

Building a Joyful and Thriving Children's Choir

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GIA Summer Music Institute - July 9, 2025

1. Music Foundations
 - a. You want students that are Tuneful, Beatful, Artful (TBA)
 - b. **Tuneful** - ability to think tunes and to coordinate their voices to sing those tunes.
 - c. **Beatful** - ability to feel the pulse of music and how that pulse is in two parts or three parts.
 - d. **Artful** - ability to be moved by music in the many ways music can elicit an emotional response.
 - e. Having these skills being developed at earlier ages (K to 2) will help your choir (3 to 5) to have strong musicians.
2. Type of choir
 - a. School and/or Religious organization
 - b. Auditioned or not?
 - i. If you offer an auditioned choir, also offer a non-auditioned option.
3. Recruitment
 - a. Flyers, posters
 - b. Past performances create interest
4. Schedule - How many performances?
 - a. School - 2 or 3 times a year?
 - b. Church - Every other month?
5. Schedule - How long will the performances last?
 - c. School - 30 to 45 minutes?
 - d. Church - 1 or 2 songs on Sunday?
 - e. For 5 to 6 songs to be learned each semester, rehearse an hour once a week.
 - f. Twice a week with a shorter time span.
6. Logistics - Location
 - a. Music room, choir room, stage, sanctuary
7. Logistics - Set-up
 - a. Seating - chairs, risers floor (Velcro strips/Velcro spots), pews
8. Logistics - Projection - Screen, computer, document camera
9. Logistics - Sound System
 - a. Microphone - rehearsal and/or performance (handheld, lavalier)
 - b. Music Player (CD, MP3, flash drive)
10. Logistics - Lighting for performances
11. Logistics - Accompaniment
 - a. Piano, electric keyboard (MIDI), organ, tracks, solo instruments during performances
12. Logistics - Accompanist
 - a. Live or recorded (Paid or volunteer).
13. Logistics - Conductor location - Music stand, chair/stool, podium
14. Logistics - Music Notation
 - a. Octavos, word sheets, folders (allow to take home?), storage for octavos

15. Warm-ups - Stretching
16. Warm-ups - Breathing
 - a. Consonants, candles, panting
17. Warm-ups - Pitch Explore
 - a. Sirens, slide whistle (voice, body, both)
18. Warm-ups - Vowels & Range
 - a. Indianapolis Children's Choir Warm-ups
 - b. Do not get too repetitive.
 - i. Focusing on good vowels and diction at the beginning of rehearsal only
 - ii. Always using the same approaches to address vocal challenges
19. Programming - Repertoire
20. Harmony in Sequence - by Ruth E. Dwyer
 - a. Unison Singing
 - i. Helen Kemp - "Better to sing in unison beautifully, rather than parts badly".
 - ii. Unison singing allows the director to focus:
 1. Group breathing
 2. Accurate rhythm & pitch
 3. Vowel formation
 4. Diction
 5. Entrances & cut offs
 - b. Ostinato
 - i. Rhythmic - Using text (words or rhythm syllables) and/or motions help students perform the ostinato at the same tempo as the rhyme/song it accompanies
 1. Idea 1 - Half the choir chants a rhyme while the other half claps, taps or chants an ostinato.
 2. Idea 2 - The singers clap or tap the ostinato while performing the rhyme or song simultaneously.
 3. Idea 3 - A small group of singers perform the ostinato on unpitched percussion instruments.
 - ii. Melodic - Songs that are pentatonic lend themselves well to creating a melodic ostinato.
 - c. Descants
 - i. It is easiest for singers to sing a descant that does not cross over the melody.
 - ii. Descants help the singer stay in their head voice. When students sing in their chest voice, they can struggle more with correct pitch.
 - d. Harmony in Sequence: Suspended Pitches
 - i. This is an effective tool to develop harmonic skills.
 - ii. Can also help develop sight-reading skills.
 - iii. "Hot Cross Buns" example
 1. Hot Hot One, two Hot
 2. m m m r m
 - e. Canon/Rounds
 - i. The goal of a canon is to create beautiful harmony.
 - ii. Canons that move by step or thirds are easier.
 - iii. Canons with part crossing are more challenging.
 - f. Harmony in Sequence: Canonic Entrances

