



# follow the star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

### “FOLLOW THE STAR”



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*Play demo of “Follow the Star,” and lead children to sing and do choreography.*

The wise men stepped far out of their ordinary, everyday lives to follow an unusual star in the sky. They knew the prophecies about the Messiah and they trusted they would find Him by following that star. It wasn't really the star that was important—the star's purpose was to lead them to Christ. They weren't following a star just because it was unusual. They were following a star because they knew where it would lead them.

Who or what do you follow? Grown-ups can “follow” people on Twitter and get a glimpse of others' lives. Maybe you “follow” a famous person by watching their TV show or their movies, listening to their music, or watching their games. Perhaps you read books, stories, newspapers, or magazine articles about people. I'm pretty sure those people have no idea who you are. Do they?

Sometimes those people live good, Godly lives and it's an encouragement to watch them. Others might be a great musician, actor, or athlete—but their lives are a mess. Following that kind of example would be a terrible thing to do. Who should we really be following?

*Get responses.*

That's right: Jesus! The wise men did it the right way. Check out this Scripture verse from Matthew 2:1-2:

**“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived unexpected in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” (HCSB)**

Do you think the wise men were the only ones who saw the star?

*Get responses.*

Of course not! Anyone can look up in the sky. But maybe these wise men could see something that others could not see. They had been studying the sky and knew this star was different. They also had the resources to take off on a trip to follow it. It would change their lives and ultimately change the whole world. That star led them to the Savior of the world.

What or who led you to the Savior?

*Get responses.*

Maybe it was our pastor or a Sunday School teacher. Maybe it was your parents or a friend. We are all led to Jesus by His Word and we are led into His presence in worship. We are led into a relationship when we feel Him knocking on the door of our hearts and we let Him in.

**Optional plan of salvation:** Maybe you have never followed Jesus all the way to salvation. You know about Jesus. You can talk about the Christmas story or the Easter story, but you have never taken a journey like the wise men and abandoned your old life to follow after Jesus. If you would like to do that today, pray this with me:

*Allow kids to echo each phrase. Pause at each slash [ / ] for kids to repeat.*

**Dear Jesus, /**

**I know You are the Messiah. / You are God's Son, born in Bethlehem. /**

**God sent you to earth / to be the Sacrifice for me. /**

**Thank You for dying on the cross for me. /**

**I want to follow You. / Amen.**

*Follow up individually with your kids if any were saved!*

*Sing the bridge of “Follow the Star” quietly and worshipfully (ms. 48-63).*

**Star of Bethlehem, you are shining, shining.  
Lead us to the manger where He lays.  
Light of the world, You are shining, shining.  
Lead us to the cross where we are saved!**

The secret to being a true follower of Jesus is simple:

- **Want** what He wants;
- **Go** where He leads;
- **Believe** in His Word;
- **Work** for His Kingdom;
- Bow down and **worship** Him.

That is the ultimate act of a true follower—lift up the person you are following higher than yourself and honor them. We don’t do it just with music—we do it with our lives.



**PRAY: Light of the world, we will follow You. We will worship You.  
We will honor You with our lives. We will go where You lead.  
Help us lead others to You by the way we live our lives. Amen.**

## “Follow the Star”

*Give each child a star, arrow, or cross. See Craft Activity (pg. 9).*

Let’s listen to the song, “Follow the Star.”



*Play demo of “Follow the Star.”*

Name some of the characters you heard about in the Christmas story.

*You’re looking for “wise men.”*

What part did the wise men play in the birth of Jesus?

*Get responses.*

Yes, you know the story: the wise men found baby Jesus by following a star. And that’s the name of the song we’re introducing today! Let’s play the song again. As you listen, raise the cross, star, or arrow symbol up in the air every time you hear corresponding words.

*Divide kids into individual groups of three with a star, an arrow, and a cross facing inward towards each other as they listen. OR you could put all the stars together, all the arrows together, and all the crosses together. There are many ways to have fun with this!*

**Star** – Star • Light • Brighter • Shining

**Arrow** – Pointing • Follow • Lead/Leads

**Cross** – Jesus • King • Savior • He • Cross



*Play demo of “Follow the Star” and give verbal cues and encouragement as the kids listen for their words.*

### Verses

- How many phrases are there in the verse portion of the song?
- *Show the words on a screen, or write them on the white board.*
- Count them! *There are 4.*

- Can you find any similarities between the phrases?
- *Phrases 1, 3, and 4 start out almost identical. Phrases 1 and 3, and phrases 2 and 4, end similarly.*
- Which verse had the solo? *Verse 1*

## Chorus

- Let's clap the steady beat and speak the rhythm of the chorus. Emphasize the syncopation!
- Now let's work on some spots where it's important to get the rhythm correct:

*ms. 23-24: star --- to --- Je---sus*

*ms. 27-28: where-ev---er ---Je---sus---leads*

*ms. 31-32: lights --- shine --- bright---er*

*ms. 35-36: that Je---sus---came---to---set---us---free*

- Sing the chorus again, still clapping. Keep emphasizing the syncopation!
- Now let's learn the harmony. It's almost entirely in thirds, so it's very easy to hear and learn.
- *The only exceptions are "Jesus" in ms. 24 and 28, "brighter" in ms. 32, and "set us free" in measure 36. Add the third high harmony with just a few girls on the word "free."*

## Bridge

- *This section has syncopation and should be precise, but with more flow. Speak the words in rhythm like a robot. Sing it very precisely on the pitches, but still very machine-like. Now sing with musicality and passion. Add harmony. This is almost all in thirds, too!*



## LARGE GROUP

- *Players stand in circle around the room or around the chairs.*
- *One player (the **guesser**) goes outside with a volunteer, or moves far away from the group and turns their back.*
- *While that player is gone, appoint a child to be the **leader** for the first round.*
- *Give instructions for the game, then bring the guesser back, and have them stand in the middle of the circle.*

### Playing the Game

- ***Everyone in the circle must imitate whatever the leader does** (arm motions, facial expressions, sing, dance, etc.), but tries not to make it obvious who the leader is.*
- ***The guesser (in the middle) tries to discover which player is the leader** (by attempting to see who the other players are watching and taking cues from).*
- *Guesser gets 3 guesses.*
- ***The leader then becomes the guesser** who leaves the group so you can appoint a new leader.*
- *Play for 5-6 minutes. Keep it moving fast with high energy!*



- *Copy and cut out the following four strips:*

**We will follow the star to Jesus.**

**We will worship the King.**

**We will go wherever Jesus leads.**

**We will let our light shine brighter,  
so the whole world will see.**

- *Put kids in groups of 4 and give each one a different phrase from above. You can do groups of 8 and double up each phrase.*
- *Explain:* When it is your turn, you will act out the words on your strip of paper. You may not use any spoken or written words. It must only be actions.
- *The other children in your group have to guess which phrase they are acting out.*
- *After everyone has had a turn, explain:* Some of those were easy to guess because the action was clear. But some of those were harder to guess, correct?
- *Explain:* The song says, “We will follow the star to Jesus,” but that has already happened. The Bible says that Jesus is the bright Morning Star. So now Jesus is the star we follow.
  - What does it mean to follow Jesus?
  - What are some ways that we can worship the King?
  - What does life look like when we follow Jesus where He leads?



**Craft Activity**  
**Stars, Crosses, Arrows**

**Gather the following:**

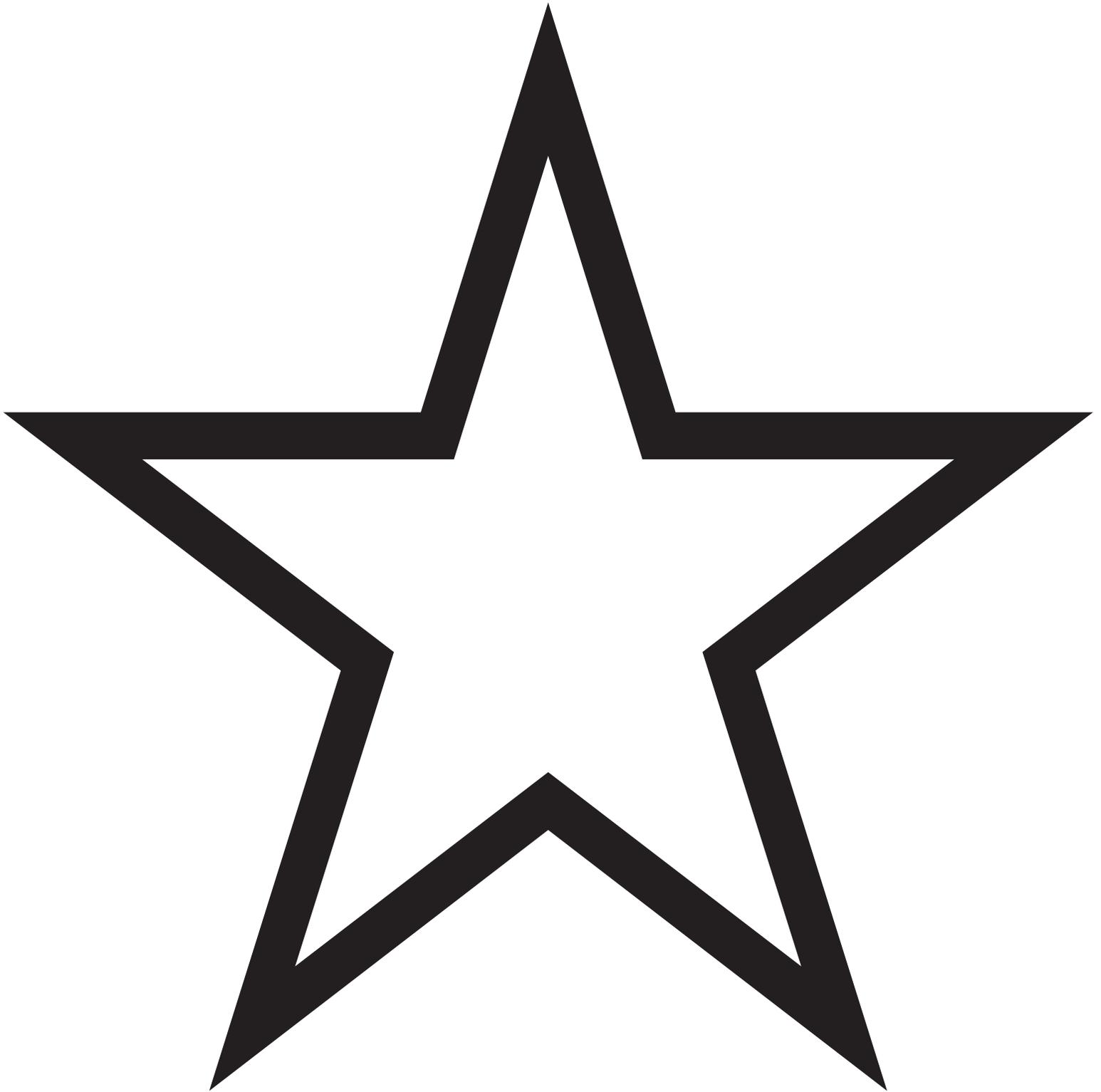
- *White or colored card stock*
- *Crayons or markers*
- *Scissors*
- *Clip art patterns for star, arrow, and cross (pgs. 10-12).*

