

## ♪ Sacrament Meeting Presentation Ideas ♪

(Glean, then adapt tips from successful SMP's)

Presentation Ideas: (Some impressive ideas seen a variety of ward presentations)

- ♪ Use the ward bulletin to outline the presentation with names of the speakers, special numbers or instrumentalists. Use a ½ page insert if needed.
- ♪ Children hold a letter on a piece of poster board, spelling out the theme word, i.e. TEMPLE. Each child can recite a short sentence relating to the theme beginning with the letter they are holding.
- ♪ Graphics or picture relating to the presentation theme on bulletin cover.
- ♪ Or artwork from a ward artist, or the children produce a program cover.
- ♪ Mentioned or typed in the bulletin, "The children wrote their own talks..."
- ♪ Use vignettes: teacher with child, parent and child or classroom situation.
- ♪ Two Microphones attached to podium. This allows for a double narration, 'conversation' between father and daughter or choral reading. This adds a professional touch.
- ♪ Don't be afraid to use several microphones; as many as needed.
- ♪ Atmosphere: One ward decorated with red yellow and blue carnation centerpieces on the piano and in the front of the chapel.
- ♪ Provide buttons/badges or necklaces for the children to wear the day of the presentation for uniformity, as a souvenir, reminder or a reward. \*
- ♪ The older children could speak of a service project or activity they were involved in that may have related to the theme.
- ♪ Have a child speak of the sweet experience of going to the temple to be sealed to their family, and how this instilled a love for Heavenly Father and Jesus and the temple.
- ♪ Invite children to bear their testimonies.
- ♪ Have an entire class quote a scripture or Article of Faith.
- ♪ Work narration closely into the music, i.e.: "We'd like to conclude this presentation with a testimony of song; "I Believe In Christ." (Appropriate wording for the appropriate song.)

- ♪ Choral reading: Organist/Pianist plays a hymn or song while child reads a scripture or poem.
- ♪ If using slides or anything else that would require the lights to be lowered, allow lighting for the music personnel and speakers.
- ♪ Line three or four children at a time behind the pulpit. Thus eliminating the pauses between speakers, as they crawl over other to reach the microphone.

*General Suggestions:* (Some things learned by experience, and shared @ stake mtg.)

- ≈ Work as a team but determine who is in charge and support their decisions gracefully.
- ≈ Meet with music personnel when planning and writing the script, keep them involved.
- ≈ Arrange plenty of practice times in the chapel. Plan well ahead and publicize; perhaps a phone committee could help.
- ≈ Parts that are **memorized** help make the presentation **extraordinary**.
- ≈ Keep communication open between First Counselor and Music personnel.
- ≈ Practice *performance etiquette* i.e. standing, sitting, hands, talking, scratching, walking in front of speakers, talking during a musical number, etc.
- ≈ Music and the Presidency should work together on the seating. Together check for missing children; those lost souls behind the piano who are not visible to their parents or the chorister.
- ≈ Watch your attitude and words. Children pick up every signal. Don't worry, be happy.
- ≈ Reverence may be enhanced by having the children sit with their families until after the Sacrament is passed. With previously assigned seats, shuffle may be minimal and quick, but worth it. This also cuts down on disruptive late-comers.
- ≈ Inform the children that if they arrive late, they are to come up after the Sacrament has been passed, (if the children are on the stand the entire time.)
- ≈ Some wards excuse the children to the foyer after the sacrament, and as the adults sang a rest hymn relating to the theme, the children are lined up (well practiced ahead of time) and filed in – up to the stand to their pre-assigned seats. They could hum as they walk, also – truly angelic.

