

Pop-Up Books, Word Strips, and Melody Maps

Pop-Up Books, Keyword Charts, and Melody Maps are a few tools I have used to teach songs to children. I like these strategies because they are easy to store in an envelope and carry in a tote bag. These particular ideas can be used for teaching as well as review and weekly use.

Pop Up Books

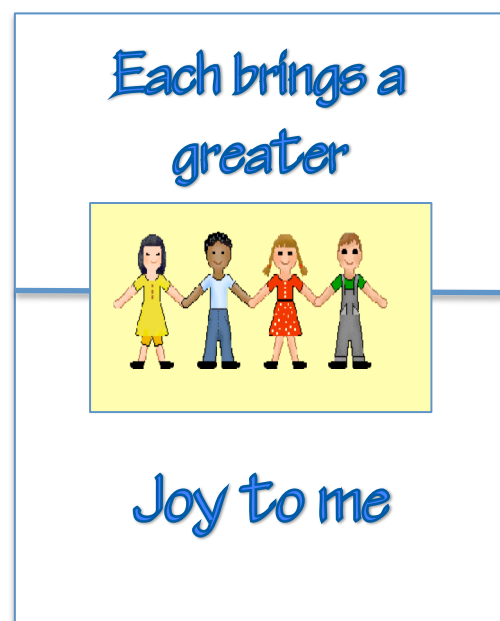
Pop-up Books are very easy to construct and seem magical to the children when used. I usually use lightweight poster board approximately 18' x 12" for this type of project. For this visual aid, I choose a song that has fewer than eight phrases that have very visual lyric clues. Usually I scavenge artwork from old copies of the *Friend* magazine that is scaled to the size I need. Sometimes I will draw and color simple pictures to illustrate the concept needed. The lettering I always freehand, but you could print out and paste beautifully computer generated lettering, if you choose. I sometimes glue or staple together up to eight folded pages into a booklet. (That's two verses of a 4 phrase song, or one verse of an 8 phrase song.) Don't try to do more pages or the booklet will be too big and unwieldy.

One **Pop-Up Book** I did was for the song "I Like My Birthdays." Since this song is about baptism and gets only a few ready opportunities to be sung during the year, I included most, if not all of the lyrics along with the simple illustrations. That way I could pull it out at any time and the children were right with me when we tried to sing it. *(Suggestions for pages verse one are given here. Follow instruction page for assembly.)*


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But I can't wait



until I'm 8

For then I'll be



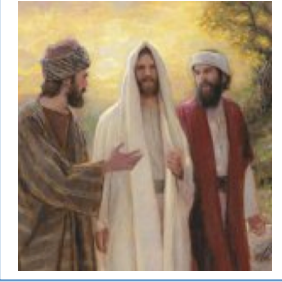
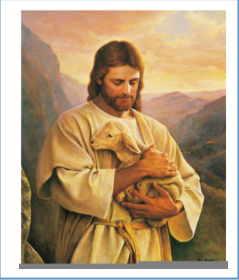

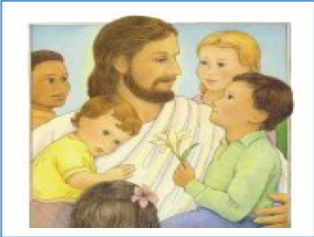


baptized you see

Word Strips

Word Strips can be very useful when teaching a song. I used to have a wordstrip pocket chart to put the strips into, but now since the chalk boards are magnetic, I just adhere a flat magnet to the back of each wordstrip and I can place them anywhere on the board. *"He Sent His Son"* is a great song to teach using wordstrips. The song is constructed in question and answer form. I put up the strips with the questions on the left side of the chalkboard and the corresponding answers on the right side. *(You could always write on the chalkboard with actual chalk, or even colored chalk, but that is very messy. And besides, I am allergic to chalk dust!)* After the song is taught and sung a few times through, you can ask a child to come up and pick one of the the wordstrips off the board. Sing the song again trying to remember the missing phrase. Continue eliminating phrases a few times more, but be careful not to repeat too many times in one session. You don't want the children to lose interest.

