



All Things Bright and Beautiful is a collection of nine scripture songs which incorporate the use of instruments for elementary-aged children. One song is included for each month of the children's choir year (September through May). The songs can be presented in any order and all are suitable for sharing in a worship service. The lessons were created through the Orff Schulwerk approach, which was fully described in the previous issue of *The Chorister* (August/September 2018).



Six of the songs include percussion instrument accompaniment, one includes autoharp or guitar accompaniment (or another equivalent), and two are comprised of a hymn with a scripture descant. These descants may be sung or even played on soprano recorder, if desired.

MONTH	SONG AND SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	CONCEPTS AND MUSICAL TASKS
September	It Was Very Good! Genesis 1:31	Orff instrument technique, layered ostinato*, ensemble playing, experiencing syncopation
October	This Is What I Seek Psalm 27:4	Orff instrument technique, layered ostinato*, ensemble playing, tie, anacrusis (upbeat), reading <i>drm sl</i> patterns
November	Praise the Name of the Lord Psalm 148:13	compound meter, handbell (or hand chime), autoharp, and/or guitar technique
December	Infant Holy, Infant Lowly Luke 2:11	triple meter, descant (may be played on soprano recorder), sequence, unpitched percussion ostinato*
January	Give Thanks to the Lord Psalm 107:8	canon, ensemble playing, reading patterns with <i>do-re-mi-sol-la</i> , Orff and unpitched percussion instrument technique, dramatic reading
February	Great Is Thy Faithfulness Lamentations 3:22-23	descant (may be played on soprano recorder), melodic contour, rhythm reading, tie
March	In God's Hand Job 12:10	Orff instrument and conga technique, functional harmony (I-V), ensemble playing
April	The World Is Mine Psalm 50:12	Orff instrument technique, notating compound meter, ensemble playing, singing patterns using <i>do-re-mi-sol-la</i> , instrument improvisation
May	Wonderfully Made Psalm 139:14	Orff instrument technique, ensemble playing, functional harmony (i-V), Jewish-style dance, experiencing minor mode

*An *ostinato* is a short, repeated rhythmic or melodic pattern that is used as an accompaniment to a song or poem. Ostinati are often used in Orff arrangements because they are easily mastered by children. All the barred instrument parts in ATBB are ostinati that are layered together to create a pleasing texture that supports children's singing voices.

Detailed lesson plans will aid in presenting the material to children, and PowerPoints are included. If you do not have access to a projector and screen, or you would prefer to have paper visuals, simply print out and enlarge the slides you would like to use.

HOW DID THIS BOOK COME TO BE WRITTEN?

A few years ago, while I was teaching fifth grade VBS, the children were challenged by our Minister of Music to memorize several Bible verses. The first day, many of them struggled to do this. Knowing the power of music to aid in memorization, I decided to create melodies for the verses that they could sing. While I was at it, I went ahead and added simple accompaniments that they could play. Since our church did not have any Orff instruments, I borrowed some from a nearby school.

As the children entered the following day, they saw the instruments set up on the side of the room. Immediately an excited buzz filled the classroom! We discussed the instrument rules (below) and I informed the children that we would memorize our scriptures in a new, exciting way—with music! The children learned the entire piece within 30 minutes, and were so proud of their progress that they insisted I video them so they could see and hear what they had done. Imagine their astonishment when they realized that they had memorized the verse within minutes with no struggle at all!

After this success, it occurred to me that I should transfer this idea to my children's choir. We already utilized a hymn memory program—why not institute a scripture memory program using the same theme so that they could memorize one scripture per month? I chose nine scriptures and crafted accompaniments, lesson plans, and visuals for each, which I taught the following year. *All Things Bright and Beautiful* is the result of that year's work with my choristers.

You may be wondering how I acquired instruments for this project. I showed the video of the children at a deacon's meeting and explained how the children were using music to memorize scripture. The deacons were so impressed that they allowed me to purchase a set of Orff instruments for the children's choir to use the following year!

TIPS FOR TEACHING

1. If you do not yet have instruments, no problem! These lessons can be enjoyed with voices and body percussion. If you would like to add the timbre of instrumental sounds, substitute the suggestions in the resource with what you do have. Resonator bells, Melodee bells, hand chimes, or keyboards would work just fine. Try "found sounds" for the percussion parts, such as a trash can or a set of keys!

2. Great care was taken to ensure that the Orff instrument parts are accessible for young children with minimal practice needed. However, if the Orff arrangements are too difficult for your children at this time, have them sing the melody and perform only ONE of the parts. You may choose to have an adult volunteer play another one of the parts. Simplify any lesson as you need to so that the children are successful. Parts can even be divided between two or more choirs.

