

Teaching Tips

Instructions for Sharing Time and the Children's Sacrament Meeting Presentation

Dear Primary Presidencies and Music Leaders,

The scriptures are the word of God. As you prayerfully read the scriptures and apply the principles taught in them and in this outline, you will be spiritually prepared to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the children in your Primary. You will also be able to use the scriptures to help the children understand gospel principles you will teach this year, such as Heavenly Father's plan, the mission of Jesus Christ, the role of prophets, the Restoration of the Church, and the blessings of the temple. The scriptures will help you invite the Spirit into your Primary and create an environment in which the children can feel the influence of the Holy Ghost. That influence will help every Primary child be able to say, "I know the scriptures are true."

Thank you for your faithful service. We pray for you and are confident in your ability to love the children and teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Primary General Presidency

TEACHING FAMILIAR SONGS:

Most of the theme songs in the current Outline for Sharing Time (OST) are ones many of the children know. But do they understand the gospel meaning of the words? How can we teach the meaning more effectively?

Take the time to coordinate Music Time and Sharing Time. Choose songs that support the specific weekly theme, as well as the monthly theme in the OST. Work with the Primary Presidency so the songs will reinforce the gospel message presented during Sharing Time. Present the same doctrine in a number of different formats. Add your testimony to that of the Primary Presidency.



From lds.org, click **Serve and Teach**. Select **Primary**. Choose **Sharing Time**.

The past several years also include mostly familiar songs. January 2013 is a great example as "I Am a Child of God" is the theme. Two entire paragraphs were devoted to teaching the meaning of the chorus of the most well-known song in Primary. Sample questions help children understand "who leads us?" and "why would you want someone to walk beside you?". Then music leaders are encouraged to testify.

These suggestions show the new way the Primary General Board and First Presidency counsel music leaders to teach songs.

Please make it a priority to explore the meaning of the words of the songs with the children. Knowing the words is not enough. The children need to understand the gospel principles and doctrine that they are singing about, including familiar songs.

SING, SING, SING:

Please remember that most of the 20 minutes allotted for singing time should be spent singing.

As you teach the music and words of the theme song each week, be sure you also teach the doctrine. Keep it brief by asking a single question and taking just one or two responses. Or, read the scripture that goes with the song and have the children guess which song you might be about to sing. Share your specific testimony about the doctrine in one or two concise statements.

Plan for minimum transitions between songs. Make sure games lead to greater participation.



TESTIMONY:

By discussing the meaning of the songs, pointing out when the Spirit is present, and briefly bearing your testimony about specific doctrine, you are helping the children to understand the gospel and become converted. Likewise, be sure they know that when they feel the Spirit and share their thoughts and feelings about the truths in the song, they are testifying.

See the guidelines in Handbook 11.8.3 and 18.2.3.

FOLLOW A GOOD EXAMPLE:

Take the time to watch Sister Checkio demonstrate how to teach the gospel with Primary music. This 22 minute clip was part of the 2013 Primary Auxiliary Training.

I love how Sister Checkio shows how to help children discover gospel truths as they sing. Watch for general methods that can be used with other songs.

From *lds.org*, click *Serve and Teach*.
Select *Primary*.
Choose *Leader Resources*.
On the right sidebar, choose *2013* under *Auxiliary Training*, then scroll down to *Primary Music Leader - Presentation*.



WIGGLE DOCTRINE:

Have you noticed that there is doctrine even in the wiggle songs? Try to choose wiggle songs that support the monthly or weekly theme.

For instance, the weekly sharing time theme may be *"My Body is Created in the image of God"*. Before singing *"Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes"*, ask the children who we look like. Answers may include parents, brothers & sisters, etc. Point out that we also have a body just like our Heavenly Father and our brother Jesus Christ and then sing the song. In fact, any wiggle song that mentions our body could be introduced in a similar way.

Any of the songs about nature are any opportunity to express gratitude for the creation and recognize who the Great Creator is. For example, the weekly theme may be *"Heavenly Father commanded Jesus Christ to create the Earth as a home for His children"*.



Before singing *"Popcorn Popping"*, tell the children we are going to sing a song about something created by God. After singing the song, ask what the song was about. Some of the younger children might not realize it is about blossoms that only look like popcorn.

Ask who created the earth, including plants, flowers, and trees. Express your gratitude for the creation of our world and everything therein.

Not Singing?

Pay attention to what catches the children's interest. Talk to their teacher and presidency. Visit the class to prepare a special song. Call children by name & catch their eye. Do a friendly competition.

With the little Sunbeams, go to their class to teach the theme song. Get on their level and make eye contact. Say the words first, add music later. Ask them to repeat the main word(s). Use actions and movement. Slow down until they are singing.

Motivate the oldest Primary children. Enlist their help. Ask content questions. Ask them to look up a scripture. Pair them up with the Sunbeams. Let them use the microphone. Express confidence that they will know the words BEFORE the song begins. Invite them to the front to introduce a song.

REPEAT & REVIEW:

To help children remember a new song, have them repeat it in several different ways:

1. Listen and/or hum along with the CD or the piano.
2. Echo the first line or phrase, then the second line or phrase.
3. Split into groups and have each group try one of the lines or phrases, then switch sides.

Next week, quickly review. If the children remember the new verse, teach another verse. If not, review in a different way.