- ≈ Sr. Primary children can be seated amongst the younger ones to help with reverence. Sister Michaelene Grassli (former General Primary President) calls this “divide and conquer.” Works in sharing time as well.
- ≈ Give the full amount for singing time, possibly more, as the SMP date nears.
- ≈ Mentally walk children through the experience ahead of time. This works wonders.
- ≈ Assign speaking parts **early**.
- ≈ Offer some incentive for work well done. Be creative. Is there a non-food incentive?
- ≈ Remind children (repeatedly) to take potty breaks before the meeting.
- ≈ We have been admonished in the past from the General Primary Presidency to NOT tell the children throughout the year that “we are working on this song for the presentation.” This can be confusing for some children. “We are learning this song for the sheer joy of singing.”
- ≈ Also from the General Primary Presidency, this is a *presentation*, not a *program*. We are presenting what we have learned throughout the year, and should address it correctly when addressing the children.
- ≈ Invite some people to the final rehearsal to offer suggestions on sound, etc.
- ≈ Encourage the children to invite their parents, grandparents, relatives, etc.
- ≈ Check the guidelines in the SMP and the Handbook of Instruction concerning visuals or posters. Obtain permission from the Bishopric to hang or display visuals in the chapel. (Bishops don’t care for surprises.)
- ≈ \*Buttons, badges or necklaces for the children’s choir are lovely and unifying. But consider the cost, or if it will be an object to play with during the Sacrament.
- ≈ REWARD the children for a job well done. This can be done in sharing time or a special activity.
- ≈ Be mindful of children needing transportation to practices and the performance.
- ≈ Remember that all children are not in a two parent home or may even live with a grandparent.
- ≈ Avoid talking to the children too much – you may be tuned out.
- ≈ Be sure to **read** thank you and complimentary notes from parents, ward members or Stake representatives, about the performance **to the children**. (Perfect reward; no calories or cost!)

*Music Ideas:* (Preparations throughout the year and the last couple of weeks.)

- ♪ Learn *sign* for one or two songs.
- ♪ Introduction to a number begins: children have been trained to watch chorister as she puts up one finger, then two, and then on three she motions for them to stand. Repeat same procedure at the ending of the song.
- ♪ Be adventurous with the music and dynamics. Add a break, (which brings the congregation to attention and opens up for the spirit to enter in). Accent important words, (like TEMPLE) sing a phrase staccato, sing softly, then loud. Dynamics help the number sound 'cleaner.'
- ♪ Harmonizing takes extra time to prepare but sounds beautiful and the children are pleased with their performance as they hear how lovely it sounds and see their parent's reactions. If time is short, assign only the oldest class to harmonize, or even the teachers.
- ♪ For a missionary related song, have the Elders serving in your ward (or prospective Elders) join in, or sing a verse.
- ♪ Work with Sunbeams ahead of time, even separately so they can participate fully.
- ♪ Start learning songs earlier, so not to feel rushed.
- ♪ Information on modulating between songs can be found in the Guide for Children's Music. (If still in print.)
- ♪ Send home words (or a CD) to the songs so the children can practice on the way home, or in Family Home Evening.
- ♪ Place announcements in the bulletin each month stating what song the children are learning and encouraging parents to use them in FHE.
- ♪ Teach the children to sing lovely, not loud; "Never louder than lovely." Loud can be too strenuous for the little voices, and does not produce the best sound.
- ♪ Chorister's mouth is over exaggerated in enunciating the words.
- ♪ Chorister could stand on a step stool so she can be seen by every child. OR she could stand on a riser (or low table) in the over-flow area where she is free to wave her arms, hold signs, pull faces, etc., without the knowledge of the entire audience.
- ♪ Begin the presentation with your best number, or have a duet, trio or quartet sing a special song. It's a nice introduction to the presentation.
- ♪ Have children hum the prelude or hum while the presidency arranges themselves and children in their seats right before beginning; this softens the transition.

- ♪ Mother–daughter or Father–son duet sing a song from the SMP list or one relating to the theme. This may be a way to include a number not learned by the children but included on the program.
- ♪ Have an assistant chorister for the day of the presentation. She holds posters, reminders to SMILE, or an incentive chart. This eases stress on the chorister.
- ♪ Have an organist accompany the group (or duet with the piano) on the most spiritual song.
- ♪ Teachers need to lend their voices to the choir. Provide words, especially if new.
- ♪ To prepare the children, have them sing a number the week before in Sacrament Meeting. So what if it is sung again the next week – the parents love it.
- ♪ A child can either conduct or accompany a song. Be sure to recognize the child in the bulletin.
- ♪ Use two choristers to lead songs with two melodies; i.e. “A Child’s Prayer.”
- ♪ Have two capable singers repeat the last phrase of a song at the end of it. For instance; as the children complete “I love to see the temple,” ritard, and two children repeat “This is my sacred duty.”
- ♪ If you are able to suggest the Sacrament Meeting opening hymn, choose one the children are familiar with. This adds to the spirit of the meeting and boosts their confidence. If the children are not familiar with all the verses encourage them to sing “Oooo” or hum.
- ♪ Leave ample time during introduction of songs for the choir to stand. If needed, the pianist can plan ahead to repeat the introduction seamlessly or lengthen it.

### Last thoughts:

- ☺ Be encouraging, complimentary and positive.
- ☺ Expect a lot of the children musically. They ARE equal to the task.
- ☺ Remember thank you notes.