

Teaching Suggestions for *Rejoice in the Lord*

As part of Choristers Guild's *Rote to Note Series*, you will find this anthem filled with experiences to foster music reading in your children's choir. Remember the concept behind the *Rote to Note Series* is to introduce by rote the melodies and rhythms and text prior to placing the music in the hands of the children.

Ideally suited for the younger singer, the melody is very natural and is made of frequently repeated themes. The text from Philippians 4: 4-6 is simple and straightforward in its presentation. The rhythms are direct reflections of the text. With a form that is easy for children to understand, it is an excellent anthem to include at the beginning of the choir year or at least the early part of it moving to Thanksgiving. As you plan your music for next fall, here are some teaching suggestions to get you started with this useful and practical addition to children's anthems.

EXPERIENCE ONE

Getting Ready to Sing:

The bright tempo (in one) calls for a light, focused head tone with great buoyancy from the singers. Begin with warm-ups that emphasize this desired sound, using a front of the face feel, singing with lips, teeth, and the tip of the tongue.



Teaching Activity:

Explain to the children that the melody in this anthem moves by step, skip and leap in two directions (up—higher, down-lower). Use a visual such as the one below to focus the children's attention on what stepwise looks like so this idea will transfer when you pass out the music. Also lay the foundation for skips and leaps.



Have the children echo sing some steps, skips, and leaps as you create different patterns using the chart. Remembering to keep the focused tone worked on in the warm-up. You may wish to allow the children to take turns pointing to and creating patterns to sing.

If you have access to step bells, demonstrate steps, skips, and leaps using the step bells. After the children have several experiences with echo singing and the step bells, ask the children which vocal warm-up sung was stepwise movement (*doo bee*) and which was skips (*too bee*).

Exercise:

Demonstrate with hand signals the falling minor third (Sol - Mi).

Have the choir members echo you and imitate your use of hand signals. Develop or use familiar singing games that are based on this pattern.

Sol



Mi



Exercise:

Demonstrate with hand signals the falling fourth (Sol-Re). Use the echo game play approach here also. Ask the children to tell you which warm-up was an example of this type of leaping movement?

Sol



Re



Comment:

Children will need more experiences in the coming rehearsals with these concepts. One of the delights of working with children is their enjoyment of repetition. The challenge for us is to develop and constantly

add to our musical games and exercises to teach the step-skip-leap concepts of melodic movement. This will aid greatly in teaching score reading as you progress in the choir year.

EXPERIENCE TWO

Help the children understand the meaning of *rejoice*. Some of the words you will want them to associate with *rejoice* are glad, happy, and delighted. Look for magazine pictures to show the children that illustrate people expressing joy.

Read some other scripture passages that include *rejoice* such as Psalm 33:1 or Isaiah 35:2.

Explain to them that the word comes to us from the French language (*re* means again and *joir* is the French verb to be glad) You may want to ask them to share some ways in which they rejoice and place them on a poster in the room along with the scripture passage from Philippians 4 on which this anthem is based.

Singing Exercise:

Create a word chart for the refrain of "Rejoice in the Lord."

Echo sing each line with the choir.

Note: Be sure to sing each line on one breath the very first time and to have the children echo each line that way. Otherwise you begin singing measure by measure instead of by phrases. Remember the light focused head tone that you are working toward. As you provide the echo, your voice must reflect this tone quality.

Activity:

Show the Refrain Music Chart

8 Re - joice in the Lord, re-joice in the Lord.

13 a - gain I will say: re-joice! _____

After echo singing several times with the choir, ask which lines are the same music and which lines are different. Guide the singers to see that the endings are different. Guide the choir to recognize the leaps every time they sing re-joice and a-gain.

You may want to end your rehearsal by singing

<p>REJOICE in the Lord, REJOICE in the Lord, Again I will say: REJOICE!</p> <p>REJOICE in the Lord, REJOICE in the Lord, Again I will say: REJOICE!</p>

what you learned today as a benediction or a song to depart rehearsal in an orderly recession from the choir room.