3. I have included a sequence of teaching steps for each piece that could result in a final performance if you desire to do so. The lesson plans should be taught in three or four short segments over a period of a month, not including rehearsals. Brain-based research tells us that it is more beneficial for children to practice in short segments over a longer period of time than in fewer, longer segments.



Children explore triple meter for "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly."

4. At the beginning of each session, reinforce the concepts learned from the previous session before continuing on to that day's lesson segment.

5. When teaching an instrument part through body movement, you will need to demonstrate the movements backwards, facing the children. The children will *mirror* your movement. The instructions in the lesson plans are from the children's view.

6. Because the ability to hear how all the parts fit together to make a unified whole is a vital ensemble skill, each child should learn every part. After all the individual parts have been learned, assign parts according to the orchestration in the score. Rotate the children through the instruments so that every child has the opportunity to play every part with the entire ensemble. Ideally, if a child happens to be absent from the performance, any other child will be able to substitute.

ALLOW CHILDREN CREATIVE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR WORK

1. The scores could be played exactly as written, or they could be considered performance suggestions. The children will have ideas of ways to perform the pieces differently, such as changing the **instruments** used. Allow the children to decide on the **form** (the pattern or sequence of parts) of the pieces they will present. For example:

- The individual ostinati could be "layered in" (enter one-at-a-time) or they could all begin together.
- The children may decide to add another contrasting section, perhaps with speech, movement, or even another related song.
- There are optional endings written into each score. Perform the pieces as written or create your own endings!

2. Guide the children to create **movement** or a simple dance for the scripture melody. The movement could feature sign language or motions to depict the text, or could be a completely improvisatory expression of worship.

Movement or dance could also be used as a contrasting section. Simply have the instrument players play the accompaniment as the dancers move. "Wonderfully Made" (May) would be an ideal song in which to include a movement section. Guide the children to create a simple circle dance including basic movements such as *circle left*, *circle right*, *in and out*, *do-si-do*, *swing your partner*, and *promenade*. Then, divide the children into instrumentalists and dancers to perform:

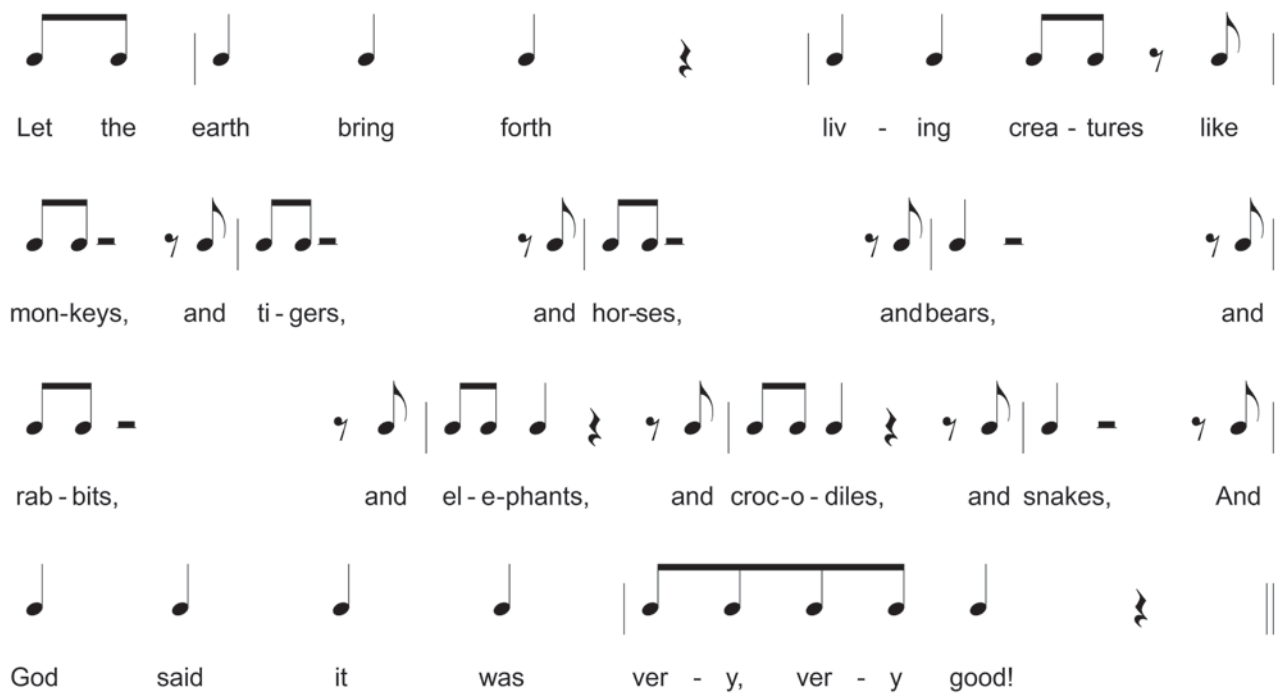
- Intro: layer in accompaniment parts
- A: song with instrumental accompaniment
- B: dance with instrumental accompaniment
- A: song with instrumental accompaniment
- Coda: layer out accompaniment parts



3. **Mix and match** the ideas for creativity that are described throughout the book. For example, the children may wish to add a *scripture sound carpet* as a contrasting section or an introduction. A *sound carpet* is described on pages 24-25 as part of the lesson for "Give Thanks to the Lord." However, the idea could be adapted for any of the other pieces using a scripture of choice.

