## INTRODUCING

# ORTHODOX LITURGICAL MUSIC TO CHILDREN



RY LiZ MCMILLAN

#### Teaching Music in Church School Pre-school to 6 year olds

By Elizabeth McMillan

#### Introduction

The Divine Liturgy in the Orthodox Church is sung in most parishes by either the congregation or choir and the clergy. Since music is such an important part of our life in the Church, musicians within our Faith must start our children's musical training at a young age. Children can and love to sing. We have all heard our own children, or stories of other children, singing parts of the Divine Liturgy when they were either playing at home or singing in the car when they thought no one else was listening.

Starting a children's music program can lay the ground work for a better adult choir in years to come. The problems that adult choirs have can be lessened by training children. We do this by:

- 1 Convincing them that they can sing; as adults they believe they can sing but resist joining the choir.
- 2 Promoting the love of music, a love that will last all their lives.
- 3 Teaching them the melodies of our Faith; what is learned as a young person, will stay with them all their lives.
- 4 Teaching them the vocabulary and understanding of our services; it is surprising how little understanding most adults have in this area.
- 5 Training their ear and voices to sing on pitch. A skill learned as a child will only grow in adulthood.

#### I. The Orthodox vs. Current Society's Music

Our musical tradition is very different from all other music the children hear or learn in their school or society. The only place they will learn our tradition is within the walls of our parishes, our homes and hopefully at summer camp. We use different musical melodies and vocabulary terms which must be taught to our children. One does not have to be a trained musician to teach children to love the Divine Liturgy, Matins or Vespers.

Singing with the children consistently through their early years must be done now or we will have very few singers in the years to come. This task requires a commitment from both parents and teachers. What will our Liturgy be like in 25 years if we do not take this task to heart today? Will our musical tradition live on if we do not teach it to our children?

Also, our society is becoming one of inactive music listeners rather than active singers. Years ago all young people sang together when they gathered in schools, scouts, or community social gatherings. The gift of loving to sing needs to be nurtured in our young people. Singing could become obsolete if our children are not encouraged to sing. Teach them to participate in singing.

Also, children might learn to sing the Divine Liturgy but never really understand what it is all about. There are many Orthodox adults today who do not understand what is happening in the Divine Liturgy. Teaching the parts of the Divine Liturgy is accomplished very easily while teaching the music of our worship. Teach the correct words and explain briefly what the song is about and when it is sung.

In the Orthodox Divine Liturgy we do things differently than the majority of the Western Churches in America. Some of these are:

- 1) We sing a cappella (which means without instruments).
- 2) Our Byzantine music is not a familiar sound to all ears.
- 3) We do not use hymn books.
- 4) We have unusual vocabulary, like Troparion, Kontakion, Trisagion.
- 5) Not all congregations sing. In some parishes only the choir sings.

#### II. Your Parish's Traditions

As you start a music program, you must identify what your parish is now doing and what is musically important to your parish priest and choir director. We have many choices of music when teaching our children. There are Byzantine, Russian, Romanian, and other music traditions. There are many resources one can use, such as The Antiochian Village Service Book or the Congregational Liturgy Book. Before starting, it is suggested that you

speak with your priest and together define the music you are now using and what he wants you to teach the children.

A suggested Music List is included, which is not at all exclusive, but rather offers some suggestions for this particular age group. Since there is limited time to teach children music, it is suggested the bulk of time be used in teaching Liturgical music. The list also includes a few non-liturgical fun songs to keep the singing interesting. The goal of this course is to teach them the little musical melodic gems which make up the fabric of our Orthodox musical tradition.

Another consideration is congregational singing. This is not done in all parishes, but Metropolitan PHILIP is very much in favor of this practice. Teaching the children to sing a part of the Divine Liturgy is an excellent way of introducing music that is congregationally friendly. This is an added bonus to those parishes that wish to encourage or initiate congregational singing.

