

THEY BLAZED A PATHWAY TO THE MOON



When **NEWS BULLETIN** flashes across the television screen, what does the announcer's voice usually report?

- the death of a famous person
- a medical miracle
- an emergency or crisis
- a space expedition

Contemporary events, at any period of history, have always inspired some of our finest hymns – revealing God's presence in the midst of the present action. Can you trace the following hymns to some historical event?

- "Now Thank We All Our God" _____
- "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" _____
- "O Brother Man" _____

They Blazed A Pathway To The Moon is one of the newer hymns resulting from the contemporary lunar exploration events. Read the text and then put the main idea into your own words below:

Why not devote one choir session to a discussion of how God's action may be experienced through happenings today? Let each person bring the front page of a newspaper and select two or three of the major headlines to discuss. You may even want to climax your session as Victoria Saffelle Johnson did by expressing your conclusions in a poem which may be to music and sung as a hymn.

Count the syllables in your own contemporary event poem to discover its meter. Before you choose a tune, decide these things:

Large-Patterned or Small-Patterned Tune? – Tunes based on large-patterns give a sense of stability and use fewer stanzas (such as "Ellacombe") while small-patterned hymns project a sense of activity (such as "Innocents" and "St. Thomas.")

Duple or Triple Meter? – Tunes in duple time tend to have more dignity and grandeur while those in triple seem to flow with more tenderness. Do you know what duple and triple mean?

What Historical Type of Tune? – Which of the three general types of historical sources for your text will best carry its meaning: A Gregorian tune – A Chorale or Psalm Tune – or a tune written since the Reformation chosen from the wide range available?

And even after making these decisions you must "try on" your words to be certain the tune intensifies the general spirit and mood of the hymn as its progressive thoughts work through each stanza toward a climax.

Reread *They Blazed A Pathway To The Moon* to determine how Victoria Johnson solved each of the above problems. Check the progressive thoughts of her words against the interpretation of the words you wrote above to see if you "caught" her tremendous meaning:

*How could we go away from God?
To Him no place is far,
For God, who made this world of ours,
Made all the worlds that are.*