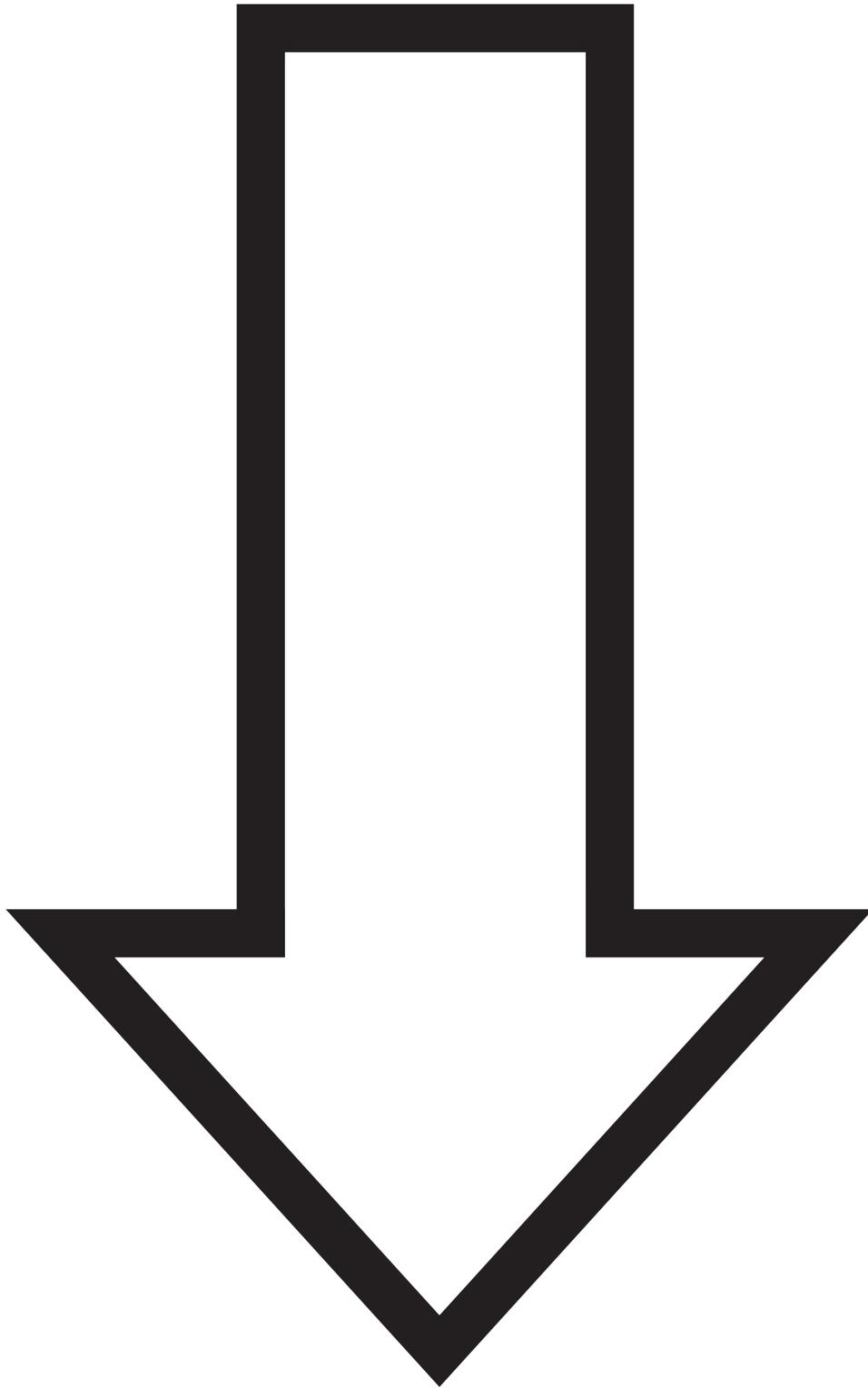
**Preparation:**

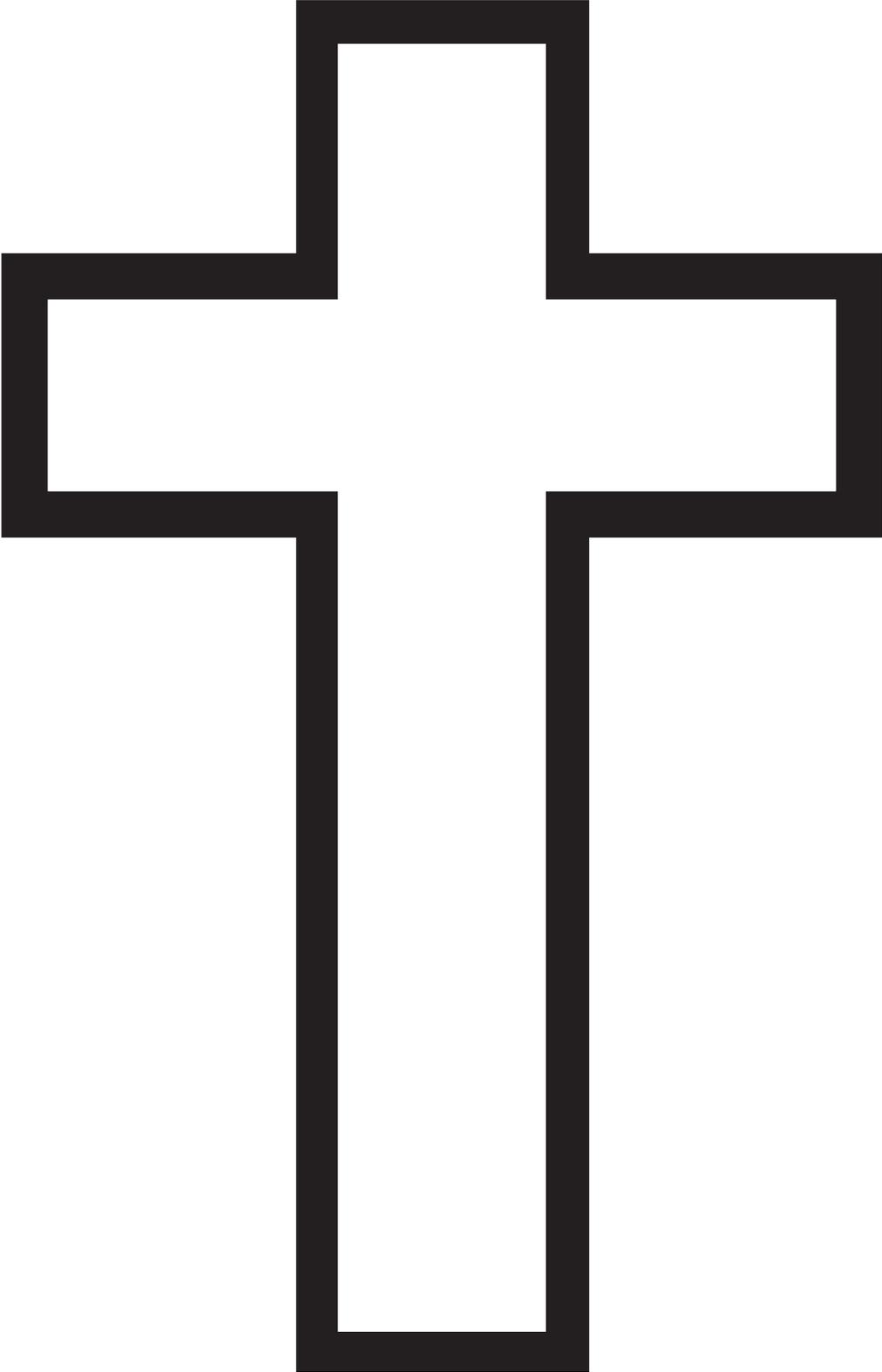
- *Cut card stock into 8x8-inch squares for stars; cut into 5x8-inch pieces for crosses and arrows.*

**Instructions:**

- *Kids trace (or draw) either a star, cross, or arrow on their piece of card stock.*
- *Color and decorate, then cut out.*
- *Collect and use objects when introducing and teaching the song.*







A large, hand-drawn style yellow star with a textured, brush-painted appearance is positioned above the main title.

# follow the star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

**“RING THE BELLS”**

*with*

**“I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY”**



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Bells are an important part of Christmas! Can you name some different kinds of bells?

*Get quick responses.*

That's right! There are sleigh bells, jingle bells, church bells, and Salvation Army bells that volunteers ring at the mall! There are lots of Christmas songs that mention bells, and bells are often featured on Christmas decorations.

What do the following bells signify when they ring?

- **Church bells** (They mean that church has begun or ended, or that a celebration is in progress.)
- **School bells** (They mean that class has begun or ended, or maybe that there's a fire drill.)
- **Doorbells** (You have a visitor!)
- **Dinner bells** (Food is ready! Come and get it!)
- **Sleigh bells** (These bells warn people that horses are coming.)

In many countries, it is customary to tie bells around the wrists or ankles of dancers who are performing traditional dances. As you can see, bells frequently signal that something is happening, or they are part of a celebration. They certainly get your attention!

Which of our choir songs is about bells?

*Get quick responses.*

Of course! It's "Ring the Bells." Let's sing it and let people know that Christ is born!

*Sing "Ring the Bells" with the demo and shake jingle bells in rhythm.*



***Play demo of "Ring the Bells."***

***Note to teacher:*** *If you have hand percussion jingle bells, kids can take turns bouncing them on their hand in rhythm. Move instrument(s) from child to child while the class sings. You can also give each child an individual jingle bell from a local craft store to shake on beat. It is most important that the kids stay on beat! If every child has an instrument or bracelet, lead them in rhythmic patterns: for example, shake 4 beats to the left, then 4 beats to the right, 4 beats above your head, then 4 beats down low. Be creative!*

**Craft Option:** Make jingle bell bracelets or jingle sticks (making them at the beginning of class as kids come in, OR during a previous week so that they are ready to use). See directions on page 10.

Listen to this Bible verse from I Thessalonians 1:8:

**“For the Lord’s message rang out from you...in every place that your faith in God has gone out.”** (HCSB)

There are several things we can learn from this verse:

- Telling others about Jesus can be done without words. When we’re living our lives in a way that honors God, it sets us apart from others. People notice when we are especially kind, helpful, or generous. They notice when we do the right thing.
- It’s even better when we do use words! What does this verse say the Lord’s message did?

*Get quick responses.*

Yes! It rang out! If you don’t shake a jingle bell, it’s just a decoration. It can’t celebrate on its own. We have a message and we need to share it!

- Everywhere we go, our witness goes with us. Whatever we do, and whatever we say, is a reflection of our faith.

Are you a good witness?

Are you sharing the message of Jesus?

Do your actions honor God and point people to Jesus?

Let's spend some time in worship and ask God to help us shine for Him!

*Sing "Mighty to Save" all the way through with the demo, OR sing the 1st verse, chorus, and bridge with piano or guitar accompaniment, (or even a cappella). Maintain a worshipful atmosphere and model heartfelt worship.*



**LET'S PRAY: Lord, help us take Your message everywhere we go! Help us model Your love and kindness. Help us open our mouths to tell about how great You are and how You came to save. Help our lives ring out Your story! When people think of us, let them think of You! Amen!**

## “Ring the Bells” with “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”

### Verses One and Two

*Distribute jingle bells to kids. See Craft Option on page 10. If you do not have jingle bells, have kids pat, alternating their hands on their legs.*

- Let’s begin by listening to “Ring the Bells” and tapping the steady beat with our hands alternating on our legs.



*Play demo of “Ring the Bells,” and lead children to tap a steady beat.*

- Now let’s echo-speak the rhythm to the phrase “ring the bells” (ms. 9-10). *Explain that we use that rhythm several times just in the verses.*
- *Next, echo-speak the phrases in measures 13 and 14 with the “hey” at the end. Point out that both measures have the same rhythm, just different words.*
- Let’s continue tapping the steady beat and echo-speak a different rhythmical phrase. *Echo speak measures 11-12 and measures 15-16 and ask kids to explain the difference.*
- Now let’s speak each rhythm on the syllable “ba.” *Repeat as many times as necessary for the kids to be successful.*
- *Lead children to sing these measures on different syllables (la, da, pa, etc.), progressing to words as they master the rhythms on syllables.*
- Let’s see if we can now sing straight through verse one without stopping!

### Chorus

- Let’s start by clapping a steady beat. *Set the rhythm and get kids started.*
- Now echo speak each phrase after me. *Speak very rhythmically, pushing the syncopation.*
- *As they continue to clap the steady beat, have the kids speak the chorus in rhythm with you.*

- Now that you are comfortable with the rhythm, let's echo sing the chorus phrase by phrase. I'll sing a phrase and you sing back that same phrase. *Do this several times until kids are secure with the rhythms.*
- *Sing the whole chorus, still clapping. Have a few kids use their bells during this exercise.*
- *Teach the alto by rote to your older kids. It's easy; it moves completely in thirds.*

### **Bridge (“I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”—ms. 45-67)**

- Do you know the origin of the song, “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”? It is a carol based on the poem “Christmas Bells” by American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Henry's son, Charles, was fighting in the Civil War and was badly wounded in November 1863. His famous father wrote the poem a month later on Christmas day. While Christmas bells usually bring joy, Mr. Longfellow was sad that the peace on earth that the angels sang about the first Christmas night is so hard to find. The carol concludes with the bells carrying renewed hope for peace among men because Jesus is alive—“God is not dead.” Hallelujah! Glory to God!
- *If you have hymnals, sing the entire carol together and quickly discuss the lyrics. As an option, consider looking up Mr. Longfellow's poem and reading it to the class. Explain that the war was especially brutal and, indeed, made the idea of peace seem unreachable.*
- *Teach the carol phrase by phrase. Encourage kids to sing with nice choral voices—open mouths and clean diction.*
- *Add the high harmony at measures 65-69.*
- *Find all the rhythmic motifs with dotted quarter/eighth/quarter. Speak and clap.*

**Heard the bells  
 Christmas day  
 Carols play  
 Wild and sweet  
 Words repeat  
 Will to men  
 Pealed the bells  
 Loud and deep  
 Not asleep  
 Hope has come  
 Out the song**



Can anyone else chew your food for you? Can anyone else sleep for you?

*Get quick responses.*

No way! Can anyone else believe in Jesus for you?

*Get quick responses.*

Absolutely not! You have to make your own decision to believe in Jesus. Believing in Jesus is the only way to heaven. Jesus said:

**“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** (John 14:6, HCSB)

Our song, “Ring the Bells,” contains a lyric that says, “Show the world there is no other way. Hope has come and Jesus is His name!”

We are going to split up into groups and act out different situations depicting how we may, or may not, be showing the world about the hope of Jesus!