#### III. Divide and Conquer

There are basic skills the students will need to master. The level of these skills will depend upon their ages. We suggest that you divide your group into at least 2 groups:

- 1 Pre-school to 6 years old (1st grade) (Non-Readers)
- 2 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade to 12 years old (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)( Readers)

These are some reasons why:

- 1 Older children learn more quickly and get very bored waiting for the younger students.
- 2 Younger students are much less shy about singing especially if everyone else is doing it.
- 3 Older students sometimes are reluctant to be embarrassed by not being able to sing. It is important that they find their singing voices before they reach this age of embarrassment.

Ask a group of kindergartners "Who can sing?". For the most part they

will all raise their hands. Ask the same question to 12 year olds and maybe half will say they can sing. Ask this question to High School Seniors maybe 2 out of every 30 will say they can sing. What happens to these young people along the way? The answer is that someone or some event convinced them they could not sing. It is our duty as teachers to inspire them to sing and to love it. So inspire and convince them while they are young.

#### IV. Preparation and Class time

It is not hard to engage young children in singing. But it is our job to teach the basics of **pitch** and **rhythm**. The basic components of singing are singing the correct note (pitch) and singing with the correct rhythm.

Singing on pitch is what we will call "finding your singing voice." A very easy way to introduce this to the children, for example, is to take roll by singing on a particular note "Are you here, Elizabeth," and having the student respond on the same note with "I am here". Teach them to hear a note and match the note you are singing. Now, this will require that you be able to have this same skill. If you are not sure, ask someone in the choir, or the choir director, to help you.

Teachers must also learn skills in order to teach music, especially if you have never done this before. First, one must learn the basic skill of pitch. You must learn how to pitch a song so that it is in the vocal range of the children. Be careful not to pitch it too high or too low. It also helps to use the same pitch week after week. How you will get this pitch? Will you learn to use a pitch pipe, or tuning fork? Will you use a pitch from a piano? No matter what you do, you must be able to do this clearly and precisely.

So, consider handling your class in this manner: For this age group, 10 minutes of the Church School time is more than enough. Each week ask them what you were singing last week. Praise anyone who remembers. They will remember more and more as time goes by. Make the class fun. Enjoy their innocence and enthusiasm. Don't be afraid of being silly. Praise it when they get it right. Encourage them. Get their attention and keep it.

When you start singing actual songs, you must give a clear pitch for the students and they must be able to repeat it back to you. Try not to use any instruments. You can use a pitch pipe or a keyboard to help you find the note if you need it. Say this, "Here is your starting note." Sing the note as you say these words. Needless to say, the teacher must learn the song very well before attempting to teach the children. When learning a new song, it is sometimes helpful to have them sing the melody with no words on various vowel sounds such as "ah" or "oo". Once you start singing a song, show them how the note moves either up or down with your hand. Move your hand up and down with the notes of the song. Pay close attention to their ability to sing the correct pitch. If there is a tricky part, repeat it over and over until they get it.

It is suggested starting with very easy responses from the Liturgy, such as "Lord, have Mercy" and "Grant this, O Lord". (See Music list.) When it is time to learn a more difficult song, first sing it to them and ask them to listen only. Then break the song down into phrases or sentences. Go over a phrase again and again. Talk about the words, which will help them memorize. Tell them something about the song. Ask them to listen for it in church, e.g., the Resurrectional Troparion. Non-readers are just that and will have to memorize the words. Each week in class, repeat something familiar and work on a new piece. Experience has taught this teacher that three different songs per week is enough: one that is very well known, one that is almost mastered, and one that is fairly new.

The second component of singing is rhythm or keeping the beat. In teaching younger children this skill you can have them clap their hands to the beat. You can also use other prompts besides clapping, like stomping their feet or tapping their toes. They can say the words in rhythm. They could march in rhythm. You will probably find that this is a very easy skill for them to learn. Practice saying 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. Then teach them to clap only on 1 and 3. This is the concept of quarter notes and half notes. When you teach a new song, have them repeat the words in rhythm with no music.

Use the Musical List to find very easy songs to teach in the beginning. It is a big mistake to start with songs that are too difficult for their age group. Keep it simple, master pitch and rhythm first, then progress from there.

