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The Best Christian Children's Albums of 2005

By Natalie Nichols Gillespie

We gathered all the children's audio projects we could find that released this year, popped them in the player, and narrowed down the stack to our top dozen favorite albums for Christian kids. Some are straight music, some contain stories and songs, and some are, well, just a whole lot of fun.

We concentrated on releases that focused mainly on the pre-'tween set, with a couple of notable exceptions that are designed for kids but can be lots of fun for the whole family. We came up with a spectrum of music and fun for the tiniest of tots, the preschool set, and elementary kids. Many of our choices stuck mainly to a couple of tried-and-true formulas: 1) modern worship songs sung by kids, for kids; and 2) instrumental and softly sung lullabies for the littlest listeners. However, there are a few brave new offerings that dared to try something new. Here is our Top 12 list for 2005:



#12

Turn Up the Fun! Christian Hits for Kids

Various Artists

Sparrow/EMI

[LISTEN](#)  [BUY](#) 

Turn Up the Fun! Christian Hits for Kids, which hits stores on Dec. 27, is a by-kids, for-kids collection of the most recent top Christian radio hits, like Switchfoot's brand-new "Stars," Building 429's "Glory Defined," tobyMac's "Gone," and Joy Williams' "Hide." The two-disc collection has 13 songs and comes in split-track, so kids can sing along with the voices or pop it into the karaoke machine and perform all by themselves.



#11

Hide 'Em in Your Heart, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2

Steve Green

Sparrow/EMI

[LISTEN](#)  [BUY](#) 

Both of Steve Green's Bible memory music albums have effectively been teaching kids Bible verses for years—and that never goes out of style. Now the albums have been reissued and come packaged with DVDs at less than \$15 for the combo. Each disc contains at least 20 memory verses set to music, from Matthew 7:12 ("Do to Others") to the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), and from "I Can Do All Things" (Philippians 4:13) to "When a Child" (Proverbs 20:11). The easy-listening music and lots of repetition make Bible learning fun.



#10

Here I Am to Worship for Kids 2

Various Artists

[LISTEN](#)  [BUY](#) 

Here I Am to Worship for Kids 2 has 10 familiar modern worship songs performed by adults and kids. This collection includes modern praise songs like "We Bow Down," "Filled with Your Glory," "Awesome God," "Famous One," and "No One Like You." What sets this album apart from other modern worship albums for children is that the music itself is not "dumbed-down" too much. It may be children's voices that are singing, but the orchestrations sound a lot like the originals. Ten songs for less than \$10 that children and adults can listen to together—can't be beat!



#9

Eugene Sings!: 17 Calliphonic Cantabulations **Adventures in Odyssey**

Tyndale

[LISTEN](#)  [BUY](#) 

For "Adventures in Odyssey" fans, this album is a terrific treat. The ever-eclectic, oh-so-intellectual Eugene lets down his hair on this hilarious project, the first musical recording for the oddball genius. Eugene croons and strums his way through his college-vocabulary-laden versions of "My Dog Has Fleas," "Have You Ever Been to Odyssey?" "The Moonlight, A Tuba, and You," and "I'll Never Sneeze Again." Eugene has been the center of so many Odyssey storylines that it is fun to hear him this time around in the center of the singing spotlight.



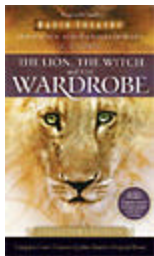
#8

The Incredible Singing Christmas Tree **VeggieTales**

Big Idea/EMI

[LISTEN](#)  [BUY](#) 

It's hard to have a best-of in Christian children's entertainment list without a heaping helping of vegetables somewhere. This list is no exception, as VeggieTales introduced a great Christmas album this year called *The Incredible Singing Christmas Tree*. It has 17 songs that range from familiar Christmas classics like "O Christmas Tree" and "The First Noel" to silly VeggieTales originals such as "Puppy Love" and "Candy Line Blues." It then veers away from the silly side to the true meaning of Christmas as Junior sings the tender "Was He a Boy Like Me?" Wynonna Judd makes a special appearance on "It's About Love."



