

# TEACHING MUSIC IN PRIMARY


DONNA HOWARD

DONNA@DIRECTEDLISTENING.COM

A CHILD WHO SINGS  
IS A HAPPY CHILD

--- ELDER ENRIQUE FALABELLA

# The Directed Listening Method is a powerful way to teach children songs because...

1. They **hear** the song several times
  2. They **notice** things about the song
  3. They **memorize** the song as they learn it
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

## When doing directed listening, remember:

1. Don't just sing one line of the song at a time for them to answer the question. Sing a lot of it, or all of it. Maybe doing just a verse or a chorus would work.

The idea is to be sure the children hear the song as much as possible.

# When doing directed listening, remember:

2. **Always** give the children something to listen for or to do.  
**Have a reason for every repetition.**

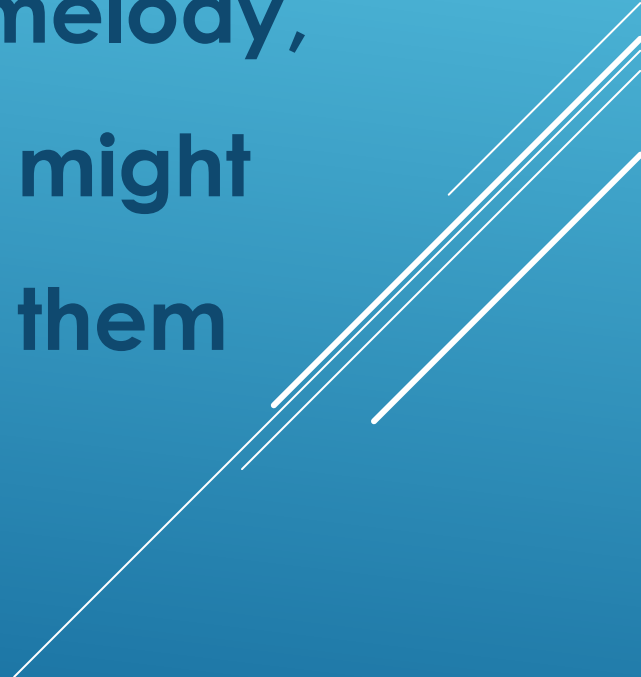
(let me repeat that...)

## Have a reason for **EVERY** repetition!

Meaning, what else are they going to do each time?

## When doing directed listening, remember:

3. You can use the words, the rhythm, the melody, actions, and anything else in the song that might be interesting to the children, or to you, for them to have something to listen for or do.

Three parallel white lines of varying lengths are positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, slanted diagonally upwards from left to right.

**When doing directed listening, remember:**

**4. Try to focus on the gospel message in the song as much as possible!**

You can use rhymes and repeated words, but being able to discuss the gospel truths and bear testimony of them is even more important.

**When doing directed listening, remember:**

## **5. Have enough repetitions!**

**Try to allow the children to hear the song maybe even ten times before they attempt to sing it.**



Some people think 2-3 reps is enough. It isn't. Preschoolers need to hear a song maybe 200 times before they really know it. For junior Primary, it's about 100 times, and for senior, about 50 times. (not really, but it's a lot!)

You can't do that many before they sing it, but you can give them several times of listening to it.

Directing their listening will help them notice things in the song and help them learn it MUCH faster.

# When doing directed listening, remember:

If you have actions to do with the song, teach them all at the same time.

You don't need to teach the melody, then the rhythm, then the words, then the actions.

Teaching them all at the same time gives the children a **MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCE**, which is an excellent way to learn.

**Children learn best with movement.**

## When doing directed listening, remember:

Short singing experiences help them learn the song.


This sometimes involves you singing the whole thing as they join you on a short segment of it.

Or, it could be that you all will just sing a part of it.

But remember that they still need to hear it more than that!

**When doing directed listening, remember:**

**Once you feel that the children have heard the song enough, and will be relatively successful at singing it, THEN you can have them sing the whole song, or whole verse or chorus.**

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

▶ Let's Practice!



WHAT DID YOU NOTICE  
ABOUT THE DIRECTED  
LISTENING METHOD?

WHAT STOOD OUT TO YOU?

A series of several parallel white lines of varying thicknesses, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, crossing the right side of the text area.

The purpose of directed listening is to concentrate a person's focus on the song and, in particular, the lyrics.

There are so many distractions around us.