These are very basic skills but are the foundation of all music. Not all of these skills can be accomplished in the first year of teaching, but by the end of year two, they will show remarkable progress. These skills will grow and become refined as the students become more proficient.

This is very simple to do but please use simple music and stress singing the correct note, or PITCH, in the correct RHYTHM. There is no mystery here. This is the most one can expect from this age group.

#### V. Conclusion

- We have the best reasons to teach, because they will not learn it anywhere else.
- Our music is different and hard to learn.
- If your choir is not good now, plant a garden of them for the future.
- \* Make sure your priest is on board
- ❖ Start with the very basics of pitch and rhythm before moving into harder music.
- You will have to practice to learn the skills needed to teach singing. Practice, practice, practice.
- ❖ Anyone can do this. It does not take a master's degree in music. Just love your subject and love your children.

By laying a good foundation with this age group of correct pitch and rhythm, which are the basic skills of learning music, these same children will be much more ready for the older group later on, and will be better able to learn harder music much faster. Even if you have only older children, these same skills should be taught first before moving on to Course Level II.

## Department of Sacred Music Antiochian Archdiocese

#### Suggested Music for Beginners

Ages 2 (Preschool) - 6 year olds

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#### <u>Liturgical Use:</u>

1. Responses: Lord have mercy; Grant this, O Lord;

Alleluia; Most Holy Theotokos; Threefold Lord have mercy; & Evlogetaria (Refrain only)

2. Troparion of Pascha

3. God is the Lord from Matins, Tone 1

4. Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 1

5. God is the Lord from Matins, Tone 8

6. Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 8

7. Troparion of the Elevation of the Cross, Tone 1

8. Troparion of the Nativity of Christ, Tone 4

9. Troparion of Pentecost, Tone 8

10. Troparion of St. Nicholas, Tone 4

11. Communion Hymn, Sunday, Tone 8

12. Trisagion Hymn

13. More Honorable than the Cherubim, Matins

14. Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Tone 5

Noah and the Ark, with verses

15. Blessing for Priest and Bishop (Many Years)

Antiochian Tradition
Antiochian Tradition

Basil Kazan Basil Kazan Basil Kazan Basil Kazan

Frederick Karam

Archpriest James Meena Antiochian Tradition Christopher Holwey Michael G. Farrow Michael Hilko/Farrow

Basil Kazan

Bishop BASIL Essey Antiochian Tradition

#### Non-liturgical Use:

1.

-	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	•••
2.	Every Generation Shall Call Her Blessed	Priest Michael Shanbour
3.	Hymn to St. Nicholas	Carpathian Melody
4.	A New Commandment	Bishop JOB
5.	Books of the New Testament	Michael Farrow/Elizabeth

