

# Involving teens IN WORSHIP

Glorifying God in worship is an opportunity for all people, no matter what their age.

Julie K. Wietzke

*From a young age, Jim Marose can remember wanting to play for church.*

“When I was in the range of [age] five to eight, I used to watch our trumpets play and I always thought to myself, ‘That would be so cool if I could do that,’” says Marose, a sophomore at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, and member at Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis.

## Important for all ages

Now he has that opportunity. For more than three years, he has been part of a multigenerational brass group—consisting of musicians from teens to senior citizens.

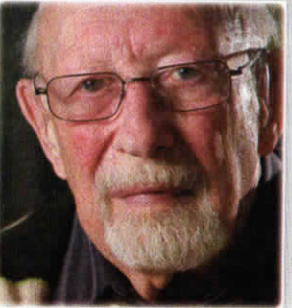
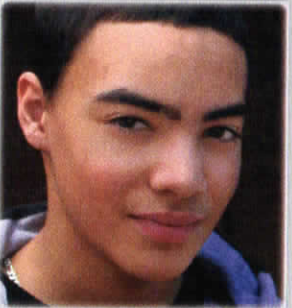
Being one of the youngest in the group is no problem for Marose. “At times when I’m having trouble with a part, it is nice to have someone who has been playing longer than I have jump in and help me play my part so I know exactly how it should sound,” he says.

He also feels that this experience will be beneficial in the long run: “Hopefully we all will be involved in church services at some point in time, so I think it’s good to get your experience in while you’re young so that you are more confident when you are older.”

He even hopes to be an inspiration for those younger than him: “I think that having teens involved in services will open the eyes of younger children so that hopefully they will have the same thoughts that I had.”

Jackie Gerlach, music coordinator at Christ the Lord, didn’t plan to include people of all ages in that brass group. Instead she went looking to fill a need and didn’t worry about an age requirement.

“I don’t think of the teens as a separate group that I need to incorporate,” says Gerlach. “I think of the call I have as music coordinator and of the members who have musical gifts that they can and want to use to serve the church, edify worship, and to express their love for their Savior.



The members of Christ the Lord with those gifts happen to be of all different ages.”

## Important for teenagers

Yet Gerlach sees the importance of involving teens: “It’s beneficial because it’s giving them examples of how to serve and helping them to feel useful within the church.”

According to Luann Kolander, director of a young adult choir at Christ the Lord, providing these types of musical opportunities for teens also keeps them involved. “This gives them a chance to continue using their musical gifts rather than stopping once they’re not in grade school,” she says.

Working with teens has its challenges, says Kolander, including choosing the right music and finding time to practice. But the rewards are far reaching. “It’s amazing the spiritual enrichment they get in rehearsing these hymns and anthems for worship,” she says. “The music is all scripturally based and can drive home a spiritual message in the unique way that music does. It’s a neat way for them to be taking in the Word of God but also express it in worship.”

She stressed how this involvement helps with leadership training, shows teens the time and effort it takes to put together a worship service, and develops their God-given gifts.

“Many of them are blessed with talents in music,” says Kolander, “so it’s fun to give them the opportunity to use it.”

She continues, “We need them. They are members of the church family and can contribute to it.”

Marose agrees. “I have learned . . . that we are all united for the same purpose. The purpose is for us to do all we can to glorify God.”

*Julie Wietzke is managing editor of Forward in Christ*

*This is the second article in a five-part series on keeping youth involved in the church.*

*Learn more about incorporating youth in worship at [www.wels.net/jump/childrenmusic](http://www.wels.net/jump/childrenmusic).*