

HYMN STUDY: LORD, WHO THROUGHOUT THESE FORTY DAYS

by Michael Bedford

WEEK ONE

Materials: Bible, hymnals, a rocking chair

1. Set up an old fashioned story time with the choristers. (Who doesn't love storytelling?) Sit in the chair and tell the choir the story of Jesus in the wilderness or read it from Matthew 4:1-11. As it is a suspenseful story, you may want to tone Satan down a bit.
2. Teach the four phrases of the melody by call and response, using "loo" for each syllable to encourage head voice.
3. Play each phrase on the piano and ask the children to locate the highest note (A, B-flat, C, A). Explain that the upward movement of the highest notes creates "tension" and the downward movement of the last high note creates "relaxation." Play the melody, shaping it so that phrase 1 is *p*, phrase 2 is *mp*, phrase 3 is *mf*, and phrase 4 returns to *mp*. Stress the high notes.
4. Teach stanza 1, making sure to discuss the meaning of "fast." If the Victorian text is used, explain "didst" and "thee."
5. Sing stanza 1 with accompaniment, making sure it is played with strength and majesty.

WEEK TWO

Materials: hymnals, a picture of Jesus in the wilderness

Ask your Christian Education Director or Librarian for assistance and invite him/her to rehearsal.

1. Review the melody and stanza 1.
2. Teach stanza 2, using the method from Week 1. Explain any unfamiliar words.
3. Play each phrase separately, asking the children if any phrases are the same. When it is determined that they are not, discuss (especially with older children) the concept of "through-composed" music as a form where no sections are alike.
4. Introduce your Christian Education Director or your Church Librarian to the children, stressing the importance and value of teamwork among church employees. Thank this person for assisting in finding the picture of Jesus in the wilderness.
5. Show the picture or drawing, and compare it to the hymn structure (no repetitive images or symmetrical structure, etc.)
6. Sing stanzas 1 and 2.

WEEK THREE

Materials: hymnals

1. Review stanzas 1 and 2.
2. Teach stanza 3.

3. Explain unfamiliar words.

4. Count the number of syllables in each line of the text (8, 6, 8, 6). Share that this form is called Common Meter.

5. Using the Metrical Index in the back of the hymnal, look up CM (Common Meter) and count the number of hymns with this meter. Select one that the children will know, and compare the structure of its text with that of *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*.

6. Interchange the two texts and tunes and sing them to the children. Do they work well changed or better left as they are?

6. Sing stanzas 1-3.

WEEK FOUR

Materials: hymnals

Reserve the sanctuary for use during rehearsal.

1. Teach stanza 4 in the rehearsal room.

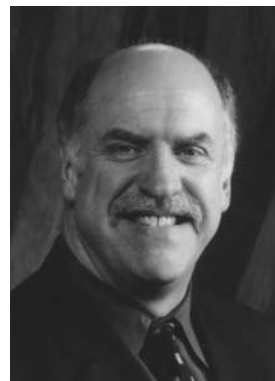
2. Sing the entire hymn with accompaniment.

3. Make a "field trip" to the sanctuary.

4. In the sanctuary, look around and find all the purple additions to the room (altar cloth, pulpit scarf, etc.). Talk about the different colored vestments the clergy wear. If the choir uses purple stoles or sings without white cottas during Lent, discuss why. If you have Stations of the Cross, explain their purpose.

5. Sing the hymn in the sanctuary. You may want to invite your organist to be present to play it with the choir. Thank this person for all they add to the musical life of your church.

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SING FOR LIFE: REPRODUCIBLE CHORISTER PAGE

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Do you remember learning a few months ago about the season of Advent? See if you can fill in this blank: "Advent is a time of _____ for the birth of Jesus Christ."

Just as we prepared for Christ's birth during Advent, we prepare for his death and resurrection during the season of Lent. Just as in the above statement about Advent, we may also say that "Lent is a time of _____ for the rebirth of Jesus Christ." What do we mean by this?

The color of Lent is purple, the color of royalty. Lent is made up of forty days before Easter, not counting Sundays. (Sunday is considered a "small Easter" all through the year, so we do not count Sundays as part of Lent's forty days.) Before Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday, celebrated his Last Supper with his disciples on Maundy Thursday, died on the cross on Good Friday, and was raised from the dead on Easter Day, he spent forty days in the wilderness. Listen as your director shares the story of Jesus in the wilderness, then answer these questions:

1. Why did Jesus go to the wilderness? _____
2. How long was Jesus there? _____
3. Who came to visit Jesus at this time? _____
4. How many times was Jesus tempted? _____

The hymn, *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*, looks at the story of Jesus in the wilderness in a special way. The words were written in 1873 by Claudia Frances Hernaman, who lived in 19th century England. The daughter of a Church of England priest, she devoted her life to teaching children about the Christian faith, writing some 150 hymn texts like this one.

The tune *St. Flavian* first appeared some 300 year earlier than this text, in Day's Psalter, published in 1562. The harmonies you hear today were written by the English church organist and composer Richard Redhead in 1856. Isn't it amazing that a text and tune written so many years apart could eventually be placed together in such a beautiful way? As you hear the tune played, listen to the strength and majesty of the music. The strength of the music is important because Jesus himself would have been

strong to endure temptation and to continue to fast and pray for forty days. Likewise, the majesty of the music helps us think of the majesty of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We often observe the season of Lent by giving up something that might not be good for us. Can you think of two things that are often given up during Lent?

1. _____
2. _____

Another way to observe the season of Lent is to take on something that will make us better people. Can you think of two things that might fit this description?

1. _____
2. _____

Listen to the message of hope in the final verse of this great hymn. May we make this Lent a time of discipline, of learning, and of growing as Christians, that we may be pure on Easter Day!

HIDDEN WORD PUZZLE

Look for the following words in the puzzle below:

ABIDE HUNGER SATAN
 CHRIST LENT STRENGTH
 FAST PENITENCE TEMPTATION
 FORTY DAYS PRAY THIRST

L	A	T	H	I	R	S	T	A	N	T
E	B	A	C	O	F	A	S	T	U	L
N	I	H	S	T	R	E	N	G	T	H
T	D	U	M	E	L	O	H	T	I	S
P	E	N	I	T	E	N	C	E	L	A
N	O	G	R	E	N	P	U	R	A	T
C	H	E	I	C	H	R	I	S	T	A
F	O	R	T	Y	D	A	Y	S	O	N
C	M	A	H	E	R	Y	B	N	S	A
O	T	E	M	P	T	A	T	I	O	N