6. Prayers at Mealtime

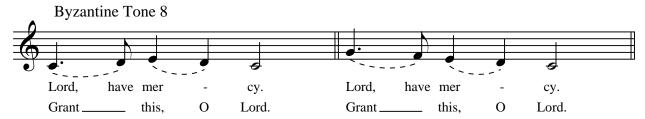
Michael G. Farrow

McMillan

Michael G. Farrow

## Responses

### Lord Have Mercy / Grant This O Lord



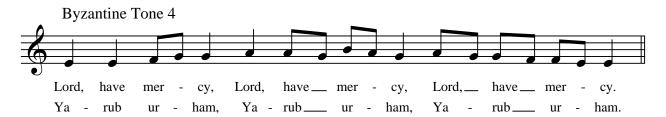
#### Alleluia



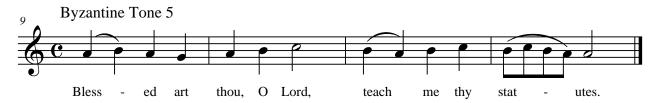
## Most Holy Theotokos



## Threefold Lord Have Mercy



## Refrain for the Evlogetaria



#### Pentecostarion

#### **PASCHA**

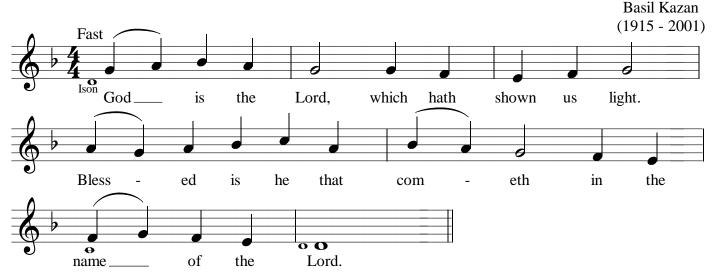
#### Troparion\*



<sup>\*</sup> Traditionally, the clergy sing "Christ is Risen," and only on the final time does the choir finish with "bestowing life."

## Paschal Troparion (Alternate version)





CHANTER: God is the Lord, which hath shown us the light. Blessed is he that cometh

in the name of the Lord. (as above)

READER: O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.

CHANTER: God is the Lord, etc. (as above)

READER: All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

CHANTER: God is the Lord, etc. (as above)

READER: I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

CHANTER: God is the Lord, etc. (as above)

READER: The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

This is the Lord's doing: it is marvelous in our eyes.

CHANTER: God is the Lord, etc. (as above)

NOTE: On a normal Sunday (no Feast or major commemoration) sing:

- 1. Troparion of the Resurrection in the proper Tone.
- 2. "Glory to the Father", repeat the Troparion
- 3. "Both now and ever", the Theotokion of the Resurrection in the proper Tone.

When a Great Feast of Our Lord falls on a Sunday sing:

- 1. Troparion of the Feast
- 2. "Glory to the Father", repeat the Troparion
- 3. "Both now and ever", repeat the Troparion

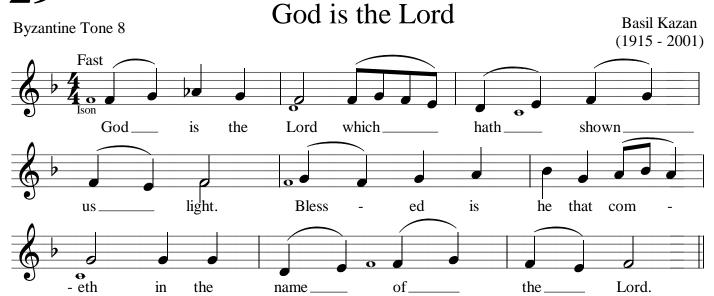
When a Feast of Our Lady or a Major Saint or commemoration falls on a Sunday sing:

- 1. Troparion of the Resurrection in the proper Tone.
- 2. "Glory to the Father", Troparion of the Feast.
- 3. "Both now and ever", Theotokion of the Resurrection in the same Tone as the Festal Troparion.

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## Troparion of the Resurrection





CHANTER: God is the Lord, which hath shown us the light. Blessed is he that cometh

in the name of the Lord. (as above)

READER: O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.

CHANTER: God is the Lord, etc. (as above)

READER: All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

CHANTER: God is the Lord, etc. (as above)

READER: I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

CHANTER: God is the Lord, etc. (as above)

READER: The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

This is the Lord's doing: it is marvelous in our eyes.

CHANTER: God is the Lord, etc. (as above)

NOTE: On a normal Sunday (no Feast or major commemoration) sing:

