

What happens when you hear these words: “I am stuck on Band-Aids cause a Band-Aid’s stuck on me”. How about this, “My bologna has a first name....” Or this, “Like a good neighbor, _____.” Did you finish that line? Did you sing it? Of course you did! And why? Because it is MUSIC – and music makes an indelible mark on our minds.

I am the lady in the green jumper called “Miss PattyCake” and after 22 years of singing, writing songs and books, traveling, and meeting tens of thousands of preschoolers and their parents, I am continually amazed at the power of music in the lives of little ones. Watching children sing, shout, clap and learn has convinced me that *using music is the fastest, and most permanent way to get information AND God’s truth into little hearts and minds.* I like to say music is God’s “magic”.

We, as Christian parents, have a job and a responsibility. It is this: **TELL YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD.**

“These commandments...shall be on your heart. Teach them diligently to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deut. 6:6-7

My experience in telling my children about God has been largely musical. Life, for me, has been full of music – my study was music – my “work” is music, so naturally, when my babies were born, I was singing. My singing to them led me to partner with friends who were writing songs for children. These songs were age appropriate, simple, rhyming, and full of God’s truth.

As Miss PattyCake, I travel to churches and groups around the country, and coach parents, workers and teachers on ways to engage children. I remind them little children are not able to retain much talking, but, find a melody – any tune – make it up or

use one you know – and SING what you want to say – and they will hear it! Music goes to a different area of our brains. SONGS are the perfect way to communicate to little ones. Songs can plant seeds of truth and of faith. Music is like glue – it makes words stick to our brains.

Look at this research:

“Music speaks in a language that children instinctively understand. It draws children (as well as adults) into its orbit, inviting them to match its pitches, incorporate its lyrics, move to its beat, and explore its emotional and harmonic dimensions in all their beauty and depth. Meanwhile, its physical vibrations, organized patterns, engaging rhythms, and subtle variations interact with the mind and body in manifold ways, naturally altering the brain in a manner that one-dimensional rote learning cannot. Children are happy when they are bouncing, dancing, clapping, and singing with someone they trust and love. Even as music delights and entertains them, it helps mold their mental, emotional, social, and physical development—and gives them the enthusiasm and the skills they need to begin to teach themselves.” Don Campbell

Thoughts on music from the ancient teacher/philosopher, Plato: “I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning.”

BENEFITS OF USING MUSIC WITH CHILDREN

- It can connect with them even before birth.
- It stimulates brain growth in the womb and throughout early childhood

- It positively affects emotional perceptions and attitudes from prebirth onward.
- It provides patterns of sound on which they can build an understanding of the physical world.
- It reduces the level of emotional stress or physical pain, even in infancy.
- It enhances motor development, including the grace and ease with which they learn to crawl, walk, skip, and run.
- It improves language ability, including vocabulary, expressiveness, and ease of communication.
- It introduces them to a wider world of emotional expression, creativity, and aesthetic beauty.
- It enhances social abilities.
- It improves reading, writing, mathematical, and other academic skills, as well as the ability to remember and to memorize.
- It introduces them to the joys of community.
- It helps create a strong sense of personal identity.

I have long appreciated the wisdom and simplicity of Mr. Rogers. Here are his thoughts on music:

“Music is the one art we all have inside. We may not be able to play an instrument, but we can sing along or clap or tap our feet. Have you ever see a baby bouncing up and down in the crib in time to some music? When you think of it, some of that baby’s first messages from his or her parents may have been lullabies, or at least the music of their speaking voices. All of us have had the experience of hearing a tune from childhood and having that melody evoke a memory or a feeling. The music we hear early on tends to stay with us all our lives.”

Little children already love music, they just need encouragement from us to **sing**. Psalm 8:2 has long been the catalyst for my journey as Miss PattyCake. I love the way the verse reads in THE MESSAGE:

“Nursing infants are gurgling choruses about You, and toddlers shout the songs that will drown out enemy talk and silence atheistic babble.”

So, DO this:

“Sing songs from your heart to Jesus. Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:19

Miss PattyCake’s advice is this: **SING YOUR WAY THROUGH YOUR DAY!** You will find the atmosphere in your home is sweeter and calmer. You will find children more willing to get the “jobs” done. And you will find *yourself* quicker to thank and praise God for the great adventure of parenting.

And remember what Miss PattyCake always says, **“Everyday is a PattyCake praise day!”**

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