

THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM  
FOR  
MUSICIANS, INC.

**Leading to the  
Leadership Program for Musicians Certificate in Church Music**

A program of the

The Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Presbyterian Association of Musicians

and

United Church of Christ Musicians Association

TEACHING NEW MUSIC  
TO THE CONGREGATION

By Carol Doran

Original edit by Teresa Bowers

Revisions 2006-2007 by Valerie E. Hess, Jan Thurber Meyer, Nathan B. Ensign

*(To see the full document you may purchase the course through*

***Anna Leppert-Largent at 989-791-3025 or***

***[lpm-online@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lpm-online@sbcglobal.net)*** )

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**STANDARDS**

**Standard 5.1 The participant will be able to analyze the roles of church musicians and identify their personal strengths and areas for enhancement within the worship experience.**

**Standard 5.2 The participant will be able to analyze music of all cultures and delineate background resources for teaching that music.**

**Standard 5.3 The participant will be able to explain and model techniques for teaching new music with specific challenges to a variety of performance groups.**

## **Introduction**

### **Premise of the Course**

Everything sung by the congregation or the choir was at one time "new" to the singers. Because most people who attend churches are not experienced music readers, assistance in learning music which they are expected to sing will increase their ability to participate and encourage their interest in the church's song.

Techniques presented in this course will be useful in teaching both congregations and choirs.

### **Character of sessions**

Techniques for teaching new music will be introduced, explained, and demonstrated. Members of the class will have an opportunity to experiment with use of these techniques as they work with their peers and learn from their responses. An important goal of all class activities is to encourage self-confidence in the musician, who may then teach people with grace and enthusiasm.

Each session will open and close with prayer.

### **Course Content**

Each meeting will include analysis of music and discussion of resources which will be useful in explaining the background of music to be taught. Techniques helpful in encouraging people to be comfortable using a wide range of musical styles and musical practices will be discussed and rehearsed (e.g., encouraging congregations who have been singing only traditional hymns and service music to use hymns and songs from other cultures or styles).

We will think carefully and discuss assumptions about what defines "correct" church music and consider the role of the musician, cantor, or worship chair in strengthening the congregation's music-making.

(Teacher's note: If the instructor plans to use a keyboard instrument in the teaching process, arrangements to have a well-tuned musical instrument in the classroom should be made in advance of the first class meeting. Place chairs on which students sit in a circle to maximize communication.)

### **Course Completion Requirements**

Demonstrate competence in teaching a hymn, song, or service music in three different teaching models utilizing any combinations listed below:

a. by rote as though to an intergenerational congregation before the service begins

- ALLEIN GOTT IN DER HÖH
- HOUSTON
- MACDOUGALL

b. to a group of children

- ANDÚJAR
- LITTLE FLOCK

c. to a group of young people as in youth choir or youth group

- POOR LITTLE JESUS
- SIYAHAMBA

d. to an intergenerational group attending a church supper

- NYACK
- INNISFREE FARM.

Combine these audiences with one of the techniques for teaching a primary musical challenge found in the new music:

- melodic accuracy
- rhythmic complexities
- cultural understanding
- harmonic development

(Teachers note: students should be encouraged to find music that is new to them or to their congregation. The categories listed above are critical areas to cover; the exact hymn tunes are not.)

(Teachers note: educational strategies suggested in italics may be found with additional explanation through the LPM website link titled “Educational Strategies”.)

## **Outline for Session 1**

### **Introduction**

### **Encountering Resistance to New Music and to Being Taught New Music**

- A. Introduction
- B. Benefits to the congregation from the teaching of new music.
- C. The unique role of the Musician-Teacher
- D. Reasons people might resist the teaching of new music.
- E. Purposes of our work to establish acceptance of the teaching of new music
- F. An experience of learning a new musical setting followed by discussion and reflection
- G. Consideration of the difference between the experiences of singing familiar and unfamiliar material
- H. Review Course Completion Requirements

## Session 1

(Open with prayer)

### A. Introduction

Students and Instructor introduce themselves to one another. Suggest a structure for their self-introduction:

*Strategy:*

*Ask them to offer 3 sentences which will help us to know you better; Display a picture you carry with you and tell us about it; Take 3 items from your purse or billfold and explain how they represent you;*

(Teacher's note: Help those who appear to be uncomfortable or shy to be welcomed into the group. From the first moments of the course it is important to stress respect for one another and the expectation that each has something of importance to contribute to what is learned in the course.)

### B. Benefits to the congregation from the teaching of new music

Discuss among participants the reasons that congregations might benefit from well-planned introductions of new congregational song.

*Strategy:*

*Turn To Your Partner*

*Each person finds or is assigned a partner. In 2 minutes, each partnership writes down all the benefits they can think of for learning new music.*

*Round Robin Sharing with recording*

*Go clockwise around the group with each pair sharing something from their list on each round until all ideas have been shared. Record this list on white board or newsprint. Once a list has been exhausted, that pair responds with "pass" until all pairs have completed their lists.*

Some of these might be:

- Few people read music well enough to be able to sing new music from the printed page successfully and are discouraged when they are asked to attempt a task for which they are unprepared.
- Giving them the means to succeed in learning new musical settings will increase the likelihood that they will be willing to learn more new music.

- Most people are able to learn music easily by rote and can be helped to pick up the melody of a new hymn or service music selection by having the challenging section sung to them.
- Assisting people's learning makes possible the use of a far greater variety of music in liturgy and in the fuller life of the congregation.

### **C. The unique role of the Musician-Teacher**

1. To express hospitality on behalf of all the congregation's liturgical leaders. Since music is often the first thing people engage in a worship service, it is important to get off on the right foot, so to speak. Using music that is unfamiliar requires advanced planning as to where it should go in the service and how it will be introduced to the congregation. The latter must be done in an inviting, encouraging way, carefully and lovingly so as to give people a sense of comfort in the learning process. Also, unfamiliar music should as much as possible be surrounded by lots of familiar music within the service so that the congregation can gain confidence from what it does know to try what it does not know.

2. To encourage interest in the music to be learned.

3. To provide a "preview" (during the teaching-learning session) of the satisfying experience (rare in our culture) of singing together.

4. To make available the information that people need in order to participate in congregational music.

5. To help people fulfill their genuine need to learn new music

- for refreshment
- to experience the fresh outpourings of the Spirit expressed in recent compositions
- to learn music which is valued and sung by Christians in a wide variety of national, ethnic, and denominational groups.

6. To enable the congregation to sing music which is too complex to "pick up" at first hearing, but which is well within their ability to sing.

*We are not responsible stewards of the full range of the possibilities of sung prayer if we limit the church's song only to those compositions which are easily learned.*

*(To see the full document you may purchase the course through [Leaderresources.org](http://Leaderresources.org) )*

## Assignment for Session 2

### Writing:

Reflecting on your own experience of teaching and of observing other teachers, recall the musical and pastoral skills which you believe must be a part of strong and effective teaching. Write them down and be prepared to discuss them in class next time.

### Reading:

Begin to read *Trouble at the Table* by Carol Doran and Thomas H. Troeger to prepare for Session 5.

*Distribute the reading guide for Chapters One and Two of this book and assign a due date for that document.*