**Note to Teacher:** *Help kids split into five groups. Give each group one of the following situations. Kids have five minutes to choose who will act out each part and figure out a way to demonstrate their scenario to the class. Be sure to help younger kids with ideas that bring their scenarios to life.*

- A child is sitting by himself at lunch, while others are in groups around him/her. Another child joins the groups and sits with the child who is alone. Have kids group together; mimic eating, the lonely child looking around sad, etc.*
- A child is walking with a mom character in the store and asks for a toy. Mom says no and he/she throws a fit, causing others to stare and point. Assign someone to play the kid, parent, and other shoppers.*
- A child is told to clean up their toys by a parent and does so right away. Assign child and parent.*
- A child is told to clean up their toys by a parent and child refuses. Assign child and parent.*
- Two kids see a person in front of them drop money when they walk by. One child picks it up and their friend encourages them to keep it for themselves. The child returns it to the owner. Assign child, friend, owner, and other pedestrians.*
- Come up with some scenarios that fit your own kids!*

*Have each group act out their scene and then let the rest of the class answer the following questions:*

Do these actions reflect the love of Jesus?

How can we show the world that Jesus is the only way to eternal life?

- *By how we treat others*
- *By how we love others*
- *By how we serve others*
- *We have to tell others that Jesus came to save them.*

*Print out the Lyric Race Sheet below and cut each word apart. Note: You might want to enlarge it and mount it on posterboard before cutting apart, OR make your own strips using the phrases below. The first four lines are Verse 1. The last four lines are Verse 2.*

*Divide kids into groups and instruct them to work as a team to put the lyrics for each verse in the right order. Teachers and other volunteers should time each team to see how quickly they can get the words in the correct order.*

Wow! Let's do it one more time and see if we can beat our own time.

*For younger kids, try it again with the same verse. For older groups, try Verse 2 or use it for an activity another time.*

<b>Ring the bells!</b>	<b>Ring the bells!</b>	<b>Jesus Christ is</b>
<b>born today.</b>	<b>Shout good news! HEY!</b>	<b>Shout good news! HEY!</b>
<b>Ring the bells</b>	<b>and celebrate</b>	<b>He is born,</b>
<b>Christ is born!</b>	<b>Verse 1:</b>	
<b>Ring the bells!</b>	<b>Christmas bells!</b>	<b>Come and worship</b>
<b>Christ the King.</b>	<b>Lift Him high!</b>	<b>Lift Him high!</b>
<b>When we praise the</b>	<b>world will see</b>	<b>He is born.</b>
<b>Christ is born!</b>	<b>Verse 2:</b>	



**Craft Activity**  
***Jingle Bell Bracelets and Sticks***

***Jingle Bell Bracelets***

- *Wrap or twist pipe cleaners together, stringing on jingle bells at regular intervals. Stop when the bracelet is the right size, cut the excess off, and twist the two ends together to make a circle.*
- *Place one jingle bell in the middle of a pipe cleaner at the top of a new, unsharpened pencil. Fold the two ends of the pipe cleaner down the sides of the pencil and begin to wrap with another pipe cleaner. Insert a new jingle bell intermittently onto the pipe cleaners hanging down and continue to wrap the pencil until you reach the bottom.*
- *Finger-weave (like crochet with your fingers) yarn and insert bells intermittently. When it's the right length, cut the yarn and tie it end to end to make a circle. (Google finger weaving to find instructions.)*

***Optional Craft: DIY Jingle Bell Sticks***

*<http://www.rockabyebutterfly.com/2013/11/jingle-bell-craft.html>*



# follow the star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

**“LITTLE TOWN”**

*with*

**“O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM”**



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*Play demo of “Glorious Christmas Day,” and sing as a warm-up, or choose a fast song from your repertoire that invites the kids to celebrate and worship. Another option is to sing the Christmas carol, “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”*

What is the birthplace of Christmas? Where did it all begin?

*Get responses.*

Of course—in Bethlehem! If you had asked a Jewish scholar back in biblical times where Jesus was to be born, he would have answered “Bethlehem,” too! How did you think he would have known?

*Get responses.*

Centuries earlier, a prophet named Micah declared that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah. It didn’t seem to be a very important town at all. No one could have predicted the simple way that God would come to earth.

That’s how God most often works—behind the scenes, in everyday places, where no one suspects. Did you know that some pretty important things originate or occur in some rather ordinary places that are only famous for that one thing?

Listen to what these little towns are famous for:

### **Williamsport, Pennsylvania**

- *Optional: Toss out a rubber baseball a few times as a hint and have kids toss it back.* The Little League Baseball World Series is held each summer in Williamsport. The first-ever game was between two Pennsylvania teams in 1947. Now, teams from all over the world compete for the international title. Lots of famous baseball stars got their start right there in Pennsylvania.

### **LeMons, Iowa**

- Le Mons is known as the Ice Cream Capital of the World! More ice cream is churned here than anywhere else in the whole entire world.

### **Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania**

- This little town is famous for one day every year—Groundhog Day! On February 2nd, we watch to see if the groundhog will see his shadow, giving us six more week of winter. We’ve been checking in with Punxsutawney since 1887!

### **Holyoke, Massachusetts**

- Holyoke is known as the birthplace of volleyball. In 1895, after meeting James Naismith, the creator of basketball, William George Morgan created the game of volleyball for older people in the gym at the local YMCA.

### **Haleyville, Alabama**

- This is the birthplace of 9-1-1. The very first 9-1-1 call was made here in 1968. It was actually a simple conversation between two Alabama politicians, but this is where the emergency system began.

### **Hershey, Pennsylvania**

- *Optional: Throw out/pass out Hershey's kisses!* Can anyone guess what HERSHEY might be famous for? That's right! It's the chocolate capital of the USA, where Hershey's Chocolate Factory is located. Yum!

Have you ever heard of any of those towns? They're not known for anything else other than one famous event or famous product. These towns work toward that one thing for which they are famous. They even build museums. Entire communities capitalize on the one product that is created there, like ice cream or chocolate!

Bethlehem was no different. Before Jesus was born, it was just a sleepy little village. Nothing interesting had ever happened except the prophecy about it. But big things can come from small places.

Let's sing about that little town. I want you to think about what the town might have been like around the time Jesus was born. Think about what it would have been like to live there, hoping for the Messiah, knowing that the prophets said that the Savior would come. Would you have been ready? Would you have believed that the baby in the manger was Jesus, the Savior?



*Play demo of "Little Town," and lead the children. Sing the song very reverently, keeping the kids focused.*

Look at this Bible verse from Micah 5:2:

**"Bethlehem...you are small among the clans of Judah; One will come from you to be ruler over Israel for Me. His origin is from antiquity, from eternity." (HCSB)**

Even though Bethlehem was small, God chose it over all the towns in the whole world for His Son to make an entrance into the world. God made Himself known from that tiny little town. Some of the people were waiting expectantly, while others were busy with everyday life. Some were devoted to God, and others were living only to please themselves. That sounds a little bit like the way people live today, doesn't it?

There's a phrase in the song that says, "Little town, so spent, so tired, busy with the wrong desires." That was true then, and it is still true today. We get caught up in things that draw us away from God. We do things that are not pleasing to God. Close your eyes for a moment right now and ask God if there are things you spend way too much time doing that are more hurtful than helpful to you. God wants us to invest our time in things that make us better people and promote God's Kingdom.

*Set an atmosphere of worship by playing instrumental music quietly in the background—live or recorded. Pray over the kids.*



**PRAY:** God, You picked an insignificant town to be the birthplace of our Savior, the beginning of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Help us see that nothing is too insignificant to be used by You. Help us see that no one is too small to do mighty things for You. Forgive us, Lord, when we are distracted and selfish. Convict us when we are sinful. Show us things we need to set aside. Show us people and activities that keep us from operating in Your power. We want to do great things for Your Kingdom, Lord! Amen!

## “Little Town” with “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

### Verses

*The verses are solos in any configuration and should be reserved for your most mature vocalist(s). One option would be to call on one or two middle school or high school students (your former Kids Choir members!) to feature on this song.*

### Chorus

- Analyze the structure of the song. *Write this on the board for kids to see and refer to.*

**Verse one / Chorus one /  
Verse two / Chorus two /  
Carol /  
Chorus one / Chorus two + tag ending**

There are TWO choruses to this song! The notes are exactly the same, but the words are different.

- The vocal style of this song is a relaxed approach to the rhythm, yet with distinct enunciation. Here are some tips to help you find a nice, round vocal sound:
  - Lift the roof of your mouth like you just swallowed something very hot. Pretend you are trying to cool it by waving your hand in front of it.
  - Let’s sing Chorus one on an “AH” vowel. Lift the roof of your mouth and wave your hand in front of it. Now do it again without the hand motion.
  - Now sing the words with that same lift inside your mouth.
  - *Sing it again, paying attention to rhythmic accuracy, singing on the backside of the beat rather than a pushed, edgy rhythm.*
- Teach the lower alto part to your older kids. There are only two phrases and it’s easy. After teaching it to the whole class, divide them into high and low voices and sing the alto line with the melody.

## Bridge

*The bridge can be sung by a strong soloist or a small group. If the entire choir is singing, let one of your mature voices lead out.*

- *Sing the traditional carol with straight rhythm and melody. If you would rather sing that version here, it will fit nicely! Just mute the voices on the split-track.*
- *If you will be singing this version with the choir, explain that the arrangement takes liberties with the melody and rhythms to make it more interesting. Your kids will be able to sing it with careful rehearsal.*
- *Sing the song phrase by phrase and have the kids echo. Make sure you are singing it the same every time! You could also play the demo and stop it after every phrase, allowing the kids to echo.*
- *Put it all together. Sing a cappella to catch areas that need attention.*



## LARGE GROUP

- *Ask children to get into groups by the differences specified:*

*\_ First, divide into groups by who is wearing pants, skirts, capris, or shorts.*

*\_ Now divide into groups by who is wearing red tops, blue tops, or black tops, etc.*

*\_ Last, divide into groups by who has red hair, blonde hair, brown hair, or black hair.*

- *Have children sit. Explain:*

You just divided into groups according to what you were wearing or your hair color. You were like a little town. Long ago, villages or towns were formed by families or people who did the same kind of work. They lived together, worked together, and took care of one another.

Our choirs are like little towns. We serve together, sing together, and love one another. But we all have one thing in common—no matter what family you are a part of, or what town you are from, you need a Savior. We all need a Savior. So let's tell everybody in our community or town that God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins.



## SMALL GROUP

- *Print copies of the **Carol Bingo Cards** (next three pages) and give one to each child. The first three cards have traditional Christmas carols; the last three card have carols from this semester of Kids Choir.*
- *This is like a lightening round in Bingo—you are not concerned with letters across the top. You simply call the titles fast. The kids try to cover the square of the title you called and keep up with you. The first child to call Bingo must sing a line from the last carol you called out. If several children call Bingo at the same time, have each sing a different line of the song.*
- *Use the card with traditional carols, classic kids' Christmas songs, Follow the Star songs, or create your own! Choose a Christmas candy for kids to cover spaces as you name them off and let them eat the candies when you're all done! Be sure to adapt the speed with which you read song titles to each age group present. Older kids will move more quickly.*

Rudolph	Hark, the Herald Angels Sing	I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day
Silent Night, Holy Night	Jingle Bells	Angels We Have Heard on High
Feliz Navidad	The First Noel	Joy to the World
Away in a Manger	Little Drummer Boy	Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree

The First Noel	Silent Night, Holy Night	Joy to the World
Feliz Navidad	Rudolph	Away in a Manger
Little Drummer Boy	Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree	I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day
Angels We Have Heard on High	Hark! the Herald Angels Sing	Jingle Bells

<b>Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree</b>	<b>Away in a Manger</b>	<b>Jingle Bells</b>
<b>I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day</b>	<b>Joy to the World</b>	<b>Hark, the Herald Angels Sing</b>
<b>Rudolph</b>	<b>Angels We Have Heard on High</b>	<b>Little Drummer Boy</b>
<b>Silent Night, Holy Night</b>	<b>The First Noel</b>	<b>Feliz Navidad</b>

<b>Follow the Star</b>	<b>Ring the Bells</b>	<b>I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day</b>
<b>Silent Night, Holy Night</b>	<b>Glorious Christmas Day</b>	<b>Angels We Have Heard on High</b>
<b>Emmanuel Is Born Today</b>	<b>Jingle Bells</b>	<b>Glory to God</b>
<b>Away in a Manger</b>	<b>Listen</b>	<b>Jump for Jesus</b>

<b>Jump for Jesus</b>	<b>Away in a Manger</b>	<b>Silent Night, Holy Night</b>
<b>Glorious Christmas Day</b>	<b>Angels We Have Heard on High</b>	<b>Emmanuel Is Born Today</b>
<b>Ring the Bells</b>	<b>Follow the Star</b>	<b>Listen</b>
<b>I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day</b>	<b>Glory to God</b>	<b>Jingle Bells</b>

<b>Ring the Bells</b>	<b>Silent Night, Holy Night</b>	<b>Jingle Bells</b>
<b>Glorious Christmas Day</b>	<b>Listen</b>	<b>Angels We Have Heard on High</b>
<b>Away in a Manger</b>	<b>Emmanuel Is Born Today</b>	<b>I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day</b>
<b>Follow the Star</b>	<b>Jump for Jesus</b>	<b>Glory to God</b>



# follow *the* star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

**“GLORIOUS CHRISTMAS DAY”**

*with*

**“O COME, LET US ADORE HIM”**



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*Sing “Glorious Christmas Day” with the demo and choreography.  
Really celebrate!*

What does “Gloria in Excelsis Deo” mean?