EXPERIENCE THREE

Warm Up Exercise:

As in the previous rehearsals to introduce the anthem, you will want to repeat the warm-up exercises; however, plan on spending more time on the falling third exercise. Use the step chart to help children and add the solfege syllables for this exercise. At the next rehearsal you may want to teach some or all the hand signals for this exercise. Move the pattern up and down by half steps while encouraging a focused head tone at all times.

sol mi fa re mi do re mi do

sol mi fa re mi do re mi do etc.

Activity:

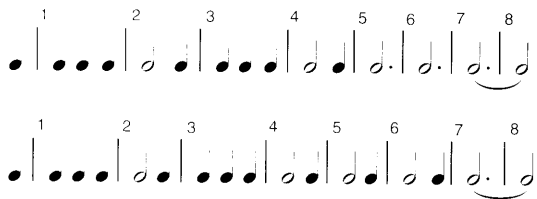
Review the refrain learned in last week's rehearsal. Pass out the music and have the singers discover that the anthem begins and ends with the refrain. Help them discover the fermata at the end. Explain the meaning of fermata (to stop) and the importance of watching the director whenever a fermata appears in the music.

Activity:

Introduce a middle section word chart:

<p>VERSE ONE: <i>Be gentle to all, be gentle to all The Lord is near.</i></p> <p><i>Be gentle to all, be gentle to all The Lord is near.</i></p> <p>VERSE TWO: <i>Be thankful and pray, be thankful and pray And God will give you peace.</i></p> <p><i>Be thankful and pray, be thankful and pray And God will give you peace.</i></p>

Echo clap the rhythm of the first verse. Pay close attention to the dotted half note (in one) feel at the end of the first verse.



When you feel the rhythm is secure, move on to echo singing the first verse.

Help children to recognize the different endings (one low one high) of the verse before moving on to the second verse.

Have the choir sing with you the second verse. Help them discover which parts have a different rhythm after singing through the verse.

Activity:

Ask the children to clap the two lines of the rhythm chart from verses one and two. Help them discover that the rhythm in measures 5 and 6 is based on the “rhythm of the words” and not the “steady beat” alone.

Comments:

Note that so far the choir has been introduced to concepts before seeing the printed music. It may not be necessary at all for younger singers to see the music until later in the study of the anthem. However, it is good to get singers following the printed music with repeats and endings as soon as possible. Utilize games such as “where did the piano stop playing? or where did I stop humming?” and have singers place their finger on the spot in the score.

EXPERIENCE FOUR

Activity:

Review musical material from the anthem that was introduced previously. Based on the needs of your singers, spend time reinforcing ideas or concepts that still appear to be uncertain for them.

Activity:

Pass out the music and introduce the concept of form. Every composer has to have a plan in mind when he or she begins to write an anthem for us to sing. Sometimes their plan is based on the words of the anthem, sometimes the music, and often a combination of the two. So, form is like a map or pattern that helps us as singers understand how all the sections of an anthem fit together.

Guide the children in discovering the large form of “Rejoice in the Lord” by making a song chart with

them. Assist the children in discovering and labeling the sections of the anthem that are the same as well as the sections of the anthem that are different. Stress the concept of alike and different in understanding and following form in music.

A <i>Rejoice...</i>	B <i>Be gentle...</i>	A <i>Rejoice...</i>
B <i>Be thankful...</i>	A <i>Rejoice...</i>	Coda <i>Again I...</i>

Even though the term *coda* is not used in the score, there is an added ending that is a repeat of the last phrase with a fermata. So, here is a teachable moment and an excellent time to introduce the term.

Activity:

Continue teaching the anthem with children singing the various sections they labeled in studying the form.

Comments:

In the score there is an indication (+) for a finger cymbal on the downbeat of the refrain. You could also use a ‘C’ handbell or handchime and finger cymbals or triangle in any combination to add some color and variety. The piano part is very easy and gives you a chance to be creative. A plucked low string instrument, such as a cello or double bass could play the bass line with an oboe or clarinet on the treble line, reserving the flute/recorder for the descant on the final refrain. A harpsichord would be great along with the flute descant as accompaniment as well as a light, bright organ registration.

In any event the piece will be best learned without playing the melody line on the piano. There are many repeated patterns and easy rhythms that make rote teaching of this anthem possible. However, do not just allow yourself to teach it by rote without helping your singers discover the many musical concepts contained in this anthem. As you study the anthem, you will find there are many concepts that you can carry over into the choir year and other anthems.

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