

PLAN FOR THE NEXT SINGING YEAR

OUTLINE A YEAR OF SONG

by Andrea Baxter

Presented here is an outline for a concert/worship experience, appropriate for the upper elementary children's choir, that includes both word and song. It is comprised of three main sections: a gathering, a journey through the church seasons, and a sending. While a creation theme is woven through the gathering and sending portions, the journey through the church seasons highlights the life of Jesus, God's greatest gift to His precious creation, as it is told during the church year.

This celebration should be observed at the end of the ministry year, after having worked throughout the year on each anthem during the corresponding church season. A ministry year that culminates with such an experience provides a goal for children as they work from September through May or June, and it gives children a chance to review and sing the anthems confidently before taking a summer break.

The readings prior to each anthem are merely suggestions. Scripture readings, meditations, poetry, prayers, or narratives all work well as a means of introducing a particular season and anthem. You may choose to write something that works for you, or work together with a child or small group of children to create an introduction together. Whether you use the readings here or take the time to create something, be sure to spend ample time coaching your readers so that passages are spoken clearly and slowly.

Several of the anthems included below will be highlighted in coming issues of *The Chorister*. Look for lesson plans and a special church/home connection piece that will assist you in your preparation.

WE GATHER

GATHERING HYMN: For the Beauty of the Earth



For the beau-ty of the earth, for the beau-ty of the skies,
For the won-der of each hour of the day and of the night,
For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
For the joy of hu-man love, broth-er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
For each per-fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
for the mys - tic har-mo - ny link-ing sense to sound and sight:
friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:



Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

Text: Follitt S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.
Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872

PRAYER

Dear God,

We hear stories of creation in the Bible. We know that you created the earth and the heavens and everything that is a part of them.

But when did you first create music? Was it when the first bird sang? When the first cricket chirped? When the first baby cried out a song of surprise and wonder as he burst forth into the world?

All must be delightful sounds to you, their Creator!

We strive to make beautiful music that will be equally as pleasing to you. May all that we say, sing, and do today bring glory to your name. Amen.

LITANY

Throughout the year, take the opportunity to talk to the children about how the Lord is glorified in their lives (songs, the church, the world). Do others see Christ shining through us as we go to school or play with friends? When we lead in worship, are the hearts and minds of the gathered assembly directed toward God?

Give children an opportunity to write their own prayers, and then use them after each stanza while the pianist/organist continues to play softly. You can include as few or as many as you like after each verse. Invite one or more children to be the representative(s) for the choir as the reader(s).

Lord, Be Glorified



In my life, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied;
In our song, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied;
In your church, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied;
In your world, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied;



in my life, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.
in our song, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.
in your church, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.
in your world, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.

Text: Bob Kilpatrick, b. 1952

Music: BE GLORIFIED, Bob Kilpatrick

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Each verse is sung prior to spoken petitions.

Spoken following the first verse:

Be glorified, Lord, as I . . . (work toward my wolf badge in scouting, learn to use my singing voice, etc.)

Spoken following the second verse:

Be glorified, Lord, as we . . . (strive to become a better choir, join our voices with all those gathered, etc.)

Spoken following the third verse:

Be glorified, Lord, as we . . . (work together to help a refugee family, collect canned goods for a food shelter, etc.)

Spoken following the fourth verse:

Be glorified, Lord, as we. . . (try to be more conscious of your creation and how we treat the environment, work together for peace, etc.)

All sing together:

In our lives, Lord, be glorified, be glorified.

In our lives, Lord, be glorified today.

WE JOURNEY THROUGH THE CHURCH SEASONS

ADVENT

Advent is about waiting. During Advent, we wait to celebrate the coming of Christ as a little child, born in a manger in Bethlehem. We also wait for Christ to come again so that we can all experience God's great kingdom. But don't we also wait during Advent, and every day of the year, for Christ to come into our lives? Is he knocking on the door of your heart? Have you invited him to come in?

