Choir directors will long remember the year 2020, a year that required flexibility, adaptation, and innovation. In the midst of a worldwide health pandemic, choirs moved online. Master teachers worked diligently to design virtual rehearsal spaces and create new learning tools for online platforms, while singers remained open to new ways of lifting their voices in song.

With the desire to keep her choir members singing, growing, and learning, conductor and teacher Emily Floyd crafted the rehearsal model contained in this resource. Incorporating vocal technique exercises, hymns and sacred songs, prayer, Bible narratives, and choral anthems, she provided musical and spiritual nourishment for her high school and adult church choirs as they met online.

The intentionality in Emily’s rehearsal content is evident - resulting in feelings of accomplishment and shared experience among singers. The vocalises provide an awareness of vocal technique and seek to improve individual tone and expression. The devotional material seeks to guide singers to a deeper sense of belonging, both within the ensemble itself and more broadly as part of the Church. A good portion of the repertoire selections feature Mark Miller’s social justice music, particularly from Roll Down, Justice! - Mark’s congregational songbook; the hymn selections beautifully represent the global Church. Reflecting on our place in community is important and necessary work, especially in this season of virtual interaction.

Ten comprehensive rehearsal plans are designed to be used in sequence. The techniques, exercises, and anthem teaching plans build on the previous rehearsal’s work. Emily has chosen bestselling choral anthems that may likely be in your choral library; and if they not, these pieces are worthy of your consideration. Each hymn and sacred song selection in this digital resource contains a hyperlink to hymnary.org, where the user can search for the song's location in hundreds of hymnals and find background information on the composer, lyricist, and origin. Emily offers helpful advice in Teaching Tips for Virtual Rehearsals and provides a number of visual aids to display on your screen or in your choir room.

God’s song continues in new places - Zoom rooms, Google hangouts, pre-recorded videos, hybrid settings, and socially-distanced choir formations. May this resource provide inspiration, form, and joy... wherever you find yourself singing.

Katie Houts, editor
December 1, 2020
REHEARSAL THEMES

Each rehearsal plan includes music and litanies which complement the Bible story and theme - a hymn or sacred song, a prayer refrain, a choral anthem, a benediction. Through spoken and sung Word, singers are given opportunity to reflect on these foundational Bible stories in new ways.

1. **Fishes and Loaves** (Matthew 8:22-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)
2. **Mary and Martha** (Luke 10:38-42)
3. **David and Goliath** (1 Samuel 17:1-51)
4. **Manna from Heaven** (Exodus 16:11-34)
5. **Two Gates, Two Builders** (Matthew 7:7-8, 13-14, 24-29)
7. **The Parable of the Sower** (Matthew 13:18-23)
8. **Four Fishermen Follow** (Mark 1:16-20)
10. **Sheep and Goats** (Matthew 25:31-46)
Hymns, Rounds, and Sacred Songs

By the Waters of Babylon, Traditional Jewish melody
Come into God’s Presence, Anonymous
God Is So Good, by Paul Makai, tr. Marilyn Foulkes
God Welcomes All, by John Bell
Know That God Is Good (Mungu ni Mwema) - also available in CGC64 Glory to God
Sanctuary, by Randy Scruggs and John Thompson
Santo, Santo, Santo, Argentine folk melody - see below for the choral anthem
Shalom Chaverim, Israeli/Hebrew folk song - see below for the choral anthem
Shepherd Me, O God, by Marty Haugen
The Lord Is My Light, Taizé Community
Thy Word, by Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith
Uyai Mose (Come All You People), Zimbabwean song, text by Alexander Gondo
What Does the Lord Require of You? by Jim Strathdee
You Are the Lord, Giver of Mercy, Traditional text, Appalachian folk melody

Choral Anthems

*Child of God, by Mark A. Miller - CGA1425
Christ Has Broken Down the Wall, by Mark A. Miller - CGA1224
Everything Good, by Don Schlosser, CGA1166
I Believe, by Mark A. Miller - CGA1310 (SATB) or CGA1510 (SSA)
*I Choose Love, by Mark A. Miller - CGA1491 (SATB) or CGA1591 (SSA)
*Roll Down, Justice, by Mark A. Miller - CGA1472
Santo, Santo, Santo, arr. Mary Kay Parrish - CGA988
Shalom Chaverim, arr. Stan Pethel - CGA868
The Fruit of the Vine, by Mark Patterson - CGA1473

*Unison voicing also available in the Roll Down, Justice! songbook

Selections from Mark Miller’s songbook, CGBK72 Roll Down, Justice!

Child of God
Come Out!
I Choose Love
Make Me an Instrument
Roll Down, Justice!
The Day Is Coming
The Open Table
Welcome
Virtual Rehearsals: Plan #1
By Emily Floyd

FISHES AND LOAVES
There is enough. God surprises us.

