

Sing the Stories of Jesus

Twenty-five Songs
for the Youngest Singers

Words by Mary Nelson Keithahn

Music by John D. Horman

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Preface

Over the years we have observed many trends in the music churches use in their ministry with children. There was a time when children were considered miniature adults and expected to sing the hymns adults sang in worship. Then church educators began to call for songs that were more relevant to the life experiences of children, especially young children, written in language they could understand and set to music they could actually sing. However, the subject matter of these “life experience” songs did not directly support the biblical content of the church school curriculum for this age group, or prepare them to participate in congregational worship. As a result, some church educators and musicians began teaching young children a phrase, refrain, or a stanza of carefully selected classical hymns. Others turned to contemporary popular songs or old favorites they had sung for fun as children.

With this collection, “Sing the Stories of Jesus,” we hope to establish a new trend for using music with children, ages 4 to 7, in the church:

- The twenty-five songs grew out of stories from the life of Jesus that are common to Bible story books and curriculum resources published by several different denominations for ages 4 to 7. The biblical texts are age-appropriate and address important ideas about Jesus.
- The lyrics are written in simple language and focus on a key idea in each story. They also introduce the children to three worship words: “Gloria,” “Hosanna,” and “Alleluia.”
- The tunes are short and memorable; they use the 6- to 8-note range of children in this age group and contain repeated tones, scale-wise passages, and sequences for easy learning. There are also opportunities in some of the songs for children to listen and echo what a leader sings. The accompaniments are interesting and complement the themes of the lyrics.
- Because all the scriptures on which the songs are based are included in the Revised Common Lectionary, the songs provide an opportunity for young children to provide music for congregational worship that is relevant and meaningful.
- For each song, we have provided creative suggestions for teaching the words and melodies.
- Also included is a CD recording with both the full-chorus and accompaniment-only versions. These recordings can be duplicated for local use so that the children can sing at home, in the car, or in the classroom.

As those who work with children in the church, we believe young children deserve our best efforts. We hope that this collection will help you offer them a way to grow in their faith through the songs they sing.

Mary Nelson Keithahn and John D. Horman

Simeon and Anna

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

Like a lullaby (♩ = 104)

Unison Voices *mf*

Sim - e - on in the

Keyboard *mp*

Red.

7

tem - ple saw Mar - y bring her son.

Red.

13

He said, "This ba - by, Je - sus, is God's long - prom - ised

Red.

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Finding Jesus

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

With a slow rocking motion (♩ = 42)

Keyboard

p *mp*

Dm Dm/A Dm Dm/A Em^{7(b5)} A^{7sus} A⁷

Unison Voices

4 *mf*

Once there were wise men that came from a - far. Rid - ing on cam - els, they

Dm Dm/A Gm⁶/B^b A Gm FM⁷

mf

7

fol - lowed a star o - ver the des - ert and in - to a town.

Em^{7(b5)} A Dm Dm/A Gm⁶/A^b A

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Have You Seen Jesus?

Leader (*spoken*): Passover was a holy day to go to Jerusalem, feast and pray.
 Jesus went with his mom and dad. Oh, what a good time they all had!
 Then, at last, they left to go home again through Jericho.
 But when they stopped to rest that night, Jesus wasn't anywhere in sight!

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

Lilting (♩ = 50)

Unison Voices

Refrain *mf*

Keyboard *mf*

“Have you seen Je - sus,

5 an - y - one?” his par - ents cried, “We’ve lost our son! He’s

8 twelve years old, al-most a man. Please help us find him, if you can.”

The musical score is written for unison voices and keyboard. The key signature has one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked as 'Lilting' with a quarter note equal to 50 beats per minute. The piece is in common time (C) for the lyrics. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with the unison voices and keyboard accompaniment. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the vocal line and keyboard accompaniment. The third system (measures 9-12) concludes the piece. Chord markings are provided for the keyboard part throughout the score.

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Jesus Is Baptized

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

Bouncy (♩ = 88)

Keyboard

mf

C C/G C C/G Dm G

3 **Leader** *mf* **Unison Voices** *mf*

Je - sus was bap - tized by John, Je - sus was bap - tized by John,

C C/G C C/G C C/G C C/G

5 **Leader** **Unison Voices**

down by the riv - er - side, down by the riv - er - side.

C C/G C C/G C C/G C C/G

Teach Us to Pray

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

Jauntily (♩ = 100) *mf*

Unison Voices

Keyboard

This system shows the beginning of the piece. The Unison Voices part starts with a whole rest for three measures, then enters in the fourth measure with the lyrics "Je - sus,". The Keyboard part begins with a C major chord and a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked "Jauntily" with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The dynamic is mezzo-forte (mf).

4

teach us how to pray," asked his friends a - long the

This system continues the piece. The Unison Voices part has the lyrics "teach us how to pray," in the first measure and "asked his friends a - long the" in the second measure. The Keyboard part continues with the melody and bass line, featuring a C major chord in the first measure and a G7 chord in the second measure.

7

way. "Help us find the words to say

C F C/E G⁷/D G⁷ C Dm C/E

This system continues the piece. The Unison Voices part has the lyrics "way." in the first measure and "Help us find the words to say" in the second measure. The Keyboard part continues with the melody and bass line, featuring a C major chord in the first measure and a sequence of chords (F, C/E, G7/D, G7, C, Dm, C/E) in the second measure.

The Lost Sheep

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

Lively (♩ = 112) *mf*

Unison Voices

Keyboards

mf

A shep - herd had a

4

hun - dred sheep, but nine - ty - nine came home. He said, "I can - not

8

bear a lamb should be out there a - lone." He left the oth - ers

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The Lost Coin

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

Lightly (♩ = 120)

Unison Voices *mf* Leader or solo

1 "I've
2 "Hoo -

Keyboard *mf*

C⁶ F Dm Dm⁷ G⁷

5

lost a sil - ver coin to - day, and I've looked ev - 'ry - where: back
ray! The coin I lost is found! Come cel - e - brate with me! Dear

C⁶ Dm Dm/C G/B G C

9

in the cor - ner, on a shelf, and un - der - neath a chair. Will you
friends and neigh - bors, share my joy, and then we'll all have tea! I have

F C/E A⁷ Dm Dm⁷ G⁷_{sus} G⁷ C

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The Lost Son's Sad Song

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

Thoughtfully (♩ = 112) *mf*

Unison Voices

My mon - ey's gone, my

Keyboard

mf

Gm Dm/A Gm⁶/B^b A Dm

7

friends are, too. I don't know what I'm go - ing to do. I won - der

Gm A⁷/E Dm Gm⁶/B^b A Dm

14

what it's like at home. It's no fun here out on my own. I'm

Gm A⁷/E Dm Dm/A A⁷_{sus} Dm

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The Supper at Emmaus

Mary Nelson Keithahn

John D. Horman

In an easy walking rhythm (♩ = 100) *mf*

Unison Voices

They did not know the

stran - ger who walked with them that day,

un - til they stopped for sup - per and he be - gan to

Keyboard

mf

E⁶ A B⁷ E A B

E A F#m⁷ D B

E A B E A B^{7sus} B⁷

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