- i. Imitative entrances are an excellent way to experience chord building.
 - ii. Entrances that are followed by suspended or repetitive pitches are an easy way to have the singers experience homophony.
- g. Partner Songs & Countermelodies
 - i. Melodies that have the same harmonic structure, can be sung together.
 - ii. Countermelodies that move in opposite directions with the main melody are easier. Different rhythmic content also helps.
- h. Homophonic Harmony
 - i. Blocked chords are musically fulfilling, but can be quite challenging for young singers.
- 21. Programming - Repertoire
 - a. Choosing Repertoire
 - i. Thematic focus, Literacy focus, Genres, Languages, Buffet
 - ii. "Theme Song?" - Alumni
- 22. Programming - Notation
 - a. Purchasing notation, school district octavo library , storage
- 23. Programming - Other Items
 - a. Length of program (parents appreciate "to the point" concerts)
 - b. Program
 - i. Paper or digital - QR code
 - c. Video Recording - Professional?
- 24. Conversational Solfege - 12 Steps
 - a. CS is a 12 step music literacy method that develops musical understanding by ear using rhythm and solfege syllables at a "conversational" level during Steps 1-5, and then by gradually introducing music reading, writing and improvisation and composition skills in Steps 6-12. Each unit in the CS curriculum introduces new rhythmic or melodic concepts, which are sequenced by difficulty level.
- 25. Sing in Parts
 - a. These pieces make excellent concert pieces for elementary and middle school choirs.
 - b. Can be used in the general music class with developed notation reading skills to experience a "performance feel".
 - c. Even if a teacher chooses not to use CS with "Sing in Parts", the folk song arrangements are intended to encourage sight-reading without piano assistance.
 - d. Melodies should not be played on the piano for students.
 - e. Piano accompaniment should be added only after the students can securely sing the piece *a cappella*.
 - f. Teachers may wish to wait to introduce an arrangement until students have learned the rhythmic or melodic skill required for the piece.
 - g. Students can sight-read a piece even before all rhythmic and melodic skills have been learned. In this case, when students encounter an unknown concept, the teacher can sing *for* the class, and the students can learn by rote.
 - h. Each arrangement is provided in two versions.
 - i. Full score with piano accompaniment.
 - ii. Vocal score only.
 - i. Teachers are permitted to duplicate the vocal only scores for singers but not the full score.
 - j. Recordings of full performances as well as piano accompaniment only are available when purchasing each book. The piano tracks can be made available to students to practice at home.
- 26. Sing in Parts - Vol. 1

- a. The pieces are organized by having 4-measure introductions, 4 measure interludes and 4 measure endings.
 - b. This gives the pieces a balanced feeling and allows the students time to think before singing the next section in the piece.
 - c. All the pieces (except the ones in unison) have the students experience all the singing parts. In doing so, the students can then listen more intently on how the parts fit together and create harmony.
 - d. The piano accompaniments were created to support the harmonic changes, not be too busy so the focus is on the singing, and to have stylistic elements that fit the mood of each piece.
27. "Dog Tunes"
- a. Partner Song
 - i. "Bow, Wow, Wow" (singing game), "I Have a Dog"
28. "A Branch of May"
- a. Counter Melody
29. "Wishy Washy"
- a. Bass line melody, parallel 3rds
30. Score Analysis - Dr. Eric Stark - Butler University
- a. "The score teaches us how to teach the piece"
 - b. Red - forte, cresc., accel., fast tempo
 - c. Orange - mezzo forte
 - d. Green - mezzo piano
 - e. Blue - piano, dim., rit.c slow tempo
 - f. Purple - key change
 - g. Light Blue - meter change
 - h. Light Green - breath mark
31. Resources
- a. "Sound Advice" - Jean Ashworth Bartle - Oxford University Press - Paperback \$47.00
 - b. "Teaching Kids to Sing" - Kenneth Phillips - out of print - buy used
 - c. "Before the Singing: Structuring Children's Choirs for Success" - Dr. Barbara Tagg
 - d. "Harmony in Sequence: Developing Part Singing" - Ruth E. Dwyer - ICC Publishing

ICC-Dwyer Warmups

1

ff

1. OO
2. Ee
3. A(Eh)
4. Oh
5. Ah

Musical notation for warmup 1, measures 1-3. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The vocal line consists of whole notes: Bb4, Bb4, Bb4. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a descending eighth-note pattern in the left hand.

4

1-4.

5.

Musical notation for warmup 1, measures 4-5. Measure 4 continues the vocal line with a whole note Bb4. Measure 5 is a repeat sign. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note patterns.

2

Do bi do bi do bi do bi do

Do bi do bi do bi do bi do

Play this in the left hand for more support

Musical notation for warmup 2. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The vocal line consists of eighth-note patterns: Bb4-A4-G4-F4, Bb4-A4-G4-F4. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a descending eighth-note pattern in the left hand. The piece ends with a repeat sign.

3

Do bi do bi do bi do bi do

Continue chromatically

3

p

Mee aw Mee aw Mee aw

Continue chromatically

4

sempre accelerando

Mee aw Mee aw

Continue chromatically

3

Mee aw

Continue chromatically

Dog Tunes

"Bow, Wow, Wow" & "I Have a Dog" (Vocal Only)

arr. Andrew Himelick
and Patrick Fata

Part 1

4

Bow, wow, wow, Whose dog art thou?

Part 2

4

Bow, wow, wow, Whose dog art thou?

9

Pt. 1

Lit - tle Tom - my Tuck - er's dog. Bow, wow, wow.

Pt. 2

Lit - tle Tom - my Tuck - er's dog. Bow, wow, wow.

13

Pt. 1

Bow, wow, wow, Whose dog art thou?

Pt. 2

Bow, wow, wow, Whose dog art thou?

17

Pt. 1

Lit - tle Tom - my Tuck - er's dog. Bow, wow, wow.

Pt. 2

Lit - tle Tom - my Tuck - er's dog. Bow, wow, wow.

