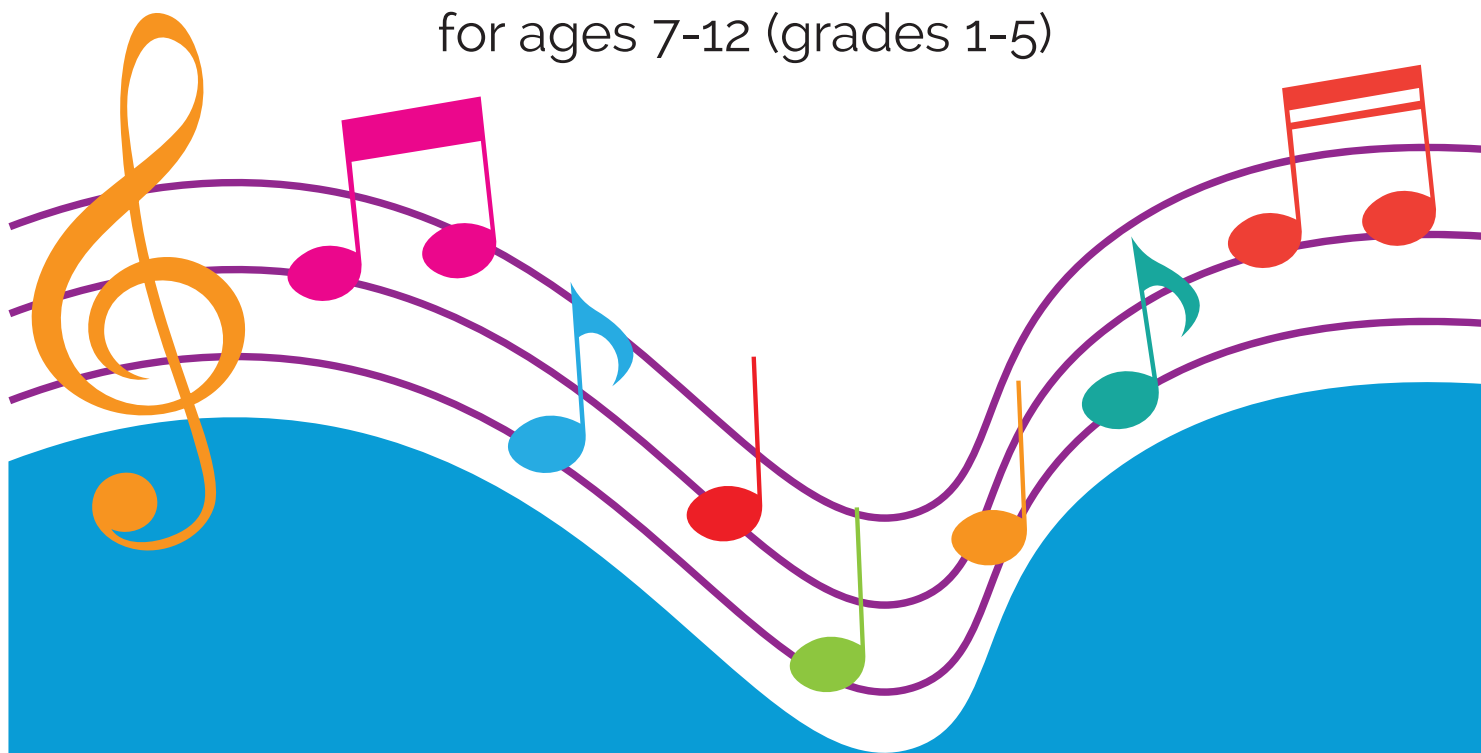


A Year of Beautiful Singing

Volume 2: Addressing the Basics

A comprehensive faith-based choir curriculum
for ages 7-12 (grades 1-5)



Written by
Heather Potter

Introduction

Welcome to volume two of *A Year of Beautiful Singing*! After spending a choir year focusing on the skills needed for singing beautifully (volume one), your singers should now be ready to acquire more musical information. While continuing to include exercises for developing healthy vocal tone, volume two lessons begin to highlight the language of music. Instruction includes activities and strategies for identifying and responding to music symbols and notation. Singers will become more familiar with musical form, dynamics, and tempo markings. They will practice naming and responding to rhythmic notation. Lessons include introductory solfège, preparing for more extensive ear training in volume three.

This curriculum provides the tools you need as a volunteer director or part-time staffer leading children's choirs: thoughtfully selected repertoire, carefully crafted lessons, beautifully prepared visuals, resources for rehearsal, articles for teacher training, and even an end-of-year service template. If you have not led a children's choir before, each week's lesson is laid out for you to follow. If you have years of experience teaching children, use this curriculum as a resource to stimulate your own creativity or remind you of things long-forgotten.

I must repeat what I said in volume one, quoting Alfred Lord Tennyson: "I am a part of all that I have met." I most certainly am a part of all the wonderful teachers I have witnessed, read, and sought to emulate. Their wisdom has woven into my pedagogical vocabulary, teaching strategies, and educational priorities. I am indebted to each for being a part of the teacher I am today. I've incorporated ideas from so many people and for so many years, that it is impossible to credit each individually. My hope is that you will take this pedagogical collage and make it your own.

– Heather Potter

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A Year of Beautiful Singing (Volume 2: Addressing the Basics) is designed to support the learning of the following choral literature for unison/two-part treble voices:

CGA242	Prayer of St. Francis by Helen Litz
CGA553	Come One, Come All, Come Follow by Philip Dieterich
CGA606	Hosanna to the Son by Jody W. Lindh
CGA637	Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day by Jane Marshall
CGA956	Ding, Dong! Merrily on High arr. Ken Berg
CGA1357	Guide Us, Lord by Mark Patterson
CGA1439	Amazing Day by Rebecca Thompson
CGA1713	Prayer by Natalie Sleeth, arr. Katie Houts
CGA1753	May God Bless Us and Keep Us by Katie Houts

The purchase of this curriculum does not include permission to photocopy the anthems listed above. Contact Choristers Guild to order copies of these anthems for your singers or to request a license for watermarked reproducible PDFs of these anthems for your choir.