4. Create a **speech section** using a related scripture as a contrasting section! Speech is an important tool in the Orff Schulwerk process and it is considered an art form in itself. Rhythmic speech is ideal for the development of verbal expressiveness. Instruct the children to use much vocal inflection and to project their voices in a healthful manner.

Here is an example that would work well for "In God's Hand" (March):

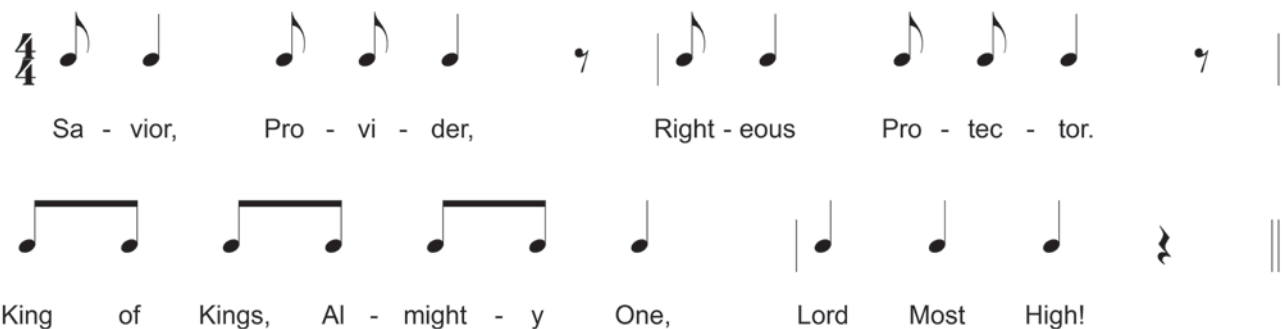


Let the earth bring forth living creatures like
 monkeys, and tigers, and horses, and bears, and
 rabbits, and elephants, and crocodiles, and snakes, And
 God said it was very, very good!

The children could accompany this chant with a steady beat or a simple ostinato on a drum. They may even want to choose an unpitched percussion instrument to play for each of the animals named. For example, a guiro could represent a growling tiger, and a shaker could represent a hissing snake.

5. Another way to use speech is to create **word chains**. In "This Is What I Seek" (October), the children could brainstorm words that describe God and use them to create a speech word chain:

King of Kings	Yahweh	Almighty	Patient
Lord	Abba	Creator	Savior
Most High	Omniscient	Forgiving	Protector
El Shaddai	Provider	Master	Righteous



Savior, Provider, Righteous Protector.
 King of Kings, Almighty One, Lord Most High!

Again, the children could accompany this chant with a steady beat or a simple ostinato on a drum. They may choose to create simple movements to depict each descriptive word.

6. **Add art!** "It Was Very Good!" (September) inspires children to use various art media to create pictures of animals, plants, landforms, etc. that were created a by God. The creation story in Genesis 1-2 could be read as the pictures are shown as a slideshow, with the instrumental accompaniment playing in the background.

7. String several pieces together by using a children's book as connective material. There are several charming books with a creation theme, such as *My Father's World* by Selina Alko or *When the World Was New* by L. J. Sattgast and Steve Björkman. Read the books to the children and have them select their favorite, and collectively decide which pieces and related songs to include at certain places in the book. The children could divide up the text between several narrators.

There is no limit to the extensions you and the children can make with these pieces. I wish you delight and joy as you guide your choristers to develop their creative gifts while exploring the wonders of God's creation!



CGBK74 ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

by *Darla Meek* | an exciting collection containing nine foundational Bible verses set to music with Orff and other percussion instruments.

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CGBK74 All Things Bright and Beautiful by Darla Meek.**



Darla Meek serves as Lecturer and Music Education Coordinator at Texas A & M University-Commerce. She is a teacher trainer for both Movement and Basic Pedagogy I for Orff Levels courses. Darla presents professional development sessions at the district, state, regional, and national levels, and her materials for elementary music specialists have been published through Choristers Guild, Celebrating Grace, Inc., and Sweet Pipes, Inc.