Another interesting way to use wordstrips is to have each wordstrip have a corresponding illustration, or you could use a mix of keywords and picture illustrations. You can test the children's memorization by eliminating pictures or keywords until the song or verse is completely learned. The example below is from *"I Think When I Read That Sweet Story."*

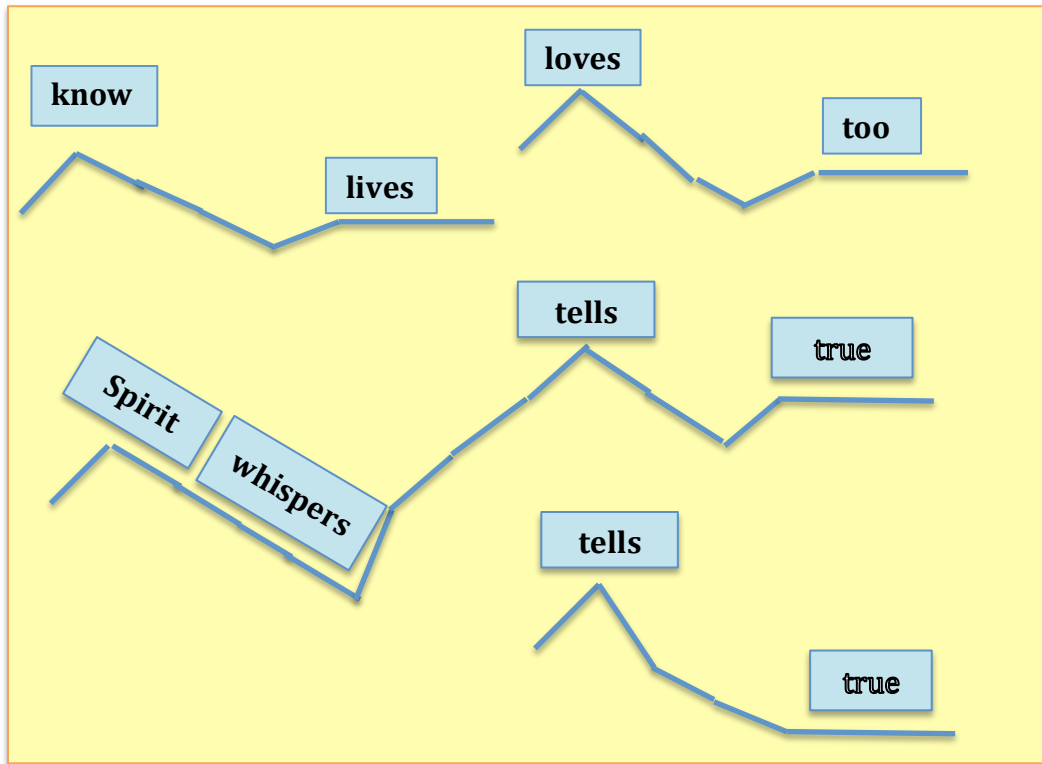
think			old
	here	called	
	men		
like	been		then

These keywords and illustrations are placed in such a way to give just a few visual clues to the lyrics. Sing as you place the pieces the first time. *(The color of the word strips can also help with visual memory. Here I deliberately colored the word strips the same within a phrase.)* As you sing each time thereafter, point to the keywords and illustrations in order. Be very clear about the lyrics the pictures represent. Don't forget to pick out the rhyming words. Ask a child to come remove one of the pieces each time you sing to check their memory. Sometimes it is fun to challenge the children to put back the pieces in the correct order while you sing.

Melody Maps

Melody Maps can be very helpful for teaching songs to children. It can be a first introduction to reading musical notation in a simplified way. On the musical staff the notes are placed high and low on the lines and spaces. If you take away the staff, and connect the dots of the notes, you create a melody map of how the line of the musical phrase goes. *(You will want to be able to draw this melodic line from memory on the chalkboard as you sing the song through for the first time.)*

First I study the music to memorize the shape of the melody in short phrases. I want to know if the melody moves up or down by steps or large skips. I look for repeated notes, or held out notes, and where the highest and lowest notes are. Then I look for clues to how the composer word-painted the lyrics with extra emphasis. I want to know where the climaxes are and how the ending of the song plays out. I intend to be able to draw a large melody map onto the chalkboard in 3-4 phrase sections to point at while I sing. This example is from *"I Know My Father Lives."*



Next I create keyword strips with magnets that I can place onto the melody map. These words show important lyric clues as well as rhymes. I will ask the children to listen as I sing and tell me which word is on the highest note of the phrase, such as "loves" or "tells" in the example above. I will also ask them to listen for which words are used to move down the scale, such as "Spirit whispers." I will ask them to listen and find which words are held out such as "lives," "too," and "true." I will also ask them to find the rhyming words. Through this exercise, I can expose them to the words and music many times in quick succession and guide their listening. By the time they sing, they have heard it the magic seven times!