Reproducible Visual Aid Pages

Appendix 1 includes a number of visual aids referenced throughout the lesson plans: rhythm charts, pictorial aids, student handouts, and more. You may reproduce these Appendix pages for your choir – copy them, print and enlarge them, project them on a screen, or use them as a guide to create your own visual aids on large posterboard. A lesson plan sometimes calls for the text of a visual to be hidden so the children can focus only on rhythm; long strips of cardstock are effective at hiding text until it's needed. At the end of this curriculum book, you'll find ready-to-print musical terms for your **Word Wall** and the lyric cards for **Prayer of St. Francis**. Consider printing these cards on cardstock and laminating them for repeated use.

You may download the entire set of visuals in digital format at the following link:

<https://www.choristersguild.org/beautiful-singing2/>



Focus on Singing

Encourage singers to follow the directions as you sing **The Posture Song** (see *Appendix 1*). After you sing, prompt singers to recall posture specifics from the song.

Invite children to stand and mirror your movements as you lead the **Stretch Prayer** (see *Appendix 1*).

Inhale as if filling an inner tube around the waist. Release the breath as if exhaling through a drinking straw. From this tall position - with shoulders back and palms forward - encourage children to mime a backstroke. The shoulders should remain back and down, and the core should engage.

Inhale again and exhale as if inflating a balloon through pursed lips (use the real balloon for a visual, guiding singers to mime holding, filling, and tying off a balloon as you do it).

Holding the filled balloon in both hands, shape your mouth to resemble the size and shape of the balloon.

Keeping this mouth shape, model **[oh]** in a high speaking voice (children echo). Model **[ah]** in a high speaking voice (children echo).

Maintain the same mouth shape/space and have singers echo-speak: *Hosanna in excelsis* (hoh-zah-nah een ek-shell-cause).

Then, sing:



Objectives

1. Establish the rehearsal process
2. Demonstrate correct singing posture
3. Accurately echo pitch
4. Demonstrate a steady beat
5. Accurately respond to basic rhythmic notation

Lesson 1

Come One, Come All, Come Follow

1. Invite the singers to echo as you sing through the entire song. Model tall round vowels, clear consonants, and two-measure legato phrases.
2. Instruct singers to hold either hand flat in front of their face, palm turned toward mouth, as a spit guard. Echo sing *He'll teach you to walk, he'll teach you to talk* and *He'll teach you to work, he'll teach you to play* with attention to a crisp **K** as the final consonant.

Amazing Day

1. ☀ Ask singers to request permission to gently tap their neighbors' shoulders for this activity. If a child declines, singers may tap their own knee or collarbone.
2. Establish a moderately fast tempo and invite children to tap the beat on their knees. Once the beat is secure, they may (with permission) transfer the beat to their neighbors' shoulders. Keep the beat going.
3. Cue the pianist to begin the introduction. As the singers tap the beat, sing the song for them, temporarily ignoring the **rit.** in m22 and m32.
4. Tell the children you will repeat the song, but this time you will change something. (You're going to add the **rit.**) Ask them if your change makes it difficult to maintain their steady beat. Reestablish the steady beat on knees, before moving it to neighbors' shoulders.
5. Sing the song again, this time taking the **molto rit.** in m22. Their steady beats should crash at this point. Give them an opportunity to verbalize what happened.
6. Hold up the Word Wall term **ritardando** and explain the term (see *Materials and Preparation*). Italian for *slowing down*, this musical term tells the musician to gradually decrease the speed of their singing or playing. Note: this is still "by ear" — no scores for steps 7-10.
7. Show them the Word Wall term **a tempo**. Tell the children the next measure is marked **a tempo** which means *at tempo* or *return to the original tempo*. With that instruction, what should happen to their steady beat as you move into m23? (The steady beat should reestablish and continue.)

8. Say: let's test it! Reestablish the steady beat, this time on their own heads, and you begin singing at m19. Feel the effects of the ***molto rit.*** and then immediately return to the original tempo at m23. Continue singing through the end of the song, engaging the ***rit.*** at m32 and ***a tempo*** for the piano at m33.
9. Ask the children to define the following terms as you post the terms on your Word Wall: ***ritardando***, ***a tempo***



The physical connection between singers will assist those who struggle to feel a steady pulse within their own bodies. Input from a neighbor can help regulate and establish the beat within the individual.

Dear Lord, Lead Me Day By Day

1. Invite singers to clap the rhythm patterns (see *Appendix 1*.) As you clap, speak the rhythm syllables aloud.
2. Draw the singers' attention to the rhythms on the board. Choose one rhythm to clap and count for the children, asking them to identify it.
3. After modeling each rhythm, invite all to clap and count each pattern, tracking with your hand if needed.
4. Review rhythms with the following activities:
 - a. Clap and count each pattern in unison or as an echo exercise.
 - b. Label the patterns 1-2-3-4. Call out a number such as "3421." Children clap/count the patterns in the order indicated by the number: third line, fourth line, second line, first line.
 - c. Select a rhythm and clap/count it without identifying it. Allow children to guess and then clap/count in unison.

May God Bless Us and Keep Us

Highlight and define the word *benediction* (blessing). Tell the singers you will end rehearsal each week with a prayer and a blessing song. Returning singers who learned this song last year will be ready to lead the benediction - ask them to do so. If you do not have returning singers or you did not teach this song the previous year, sing it yourself.

