

SING PRAISE TO GOD WHO REIGNS ABOVE

I. Psalms and Hymns

The Psalms were important songs for the people of Israel in the Old Testament and for Christians in the New Testament. Many hymns are based upon ideas in the Psalms. Read a stanza of the hymn and then read the scripture given with that stanza. In the lines provided write down the words or ideas that the stanza has in common with the scripture:

Stanza 1 (Psalm 47: 6-8) _____

Stanza 2 (Psalm 121: 1-6) _____

Stanza 3 (Psalm 46: 1) _____

Stanza 4 (Psalm 100) _____

II. Melodic Form

Listen to and look at the melody of this hymn. Does the melody have any repetition? Is there a section of the melody that is different from the rest? In fact, this melody is in three parts:

A = Sing praise . . . creation,

A = The God of pow'r . . . salvation;

B = With healing balm . . . praise and glory.

The musical form A A B is called the Bar Form. Underline the A A section of text in stanza 1 with one colored pencil and the B section with another color. Many hymns from Germany are written in Bar Form (A A B). Look up the following tune names in the Index of Tunes in your hymnal. Locate the hymn and find the Bar Form in the melody:

EIN' FESTE BURG ("A Mighty Fortress")

NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT ("Now Thank We All Our God")

LOBE DEN HERREN ("Praise to the Lord, the Almighty")

III. Antiphonal Singing

Many psalms were sung antiphonally or in two groups. The Bar Form makes it easy to sing antiphonally. Divide your choir into two groups. Have one group sing the first A section; have the other group sing the second A section. Join together on the B section. Sing all stanzas of this hymn antiphonally.

IV. Often, we think that great poems are written only by poets and music only by musicians. This hymn was written by Johann Jacob Schütz who was actually a lawyer in Germany some 300 years ago. He was an ardent Christian, whose faith inspired him to write this wonderful hymn of praise.