WHY DO WE WORSHIP?

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When we talk about “worship,” we often think it just means singing and dancing with the children. But worshipping Jesus is so much more than that. Worship is an expression, from the heart, because of who Jesus is and what He has done.

If you consider adult meetings, worship is the only time we focus on giving to God. Most of time we focus on receiving. We receive teaching, words of prophecy, prayer for our needs or healing, and fellowship. Yet we can easily think we are such good Christians just by coming to church.

So when we come to the moment where it is about Jesus and not about us, we should do our very best to honour Him in the way He deserves.

Worshipping Jesus means taking action. We worship Him when we sing, dance, pray, thank Him, obey Him, and live in a way that pleases Him. Worship is expressing our love, honour, and respect to Jesus because of who He is and what He has done. We do this by giving Him our hearts, our attention, and our praise.

The answer to why do we include times of worship at Children’s Church is simple – **because God deserves it!**

Train and teach the children to worship
Part of our responsibility as the church is to teach and train our children and this includes how to have hearts that worship God in every part of their lives.

This doesn’t mean train them in the dance moves or teach them all the words. Simply following the actions or singing wonderful words without it being an expression from the heart is not worship. Rather, it means teach children what the Bible says about worship, how we can worship and why we do it. Children also learn from the example you set so make sure your worship is authentic.

Creating moments for children to worship Jesus
Remember, children worship differently to adults and to each other. The key element is their **personal** response of wanting to honour praise and worship Him accordingly. Some children are loud and energetic, while others are quiet and do not enjoy too much noise. Help create environments where children feel safe to express their worship in their way.

You cannot force children to worship! You can, however, encourage them to. You should also make sure that their actions do not hinder anyone else from worshipping.

Scenario: A younger child lies on the floor in the middle of the floor during an active worship song. The child cannot stay there as they could get hurt and they will be a distraction to others. Gently encourage them to stand and join in with you but if you have no success whisper to them that they need to move out the way for their safety and to consider others.
Scenario 2: An older child stands at the side chatting or even laughing at the others.
As leaders we can see this as an act of defiance but you need to consider why is the child not participating. It could be many factors such as worrying what others will think of them or trying to get the attention of others. I have found it helpful, without drawing attention to them, directly address them to stand quietly and not disrupt the others. But you need to follow this up with an intentional conversation of why they are not participating and help them see the heart behind why we are singing songs.

Tips of choosing songs
Younger children:

- While clips with lyrics and actions can be helpful for leaders to follow and sing along, younger children, especially those who cannot read, tend to stand and watch instead. If you are going to use them, then have some leaders learn them well and lead the children from the front while it is playing behind them.
- Songs can be used to teach children, such as the books of the Bible or a memory verse, but remember to always include songs where the child is singing to Jesus, telling Him how great He is.

- Lyrics must make sense to the child, be easy to sing and easy to learn with lots of repetition.
- The actions should be simple and easy to follow. Children love to jump and do big actions as they express themselves with their whole bodies.
- The best songs are the ones that end up getting stuck in their heads. There is nothing more satisfying than your child coming home and belting out how much they love Jesus from the car, to supper, to brushing their teeth and into bed.
- Avoid introducing too many new songs at once but also take care to not play the same song every week.

Older children:

- This is the age group that start to have opinions on how they want to worship. Try a variety of genres and see how your children respond. Create a suggestion box where children can suggest songs for the following week. A great follow-up question is: "What is your favourite worship song, and why?" This creates a wonderful teaching moment about worship. It helps children understand the emotions they may feel during worship and guides their understanding of why we worship Jesus. If a child says they love a song because the moves are fun, do not correct or belittle them. Instead, gently guide them by asking questions like: "That's great! How do you think it makes Jesus feel when you sing to Him? Affirm their joy and excitement, but help them understand that worship is not only about the actions or the fun moves. Worship is about expressing love to Jesus from the heart and thinking about how our worship blesses Him.
- Worship can now include dances with more detailed movements, but still need to be easy enough to learn so they are worshipping not learning a dance routine.
- They are now maturing in their ability to worship so you can introduce slower songs and live worship and those without actions. Take care that while they start to think they are adults they are still children. They need the freedom to express themselves.

Remember there is no perfect song! It is all about the heart welcoming the Holy Spirit to take over and express our love to God. Wow, and how beautiful those moments are when we glorify our King!