*Get responses.*

It means “Glory to God in the highest!” Do you know who first said that? I’ll give you a hint: they actually SANG it.

*Get responses.*

That’s right! It was the angel choir announcing the arrival of Christ on the first Christmas night. You might say it was the very first Christmas advertisement. During the Christmas season, commercials and catalogues bombard us, as if Christmas exists only for us to buy stuff. But those Christmas angels weren’t selling anything at all! They were announcing the birth of our Savior in the most wonderful way—by asking us to join in the celebration, to take part in the worship, and to be a witness of the miracle.

Let’s look at exactly what they said. Luke tells us that an angel appeared to shepherds in the field watching their sheep. They were just ordinary guys, doing their jobs, not city officials or rich people. First, one angel announced Jesus’ birth and invited the shepherds to go see Him. Then a sky FULL of angels showed them what to do—worship Him! The song they sang was **“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors”** (Luke 2:14, HCSB). These celestial beings gave all the glory to God. And they also spoke a blessing over us here on earth. They gave us the message that we are special to God. He favors us; that means we are ALL His favorite!

How do we give glory to God? Is it something we have to do at church? Is it some ritual or worship service? Is it special words or special songs? Let’s look at some other Scriptures that might help us.

**Matthew 15:30-31** (HCSB)

**“Large crowds came to him, having with them the lame, the blind, the deformed, those unable to speak, and many others. They put them at His [Jesus’] feet, and He healed them. So the crowd was amazed when they saw those unable to speak talking, the deformed restored, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they gave glory to the God of Israel.”**

What happened right before the people gave God glory?

*Get responses.*

Right! They saw the miraculous healings God was doing. If you saw a miracle, how would you react?

*Get responses.*

It's easy to give God glory when He shows up like that, isn't it?

Did you know that we were destined to live in God's glory ALL the time? The peace that the Christmas angels sang about can be ours everywhere we go. That hasn't changed in the 2,000+ years since Jesus was born. The problem is US. We haven't kept our end of the deal. We're supposed to give God glory! But we don't. Our sin gets in the way.

**Romans 3:23** (HCSB)

**“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”**

Of course our sins are forgiven because of the cross, but we fall short of God's glory every day. It's because we are so...human! We can't change that; so what CAN we do so that our lives give God glory?

**1 Corinthians 10:31** (HCSB)

**“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory.”**

This verse is about living lives that give credit to God for everything. It's about living lives where we don't strive to be in the spotlight. It's about making God look good to others. It's about worship that never stops.

Here are some suggestions:

- If you make an A on your science test, say “Glory to God!”
- If you make the game-winning basket in your game, say “Glory to God!”
- If you sit beside someone alone in the lunchroom and someone else notices, say “Glory to God!”
- If you help your little brother clean up his room and your mom thanks you, say “Glory to God!”
- WHATEVER you do, do it for God's glory.

Let's worship Jesus right now and give Him glory for coming to earth to be our Savior.

*Sing the double chorus at the end of “Emmanuel Is Born Today,” starting at measure 34, either a cappella or with piano or guitar accompaniment. Add these changed lyrics at measures 40-41 and from measure 48 to the end:*

**Jesus, You have come to save.  
You’re the King of kings who reigns.  
And we lift our hearts in praise.  
[We give You glory Lord.] ms. 40-41**

**Jesus, You have come to save.  
You’re the King of kings who reigns.  
And we lift our hearts in praise.  
[We give You glory Lord, today.] ms. 48 to end  
[We give You glory Lord, today.]  
[We give You glory Lord, today.]**

Let’s pray.



**Jesus, thank You for coming to earth in a simple way. You stepped out of glory into a world where we want all the glory for ourselves. Teach us how to give You credit for everything. Show us how to turn other’s attention on you and away from ourselves. Convict us when we try to be the center of attention. Lead us to do things for Your kingdom that would help others and bring You glory. You are the King of kings and You alone deserve all the glory. Amen.**

*To the familiar tune ADESTE FIDELES (and the chorus of the Christmas carol, “O Come, All Ye Faithful”), lead the choir in singing the following words:*

**We give You all the glory.  
We give You all the glory.  
We give You all the glory,  
Christ the Lord!**

## “Glorious Christmas Day” with “O Come, Let Us Adore Him”

### Verses

- *Verses one and two were both recorded with a soloist. You could have one person sing both verses just like the demo. You could also expand it into two solos—one on each verse. To give more opportunities, select four children—two per verse. Separate each verse into two parts (7 measures each). Another option would be to use a small group or praise team on the verses. When working with your soloists or small group, make sure that the downbeat in each of the first four measures of each section is emphasized.*

**WHAT a surprise  
CAN'T be denied  
IN Bethlehem  
JUST like they said**

**ANGels sing praise  
SHEPherds amazed  
THEY ran to town  
LOOK what they found**

- *Teach the soloist or small group to sing measures 13-14 and measures 21-22 crisply, observing the rests.*
- *Even though the verses are solos, you can still use that section to teach about intervals. We will focus on the first four measures of the verse, m. 9-12, and of course the pattern is repeated in m. 17-20.*

<b>ms. 9</b>	<b>SOL - DO (5-1)</b>	<b>4th interval</b>
<b>ms. 10</b>	<b>SOL - RE (5-2)</b>	<b>5th interval</b>
<b>ms. 11</b>	<b>DO - MI (1-3)</b>	<b>3rd interval</b>
<b>ms. 12</b>	<b>DO - FA (1-4)</b>	<b>4th interval</b>

- *Use traditional or body solfege or sing numbers and teach kids the pattern. Discuss what happens in measures 9-10 and again in measures 11-12. The first note stays the same and the second note raises up one step.*
- *Draw a staff on a white board or chalkboard and notate the four intervals: starting from B $\flat$ —a 4th (ms. 9) then a 5th (ms. 10); starting from A $\flat$  a 3rd (ms.11) then a 4th (ms. 12). Have kids come up and write the notes in from the B $\flat$  and E $\flat$  starting notes. Help them count the interval aloud pointing to the lines and spaces. Another option would be to put 5 long pieces of tape on the floor to build a staff and use beanbags, blocks, paper plates, etc. for notes.*

## Chorus

- Clap the rhythm of the chorus on beats one and three.
- Let's speak the words in rhythm like a robot, with no inflection, but very crisp and clean.
- Now let's emphasize all the pushed rhythms, especially those with accents written in. For example:

**GLORY to GOD in the HIGHest.  
Let there be PEACE on EARTH,  
PEACE on EARTH.**

*Do the same thing with the 2nd phrase.*

- Sing the first two phrases of the chorus and clap your hands on the ending accents.
- Speak this rhythm—**GLORIA IN exCELSIS DEO**—in strict rhythm (*ms. 33-34, 35-36*).
- Now sing the phrases with that inflection.
- Let's divide the room in half. One side will sing that phrase first, then the other half echoes. *Do this, then switch sides.*
- Let's sing the last two phrases, clapping the ending accents.
- Now let's sing the whole chorus with over-the-top energy and accents!

## Bridge (ms. 50-58)

- *Clap and speak the words in rhythm.*
- *Have the kids discover a phrase without a dotted quarter note—the 4th one.*
- *Have the kids discover what's interesting about the first three phrases—they have the exact same rhythm.*
- *Pass out seven toothpicks and one M&M® to each child. Have them build the rhythm of the first phrase. Leave a little space open for the invisible bar line. Eat the M&Ms. Now you have the rhythm of the 4th phrase!*
- *At the end of class, pass out more candy to eat.*

*Put small surprises in a box (shoe boxes work well)—enough for every child—like pencils or candy. Wrap the bottom and top of the box so that it will open easily. If you have a very large group, have two or three boxes ready. Boxes can be passed back and forth down aisles, or around in a circle.*

- Let's begin by listening to "Glorious Christmas Day" and tapping the steady beat.



*Play demo of "Glorious Christmas Day."*

- Now that we all have the beat, I'm going to pass this box along to the steady beat. *Demonstrate passing it to the right.* Keep the box moving to the steady beat from you to your neighbor. When the music stops, whoever is holding the box may open it and take out a surprise! Set the surprise in front of you and when the music starts, begin passing the box to your right on the steady beat!
- *Begin music, then pause the CD at random times during the song.*
- *Each time the music stops, allow the child holding the box to open it and take out a surprise. Have them set the surprise in front of them and keep the game going. When the music begins again, the child should start passing the box again. Don't allow a lot of down time between turns!*
- *Pause the music every two or three children to be able to get to everyone. If time doesn't allow for this, then play for the length of time you do have, then have a volunteer give the other children a surprise.*
- *Once everyone has a surprise, say:*
- Long ago, God's sent prophets to tell his people how God wanted a relationship with them, but they would not listen. Finally, God decided to stop talking to them. He stopped talking for 400 years! Then one day, God's people got a surprise. A surprise like they had never seen! God sent His one and only Son to be their Savior. It was the greatest gift of love that any man ever born would know. God STILL wants a relationship with us. Even though that all happened a very long time ago, He sent His Son to save the people then AND to save the people that have been born from then until now. And even to save the people that will be born years and years from now. ALL people. When we give God our heart, He gives us forgiveness, mercy, grace, and love, and the promise of a home for eternity. It is a glorious present.
- Let's thank God for His glorious present by worshipping Him. Let's sing "Glorious Christmas Day."

- We are going to play **Melody Madness!** First, let's divide into two teams!
- I am going to give you the melody of one phrase—just the notes...no words. Each team takes turns answering by singing the melody with the words. If a team misses, the other team gets one try. If the second team misses, the melody goes back in the pile. The first team to sing seven correctly, wins!

***Note to Teacher:** This is a great way to see who is matching pitch and who is not.*

*Here are some suggestions of phrases for the game. Sing all melodies on "loo."*

- **"What a surprise"** (ms. 9) of "Glorious Christmas Day"
- **"Glory to God in the highest"** (ms. 60) "Glorious Christmas Day"
- **"Away in a manger"** (ms. 13-15) of "Away in a Manger"
- **"There's a world that needs to know"** (ms. 21-22) of "Ring the Bells"
- **"Hope has come and Jesus is His name"** (ms. 37-38) of "Ring the Bells"
- **"Little town so unsuspecting"** (ms. 5) of "Little Town"
- **"Little town of Bethlehem"** (ms. 12-13) of "Little Town"
- **"O little town of Bethlehem"** (ms. 36-38) of "Little Town"
- **"And I'm so excited"** (ms. 22-23) of "Jump for Jesus"
- **"He was the great I AM"** (ms. 12-13) of "Jump for Jesus"
- **"There is a baby meek and mild"** (ms. 4-5) of "Listen"
- **"Hark, the herald angels sing"** (ms. 43-44) of "Listen"
- **"Savior, He can move the"** (ms. 15) of "Mighty to Save"
- **"Shine your light and let the whole world"** (ms. 45) of "Mighty to Save"
- **"We will follow the star"** (ms. 23) of "Follow the Star"



# follow the star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

**“LISTEN”**

*with*

**“HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING”**



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*Lead the kids in singing the carol “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing.” Lead it with instruments or a cappella.*

Long ago, there lived a priest name Zechariah. He and his wife, Elizabeth, were both good people who lived according to God’s laws and commandments. But they had no children. Years went by and they became old. One day an angel came and spoke to Zechariah. The angel told him that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son, and they would name him John. **“He will be great in the sight of the Lord.”** He will be the one who will tell others that Jesus is the Messiah. Then the angel spoke to Zechariah and said: **“I was sent to speak to you and tell you this good news. Now listen!”** (Luke 1:15, 19-20, HCSB)

The angel that spoke to the shepherds in the field said, **“Fear not: for, behold [or listen], I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”** (Luke 2:10-11, KJV)

After the shepherds received the message from the angels, **“they hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the feeding trough. After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.”** (Luke 2:16-18, HCSB)

In the Middle Ages, when a king or queen had an announcement to make, a trumpet-type fanfare was played. It was a special musical signal to the people that something important was happening. Today, in sports, coaches sometimes get the attention of players by shouting, “Take a knee!” It signals that he wants them to stop what they’re doing and come listen to what he has to say because it’s important. If your best friend is across the street and you want her to look, you yell “Hey!” don’t you? When we are excited or have an important message, we do something to let the listener know that we want their attention.

“Listen,” is what the angel said to Zechariah. To the shepherds, the angels said, “Fear not: for, behold” (meaning “listen up!” or “pay attention!”). The shepherds were so excited that they stopped people in the streets to share the news! I bet they caused quite a commotion.

These verses are trying to catch the attention of others because they have something important to tell. They all have a message of good news. What exactly is the news that all of those verses are talking about?

*Get answers.*

That’s correct! The good news is that Jesus is the Savior of the world. It is our job to spread the good news, too. We need to let people know how much Jesus loves them!

I want you all to think about somebody in your life that needs to hear the good news. How can you share the love of Jesus with them this Christmas?

