“Lift Up Your Voice and Sing”

It seems we think of singing as a beautiful vase to be put on the mantle and be admired, when instead, music is really a marvelous tool we can use to create wonderful daily masterpieces, and more importantly, spiritual experiences to strengthen our testimonies. In the words of the Primary song “Lift Up Your Voice and Sing” by Richard C. Berg:

A Song is a wonderful kind of thing so lift up your voice and sing.
Just start a glad song let it float let it ring, And lift up your voice and sing.
We shall make music to brighten the day, music will help us to lighten the way.
Lift up your voice, Lift up your voice, Lift up your voice and sing!

D&C 136:28 reads: “If though art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and with praise and thanksgiving.” D&C 25:12 reads, “I, the Lord, delight in songs of the heart.”

D&C 45:71 informs us that “the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.” Again, in D&C 101, we’re told: “They that remain and are pure in heart, shall return and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion.”

The list goes on and on. If you wanted permission, I think you have it. It sounds to me that when the Savior comes, there is going to be some singing!

Making singing a part of your families life can be easy, fun, and even joyful. Here are some ways to use the power of music in your home.

Lullabies

Why not start at the beginning? As a grandmother, my mind is slipping a bit. It’s been a while since I tried to remember all the words to lullabies. One night, as I had exhausted my repertoire, I just started to sing to my granddaughter, “Grandma loves you, Grandpa loves you, yes your mommy and daddy love you. We all love our Hailey, what a beautiful girl. Auntie Holly, Auntie Kris, Uncle Jimmy and Uncle Bob. We all love our Hailey. What a sweet little girl.” I went on to mention her Heavenly Father, and well, I even got to the cat. This turned out to be our song and she could never get enough of it. Hearing how many people loved her, and hearing how good, kind, and sharing she was, (yes, I used that too) was never boring. She would just sit in my lap and melt. After 30 minutes or so, I’d put her to bed and she’d go straight to sleep. I must admit, I would too, with a peaceful joyful feeling in my heart.

One day as I was working in the temple I was asked to watch a little 2 year old girl waiting for her parents to go through an endowment session. She had an aunt there that she didn’t know well and she was crying uncontrollably. I took her and to my surprise she quieted when I started to sing “I love To See The Temple.” I sang about this special
day with her family, being careful not to mention specifically the “mommy” and “daddy” words. It was a busy day at the temple with lots of people coming and going. When this little one got nervous, I’d just sing again and we made it through the two hours. As I held her at the altar to be sealed for time and all eternity with her parents, it was a great moment.

You can put anything to music, or just personalize a song you already know. Change the words. More than a few of our hymns found their origins when saints took old songs they knew by heart and inserted sacred words. Make your own sacred music. Nothing feels to me more sacred than sitting and rocking precious angels straight from God. Music is a very natural part of that experience.

Music in the car.
Was there ever a more captive audience than in the car? My own car singing experiences from my youth made car singing a must for me. Our hymn was “Abide With Me.” When the children got fussy, and there was nothing left to do, my husband and I would sing. We sang tenor, alto, soprano, or bass. The kids would always quiet down so we’d keep on singing. It brought such peace to the car. When they got older they’d sing along. Then we started making up vacation songs. The ABC song was always good. Once their dad came up with “‘A’-mazing, ‘B’-utiful, ‘C’-attle as we were taking a road trip through Washington state. We’d write songs about names of towns or funny experiences from our trip. Everyone would join in to find the right rhyming word. I can’t remember most of them, but we had a lot of fun and a lot of laughs. We crowned Dad the “King of Pun.”

Yes, throwing in a CD is great, but there’s nothing like participation. The car is the perfect place to help the children learn the songs for the Primary program. You can always pick out the children in Primary who sing the songs at home. They learn more quickly and have a greater love of the music. It is rather interesting how these simple little family traditions can be remembered down the road and can touch such soft spots in the hearts of your children.

Teaching With Music
I’ll never forget the books of the Old Testament after learning the song in Primary. Since then, I’ve conquered the New Testament and Book of Mormon, compliments of songs put to the tune of “Ten Little Indians” and such. I can’t tell you how many scriptures I can quote because they’ve been made into song. Several weeks ago in Primary, I was chosen to come up to the black board in a race against one of the Valiant boys, to write down the words to the 11th article of faith. Let’s just say I was singing in my head. We all sing the ABC song to our children. How about the counting song?

“What’s the melody? It doesn’t matter. It’s a fun game and repetition is the best teacher. How about a wash the dishes song? Have you ever been in the nursery to witness the song that goes, “Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere, Clean up, Clean up, everybody do your share?” My granddaughter takes her toys out just so she can sing the song and put them away.
Start when they’re little to let them know that singing is a part of life. Be comfortable with the sound of your voice, and they’ll be comfortable too. Hey, you might even convince yourself and find a great new outlet for increased joy in your own life!

**Hymn Singing In Church**

Singing the hymns may sound like a no-brainer, but while directing music for congregations, I’m often discouraged. I’ve had times when people yawn their way through “The Spirit of God.” I’ve noticed one thing: **if the parents have that hymnbook out and are singing, so are the children.** Is there more important music to be sung than the hymns? The most important singing we do is singing praises to Heavenly Father. From the previous scriptures, I feel quite comfortable with that assumption. Hymn singing can be one of the highest forms of worship as the congregation joins their voices and their testimonies in praise of God. It must bring such joy to our Heavenly Father. Some of the most powerful testimonies I’ve ever heard were in the voices of choir members, or even members of the congregation. Some people just put their heart and soul into singing hymns, and it can be felt.

There really is no bad time for music. I admit, sometimes there are tears in my eyes as I drive down the road singing. Even when I’m by myself, the trip is always better with song. Sometimes I sing, sometimes I listen, and sometimes I just remember.

Singing touched more than the just the hearts of my children. It has the power to lift and motivate us to do good. Let singing touch the hearts and lives of YOUR children too.

“…A song of the heart is a prayer unto God …and will be answered with a blessing upon your head…”

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