

Of Primary Importance

Volume II

Information, Preparation and Application

a practical guide for directors of young choristers

by

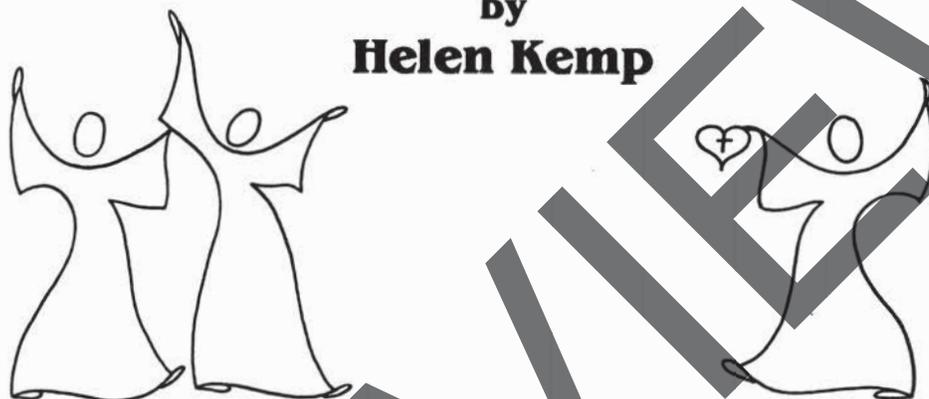
Helen Kemp

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OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE Volume II

by
Helen Kemp



This publication contains miniature study pages of each of the octavos in the *Of Primary Importance, Volume II* anthem series.

The book also includes the hymns, scriptures, and responses from *Sing and Speak of God's Glory*, with each month's pages provided in miniature score.

Sing and Speak of God's Glory Acknowledgements

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Of Primary Importance, Volume II, Anthem Series

The following anthems were written to correspond with *Of Primary Importance, Volume II*:

- CGA-553 Come One, Come All, Come Follow - Philip R. Dietterich
 Unison antiphonal voices with keyboard (General)
- CGA-554 We Come With Joy - John Erickson
 Service music for unison voices with organ (General)
 Call to Worship • Prayer Response • Benediction
- CGA-555 A Waiting Carol - Helen Kemp
 Unison voices with keyboard, hand drum, and opt. recorder or flute (Advent)
- CGA-556 While Angels Sing - B. Wayne Bisbee
 Unison voices with C treble instrument, keyboard, and opt. finger cymbals (Christmas)
- CGA-557 Christmas Stars - Alice Parker
 Unison voices with keyboard (Christmas)
- CGA-558 For the Beauty of the Earth - John Ferguson
 Unison voices with organ, opt. flute(s), opt. clarinet, and opt. congregation (General)
- CGA-559 My Song Is Love Unknown - Carolyn Jennings
 Unison voices with keyboard (Lenten Season)
- CGA-560 The Whole Bright World Rejoices Now - Carl Schalk
 Unison voices with organ, opt. flute, and opt. handbells [1 octave, 5 bells] (Easter Season)
- CGA-561 I Give You Thanks - Jody W. Lindh
 Unison voices with piano, percussion, opt. bass, and opt. synthesizer (General)
- CGA-562 Small Deeds - John D. Horman
 Unison/two part voices with piano (General)

Supplementary resources:

- CGCT-18 Of Primary Importance, Volume II Anthems
 Rehearsal Cassette
 Produced by Joe Cox and Jody W. Lindh
- CGA-563 Sing and Speak of God's Glory - Helen Kemp
 Hymns, Scriptures, and Responses
 A Primary Resource for Children in Worship
- CGCT-19 Sing and Speak of God's Glory Cassette
 Hymns, Scriptures, and Responses from *Of Primary Importance, Volume II*
 Recorded by the Cathedral Choristers and Cathedral Youth Chorale of Corpus Christi, Texas,
 Lee Gwozdz and Greg Labus, co-directors

