



## **FOUR CHILDREN'S CHOIR SESSIONS**

using materials from

***Praise Takes Flight:***

***Songs, Activities and Games***

***for High-Flying Children's Choirs***

**(CGBK68)**

This lesson plan can serve as a guideline to hold the rehearsal together and keep it moving. The time spent on each activity will vary within the constraint of the rehearsal block. The Kodaly practice of 'tension/release' (work/relax) is the model for the lesson, depending on deadline goals for performances. Lesson components are interchangeable as needed.

### **BASIC LESSON FORMAT:**

1. Opening (get-acquainted, name game, welcome, greeting)
2. Warm-up (vocal and/or rhythmic, body percussion)
3. Small Group Activity (game, part-singing, instruments)
4. Anthem (performance piece)
5. Fun Activity (game, challenge)
6. Scripture (Bible beat)
7. Closing (joys and concerns, benediction)

## WEEK ONE REHEARSAL:

### 1. Opening:

“Down the Line” Name Game (instructions on page 10)

Follow the ‘*Puddle Jumpers*’ section to organize this game, learning the chant in rhythm. If meeting for the first time with a new group, having them wear prepared name tags would speed things up. Each child needs to know when their time will come to say his/her name aloud. Move on to the ‘*Barn Stormers*’ section as time and interest allow.

### 2. Warm-up:

To prepare the voices for singing, turn to the ‘SoundWriting’ section (pages 16-17), having printed out the posters available on the CD or make your own. Follow the directions for varying the vowel sound responses.

Turn the posters upside down for variations. Connect several posters together for continuity and breath control.

### 3. Small Group Activity:

After learning and singing the song, “I’m Gonna Sing” (page 24), divide into three groups with each group demonstrating a verse of the song. To conclude, divide into two groups as suggested in the ‘*Barn Stormers*’ section to contrast steady beat and word rhythm. Switch parts.

### 4. Anthem:

Choose one of the anthems from this varied collection and set up a comprehensive rehearsal schedule for having a performance piece ready by the selected calendar date, learning the song in stages with the long-range goal in mind.

(Example – “*Seek His Face Always*” (page 68) is a good starting anthem that is scripture based (Psalm 105) with optional part-singing. Spend this first rehearsal listening to the song, then singing according to the instructions in the ‘*Barn Stormers*’ section.

## 5. Fun Activity:

Turn to page 98 for a quick partner game called “*Give Him, Give Him, Praise, Praise*”. Start with the ‘*Puddle Jumpers*’ suggestion but be ready to move on to ‘*Barn Stormers*’ when the children catch on quickly.

## 6. Scripture:

You may refer back to the anthem text by having Psalm 105 read or introduce the Bible Beat activity on page 50 using Acts 2:28. Have the children become familiar with this scripture by teaching it in rhythm with body percussion.

## 7. Closing:

“*Servant’s Prayer*” on page 18 could be your benediction to conclude each rehearsal. Standing in a circle, have the children sing verse one following the opportunity to share their ‘joys and concerns’.

## **WEEK TWO REHEARSAL:**

### 1. Opening:

Continue to focus on the process of learning names to assist new kids in the group (and the director). “*Name Attack*” on page 6, highlights the idea of making each child special when introducing themselves. The ‘*Puddle Jumpers*’ section gives you all you need to succeed using the steady beat as your guide.

### 2. Warm-up:

Review the ‘*SoundWriting*’ activity (pages 16–17) from last week with the whole group responding to the posters. Ask for volunteers who will choose a poster (or make one of their own) to perform alone for the group. Following each soloist, have the group echo the sound. After several soloists, decide who sang the highest pitch and the lowest.

### 3. Small-Group Activity:

On page 27, find a partner game involving the contrast between steady beat and word rhythm learned in last week's lesson. First, review the song on page 24, by singing using the recorded accompaniment. Ask a couple (perhaps director/child) to demonstrate the "*Clap, Clap, Tap, Tap*" game on page 27, then divide the group into partners to practice the game. Change partners on each verse when proficient.

### 4. Anthem:

The anthem "*Seek His Face Always*" on page 68 was suggested as a successful and impressive piece for early in the year. The next step in preparing this anthem for worship performance is moving from the beginning unison section to identifying the parts as 'round' (pick-up note to measure 21 through 29, measures 36 to the end) and 'two-part harmony' (measures 30 through 35). Have the whole group sing both parts separately.

### 5. Fun Activity:

For something new, find the circle game on pages 91-92, that updates the song, "*One Door and Only One*". Teach the song with the motions, using the clever German band accompaniment on the Resource CD. If time permits, have the children find partners to review the "*Give Him, Give Him, Praise, Praise*" activity from last week.

### 6. Scripture:

Review the Bible Beat activity on page 50 from last week by speaking the verse with body percussion. When familiar with the text and rhythm, move on to the second bullet in the '*Barn Stormers*' section by using only body percussion but thinking the text as a guide. Ask for volunteers to perform this activity alone.

## 7. Closing:

Review the singing of verse one of *'Servant's Prayer'* on page 18. Learn the second verse, finding rhyming words and places to take a breath. Have the group find the word 'heart' in both verses and relate what the prayer is asking.

