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## Plans and Suggestions for Teaching John T. Burke's

### "Our Brother Is Born"

CGA-601

by Betty Bedsole

In *Foundations and Principles of Music Education*, Dr. Charles Leonhard discusses the importance of getting an overview of the entire piece of music before isolating its parts for the purposes of teaching. He calls the process "synthesis - analysis - synthesis."<sup>1</sup> In applying this principle to the teaching of this anthem, I suggest that children listen to the entire anthem before you begin to teach individual phrases to them. After they have learned the parts of the anthem, the final synthesis comes in singing the anthem with expression. The following lesson plan provides suggestions for teaching the anthem over a three week time period.

#### Week 1

1. Ask the children to follow in their music as the accompanist plays and you sing the anthem. Ask them to listen for phrases that are the same or almost the same.
2. Sing the song with accompaniment.
3. Sing the first phrase and ask the children to look for other places in the music where this phrase occurs. Guide them to see that the second phrase (ms. 9 - 10) is the same except that it is at a higher pitch level. (The second phrase is found again in ms. 33 - 34.)
4. Teach measures 7 - 12 by singing each phrase on the syllable "loo" and having the children sing it after you. This teaching technique is called "who-singing." Repeat this several times. When they can sing these phrases with correct pitches and in their head voices, have them chant the words in rhythm with you.
5. Next, sing each phrase in measures 7 - 12 with the words, and have the children sing after you.
6. Tell the children that you're going to sing the song again and that you want them to sing with you each time the phrases they have learned occur in the song. Ask them to look at their music and listen to the rest of the song.

#### Week 2

1. Use the phrase in measures 27 - 28 as a warm-up exercise. Have the children sing the phrase on the syllable "loo"

October 1992

beginning on the pitch, A above middle C, and moving upward by half-steps. Reverse direction before the children begin to sound like they are straining or forcing the sound.

2. Give each child a copy of the Chorister's Page. The Chorister's Page is designed to help boys and girls learn to read music. In this anthem we will help them learn to read "Do, Re, and Mi." Sing the first phrase using tone syllables as indicated on the Chorister's Page.



Then ask the children to sing the phrase with you using tone syllables.

3. Tell them that the phrase they used as a warm-up exercise also begins with "Do, Re, and Mi." Explain that these notes are at a different place on the music staff because it is sung an octave higher. Sing the phrase using tone syllables.



Ask them to sing the phrase with the words "Little Christ Jesus our brother is born."

5. Write the phrase beginning in measure 13 on flash cards or on an overhead transparency. Sing the phrase "The passing night has given birth" for the children to echo-sing. Follow the same procedure with "unto the children's King."
6. Review the parts of the song learned last week.
7. Have the children sing the anthem all the way through except for the phrases that have not been taught. Ask them to listen as you sing on the parts they do not know (ms. 19 - 24).

#### Week 3

1. Review the anthem by having the children sing it all the way through. (They have heard measures 19 - 24 though they have not sung it. Let them try to read it.)
2. Have the children echo-sing the three phrases in measures 19 - 24.
3. Review any parts of the anthem that were insecure when they sang it through.
4. Have the children sing the anthem in unison, giving close attention to the dynamic markings indicated in the music.
5. If you are using the optional Voice II part beginning at measure 27, divide the choir in two and teach Voice II to half of the choir. Parts of Voice II move in parallel motion to Voice I so it will seem familiar to the children. They may have difficulty when Voice II moves independently rather than in parallel motion. The most difficult part will probably be when you put the two parts together since music in parallel motion is often difficult to sing in tune.
6. Work individually on each phrase that is in two parts. Notice that measures 33 - 34 are in unison, breaking into parts in measure 35.
7. Have the children sing the entire piece in two parts (as indicated) giving careful attention to dynamic markings indicated in the music.

<sup>1</sup>Charles Leonhard, *Foundations and Principles of Music Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1972), p. 164.

# Chorister's Page

## Finding "Do, Re, Mi" is as easy as 1, 2, 3

When we begin to count, we begin with 1, 2, 3. When we learn the alphabet, we begin with A, B, C. When we begin to read music, we begin with "Do, Re, Mi."

Listen as your choir director sings this musical phrase. Then, sing it back.



A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 6/8 time signature. The melody consists of three measures. The first measure contains three quarter notes on the same pitch (middle C). The second measure contains two quarter notes on the same pitch. The third measure contains a quarter note on the same pitch, followed by a half note on a higher pitch. Below the staff, the letters D, D, D, R, R, M, F, and S are aligned with the notes.

Can you find this phrase in your music?

The warm-up exercise you sang today also begins with "Do, Re, Mi" but it is at a higher pitch and is written at a different place on the music staff. Listen as your choir director sings this phrase and sing it back to him/her.



A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 6/8 time signature. The melody consists of three measures. The first measure contains three quarter notes on the same pitch. The second measure contains two quarter notes on the same pitch. The third measure contains a quarter note on the same pitch, followed by a half note on a higher pitch. Below the staff, the letters D, R, M, D, R, M, R, D, T, and L are aligned with the notes.

Can you find this phrase in your music? Notice that if "do" is on a line, "re" is in a space, and "mi" is on a line. The notes move up the staff by steps.

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