*Get answers.*

Can you invite a friend or neighbor to come see you sing in your Christmas musical or service at church? Can you tell a teacher or coach the Christmas story? It's time to get so excited that we say, "Listen!" and get the attention of the people God places in our lives! We can't always plan to share the good news in advance, but we can pray that the Lord will give us the opportunity to share the message of His love with them. There is no greater gift you can give somebody else!

Let's sing the chorus of "Listen" together, but we are going to slow it way down. I want you all to really think about the words you are singing. Start praying right now, for the person or people with whom you will share the good news.

**Listen, Christ has come.  
Listen, He's the only One.  
He's the reason that we sing.  
Listen, this Baby is the King of kings.**

**Listen, Christ has come.  
Listen, He's the only One.  
He's the reason that we sing.  
Listen, this Baby is the King of kings.**



**PRAY: Heavenly Father, what an important job You've given us—to help spread the word about Your love, kindness, truth, and Son, Jesus. As we get excited about trees and decorations and parties and gifts this year, help us to also get excited to tell people the good news that Jesus is born! Lead us to new people this Christmas season. Show us the ones already in our lives who need to know about You. Give us boldness to shout it out! We love You, Lord, and we want to make Your glory known to the whole world. In Your name we pray. Amen.**



## **“Listen”**

### **Song introduction**

*Sing the 1st verse and chorus of “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” and discuss what “Hark” means (literally means “listen”).*

### **Listening Game: Make a Rainstorm**

*Kids have to listen carefully to your instructions. Together they will go through gentle rain to a rainstorm, then back to gentle rain. Say the following phrases as you do the corresponding action, and have children do the action with you.*

**Rub your fingers together.**

**Rub your hands together.**

**Snap your fingers.**

**Clap softly.**

**Clap loudly.**

**Pat your chest.**

**Pat your legs.**

**Stomp your feet.**

**Stomp and clap at the same time.**

**Add crashing noises with your mouth.**

*Now, give the instructions backwards. For large groups, divide kids into sections and layer the sounds.*

## Verses:

- *Verses are solos which can be divided as such:*
  - \_ *one child sings both verses.*
  - \_ *one child sings the first verse and another child sings the second verse.*
  - \_ *divide each verse into two solos (ms. 4-7 and ms. 8-12; ms. 24-27 and ms. 28-32).*  
*You will have four solos.*
- How many phrases are in each verse? (4)
- Are there any phrases where the melody is exactly alike? (Yes)
- What is the form of the verse? (ABAC)

## Chorus

- *Teach the kids to conduct the 4/4 pattern (down, in, out, up) and the 2/4 pattern (down, up).*
- *“Conduct” the chorus at a very slow tempo—seven measures of 4/4, one measure of 2/4, back to 4/4. Speak the words to the chorus as you conduct.*
- *“Conduct” the bridge (ms. 43-49) and the ending (ms. 59-63) at a slow tempo while speaking the words.*
- *Play the demo. Sing the verses and conduct the choruses and the bridge.*
- *Sing the chorus a cappella with precise rhythm, clapping the steady beat. Emphasize the word “listen” every time you sing it. When you get to measure 19, clap beats one and three only, clap only the downbeat of measure 20 (the 2/4 measure) and resume clapping the steady beat again.*

## Bridge

- *Sing the bridge, inserting a verbal count-off 1-2-3-4 at measure 41.*

| X X X. x | X X X X | X X X X |  
Hark the her-ald an-gels si-ng - 1 2 3 4

| X X x x x x | x X x | X X X X |  
“Hark” means “listen there’s a newborn King.” \_\_\_\_\_

- *Sing the bridge with a sharp crescendo in that measure.*



## LARGE GROUP

- Today, we are playing **“Telephone.”** I will whisper a Scripture phrase (*see below*) into the ear of a fellow choir member, who will then, whisper that same phrase into the ear of the person next to her/him. Each member will continue in the same manner. When the last person has heard the phrase, please stand up and tell the group what you heard. It will most likely be different than the original phrase!

**“Good news from a distant land is like cold water to a parched throat.” Proverbs 25:25 (HCSB)**

**“Bright eyes cheer the heart; good news strengthens the bones.” Proverbs 15:30 (HCSB)**

**“And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations.” Mark 13:10 (HCSB)**

- *If you have a large group, divide into lines of 15-20 kids and start the same phrase for each group. Compare the way it changes!*
- *A couple of rules to be observed: The phrase can only be spoken one time to each person. There is to be no talking about the phrase after you have spoken it until the last child has repeated the phrase to the group.*
- Wow! The person at the end heard something very different than the starter phrase! Maybe whispering was not the best way to communicate the message. It would be clearer if we spoke in full voice. Right? When we sing the lyrics of this song, we have to speak and sing clearly so that the message is clear. We are telling people that Christ has been born and He’s the Savior of the world.



## SMALL GROUP

- *Copy the heart sheet (on next page), one per child.*
- *Lead children to tap each heart on the steady beat while you sing a cappella the words to the chorus.*

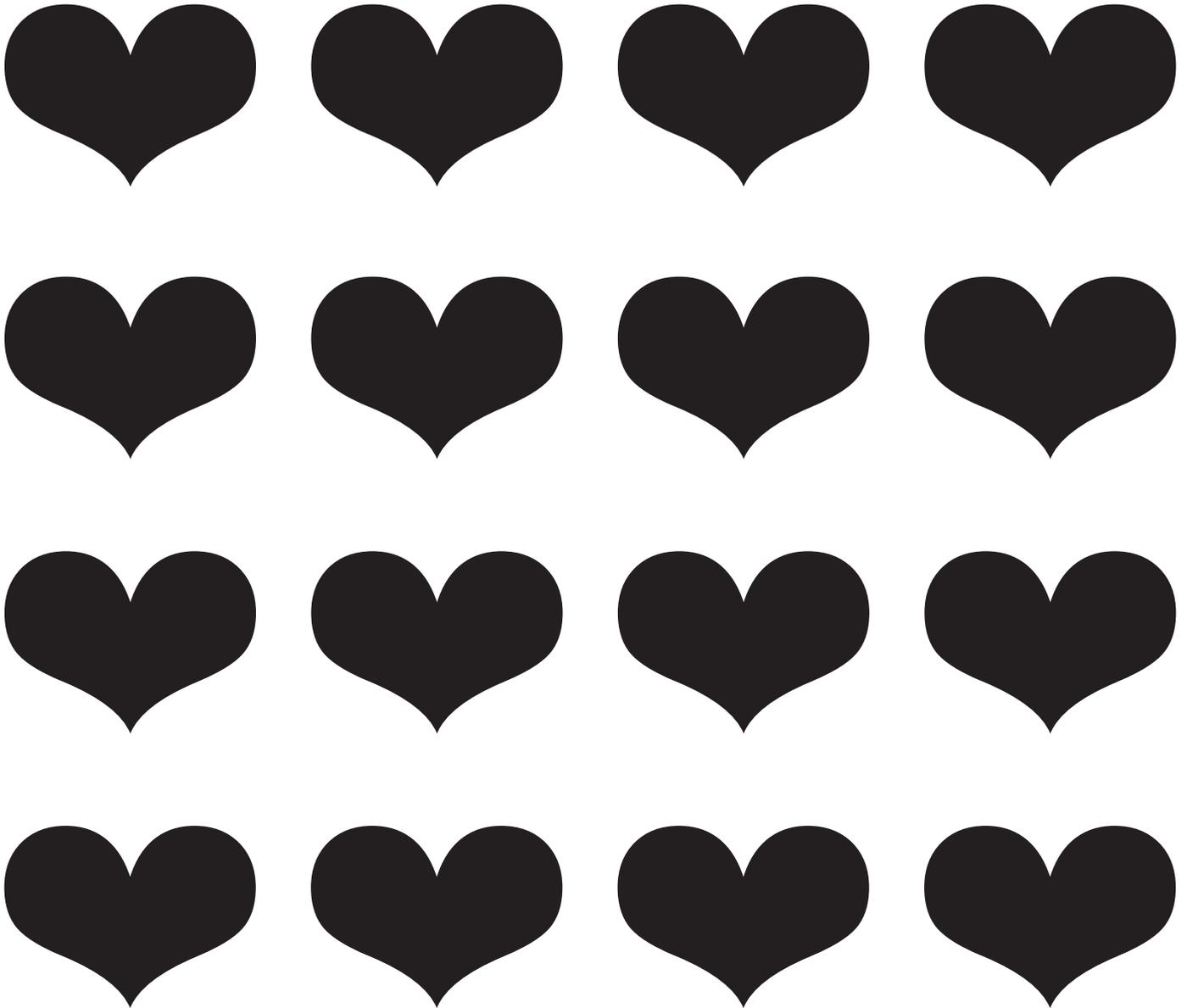
*You will tap through the page once when tapping the steady half note beat.*

*You will tap through the page twice when tapping the steady quarter note beat.*

- *Repeat the process with the verse. When you get to the end of the verse, tell the children to freeze with their finger on the last heart they tapped. Check to see if all stopped on the same heart.*
- You may think it is unusual to tap a heart when talking about listening, but when we listen to God and His Words, we not only listen with our heads, but also with our heart.



*Activity*  
*Heart Rhythm Activity*





# follow the star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

### “EMMANUEL IS BORN TODAY”



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Looking throughout the Bible, we will find there are a lot of names for God. He is called Healer, Provider, Savior, Messiah, and many, many other names. At Christmas time, one of the names we hear a lot is Emmanuel. Can anyone tell me what Emmanuel means?

*Acknowledge answers.*

It means “God is with us.” A little over 2,000 years ago, on the night Jesus was born, “Emmanuel” meant that God was literally with us. He was born as a human baby, living on earth among people. The Jewish people had been waiting for the promised Messiah a long time before Jesus was born. Listen to what the prophet Isaiah told them about how and where Jesus would come:

**“The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel”** (Isaiah 7:14, HCSB).

The prophet Micah also told about the coming Messiah:

**“Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah; One will come from you to be ruler over Israel for Me. His origin is from antiquity, from eternity”** (Micah 5:2, HCSB).

And that’s exactly how Jesus arrived on earth. The Lord sent an angel to announce the news—first to Mary, then to Joseph. When the angel spoke to Joseph, he told Joseph that Jesus would be the one called Immanuel. He also instructed Joseph to get married to Mary. They both lived in a town called Nazareth, but that’s not where the prophets had said Jesus would be born, was it? No, it wasn’t.

Before Jesus was born, the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus ordered all families to go to their hometowns to be counted in a census. Can anybody guess what Joseph’s family hometown was?

*Get responses.*

You’ve got it—Bethlehem! And that’s where Jesus was born. Because so many people were in Bethlehem for the census, all the inns and “motels” were full. No vacancy signs were everywhere! But Joseph found a small barn that was dry and warm. And in that unlikely place, Jesus was born. Joseph filled a feeding trough (or manger) with soft hay, and Mary wrapped the baby Jesus in soft cloths and laid Him in that make-shift crib.

On the same night that Jesus was being born, angels appeared to some shepherds out in the hillside surrounding the town of Bethlehem. They told the shepherds the wonderful news about the Messiah’s birth, and the shepherds came running to see Jesus. They

worshipped Him right away and then went running through the streets telling people that “Messiah” was born. A year or two later, when Jesus was a small child, three wise men came from a country to the far east to bring gifts to Jesus.

We talk about that story of the first Christmas every December, don't we? Sometimes we learn about it at church. Other times, it's a tradition to read the story at home, perhaps during the advent season or on Christmas morning while gathered around the tree. Even people that don't come to church will know most of this story. It's the story of how Jesus came to be “Emmanuel, God with us.”

But when Isaiah and the angel talked about “Emmanuel, God with us,” he was implying more than God being with us physically. Once Jesus had fulfilled His purpose here on earth, He sent the Holy Spirit to be “God with us”—all the rest of us! You see, before the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross, there was always a separation between us and God. In those days, people had to send their prayers to God through priests or by ritual and sacrifices. When the Holy Spirit is living inside of us, we have God with us all the time.

We serve a God who loves us so much. Not only did He provide a way to save us from sin, but He gave us the Holy Spirit so that we are never alone. The Holy Spirit gives us guidance when we seek God's will for our lives. He convicts our hearts when we make bad choices. The Bible even says that the Holy Spirit will pray for us when we don't know what to say. Let's sing the last chorus of this song, using these different words as a prayer:

**Jesus, You have come to *stay*.**  
**You're the King of kings who reigns.**  
**And we lift our hearts in praise.**  
**Emmanuel is here...**

**Jesus, You have come to *stay*.**  
**You're the King of kings who reigns.**  
**And we lift our hearts in praise.**  
**Emmanuel is here today.**  
**Emmanuel is here today.**  
**Emmanuel is here today.**



**PRAY:** Lord, Your ways are perfect. They were perfect thousands of years ago when You created a plan to save Your people. They were perfect the night that Jesus was born. And they are perfect for us today. Help us to seek Your will for our lives by listening to the Holy Spirit. Help us to make decisions to follow Your commandments, even when they might be hard or unpopular. Thank You for giving us the Holy Spirit to be "God with us" as our Guide, Comforter, and Friend. Thank You for being everything we need, all in One. In Your precious name we pray. Amen.