**When a person can put all focus on one task, learning that task can be infinitely faster.**

In this study by Ali Sabah Jameel Al-Khayyat, students in Iraq were learning English. One group was taught the traditional way, the other with directed listening. The students were asked ahead of the teacher reading sections what they thought would happen, then the section was read, then asked if they were right.

At the end, the students in the directed listening group had made significant gains in their English comprehension while the control group gains did not show any statistical significance.

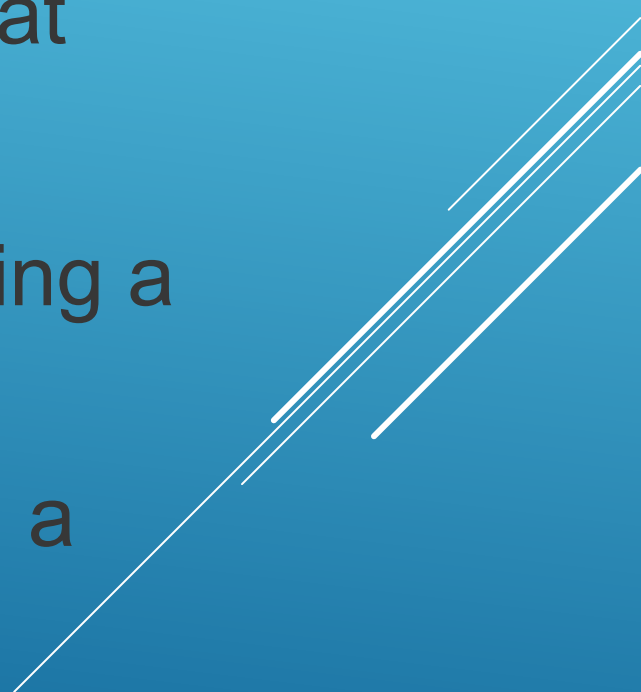


Directed listening showed a significant increase for all students (6-8 years old) but the biggest gains were for those with low self esteem. It appears it gave them a positive experience and helped them do better.

