy times and in the quiet times. When we start to look for God, we can see that he is always there, watching over us.

Personal challenge

Life is often very busy, and we can spend our time always rushing from one place to another. This week, set yourself a goal of spending some quiet time with God. It might be just a few moments of quiet, on your walk to school or before you go to bed. In that time, list three things that you have seen so far that day that might have reminded you of God. It might be something good that happened in the day, or something beautiful that you have seen. Thank God for always watching over you and making his presence known.

Group challenge

How often do you stop and take time to admire God's creation?
This week, have everyone take a photo of something beautiful that they see. This could be one of the examples in the song or something different. Put them all together in a presentation that can be projected when you sing this song as part of worship.



I give you my praise

Leader's guide

Osei Stewart and Donald Montgomery have given us a lively song expressing many of the characteristics of God.

Bible verse

'Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

Philippians 2:9-11

Name above all names

Warm-up

Strong consonants will really help listeners understand the different characteristics we are describing. Practise putting a strong 'h' on 'holy,' a strong 'f' on 'faithful' and a strong 'k' on 'kindness'. Also take care of the melodic D sharp in bar 10 and similar. Practise getting the pitch right by singing the phrase before and then landing and holding that note until everyone can find it straight away, every time.

Prayer

Dear God,
We thank you for all that you have done for us in our homes, schools and communities. We thank you for the gift of your precious Son, Jesus. Lord, we pray more people will know about you. Help us always to remember the power of your name and to spread your message in everything we do and everywhere we go. Amen.

Activity

This is me!

Have each member of your group think of an action to describe themselves. This might be an action to describe their favourite hobby or something to represent their personality. For example, it might be kicking an imaginary football, doing a little dance, or giving someone a hug. Go around the group getting them to say their name and perform their action.

We can have many different names and nicknames and different ways to describe ourselves. In the Bible, God is given many names to describe his character.

Thought

God is more incredible and infinite than we will ever be able to imagine. He is referred to by many different names in the Bible; each name teaches us something new about who God is and how he relates to us as his children. For example, Father, Almighty God and Lord. The name of Jesus is exalted (raised above) all names; how awesome it is that he came to earth to be our Saviour, but he is also our Lord!

Personal challenge

Take a moment to think about the name of God that resonates the most with you right now; this could be God the Father, Shepherd, or a characteristic from the song. Reflect on how God gives us all we need through his name. What name of God do you think our world needs the most right now?

Group challenge

Before you sing this song on a Sunday, ask your worship leader if you can have some time to each share a name of God that means something to you; this only needs to be a line or two per person.



Stopped in my tracks

Leader's guide

In all our favourite animated films, the lead character inevitably undergoes some kind of transformation. That could be a physical change, a change of circumstances, or a change in life view. Kay Moorby and Simon Gash tell the story of Saul in a song that sounds as if it could be the transformation montage song from one of those films.

Your light filled up my life

Warm-up

Storytelling is very important in music making, and never more so than when singing.

Encourage your group to 'get into character' while rehearsing. Perhaps a brief digression while they 'lip-sync' to a favourite song from a film or musical might help them understand how to change 'persona'.

Bible verse

'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'

Matthew 5:16

Prayer

Lord God, thank you for filling up my life. Help me reflect your goodness in everything I say, think and do. May others see your love through me and want to be transformed by having a relationship with you. Amen.

Activity

Fill up the cup!

Equipment: a cup and jug of water.

Have an empty cup and a jug of water. Each person takes it in turns to add water into the cup. It is their choice how much or how little water they add; the only thing they must not do is allow the water to overspill. The person who eventually overfills the water loses.

God fills up our lives to the maximum with his love, kindness and care. We are called to share this with other people.



Thought

The song tells the story of Saul, a man who had no belief in God. He was an unkind man who had a reputation for doing the wrong thing. But after he met Jesus, his life was transformed. Jesus told Saul to go and share the message of God's love.

Darkness is powerful. It can feel intimidating and make us feel afraid. However, if there is even the tiniest bit of light, it can transform the darkness. Now think about the cup in the activity – when the cup had been filled it began to overspill. God fills us up and transforms us to the point that we overspill with joy. Everyone can see through our words and actions that we have been transformed. In a dark world it is important for us to shine God's light.

Personal challenge

Take some time to reflect on the questions below.

