



Songs unpacked



Volume 28

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

Short devotionals 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:

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Songs unpacked



Children's Voice Series Vol 28

God loves us so

*'He loves us,
God loves us so'*

Leader's guide

Songster Leader Chelsea Pascoe from Belfast Sydenham Salvation Army has provided this great arrangement of the beautiful song 'God loves us so' by Jay Stocker.

Isn't it amazing that no matter who we are or what we do, God loves us so much!

Warm-up

Rhythmic warm-ups can be just as important as vocal warm-ups.

To help teach some of the tricky rhythms in this song, during the warm-up you could clap the rhythms and ask the choir to clap them back to you.

Bible verse

'But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.'

Romans 5:8

Prayer

Thank you, God, for your love for us. Thank you that your love is unconditional. Thank you that no matter what we do wrong, we can always ask you for forgiveness because Jesus died on the cross for us. We are sorry for the times we do things or say things that are wrong. Please forgive us and remind us that you still love us even though we don't deserve it.

Amen.

Activity

Clap out a few words and phrases, and ask the group to clap back to you. End with the word 'unconditional'. Ask if anyone knows what the word 'unconditional' means (eg total, complete, unlimited, full). Clap the phrase 'unconditional love' and ask if anyone knows what 'unconditional love' means.

Thought

God's love is not like human love. Human love can change depending on how we are feeling or in different situations. For example, sometimes people can stop being friends with each other and sometimes people can be unloving towards their family. But God's love is unconditional; it never ends, it never changes.

God can't love you any more or any less – because he loves you. It doesn't matter what you do or what you have done. Even if you feel you don't deserve it, God loves you.

Personal challenge

Each day think about your day and any time you have said or done something, or not said or not done something, that would make God sad.

Pray and thank God for his unconditional love and ask for forgiveness.

Group challenge

Let's spread God's message of love.

Each person in the group thinks of one person they'd like to talk to about God's amazing, unconditional love this week. It might be someone in your family or a friend at school. Write these names down on a big piece of paper and each week get it out again to see if you were able to do it.

Songs Unpacked

Jesus is King!

'We've a message we must share'

Leader's guide

It's always exciting to include new composers in our publications.

Alongside Neil Winton, Tom Grimshaw has written this fun song proclaiming that Jesus is King!

Let's get this exciting message out there!

Warm-up

When singing a fun and energetic song, like this one, it is often easy to forget to put in lots of effort with breathing and vocal control.

Perhaps the singers could warm up with some scales and arpeggios on different vowel sounds to ensure good placement of vowels.

Bible verse

'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

John 13:34-35

Prayer

God of love,

Help me to share your message. I pray that I will share that 'Jesus is King' in more than my words. Help me to live a life so loving that in every moment – quiet, loud, difficult, easy, public or private – I will reflect the One I belong to. I pray also that in sharing your message, my ears won't be closed to other people's beliefs and perspectives. Help me to listen and to love others, recognising that we are all made in your image.

Amen.

Activity

Sit in a circle and play a version of *Chinese Whispers*.

Ask one young person to whisper to the person next to them 'Jesus is King'. This person then whispers a similar message, changing at least one word, like 'Jesus is emperor'. When everyone has had a turn, share the first and last message. Has the meaning changed or is it drastically different? When we share our own message about Jesus, we must be clear in what we mean!

You could use parts of these Bible verses (ICB) for the game too:

John 1:14; Zechariah 9:9; John 10:36,
1 John 4:13; Mark 10:27; Isaiah 11:5

Thought

What does it mean to truly 'love one another'? It seems a simple instruction, but it is a whole-life task.

Loving one another goes beyond our time in this group, because it means letting that message influence every interaction we have with another person, and every other moment of our lives. But you are not alone in this task. You are part of a community here, and, as the song says, 'You can trust [Jesus] every day. He's beside you all the way.'

Personal challenge

Think about the past week, and anything you wish you'd done differently.

How have you interacted with other people? How have you thought about people you've seen or read about online or in the news? Have you loved as Jesus commands in this verse? Do you think your life points to you being a disciple of Jesus? Does your love tell people that Jesus is King? Spend time reflecting on this each week.

Group challenge

Share the message that Jesus is King!

In your group, get into pairs – support partners. This means you can check on how you're each doing with sharing that 'Jesus is King'. Whenever you see each other, ask the other person how they've been sharing that message in the way they live their life. Have they found it difficult? Easy? Have they got any interesting stories about it to tell you? Be supportive, and remember that you're in this together!

Amen! It is so!

**‘Through ev’ry trial
and tribulation’**

Leader’s guide

Enjoy singing this upbeat song influenced by Caribbean music. Ed Mylechreest from New York has arranged this exciting song for this journal.

Are we ready to let God help and guide us with all our worries and concerns?

Warm-up

Using our bodies to help convey the message of the song is always a good idea!