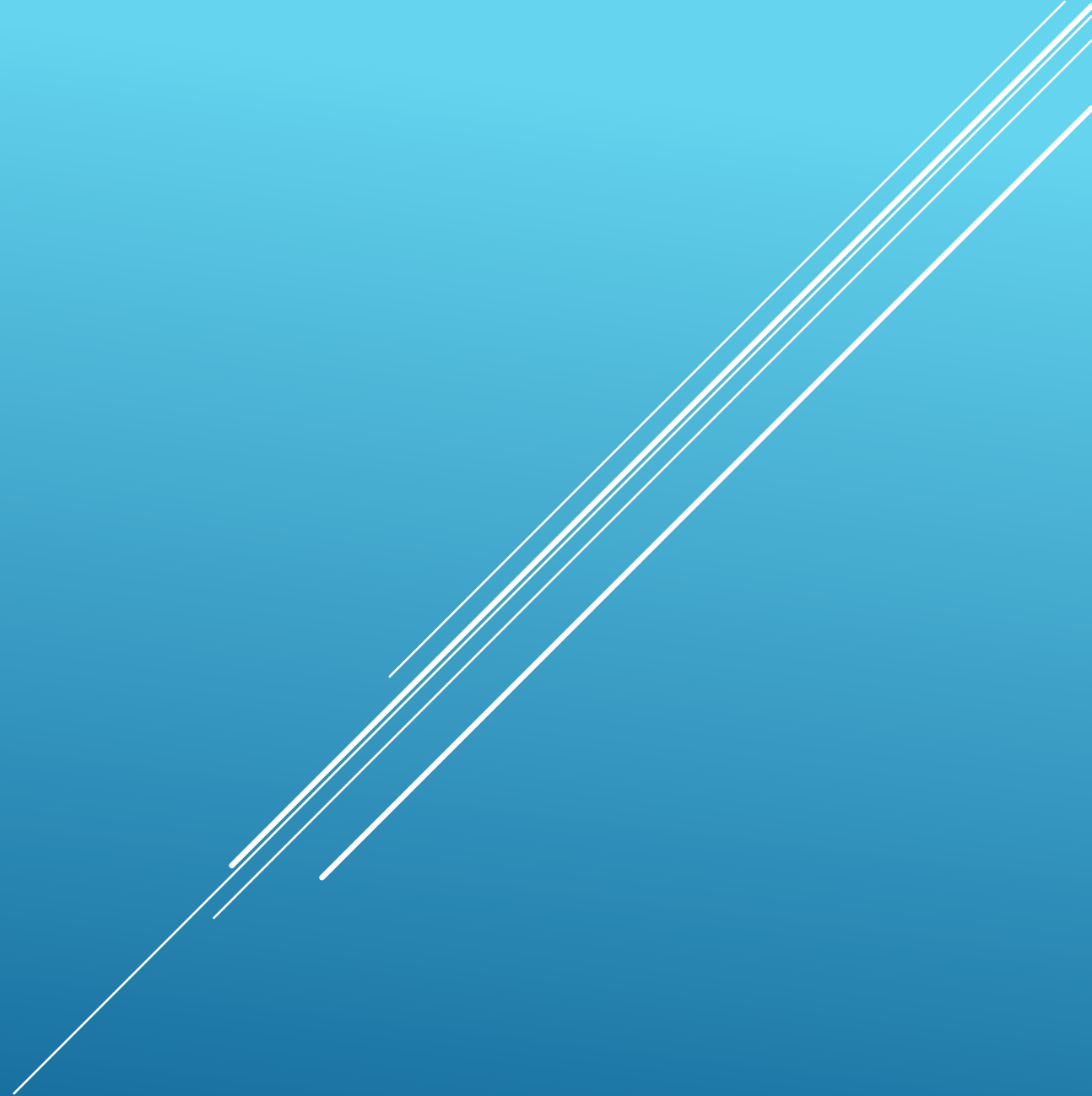


Sherlock Holmes' famous words to Dr. Watson can be rephrased to reference the ear rather than the eye as the sensory organ of observation: *You hear, but you do not listen.*

In these parallel statements, the implication is that **“seeing” and “hearing” are passive**, while **“observing” and “listening” are active**, requiring a **heightened level of engagement** from the observer or listener but also resulting in a **greater acquisition of knowledge.**

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against the blue background.

SINGING TIME!



# Make your Primary a SAFE PLACE

Everyone is entitled to feel safe in Primary –  
Spiritually, emotionally, physically

## NO criticism of any kind!

Allow them to feel safe learning to sing

One small comment, wince, or lack of encouragement could make that child (or adult) feel like they should never sing again.

**Please don't let that come from you!**

I BELIEVE THAT THE  
PRIMARY MUSIC LEADER  
IS ONE OF THE MOST  
INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN  
THE WARD.

WHY??

**The Primary music leader is the one that teaches the songs that the children will remember (or not) throughout the next 8 decades or so when they have hard times.**

**This influence cannot be underestimated!**


A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue background.

# YOU

are the Gospel Doctrine teacher for the children.

If these songs are to influence children throughout their lives,

**THEY MUST BE MEMORIZED**

- ▶ **What Primary lessons do you remember?**
  - ▶ **What songs do you remember?**
  - ▶ **Why are songs so much easier to remember?**
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue gradient background.



# Songs use both halves of your brain.

If I **tell** you something, you will remember about **10%**

If I **show** you something, you will remember about **40%**

If you **do** something, you will remember about **60%**

If you **sing** it, you will remember about **90%**

**Above all, remember the real reasons  
we teach children to sing!**

**To teach the gospel**

**So they love music**

**So these songs can influence them throughout their lives**

**So they can feel Heavenly Father's love for them**

**These goals cannot be met in a  
carnival-like atmosphere.**

**Your goal is NOT to entertain!**

**Your goals are:**

**To engage every child**

**To invite the Spirit to bear witness to the children**

**To help the children memorize songs**

**To strengthen the children.**

**Your job is to teach, not entertain. Please avoid:**

**Flip Charts** – they will just become dependent on them

**Talking too much** - Let them sing! Get them to sing a lot!

**Criticizing your own voice**

If you apologize for your voice, they will worry about theirs

And then they might quit singing. Everyone's voice is beautiful!

**Too many “wiggle songs”** – you don't need them!

Many songs can be movement songs while still teaching

# **NEVER teach in the church without:**

**Bearing your testimony**  
**Applying the lesson to the  
individuals' lives**

**(Bro. Robert Wahlquist)**

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against the blue background.

Singing Time!



