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- Easy
- Intermediate
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INTRODUCTION

THE BIBLE BEAT

It all begins here. We started with a meaningful biblical text – either a key verse or the main story idea – and set it to rhythm. The simple Bible Beat rhythm is ideal for a hand drum, such as a djembe, conga, or frame drum. It’s also the heartbeat for The Groove. Before you experiment with The Groove, however, you’ll want to be sure your group has a solid grasp on the Bible Beat.

Start by having the group chant the text of the Bible Beat in rhythm. Next, ask the group to improvise body percussion by patting either their lap or their chest as they speak the text in rhythm. Finally, pass out rhythm instruments and play the Bible Beat while you continue to chant the text:

DON’T WORRY ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE THE SUGGESTED INSTRUMENT FOR A PARTICULAR BIBLE BEAT. USE WHAT YOU’VE GOT. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A DJEMBE, USE A CONGA. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A CONGA, USE AN EMPTY FIVE-GALLON WATER BUCKET. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A FIVE-GALLON WATER BUCKET, USE BODY PERCUSSION. THE MUSIC ISN’T IN THINGS, IT’S IN YOU.

For young children, you might decide the Bible Beat is as far as you go, opting out of the Groove. You can create a simple groove by dividing the children into two groups. Have the first group use shakers, rattles or maracas to play a constant steady beat. Give hand drums to the second group, who will play the Bible Beat. After several measures of group one playing a steady beat, layer in group two with the Bible Beat. Even if you go no further than this, the children are:

- Learning the difference between the melodic rhythm and the steady beat (the pulse).
- Committing a meaningful Bible verse or key Bible concept to memory.
- Experiencing two-part music through a multisensory activity. Young children are concrete thinkers and vocal music in parts can seem pretty abstract. This activity not only allows the children to hear the parts, but to see them and feel them as well.

THE GROOVE

The next step is to combine the Bible Beat with different rhythms and a variety of percussion instruments to create the Groove. The process for learning and playing the Groove is similar to that for the Bible Beat. Start by speaking each part in rhythm. Transfer that rhythm to body percussion. Utilize instruments.

IN SOME CASES THE GROOVE WILL ACTUALLY WORK BEST FOR SPEECH PERCUSSION OR BODY PERCUSSION.

You will notice that most of the Grooves are very short – between two and four measures long. There are many ways to take those few measures and transform them into a stand-alone piece. The best way to do this is with the layering process. Start with the Bible Beat. After several measures, add another part. Keep adding parts until everyone is playing.

There are two wonderful benefits to layering:

- It extends the length of the piece and builds interest with each rhythmic addition.
- It allows you to monitor each part as it is added.

Remember: don’t bring in a new part until those currently playing are locked into the Groove.
Once all the parts have entered, you can:

- Lead the group through a series of crescendos and decrescendos.
- Have the entire group crescendo, rumble, and end on a strong (cued) downbeat.
- A RUMBLE IS WHERE ALL PARTS PLAY VERY FAST, CREATING A DRUMROLL EFFECT.
- Decrescendo to complete silence.
- Have the group continue the Groove softly and allow soloists to improvise rhythms.
- Instruct the entire group to play softly while each person (or small group) is given a turn to play their part out a little louder. This creates a solo experience without the improvisation element. For those players who feel nervous or pressured when it's time to improvise, this is a rewarding option.
- Layer out the same way you layered in, having each part drop out one at a time.

The Groove can be played as a stand-alone piece during worship or even as a change of pace during a choir concert. There are many ways to weave the Groove into the fabric of worship, and for each bible story unit we've offered a few ideas.

>>> SUGGESTED HYMN <<<

We've suggested a hymn that can be enhanced in some way by each story's Groove. The hymns cover a wide range – including hymns that practically cry out for percussion (such as Jesu, Jesu), as well as older hymns that can be heard in a fresh way with the addition of percussion (such as For the Beauty of the Earth). In some cases we recommend a different tempo – or a slight change in instrumentation – to help the Groove fit seamlessly into the suggested hymn.