Before singing this energetic song, ensure that the singers are physically warmed up, eg stretching, running on the spot, spatial awareness exercises.

Bible verse

[Jesus said] ‘I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.’

John 16:33

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, that you are more powerful than any of the things that cause us trouble in life. Thank you that your power comes from your love for us and that you are always with us.

Help us to know what the right thing to do is, when life gets tough. Thank you.

Amen.

Activity

Ask the singers to each think of a superhero and, in groups, strike a pose! See if the rest of the group can guess the superheroes and what superpowers they have to help people in trouble.

(Alternatively, you can show photos of superheroes.) Ask them to name the one superhero that could help them when they are going through trials and tribulations (troubles).

Thought

Jesus is our own real superhero. He has promised that nothing is impossible for him and he can help us find a way through anything, and find peace. The best way we can find this out for ourselves is by learning to trust Jesus and talking to him about the things that bother us.

We can also talk to the people that he has put in our lives to help us. When we look at the Bible stories, we see how God does all kinds of things, in all kinds of ways to help his children. You are one of his children, and he’s put people in your life to be with you, just as he is with you.

Jesus knows what it’s like to be human and to go through difficult times, but he has also shown that the power of love is stronger than the power of things that try to destroy us. Take heart and listen to him.

Personal challenge

Each week read a part of the Bible to help you understand how people who love God have faced troubles with a brave heart.

For example:

- Daniel 6:1-23 (Daniel in the lions’ den)
- Jeremiah 38:1-13 (Jeremiah down a pit)
- John 19:16-27 (Jesus on the cross)
- Acts 27:13-44 (Paul in a shipwreck)

Group challenge

What can we do to help others in our community?

Think together of people in your community who are going through difficult times – perhaps refugees, homeless or young carers. Plan something that you can do together to help them know they are not alone – for example, make gift parcels; find out more about what life is like for them; write to your local MP if you think something could be done to help.



Songs Unpacked



Children's Voice Series Vol 28

A child's poem

'I'll give it with trust and with hope'

Leader's guide

Rachael Power, Lieut-Col Roland Sewell and Amelia Chapman, all from Lurgan Salvation Army, have created a song that captures Scripture and that young people will be able to relate to easily.

How can we give our talents and gifts to God?

Warm-up

There are lots of words to fit into this song!

Try to use some tongue-twisters, either spoken or sung, to ensure the singers are aware of the importance of good diction: eg 'I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice-cream!' or 'How now, brown cow!'

Bible verse

'I can do all things through him who strengthens me'

Philippians 4:13 *ESV*



Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,
Thank you, Jesus, for you lived a life which demonstrates so much love to us. Sometimes I feel small and insignificant. Help me understand more of your ways so I can see myself through your eyes.
Amen.

Activity

Think of one time you did something well and good and it impacted others (maybe they told you so and it felt good, or you just noticed). Maybe you were praised for tidying or praised for sharing something of yours ... Think of one thing and share it with the group.

Thought

Jesus sent his Holy Spirit to be our helper here on Earth. The Holy Spirit is unseen but provides us with things like: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control ... (Galatians 5:22-23) which can be seen in our actions, behaviour and attitude.

If you want to be awesome like some of those mentioned in this song, keep speaking to Jesus and our helper. These people were ordinary just like me and you – but with God's help they did extraordinary things. And so can you.

Personal challenge

Every day make a firm decision to not compare yourself to others. 'Comparison is the thief of joy' (see 1 Corinthians 4:7).

Or at least when you find you are comparing yourself to others – because we often can – think of Philippians 4:13: 'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.'

Share back to the group times and examples when this has helped you.

Group challenge

Let's learn all the gifts the Holy Spirit give us!

Search on YouTube for 'Fruit of the Spirit Children's Song'. The first line of the song you're looking for says, 'The fruit of the Spirit's not a coconut!' Learn this annoying but fun song and ask your worship leader if you can teach it to the congregation! It teaches everyone the words from Galatians 5 (above) – which, as you know, is the key to being a stronger and more brilliant person!

Hosanna!

'We are taught the way to Heav'n'

Leader's guide

A new contributor to this book, Jonathan Mead, has provided a fresh, new setting to some older words. Enjoy the bluesy feel of this song.

How often do we let our young people teach and lead us?

Warm-up

This song includes some finger snaps and choric speaking.

A good idea may be to practise some body percussion – eg finger snaps, claps, tapping legs and stamping – to practise rhythmic accuracy.

Bible verse

'Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.'

Psalms 127:3 NLT

'Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these".'

Matthew 19:14

Prayer

Dear Father God,

Remind us now just how special each of us is to you. Your word says we are a gift from you. Thank you for making me, and I pray I really live up to the gift you want me to be, to bless others, simply by being me.

Amen.

Activity

As you practise your body percussion, think of Jesus and what you know of him.