## “Emmanuel Is Born Today”



*Play demo of “Emmanuel Is Born Today.”*

### Verses

*The verses can be sung by a soloist or shared by several soloists. You can also use the entire choir for the verses on this selection.*

- *Clap the steady beat and speak the words in rhythm.*
- *March in place and sing the words.*
- *March forward four steps and backwards four steps counting 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4. You can also march side-to-side, going right-left-right-left, then reversing, left-right-left-right.*
- *Sing while marching to any of those patterns.*
- *Explain that although there is a lot of syncopation, these phrases should be sung very smoothly. You can also pass out ribbons and make big loops on each measure as you sing.*

### Chorus

- There are two choruses for this song. Let’s discover and discuss the differences in lyrics.

*“Tiny Baby in the hay” vs. “Jesus, You have come to save”*

*“You’re the King of kings who reigns”*

*“And we lift our hearts in praise”*

*“Emmanuel is born today” vs. “Emmanuel is here today”*

- The first chorus teaches that Jesus was born, and thus, God was here on earth.
- The second chorus indicates that while Jesus was physically here a long time ago as the baby in the manger, He is still here right now! God is omnipresent, which mean He is in all places at all times. Believers have Jesus literally living inside them. The Holy Spirit comes in power and authority to individuals and congregations who are surrendered to Him.

- Emmanuel means “God with us.” We celebrate and worship the Baby in the manger, but more importantly, we celebrate and worship the God who is right here right now.
- *Sing the four phrases of chorus one. Discover the form: **AABC**. The first two phrases are identical.*
- *Sing the chorus with tall, open mouth positions and lots of breath support.*
- *Teach the alto part on the second chorus to older kids by rote. Put alto with the melody, using strong leaders to assist each part.*

## Bridge

- What are the two things that describe Emmanuel in this section? *He is with us and He helps us.*
- Let’s sing the bridge, emphasizing those two phrases.
- *Add alto part with the older kids. It’s very easy and all in thirds!*
- Now let’s sing the bridge at a **mf** dynamic and **crescendo** the last note to give energy to the second chorus.



## Make a Christmas Timeline

- *Choose 10 volunteers. Explain that the class will be building a Christmas timeline based on the story we heard at the beginning of class.*
- *Print each of the 10 verses below onto a quarter sheet of poster board—large enough that the group will be able to read the verses.*
- *Give each volunteer a Scripture and have them read their verse out loud. Make sure the Scripture verses are mixed up well.*
- *After distributing the poster boards, choose kids to help you put the verses in the proper order.*

### Scriptures

*(These are in chronological order. Be sure to mix up before playing!)*

- 1. An angel came to Mary and told her she would have a baby and call him Jesus.** (Luke 1: 30-31, HCSB)
- 2. An angel came to Joseph and told him Mary would have a baby and that Joseph should call Him, Jesus.** (Matthew 1:20-21, HCSB)
- 3. The angel also told Joseph that the baby would be called Emmanuel, which means “God with us.”** (Matthew 1:23, HCSB)
- 4. Caesar Augustus issued a law for a census.** (Luke 2:1-3, HCSB)
- 5. Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem for the census.** (Luke 2:4-5, HCSB)
- 6. Jesus was born.** (Luke 2:6-7, HCSB)
- 7. Angels tell the shepherds Jesus was born.** (Luke 2:8-11, HCSB)
- 8. The shepherds went to find the baby Jesus and worship Him.** (Luke 2: 15-16, HCSB)
- 9. The shepherds spread the news about the baby Jesus.** (Luke 2:17-18, HCSB)
- 10. A year or two later, the Wise Men came to worship Jesus.** (Matthew 2: 9-11, HCSB)



## SMALL GROUP

- *Play the melody of the chorus for “Emmanuel Is Born Today” on bells or boomwhackers.*
- *You will need an octave of colored bells, along with matching colored paper. Direct the children by raising the colored paper for the corresponding bell to be played at the proper time. Because instrument colors can vary slightly, I have listed the melody below in note names instead of color, so that you may customize to your own instruments.*
- *The notes are usually written on the instruments. Please note the C written at the beginning of the chorus is the higher C and at the very end of the chorus the C is the lower C.*

**C B A G G F G**

Ti-ny ba-by in the hay,

**C B A G G F G**

You’re the King of Kings who reigns.

**C B A A B C C**

And we lift our hearts in praise.

**E F G F E D C C**

Em-man-u-el is born to-day.

- *For choirs who are not using pitched instruments: give each child a crayon or colored marker and a piece of paper. Ask them to draw the melody of the song as you sing it a cappella. Explain that they should draw downward when the melody goes down, up when the melody goes up, and a straight line if the melody stays on the same note.*

**C B A G G F G**

Ti-ny ba-by in the hay,

**C B A G G F G**

You’re the King of Kings who reigns.

**C B A A B C C**

And we lift our hearts in praise.

**E F G F E D C C**

Em-man-u-el is born to-day.



# follow the star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

### “GLORY TO GOD”



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*Sing “Glory to God” along with the demonstration CD with lots of enthusiasm. Walk back and forth with your kids, modeling simple choreography on the chorus and encouraging them to join with you.*



*Play demo of “Glory to God,” and lead the children.*

What do you think it means to give God glory?

*Take answers.*

Those are great answers! Let’s see what the Bible says about God’s glory. Listen while I read 1 Corinthians 10:31:

**“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God’s glory.”** (HCSB)

This verse tells us to give God glory in everything we do. It’s easy to give God glory when we are singing at church. What are some everyday things that we can do to bring God glory?

*Take answers.*

How about obeying our parents? How about finishing jobs we are asked to do—like chores or schoolwork? You can give God glory by practicing an instrument or sports skill you are working on. As you go through your day, you should do everything with excellence, just like we would if God, Himself, asked us to do it. When you do well or somebody notices your good behavior, turn that attention to God.

Psalms 19:1 says:

**“The heavens declare the glory of the God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands.”** (HCSB)

How do the heavens declare God’s glory?

*Take answers.*

Have you ever heard that sunsets are sometimes “showing off” because they are so beautiful? What people mean by this phrase is that the skies are showing off the glory of God!

Snow is pretty and peaceful—each snowflake is unique. Mountains are made up of small and large rocks piled on top of one another—a miracle of building blocks! If we stop to take time and look and listen, we can see that nature reflects God’s glory all the time! We hear it in the birds singing. We see it in many things, like the Northern lights and the Grand Canyon. What other magnificent things in nature can you think of that show off the greatness of God?

*Take answers.*

Psalm 115:1 says:

**“Not to us, Yahweh, not to us, but to Your name give glory because of Your faithful love, because of your truth.”** (HCSB)

This verse tells us why we should give God glory. What more does it tell us? It says that we should give Him glory because of His faithful love and because of His truth. We know that He will love us, no matter what. We know that we can believe everything that He says to us in the Bible because He is truthful, no matter what!

While we sing this next song, I want you to think about God and why we give Him the glory. I'll sing a phrase first, then you echo me. We are singing to the tune of "Silent Night."

**Glory to God.** *(Children echo.)*

**Glory to God.** *(Children echo.)*

**In my life, in my songs,** *(Children echo.)*

**Jesus, You are faithful and true.** *(Children echo.)*

**I give all my worship to You.** *(Children echo.)*

**Glory, glory to God.** *(Children echo.)*

**Glory, glory to God.** *(Children echo.)*



**PRAY:** Dear Jesus, we give You all the glory. Help us to show Your glory to others all year long. Thank You for loving us faithfully, even when we do things that are selfish and sinful. Thank You for giving us the Bible so that we can read about Your promises to us. We know that they are true and that You want good things for us. We love You, Jesus. Amen.

## “Glory to God”

To introduce the song, listen to the demo. Every time you hear the following words, alternate standing up and sitting down: **God, Son, Jesus, Glory, high, peace, and shine**. You could print those words on cardstock or poster board and have kids or volunteers hold them up to assist the others.



Play demo of “Glory to God.”

### Verses

- The verses can be sung by soloists with this division:

\_ the same soloist on both verses;

\_ 1st verse solo one; 2nd verse solo two;

\_ divide each verse into two solos, measures 9-12 and measures 13-16;

\_ use the whole choir on the verses.

- No matter how the verses are sung, bring the whole choir in at measure 16 on “And the angels sang.”
- Discuss the form of the verse and the melody:

**God sent His Son** - ends down

**His will was done** - ends up

**He came from heaven to save us** - steps down

**Jesus was born** - ends down (just like “God sent His Son”)

**And Christmas was formed** - ends up (just like “His will was done”)

**And the Light of the world is Jesus** (just like “He came from heaven to save us”)

- *When working with soloists or the choir:*

*The straight eighths in the first two short phrases contrast nicely with the syncopation of the third phrase. This is emphasized with crisp rhythmic singing.*

*Emphasize these words that are capitalized:*

**GOD sent His SON; HIS WILL was DONE.**

**HE came from HEAVEN to SAVE us.**

**JESUS was BORN and CHRISTMAS was FORMED,**

**And the LIGHT of the WORLD is JESUS.**

- Let's discuss the lyric: "Shepherds came running to worship."

**Why** were they running into Bethlehem in the first place?

**What** do you think they were planning on doing if they found the baby like the angels said?

**How** would you run to worship someone?

**Have** you ever been so excited about God that you ran to worship Him? Have you ever been so moved by being in the presence of God that your only reaction was worship?

## **Chorus**

- The first three phrases of the chorus are exactly alike: "**Glory to God on high**"; "**Peace to His people on earth**"; "**Creation praised at His birth.**" They are descending sequences of each other.

The first one starts on the 5th (*so*).

The second one starts on the 4th (*fa*).

The third one starts on the 3rd (*mi*).

Then the whole sequence pattern is repeated!

*You can have students play the corresponding initial pitches on step bells, boom whackers, or other pitched instruments (A, G and F#).*

- There are two choruses in the song. What is different about the second chorus?

*(The lyrics: “We dance and sing at His birth” instead of “Creation praised at His birth.”)*

- *When working vocals with the kids, push the ending syncopation of each phrase (“on high,” “on earth,” “His birth”). As you sing the chorus, clap the rhythm of those words.*
- *The little descants “Glory to God” can be sung by a small group, praise team, or your soloists at measures 44 and 48. The entire group sings from measure 52 out.*

## **Bridge**

- As we sing the bridge, you will notice that we have sequence again, but this time it is ascending (moving up). Let’s sing the bridge with lots of energy, emphasizing **“God,” “highest,” “shine,” “light,” “world,”** and **“Jesus”** (the important words)!



## LARGE GROUP

- *You will need two beach balls and a timer (or your phone!).*
- *Explain that we are going to try to keep one beach ball in the air for 30 seconds. You may have to try a couple of times before the kids can do it.*
- *Once successful, explain:* Now let's try with two balls in the air. Let's see if we can keep two of them up for 30 seconds.
- Now let's try passing the ball down each row on the beat. *(Play "Glory to God" while passing the ball.) With younger groups, start by clapping when the kids are supposed to be passing to help them establish the beat.*
- *Explain:* It's hard to know when the balls are coming to you when they are bouncing around randomly. Great news, though—the beat of the song is NOT random! It is in the same place every time. On every phrase of the chorus, we sing right after beat one. Let's practice our attack and make sure that we are together.

*Divide kids into small groups of 4-8. Assign each group a Bible verse from the list below and explain that each group will have 3 minutes to create motions using their whole body to act out the verse. They can divide it up so that each child acts out one portion or they can all do all of the motions. Encourage them to be creative. The first verse below has some ideas you can use to get started, but the possibilities are endless!*

- **“Then call on me** *(place hands on either side of mouth like shouting at someone)*  
**when you are in trouble,** *(cower or act afraid)*  
**and I will rescue you,** *(show muscles)*  
**and you will give me glory.”** *(hands up, raising the roof)*  
(Psalm 50:15, paraphrased)

**“For the Lord is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory.  
The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.”**

(Psalm 84:11, paraphrased)

**“With all my heart, I will praise you, O Lord my God.”**

(Psalm 86:12, paraphrased)

**“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,  
do everything for God’s glory.”**

(1 Corinthians 10:31, HCSB)

**“So use your whole body as an instrument to do  
what is right for the glory of God.”**

(Romans 6:13, paraphrased)

**“The voice of the Lord twists mighty oaks.  
In His temple, everyone shouts ‘Glory!’ ”**

(Psalm 29:9, paraphrased)



# follow the star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

### “JUMP FOR JESUS”



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*Play demo of “Jump for Jesus.” Sing and encourage the kids to dance and jump. Wave your arms / Spin around / Do something special each time you sing “and I’m so excited!”*

Woooo-hoooo! Isn’t that song so much fun? When’s the last time you got so excited about something that it made you jump around? I’m going to give you some situations and I want you to show me your level of excitement by jumping. So, if you’re only a little excited, you might only hop a little bit, with your feet not even leaving the ground. If you’re really excited, you will want to jump straight up as high as you can! Ready? Here we go:

- Your best friend is coming over to spend the night.
- Your dentist says, “Good job: no cavities!”
- Your favorite sports team wins the championships.
- You get an OK grade on a test.
- You get a GREAT grade on a test.
- Your mom makes green beans for dinner.
- Your favorite song comes on the radio.
- You get a new puppy.
- Your family surprises you with a vacation to your favorite place in the whole world.