Contents

1.	Elementary Voice Training A Guide for Directors of Children's Choirs	8
2.	Guidelines for Vocal Ranges (K-6)	17
3.	A Short Note About High Notes	18
4.	Batter Up! A Pitch for Boys.....	19
5.	Keep the Momentum Going Careful Planning for Successful, Productive Rehearsals	21
6.	Treats that Teach	22
7.	Pre-Christmas Round-Up A Wreath of Holiday Choir Activities	23
8.	The Plan A Chart of the Months, Anthems, Symbols, Hymns, and Scriptures	24
9.	<i>Sing and Speak of God's Glory</i> Introducing Hymns and Scripture to Children	25
	Ten Ways to Use <i>Sing and Speak of God's Glory</i>	26
10.	About the Anthems, Study Plans, Cassette Tapes, and Symbols	27
11.	The Symbols	28
12.	Director's Study Plans	
	September: <i>Come One, Come All, Come Follow</i> Philip R. Dietterich	29
	October : <i>We Come With Joy</i> John Erickson	33
	November: <i>A Waiting Carol</i> Helen Kemp	41
	December: <i>While Angels Sing</i> B. Wayne Bisbee	49
	<i>Christmas Stars</i> Alice Parker	55
	January: <i>For the Beauty of the Earth</i> John Ferguson	59
	February: <i>My Song Is Love Unknown</i> Carolyn Jennings	65
	March: <i>The Whole Bright World Rejoices Now</i> Carl Schalk	71
	April: <i>I Give You Thanks</i> Jody W. Lindh	77
	May: <i>Small Deeds</i> John D. Horman	85
13.	Supplementary Resource Materials	91
14.	Postlude	92
15.	About the Author	92

Acknowledgements

Of Primary Importance, Volume II, is in print because *you* asked that there be a sequel to the original publication. Without your encouragement and positive endorsement, Volume II would not have been created.

There is a whole network of talented and dedicated colleagues who gave time, energy, professional advice and spiritual support. To the following, I give my ♥ felt thanks:

- the thousands of children who have *taught* me how to teach;
- John S.C. Kemp, my husband and friend, whose lifetime of experience as a minister of music kept the purpose of the project in focus;
- Kathy Lowrie, Music and Literary Editor for Choristers Guild, whose friendship and constant support combined with superb editorial and musical skills enabled me to bring these ideas to life;
- Doris Friedell, Art Editor for Choristers Guild, whose creative, colorful spirit brought beauty and meaning to the book, anthem covers, and all the pages she touched;
- Patricia Evans, Executive Director of Choristers Guild, whose guiding hand directs and supports all that happens at the Guild Headquarters;
- And to the composers who created charming, challenging, beautiful, and appropriate anthems (poetry and musical settings) for this important age group:

B. Wayne Bisbee
Philip R. Dietterich
John Erickson
John Ferguson
John D. Horman

Carolyn Jennings
Jody W. Lindh
Alice Parker
Carl Schalk

Looking back several decades, I realize how the mentors of my youth continue to inspire my own pilgrimage. I honor them with my unending gratitude:

- LoRean Hodapp Powell, singer and teacher, who instilled in me the love for beautiful singing;
- Ruth Krehbiel Jacobs, whose commitment to the musical, spiritual, and artistic potential of children's choirs in the church led me to "follow the call."

Helen Kemp
April 1991

Prelude

As we journey toward the year 2000, it gives us pleasure to report that children's choirs continue to be **Of Primary Importance** to thousands of directors, teachers, choristers, churches, and schools all over our country and around the whole world.

In this publication, *Of Primary Importance, Volume II*, we have continued our original plan to create helpful materials of excellent quality, within the grasp of that important segment of the musical world called "the children's choir in the church." Having traveled this year from east to west, coast to coast, and from north to south, Canada to Texas, I can tell you that children's choirs are alive and well. They bring joy, beauty and hope for the future to congregations of all sizes and religious persuasions.

It is our desire that teachers of *children*, our greatest national treasures, will be able to use these carefully created materials to nurture the musical and spiritual lives of singing children in our churches, homes and schools.

With William Byrd (1588)
we agree that:

*Since singing is so good a thing
We wish every child would learn to sing.*



alt. Helen Kemp (1991)

Soli Deo Gloria!

1. Elementary Voice Training

A Guide for Directors of Children's Choirs

We write a great deal about imaginative programming, enthusiastic leadership, coordination with the church school curriculum, and adequate preparation for rehearsals. Every one of these subjects is vitally important in our choir work and we speak of these things with certainty and clarity.

