



CORE VALUES

No ministry is more central to a local congregation's life and work than is its ministry to children. Here, a congregation's heritage and future are blessed (Zechariah 8: 3-8). Here, the congregation's day finds its humility and servant hood (Luke 9:46-48). No mode of learning or expression is more natural to the child than is music, through its melody and movement, its energy and emotion, its rhythm and rhyme. Therefore, children's music ministry shall have a central and formative place in the mission and ministry of Celebrating Grace, Inc. Toward that end the following are established and presented as Core Values. With children in mind, let us imagine. In this case, let us imagine a tree.

Faith Development (trunk)

The root and strength of children's choir ministry is its adherence to scriptural admonitions concerning our relationship to and responsibility for children. God's love for children rises up from the very soil of God's self revelation in scripture, in nature, and in Jesus. Herein lies the source and evidence of life for children's choir ministry: that it might take root downward and bear fruit upward (Isaiah 37:31) in the love of God and the teachings of scripture. Children must learn that God loves them and in so learning, find their self-image and self-confidence. Children must learn that God has established the Church to continue the work of Christ and they have a place and a role in that community and in that work. Children must learn that the Bible is God's holy word, developing a love for its stories and finding themselves in those stories. Children must learn that they can become intentional Christ-followers. They must then be taught the ways of growing in Christ-likeness.

Worship (branch)

Worship sprouts first, even in the understanding of the youngest of Christ's followers. To express our love for God is to worship. Children must learn to express their love for God in personal, corporate, liturgical, and relational settings (Matthew 22: 37-39). Children must learn that expressions of corporate worship exist in the dynamic tension between and full gamut of joyful noise (Psalm 66:1, et.al.) and silence (Habakkuk 2:20, et. al.). Children must learn that congregational song stretches from a rich heritage to a creative future, gathering the Church's beautiful cultural and generational diversity in its vast arch. Children must be led to imagine their names among those of the heroes of the faith and the faithful of their congregation. This includes the names of the authors, composers, and church musicians associated with their worship.

Music (branch)

Music in the service of Christ and His church must first of all be good music. That is to say, church music cannot be questionable in its basic musicality. From the instruments of Genesis 4 to the new songs of Revelation 14, the full gamut of music ministry must be stretched across a firm foundation. Further, music is a gift from God, as are children. To respond to music is a natural human instinct. Therefore, it is right that children be taught to identify, own, and cultivate their instinctive musical awareness and expression.

Ministry (branch)

The sacrifice, humility, service and love in Romans 12 are Christian ministry's admonition and guidelines. The adults of the Church must be advocates of this understanding of ministry in their participation and in their allocation of resources for children's music education and ministry opportunities. Lifestyle worship and ministry must sprout here. Physical and spiritual; church, home, and school; family and community; the gospel and daily living...children's music must create the harmony that keeps these aspects of life in the same key in the ears, voices, and hearts of our children.

Jesus is Lord (roots)

The confession that Jesus is Lord is the root and foundation of all Christian ministry and community. All who confess that Jesus is Lord are sisters and brothers in Christ. All that is done in the name of Christian ministry must find its identity and parameters in this simple, but profound phrase. Call, confidence, and conduct are subject to the Lordship of Christ for any who would claim His name as the source of their salvation and the motivation for their service. *Jesus is Lord* defines the heart and pulse, the breadth and focus of Celebrating Grace, Inc., its people, products, and perspective.