

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings

G. F. Handel

Edited and Arranged by
Jeremy J. Bankson


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Curriculum Guide

For Choir Teachers, By Choir Teachers

by: Colleen McNickle & Coty Raven Morris
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WELCOME!

We are delighted that you have chosen to purchase this curricular resource for your choirs! We have worked hard to provide you with a comprehensive approach to teaching this piece, while leaving space for you to add your own brilliant ideas. From music theory to social issues to science and literature—we believe all of these topics and more not only belong in choir rooms, but also have the potential to lead to more intentional and empowered choral musicians. We encourage you to think outside the box and engage with your repertoire in mindful and meaningful ways!

Whether you follow this guide step-by-step or simply use the information to inform your instruction, we are confident that you will benefit from this resource. Happy singing!

Teachers are permitted to make copies of the quizzes and activities in this book for students' use.
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Teaching Objectives

Within every piece of choral music lies myriad teaching objectives. Here are a few teaching objectives for *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings* that we have addressed within this curriculum guide.

- ☐ Students will be able to...
Sing sixteenth note rhythms confidently and accurately, describe and perform Baroque vocal styles, unify vowels and sing in a light and stylistically appropriate vocal production .
- ☐ Students will be able to...
Distinguish the difference between macro and micro-beat, applying to the piece.
- ☐ Students will be able to...
Identify, define, and put into practice vocabulary terms and musical instructions from *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings*
- ☐ Students will be able to...
Analyze the lyrics and historical context of *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings*.
- ☐ Students will be able to...
Listen to and evaluate additional compositional works by Handel.
- ☐ Students will be able to...
Improvise and notate a composition based on a motif from *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings*.

notes

Teaching Sequence

Just one way you might consider teaching this piece to your ensemble:

	Teaching Suggestion	Time	Measures
day 1	Introduce Warm-Up One . Begin mm. 13–29 on neutral syllables. Focus on note accuracy, macro vs. micro-beat.	15 minutes	mm. 13–29
day 2	Introduce Warm-Up Two . Learn mm. 30–38 on neutral syllable. Combine with mm. 13–29. Add lyrics. Focus on diction and pronunciation. Assign Activity One for homework.	20 minutes	mm. 13–38
day 3	Complete Activity Two together. Apply new insights to mm. 13–38.	30 minutes	mm. 13–38
day 4	Introduce Warm-Up Three . Learn mm. 39–48. Focus on vowel unification.	15 minutes	mm. 39–48
day 5	Review Warm-Up One and Warm-Up Two . Examine 52–end. Identify similarities and differences between first half and second half. Learn 80–end, then 74–end, then 65–end. Begin Activity Three in class together.	30 minutes	mm. 65–end
day 6	Review Warm-Up One . Learn mm. 53–64. Combine with 65–end.	15 minutes	mm. 53–end
day 7+	Continue rehearsing full piece, paying special attention to Baroque style, vowel unification, energized entrances, supported 16th notes, impactful word emphasis, and appropriate resonance. Share Activity Three compositions.	TBA	full piece

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings Warm-Ups

Teach concepts specific to this piece by using these original warm-ups:

Macro vs. Micro

☐ warm-up 1



Teach by rote or project for sight-reading. Raise and/or lower by half step. Step the macro-beat while tapping the micro-beat. Focus on strong beats 1 & 4, vowel unification, and crisp consonants. *Can students identify from where this exercise comes?*

Sing those 16th Notes!

☐ warm-up 2



Teach by rote or project for sight-reading. Raise and/or lower by half step. Focus on accurate 16th notes and 3rd and 5th leaps. *Can students identify from where this exercise comes?*

Vowel Unification

☐ warm-up 3



Teach by rote or project for sight-reading. Raise and/or lower by half step. Focus on breath energy, plosive consonants, and unified vowels. *Can students identify from where this exercise comes?*

my warmups

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings Vocabulary

Here are some terms and definitions that are handy when learning this piece:

Term	Definition
<i>tr</i>	Abbreviation for "trill." A quick back-and-forth between two notes.
Compound Meter	Meter in which the beat divides into three and subdivides into six.
Tie	Indicated by a curved line connecting two notes of the same pitch. Sing the note for the combined rhythmic value of the notes as if they were one.
Anacrusis	An unstressed note or group of notes that comes before the first accented note of a phrase. AKA "pick-up"
Breath Mark	Indicates to take a breath.
Slur	Indicates to sing the notes without separation (legato).
Natural	An accidental which cancels previous accidentals. Sing the unaltered pitch of the note.
Sharp	Raise the pitch by one half step.
<i>rit.</i>	Gradually decrease the tempo.
<i>a tempo</i>	Return to the previous tempo
Your Term:	
Your Term:	

Name: _____

Date: _____



Lyrics Interpretation

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings



Answer the following questions to get to know the meaning behind your piece:

- ① This text is part of Scene 3 from *Messiah* about the prophecy of Christ's birth. A prophecy is a prediction of something that will happen in the future. What do you think this text is about?