However, when we begin to talk or write about vocal method, we become less proficient in expressing ourselves clearly. This, I believe, is caused by different sets of terminology which we acquired at various periods of our own vocal studies. All of us should bear in mind that there are many ways of expressing the same truths, and that it is not necessary to verbalize with long professional terms in order to work successfully with children's voices. But *singing* is essential. Choirs are for singing. To sing well, children need instruction, guidance, and positive singing experiences.

What is good tone? Do I know what sounds I want to hear? Do I know how to go about developing good tone with my children? Though tone quality is an intangible thing, there are proven and tangible ways to achieve it. The foundations of good tone are easy to lay if approached in a positive, disciplined manner. The *development* of good tone, however, is never-ending.



STOP



LOOK



LISTEN

At your very next rehearsal, take this railroad crossing advice.



STOP! Stop singing *with* the children. Stop leading them with a too heavy piano. Stop being so satisfied with learning the notes that you never get to the *music*.



LOOK! Look at the children's faces. Do they show signs of physical strain? What about their eyes and expressions? Do they look alert and "tuned in," or are they passive and far-away in thought? Are they slumped over and long-necked? What is the overall picture of your young choristers as they sing? Body language gives us important clues.



LISTEN! Listen to the singing sounds the children are making. *Listen* honestly, objectively. Face the music! Don't drown them out with piano or your own voice. Are they shouting? Are they whispering? Are they talk-singing? Do you rely on a few good singers to carry the others?

How and when shall I begin my improvement campaign?

Begin *now* – with YOU! Be sure that your inner ear knows what it wants to hear. Good recordings will help. Purchase at least one. Listen carefully, and be aware of tone quality, pitch, diction, dynamics, and phrasing.

Here is a short list of types of recordings which would provide realistic and positive vocal models.

- *a good church choir*
Westwood Choristers, Minneapolis, MN
Ronald A. Nelson, director
- *a select group*
Bach Choir, Princeton, NJ
Sue Ellen Page, director
Cathedral Choristers, Corpus Christi, TX
Lee Gwozdz and Greg Labus, co-directors
- *a concert choir*
Toronto Children's Choir, Toronto, Canada
Jean Ashworth Bartle, director
- *a professional choir*
American Boy Choir, Princeton, NJ
James Litton, director
- *a church related choir school*
St. Thomas Boys' Choir, New York, NY
Gerre Hancock, director
- *an English cathedral choir*
King's College Choir, Cambridge, England
Stephen Cleobury, director

Try singing hymns and anthems you plan to teach, not for the purpose of singing *with* the children, but to establish a concept of tone within yourself. The golden rule should be to show choristers how to do it, but then let them do it themselves. Choose a few good *a cappella* warmups to become aware of the vocal sounds your choristers are producing.



Come One, Come All, Come Follow

by Philip R. Dietterich

A Director's Study Plan by Helen Kemp

*Come one, come all, come follow the call
of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all.*

There are many ways to introduce the text, but I think the words of Matthew 4:18-22 best illustrate the source of "following the call."

"As Jesus walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And he called to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him."

Composer Philip Dietterich was commissioned to write this piece for the children's choirs in a church in Kentucky as part of their 200th anniversary celebration. It is subtitled, "A Call and Response Song." How appropriate to use that style, for it is exactly how many church hymns and songs were taught way back in 1790. There were no hymnals in the pews, so the congregation had to follow the song leader. They called this teaching process "lining out" the tune. The leader sang line one:



Then the whole congregation would respond, in echo style, learning the words, the rhythm, and the melody by following the leader.

So, in this delightful beginning-of-the-year song, we have both biblical and historic connections to set the stage. At the same time, we can get our children to sing confidently and cheerfully, because they have the advantage of *seeing* the notation on the music page as they hear a model sound. The importance of the developmental process of the rote-to-note transition cannot be over-emphasized. This whole series of anthems, with each measure numbered and with the vocal line on its own staff, makes the development of music reading skills part of the educational plan.