To meet the needs of various congregations and denominations, many of the suggested hymns appear in multiple sources. A full list can be found in the Hymnal Index on page 50. Though we offer a number of suggested hymns, don't feel you have to limit yourself. Check your hymnal's metrical index to see if other hymns could be enhanced by the same Groove. Additionally, we have included connections to the Revised Common Lectionary to aid in your music and worship planning. The Lectionary Index is located on page 53.

COMPLEMENTARY ANTHEM

Another great way to utilize this newly-learned groove is to incorporate it into an anthem. We have paired a Choristers Guild title with each groove. Some anthems are newer releases while others are catalog classics. These specific anthems were chosen because they allow percussion to be a rich enhancement, rather than a distraction, to the composers’ fine work. As with the hymns, we occasionally recommend a slight adjustment to tempo and instrumentation.

WHEN ACCOMPANYING AN ANTHEM, A CHANGE IN INSTRUMENTATION MEANS USING FEWER INSTRUMENTS. THE INSTRUMENTS UTILIZED SHOULD ALWAYS BE PLAYED WITH ATTENTION TO VOLUME. IT ONLY TAKES A FEW OVERZEALOUS PERCUSSIONISTS TO COMPLETELY OVERTAKE A CHOIR.
WORSHIP INTEGRATION

Just as the Bible Beat is the rhythmic anchor for each unit, the Bible Story is the thematic core that holds everything together. Selecting only ten stories from The Great Story was no small task. We looked for:

• Stories with kid-appeal.
• Stories with a core message that would resonate regardless of age.
• Stories from both Old and New Testaments.
• Stories that evoked different moods to allow for a variety of musical settings.

Every Bible Beat, Groove, Hymn Suggestion and Complementary Anthem was either created or selected with the Bible Story in mind. (Say what you will about our writing ability, at least our priorities are squarely in order!) For each story, we offer a unique way to incorporate the material into a worship service. The musical retellings found in this resource can be integrated into worship as the scripture lesson for the day or the primary content of a Children’s Message. You could also include a musical retelling of a Bible story as part of a Children’s Chapel service, a Sunday School lesson, or even a brain-break in the middle of choir rehearsal.

The authors acknowledge our main tasks were to select the Bible stories and explore creative ways to tell those stories using rhythm. It wasn’t up to us to unpack the meaning of each story for the reader. If we asked a roomful of people – Okay everyone, what’s the big take-away lesson from the story of Noah? – we would get many different answers! We do hope, however, that this resource will serve as a springboard for your own theological conversations as an ensemble or small group.
THE CREATION
[GENESIS 1-2:3]

SUGGESTED HYMN
“For the Beauty of the Earth”
\( \text{\textit{\textbf{J}} = 112} \)

COMPLEMENTARY ANTHEM
CGA1373 “Uyai Mose”
“Come All You People”
from CGC41/42 Halle Halle

WORSHIP INTEGRATION
• Call to Worship
• Teaching “Come, All You People”

Where do you start a sacred resource on percussion? In the beginning, of course.

---

THE BIBLE BEAT

\[ \text{\textit{\textbf{J}} = 112} \]

God saw all that God made, and indeed it was very good.

Divide the players into seven groups and assign Groove parts and instruments to each group. Teach the rhythm for each part, including the Call and Response at the end.

Don’t have enough players for seven groups? See page 9 for how to adapt the groove for fewer parts.

Start the Bible Beat as an ostinato. Read a portion of the Bible story, then pause to layer in a new rhythm as indicated. (Hint: you’ll work your way up the instrument list. Start at the bottom with Djembe, then layer in the Hand Drum, Claves, Guiro, etc.) Allow the players multiple repetitions before continuing with the story. When you’re ready to continue the story, indicate for the Groove to get softer. Continue this process for the rest of the story until all parts have entered. After the narration for Day 7, indicate for those playing the Bible Beat (djembe part) to play the Call – after which all other parts play the Response. (You could also have the teacher/leader play the Call.) And by all means observe the long rest at the end. It’s part of the music. (And an important part of the Creation story!)
God saw all that God made, and indeed it was very good.