## **WEEK THREE REHEARSAL:**

### 1. Opening:

When you need an energizing activity to start the choir session, "*Sounds Funny*" on page 12 is just what you're looking for. On the resource CD you will find these clever illustrations to build the grid in four-beat measures. Practice each sound separately, then perform in order or backwards or even mix them up. The children are stretching their vocal ranges while having FUN!

### 2. Warm-up:

Bring the focus to producing scale pitches in solfege using hand signs with suggestions on pages 54 and 55. Have the children sing the solfege ladder up and down, starting with four beats for each tone to gain confidence. Shorten the beat count to three, then two, then one when ready. Have them try singing the 'trampoline' by bouncing one hand in the other palm (Do) before moving to other pitches and the 'bungee jumping'.

### 3. Small Group Activity:

Review the "*Clap, Clap, Tap, Tap*" game on page 27 from the last session. Try speeding up the tempo appropriately by singing the song without the CD accompaniment as the game is played. Turn next to page 56 for a trick to creating instant three-part harmony. Learn all three parts with solfege and hand-signs before dividing into three groups to follow the *'Barn Stormers'* guidelines. Sing the song with suggested text.

#### 4. Anthem:

The children should be ready to put the two parts together for “*Seek His Face Always*” on page 68, after learning each one separately in the last session. Your division into Part 1 and Part 2 will not necessarily be based on higher/lower voices, since they all sing the same pitches. Encourage the singers to give full value to the dotted half and whole notes, enhancing the harmony. Try singing the two parts on pages 69 and 70 without the CD.

#### 5. Fun Activity:

Play the circle game for “*One Door and Only One*” on page 92 after reviewing the song. Learn to sing a new song, “*If Anybody Asks You*” on page 46, starting with the ‘*Puddle Jumpers*’ suggestions. Move on to the next steps involving body percussion on page 48 (‘*Barn Stormers*’), incorporating the use of ‘inner hearing’ (audiation).

#### 6. Scripture:

You will find a more challenging Bible Beat example on page 52, this time in triple meter, based on Psalm 139:23-24. Review the levels of body percussion, introducing one phrase at a time. Complete the ‘*Barn Stormers*’ section, practicing each segment as needed. In addition to swaying from side to side, have the children pat knees on beat one (strong beat) and tap shoulders on beats 2 and 3 (weak beats) to get the feel of triple meter.

#### 7. Closing:

Look at the ‘*In-flight Insight*’ box on page 47 to initiate a meaningful discussion about being a ‘child of God’. Close by singing both verses of “*The Servant’s Prayer*” on page 18, using the instrument suggestions on the Resource CD including two bell chords.

## WEEK FOUR REHEARSAL:

### 1. Opening:

Having previous practice with solfege syllables and hand signs, turn to page 58 for “*The Great Commandment Round*” in two parts. Follow the first three bullets in the ‘*Barn Stormer*’ section using solfege, demonstrating excellent posture and concentration.

### 2. Warm-Up:

How do you combine Mozart, the classical composer, with M and M candy? It’s easy if you look on page 14 for a clever way to improve vowel and consonant sounds while putting a new twist on the familiar five-pitch ascending/descending warm-up.

### 3. Small Group Activity:

Using the ‘*Corner Pockets*’ resource on page 59, review “*The Great Commandment Round*” from the opening. Singing the actual text instead of solfege, divide the group into four equal small ensembles. Stationed in separated locations, have them sing this round in four parts, repeated several times. Alternate the starting and subsequent groupings to continue.

### 4. Anthem:

To test the level of performance proficiency for the chosen anthem, sing all the way through without the CD accompaniment, checking for pitch and rhythm accuracy. Record the singing of the anthem using the CD accompaniment then listen to the result, so the singers can critique their preparedness.

### 5. Fun Activity:

If 'cup routines' you've seen performed seem complicated, the one found on page 100 is a cinch to bring quick success. The instructional steps are clearly defined with a chant added to ensure the process. After some practice, be prepared to repeat this activity many times in coming weeks as a favorite thing to do.

### 6. Scripture:

Review the '*Psalm 139*' Bible Beat activity previously introduced on page 52 in preparation for the playing of rhythm instruments in the '*Flying Angels*' section. Notice how easily each level of body percussion transfers to the instrumentation. An accompaniment is provided on the Resource CD which helps transform this activity into a performance speech piece if desired.

### 7. Closing:

Continue ending each rehearsal with the singing of "*Servant's Prayer*" on page 18 with variations. Another opportunity for the children to express praise as this session closes is to stand in a circle to sing "The Great Commandment Round" in parts using the text or a neutral syllable (loo).

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>QUICK REFERENCE CHECK-LIST</b> <b>Book: <i>Praise Takes Flight</i> (CGBK68)</b></p>
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	<u>WEEK 1</u>	<u>WEEK 2</u>	<u>WEEK 3</u>	<u>WEEK 4</u>
<u>OPENING:</u>	Page 10	Page 6	Page 12	Page 58
<u>WARM-UP:</u>	Pages 16	Page 16	Page 54	Page 14
<u>SMALL GROUP:</u>	Page 24	Page 27	Page 68	Page 59
<u>ANTHEM:</u>	Page 68	Page 68	Page 68	Page 68
<u>FUN ACTIVITY:</u>	Page 98	Page 91	Page 92	Page 100
<u>SCRIPTURE:</u>	Page 50	Page 50	Page 52	Page 58
<u>CLOSING:</u>	Page 18	Page 18	Page 47	Page 58