

# Overview for Instructors

Leadership Program for Musicians, Inc.

## Principles of Choral Leadership

### Part 1: Basic Conducting for Church Musicians

*This sheet is intended to be copied by a local LPM coordinator and given to the instructor with the course material.*

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**Helpful things to understand** This course is designed to insure that all participants acquire basic conducting skills while including material that will challenge and refine the technique of experienced conductors. The goals for this short course in conducting, as well as suggestions for class organization, are stated in the introduction.

Participants may come to your class with a variety of conducting skills: some may have virtually no training in conducting while others may be experienced conductors. Your challenge will be to provide each participant with goals appropriate to his or her skill level. For beginners, your expectation may be only that they can reasonably conduct the three main beat patterns and begin and end a piece. For others (and hopefully the majority), it will be to hone basic skills and expand their present conducting ability.

**Materials** While there is no required text for this course, all recommended texts should be available to participants. It is suggested that all participants should be given an opportunity to view the video, *Attention to Detail*. If there are ten or less participants in the class, consider having each participant take the video for a week and view it at home. A class discussion of the video should occur at some point in the course. All participants should be given copies of the conducting patterns in the appendix. Make large-scale copies for those participants having difficulty conducting the patterns.

**Assignments** Everyone should conduct the conducting drills at every class as well as in daily practice sessions. This drill is the corollary to scale study for keyboardists. Regular practice of these drills, which must include counting aloud, will render conducting patterns automatic as well as develop the "inner clock."

Assignment of material should be based on the skill level of the individual participants. Those participants with no prior conducting experience may only conduct hymns and at most one anthem.

**Hints for teaching** Give participants as much conducting time before the group as possible. Be gentle and encouraging, but thorough and helpful with your comments to individual participants. Develop a positive atmosphere of support in the class.

Some of the techniques, especially those for cut-offs, may at first seem stilted to you. Remember that they are designed to teach clearly and cleanly a particular skill in the shortest possible time. Thus, some motions will be exaggerated during the teaching process; these will gradually become smoothly integrated into the conducting technique as participants become more competent in their conducting.