



ICDF Networks

May 2017

Dance for Children

Do you have a heart to minister with children? Are you a dance teacher or leader of a Children's dance team? Do you want to start?

In Matthew 21:15, 16, Jesus said, "Have you read, out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants, you have perfected praise?" God wants to use children. He wants us to release and allow and encourage them to be dynamic little instruments in His Hands.



The Children's Dance Network is for all who are or would like to be involved with teaching and leading children in Christian dance.

We will hold regular (every six months) networking cyberforums so that we can share ideas, teaching methods, learn from one another's personal experiences in teaching children, share dances, share resources.....and most of all share our hearts. We desire to be available to mentor those who would like to serve in this area of ministry within their church, other Christian organisation, school, or community.

Network Joint-Coordinators: Belma Vardy (Canada) and Roz Hancock (Australia)

To find out more ... <http://icdf.com/en/networks/dance-children>

Facebook ... [Dance For Children - International Christian Dance Fellowship](#)

Blog ... <https://icdfnetworks.wordpress.com/category/childrens-dance/>

Dance for Youth

The Youth Dance network is for teenagers and young adults who dance. Being a member provides an opportunity to connect and share ideas together enabling youth across the globe, to keep creating new innovative dances in the name of Jesus and to support each other as they do so.



Network Coordinator: Steven Turner (Britain)

Email address ... youth.icdf@gmail.com

To find out more ... <http://icdf.com/en/networks/youth-dance>

Facebook ... [ICDF Youth Network](#)

Blog ... <https://icdfnetworks.wordpress.com/2017/04/27/new-network-for-youth-dance/>

Be spontaneous ...

My life has always included dance, predominately ballet but so many styles and my happy place is spontaneous. My grandkids have brought me back to that place. We dance around each other, make up silly moves and without a word, just by face, gesture and moves we flow together. They are two years old. This is community. No discussion just love, fun and creativity ... Heaven!

- Roz Hancock

What we do in Children's Dance?

1. Provide a safe place
2. Have fun
3. Create community
4. Explore creativity
5. Teach healthy habits

Be still ...

A three year old toddler would follow his mother from room to room during their morning cleaning time. If the mother was not giving him the attention he wanted, he would take her head in his little hands and say, "Point your face at me!"

It was a serious matter to him, but it never failed to put a wide grin on his mother's face. Precious minutes always followed. He would ask a question or invite a cookie break or show her a new treasure.



Photo: Being still as a group before the Lord

David relates a similar scenario in one of his Psalms, "When Thou didst say, 'Seek My Face,' my heart said to Thee, 'Thy Face, O Lord, I shall seek'".

The Lord is eager for us to seek His Face, just as the toddler was eager for the mother to seek his face. The Lord longs for us to put aside all distractions so that we might concentrate on Him.

When we do, we are delightfully rewarded. We discover a new treasure in His Word. We find an answer to a question, sometimes even before we ask. We see a situation in an entirely new light. In the midst of turmoil, we receive peace. New strength replaces weariness. Our love for God is renewed.

The privilege of seeking God's Face is a daily choice. As we do, we then enjoy His blessing as He sheds the light of His Face on us.

Psalm 37:7 - "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him."

Psalm 46:10 - "Be still and know that I am God."

Silence as a tool of worship ... may I encourage all of us to take a few moments of silence daily ... just to get renewed, refreshed, restrengthened ... and be able to "hear" the voice of God—to "hear" the answer to the question of "God, what do YOU want me to teach the children today? What would YOU want me to have them do in today's class?"

And then the joy of teaching the children to seek the Face of God.

Be encouraged to seek His Face, spend time in His Presence, and receive direction for what the Lord wants for "HIS Children's Ministry"!

- Belma Vardy

Five Adjectives to describe Children's Dance
Lively, inspiring, exciting, joyful, engaging, imaginative

Teaching With a Childlike Heart

The worship of children has, at times, offended people. They are noisy; they are too irreverent. It happened in Jesus' day and it happens today. When adults worship Him as little children with abandonment, exuberance and joy, it might be alarming to some who assume it is not the 'proper' way to worship.