Close by speaking together the **Singer's Benediction** (see *Appendix 1*) and singing **May God Bless Us and Keep Us**.

Materials and Preparation



Affix to the wall (these should remain visible throughout the choir year):

Stretch Prayer

Singer's Benediction

*Word Wall: ***ritardando***, ***a tempo***

*A Word Wall is a visual display of important vocabulary and symbols. Keep this displayed throughout the choir year, adding terms as needed.

Write on a board or poster:

rhythms for **Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day** (see *Appendix 1*)

Balloon
Hand chimes (if using)

Expanding or Contracting



Expand

Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day: ask a child to clap/count a rhythm without identifying it. After the group correctly identifies the pattern, all clap/count.

May God Bless Us and Keep Us:

returning singers may add hand chime accompaniment.

Contract

Amazing Day: teach only the A section. Keep the descriptions of ***ritardando*** and ***a tempo*** very concise. Eliminate the Word Wall if your singers are non-readers.

Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day: using only steps 1-3, focus on echo-clapping the rhythms.

Notes for Next Week



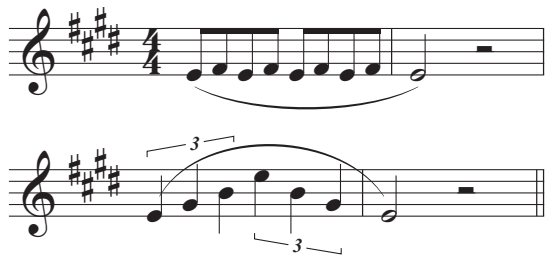


Focus on Singing

Invite children to stand and mirror your movements as you lead the **Stretch Prayer**.

Inhale to fill an inner tube around the waist; exhale through a drinking straw. Reverse the movements of the **Stretch Prayer**, returning to prayer hands. Twist right and exhale, extending your left hand to high-five a neighbor. Inhale as you return to center, then twist left and exhale, extending your right hand to high-five another neighbor.

Vocalize on lip trills. Encourage relaxation by shaking hands (as if drying them) while you trill:



Teach **All the Earth Sings Joy!** (see Appendix 1) Focus on inhaling with the mouth in the shape of the [ah]. Reinforce forward vowel placement by adding hand movement. Begin with hands at shoulder height, palms facing each other (6 inches apart). As you sing, point the fingers up and move the hands out from the body in an upward arch.

Sing **Ritardando**.

Sing **Hallelu, Hallelu**. Repeat and sing only the phrase *Praise ye the Lord*.



Objectives

1. Accurately echo pitch
2. Demonstrate **staccato** and **legato** articulations
3. Demonstrate basic vowel sounds and shapes
4. Demonstrate clear articulation of consonants

Lesson 5

Come One, Come All, Come Follow

1. Stand and sing straight through with attention to round vowels, a strong **K** sound on the word *come*, and **legato** phrases.
2. Continue experimenting with ways to divide the two parts.

Amazing Day

1. Ask children to demonstrate the meaning of **legato** and **staccato** with their hands, then to demonstrate the difference with their voices as they stand and sing the entire song. Before they sing, select one child as the Listener, who will assess **staccato** and **legato**, **mf** and **f**, **rit.** and **a tempo** in the group's singing. After singing, ask for the Listener's response.
2. 💡 Shape tall [ah] vowels with the hands, modeling the vowel shape in the words *God* and *amazing*. Encourage singers to show the [ah] as they sing each one. Are there other words in the opening section that need a tall [ah]? (*and, animals*)
3. Instruct the singers to look at the middle section of the song (m15-22). What words need [ah]s in this section? (*around, us, God's, love, all*) Sing and concentrate on shaping these vowels.
4. If time allows, repeat once more and try singing from memory.



Although the words *and* and *animals* do not contain a true [ah], this basic vowel shape is nuanced to create the sound these words require (same sound as *apple*). Start here and work for more finesse as the singers gain experience opening their mouths.

Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day

1. Ask: what is the purpose or intent of this song? (the text is a prayer)
2. Each verse has a different dynamic marking. Find these symbols and match them to the correct verse: **mp** (verse 1), **p** (verse 2), **mf** (verse 3) (**mf** is already

posted on Word Wall). Define **mp** and **p** and affix to Word Wall.

- Trace the verses throughout the song, omitting the refrain. Remind them as they lead the congregation in prayer, it is important for the people to understand the words of the song. Attend to beginning and ending consonants. Lean into important syllables and de-emphasize less-important syllables by applying **tenuto** stress to the quarter notes. Add **tenuto** to the Word Wall.
- What text begins both verses 1 and 2? Sing it without looking at it.
- Divide the group into two sections, assigning each either verse 1 or 2. Instruct both groups to sing verse 3. Remind them to omit the refrain and concentrate only on the verses. Sing and then swap verses.
- Continue in a round robin for memory work. Recalling the repeated musical phrases from Lesson 2, assign one group to lead and the other to echo. This means group one sings m4-8 and 12-16. Group two sings m8-12 and 16-20. Each group should mouth whatever words their group does not sing aloud. Swap assignments for verse 2 and all sing verse 3 in unison.

Prayer

*Note: during the first half of the year, rehearsal activities related to **Prayer** are intended to lay the general groundwork of solfège - leading to pattern recognition and part-singing. We will fully explore and learn this anthem in Lessons 13-18.*

- If using step bells, play the descending and ascending scale on the bells. If not, use another instrument.
- Invite the singers to sing the solfège for each pitch as you play.
- Teach Curwen hand signs and sing the solfège while practicing the hand signs. Set a tempo slow enough for the children to succeed.

Close by speaking together the **Singer's Benediction** and singing **May God Bless Us and Keep Us**.