Dog Tunes - 2
(Vocal Only)

21 4

Pt. 1 I have a dog and his name is Ro - ver.

Pt. 2 I have a dog and his name is Ro - ver.

29

Pt. 1 He is the one I love the best.

Pt. 2 He is the one I love the best.

33

Pt. 1 When he is good, he is good all o - ver.

Pt. 2 When he is good, he is good all o - ver.

37

Pt. 1 When he is bad, he is just a pest.

Pt. 2 When he is bad, he is just a pest.

Dog Tunes - 3
(Vocal Only)

41

Pt. 1 **4**
Bow, wow, wow, Whose dog art thou?

Pt. 2 **4**
I have a dog and his name is Ro-ver.

49

Pt. 1
Lit-tle Tom-my Tuck-er's dog. Bow, wow, wow.

Pt. 2
He is the one I love the best.

53

Pt. 1
Bow, wow, wow, Whose dog art thou? Lit-tle Tom-my

Pt. 2
When he is good, he is good all o-ver. When he is

58

Pt. 1 **3**
Tuck-er's dog. Bow, wow, wow. Good Boy!

Pt. 2 **3**
bad, he is just a pest. Good Boy!

A Branch of May

(Vocal Only)

arr. Andrew Himelick
and Patrick Fata

Part 1

8

I've been a - wan - d'ring all through this —

Part 2

8

I've been a - wan - d'ring all through this —

Pt. 1

12

night and the best part of the day, But

Pt. 2

night and the best part of the day, But

Pt. 1

17

when I — come back home a - gain, I will bring you a

Pt. 2

when I — come back home a - gain, I will bring you a

Pt. 1

22

4

branch of — May. — Branch of — May. Branch of —

Pt. 2

4

branch of — May. — Branch of — May. Branch of —

Permission to duplicate.

A Branch of May - 2
(Vocal Only)

32

Pt. 1

May. I'll bring you a branch of May. God bless you all,

Pt. 2

May. I'll bring you a branch of May. God bless you all,

39

Pt. 1

both great and small, and send you a joy - ful May.

Pt. 2

both great and small, and send you a joy - ful May.

45

5

Pt. 1

My song is done, I___ must be___ gone. No

Pt. 2

5

My song is done, I___ must be___ gone. No

54

Pt. 1

long - er can I stay. God bless you___ all both great and___

Pt. 2

long - er can I stay. God bless you___ all both great and___

A Branch of May - 3
(Vocal Only)

61

Pt. 1

small, and send you a joy - ful May.

Pt. 2

small, and send you a joy - ful May.

4

70

Pt. 1

My song is done, I must be gone. No long - er can I

Pt. 2

Branch of May. Branch of May. I'll bring you a

76

Pt. 1

stay. God bless you all both great and small, and

Pt. 2

branch of May. God bless you all, both great and small,

82

Pt. 1

send you a joy - ful May.

Pt. 2

and send you a joy - ful May.

3

Wishy, Washy

(Vocal Only)

arr. Andrew Himelick
and Patrick Fata

Part 1

3

Oh, we are two sail - ors

Part 2

3

Oh, we are two sail - ors

Part 3

3

Oh, we are two sail - ors

7

Pt. 1

late - ly come from sea, — and if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with

Pt. 2

late - ly come from sea, — and if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with

Pt. 3

late - ly come from sea, — and if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with

12

Pt. 1

me. Oh, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y wee, — and

Pt. 2

me. Oh, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y wee, — and

Pt. 3

me. Oh, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y wee, — and

Wishy, Washy - 2
(Vocal Only)

17

Pt. 1

if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with me.

6

Pt. 2

if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with me.

6

Pt. 3

if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with me.

6

27

Pt. 1

Wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y.

3

Pt. 2

Wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y

3

Pt. 3

Wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y

3

38

Pt. 1

Oh, we are two sail - ors late - ly come from sea, — and if you want an -

Pt. 2

Wish - y wash - y, wish -

Pt. 3

Wish - y wash - y, wish -

Permission to duplicate.

Wishy, Washy - 3
(Vocal Only)

44

Pt. 1

oth - er one, come a - long with me. Oh, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y,

Pt. 2

y wash - - - y, Wish - - - y,

Pt. 3

y wash - - - y, Wish - - - y,

49

Pt. 1

wish - y wash - y wee, — and if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with

Pt. 2

wash - y, wish - y wash -

Pt. 3

wash - y, wish - y wash -

54

Pt. 1

me. Oh, we are two sail - ors late - ly come from

Pt. 2

y Oh, we are two sail - ors late - ly come from

Pt. 3

y Wish - y wash -

Wishy, Washy - 4
(Vocal Only)

65

Pt. 1

sea, _____ and if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with

Pt. 2

sea, _____ and if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with

Pt. 3

y, wish - - - y wash - - -

69

Pt. 1

me. Oh, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y wee, _____ and

Pt. 2

me. Oh, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y, wish - y wash - y wee, _____ and

Pt. 3

y, Wish - - - y wash - - - y,

74

Pt. 1

if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with me.

Pt. 2

if you want an - oth - er one, come a - long with me.

Pt. 3

wish - - - y wash - - - y