#7

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe **Focus on the Family Radio Theater**

Tyndale

[LISTEN](#)  [BUY](#) 

With the new live-action film version of C. S. Lewis's classic children's fantasy *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* hitting the big screen, people are taking notice of all things Narnia. If you want to introduce your kids to the first book in the seven-book Narnia series in a top-notch audio-drama presentation, pick up Focus on the Family Radio Theater's version—an unabridged recording of the book that was done in London with a first-rate cast and plenty of sound effects and orchestration. Play it in the car or at home, close your eyes as you listen, and imagine the action for yourself.



#6

Absolute Modern Worship for Kids

Various Artists

Absolute Modern Worship for Kids

LISTEN  BUY 

Fervent Records expanded its popular "Absolute" collections of recent radio hits to create a version just for kids. On *Absolute Modern Worship for Kids*, children can worship and praise to 12 top modern worship hits sung—of course—by kids. Some of the songs here, like "Trading My Sorrows," "Above All," and "Blessed Be the Name," can be heard on other children's worship projects. What gives this album our vote is that it goes past the familiar favorites to include songs like "Audience of One," "Who Am I?" and "Beautiful One."



#5

Hillsong Live Worship for Kids: Jesus Is My Superhero

Hillsong Australia

Hillsong/Integrity

LISTEN  BUY 

In this first-ever children's worship album from Hillsong (the famous Australian church and worship ministry with world-renowned worship leader Darlene Zschech), more than 1,000 children were recorded unabashedly praising the Lord. This upbeat collection has 15 songs like "Superhero," "Alive," "Oh How I Love You," and the super-sharp "Anthem of Praise." Puppets Max and Melody and the Hillsong Kids praise team directed the kids, and the energy can be felt throughout this live recording. There is also a companion DVD, so kids can see Max, Melody, and other kids with their hands raised in worship.



#4

Superstar

Go Fish

Sparrow/EMI

LISTEN  BUY 

Go Fish is a trio of three funny guys who make marvelous music with virtually no instruments (shades of Herbie Hancock). With *Superstar*, band members Andy, Jason, and Jamie sing 10 songs in multi-part harmony and often make their own percussion and instrument sounds. Most of the songs are original, too, and center around themes of feeling good about yourself, loving Jesus, and just being silly. We especially love the fun "What a Great Day" and the toe-tapping "That Acapella Sound." Go Fish is one of the few groups making all-new music for Christian kids, and it is great.



#3

The Praise Baby Collection: Gift Set

Big House KidsLISTEN  BUY 

The Praise Baby Collection: Gift Set is a three-pack of the whole trio of Praise Baby audio projects: *Praises and Smiles*, *God of Wonders*, and *Born to Worship*. Altogether, the gift set offers 42 of the top modern praise and worship songs recorded with soft instrumentals and soothing, repetitious vocals (by adults and children) designed to encourage infants and toddlers to experience physical relaxation, mental stimulation, and spiritual nourishment.



#2

Absolute Smash Hits for Kids

Various Artists

Fervent/Spirit-Led

LISTEN  BUY 

Absolute Smash Hits for Kids gives kids their own spin on the top Christian hits they heard on the radio with their parents this year. On this collection, children sing versions of Switchfoot's "Dare You to Move," Casting Crowns' "If We Are the Body," BarlowGirl's "Never Alone," and MercyMe's "Word of God Speak," just to name a few. Altogether, the project offers a dozen songs that landed high on the charts, guaranteeing that kids will want to sing along.



#1

Dance Praise

Various Artists

Digital Praise/EMI

LISTEN  BUY 

Patterned after a popular dance video game, this computer game is full of Christian music and hours of fun. Programmed with top hits from artists like Newsboys, Audio Adrenaline, ZOEgirl, tobyMac, and David Crowder Band, it comes with a dance pad that hooks up to your computer, and the game puts arrows up on the screen that show players where to step on the pad, causing them to dance to their favorite Christian songs. Christian music, exercise, and lots of laughs for the whole family—what could be better? That's why *Dance Praise* is our top pick this year.

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