Materials and Preparation



Solfège Hand Sign Chart (page 92)
Word Wall: **tenuto, mp, p**
Step bells (if using) or other similar instruments

Expanding or Contracting



Expand

Come One, Come All, Come Follow: Invite soloists to lead the call. Add movement devised by the children.

Prayer: Invite singers to echo solfège patterns.

Contract

Amazing Day: Focus only on the A sections.

Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day: Work on word stress with the refrain instead of all three verses. If you teach the verses, skip step 4. In step 5, you provide the leadership and ask the full group to echo.

Prayer: Teach only a few hand signs at once, beginning with **sol - mi - do**. With experience, the children can add **fa** and **re** before extending to a full scale. Focus on singing the pitch associated with the hand gesture.

Notes for Next Week





Focus on Singing

Invite singers to sit tall and establish a steady beat on their own knees. Introduce **As for Me and My House** (see *Appendix 1*) and have the children echo. Share the scripture reference.

Invite children to stand and mirror your movements as you lead the **Stretch Prayer**.

Inhale to fill an inner tube around the waist; exhale through a drinking straw. Reverse the movements of the **Stretch Prayer**, returning to prayer hands. Twist right and exhale, extending your left hand to high-five a neighbor. Inhale as you return to center, then twist left and exhale, extending your right hand to high-five another neighbor.

Sing **Hosanna in excelsis**. Repeat, mouthing the words by making no sound. Sing aloud two more times - first **staccato**, then **legato**.

Sing **All the Earth Sings Joy!** Concentrate on making the melody as **legato** as possible.



Objectives

1. Demonstrate **staccato** and **legato** articulations
2. Accurately respond to basic rhythmic notation
3. Match pitch

Lesson 6

Prayer

1. Sing a scale using solfège syllables and Curwen hand signs. Start at the top, descend, and ascend back to the starting pitch.

Ding, Dong! Merrily on High

1. Using the rhythm cards, count-sing Rhythm 1. Invite a singer to identify this as the rhythm of the first phrase of **Dear Lord, Lead Me Day By Day**.
2. Clap and count-speak Rhythm 2. Notice how this is similar/different from Rhythm 1.
3. Look at Rhythm 3. How is it the same and different from Rhythm 2? Clap and count Rhythm 3.
4. Clap and count Rhythms 4 and 5.
5. Now clap the full anthem refrain for the singers, asking them to notice how many times you clap Rhythm 2 before continuing through the remainder of the rhythm cards (5x).
6. What if we add melody to this rhythm? Invite the accompanist to play the melody in m13-20 as you lightly tap and count-speak the rhythm together.
7. What if we add text to this melody and rhythm? Sing the final phrase: *Hosanna in excelsis*. Invite the children to sing this phrase (clarify that it is Latin). Coach their Latin vowels to be pure and round.
8. Sing the entire refrain by count-singing Rhythms 2 (5x) and 3 and singing *Hosanna in excelsis* for Rhythms 4-5.

Prayer of St. Francis

Play **Musical Road Map** (see *Appendix 2* for full game details). Begin at m4 and model tall, round vowels and **legato** phrases as you play. Play several rounds, extending further each time (noting **1st and 2nd endings, repeat signs**, and the **D.S.**).

Close by speaking together the **Singer's Benediction** and singing **May God Bless Us and Keep Us**.

Materials and Preparation



Rhythm cards for **Ding, Dong! Merrily on High** (see *Appendix 1*)
Solfège Hand Sign Chart (page 92)

Expanding or Contracting



Expand

As for Me and My House: Ask: How can we demonstrate that we serve the Lord? Form their answers into new verses.

Add a hymn to rehearsal.

Contract

Ding, Dong! Merrily on High: Skip step 3. Model each rhythm and allow the children to echo as you track the rhythm on the board. Use steps 6-7 to gain repetitions. Move to step 8 when the children are secure in the rhythm and melody.

Prayer of St. Francis: Do not play **Musical Road Map**. Teach only the refrain.

Notes for Next Week





Focus on Singing

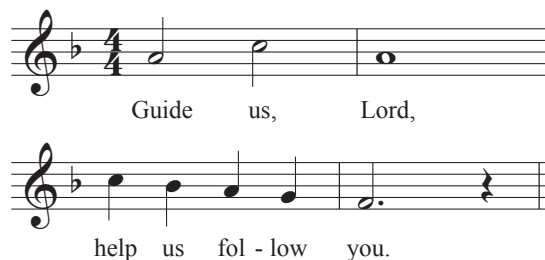
Echo-clap rhythms of **Ding, Dong! Merrily on High** refrain with rhythm cards.

Invite children to stand and mirror your movements as you lead the **Stretch Prayer**.

Inhale as if filling an inner tube around the waist. Release the breath as if exhaling through a drinking straw.

Encourage singers to follow the directions as you sing the **Posture Song**.

Concentrate on tall, round vowels - **molto legato**!



Establish the key of D-major. Invite singers to audiate a D-major scale, descending and ascending. Encourage hand signs to help you monitor participation. Repeat the descending and ascending scale patterns using a lip trill. Repeat once more, singing on solfège.

Sing **As for Me and My House**.

Now sing the entire call phrase and repeat with a variation.

- Ask children to audiate the echo phrases (no sound)
- Challenge children to sing only the word *house*.
- Ask children to sing only the words *house and Lord*.



Objectives

1. Accurately respond to basic rhythmic notation
2. Accurately audiate pitches
3. Demonstrate **staccato** and **legato** articulations
4. Demonstrate clear articulation of consonants

Lesson 7

Amazing Day

1. Breathe an [ah] vowel and sing a **legato** melody:



Repeat and sing the same pattern **staccato**.

