

It's Okay to be Different



A unison cantata with piano and optional flute or other C instrument

Story by
Gene Grier

Lyrics by
Gene Grier and Natalie Sleeth

Music by
Gene Grier,
Lowell Everson and Natalie Sleeth

This cantata is especially recommended for younger elementary choirs.
Performance time is approximately 25 minutes.

Also available:

Demonstration Cassette Recording – code CGCT31

Director's Kit (containing score and demo cassette) – code CGK16

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Contents

Foreword	3
Rehearsal and Performance Notes	3
Overture	5
Why Can't We Get Along?	8
Listen With Your Heart	13
It's Okay to Be Different	17
The Lord, God Made Us All	21
Melody and Harmony	27
Kum Ba Ya	32
The Lion and the Lamb	37

Foreword

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” Jesus revealed this to us in Matthew 5:9. As Christian families, we are the keepers and teachers of peace. Our children provide opportunities for us to develop faith, character, integrity and all of those family values that God has set before us. In essence, we are all God’s children seeking perfect peace.

In an ever-changing world, we are faced with new and sometimes violent challenges on an everyday basis. This cantata is not about these negative situations, but rather about understanding and preventing them. It begins with us doing God’s good work and setting good examples for our children. It continues with an awareness that much work needs to be done. With discipline, purpose and love, we can help our children develop an understanding of themselves and others.

Younger children often don’t have the skills to cope with frustrating situations. This frustration can sometimes lead to aggression and violence. A choir director can use music as a tool to ease these tensions and provide constructive opportunities for success. Music and singing provide a sense of unity and security. Singing also builds self-confidence and respect. When a child feels these feelings within, then the child can return them to others. The choir director has the opportunity to plant God’s musical seeds and watch them grow. The director can also use various creative skills to bring our children into God’s musical circle of love.

Rehearsal and Performance Notes

The cast includes lions, lambs, and the choir director. During the first rehearsal, talk about the story of the lion and the lamb. Talk about feelings, as well as the music. After getting the choir’s attention, work on one song at a time. The goal is to have everyone feel good about themselves when they leave rehearsal.

The work is written so that the creative choir director can lead the children in dialogue, as well as music. The only costume needed is a sign for each singer. These can be made on a computer using colored paper. Hang them on the children with string so they can exchange them during the last song. (This occurs when the lions become the lambs and vice versa.) Let them mingle together on the last song as a sign of togetherness. In every aspect, use individual creative talents to perform the music and communicate God’s message presented in “It’s Okay to Be Different.”

Overture

(As the Overture begins, the children enter and take their places.
The LIONS are on one side, and the LAMBS are on the other.)

Gene Grier
Lowell Everson
Natalie Sleeth

Crisply (♩ = 160)

mf

5

9

13 (The LIONS and LAMBS pantomime "growling/baaing" and display general aggressive behavior.)

17

poco rit.

rit.

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6 (The LIONS continue their actions, while the LAMBS stop and focus their attention on the LIONS.)

21 ♩ = 108

Musical score for measures 21-24. The piece is in 2/4 time with a tempo of 108 beats per minute. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a simple eighth-note melody.

(The LAMBS continue their actions, while the LIONS stop and focus their attention on the LAMBS.)

Musical score for measures 25-28. The tempo is marked *poco rit.* The right hand plays a more active melody, while the left hand continues with chords. A large 'PREVIEW' watermark is visible over the score.

(Both groups now ignore each other, and interact with their own group.)

Musical score for measures 29-32. The tempo is marked *mp a tempo*. The right hand features a complex, rhythmic pattern of chords, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. A large 'PREVIEW' watermark is visible over the score.

Musical score for measures 33-36. The key signature changes to two sharps (D major). The right hand plays a melody with some chromaticism, and the left hand plays chords. A large 'PREVIEW' watermark is visible over the score.

37 ♩ = 132

Musical score for measures 37-40. The tempo is marked *mf*. The right hand plays a melody, and the left hand plays chords. A large 'PREVIEW' watermark is visible over the score.

Listen With Your Heart

Gene Grier

Gene Grier and
Lowell Everson

95 **Lightly** (♩ = 66) *mp*

Lis-ten to the rain-drops fall-ing.

98 Lis-ten to the rob - ins sing. Lis-ten to the rain-drops fall - ing.

100 Lis-ten to the church-bells ring.

103

Lis-ten to the peo - ple talk - ing. Lis-ten to the words they say.

105

Lis-ten to the peo - ple talk - ing. Lis-ten as they lead the way.

107

mf
Lis - ten with your heart, try to un - der - stand.

cresc. *mf*

110

Lis - ten with your heart, then lend a help - ing hand. _____