



Can Preschoolers Really Worship?

by Jenna Kuykendall

I've always known that the answer is YES but deep down inside, after writing songs, creating choreography, and planning large groups for preschoolers, I've found myself still asking this question. I've also asked: Is my preparation even worth it? Do they even hear or understand what I'm saying? As I've taken the time to get to know the kids in my ministry, and after 14 years of children's worship ministry, I've learned that the answer is a complex YES!

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me and don't hinder them!" (Matt 19:14), and "Unless you receive the Kingdom like a child, you'll never enter it" (Luke 18:16). We have so much to learn from these cute and tiny theologians, and Jesus was completely aware of that.

Here are three ways I believe the answer is YES:

1. Yes, preschoolers can worship, and we need to allow them to be who they are! They're wiggly and squirmy, and have no filter! I can't even count the times I've seen a preschooler doing the potty dance during what is supposed to be a quiet prayer moment, or rolling around on the floor when they should be quietly listening. Preschoolers are also sponges whose brains need repetition, and that's why we repeat the bottom line and memory verse over and over and over again!

2. Yes, preschoolers can worship, and they learn by watching us! Preschoolers are parrots and, for better or for worse, they take their cues from us. As a parent of three kids, it's sometimes a challenge for me to model worship as a lifestyle. My kids see how I react to every situation, and they're taking notes and learning from me what it means to worship. Webster defines *worship* as "the reverent love and devotion given to a deity, idol, or sacred object." Whom or what do our kids see us worshiping? Our jobs, hobbies, or possessions? Our preschoolers also learn how to worship by singing and dancing with us. We worship with our bodies, just like David did in 2 Samuel 6, and we use energetic music and fun dance

moves to get them going! If you're not sure how to get them moving or how to teach them the moves, check out [First Look's Dance Moves DVD](#) and you'll be hooked on the fun!

3. Yes, preschoolers can worship, and now is the time for them to begin! They're at such a fun and foundational age where they're getting their first look at a God who made them, who loves them perfectly, and who wants to be their best friend. Teaching them to worship at such a young age will set the stage for a life-long journey of faith a journey that, as leaders, we'll have a front-row seat to! As they continue on this journey, they'll learn that worship is not about them, but rather a chance to focus on a holy God, despite their circumstances or feelings.

So, with a resounding and loud YES, I believe that preschoolers CAN and WILL worship as we allow them to be who they are, and model for them what it means to worship Jesus with our lives. As we introduce and encourage it along the way, it'll be a natural part of their lives. We are providing an environment and atmosphere where children can come boldly, wildly, passionately, just as they are, and childishly to the throne of God, and that's exactly how He designed it to be!

Jenna is a singer, songwriter, and worship leader based in Birmingham, Alabama. She is passionate about leading both kids and adults in worship, choreographing worship music, and especially loves to mentor new children's worship leaders. Jenna consults with and leads worship for churches all over the country; summer VBS programs, family fun nights, women's retreats, and marriage retreats with her husband Ben. She and Ben have three kids and two dogs. Jenna is a songwriter for First Look curriculum, and is releasing her first solo album this fall. Her hobbies include running, drinking coffee, and watching NFL football. You can follow Jenna's blog on www.jennakuykendall.com or on Twitter at [@jennank](https://twitter.com/jennank).

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