“But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things He did and the children shouting in the temple area, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they were indignant. ‘Do you hear what these children are saying,’ they asked him. ‘Yes,’ replied Jesus, ‘Have you never read: From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?’” Matthew 21:15,16

In response to His disciples' question, “Who, then is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” (Mt. 18:1-4)

Jesus, as an example, called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and taught that the way into the Kingdom of Heaven is by simple trust and dependence of a child; and the way to greatness in the Kingdom is by childlike humility producing a servant-like heart. The term childlike refers to the attractive characteristics of children: enthusiasm, innocence, trust, total dependency, freedom to play and enjoy, teachableness, desire to please and lack of inhibition.



Photo: There is joy in being able to see the outcome after many hours of preparation

For those of you called to teach children in these last days, the good and perfect gift our Abba Father will provide is the heart of childlike expectancy; this is the kind of heart that blesses Him. Every tool for ministry — all the supernatural abilities, all the expressions of His love, all the wisdom and understanding needed for each situation — flows most graciously through the ones who choose to walk as a little child clutching tightly to the Father's hand.

Let us offer ourselves up to God and be in a place of utter dependence upon Him, “leaning not on our own understanding but trusting Him with our whole heart.” (Proverbs.3:4,5)

Let our worship, dance and teaching come from hearts that are more and more childlike, simple and sweet, serving with joy and freedom. Let us allow the Holy Spirit — our good, perfect and best teacher to give us what we need so we can pass it on to our children. Thank You, Father, for the gifts you are continuing to pour out on us.

- Belma Vardy

Each country has its own laws and regulations for ensuring a safe environment for children. The extract below was taken from the “Ausdance National in Teaching” factsheets in Australia (Child Protection, Factsheet #21). We encourage all persons working with children to find out about the relevant laws in their own countries.

- Roz Hancock

Child Protection

“Under Australian law the term 'child' is defined as a person under 18 years of age. Children have a fundamental right to be safe from any form of abuse. This is a legal requirement as well as a moral obligation.

A Child Safe organisation has good child safe policies and practices to reduce potential environmental risks and keep kids safe. The child safe approach includes education and supervision of both paid and unpaid staff about appropriate and acceptable behaviours. Strong child safety policies and procedures help deter, minimise and remove opportunities for abuse to occur within organisations. They help us be preventative rather than reacting to an unfortunate incident after it happens.

Child protection requires a commitment from everyone to ensure the environment is safe for all children. For dance teachers and leaders, this includes an awareness of the requirements and risks, a commitment to practices that minimise the risks, and the ability to respond appropriately to incidents of child abuse.

If in doubt about the possibility of, or the seriousness of, any risk of harm, or whether the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child is in jeopardy, seek professional advice.”

Creating Space for the Youth

Steven Turner has recently been appointed as the Network Coordinator for the ICDF Network for Youth Dance. He has been working with the Christian Dance Fellowship of Britain for a few years now as National Youth Coordinator and is excited to be able to expand this to start engaging with young people all over the world.



Photo: Our authority comes from standing in Christ - even at a young age.

The Youth Network is just beginning, but it is really astonishing to start thinking about the potential that could be created. There are so many dance styles and it is great to see how young dancers are taking these to new levels. Just in the last few weeks in the UK, there has been a TV show celebrating the talent of young dancers over different genres. When you start looking at the creative gifts that God has put in the next generation, to build on what has gone before, it is really exciting.

Going forward one of the aims of the Youth Network is to 'provide an opportunity to connect and share ideas together'. This will be achieved in many ways. There is going to be a Youth page on the ICDF Networks part of the website, but what would be really interesting is to hear from some young dancers, as to how their faith affects their dance and how different styles of movement can be used to express their faith. We are going to do this through various social media platforms as well as the ICDF Networks blog. For me personally it has been really useful to have other young Christian dancers to share ideas with, especially when they come from different genres. I want to create an opportunity, using a range of media platforms, that can facilitate other young dancers to connect all over the world, building faith and creating new innovative movements.