Create a rhythm, then each person says a descriptive word for Jesus; it would be great if each person tries not to repeat a word already mentioned. Go round again, this time giving a quick example of how good he is. Perhaps someone from the group could make a word-cloud based on this.

Thought

Jesus definitely loves children and sees you all as a gift to others. You are fun, honest, creative and trusting; you ask why and are ready to learn.

Sometimes some grown-ups think they know how to behave and maybe think they already know everything. But the truth is, we all are learning – young people and adults. In Matthew 19 Jesus actually reminds the adults not to 'hinder' children, to let them be, because you have a special place in God's Kingdom.

Personal challenge

Find out what the word 'hinder' means. Then find out what the words opposite to 'hinder' are.

Each week think about which people, adult or young person, have been helping you be a better person (or a better Christian). Spend time thanking God for them – or even better, tell them!

Group challenge

As you practise this song – remember you are a gift.

You have the capacity to teach the adults to love God as much as they are able to teach you. Pray that you deliver this song with confidence and assurance. And then after the song, each of you can say a short prepared statement, sharing what you have discovered about the way to Heaven.



Songs Unpacked



Children's Voice Series Vol 28

Have faith!

'Faith to walk with him'

Leader's guide

Husband-and-wife duo, Andrew and Sue Blyth, have brought together accounts from Scripture that show us great examples of people with strong faith.

Imagine how our lives would be, if we truly put our faith in God.

Warm-up

Some songs in this book split into two or three voice parts, so, it's always a good idea to practise singing in harmony.

Singing rounds and canons is a great way of doing this, and it subtly introduces the idea of sticking to your own part.

Bible verse

'Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.'

Proverbs 3:6 MSG

Prayer

Dear Lord,
Sometimes it's hard to understand what is happening in life and what you want me to do. Please help me to listen out for you and to trust you when you say that you will help me follow your way because you are with me.

Amen.

Activity

Set up a simple obstacle course that twists and turns rather than goes in a straight line. Use simple objects or get the group to be the obstacles. Ask one of the young people to try and make their way around blindfolded.

The first time, give them no guidance; the second time, ask another young person to shout the instructions to them while the others are making a noise; the third time, walk alongside them and guide them by the arm, using words as necessary.

Thought

Which was the easiest way of completing the obstacle course? It would be even easier if we could take the blindfold off, obviously, and we could see the obstacles for ourselves.

But that's how it is sometimes in life – we can't see the way ahead, we can't see what is going to happen, we can't always see the things that are possible. It's like having a blindfold on. God can see it all, though, and he knows what is possible. If we learn to put our faith in him he really will guide us through the twists and turns of life. Have faith!

Personal challenge

Each week try listening to God's voice and hear what he has to say to you. Ask him to speak to you.

If you want, write down what he says or tell someone close to you. Be amazed, be very amazed!

Group challenge

What is God saying to us?

Ask each other what you think God may be saying to you as a group. What does he want you to do? Think if there is a Bible verse or story that would help you hear God's voice and talk about it together.

Show me the way

'I bring the world to you in prayer'

Leader's guide

John Ellwood and Adrian Griffiths have provided a song that will particularly appeal to the younger members of your group.

It's a simple message that reminds us God is always with us.

Warm-up

Often, to guarantee a strong melodic line, you need to ensure that the singers have good breath control.

Practise breathing and controlling exhalation to make sure the singers have enough breath!

Bible verse

'The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know. Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well ... This is the way our Saviour God wants us to live!'

1 Timothy 2:1-3 MSG

Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for giving us the gift of prayer. We know it is a special way for us to talk to you anywhere, anytime, and in any place. Help us to use the gift of prayer wisely by praying for the world you created. Help us to pray for the people we know and love – our friends, families and neighbours – and to pray for the people we don't know. May we share the gift of prayer with others, far and wide.

Amen.

Activity

Gather in the centre of the room. The leader asks a series of questions with four options for answers (eg 'Out of the following, which is your favourite ice cream flavour: vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, mint choc-chip?'). Each wall of the room stands for one of the four answers. After each question, the young people run to the wall that represents their answer.

Celebrate the variety of ways the young people answer; how alike and different we all are, how unique.

Thought

Just in this one room, there are so many differences and similarities among us. Now take a moment to think of how many people there are across the whole world!

God has made a world that is so amazingly diverse. Praying for the world can feel like a big task, but it is important work. By praying for the parts of our world that are going through hard times, out of compassion and care for them, we become connected more to God and to God's creation.

Personal challenge

The Bible verse (1 Timothy 2:1-3) tells us to 'pray every way you know how, for everyone you know'.

For every day this week, challenge yourself to pray for a different person in a different way – for example, praying out loud for your teacher, or praying through drawing for your friend. Share with your group any new ways you have discovered to pray.

Group challenge

Commit to praying for different countries across the world each time you meet together.

As well as praying for the people of the country, take the opportunity to learn about the cultural differences by sharing facts, listening to traditional music or trying national dishes.