



STEPPING STONES:

An Ecumenical Children's Choir Curriculum

C. Michael Hawn, Editor

Older Elementary Teacher's Guide

by Craig Singleton

Also available:

Older Elementary Level Listening CD (code CGCD25)

Purchase of this CD includes permission to duplicate for each child.

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Preface

Welcome to the new choir year. Looking ahead and planning are very important if the year is to be successful. This Older Elementary edition of *Stepping Stones* is designed to be a church music education component within your choir experience. A rehearsal that uses a church music education curriculum is more intentional about the process of learning musical skills as well as preparing music. Choristers Guild has addressed the issue of providing music for children's choirs for over forty-five years. Choristers Guild has also sponsored workshops and conferences devoted to teaching musical skills to children in the church context. Now Choristers Guild is addressing the need to teach children music in a systematic way that encourages musical learning as well as performance. *Stepping Stones* is that effort.

The members of Choristers Guild represent a wide variety of denominational and liturgical contexts. Regardless of that context, some things are in common:

- Our children sing, and
- Our children lead in worship.

In order to facilitate these experiences across many denominational lines, the creators of *Stepping Stones* have provided for the following in this curriculum:

Learn to sing better.

Stepping Stones is full of vocalises, ideas, and songs that, if used consistently and properly, should help your children improve the use of their singing voices as an instrument for the glorification of God.



Learn to read music.

Because many public school music programs no longer provide music instruction, it is necessary for the church to reclaim its role as a leader in music education in the community. Reading music is a very important life-long skill that opens many doors for those who possess it. *Stepping Stones* draws from the proven music education

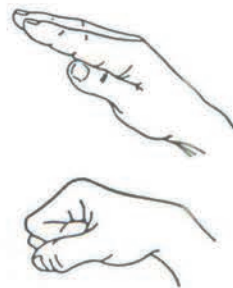
philosophy of Hungarian music educator Zoltán Kodály. His approach involves at least three major components that are a part of this curriculum:

do re mi fa sol
la ti do

- **The use of solfege or tonal syllables** (*do, re, mi, etc.*). This special musical language helps children internalize the sounds of music in an orderly way. Many of us as teachers did not grow up using *solfege*. It is a new language to us. **DO NOT WORRY!** The system gradually unfolds in the curriculum in a manner that allows the teacher to stay ahead of the children. Participation in a special workshop on the Kodály approach will also increase your confidence. You will find your musicianship improving with that of your children. *Solfege* is much more musical than singing on numbers, promoting pure vowels and better tone quality while learning the structure of music.

- **The use of hand signs.**

The use of hand signs with singing is also a tried and true approach in music education. These signs were first used by an Englishman, John Curwen. The hand signs support the *solfege*, providing a kinesthetic link to what is sung. Children learn best through a multi-sensory approach. By singing and signing the music, they hear, feel, and see music in action. Once again, most of us did not grow up using hand signs. **DO NOT WORRY!** The sessions are paced so that the teacher who practices a little each week can easily



keep ahead of the students. A chart with the hand signs that you will need is found on page 5.

- **The use of rhythm syllables.** Like the *solfege* tonal syllables, the use of special rhythm syllables promotes rhythmic independence and security. Children like to learn new languages. This French system of learning rhythm provides the children with a special musical language that opens the door to many fun ways of learning.

Learn hymns they can use in worship.

Hymns are the sung faith of the church. Just as we share the same scripture, we share many of the same hymns. There is a body of ecumenical hymns that links most of our churches. The teaching of hymns—one a month—is central to this curriculum. A chart containing the hymns for the year is found on page 7. *Stepping Stones* provides you with hymn studies for each of these hymns. Although the hymns have been chosen because they are found in most recent denominational hymnals, there may be some variation from one hymnal to another. You will need to note these in your hymnal and make changes as necessary. The children may not remember all of the songs you teach them. As the sung faith of the church, hymns are music to live and grow by.



Have Fun

Do all of the above while having fun.

This is where a curriculum comes into the picture. If you are like most teachers, you have very little time to plan and less time for rehearsal than you would like. A curriculum helps you plan your time better.

Who should use the Older Elementary edition of *Stepping Stones*?

The Early Childhood and Early Elementary editions are prerequisite to the Older Elementary Level which takes the children much further in their musical reading experience. This edition is designed for children who are in choirs where the focus is on grades 4-6 or 7. It may be possible to use the Older Elementary Level in choir settings where there are, for example, grades 1-6. At some point in the rehearsal it would be necessary to divide the choirs according to age and experience. The younger group could use the Early Elementary edition while the older group used the Older Elementary materials. It is easy for rehearsals to become rote music learning sessions with little educational value. The hymns used in the Primary Age Level (Year 2) by Rebecca Gruber correspond to the hymns used in the Older Elementary Level by Craig Singleton.