What good things has God done for you?

Where have you seen God's goodness today?

How can you show other people about God's light?

At the end of this time, say a prayer to give thanks to God.

Group challenge

Give each member of the group a glow-stick. Challenge the group to give their glow-stick to someone else. This might be someone at their school or at your church. When they pass on the glow-stick, encourage them to talk about their singing group, church or faith. Talk about this being an opportunity to share God's light with the people around you.



Shout for joy

Worship the Lord with gladness

Leader's guide

Gavin Whitehouse has given us a great opportunity to help familiarise your group with Psalm 100; it is a reminder that the Lord is good and that his love never ceases. An energetic song full of positivity.

Warm-up

The melodic line is entirely on the lower stave, with the upper stave adding decoration. If a few voices are to add the upper line, this will need careful rehearsal to ensure some of the tricky pitches and independent rhythms are secure. Warm up with a 'round' to encourage the independence of different parts.

Prayer

Dear Lord,
We choose to worship you with gladness today. We say thank you for all you have done for us and all you have given to us today. We shout for joy as we sing your praises! Amen.

Bible verse

'Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.'

Psalm 100: 1-2

Activity

Shout for joy

Get the group to think of something they are thankful for. Take it in turns for each member to speak; start very quietly, then get each person to get a little louder. The last person should have to shout what they are most thankful for.

We want everyone to be able to hear our worship and thankfulness to God.



Thought

Ask the children to shout out a word that describes how they feel about their day (eg fun, boring, exciting, sad).

Our feelings can change all the time, but no matter how good or bad our day has been, it is always possible to 'worship the Lord with gladness' as we always have something to be grateful for. Sometimes praying and thinking about all the good things God has given us can help us to feel glad.

Personal challenge

Each morning when you wake up and every evening before you go to sleep this week, try and think of three things that you are thankful for.

Group challenge

When the children see each other at a rehearsal or on a Sunday, perhaps they can ask each other how they are feeling and pray with each other about it. They can also encourage each other to worship with gladness by asking each other, 'What are you thankful for today?'



A humble King

Don't be afraid

Leader's guide

A Christmas song by Michelle Dodds, made beautiful by its simplicity.

Warm-up

Why not use this song as part of a carol service or Nativity service to tell the story of the angel's visit to both Mary and Joseph? The repeated melodic phrases will be easy to learn, but it is important that the story does not become uninteresting because of it. Perhaps find a way to depict Mary, Joseph and the angel amongst your group to provide a visual aid to the song.

Prayer

Dear Lord,
Thank you that you are with us always. You protect us and love us and walk beside us each day. Because of your mighty power, we have no need to be afraid. Please help us when we are scared to put our trust in you. When we are facing hard things, or when we need to be brave, help us to know that you are there, guiding us and holding our hands. Amen..

Bible verse

'But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people".'

Luke 2:10

Activity

Do you hear what I hear?

Equipment: empty boxes and Christmas items.

Have three empty boxes with three different Christmas items in. For example, bells, baubles and tinsel. Volunteers can come and give the box a shake to see if they can guess what is inside the box.

Throughout the Christmas story different people feel surprised by what they are hearing, but they trust that God has a plan and they shouldn't be afraid.

Thought

Have you ever been outside at night with no streetlights or torch? It probably felt very dark and scary! On the night of Jesus' birth, the shepherds were out in a very dark and cold field when the angels came to tell them the good news. The first thing the angel said was, 'Do not be afraid!'

When Mary and Joseph were told they were going to have a baby, they were probably quite scared. Then there was the added pressure that this baby was not a normal baby – he was the son of God! But God was with them, so they did not need to be afraid. He sent his son to earth in the humblest of ways, in the form of a baby. He lived alongside us then, and still does now. So what do we have to fear? Nothing! Because God is always with us.

Personal challenge

Think about a time recently where you've felt really scared. How did you overcome your fear?

Why not say a prayer, thanking God for all the times he has kept you safe when you have been afraid. Next time you feel scared, remind yourself of these words: 'God is with me. I am not scared!'

Group challenge

Christmas is full of joy and happiness. But for some people in the world, it is not so fun.

Talk with each other about the reasons why some people might be scared or unhappy this Christmas. Then say a prayer for them, asking God to be with them. That way, they don't have to be scared either.