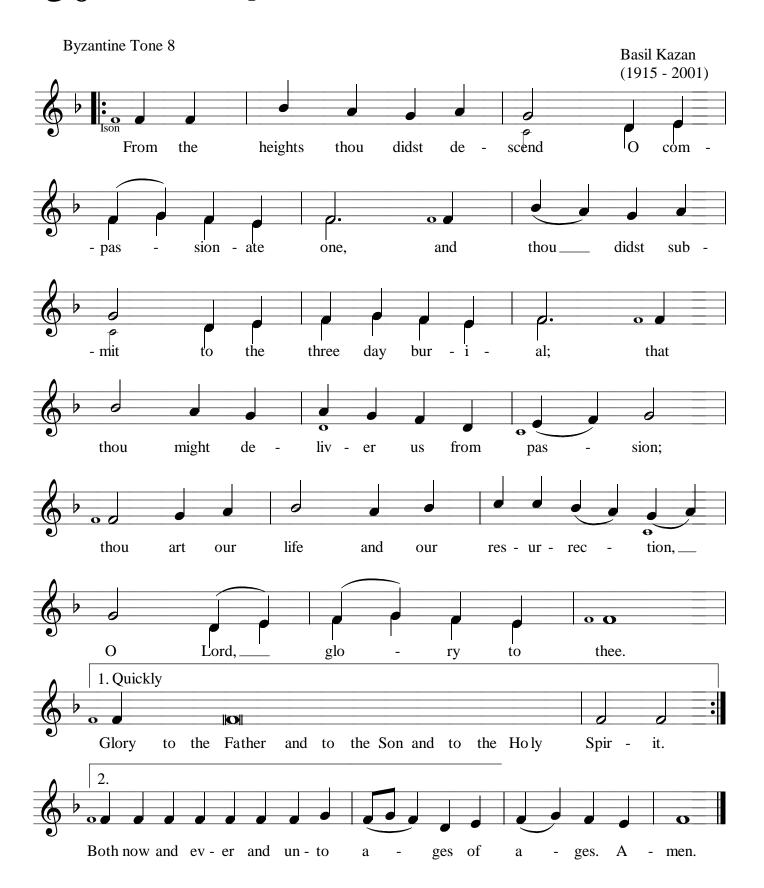
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- 3. "Both now and ever", the Theotokion of the Resurrection in the proper Tone.

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- 2. "Glory to the Father", Troparion of the Feast.
- 3. "Both now and ever", Theotokion of the Resurrection in the same Tone as the Festal Troparion.



#### September 14th

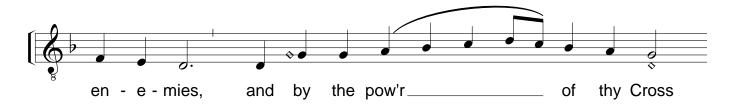
#### THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS

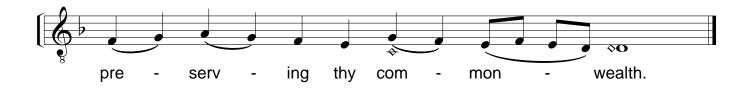
### **Troparion (A)**

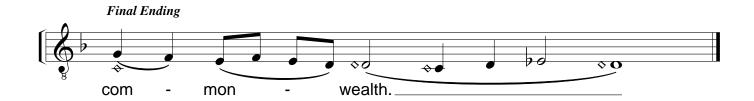
(Also sung on the 3rd Sunday of Great Lent)











#### December 25th

## THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST Troparion



#### Pentecostarion

#### **PENTECOST**

## **Troparion**

#### **Byzantine Chant Tone 8 Antiochain Village Camp Version** Thou, Bless - ed art Christ\_ our\_ God, O\_ Ison hast re - vealed the fish - er - man as who most\_\_ wise, them the Ho - ly Spir hav - ing sent it, up on fished the and through them Thou hast u - ni - verse,



glo

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to

of man - kind,

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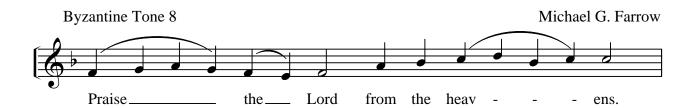
Lov - er

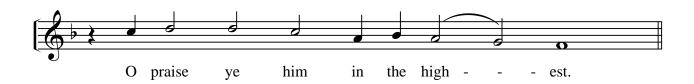
Thee.

## Troparion of St. Nicholas December 6



## **Communion Hymn for Sundays**









## The Trisagion Hymn

First line below is English; second line is Arabic.

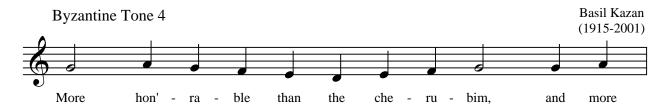
PRIEST: For holy art thou, O our God, and unto thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages of ages.