2. Say: Without looking in your music, let's list the things we thank God for in our song (this amazing day, work, play, friends, family, animals, happiness, gentleness, love, peace, joy). What are these last characteristics called? (Fruit of the Spirit) These characteristics are evident when God's Spirit is present. (*Look around...see God's Holy Spirit everywhere.*)
3. Challenge the singers to sing their thanks to God with this list as a cue.
4. Ask the children what they would add to the list of thanks if they were writing the song text. Hear from several volunteers.
5. Give the children 30-45 seconds to look in their music at words or melody they need to refresh. Remind them to attend to rhythmic articulation and dynamics. Sing the song again.

Ding, Dong! Merrily on High

1. Are there volunteers to demonstrate the rhythm of this new song?
2. Are there volunteers to demonstrate the rhythm and sing the final phrase of text?
3. Encourage them to tap the rhythm into their palms and count-sing, changing to text on the final phrase *Hosanna in excelsis*.
4. Lay rhythm cards 2-5 onto the line or space of the floor staff that corresponds to the correct starting pitch for that phrase of the refrain. You will need five cards of Rhythm 2 for this activity. Repeat step 3 while looking at the patterns on the floor.



Focus on Singing

Invite children to stand and mirror your movements as you lead the **Stretch Prayer**.

Inhale to fill an inner tube around the waist; exhale through a drinking straw.

Establish a steady beat, then echo sing **As for Me and My House**. Add additional verses.

Sing **Cats Have Claws**. There should be little discernible difference between the **gl** and **kl** sounds.

Sing **Accelerando**, beginning at a moderate tempo to clarify diction. Increase tempo as much as possible while maintaining clear consonants and tall vowels.

Sing **I Will Rejoice in God** with attention to tall, rounded vowels and legato phrasing.

Lesson 10

Ding, Dong! Merrily on High

1. List on the board the words/syllables attached to half notes or dotted half notes in each verse - sing only these words aloud while audiating everything else. Perform each verse in this manner, omitting the refrains.
2. Repeat this process — but this time, sing aloud everything NOT attached to a half note or dotted half note and audiate the rest. Continue to omit the refrains.
3. 💡 Using an on-off switch cued with your arms, work your way through the entire song. Randomly turn the switch on and off to indicate singing aloud or audiating. Use this exercise to drill the text of the verses.
4. Take a vote: are they ready to sing the verses from memory? Those who vote "no" can hold the music. Encourage the children to test themselves as they sing the verses. If time allows, repeat and encourage everyone to sing from memory—even if they make a mistake!



*Create an on-off switch by stacking your forearms one on top of the other. When arms are stacked and flat, the switch is off, and singers should sing silently. When the top arm rises to a 90-degree angle (fingertips of bottom arm touching the elbow of the top arm, top arm's fingertips pointing to the ceiling), the switch is on, and singers should sing aloud.

Prayer of St. Francis

1. Have each singer make a circle with their hands, held 5 inches from the face, and mimic that same shape with their lips. Now speak *O Lord* without changing the shape or size of the [oh] vowel. (Be sure to drop the **r** in *Lord* so the vowel remains pure.) Sing m4-5 with this same sound.
2. Change the size of the circle by forming it with the thumb and pointer finger of one hand. Pull this small circle approximately one foot away from the face and imagine drawing the lips forward into the same size and shape. Speak the word *instrument* through this space. There should be a rounded [oo] in the middle of the word.



Objectives

1. Demonstrate basic vowel sounds and shapes
2. Accurately audiate pitch
3. Demonstrate appropriate singer's posture

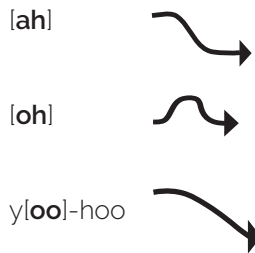


Focus on Singing

Invite children to stand and mirror your movements as you lead the **Stretch Prayer**.

Inhale to fill an inner tube around the waist; exhale through a drinking straw.

Sing the following vocal slides:



Sing **Let Us Pray to the Lord**. Concentrate on rounding the [ah] and [oh] vowels. Release a pretend frisbee at the start of each repetition, and move a half-step higher each time to explore range extension.

Review skills through songs — ask the question, receive an answer, then sing the song containing the term:

1. What are the accents that draw attention to a word or syllable? **tenuto**
2. What is the term for gradually getting louder? **crescendo**
3. What is the term for the opposite — gradually getting quieter? **decrescendo**
4. What musical term means gradually slowing down? **ritardando**
5. What musical term means gradually getting faster? **accelerando**



Objectives

1. Praying prayers of supplication (request)
2. Accurately audiate pitch and rhythm
3. Demonstrate correct singer posture

Lesson 22

Guide Us, Lord

Stand and sing the entire song, focusing on clear diction and **legato** phrases. Draw attention to places you observed clear articulation and beautiful phrasing.

Play a guessing game with the following songs:

Come One, Come All, Come Follow

Tell the children: *When you recognize my song, join me.* Without identifying the title, begin to hum **Come One, Come All, Come Follow**.

Allow a child to identify the song. Stand and sing the whole song, assigning the leader part as you desire.

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

The song we just sang is an invitation to follow Jesus. Last week we learned a hymn that is also an invitation. Can you find the music? Sing together, correcting pitches and rhythms as needed.

Hosanna to the Son

What song do we know that is a retelling of the Palm Sunday story? Invite the children to stand with tall singer posture and sing. As they sing, walk around and tap the shoulders of those with excellent singer posture.

Prayer of St. Francis

The text of this song was written by a famous monk who lived in the 12th century. What is it called? Before they open the music, ask: What is St. Francis praying God will make him? (an instrument of thy peace) How have you been an instrument of peace? Stand and sing the song.

