STUDY PLAN

William M. Schoenfeld is Minister of Music at First Presbyterian Church of Idaho Falls, Idaho. He directs a music ministry program of thirteen vocal and handbell choirs for all ages. A native of San Francisco Bay Area, William pursued his initial church music training with his mentor, John T. Burke, former Executive Director of Choristers Guild. Bill is married to Tia Marie Luitze. They have two children, introduced below.

"Oh Come, All You Children"

by William M. Schoenfeld (CGA-511)

This anthem expresses our joy and celebration over the birth of our son, Stewart Lyle. I knew I had set a precedent with our daughter Dana Noel, by composing an anthem in honor of her birth ("Little Children Welcome" CGA-383). So, with the arrival of Stewart — the pressure was on! Naturally everyone said to me, "Since you composed an anthem for your son?!" And I thought the homework assignments were tough in seminary! We plan no more children!

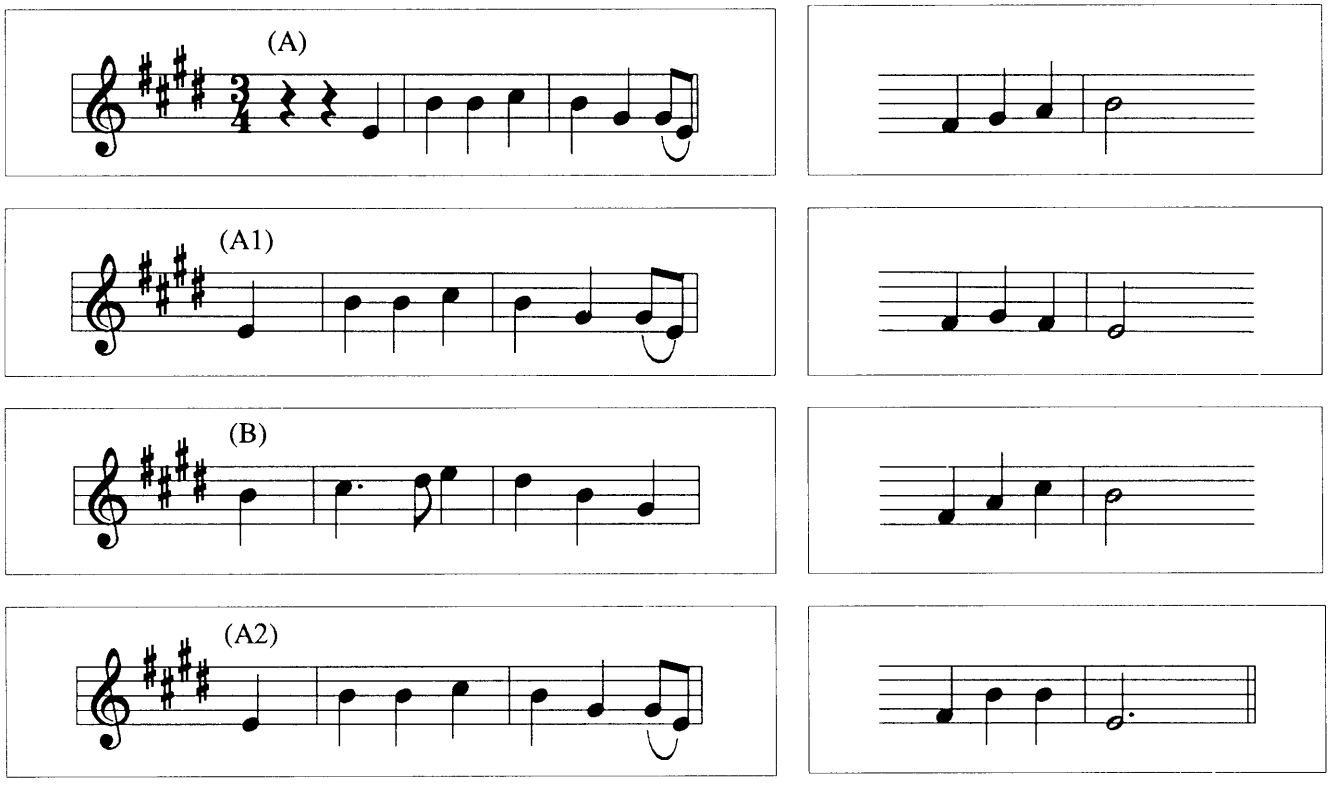
Introduce melody and text together. Play the vocal line on the keyboard and have the children read the text aloud for each stanza, or have a high school or adult singer present the anthem as a solo. Select a soloist with a light, clear vocal quality. On a second "run-through" invite your choristers to join in singing when they feel comfortable in doing so. Also consider substituting a flutist for the vocal soloist. Since the tune remains the same throughout the anthem it is vital for the children to learn it thoroughly in the first rehearsal.

Diagram each phrase of the anthem in small sections, pointing to the similarities and differences of the melodic structure and the form of this anthem (A, A1, B, A2). Writing each phrase on posterboard and asking the children to arrange each section of the melody in proper sequence is an excellent way of reinforcing the learning process.

Direct attention to the descending segments of the melody (measures 11, 15, 19, 23, etc.). Point out how easy it can be to sing a descending melodic line flat.

Choristers should sing the melody gently with the feeling of approaching the manger in quiet adoration. The anthem reaches its emotional and melodic height through measures 45-50.

Demonstrate to your singers that although an anthem is to be sung gently and quietly, the text still needs to be articulated with clarity of beginning and ending consonants, and careful execution of diphthongs and vowel unification.

While my original concept was to use handbells through the second half of the anthem, tonechimes can lend a different tonal option you might want to consider. The handbell part was intentionally composed on the easy side to allow children (rather than older youth or adults) who are in the beginning stages of handbells (or tonechimes) to participate in this anthem, thus having a positive early experience of ringing with a vocal choir. Stress the importance of chordal alignment with the bells in measures 51-60. The last chord is to be rung *piano*.

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