### **More Honorable Than The Cherubim**

Chanter: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.









#### Verses:

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

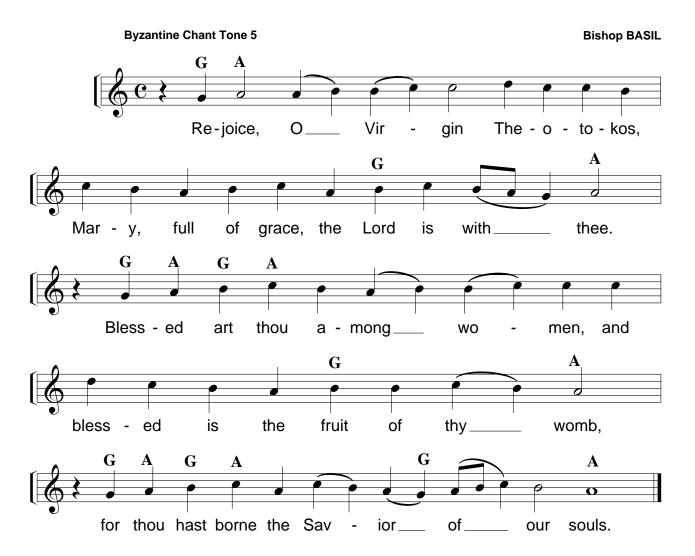
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name; and his mercy is on them that fear him, throughout all generations.

He hath shown strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek, he hath filled the empty with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away.

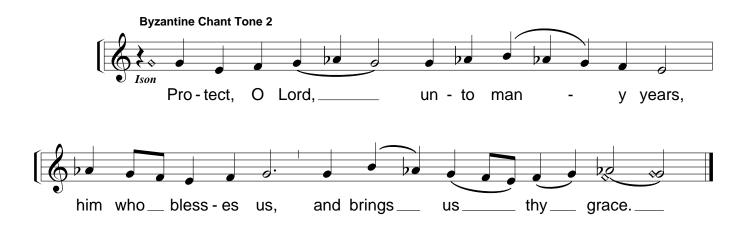
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel as he promised to our forefathers Abraham and his seed forever.

## Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos



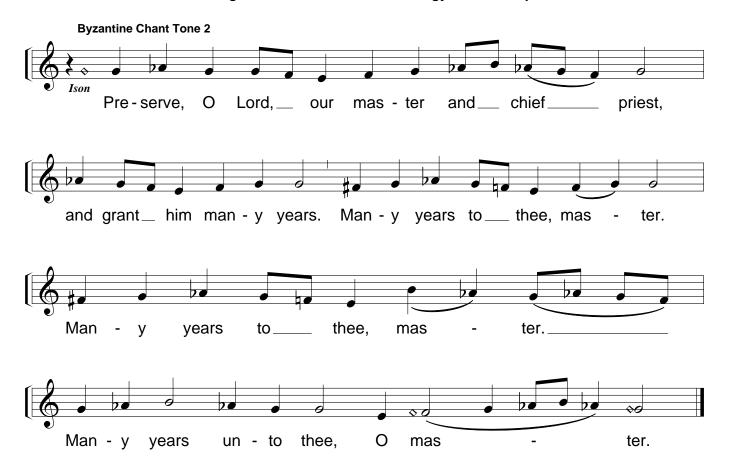
#### MANY YEARS

#### Sung at the end of the Divine Liturgy for a Priest



#### **MANY YEARS MASTER**

Sung at the end of the Divine Liturgy for a Bishop



#### Noah and the Ark

(Words by Michael Farrow)

Noah built an ark out of wood,
 Noah built an ark out of wood,
 Noah built an ark out of wood,
 And the rain came tumbling down.
 And the rain came down and the flood went up,

The rain came down and the flood went up, The rain came down and the flood went up, But the ark was big and strong.