Prayers of the People

1. Explain to the children that they will lead the **Prayers of the People** during the Sharing Service. If your congregation prays this weekly, make a connection for the children. If it is unfamiliar, explain that this is an opportunity to pray as a congregation for the needs of individuals, people in our community, and people around the world — whether we know them personally or not.
2. Give an example: *Lord, we pray for those who are hungry in our city and in _____* (somewhere in the world that has been in the news).
3. *After each prayer, the leader says Lord, in your mercy, and the congregation responds, Hear our prayer. Let's try that.* Repeat the pattern a few times.
4. Provide children an opportunity to write these prayers. Draw attention to the colored paper strips and pencils. Invite the children to pause, think, and pray before writing. Tell them we will remain quiet while the piano music is playing to give everyone a chance to finish their prayers. If they finish early, they can follow the words of the hymn.
5. Cue the accompanist to play three verses of **Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing** while the children write their prayers.
6. Collect the paper strips and pencils at the end of rehearsal. Names are optional.

Close by speaking together the **Singer's Benediction** and singing **May God Bless Us and Keep Us**.

Materials and Preparation



If you list song titles on your rehearsal agenda, list only **Guide Us, Lord** by name. List the rest as **Mystery Song #1, Mystery Song #2** (etc.)

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing hymn sheets (see Appendix 1)

Colored strips of paper and pencils (place these in music folders or underneath chairs before rehearsal)

Expanding or Contracting



Expand

Guide Us, Lord: See Appendix 2 for an expanded lesson plan geared toward two-part singing.

Contract

Prayers of the People: Allow children to dictate their prayers as you write them on the board or a poster.

Notes for Next Week



Appendix 1

Accelerando

Musical notation for the 'Accelerando' section. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time, key of D major. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are: 'Pick up the pace, make it go fast, ac - cel - er - ate, ac - cel - er - ate. The song is mov - ing quick - ly now, ac - cel - er - an - do.'

Pick up the pace, make it go fast, ac - cel - er - ate, ac - cel - er - ate. The
song is mov - ing quick - ly now, ac - cel - er - an - do.

All the Earth Sings Joy

Musical notation for 'All the Earth Sings Joy'. It consists of one staff in 4/4 time, key of D major. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are: 'All the earth sings joy, joy, joy!'

All the earth sings joy, joy, joy!

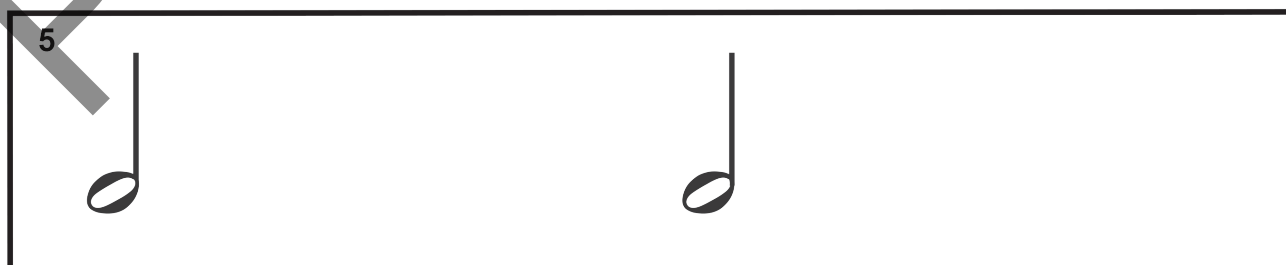
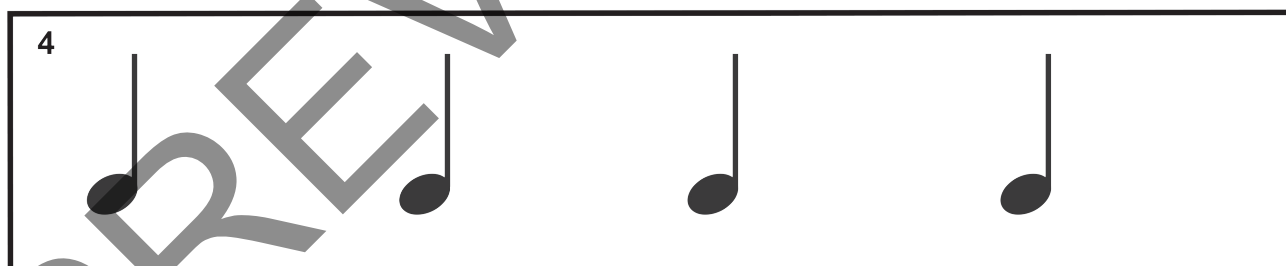
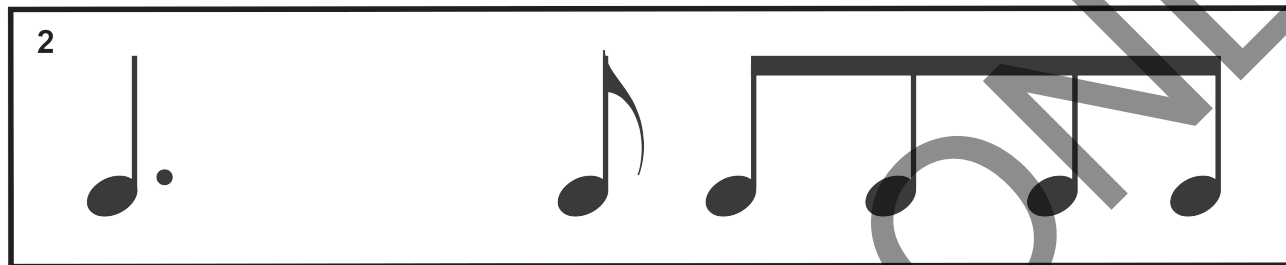
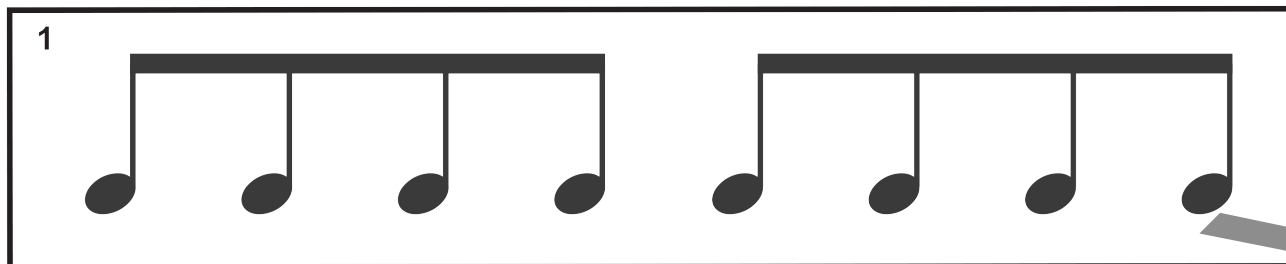
As for Me and My House

