SINGING WITH CHILDREN

Why we sing in Sunday school

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
EPHESIANS 5:19–20

When we sing we are…

- **Obeying God**
  - We are commanded to praise Him in His courts (Psalm 100:4). Singing isn't a filler activity or a break from the "real" lesson; it is worship.
  - God delights in children's praise in particular. Psalm 8:2 speaks of praise from the mouths of infants and nursing babies, and Jesus quotes it when children sing His praise in the temple (Matthew 21:16).
  - Children don't have to wait until they're older to obey this command. They can and must obey it now.
  - Children are particularly good at praising God in song…if we do not nurture this aspect of youth, we will essentially be hampering their faith going forward.
- **Passing down the faith**
  - "We will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord" (Psalm 78:4).
  - Scripture treats singing as a form of teaching: we teach and admonish one another as we sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16).
  - Simple songs like *Jesus Loves Me* give children the foundational truth in a way they can process, understand, and carry with them daily.
  - Hymns carry centuries of the church's theology. When children learn them, they join the same song the church has sung for generations, and they can sing it beside their parents and grandparents in the sanctuary.
- **Embedding beauty and wisdom into the child's heart and mind**
  - Words set to music stay with us for life, often long after other memories fade. Many people who can no longer recognize family members can still sing the hymns of their childhood.
  - Children don't need to fully understand a hymn to begin to love it. We don't wait until children understand grammar before we speak to them; they learn language by being surrounded by it. Hymns work the same way.
  - A six-year-old who learns *"When through the deep waters I call thee to go"* won't understand it yet. At forty, walking through grief, she may find the words are already there when she needs them.
  - Rich words and beautiful music shape a child's sense of what is true, good, and worth loving.
- **Becoming vulnerable to one another**
  - Singing asks us to put ourselves out there. You can't hide behind your voice.
  - When children sing together and with their teachers, they learn that worship is something we do together, not a performance for an audience.
  - When teachers sing freely, children see that praising God is worth a little awkwardness.