Anthem: *Somebody's Knocking* by James E. Clemens (Choristers Guild CGA 865: two part, piano, woodblock)

CHRISTMAS

Luke 2:8-17

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Anthem: *Oh, Come, Little Children* by Lynn Shaw Bailey and Becki Slagle Mayo (Choristers Guild CGA 1099: unison/two part, piano, optional finger cymbals, woodblock, hand drum or congas, 5 optional handbells or handchimes)

EPIPHANY

How do you experience darkness? Does it feel scary, or full of the unknown? Maybe you can even remember a time in your life when you wanted nothing more than to sleep with a flashlight in your hand at bedtime. That must have been what it was like for the people who walked on the earth before Jesus came. The unknown of their existence must have caused great confusion! But then Christ came, and he was their flashlight. The light of Christ, *Lumen Christi*, was comfort and security in the night. May that light shine just as brightly today.

Anthem: *Lumen Christi* by Jayne Southwick Cool (Choristers Guild CGA 1098: unison)

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

When Jesus was baptized with water, a voice from heaven declared, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." When we are baptized and named as a special child of God, sometimes a candle is lit and words are spoken: "Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." On this special day in the season of Epiphany, we celebrate the fact that we, the baptized followers of the lamb, are the bearers of the light that is Jesus Christ. May we bear it boldly and share it generously!

Anthem: *The Lamb* by Mark Patterson (Choristers Guild CGA 839: unison, optional flute)

LENT

A Reading from Psalm 51: 1-9

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.
Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.*

Anthem: *Create in Me a Clean Heart* by Jeff Reeves (Choristers Guild CGA 879: unison/two part)

EASTER

*A Reading: "On the Third Day Risen"

*Baptized into his death, buried with him,
We too shall rise.
Since Jesus crossed the river,
it is not only Christ's resurrection
it is not only Christ's resurrection.
We too shall rise.
This is our baptismal faith
expressed in our baptismal creed.
Jesus is Lord!
is the earliest Christian creed.
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again,
we proclaim in the Great Thanksgiving.
Baptized into a death like his,
we too shall rise.
The grain dies,*

*the wheat is born;
from barren branches
Buried with him,
new buds green;
from deathly winter,
spring blossoms;
from the cold baptismal river
the new person steps forth;
from pain,
birth,
from death,
Easter.*

Anthem: *Now the Green Blade Rises* by Shirley McRae (Choristers Guild CGA 795: two part, flute, handbells, tambourine)

PENTECOST

Do you think that God could ever be like the wind? The wind can be strong, and it can be a gentle breeze. I suppose God is like that, strong and gentle.

In the Bible, the Hebrew word for "Spirit," *Ruah*, also means "breath" and "wind." Jesus said that the Spirit of God is like the wind. It blows where it chooses, and we hear it, but we don't know where it comes from or where it's going. (John 3:8)

Also in the Bible, we read that Elijah expected God to come in the wind, but instead God came in a "still small voice." (I Kings 10:11-12) But another time, the Spirit of God came "like the rush of a mighty wind." (Acts 2:2) So I guess we can say that God sometimes comes in surprising, unexpected ways, like the wind!

Anthem: *God of the Universe* by Dorothy Christopherson (Choristers Guild CGA 821 POD: two part with flute, percussion, piano or Orff instruments)

WE ARE SENT INTO THE WORLD

As we enter this house to worship, we come with the hope that we will be able to hear, meet, touch, taste, and see God. But if we are truly equipped during worship, then we should scatter from this place with the same expectations when we enter the world. Do you hope to see God as you go off to work or school? Do you stop to listen for God as you walk in your neighborhood or play in the park? Do not underestimate the might and power of God! For our God is powerful enough to be present in the people we meet in the grocery store line and in the bird that sings in the tree. Our God is powerful enough to be present in the friend in need and in the delicate daisy pushing up from the ground.