What do you need?

In addition to this book and careful preparation, the following will be helpful:

1. **Anthems.** *Stepping Stones* does not provide you with all of the music you will need. Your worship needs may vary from those in other denominations. You are encouraged to search for the best music you can find for your children. While some songs are provided, you will probably need additional material to fit your situation. Remember! As a children's choir director in a church, you must teach more than music. You must also teach them about music and its use in worship.
2. **Recording.** A recording of many of the songs and hymns is available through Choristers Guild. Using this recording with the children helps them hear an appropriate model for singing. You have permission to reproduce the recording for use with the children. Encourage them to take it home and listen to it often.
3. **Rhythm and *Solfege* Teaching Cards.** These cards, prepared by Music Mart and distributed through Choristers Guild, make it easier for you to reinforce what you are doing with the children in the



4 STEPPING STONES


session plans. A list of these materials is found on this page.

Special features of the Older Elementary Level.

The Older Elementary Level offers much more material than any one choir could possibly use in a single year, meeting just one one-hour rehearsal per week. The activities are designed to give the teachers options in both rhythmic and melodic learning. It is quite possible to use the Older Elementary Level for two or even three years, reviewing some favorites of the children and adding new activities and songs for reinforcement.

Keep the following in mind:

- **Children need to have significant experience with the Early Childhood and Primary Age Levels before proceeding to the Older Elementary Level.** At least they need to cover the material offered in these levels. You may have to grow a choir into the Older Elementary Level, but it will be worth it.
- **Go at the pace of your students.** If they need to spend more time on some sessions before moving ahead, then do it. The important thing is to always be adding to their experience and learning, not to finish the book.
- **Do not plan to do everything in one year.** It is almost impossible. Pick the best activities for your choir under the melodic and rhythmic options offered.

- **Do not skip around between units!** Sequential learning is the way. You can always repeat but do not skip over any session.
- **Always leave time for hymn singing.** This is foundational to the future of music in the church. 
- **Note the use of special sections for Intermediate and Advanced Choir situations.** These are in bold print and can tell you how to develop the children's abilities even further.

Craig Singleton is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Master of Church Music and Doctoral of Musical Arts (1980) degrees. In addition he received a Master of Music Education with Kodály emphasis from Holy Names College (1990). He has studied the Kodály methodology intensively at the Vigadó Redoute in Budapest, Hungary. Dr. Singleton has taught church music at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, California since 1980. In addition he has served as co-minister of music with his wife, Beth, at Tiburon Baptist Church, Tiburon, California, since 1985.

If you will add careful preparation, love for music, love of children, and a love for God to *Stepping Stones*, you will have a great choir year!

Cantate Domino (Sing to the Lord),
Michael Hawn, Editor, *Stepping Stones*

Additional materials include:

Older Elementary Listening Cassette (CGCT26)

Purchase of this cassette includes permission to duplicate for each child.

Music Man Flash Cards *

Handsign Ladder (MM1a)

Rhythm Cards (MM3a)

Solfège/Rhythm Cards

Need: Set 1 (MM5a) set includes *sol*, *mi* and *la*

Set 2 (MM5a2) set adds *do* and *re*

Set 3 (MM5a3) set adds *do*¹, *sol*¹, *la*¹

Melody Flash Cards

Need: Set 1 (MM6a) set includes melody patterns using *sol*, *mi* and *la*

Set 2 (MM6a2) each side of each set adds a new sound; uses *do* clef

Set 3 (MM6a3) each side of each set adds a new sound; uses *do* clef

*These are available only from Choristers Guild office, 2834 West Kingsley Road, Garland, TX 75041