All right! Good jumping everybody! Turn to a friend and give them a high five and tell them what a great job they did jumping.

Now find another friend and tell them you’re glad they came to choir today.

Now find a seat on the floor and take a deep breath in, and out; in, and out. Good job!

***Note to Teacher:** This last exercise is meant to bring order back after the jumping activity, which will have stirred kids up, especially those who are easily excitable. Feel free to calm the class in any way you might normally use, such as getting a drink of water, 1-2-3 eyes on me, etc.*

I could tell that some of those things made you guys really excited! Tell me: have you ever been so excited about something that you didn’t care how silly your celebration looked to other people? What was it that made you this excited?

*Take several responses.*

Those are some really amazing things! In the Bible, there is a story about how King David was so caught up in worshiping the Lord that he started dancing right in the street! Can you imagine? The Bible says:

**“David was dancing with all his might before the Lord, wearing a linen ephod. He and the whole house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of a ram’s horn.”** (2 Samuel 6:14-15, HCSB)

In fact, we find out that David’s dancing was so enthusiastic that his wife was embarrassed. She told David that she was ashamed of the way he acted in front of his people. Do you think David was sorry that he got so excited? Do you think he was embarrassed? Well, he wasn’t! He told his wife that, in order to celebrate the Lord, he was willing to act even more crazy in his praise. Can you believe it?

It’s easy to get excited about Jesus when we’re here at church, isn’t it? Our friends here love Jesus, too. They understand that we are singing about the Savior of the world.

But how about at school?

Is it harder for you to talk about Jesus and show your excitement?

What about on your baseball or soccer team?

Do you sing and dance and praise before your practice starts?

Sometimes it is hard to talk about Jesus to those who don’t know about Him, but our excitement and boldness will show others the light of Jesus. We need to follow the example of King David! The only opinion we should care about is Jesus’ and not anybody else. We are the reason He came and that is definitely something to get excited about!

Let's sing the chorus of "Ring the Bells," another of our other songs that celebrates the good news of Jesus!

**There's a world that needs to know  
That Christ has come to earth to save us.  
Shepherds bow and angels sing His praise.**

**Ring the bells and dance for Jesus.  
Sing a carol like you mean it.  
Show the world there is no other way.**



**PRAY:** Dear Jesus, thank You for filling us with joy! Living for You is fun and we want to share it with everybody we know! Help us to sing with our whole hearts, dance like King David, and ring the bells loudly so all the world will hear about Your great name. We love You, Jesus! Amen.

## “Jump for Jesus”

### Verses

*The verses may be sung by a soloist, several soloists, or a small group. You may use younger singers for this song, if you'd like. Divide the solos as follows:*

- \_ one soloist sings both verses.*
- \_ one soloist sings verse one; another soloist sings verse two.*
- \_ divide each verse into two parts: measures 8-15 and measures 16-23.*

### PITCHED INSTRUMENTS

*Pass out pitched instruments to kids in groups of 5 (according to the size of your group and the availability of instruments). You will be using the pentatonic scale in the key of F— with the notes starting from the 5th tone (middle C, D, F, G and A). Each child in a group will have one pitch.*

**Note to Teacher:** *You could also use step bells and remove the E and the B (or put construction paper on them with an X written on those notes if the notes are not removable). If you have Kodaly or Orff instruments, either remove all other notes except these, or teach the kids to play from middle C up five pitches, always skipping the E.*

**BEGINNERS:** *With younger groups, have the kids play their instruments all at the same time and sing the verses in slow motion. Help them discover the pitches in the verses that are not in the pentatonic scale (the three B-flats in measure 22).*

**ADVANCED:** *With older groups and individual pitches, scramble the kids and have them stand in ascending order by playing their pitches and experimenting with different orders. (Some will quickly figure out they can look at the length of some of the pitched instruments).*

- With xylophones, step bells, etc., have kids play the pentatonic scale ascending and descending together. The rest of the class can sing the pitches: C, E, F, G, A or 5, 6, 1, 2, 3 or Sol, La, Do, Re, Mi.*
- Then, with individual pitches, have them play their instruments all at the same time and sing the verses in slow motion. Help them discover the pitches in the verses that are not in the pentatonic scale (the three B-flats in measure 22).*
- With xylophones or step bells, have students slowly pick out the melody of measures 8-15. This will be much more accessible if you choose kids with good ears and keyboard experience to be your instrumentalists. Go slowly and have the whole*

*class assist them, singing along. Continue to measures 16-23 and discover that the B-flats are not in the pentatonic scale.*

## **SOLFEGE / BODY SCALE / NUMBERS**

*Using whatever system you regularly utilize, sing these pitches: C, E, F, G, A **or** 5, 6, 1, 2, 3 **or** Sol, La, Do, Re, Mi in the key of F (pattern starts on middle C). Sign the whole verse in slow motion and discover that the entire verse fits into this pentatonic scale except for the three B-flats in measure 22.*

### **Chorus**

- Listen to the chorus and clap on the recurring quarter note pattern in measures 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, and 37. You can use individual percussion instruments on that pattern as well (wood blocks, rhythm sticks, etc.). Then sing the chorus and clap or play the instruments on those measures. Accent the repeated words on the pattern as you sing.*
- Speak the words in rhythm and stress the syncopation on the words **“Jesus,” “save us,” “forgave us,” “Jesus,” “pleases,”** and **“reason.”***
- Sing the whole chorus, accenting the repeated words on the quarter note pattern and the syncopated syllable.*

**JUMP, JUMP, JUMP, † jump for JEsus, He  
CAME, CAME, CAME, † came to SAVE us, That’s  
WHY, WHY, WHY, † He forGAVE us of  
all ---- our --- si---in--- (*build that ascending pattern in intensity and dynamics*)  
JUMP, JUMP, JUMP, † jump for JEsus, and  
LIVE, LIVE, LIVE, † as He PLEASes. His  
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, † is the REAson He came.**

### **Bridge**

- As you listen, play invisible drums in the little breaks between the words.*
- Count how many names of God they are singing (8)*
- Sing the bridge together and crescendo on “King of kings” (ms. 64-65).*



## LARGE GROUP

- God created us to do many wonderful things with our bodies. Some of us are very graceful like a ballet dancer. Some are very athletic like a football player. Others have great balance, like a gymnast. Still others have great minds, like Einstein. But what we were all made to do is to worship God, as it says in the Bible in Isaiah 43:7. So we are going to use our bodies to worship today!
- What are some of your favorite dance moves? Jumping, spinning, clapping, hands in the air (like raise the roof)?
- *Take at least four suggestions and write them on a white board, or have someone type them to show on a screen.*
- *Listen to the track for “Jump for Jesus.” Beginning in measure 9, lead each suggested movement for 8 counts.*



*Play demo of “Jump for Jesus.”*

- *Play CD again and lead children to move to every motion, always moving from left to right.*
- *Repeat and play CD or sing chorus.*

## Activity 1

- *Copy several of the eight large names of God cards (on pages 9-10). Print enough for every child to have one. Laminate or glue them to cardstock, or print them on heavy-weight paper, and cut out. Give each child a name of God.*
- *Play the recording of “Jump for Jesus.” Have children hold up their card when they hear the name of God sung that is on their card.*
- **Or**, *when you give a signal, have children stand up and get in the correct order as the names are sung (from left to right).*
- **Or**, *instead of using cards, simply assign a name of God to each child and have them stand up and shout that name as you listen to the CD or sing.*

## Activity 2

### **Materials:**

- *Names of God cards, one for each child. (See page 11.)*
- *Colored pencils*

### **Listen and Respond:**

- *Echo-sing measures 49 – 65.*
- Which of those are names of God? That’s correct, all of them.
- On the card that I have given you are many names of Jesus. Using a colored pencil, only color the names of Jesus that are mentioned in our song. Here’s a little hint: there are names in the verses and the chorus.

### **Answer Key:**

*Here are the answers that should be shaded.*

- |             |                   |                       |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| • I AM      | • Mighty One      | • King of kings       |
| • Messiah   | • Son of Man      | • Wonderful Counselor |
| • God’s Son | • Redeemer        | • Emmanuel            |
| • Jesus     | • Prince of Peace | • Friend              |
| • Savior    | • Lord of lords   |                       |

Redeemer

Savior

Lord  
of lords

King  
of kings

Son  
of Man

Prince  
of Peace

Son  
of God

Mighty  
One

### Names of God Card - Activity 2

I AM	Messiah	El Shaddai	God's Son
Ralph	Wonderful Counselor	Emmanuel	Provider
Jesus	Protector	Savior	Abraham
Paul	Redeemer	Andrew	Mighty One
Prince of Peace	Zacchaeus	Son of Man	Friend
Yaweh	Lord of lords	Matthew	King of kings

### Names of God Card - Activity 2

I AM	Messiah	El Shaddai	God's Son
Ralph	Wonderful Counselor	Emmanuel	Provider
Jesus	Protector	Savior	Abraham
Paul	Redeemer	Andrew	Mighty One
Prince of Peace	Zacchaeus	Son of Man	Friend
Yaweh	Lord of lords	Matthew	King of kings



# follow *the* star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

**“AWAY IN A MANGER”**

*with*

**“BE NEAR”**



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How many of you have been singing the song “Away in a Manger” since you were really, really little? Me, too! You know, it’s not just a song about a baby and some animals in a barn—it’s a worship song that also tells Jesus how much we love Him and that we want Him to be with us! Let’s close our eyes and sing and tell Jesus how much we love Him right now.



***Play demo of “Away in a Manger” with “Be Near.”  
Model worship and reverence for the kids.***

When a king is born, what kind of things do you THINK are in his nursery? Do you think there would be a gold bottle or expensive toys in there? Do you think a baby king would have a fancy crib with very soft blankets?

*Take responses.*

But that’s not how Jesus spent His first day here on earth, is it? Where was He placed instead? Hint: It’s in the title of the song we sang.

*Take responses.*

That’s right! Mary placed the baby Jesus inside of a manger. And can someone tell me exactly what a manger is usually used for?

*Take responses.*

Right! It is a feeding trough made for animals. Many times we think of a manger being made of wood. That’s often the way it looks when we see a nativity, right? But some mangers were made of stone. Can you imagine what it would feel like to be sleeping on a rock? Think about how a baby’s crib is usually warm and soft.

*Pass around some hay. For large groups, have several pieces to pass so that you save time.*

A manger can be hard and cold. Perhaps the only thing that made it any more like a crib for Jesus was that it was filled with hay. However, hay is often scratchy and can poke you. Is it the kind of place you would imagine a baby king to be sleeping? Of course not!

Some people didn’t believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the King of kings, because they expected Him to be born in a palace. But God’s plan was much different. He sent Jesus to grow up in a regular home, as the Son of a carpenter (not the Son of an earthly king). He wanted Jesus to be someone with whom we could identify—someone who was like us!

Jesus came to earth as a human in order for us to know that:

even though He is the King of angels,

the King of Heaven, and

the King of all CREATION,

He is still *very* available to us. Jesus is someone who wants to be our Friend. Listen to what James 4:8 says:

**“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”** (HCSB)

Jesus wants to be close to us. All we have to do is call on Him.

Let's sing the chorus of this song one more time without the music CD (ms. 60-68). We want to sing it like a prayer, repeating the last line three times.

**Be near me Lord.**

**This Christmas prayer I sing.**

**Be near me Lord.**

**Jesus, You're my King.**

**Jesus, You're my King.**

**Jesus, You're my King.**

*If you have the ability, transition to singing "You Are My King," written by Billy Foote, with acoustic guitar or keyboard.*



**LET'S PRAY:** Dear Jesus, thank You for leaving Your throne in Heaven and coming as a baby to create a way for us to live with You forever. Help us to choose every single day to honor You in our words and actions. Even though the words in our song are, "this Christmas prayer I sing," help us to know that we can pray this prayer any time because You are always looking to be near to us. We love You, Jesus. Amen!