Swing!

Musical notation for 'As for Me and My House'. It consists of four staves in 4/4 time, key of D major. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are: 'As for me and my house, (as for me and my house) we will serve the Lord. (we will serve the Lord) As for me and my house, (as for me and my house) we will serve the Lord. (we will serve the Lord) As for me and my house, (as for me and my house) we will serve the Lord. (we will serve the Lord) No mat-ter what our friends might say, we will serve the Lord. (We will serve the Lord.)'

As for me and my house, (as for me and my house) we will serve the Lord. (we will
serve the Lord) As for me and my house, (as for me and my house) we will serve the Lord. (we will
serve the Lord) As for me and my house, (as for me and my house) we will serve the Lord. (we will
serve the Lord) No mat-ter what our friends might say, we will serve the Lord. (We will serve the Lord.)

Ding, Dong! Merrily on High – Rhythm Cards



From *A Year of Beautiful Singing*, by Heather Potter
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Selecting Repertoire to Encourage Beautiful Singing

The key to healthy vocal development is selecting appropriate repertoire for your singers. The songs become the road maps that assist singers in accessing their head tone, learning to notice and shape phrases, and incorporating tall, round vowels into their singing. Identifying rhythmic and melodic patterns within a song lays the groundwork for responding to written notation. The quality of the text determines the potential for spiritual growth. It is not an overstatement to say that selecting repertoire is the director's most important job. How do we do it well? Below are three questions to guide your selection process.

1. Is the text worthwhile and will it contribute to the child's spiritual and mental development?

- Is the text interesting, thought-provoking, and substantive?
- Does it describe or respond to relatable life experiences for children?
- Does the text use rich imagery and interesting words?
- Does the text fit the needs of a worship service?

Don't hesitate to engage children in topics of faith. They can often understand complex concepts explained in age-appropriate terms.

2. Will the children develop good vocal habits by singing this song?

- Will it contribute to your overall goals for tonal development and vocal production?
- Does the melodic line contain long phrases that encourage breath support? Or are all the phrases short and choppy?
- Are the *range* (distance between highest and lowest pitches) and *tessitura* (span of pitches where the majority of the melodic material sits) appropriate for the age of the singers? For elementary-age singers, center the *tessitura* on the treble staff and extend the range lower and higher as their voices mature.
- Does the text require the use of tall, round vowels such as [oh], [ah], and [eh] or are the vowels primarily [ee] and [ay]?
- Does your full repertoire maintain a balance between rhythmic pieces and legato melodies? The breath requirements differ between these styles, and singers need to practice both to develop a well-rounded technique.

3. Does the music demonstrate quality choral writing?

- Is the music—including the accompaniment—stylistically correct?
- Does the melody match the text?
- Are modulations and transitions smooth?
- Is the music sufficiently complex to lend interest to the rehearsal process?
- Does the composer phrase the text correctly?
- Are there awkward moments in the music: transitions, melodic leaps, rhythms that don't match the text?

Musical Terms Cheat Sheet

A quick reference for definitions and application of common music terms

a tempo	An indication to return to the previously established tempo.
accelerando	A steady increase in tempo.
audiate	The ability to understand and interpret music internally, even when no external sound is present.
crescendo	A slow, steady increase in volume.
decrescendo	A slow, steady decrease in volume.
D.S. (Dal Segno) %	A symbol that indicates a return to "the sign" and a repeat of the section between these markings.
dynamics	Volume markings: <i>f</i> (<i>forte</i>) - loud <i>p</i> (<i>piano</i>) - quiet <i>mf</i> (<i>mezzo forte</i>) - medium loud <i>mp</i> (<i>mezzo piano</i>) - medium quiet
1st/2nd endings	Bracketed sections of music labeled with small numbers 1 and 2. The first bracketed section indicates the music to be sung or played the first time one arrives at this place in the score and concludes with a backwards repeat sign. When arriving at this place in the score for the second time, move directly to the second bracket and skip the content of the first bracket.
half step	The smallest distance between two pitches; best visualized on a piano keyboard as the distance from one key to its nearest neighboring key(s).
musical phrase	The pitches that correspond to a phrase of text which is intended to be sung in one breath.
melodic shape	The curve of the pitches in a melody. Imagine drawing a line to connect the noteheads; the resulting image would be the melodic shape.
modulate	To change from one key, or tonality, to another; most often involves a change in key signature.
poco-a-poco	<i>Little by little</i> ; a slow and steady change.
range	The distance between the highest and lowest pitches incorporated in a melody.
repeat signs	Symbols inserted into the score that indicate the beginning and end of a section of music that should be played/sung two (or more) times. When singers arrive at the backwards repeat sign, they return to the forward repeat sign and repeat the section between the signs before continuing into the remainder of the song.
ritardando	A slight slowing, usually at the end of a phrase; abbreviated <i>rit.</i> and <i>ritard.</i>
slur	The arching line above a phrase of text that indicates it should be performed in one breath.
tempo	The pace of the music (how fast or slow it is).
tenuto	A dash placed above a note to indicate a slight stress on the note/pitch/syllable.
tessitura	The span of pitches most used within a given melody.
timbre	The sound quality of a voice or instrument; also the quality that makes a voice or instrument unique and distinct from another. Timbre is described with adjectives such as: "bright, dark, metallic, rich."
triplet	A set of three notes grouped together with a connective bar or bracket and a small 3 above the group. The three notes receive equal weight and rhythmic space. Triplets fit (most commonly) within the span of one beat.
whole step	The distance between two pitches which is equal to two half steps; visualized on a piano as two keys with one key between them (D to E, E to F#, Bb to C).