- ② Complete the lyrics to the song in the space below:

O thou that tellest

get thee up

O thou that tellest

lift up

Say unto the

O thou that tellest

And the glory

- ③ What or Who is Zion?

- ④ What is the speaker asking Zion to do? Why?

- ⑤ What does the text mean by "thy light has come"?

- ⑥ Based on the lyrics, what do you think the mood of the piece is and how do we portray this musically?



HANDEL LISTENING

listening examples:

- "For unto us a Child is born" - Handel
- "No, di voi non vo' fidarmi" - Handel
- "Hallelujah Chorus" - Handel

Listening to choral music is essential as we learn and sing music representing a variety of eras and cultures.

As you listen, evaluate the performance and consider what elements of the ensemble's interpretation you may want to borrow for your own performance of the piece.

instructions

1. Listen to each of the three examples of Handel's music provided above.
2. As you listen, answer the following questions:
 - What instruments do you hear? How do they compare to *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings*?
 - Describe the expressive elements of the performance, including dynamics, articulation, and style. How are these elements representative of Baroque music?
 - What do you notice about the text of these pieces?
 - Are these compositions sacred or secular? Why might Handel have composed them?
 - What are the similarities and differences between these three works?
3. Following your listening, consider how your listening might inform your performance:
 - What did you like from these performances that you would like to consider for our performance of *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings*?
 - What did you not like from these performances that you would like to avoid as we present *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings*?

Be the Composer!

To complete this exercise, you will need staff paper or a music notation software like Noteflight or Finale.

2 Isolate a motif

Simplify the rhythm of your motif and assign it to one voice part, repeating it several times on a neutral syllable to make your *ostinato*. Use whole, half, or quarter notes.

4 Let's Harmonize

Now, add some harmonies! Play around with rhythm and entrances. Do you enjoy the sound of everyone moving together (homophony) or moving at different times (polyphony)?

6 Add text to your song!

The cool thing about being a singer is that we get to use words! Take some text from the piece and add it to your new tune or write your own! Remember that more syllables may call for variation on your rhythm to fit all of the words!

Sing the tune

1

Sing through the opening melody or a section of your choosing from *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings*. Find a four-note passage or small group of notes from the tune to create your new composition around! This will be your piece's **motif**!

Melody Matters

3

Improvise a melody on a neutral syllable above your new bass line. This theme should be repetitive and easy to remember. Let your *ostinato* guide your direction. Make it as simple or complicated as you like.

Improvise

5

You have now built your mini-composition! In your notational software, play your tune on repeat. Improvise an alternate melody or harmony above this repeated composition. Are there any changes you want to make to your piece?



important note:

Variety is the spice of life! Play around with changing up the harmonies you have created one line at a time. Don't forget to have fun!



“
Lift up thy
voice with
strength, be
not afraid!

G. F. Handel

About the Composer

George Frideric Handel was born in Germany on February 23, 1685. After studying music and law at Halle University, he moved to Hamburg in 1703 to work as a violinist and harpsichordist in the Hamburg opera orchestra. This is where his *St. John Passion* and first opera, *Almira*, were first performed. At the time, Italy was the musical center of Europe, so he moved to Italy to compose his next operas, an oratorio, solo works, and church music.

In 1711, Handel moved to London, where he remained for the rest of his life. For the next 48 years, Handel continued to compose, produce, and direct operas. Some of his famous works include *Water Music*, an orchestral suite premiered in 1717 and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, for wind and string bands, premiered in 1749.

Handel wrote his famous *Messiah* for a performance in Dublin, Ireland in 1742. Incredibly, he wrote the whole oratorio in just 24 days. (To help write this quickly, he recycled some of his earlier composed music - which was not uncommon at the time). He died on April 14, 1759, and was buried in Westminster Abbey

About the Arranger

Jeremy J. Bankson serves as the Director of Music at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Dublin, Ohio where he leads a dynamic and developing music ministry that includes several choirs and the Concerts at Prince of Peace Series. Prior to this position, Jeremy was most recently the Associate Minister of Music at First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, and Executive Director of the Abendmusik at First-Plymouth Concert Series as well as the organ instructor at Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska. A native Nebraskan, Jeremy received his Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where he also pursued graduate studies in choral conducting. Jeremy also served as the Associate Director of Music at Trinity English Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana and as the Director of Music at St. John Lutheran Church in Beatrice, Nebraska.