Southern Tunebook Melodies and African American Spirituals

List Compiled by C. Michael Hawn

Southern Tunebook Melodies

TUNE NAME	FIRST LINE / TITLE
Pentatonic	
<i>New Britain</i>	Amazing Grace
<i>Arise</i>	Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy
<i>Beach Spring</i>	Come, All Christians, Be Committed; Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service
<i>Boundless Mercy</i>	Come, O Spirit
<i>Cleansing Fountain</i>	There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood
<i>Complainer</i>	Jerusalem the Golden; When Jesus Came to Jordan
<i>Distress</i>	O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come
<i>Foundation</i>	How Firm a Foundation
<i>Holy Manna</i>	God, Who Stretched the Spangled ...
<i>I Love Thee</i>	I Love Thee
<i>Kentucky 93rd</i>	The First Day of the Week
<i>Pleading Savior</i>	Jesus, Our Divine Companion
<i>Prospect</i>	The Lone, Wild Bird
<i>Wedlock</i>	O Lord, Send Forth Your Spirit
Largely Pentatonic	
<i>Detroit</i>	Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive
<i>Nettleton</i>	Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Hexatonic	
<i>Land of Rest</i>	I Come With Joy to Meet My Lord; Jerusalem, My Happy Home
<i>Tender Thought</i>	O Jesus, Blessed Lord
Natural Minor	
<i>Consolation/Morning Song</i>	Awake, My Soul, to Love and Work; O Holy City, Seen of John
Diatonic	
<i>Kedron</i>	Spirit of God, Unleashed on Earth

African American Spirituals

Pentatonic	
<i>I Want to Be a Christian</i>	Lord, I Want to Be a Christian
<i>Somebody's Knocking</i>	Somebody's Knocking at Your Door
<i>Were You There</i>	We You There
Largely Pentatonic	
<i>Go, Tell It</i>	Go, Tell it On the Mountain
<i>Jacob's Ladder</i>	We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder
Hexatonic	
<i>Balm in Gilead</i>	There Is a Balm in Gilead

Mixolydian
McKee

In Christ There Is No East or West

Diatonic
Bread Bread

Let Us Break Bread Together

Tokyo
Sheng En

Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather
The Bread of Life for All Is Broken

Multi-Cultural Melodies

HAND SIGNS for

Ti



La



Sol



Fa



Mi



Re



Do



Sessions 1-12

Introduction to Sessions 1-12

Welcome to *Stepping Stones*, a Kodály based curriculum for Older Elementary Children (grades 4-6). I am pleased that you are interested in teaching your children the elements of music and hope that the following sessions will be helpful in doing so.

Organization of the Materials.

The material has been organized in the following way.

- First, there is information about the monthly hymns and ideas for their use.
- Following this are the two, six-session units. For each session within the unit, you will find a list of the songs and materials you will need, melodic and rhythmic goals and activities, and the suggested sequence for utilizing the unit as a whole within your rehearsal. The last two sessions are intentionally more free so that you can either catch up, or spend more time preparing for your Christmas program.
- In addition to singing in worship, you may want to provide special music events during which the children not only sing anthems, but also show some of the Kodály based skills the children are learning. I do this in my own church and both the children and parents enjoy these demonstrations.

Flexible Sessions.

Each session can be used in either of two ways. You can use the session in its entirety in the suggested order or you can select some material and then integrate it with the other elements of your rehearsal. If you choose to use the suggested session plan, it is a good idea to place it somewhere in the middle of your rehearsal when your children are ready to concentrate. The entire plan should take about 15 to 20 minutes.

If you select some material from the session, then I suggest that you plan your rehearsal on a relaxation/concentration type of rhythm. That is, alternate periods of relative relaxation with periods of relative concentration. The lengths of each period of relaxation/concentration will vary and depend on your own situation (time of day, what happens before the rehearsal, amount of sugar in the system!, and the like). In my own situation I use singing and rhythmic games for relaxation. Normally, I choose games which require them to sing, both as a group and as individuals. And, if I can, I use the games to prepare the tonality of the singing activity which follows.

Learning the Songs.

- **Memorization of songs.** It is important that the teacher memorize or nearly memorize all teaching songs. I suggest that your memorization should include

Session 11

Materials needed:
Chalk board and chalk

Songs:

- “Hebrew Canon” (See Session 7)
- “Joseph Dearest” (See Session 9)
- “Bring a Torch, Jeannette Isabella” (See Session 10)
- “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” (See Your Hymnal)
- “Go Tell It on the Mountain” (See Introduction)
- “Sing a Song of Praise” (Brahms or Dinah version)

Activities for Developing Rhythmic Skills

1. “Go Tell It On the Mountain”
Goal: *syncopa* practice
 - Sing “Go Tell It On the Mountain,” working on memory and beautiful singing.
 - Ask the children if they think they could sing the rhythm names to the refrain (or just the first phrase of the refrain). Remind them that the new rhythm (*syncopa*) is in the song. If necessary, demonstrate the rhythms to the children.
 - After they are secure in singing the rhythms to the refrain then tell them to switch to the words at your signal without missing a note.
 - Then switch back to the rhythms at your signal.
 - Have groups and individuals repeat.
 - Close the activity by singing the song again.