There are several possibilities for achieving the call and response effect:

Part I

- adult (perhaps choir director)
- an older child (confidence and good pitch required)
- a small group (3 or 4 children – a model sound)
- an older choir (upper elementary)

Part II – always echos Part I

- younger children (grades 1-3)
- if choir is large enough, divide into two equal groups



We come
with Joy on this
God's holy day.

Published by CHORISTERS GUILD 2834 W. Kingsley Rd., Garland, Texas 75041
Distributed by THE LORENZ CORPORATION 501 E. Third St., Box 802, Dayton, Ohio 45401

Dear Choristers,

Do you know that when you sing in your church choir, you are in *partnership* with your pastor or minister or anyone else who *leads* the service of worship? Your choir is able to do much more than "sing a special anthem." You can be leaders in *worship*, and that is the most important thing you do as a choir!

With this music you are holding in your hand, you have three short and lovely pieces called *service music*. That means your choir could be responsible for:

1. calling the congregation to worship
2. *responding* to the minister's or the congregation's *prayer*, and
3. singing a beautiful *benediction*, asking God to bless each worshiper at the end of the service.

Wouldn't you like to have *your* choir provide *all* the music leadership for a service some Sunday morning?

These three pieces are all in the key of D major. That makes the music flow through the service like a repeated color in a tapestry.

Get the "feel" of the key of D major. Sing it with many sounds:

Loo loo loo loo, lah lah lah lah
Ah leh loo yah, Ah leh loo yah
Come and wor-ship, Come and wor-ship
God be with you, Christ be with you.

(Round and full)
(Light and bright)

Be sure to think about the *meaning* of each of these short and wonderful texts. If you *know*, it will *show* as you sing with joy in your heart.

Call to Worship (John Erickson)

We are here with a purpose. We come with joy on this God's holy day,
to sing, to pray, on this God's holy day.

Please come and worship! Come sing, come pray, come worship our God.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Prayer Response (Psalm 19:14)

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in your sight, O Lord,
our strength and our Redeemer.

Benediction (John Erickson)

Now may the light of God be with you to guide you,
Now may the love of God be with you to strengthen you.
Now may the Son of God be with you to be a joy
in all you do, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

- Helen Kemp

For my nephew, Eric, who loves God

We Come With Joy
(Call to Worship)

John Erickson

John Erickson

With anticipation and joy (♩ = 100)

The book, *Of Primary Importance, Volume II*, by Helen Kemp (CGBK-54), includes teaching suggestions for this octavo and ten others in the series. Also available: cassette recording of the octavos (CGCT-18).

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CGA-554

CGA-554



We Come With Joy

Service music for unison voices and organ

Call to worship • Prayer response • Benediction

by John Erickson

A Director's Study Plan by Helen Kemp

Last Sunday I visited a church where the children's choir took the responsibility for the music of the entire service. What a wonderful idea! There was a call to worship, a prayer response, and a benediction, plus an offertory anthem, two hymns, and a scripture passage read by a chorister. The scripture was punctuated, at several points during the reading, by the refrain of the hymn which the children and congregation had just sung. The children were well-prepared, confident, and very effective as leaders in worship. For such a project to really

fly, many rehearsal hours were spent preparing for the *drama* of worship.

To encourage others to try the idea, John Erickson has composed a worship "trilogy" for us. He chose three texts – a call to worship, a prayer response, and a benediction – all in the key of D, not unlike the service music of some of our great English church music composers. The melodies are short and simple, but *not* ordinary. Each one has a significant role in liturgy.



We Come with Joy – A Call to Worship



The text, written by the composer, says it all in very few words:

We are here

*We come with joy on this God's holy day,
To sing, to pray, on this God's holy day,*

*Invitation:
Come join with us!*

*Come sing, come pray,
Come worship our God,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

The Tune:

Get the *feel* of the key (D major) and the *lilt* of the scale as you warm up the voices:



Du - dah, du - dah du, _____ Du - dah, du - dah du. _____
Du - bee, du - bee du, _____ Du - bee, du - bee du. _____
Come and sing and pray, _____ on God's ho - ly day. _____

Notice that the second space A pitch is important. It is sung 15 times in this song!

Practice these *intervals*:

We 3 2 1
 come with joy on this God's ho - ly day.

5 6 4 5 5 4 3 2 1 5
 Come sing, come pray on this God's ho - ly day.

