

Duo desires to help shape lives with Scripture songs

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CEDAR HILL—While leading worship for children's camps such as Mt. Lebanon Baptist Encampment in Cedar Hill, the husband-and-wife worship duo Dave and Jess Ray—otherwise known as “Doorpost Songs”—seek to influence the rising generation by developing Scripture-based songs and resources to help children easily remember key passages.

Their name is based on Deuteronomy 6, and their primary desire is to help families become rooted in Scripture through the songs they sing and teach their children. As the parents of three children, this is especially close to their hearts.

“Hearing the words of Scripture in the voices of children will never get old,” Dave Ray said. “What an incredible blessing to help create those moments.

“Doorpost Songs began almost by accident. At the first church we served, our children's minister asked me to write a song for their fall memory verse. I wrote the song and actually liked it, and then I realized that we could do more.”

Ray wrote enough Scripture-based songs for an album, and then he gathered a group of instrumentalists to record the tracks and a children's choir to sing them.

Fulfilling a sacred command

“Once the album was complete, we needed something to call it,” he said.

“Because the focus was Scripture and family, we were immediately drawn to Deuteronomy 6: ‘And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. ... You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.’

“Ultimately, the purpose of these songs is to help God’s word become a part of our family life. It’s a way of fulfilling this sacred command.”

Dave and Jess Ray both have fond memories of growing up in church and crafting their musical skills at an early age.

Jess Ray played bluegrass and gospel music with her family, while also singing while playing the piano, mandolin and cello.

Dave Ray began learning to play the piano as a child, along with singing, and then he started playing the guitar at age 13.

Today, the duo leads worship for a variety of conferences, camps and family worship events around the country.

“We love getting to partner with churches to create fun worship nights that bring the whole family together,” Dave Ray said. “So often, each age group is separated on Sundays, and when we come together, not only can it be incredibly fun but also incredibly meaningful both for parents and kids.

“We also want kids and families to have a deeper love for God’s word. For many of us, God’s word is an afterthought when it should be our lifeblood.”

Encouraging parents to be spiritual leaders

The Rays want to encourage parents to fulfill their role as spiritual leaders.

“It’s not an easy role, but it’s such an important calling,” Dave Ray said.

“We can trust that as we seek to faithfully live out God’s calling, he’ll be with us every step of the way.”

The inspiration for their songwriting process comes directly from reading Scripture passages and putting them to music. However, they admit it can sometimes be a challenging task.

“Most of the Bible was not written to be a song,” Dave Ray said. “It doesn’t have rhyme or meter or symmetry. Even the poetry in Scripture is different from the kind of poetry we use.

“So, a big part of the process is just sitting with a bunch of different verses and testing them musically: ‘Can we find a melody that fits the syllables? Are there rhyming words that we can figure out how to pair? And most importantly, will a kid love singing this?’”

Their ultimate goal is to create songs filled with rich, biblical truths that will help shape young hearts and minds with the gospel.

“Teaching our kids to be worshippers is one of our most important tasks,” Dave Ray said. “We spend so much time trying to get our kids to obey God and much less time teaching them to love God. But love for God is where true obedience comes from. If our kids are going to love God deeply, they must learn to be worshippers.”