Noah boarded animals two by two,
 Noah boarded animals two by two,
 Noah boarded animals two by two,
 And the rain came tumbling down.
 And the rain came down and the flood went up,

The rain came down and the flood went up, The rain came down and the flood went up, And all had room on the ark.

Ducks and cows and camels and goats,
 Ducks and cows and camels and goats,
 Ducks and cows and camels and goats,
 And the rain came tumbling down.
 And the rain came down and the flood went up,

The rain came down and the flood went up, The rain came down and the flood went up, But the ark sailed on and on.

Noah sent a raven to find some land,
 Noah sent a raven to find some land,
 Noah sent a raven to find some land,
 And the rain came tumbling down.
 And the rain came down and the flood went
 up,

The rain came down and the flood went up, The rain came down and the flood went up, But the raven did not return.

- Noah sent a dove to find dry land,
   Noah sent a dove to find dry land,
   Noah sent a dove to find dry land,
   And the rain came tumbling down,
   The rain stopped coming and the flood
   did cease,
  - The rain stopped coming and the flood did cease,
  - The rain stopped coming and the flood did cease.

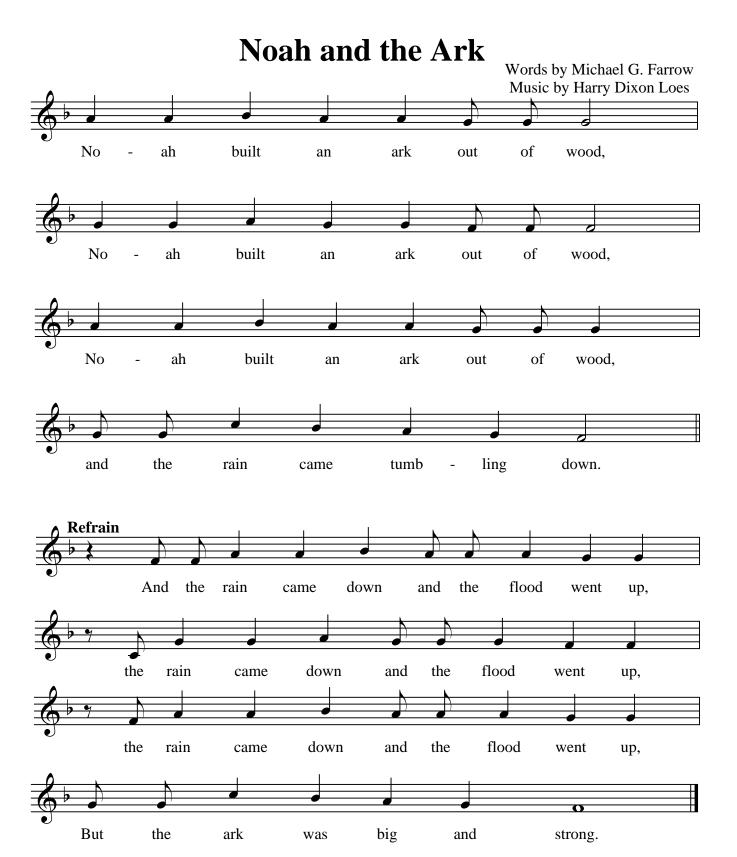
But the dove found an olive branch.

- 6. The ark came to rest on Mount Ararat,
  The ark came to rest on Mount Ararat,
  The ark came to rest on Mount Ararat,
  And the rain stopped coming down,
  And the rain stopped coming and the
  flood did cease,
  - The rain stopped coming and the flood did cease,
  - The rain stopped coming and the flood did cease,

And all the land was dry.

- 7. Now all on the ark did disembark,
  Now all on the ark did disembark,
  Now all on the ark did disembark,
  And the rain stopped coming down,
  And the rain stopped coming and the
  flood did cease,
  - The rain stopped coming and the flood did cease,
  - The rain stopped coming and the flood did cease.

And all gave thanks to God.



