

ANTHEM LESSON PLAN

ANTHEM: CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART (CGA 879)

by Jeff Reeves

MATERIALS

1 circle, 1 square, 1 triangle (cut from different color poster board)
blackboard/erase board
ribbon (28 inches long)

REHEARSAL ONE

I. Introduce the anthem.

1. Ask a volunteer to read Psalm 51:10-12.
2. Invite choristers to share what this passage means to them. Use their comments as “teachable moments” to discuss how actions and words demonstrate our love and faithfulness to God and others.
3. When singing the anthem during Lent, remind choristers that Lent is a season for reflection and a special time of penitence (expressing regret for our wrongdoings or sin).

II. Introduce the refrain.

1. Display a circle on the board. Call it “refrain.”
2. Have choristers listen as you sing Part I, measures 21-38. Sing on “loo” and point to the circle as you sing.

III. Teach the refrain, measures 21-38.

1. Echo sing measures 21-24 on “loo.”
2. Lead choristers to “trace” the melodic movement with their hands as they sing.
3. Echo sing (on “loo”) and “trace” measures 25-27; 28-31 (bt. 2); 31 (bt. 3)-35 (bt. 1); 35 (bt. 3)-39.
4. Help choristers locate the above phrases in their music, showing them how their melodic “tracings” match the melodic movement in the music.
5. For an added challenge, echo sing and “trace” longer phrases.

REHEARSAL TWO

IV. Play a listening game.

1. Ask everyone to stand. Display a square and circle on the board. Place the square to the left of the circle. Ask choristers to sit down if they remember the name given to the circle. Have them say the name together (refrain). Invite anyone still standing to sit down.
2. Tell choristers to listen as the accompanist plays Part I, measure 5-38. Challenge them to stand when they hear the refrain begin.

V. Review the refrain, measures 21-38.

1. Assist choristers in locating where the refrain begins (measure 21) and ends (measure 38 or 40) in their music.
2. Lead them in singing the refrain, Part I, with text.

VI. Introduce stanza I, measures 5-20.

1. Point to the square on the board.
2. Echo sing measures 5-20 in 4 measure phrases.
3. Have choristers locate words in verse I that end in “t” or “d.”
4. Ask them to speak the words without the ending consonant.
5. Help choristers discover the importance of articulating consonants when speaking and singing.
6. Everyone sing stanza I with crisp, clear consonants.

REHEARSAL THREE

VII. Play a listening game.

1. Display a square and circle on the board as in Rehearsal Two.
2. Have choristers listen as you sing verse 2, measures 5-20.
3. Ask a volunteer if the melody belongs to the "square" or "circle" section. [Square]
4. Ask another volunteer if the text is the same or different from the text learned in the last rehearsal. [Same and different; the text in measures 5-7 is the same.]

VIII. Learn stanza 2, measures 5-20.

1. Have choristers locate words in verse 2 that end in "t" and "v."
2. Everyone speak and sing these words without the ending consonants.
3. Everyone sing verse 2 with crisp, clear consonants. Instruct choristers to watch you for phrase cut-offs where the ending consonants are placed.

IX. Practice singing 4 measure phrases.

1. Use a ribbon to demonstrate singing a phrase on one breath. Hold ribbon in one hand. With the other hand, pull one end of the ribbon horizontally as you sing measures 41-45. The ribbon should be fully extended by the end of the phrase.
2. Practice singing 4 measure phrases (measures 41-57).

X. Identify measures 41-57.

1. Ask if this section sounds like the "square" or "circle" section. [Neither]
2. Display a triangle to the right of the circle on the board.
3. Everyone sing the triangle section, measures 41-57.

REHEARSAL FOUR

XI. Practice pure, beautiful vowel sounds.

1. Write these vowel sounds on the board: ah, eh, ee, oh, oo
2. Demonstrate mouth shapes for each vowel sound, helping singers recognize appropriate lip shapes and jaw/tongue placement.
3. Have choristers find words in the anthem with these vowel sounds.
4. Practice singing words that choristers find.