Begin
 here ⇌



You can almost learn the melody “off the wall” from a circle scale. Using a pointer, “play” the melody by tapping the tune (intervals and rhythms) on the circle notes. Reinforce with single line piano melody. For children who are just beginning to read music notation, the visual connection of up, down, the same, skip, and leap helps them to grasp the concept of intervals. Immediately transfer the focus from the wall circles to the music page. Link visual, spatial, and pitch awareness experience.



Let’s learn the rest of the song right from the music score. Your eyes and your *brain* will guide your voices. Sing the alleluias with joy!



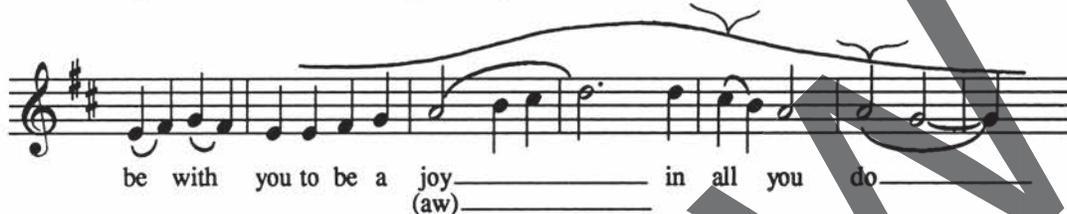
Remember that melodies have shapes in *time* and *space* and *sound*. Move your arm and hand to *shape* the three alleluias.

Al-le-lu - ia, Al-le-lu - ia, Al-le-lu - ia.



Prepare to sing a long phrase – excellent posture, low breath, and an alert attitude! Maybe you can learn to *stagger* breathing (not all breathing at the same time) so it will sound continuous and smooth. You might experiment to see where you need to breathe – but not at the same place as your neighbor!

Practice singing this exciting l o n g p h r a s e !



Accent very slightly where the birds have “touched down.”



Now that you have worked on special phrases, take time to listen to the cassette tape to hear the entire benediction.

Follow the score very closely. Observe the resting measures (1-2, 9-10, and 17-18) and, of course, listen attentively to the very end. It is not over till it's over! Be alert, listening and thinking right through the final measure (34).

Try singing this beautiful benediction with accompaniment. People in your congregation will be especially blessed when you sing these words from your ♥

A word chart will help you memorize. Use it as a reminder until *all* the words are in your own computer!

	of God	be with you	to guide
Love of God	be with you	to strengthen	
Son of God	be with you	to be a 	
Through 	our Lord,	Ah _____ meh _____	n.



November

Overview for November



Hymn:
Now Thank We All Our God

Symbol:



Scripture:
Psalm 92:1-4



Anthem:
A Waiting Carol
- Helen Kemp

Pages for this month from *Sing and Speak of God's Glory* by Helen Kemp (CGA-563)

6

Now Thank We All Our God

1. Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
2. All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given;

who wondrous things has done in whom this world rejoices;
the Son, and him who reigns with them in highest heaven;

who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way
the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;

with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day,
for thus it was, is now, and shall be ever more.

Text: Martin Rinkart, 1586-1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878
Music: Nun danket alle Gott, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662; harm. Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847

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CGA-563

7

Psalm 92:1-4

Refrain:

Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices.

Scripture text:

It is good to praise you, Lord,
And to sing to your name, O God on high,
Proclaiming each morning that you are faithful,
Each evening that we can trust in you,
Using ten-stringed lyre and harp,
Using the sounds of music,
Lord, you have made me delight in your actions;
I celebrate what your hands have done.

Refrain

Dear Choristers:

Did you know that most services of worship include a time for *thanksgiving*? It may be through a prayer or a song, but giving thanks to God our Creator is an important part of worship.

In America we celebrate Thanksgiving Day as a national holiday in November, but in our churches, every Lord's Day is a time for giving thanks.

That's what this great hymn is about! Why not memorize it? Put it into your own "personal computer" so you can recall it whenever you want to give thanks "with heart and hands and voices."

Stanza 2 is what is called a doxology. We remember it by the symbol:

Father

Son Holy Spirit

— Helen Kemp

CGA-563