2. “Sing a Song of Praise”—Dinah or Brahms canon
Goal: *tick-a-tick-a* preparation

Brahms Version

Sing a song of praise to God cre - a - tor,

Sing a song of praise to Christ the Lord,

Sing a song of praise_ to the Ho - ly Spi - rit,

Bles-sed be our God the Ho - ly Three in One.

Text by Craig Singleton.

Dinah Version

Sing a song of praise to God cre - a - tor,

Sing a song of praise to Christ the Lord,

Sing a song of praise to Ho - ly Spi - rit,

Praise the ho - ly Three in One.

Text by Craig Singleton.



Session 20

Materials needed:

“Sing God’s Praise” rhythm handout
la scale tone ladder
 PASSION CHORALE melody handout
 hymnbooks

Songs:

“Sing God’s Praise” (See Session 17)
 “The Scale Song” (See Session 6)
 “Lift High the Cross” (See Session 19)
 “Come Thou Fount” (See Session 19)
 “When Jesus Wept” (See Session 19)
 PASSION CHORALE

Activities for Developing Rhythmic Skills

1. “Sing God’s Praise”

Goal: *tick-a-ti* practice 

- Prepare a handout for the children with some of the rhythms of “Sing God’s Praise” in stick notation. The children should sing “Sing God’s Praise.”
- Call attention to the handout and ask the children to follow while you sing the song. Point out that some rhythms are missing and that you would like them to write in the missing ones.
- Continue to sing the song until the children have completed the assignment. Then have the children sing the rhythms together, in groups, and/or in canon.
- Close by singing the song with words.

2. “The Scale Song”

Goal: *ti-tick-a* presentation

Ti-tick-a is presented in the same manner that *tick-a-ti* was presented last week (See Session 19). The only difference is that you should isolate the scale portions of the canon (ascending and descending scales in the second and third part).

- Tell the children that you want to teach them a very close relative of *tick-a-ti*.
- Place the rhythms of the scale portions on the board, omitting the *ti-tick-a*'s.
- Continue the established procedure until *ti-tick-a* is named.

Close by singing the canon, but sing the words in the “O tell me” section, and then change to the rhythms in the scale sections.



For Intermediate or advanced choirs the activity may be increased or decreased in difficulty by supplying less or more of the rhythmic notation. The most difficult approach for this type of activity is to have the children supply the rhythms using only their inner hearing.

3. "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand"—PROMISED LAND

Goals: *ti-tick-a* practice



tim-ka practice



pure minor mode (scale) practice

On Jor - dan's stor - my banks I stand and cast a wish - ful eye, To

Ca - naan's fair and hap - py land where my pos - ses - sions lie. I am

bound for the pro - mised land, I'm bound for the pro - mised land; O,

who will come and go with me, I am bound for the pro - mised land.



Concluding Letter

Concluding the Choir Year. A Letter for Parents and Friends

Dear Choir Friend:

The choir year has come to an end. I have enjoyed having your child as a part of our choir program. Let me suggest some of the things that we have learned:

We have learned how to use our voices. According to Georg Philipp Telemann (18th century composer), "Singing is the foundation of music in all things." We are not trying to help your child become a soloist or music major, although indeed some may become one or both. We are attempting to help your child be able to use their voice in praise of God, whether in the pew or in a choir.

We have learned how to read music. Robert Schumann (19th century composer) said, "Try to sing, however small your voice, from written music without the aid of an instrument." Just as reading literature enhances your child's life, so will the reading of music. We have been using a very successful system developed by Hungarian composer and music educator Zoltan Kodály. Ask your child about hand signs, *solfege* and rhythm syllables. They will know all about them.

We have learned new hymns. Martin Luther (16th century reformer) said, "That it is good and God pleasing to sing hymns is, I think, known to every Christian; for everyone is aware not only of the example of the prophets and kings in the Old Testament who praised God with song and sound, with poetry and psaltery, but also of the common and ancient custom of the Christian church to sing Psalms." Hymn singing links your children with Christians of all ages. It also allows them to participate more freely in worship. Some of the hymns that they have learned have been traditional and some are more recent. As one famous hymn says, "Through the church the song goes on." Your child has been a part of this process. Ask them to sing a stanza of some of the hymns that they have learned.

Your child has learned to become a part of a team. Father William Finn. (20th century founder of the boy choir movement in the United States) said, "The extraordinary choir is usually made up of ordinary singers." This means that everyone in our choir is important. The choir is one of the few teams where everyone is a winner.

Thank you for supporting our work this year. We look forward to seeing your child (and you) in the fall.

Cantate Domino (Sing to the Lord)!

Sincerely,