In my experience it can be difficult developing as a young dancer with a Christian faith. Sometimes you have dance teachers asking you to take on roles in pieces that are not necessarily spiritually edifying. On the other hand, there are parts of the Christian family that do not understand why dance and movement is relevant to faith. I love the idea of building an international network that is able to encourage each other and share ideas and prayer requests. Building up the next generation of dancers as they step into their identity as children of God and become part of the church of today as well as the church of tomorrow.

Are Youth the Church of Tomorrow?

It can be easy to see young people as the church of tomorrow but at what point do they become the church of today? Youth can be a funny age as you are no longer a child but you are still not always legally able to do everything an adult can do. However I believe there is tremendous potential in the youth to help the church of today develop.

In the Bible God works with people of all ages. Some commentaries suggest that Mary was as young as 12 when she gave birth to Jesus. Not even a teenager but God was prepared to use her for such an important role in the story He was creating. There is no junior Holy Spirit and so God is speaking just as much to the youth as He is to other generations in the church. Why not try encouraging and supporting the youth around you so we can all benefit from their energy and creativity. They are part of the church of today as well as the church of tomorrow.

Last week I was at an Encounter evening with opportunities to paint, dance and sing as well as lots of other ways to creatively engage with our Heavenly Father. Two teenagers gave me pictures they had painted and explained how God had shown them the picture and prophetic meaning during the worship, and how the colours had different meanings. It is very exciting to see how God is using all generations to further His Kingdom in a creative way.

- Steven Turner



All photos published in this newsletter have been provided by the contributing writers.

“Rise Up & Grow” conference - South Africa

The children and adults of Christian Dance Fellowship of South Africa recently attended the Free 2 Dance Creative Arts conference held in Eldorado Park, 4th-8th April 2017. It was a time when we saw all cultures come together to give back to the children of this community. It was focused on the community of Eldorado Park & surrounding areas to get the youth off the streets. As a holiday Creative Arts Programme this created a place where the youth could come and have relief from the stressful and peer pressure lifestyles that they currently have. The conference was attended by 100 delegates. 30 **children** were aged between 7-11 years, 45 **youth** and 25 adults.



Photo: As one in praise and worship

The youth and adults were able to choose from 16 different classes and kids from age 7-11 years attended Praise Dance, Flags, Tambourines and African classes. “Skilled, Anointed & Fun Teachers” were brought in from all provinces in South Africa to assist with the children’s classes.

Every morning started with Praise & Worship and ministry time and the children were led into a time of prayer first putting on the Armour of God in the form of movement.

Ephesians 6:11 - “Put on the whole Armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

We prayed for our country and its leaders and for one another followed by a prophetic act of dance that was done to “Break every Chain” by Jesus Culture, tearing down strongholds in our country. Over the few days the children formed groups praying for each other and speaking words of life and blessing over each other. Teachers shared what sacrificial worship is unto God and the importance of having a mind like Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 “...to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

The communities and organisations came together to fundraise in the form of a High Tea to enable the under privileged children to attend the conference. The Christian Dance Fellowship of South Africa assisted by hosting two tables at this event in aid of raising the funds for these children to pay for their conference fees.

On the first three days all delegates attended classes of 4 sessions per day. On the morning of the last day they brushed up on their routines to prepare for the Grand Finale show in the evening to display to their parents, families and friends all that they have been learning at the conference. It was amazing to see the look on all the parents’ faces as they watched their children transform on that stage in only a few days. The creative arts have taught their children to be more positive and to find purpose! The conference has brought out confidence in these children and it enabled them to step out and to stop hiding. God made each of them beautiful and wonderful and they knew that by the end of the conference. The teachers were able to show and lead them to put God first and, also, that you can have lots of crazy fun dancing for Jesus.

The children and adults formed new relations and connections with each other and helped each other in the classes with their routines and costumes. The conference brought everyone together to fulfil one purpose -To Rise & Grow together in the Lord! No one was left behind. A new family was formed.

We thank the organisers of Free 2 Dance, Warren and Natalie Stuart, and to Mount Carmel ministries and their leaders for hosting the conference. The children are already looking forward to the next conference and they thank Jesus for the opportunity that was given to them at this one. They left the conference totally transformed to when they arrived on the first day .

Praise be to our Creative God who blesses us !
Serena Reddy Melo
Christian Dance Fellowship of South Africa