

Overview for instructors

Leadership Program for Musicians, Inc.

Hymnody of the Christian Church

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

Helpful things to understand This course is designed to give LPM participants an overview of the history of hymnody in the Christian church.

Rationale for Organization Sessions 1 and 2 deal with hymnody in general for participants to gain a firm grounding both theologically and practically. The course then progresses chronologically, with one key exception. Session 7, “The Rediscovery of Early Christian Hymnody,” precedes all other hymnody chronologically, yet its inclusion in the singing practices of Christian congregations occurred much later. For this reason, these early Christian hymns are treated following nineteenth-century British hymnody (Session 6). Session 10 deals with hymnody at the current time.

Limits and Lenses The sheer content of this course requires broad strokes, hence the tendency to focus on the “giants.” It will be important for the instructors to help participants gain a sense of the larger picture, and especially learn how trends and tensions resurface in similar ways in different eras and climates. This course is clearly written from a Western European lens: England, Western Europe, and America are the primary regions that influenced a majority of Christian hymnody. It is important to remember that the song of the church was continually influenced by the musical practices of the surrounding culture, even when these had not yet found a place in the core hymnody of the church.

Terminology Strictly speaking, the term “hymn,” as used in the field of hymnology, refers to the text; a hymn does not need a musical setting. Yet many continually use the word “hymn” when meaning the combination of text and tune. Because of this practice, the course will frequently employ the terms “hymn text” or “hymn tune” as a means of clarification. In Session 10 the terminology “hymns and songs” appears. This acknowledges that although this course addresses hymns in the strictest sense as a form of poetry, many of the sung expressions of the church would not be classified as such: simple refrains from Taizé and popular praise choruses, for example. Instructors can help participants see the benefits of many forms of both hymns and songs.

Materials The required textbook for all participants is David W. Music and Milburn Price, *A Survey of Christian Hymnody*, 4th ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1999).

Also, participants will need the **hymnal of their own denomination** and are strongly encouraged to own a copy of the **hymnal of another denomination**. Instructors will need a copy of the hymnal for each denomination represented in the class. Hymnal companions for various hymnals should also be available for class use. An extensive bibliography is given.

Assignments Each session includes various assignments or activities as well as reading preparation for the next class. Participants are encouraged to use these written assignments in their congregations. If the class is small and time permits, some assignments may be done together as a class.

Hints for teaching Standards and benchmarks to assist the instructor in tracking student’s progress are given for each lesson.

Materials are provided that may be reproduced and given to participants that include the required readings, additional reading suggestions, assignments, and excerpts from the instructor's materials needed for activities and assignments. Throughout the instructor's material, suggestions are given as to whether a particular activity might be done in class or as an assignment.

An index of numbers in the four LPM denominational hymnals for all texts and tunes mentioned in the course is given. This may be used by the leader and/or reprinted for participant use.