Active as a composer and arranger, he has led workshops, clinics, and hymn festivals for the Fellowship of American Baptist Musicians, the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, the American Guild of Organists, Leadership Program for Musicians, Augsburg Fortress and other churches and institutions around the country. His compositions can be found in the catalogs of MorningStar Music Publishers, Augsburg Fortress Press and Concordia Publishing House and have been heard on the nationally syndicated radio programs Sing for Joy, The Lutheran Hour, and With Heart and Voice. Many of Jeremy's arrangements can be heard on the following recordings: Sing with All the Saints in Glory, Hymns from First-Plymouth, Carols from First-Plymouth, and Easter at First-Plymouth.

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings Quiz

Circle the best answer:

Who originally wrote "O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings"?

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| A. Antonio Vivaldi | C. J. S. Bach |
| B. G.F. Handel | D. Jeremy J. Bankson |

2. This piece describes a "prophecy" of what?

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| A. a festival | C. a battle |
| B. a birth | D. good health |

Another word for "Anacrusis" is

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| A. syncopation | C. down-beat |
| B. pick-up | D. All of the above |

Which of the following is a characteristic of Baroque music?

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| A. terraced dynamics | C. ornamentation |
| B. basso continuo | D. all of the above |

"Often is narrative and composed of a group of several songs" describes what genre of music?

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| A. motet | C. cantata |
| B. madrigal | D. verse hymn |



hey there!

We're Colleen & Coty

Coty Raven Morris is currently the Visiting Assistant Professor of Choir, Music Education, and Social Justice at Portland State University. Prior to this, she was the Director of Choirs at Crosby High School in the Houston area and has served as the Outreach Choir Director at the MSU Community Music School and Music Director at Grand Ledge United Methodist Church.

A newly published author and composer, Morris is a sought after clinician and speaker across the country. She has recently served as the Clinician and Headliner for Florida ACDA, Washington MEA, and Minnesota ACDA as well as the Keynote speaker for the city of Lake Oswego's Juneteenth festival.

Coty is the Founder of *Being Human Together*, a budding community rooted in music education striving to normalize difficult topics in our field through conversation and connection. BHT seeks to discuss traditionally taboo topics like mental health, systemic oppression, diversity, and inclusivity.

Music enthusiast, choral educator, and life-long learner, **Dr. Colleen McNickle** is Assistant Professor of Music Education at Arkansas State University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate music education courses and conducts Scarlet Voices and the Singing Statesmen. With a PhD in Music Education and Choral Cognate from Michigan State University, Colleen's scholarly interests include music educator wellness and interdisciplinary choral education. Colleen previously taught middle school and high school choirs, piano, ukulele, and music theory in Illinois.

An active clinician, Colleen has conducted choirs and presented research and practice sessions regionally, nationally, and internationally. Colleen is the founder and author of *Inspired Choir*, a blog for choir leaders, singers, and enthusiasts.



Our paths first crossed as we pursued graduate degrees as Michigan State University. Through numerous choral literature classes, conducting lessons, and choir rehearsals, we bonded over our appreciation for choral music education with a purpose. Together, we have published an article in Choral Journal, presented at state and national conferences, and supported each other via our weekly Zoom work calls.

Now, we have paired up to bring you the resources that we wish we had when we taught elementary, middle school, and high school choral ensembles. We have personally selected each piece of music in this curriculum series and look forward to seeing you bring these curricula to life in your own classrooms!

Let us know how it goes by contacting us at the links below!

let's get social!



Similar Guides



RECONCILE

Examine the role of reconciliation with your choral communities via Kyle Pederson's *Reconcile*.

Objectives of this curriculum guide include arranging a narration to accompany performance, articulating the historical and cultural contexts of Swahili language and sing the language with appropriate vowel shapes, and conceptualizing choral creations.

[**CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**](#)

SHEEP MAY SAFELY GRAZE

Dive into the Baroque Era with Katherine K. Davis's arrangement of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Sheep May Safely Graze*.

Objectives of this curriculum guide include describing, identifying, and applying characteristics of Baroque composition within *Sheep May Safely Graze*, analyzing the lyrics of the piece and articulating the meaning of the piece, and comparing *Sheep May Safely Graze* with other works by the composer J. S. Bach. .

[**CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**](#)



SOUND THE TRUMPET

Begin your set with a grand fanfare: Henry Purcell's *Sound the Trumpet* as arranged by Alfred Moffat and Rollo Dilworth.

Objectives of this curriculum guide include investigating Baroque characteristics within *Sound the Trumpet*, singing with a tone appropriate to the composition, interpreting lyrics and intent, explaining the difference between a composer and arranger, and creating a simple arrangement utilizing familiar musical materials.

[**CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**](#)