Singing Our Prayers

A Children's Choir Sharing Service

Welcome

[children's choir director]

Call to Worship (Psalm 100)

[reader's name]

Choral Introit

Come One, Come All, Come Follow

Philip Dieterich

Congregational Hymn

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

NETTLETON

Come, thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace.
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of thy redeeming love.

Call to Confession

[speaker's name]

Song of Confession

Guide Us, Lord

Mark Patterson

Assurance of Pardon

[speaker's name]

Song of Response

Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day

Jane Marshall

Scripture Readings

Psalm 42:8

[reader's name]

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

[reader's name]

Music for Meditation

Amazing Day

Rebecca Thompson

Prayers of the People

[speaker's name]

The prayers of the people were written collectively by the children's choir singers.

One: Lord, in your mercy,

Many: **Hear our prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

Prayer

Natalie Sleeth, arr. Katie Houts

Prayer of Commitment

Prayer of St. Francis

Helen Litz

Benediction

[speaker's name]

Choral Benediction

May God Bless Us and Keep Us

Katie Houts

(Children's Choir Ensemble Name)

(Director)

(Accompanist)

(Include a list of singers' names for each ensemble in your children's choir program)

(Rehearsal Assistant(s))

CGA1713 Prayer - Expanded Teaching Plan

Natalie Sleeth, arr. Katie Houts

Teaching visuals: Elevator solfege scale (*Volume 1*)
Rhythm chart (*Appendix 1*)
Rhythm Relatives chart (*Appendix 1*)
Bible marked with Matthew 6:9-13
Solfege hand sign chart (page 92)

Pre-teaching

The pre-teaching ideas are intended to lay the groundwork for part-singing using solfege pattern recognition. If your choir is not ready to sing in two independent parts, use the solfege exercises to introduce aural pitch patterns, preparing the singers for responding to pitch notation (Volume 3). Implement these pre-teaching ideas weeks before introducing this anthem and repeat them regularly. Building the aural connections for inner hearing—and later sight singing—is a muscle memory activity.

1. Teach a scale using solfege syllables and Curwen hand signs. Repeat this pattern of step-wise movement down the scale and back up the scale weekly for two months before moving on.
2. Invite singers to echo your patterns. As you introduce each one, break up the patterns below into 3-5 pitches. Increase the length of the pattern as singers gain confidence and skill.
(F-Major)

d - r - m - f - m - r - m - r - d - t, - d
d - m - s - f - m - r - f - m - r - d - r - d
d - r - m - f - s - d - f - m - r - d - t, - d
s, - d - r - m - s - f - m - r - f - m - r - d - r - d

Week 1

1. Hide the text on the **Prayer** rhythm chart visual. Invite the children to study the rhythm chart and determine the rhythm represented. Instruct them to do this with *no sound*.
2. Invite a volunteer to count-speak and *patsch* the rhythm. Ask the group to join this leader in repeating the rhythm. Listen to ensure absolute accuracy and unison.
3. Ask them to repeat the rhythm, mouthing the counting syllables and tapping the rhythm with their pointer fingers (so that you can see their hands), making no audible sound.

If your singers are not ready to sing in canon, skip step four and continue to step 5, working in unison.

4. Divide the choir into two groups. Instruct them to repeat this process (important part is *no audible sound*), starting the rhythm when you point to their group. Lead the two groups to perform the rhythm in a round. Repeat this once or twice, allowing you time to focus on each singer to check for success.
5. When most of the singers are succeeding at maintaining the rhythm independently, invite them to tap two fingers into the opposite palm to make a slightly audible sound. Repeat the round.
6. When most of the singers are successful with this, invite them to repeat the process and add whispered count-speaking. If the singers are confident, try speaking the syllables aloud.

Solfège Hand Sign Chart



do



ti



la



sol



fa



mi



re



do

From *A Year of Beautiful Singing*, by Heather Potter
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D.S. %

fermata

1.

1st and 2nd endings

2.

forte *f*

light

darkness

joy.

sadness

A comprehensive faith-based choir curriculum for ages 7-12 (grades 1-5). Guide your developing elementary singers in meaningful musical learning with this wonderful resource from master teacher Heather Potter. **Addressing the Basics** offers twenty-four sequenced lesson plans for church children's choirs of all shapes and sizes. Features complete teaching sequences for eight unison/two-part choral anthems, including rehearsal objectives, warmups and vocal technique exercises, and opportunities to expand or contract the rehearsal activities to meet the needs of your ensemble. The curriculum also includes visual aids and an appendix of pedagogical articles to enrich the skills of the director.

Addressing the Basics is the second volume in the *A Year of Beautiful Singing* series. The second year's thematic content focuses on the basics of music-making in a choral setting, including pitch matching, recognition/demonstration of musical terms, and responding to basic rhythmic notation.

