

Frequently asked questions on Movement: for leaders & teachers

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Why use movement?

Song & Dance resources often combine music and movement together. Movement is a natural response to music, just like lifting our hearts in song: what a wonderful gift God has given us to enjoy in praise, worship, prayer, evangelism and mission! Psalm 149 commands us to “praise his name with dancing”!

Along with the auditory world inhabited by music and lyrics, we live in a visual and tactile world, and children need to experience God’s story and Spirit in all of these areas as they come to know Him. Movement can convey and express much that mere words cannot: forgiveness, friendship, community, joy, wonder, mystery, glory! A holistic creativity can therefore complement and transcend words and music, providing opportunity to learn, worship and celebrate as we unite with one another.

With this in mind we use a range of movement styles - beyond simple actions - to try to create an ‘integrated creative experience’.

Is there a difference between gestures and worshipful movements?

Gestures such as finger play and fun actions could be described as simple forms of movement that are relevant in many settings. Movements involving the whole person also have the potential to provide a much deeper experience, and we can describe these as ‘worshipful movements’. Often children or adults choreographing a phrase will use stylised gestures. For example, the words “I see” may be displayed as a gesture by raising the hand to shade the eyes ‘Indian style’, while a worshipful movement may involve raising the arm followed by the head and gaze. Thus a gesture that represents merely ‘looking’ is replaced by a movement that invites the mover to really ‘see’.

Why use worshipful movements?

The Word of God encourages us to move worshipfully, as in the following examples -

- “Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psalm 95:6)
- “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord” (Psalm 134:2).

And there are many more such examples in the Bible.

Such worshipful movements are demonstrated more specifically by -

- Miriam with her tambourine after crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 15: 19 - 21); and
- David dancing with all his might before the Ark of the Covenant (2 Samuel 6: 4 - 5; 14 - 15).

What are worshipful movements? How do I do worshipful movements?

A movement becomes worshipful by the intent of the action. Worshipful movements are developed and conducted using the whole body in an attitude of prayer. The best way to have an attitude to prayer is to ask Jesus to guide your movements as an act of worship, bow and acknowledge him as creator of all things rather than appealing to yourself, and your own skill and dance technique.

A movement can acknowledge our Heavenly Father or acknowledge our brothers and sisters around us. It becomes worshipful by our attitude of love and reverence with our hearts and minds focused on Jesus. We can then express joy, thanks, repentance and awe through the movements.

Such worship is fulfilling Jesus' greatest commandment to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12: 30). Paul goes further and encourages us "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1).

Worshipful movement is spiritual worship encompassing heart, soul, mind and body. Sadly there are also times in the Bible when movement wasn't worshipful to God such as the dance of Salome and the Israelites dancing around the golden calf in idol worship. So our intent and prayerfulness is important.

What movements can I use?

Some people are unaware of the wide scope of movements that God has given us that can be used with music. There is no one correct type of movement or style to use. Within the Song & Dance resources we have used movement as -

- 'prayer,' (line, circle, whole group);
- 'processional' (line);
- 'community,' (partner, circle);
- 'praise' (fun action whole group);
- 'singing games' (mostly circle games to the song); and
- 'drama' (dramatic action to the song).

Song & Dance resources provide an information box on the movement pages of *Faith & Fun With Songs* and *Outrageous Praise* to assist you:

Types of movement:

Formation:

Number:

Age:

So the leader selects the appropriate movement to suit the music, lyrics, mood and ability of the participants, considering the appropriate age group. This is a very creative moment where God inspires and broadens the choreographer to faithfully present and represent the lyrics.

Working with all the participants' ideas can often create moves and an interpretation inspired by God. God can speak and enlighten hearts and minds and touch souls where the movement becomes worshipful, transformational and uplifting for all. What an amazing blessing from God!