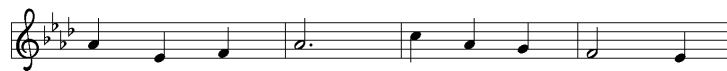
Anthem: *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* by Michael Bedford (Choristers Guild CGA 884: unison/two part, congregation, flute, oboe, organ, optional handbells)

*A Reading: "Contrast"

All words are relational
No servant without master.
No light without darkness
No health without sickness.
The interplay of opposites
Grants existence
Its challenge and delight,

*Its triumph and savor.
 The contrasts of life
 Keep us from numbness
 Keep us from dustiness
 Keep us from yawning.
 How blessed the variety.
 how blessed the contrasts:
 Black and white
 Land and water
 Child and adult
 Bread and wine
 Woman and man
 Body and spirit
 Human and God
 Daylight and darkness
 Earth and stars.*

SENDING HYMN: Earth and All Stars



1 Earth and all stars! Loud rush - ing plan - ets!
 2 Trum - pet and pipes! Loud clash - ing cym - bals!
 3 En - gines and steel! Loud pound - ing ham - mers!
 4 Class-rooms and labs! Loud boil - ing test tubes!
 5 Knowl-edge and truth! Loud sound - ing wis - dom!



Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!



Hail, wind, and rain! Loud blow - ing snow - storm!
 Harp, lute, and lyre! Loud hum - ming cel - los!
 Lime - stone and beams! Loud build - ing work - ers!
 Ath - lete and band! Loud cheer - ing peo - ple!
 Daugh - ter and son! Loud pray - ing mem - bers!



Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!



Refrain
 God has done mar - vel - ous things.



I too sing prais - es with a new song!

Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926
 Music: EARTH AND ALL STARS. David N. Johnson, 1922-1987
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Andrea serves as the Associate Director for Music at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, where she directs two children's choirs and the youth choir, oversees the handbell program, and teaches preschool music. As a pianist, Andrea also regularly leads one or more of Trinity's five weekly worship services.

Andrea earned her undergraduate degree in music education from Susquehanna University and her Master of Music in conducting from Carnegie Mellon University where she studied with Robert Page. She has been teaching music and serving in churches for over fifteen years.

In 2007, Andrea was selected by Choristers Guild as one of five exceptional children's choir leaders. She lives with her husband and three sons in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.



*The two readings in Andrea's article are taken from *Crossings, Meditations for Worship* by Susan Palo Cherwien ISBN 0-944529-35-6

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“OUTLINE A YEAR OF SONG” RESOURCES

ANTHEMS

AVAILABLE FROM CHORISTERS GUILD:

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Somebody's Knocking by James E. Clemens
Choristers Guild CGA 865

Oh, Come, Little Children by Lynn Shaw Bailey and Becki Slagle Mayo
Choristers Guild CGA 1099

Lumen Christi by Jayne Southwick Cool
Choristers Guild CGA 1098

The Lamb by Mark Patterson
Choristers Guild CGA 839

Create in Me a Clean Heart by Jeff Reeves
Choristers Guild CGA 879

Now the Green Blade Rises by Shirley McRae
Choristers Guild CGA 795

God of the Universe by Dorothy Christopherson
Choristers Guild CGA 821 P

I Sing the Mighty Power of God by Michael Bedford
Choristers Guild CGA 884

HYMNS

For the Beauty of the Earth - Lord, Be Glorified - Earth and All Stars

READINGS

**Crossings: Meditations for Worship* by Susan Palo Cherwien

Crossings: Meditations for Worship
Susan Palo Cherwien



A collection of meditations written over a number of years primarily for use in hymn festivals. This collection can be used in worship services, hymn festivals, or for private reading. Full indexes are provided to help worship planners. Sections include: Images; Mysteries; Epiphanies; Dawning; Seasons; Colors; The Servant Church; and Harvest. 256 pages.

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