**Be aware of the children's abilities at this age for maximum success (Nursery):**

**A range of about a fifth or a little more (think D to A on the staff)**

**Some can now sing in tune**

**Still working on coordination**

**Simpler rhythms are easier for them**

**Children need to hear the song about 200 times to really own it**

# Children's abilities (Junior) for maximum success

A range of about an octave

Most can now sing in tune

Probably need to hear a song about 100 times to really own it

Can understand the difference between shouting and singing

Beginning to understand breath control

Can sing call and response songs

Can sing with attentions to dynamics and tempo changes

Can accent strong beats and understand syncopation



# Some things that might still be difficult for Junior Primary

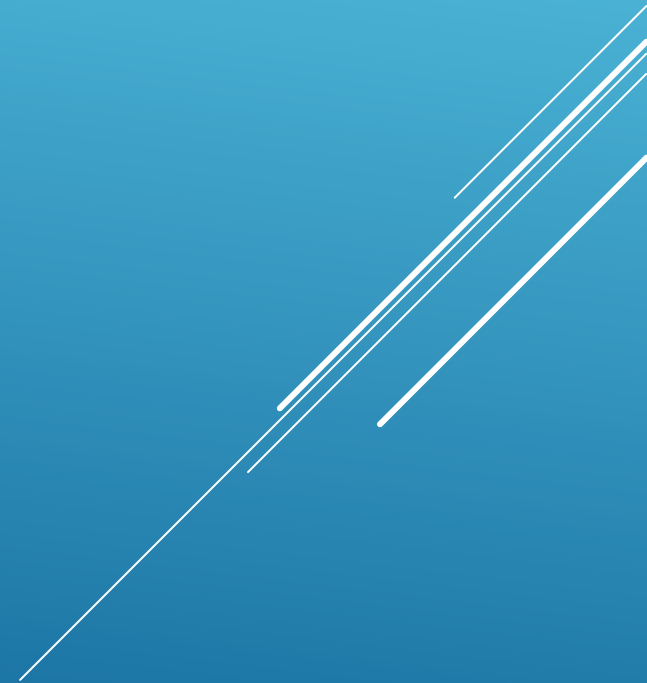
## Rounds

A second part that isn't the melody

Legato, dynamics, sustained phrases

## Harmonizing

Wider ranges – more than an octave



# Children's abilities in Senior Primary:

A range of a little more than an octave

Most can now sing in tune

Voices may still be light, but some are starting to change


Beginning to understand breath control

Can sing two part songs

Probably need to hear a song about 50 times to really own it

They want to be challenged!

**Then, once the song is fairly well learned, the children are ready for other activities that will cement the song into their brain.**

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

**MAKE EVERYTHING YOU DO  
COUNT DOUBLE**

**THIS MEANS THAT IT WILL  
NOT ONLY GIVE YOU MORE  
SONG REPETITIONS – IT  
WILL ALSO...**

**INCREASE COORDINATION  
HEAL THE FRONTAL LOBE  
IMPROVE BEHAVIOR  
HELP CHILD FEEL A STEADY BEAT  
HELP THE CHILDREN CREATE  
HELP THEM FEEL LIKE MUSICIANS  
HELP THEM TO LOVE MUSIC  
STRENGTHEN THEIR TESTIMONIES**

# Midline Crossing Activities

Improve coordination

Improve impulse control

Help heal the frontal lobe

Raise reading and math scores

Extra cognitive function and memory

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

**Midline crossing exercises/activities help to strengthen the corpus callosum, the bridge between the two halves of the brain.**

- ▶ **This helps the two halves of the brain to communicate better, resulting in:**
  - ▶ **Better behavior due to better impulse control**
  - ▶ **Improvements in schoolwork**
  - ▶ **Increased cognitive function and memory**
  - ▶ **Better coordination**
  - ▶ **Etc. We don't have all of the answers yet!**

# **If your child can't cross the midline, you may see some of the following signs:**

**Uses right hand activities on the right side of the body and uses left hand activities on the left side of the body.**

**Has trouble with tracking words from right to left**

**Poor fine motor skills (pencil grip, handwriting)**

**Has trouble switching different feet and arms in sports.**

**Had developmental delays as a child (crawling, jumping, skipping)**

**Poor muscle tone (neck, arms legs) and balance and coordination**

**Switches hands when drawing, painting, coloring**

<https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/crossing-midline-exercises-for-kids.html>



**A MAJOR DISORDER LINKED WITH SCREEN MISUSE IS ADHD. THE BRAIN IS LIKE A MUSCLE THAT CAN BE TRAINED, SAID DR. ANDREW DOAN...**

**SINCE SCREEN ENTERTAINMENT IS HIGHLY DISTRACTING, LESS TIME IS NEEDED TO TRAIN A PERSON'S ABILITY TO SUSTAIN ATTENTION, WHICH IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE A MENTALLY CHALLENGING TASK LIKE FINISHING LENGTHY HOMEWORK.**