## “Away in a Manger” with “Be Near”

### Verses

- *Sing the first verse of “Away in a Manger” from memory. Sing it to the traditional MUELLER tune.*
- *Now teach the other melody (the CRADLE SONG tune) which is used in the **Follow the Star** collection), but sing it in 3/4 time. Sing the first verse to this tune and time.*
- *Now sing the CRADLE SONG tune in 4/4 time (like the demonstration recording). Continue with verse 2 and 3 (just for rehearsal. The second verse will actually be a solo or small group.)*
- *In advanced groups, add alto in the third verse (ms. 43-59).*

### New Chorus (ms. 31-39)

- *Clap the steady beat and speak the second and fourth phrases in rhythm, emphasizing the syncopation.*
- *Teach this section by rote, modeling tall open mouth positioning and lots of breath support. Slightly emphasize the word “Lord.”*
- *The form of the song is simple—ABAC.*
- *The first time through the chorus can be sung by a soloist or small group.*
- *In advanced groups, add alto at measures 61-68.*

### Bridge/Worship Section

- *Sing the phrase very reverently and ask the kids to echo.*
- *Emphasize the words “**worship,**” “**near,**” and “**Lord.**”*
- *Ask the kids to sing the section four times, getting louder and louder each time (ms. 70-85).*
- *Add alto (starting at ms. 78). It’s easy—all in thirds. You can assist the kids by asking a strong adult or student vocalist to join in with both parts for reinforcement.*



## LARGE GROUP

### Let's Play a Game!

*Observe the children in the room. As you discover common characteristics (yellow shirt, khakis, brown hair, etc.), call out a characteristic and ask kids to circle up with others sharing common characteristics. Inform them that each group will be asked to do a certain task. Move at a quick pace, especially with older kids.*

**Note to Teacher:** *Keep an eye out for children who don't find a group and figure a way to match them up. For instance, if they are the only one in a hot pink shirt, match them with the red shirt kids, etc.*

- Okay, kids! Let's all stand up!
- For this game, you'll need to listen very closely to the instructions given. I want you to know who is on your team and what your tasks are. We will sort into groups according to characteristics you have in common with other kids here. It might be something you're wearing, a sport you play, or something you like to eat. As soon as I call it out, you will have 10 seconds or less to find others who share the characteristic and circle up! After 5 seconds, I'll call out a task you have to complete as a group. When you finish, sit down to signal that you're done. First team down wins that round! We'll play several rounds.

- Circle up with **everyone wearing the same color shirt you are wearing!**

**TASK:** Line your whole group up shortest to tallest

- Circle up with **everyone** in the room **who goes to your school!**

**TASK:** Spell out JESUS with your bodies by laying on the floor. You must use everybody in your group. *(For large groups, the letters might need to be big!)*

- Circle up with everyone who has the **same color hair** that you have!

**TASK:** Think together and try to remember EVERY song that we are singing in Kids Choir this semester. Send ONE representative to the front of the room when you think you have a complete list, and I will confirm!

- Circle up with **siblings!**

\_ If you only have sisters, gather on the left.

\_ If you only have brothers, gather on the right.

\_ If you have both brothers and sisters, gather in the back of the room.

\_ If you are an only child, gather in the front of the room.

TASK: Break your large group into smaller groups of 4-5 (or include everyone if the group is small) and line up. Everyone in your line will walk straight across the room while pretending to row a boat and singing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”

- Circle up with everyone who shares your birthday month!

TASK: Create a pyramid (or multiple pyramids if there are a lot kids in any one group).

- *Feel free to continue playing if the first few rounds go quickly!*

## Game Wrap-Up

Everyone take a seat. As you played this game, each of you were looking for other people sharing common characteristics. You did this in order to be near those other people. Isn't it great that we don't have to wear anything or be anything special in order to be near to the Lord? All we have to do is draw near to Him and He will come close to us! (*James 4:8*)



## SMALL GROUP

- Let's find the meter of our song, "Away in a Manger." The "meter" of a song determines how many beats are in each measure that we sing.
- All songs are divided into measures, and every song contains unique rhythms. Even if we haven't learned how to read music yet, many times we can use our natural rhythm to help us find the correct meter. Let's listen to the first verse.



*Play demo of "Away in a Manger" through ms. 30.*

- Do you think we should be counting to 3 over and over again? Or should we count to 4?
- Try this: **tap your knees once, then clap two times**. This is a 3-beat pattern. I'm going to play this song for about 12 to 16 beats. See if you can make that pattern work. *(They will not be able to make this work.)*
- Let's try that again using a different pattern: **stomp, clap, clap, clap**. *(Help them get started with the rhythm. Play the recording, and identify the beat.)*
- *Lead the children to stomp on beat one of each measure and to place the three claps on the other beats in each measure.*



# follow the star

## SONG TEACHING TIPS

### “MIGHTY TO SAVE”



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## DEVOTION

**The Lord your God is with you. The Mighty One will save you. The Lord will be happy with you. You will rest in His love. He will sing and be joyful about you.**

Zephaniah 3:17 (paraphrased)

*You will need the above paraphrased Bible verse separated into five phrases. Print each verse on a piece of cardstock that is at least 7-inches high by 2-1/2 feet long. Include the Bible reference as the sixth piece.*

1. The Lord your **God** is with you.

2. The Mighty One will **save** you.

3. The Lord will be **happy** with you.

4. You will **rest** in His love.

5. He will sing and be **joyful** about you.

6. Zephaniah 3:17

- *Get 6 early arrivers to be your Bible verse leaders. Give the fourth phrase to a peaceful child (you will rest in His love).*
- *Ask the Bible verse leaders to stand in order (left to right). Have them raise their card over their head, and one by one, from left to right, recite the verse loudly (medium loud for the 4th phrase). End with the Bible reference (Zephaniah 3:17).*
- *Divide the choir into six sections and ask each section to stand to their feet and recite the verse with their leader.*
- *Each phrase has a word to act out (in bold). As the kids say these words, instruct them to make the following motions:*

**God**—<https://www.signingsavvy.com/sign/GOD/1409/1> American Sign Language for God

**Save**—cross your arms in an X in front of your body and open them up like a muscle pose

**Happy**—throw hands up in the air

**Rest**—cock your head to one side and “sleep” on both hands folded under your chin

• **Joyful**—<https://www.signingsavvy.com/sign/JOY/3754/1> American Sign Language for joy

• Go through the exercise a few times. Go through the following variations as time allows:

- \_ Each leader speaks his/her part; their corresponding group jumps up and recites the verse silently.
- \_ Recite the whole verse in fast forward.
- \_ Recite the whole verse in slow motion.
- \_ Recite the whole verse in fast forward, except: recite phrase four in slow motion.
- \_ Mix the verse leaders up and time how quickly another child can put them back in the correct order.
- \_ Have everyone run to another group and recite a new part quickly.



*Sing “Mighty to Save” with the demo and choreography.*

The Lord is a mighty Savior! Every day, He saves us from accidents and problems that we never even see. He fights the devil and keeps us from problems, or helps us through them. We know He died to save us from our sins. When we were without hope, Jesus willingly sacrificed His life: He died on the cross and took all our sins away. Our sins were crucified with Him on that cross. Then, true Love brought Him back to life! God raised Jesus from the dead and now He lives forever! And He can live in us!

When Jesus lives in us and we, in turn, live in ways that honor Him, we can help others find Jesus. We can let others know that Jesus is mighty to save. We can invite someone to church; we can pray before a meal; we can pray with someone who is sick or hurting. We can tell a friend how we were saved, or sing them one of our favorite worship songs. There are so many ways to shine our lights for Jesus!

*Sing the bridge of “Mighty to Save” a cappella, very reverently, and authentically.*

**Shine your light and let the whole world see  
We’re singing for the glory of the risen King.  
Jesus, shine your light and let the whole world see  
We’re singing for the glory of the risen King.**



**PRAY: Lord, everyone *does* need compassion. They need to know someone cares. Everyone needs forgiveness. Help us look past one another’s faults, realizing that we all need a Savior. Help us be a light that shines so that the world knows who You are. Fill us with your Holy Spirit. Change all our fears and failures into confidence. Help us trust that You work through us and give us victory in what You call us to do. Lord, we love You and we want the world to know that You are mighty to save. Amen.**

## “Mighty to Save”

### Verses

- *The verses are solos and should be sung by mature voices. Kids should sing with a rich legato style and clean enunciation.*
- *Inform all the kids about the form of the verses—ABAC.*

### Chorus

- *Many of your kids will know this song. Ask them to emphasize “**mighty to save**” and “**conquered the grave**” as they sing. Make sure they put the ending consonant “**V**” on the words “save” and “grave.”*

### Bridge

**Shine your light and**  
**let the whole world --- see---**  
**we’re singing**  
**for the glory      of the risen King--- Je-sus**

- *Work on strong, percussive enunciation on the underlined words, and hold out notes evenly that should be sustained (indicated with these successive hyphens).*
- *Add high harmony with older kids (ms. 61-68).*
- *Go to the end of the song and work on the descant “Shine your light, shine your light” starting in measure 70.*
- *Divide the room in half, with one side singing the bridge and the other half singing the descant. Make sure the kids know they can sing it in the upper or the lower octave.*



## LARGE GROUP

- This song tells us many things about who God is. Look at the words on the screen for the chorus. We will take one line at a time.

***Note to Teacher:** Print the bold phrases below on a white board, chalkboard, poster board, or project them on a screen.*

***“Savior, He can move the mountains.”***

What does this line tell us about God? *(Get responses.)* Yes, it is pretty obvious that He is our Savior, and He has the power to move mountains.

***“My God is mighty to save, He is mighty to save.”***

What does this line tell us about God? *(Get responses.)* Yes, He is the one to save us. He sent his only Son to save us from our sins. Can anyone else do this? No.

***“Forever,”***

Is God forever? *(Get responses.)* Yes, He is. He has always been and always will be. He doesn't have a beginning or an end.

***“Author of salvation,”***

What is an author? *(Get responses.)* Someone who is knowledgeable about a subject and writes about that subject. If I were a scientist and a world-renown scholar on the habits of honey bees, and I wrote a story explaining all about bees—their life cycle and their value to the earth—I would be called the “Author of Bees.” God was the one to think of the plan for salvation because He was the only one that could do it. So sometimes we refer to Him as the “Author of salvation.”

***“He rose and conquered the grave. Jesus conquered the grave.”***

What does this line tell us about God? *(Get responses.)* Yes. Jesus is risen! The grave could not keep Him. Conquered means defeated. So he defeated death and he defeated the grave.

- So we know from this song that God is:
  - our **Savior**,
  - a **Mountain Mover**,
  - **Mighty to save**,
  - **Forever**,

- the **Author of salvation**,
- **Risen**, and
- **Conqueror**.

***Note to Teacher:** You may want to underline these words and phrases as you review and discuss.*

- Read those words out loud with me.
- Those are wonderful reasons to praise Him. Let's sing the words of the chorus. Lift your voice to worship the Lord.

*Print out two Feud Answer Sheets (on page 9). Split your small group into two teams. Give each team a set of the Feud Answers.*

Today we're going to play **Team Feud**. Each team has several words in a pile. I am going to read a verse from the Bible. One point is awarded to the first group to find the word from the pile that describes or matches the verse, or key word from the verse. You can discuss answers as a team, but the team that gets the answer to me first wins the point.

- “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord shines over you.” (Isaiah 60:1, HCSB) **SHINE**
- “He will not allow your foot to slip; your Protector will not slumber.” (Psalm 121:3, HCSB) **PROTECTION** (*from the song lyric, “fears and failures”*)
- “For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.” (2 Timothy 1:7, HCSB) **FEARS AND FAILURES**
- “Turn my eyes from looking at what is worthless; give me life in Your ways.” (Psalm 119:37, HCSB) **SATISFACTION** (*from the song lyric, “Fill my life again”*)
- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30, HCSB) **EVERYTHING** (*from the song lyric, “everything I believe in”*)
- “Follow Me,” He told them, “and I will make you fish for people!” (Matthew 4:19, HCSB) **GIVE MY LIFE TO FOLLOW**
- “And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.” (Ephesians 4:32, HCSB) **COMPASSIONATE**
- “He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the Lord’s unfailing love.” (Psalm 33:5, HCSB) **NEVER FAILING LOVE**
- “He forgives all your sin; He heals all your diseases.” (Psalm 103:3, HCSB) **FORGIVING**
- “For You, Lord, are kind and ready to forgive, rich in faithful love to all who call on You.” (Psalm 86:5, HCSB) **KINDNESS**
- “I, I am Yahweh, and there is no other Savior but Me.” (Isaiah 43:11, HCSB) **SAVIOR**
- “The nations will put their hope in His name.” (Matthew 12:21, HCSB) **HOPE OF NATIONS**

**Note to Teacher:** You do not have to set out all words. You can choose just the ones that cover the songs you are singing or have already worked on.

### Feud Answer Sheet

*(Print two, each on different colored paper; trim each into 12 cards, one set per team.)*

<b>SHINE</b>	<b>PROTECTION</b>	<b>FEARS AND FAILURES</b>
<b>SATISFACTION</b>	<b>EVERYTHING</b>	<b>GIVE MY LIFE TO FOLLOW</b>
<b>COMPASSIONATE</b>	<b>NEVER FAILING LOVE</b>	<b>FORGIVING</b>
<b>KINDNESS</b>	<b>SAVIOR</b>	<b>HOPE OF NATIONS</b>

## Optional Group Activity

### Bridge Stomp

**Note to Teacher:** This activity can be done in large or small group time. When done in small group, you can give one-on-one help to children who may need it, without singling them out.

Lead children to stomp the steady beat as you speak the rhythm of the Bridge of “Mighty to Save.” Point out that they will hear beats one and three, but do not sing on them, unless they are holding out a long note. We begin each phrase in the middle of the beat.

Here is a quick reference.

1                    2                    3                    4                    1                    2                    3                    4  
Shine your light and      let the whole world      see\_\_\_\_\_ We're singing

1                    2                    3                    4                    1                    2                    3                    4  
For the glory      of the risen      King\_\_\_\_\_ Jesus