

Project moves Scripture off the shelf and into memory

By Shawna Carpentier

MINNEAPOLIS — He was in elementary school when a Saturday morning program called “Schoolhouse Rock” aired a song that taught him important history during the commercial breaks from his favorite cartoons.

“You [learned] through ‘Schoolhouse Rock,’ and one of them was the Preamble to the United States Constitution and just by listening to that—not trying to learn it at all—I memorized the Preamble,” recalled Scott Jamison.

Jamison was ahead of the game when in sixth grade he was given the assignment to know the Preamble. He quickly recalled the words set to a catchy, strummed country melody and the Preamble was easily recollected.

Now Jamison applies the same concept he learned as a young boy to promote Bible verse memorization.

With encouragement from a former small group leader, Jamison birthed the Fighter Verse Songs Project seven years ago. The project sets Bible verses to mood-appropriate melodies that attest to the meaning of each specific verse.

“I know I have memorized Scripture before and I forget it after a couple of weeks,” explained Jamison, “and this really—a good melody— keeps it in your head longer.”

The songs have been an inexpressible resource at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, where Jamison and the 50 volunteers involved in the project are active members. Fighting the fight of faith is an active philosophy of Bethlehem Baptist in which Christians run the race of faith in their daily lives. The armor of God—His Word— as it is in the Bible equips believers with truth, protection and strength to live by faith.



40 songs have been added to the Fighter Verse Songs collection per year on average.

“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of the Lord,” said Kevin Shull, director of Music and Worship at Bethlehem’s North Campus.

Shull has written many Fighter Verse Songs in addition to being a featured vocalist on several of the song recordings.

“That is kind of what undergirds the Fighter Verse program is that if you are going to have faith it’s got to be founded on the Word of the Lord,” expanded Shull.

Not only has the project been instrumental in uniting families in quality discipleship, it has accomplished a feat in quantity alone. While most recording artists release as many as 10 songs a year, 40 songs have been added to the Fighter Verse Songs collection per year on average. This has made it possible to provide every member—approximately 3,000—of Bethlehem Baptist with Fighter Verse Songs in conjunction with weekly Scripture given for memorization.

Two of the three Fighter Verse CDs are also available to the general public for purchase through

Children Desiring God, which provides God-centered resources for children’s ministry.

Betty Dodge, coordinator for Family Life at Bethlehem has seen the tremendous impact the Fighter Verse Songs have had, particularly with children and their ability to retain the verses through song.

“People say, ‘I just love the songs’—and it gets them excited to memorize— and that’s what I like to see,” said Dodge.

For Tom Dodds, the songs have helped him in his role as a comforting father. Dodds’s three-year-old daughter Elianna frequently wakes up at night, walks into her parents’ bedroom and asks her dad to sing a song. For the past four months, Dodds has used the Fighter Verse Song—Psalm 56:3-4—whenever Elianna gets afraid.

“We sing [Psalm 56:3-4] and it’s not only that God’s Word gets into her heart, but that singing calms her spirit and helps her fall back asleep,” he said.

As a guitarist in Bethlehem’s worship band, Dodds has an awareness of the power of music to stir people’s emotions and connect with them.

“God has given us music to glorify His name and help us enjoy Him and help us to get the Word planted into our hearts, and song is unique in that way,” he said.

While many Christians spend less time reading their Bibles than in the past, the Fighter Verse Songs are helping to reach people whose lives otherwise would be void of God’s Word.

“If you can listen to something in the car on your way to work or on the treadmill running or whatever you are doing ... you can use the Fighter Verse Songs to redeem that time and use it to get God’s Word into your heart,” said Dodds.

That’s the goal of the ongoing project: to get God’s Word in as many hearts as possible.

“People can share a language and find faith,” said Dodds, “but even more so when it’s spoken [or sung].”

➔ ACTIONPOINT

For more information about the Fighter Verse Songs Project, visit www.fighterversesongs.com or email fighterversesongs@gmail.com.