XII. Identify anthem sections.

1. Display the following "visual shapes" in this order: square, circle, triangle.
2. Have pianist play measures 5-7. Ask a volunteer to identify if the music comes from the "square," "circle," or "triangle" section. [Square]
3. Repeat for measures 21-24 and 41-45. [Measures 21-24 = circle; measures 41-45 = triangle]

XIII. Discover music "road signs."

1. Draw on the board: repeat signs, repeat endings, D.S. al Coda, D.S. sign, and Coda sign.
2. Challenge choristers to locate the signs in the anthem. [Repeat signs at measures 3 and 39; repeat endings at measures 38-39 and 40; D.S. al Coda at measure 57; D.S. sign at measure 21; Coda signs at measures 37, 57, and 58]
3. Explain that these signs indicate "where to go" in the anthem.
4. Without singing, lead choristers through the anthem following the road signs.

XIV. Sing measures 5-57.

1. Sing measures 5-57 following the musical road map.
2. Point to the square, circle, or triangle to visually indicate when each section is sung.

REHEARSAL FIVE

XV. Learn the Coda.

1. Review the music "road signs" found in the anthem. (Refer to Rehearsal Four.)
2. Explain that a "Coda" is a section at the end of a piece that brings the piece to a close. Lead choristers to locate the "Coda."

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on page 7, measures 58-67.

3. Rehearse Part I, measures 35-37, taking the “Coda” to measure 63.

XVI. Learn Part II.

1. Have choristers locate where vocal Part II begins on page 3, measure 21.

2. Point out that Part II sings only on the third time.

4. Have choristers follow in their music as you sing measures 21-24.

5. Ask if Part II is higher or lower than Part I. [Higher]

6. Everyone sing Part II, measures 21-24.

7. Repeat this process with measures 25-27; measures 28-31, beat 2; measure 31, beat 3; measure 35, beat 1; measure 35, beat 3; Coda at measure 59, beat 2; measure 59, beat 3-63. (Note: in some phrases, Part II is both higher and lower than Part I.)

XVII. Sing Parts I and II together.

1. Divide choristers into 2 groups. If possible, include several strong, independent singers in each group. Have these singers serve as group leaders to provide vocal support for developing singers.

2. Rehearse measures 21-37 and measures 58-63 in 4 measure phrases. Have each group sing their part alone, then put parts together.



JEFF REEVES, Choral Music Editor, joined the Choristers Guild staff in August 2000. Before coming to Choristers Guild, Jeff served as Music Editor for LifeWay Church Resources, Abingdon Press, and World Library Publications. He is the author of numerous publications including music curriculum materials, teaching articles, and choral and handbell works for children of all ages.

Since 1990, Jeff has specialized in the field of church music for children. His work in both the music publishing industry and the local church has given him the unique opportunity to understand the needs of children’s choirs within the larger ecumenical community. The resulting passion is Jeff’s drive to develop products and services that meet those diverse needs.

Jeff serves as Director of Children’s Music Ministries at St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

CORRECTION TO LUMEN CHRISTI

Regretfully, there were two printing errors in the musical examples given in Jayne Southwick Cool’s Anthem Lesson Plan, Lumen Christi, in the October/November issue of The Chorister. The example on the middle of page 9, which is intended to teach the children to watch and respond to the way the director conducts measures 72-end, should read:

When you combine the legato markings with a ritard and a mezzo forte volume, you are creating a dramatic ending to the piece. “The light of Christ” is now emphasized, and that’s what you want your listeners to remember. Look up here and follow me as I conduct.



The other musical example that needs correcting appears on page 10. It should read:

There’s a special trick for making everyone end together on the last word of this anthem. “Christ” ends with two consonants, an “s” before the “t”. If we assign a rhythm to the word, we’ll have a perfect cut-off.



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