

## O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

Before Jesus was born, the Jews were constantly at war with their neighboring countries. Many times they were conquered and taken away as captives. For a long time they were kept as slaves in Egypt. Their prophets kept telling them that sometime there would come a leader who would rescue them from their captivity.

The Jews thought that this savior would come soon, and prayed every day, "O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel." Israel was the name they called their country. So sure were they that their prayers would be answered, that after their prayers they would say to each other, "Rejoice, Emmanuel will surely come."


There are several things you will be interested to know about this hymn.

1. It is called an ADVENT hymn, because it is about the coming of Jesus. Christmas hymns are about His birth.
2. In some hymnals, you will find this sign above the hymn: 8,8,8,8,8,8. That means that it has six lines of poetry, and there are 8 syllables in each line. Let's see if the numbers are right. Count the syllables in each line.

O come, O come, Em-man-u-el \_\_\_\_\_  
 And ran-som cap-tive Is-ra-el \_\_\_\_\_  
 That mourns in lone-ly ex-ile here \_\_\_\_\_  
 Un-til the Son of God ap-pear \_\_\_\_\_  
 Re-joice, re-joice, Em-man-u-el \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shall come to thee, O Is-ra-el \_\_\_\_\_

3. The first two stanzas were written in Latin, about 800 years ago. The third stanza was added much, much later. Only in modern times have people begun to think of the WHOLE WORLD as one family. We are just beginning to realize that God cares for all people, all races, all nations, and that we must learn to do so too. Fill in the missing words of this stanza.

Bind \_\_\_\_\_ nations in \_\_\_\_\_ heart and mind; bid envy, strife and \_\_\_\_\_  
 cease; fill the \_\_\_\_\_ with heaven's \_\_\_\_\_.

4. The tune of this hymn is almost as old as the Latin words. In fact, it comes from the time when music had no tune at all. It was called *plain* song, because it was almost like talking on one pitch. If you sing the first stanza very slowly, you will notice that at the end of each line there is something like a little melody on just one syllable. That was the way our church music began, by adding a little melody at the end of a very *plain* phrase. In your hymnal, you will probably have a sign like this:  to mark the end of the chanting and the beginning of the melody.

### RIGHT OR WRONG

1. This is a Christmas hymn. \_\_\_\_\_
2. All three stanzas were written in Latin. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The tune is very old. \_\_\_\_\_