**PROLONGED SCREEN TIME IS ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH THINNING OF THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX, WHICH IS CRITICAL FOR COMPULSION CONTROL AND LOGICAL THINKING. THIS IS ALSO WHAT MAKES PEOPLE WITH ADHD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN COMPLETING TASKS THEY FIND UNINTERESTING.**

# Zoltan Kodaly and Karl Orff both believed that children learn best with movement – especially music!

- ▶ This does NOT have to be wiggle songs. Just adding movements to regular songs is great!
- ▶ Teach melody, rhythm, and actions all at the same time
- ▶ At the same time, help students feel the beat, which is critical for reading abilities
- ▶ Orff and Kodaly also believe in helping children experience music, not just listening. They also want children to create music – including dance. Perhaps children can help you create actions for a song.
- ▶ The more involved a child is in music, the more they will remember the songs and LOVE music!

## Children learn best with these:

1. When it's meaningful to them. When they can relate to it, when they understand it, and when you can apply it to their lives.
2. Multisensory learning. Not just hearing. Add sight, add movement, anything!
3. Within their abilities, but challenging them is great, too!
4. When the learning is child centered. The focus is on the child, not the teacher.
5. When lessons/songs build on previous knowledge and go farther.
6. When they can make connections to things they already know.

**But what do they need most?**

**Time to feel the Spirit speak to them.**


**Are you inviting the Spirit to join you in  
your Primary room?**



**Remember the conference talk about  
intentional living?**

**Let's encourage intentional movement.  
Let's encourage intentional listening.**

**Movement that teaches.  
Listening that teaches.**

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

NO DOWN TIME!

DO NOT LOOK AWAY FROM  
THE CHILDREN!



# Sign Language!

Many gospel messages can be found in sign language

Intentional movement

Multisensory learning

Inclusive activity



# Week 2 Possible Activities

Eraser Pass Activity

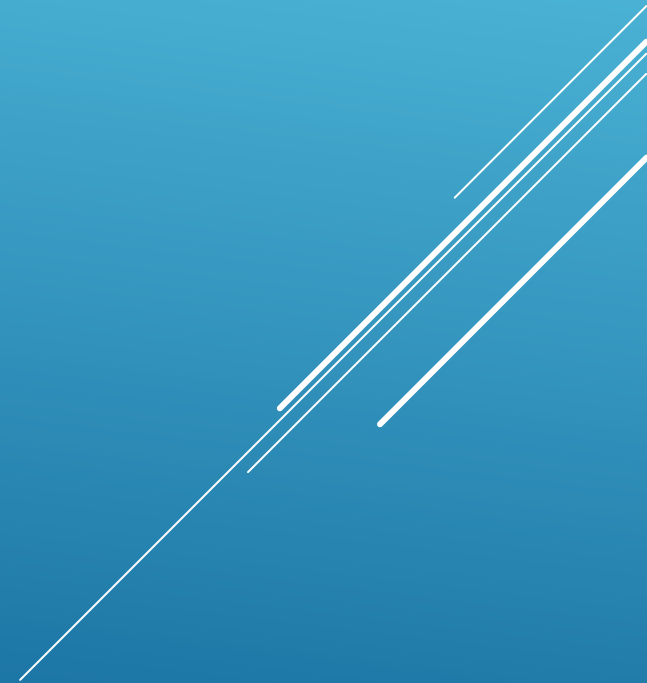
Word Challenges

Melody Maps

Sign Language – one of my favorites!


Start – Stop (piano keeps playing)

And many more!





# ▶ **Week 3 Possible Activities**

- ▶ **Spool Rhythms**
  - ▶ **Rhythm Creation Activity**
  - ▶ **Rhythm Sticks**
  - ▶ **Scarves**
  - ▶ **Marching in Place**
  - ▶ **Midline Crossing Activities**
  - ▶ **And Many More!**
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue background.



"It is far more important who the elementary music teacher is in a small town than who the director of an opera house is because if the opera house director is not good, he will be dismissed in a year, but a poor music teacher in a small town can kill off the love of music for thirty years from thirty classes of children. This is an enormous responsibility."

~Zoltan Kodaly

Floating Down the River

# Donna Howard

Primary Music

208-313-1310

[donna@directedlistening.com](mailto:donna@directedlistening.com)

Slides can be found at:

[Directedlistening.com](http://Directedlistening.com)

Watch for new content at

[Directedlistening.com](http://Directedlistening.com)

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue background.