REPERTOIRE: “Come into God’s Presence” (click here)
“The Open Table” by Mark A. Miller from Roll Down, Justice!
“God Is So Good” by Paul Makai, tr. Marilyn Foulkes (click here)

Stretches
Creating body awareness allows singers to release tension and prepare mentally for singing.

Breathing
To teach the “sh” rhythm by rote, have your singers echo every two measures.
Option: display the rhythm and sightread together.

Vocal Warm-up
Sing the following two exercises, modulating down by half steps.

Physical Stretches
• Wiggle in your chair.
• Wiggle your imaginary (or real) mustache.
• Roll your shoulders back several times, then hold them back and down.

Breathing
• Execute the rhythm below on sh.

Vocal Warm-up
Use a visual (tennis ball, puppet, etc.) to show the proper amount of space for the “ah” vowel.
See the Teaching Tips resource page for ideas.

Copyright © 2020 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
MARY AND MARTHA

Martha and Mary respond in different ways. Jesus shows compassion, explaining that a good attitude is important.

REPERTOIRE: “Come into God’s Presence” Anonymous (click here)
“You Are the Lord, Giver of Mercy” Traditional text, Appalachian folk melody (click here)
“Welcome” by Mark A. Miller and Laurie Zelman from CGBK72 Roll Down, Justice!
“God Is So Good” by Paul Makai, tr. Marilyn Foulkes (click here)

Breathing

To teach the consonant exercise by rote, have your singers echo one measure at a time.

Option: display the rhythm and sightread together.

Vocal Warm-Up

Use the Question Mark graphic to encourage singers to sing with forward placement in exercise #1.

Color cards are effective visual tools. Reference the Vowel resource page and print the vowel sounds on corresponding colored paper. Display the color cards to remind singers which vowel they should be forming.

Physical Stretches

• Tilt head from side to side to create a stretch.
• Close eyes and tilt face to ceiling, and then down to chest.
• Move into a singer’s posture, take a singer’s breath, and sigh.

Breathing

Execute the consonant exercise; teach by rote or sightread together.

Vocal Warm-up

Sing the following exercise, modulating down by half steps.

Sing the following exercise, modulating up by half steps.

Copyright © 2020 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
Virtual Rehearsals: Plan #6

By Emily Floyd

THE LOST SHEEP

Jesus is like a good shepherd and always looks for the one lost sheep.

REPERTOIRE: “God Welcomes All” by John Bell (click here); also in CGC41 Halle, Halle We Sing the World Round

“Child of God” by Mark A. Miller - CGA1425 (SATB) or CGBK72 Roll Down, Justice!

“Thy Word” by Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith (click here)

Physical Stretches

• Alternate these two positions: stretching your elbows behind your torso, and stretching the length of your arm (through your fingertips) out in front of you.
• Vibrate your lips like a motor boat.
• Stretch your mouth into a tall yawn.

Breathing

Hiss out on an ss sound for 4 beats. Extend to 8 beats, 12 beats, and 16 beats.

Vocal Warm-up

The purpose of this vocal exercise is to create relaxation. Start at a medium-high pitch and work down.

Energize the breath through the following exercise, maintaining good breath support through the end of the phrase.
**THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER**

Jesus loved to use stories and metaphors in his teaching. In this story about seeds and soil, we’ll place our focus on the seeds.

**REPERTOIRE:** “By the Waters of Babylon” Traditional Jewish melody (click here)
“Christ Has Broken Down the Wall” by Mark A. Miller - CGA1224 (SATB)
“Thy Word” by Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith (click here)
(optional) “Make Me an Instrument” by Mark A. Miller - from CGBK72 Roll Down, Justice!

---

**Physical Stretches**
- Place a hand on the opposite upper arm and pull for a stretch. Repeat on the other side.
- Wiggle hips while walking in place.

**Breathing**
Take a silent breath from an imaginary milkshake and exhale on mm (any pitch). As you continue, extend the time of inhaling and exhaling.

**Vocal Warm-up**
Use a hand gesture to encourage forward motion on repeated notes.

Use a straw to aid a relaxed exhale. Inhale normally, then exhale fully through a straw.

Singers can sing through their straws on this second vocal exercise.

---

Needed for Rehearsal
Ask singers to bring a candle (and something with which to light it) to rehearsal today.

Breathing
Short, shallow breathing causes muscle tension. By incorporating breathing exercises into our warm-up period, singers will slow their heart rate, lower blood pressure, and relax tension in their neck and shoulders.

Use a straw to aid a relaxed exhale. Inhale normally, then exhale fully through a straw.