Please Note: Children can animate the line in the refrain of this song "and the rain came tumbling down", by extending their arms forward and upward at a 45 degree angle. Then with palms down and fingers wiggling, move their arms downward to indicate the rain coming down. On the line "and the flood came up", they would turn their palms upward with fingers closed and move their arms upward to the 45 degree angle. On the last line of each refrain, e.g., "but the ark was big and strong", the children bring their hands together and clap once.



Words by Michael G. Farrow Music by Harry Dixon Loes Ducks and cows and cam els and goats, Ducks and and cows cam els and goats, Ducks and and els and cows cam goats, and the rain ling down, came tumb Refrain the rain down and the flood and came went up, flood the rain down and the came went up, the rain came down and the flood went up, O but the ark sailed and on.

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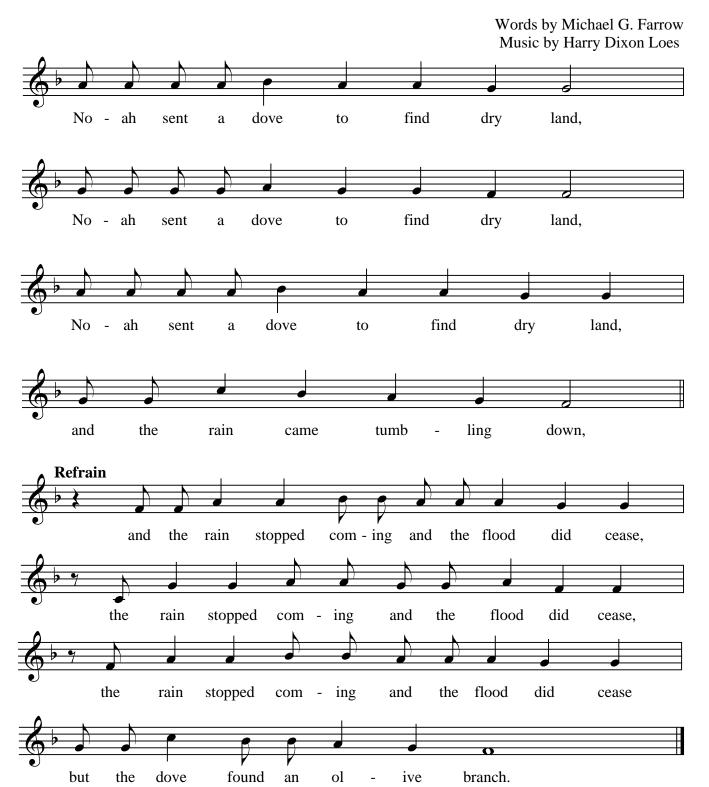
re

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the





God.

Words by Michael G. Farrow Music by Harry Dixon Loes Now did all on the ark dis em bark, all did ark dis now on the bark, em all ark did dis the bark, now on em the rain stopped down, and com ing Refrain the rain stopped com - ing and the flood did and cease, flood did the rain stopped com - ing and the cease, flood did the rain stopped com ing and the cease, O

thanks

gave

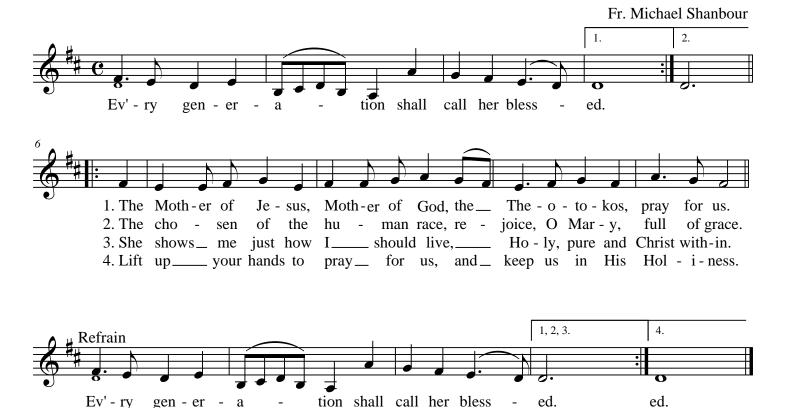
to

all

and

## **Every Generation**

(shall call her blessed)



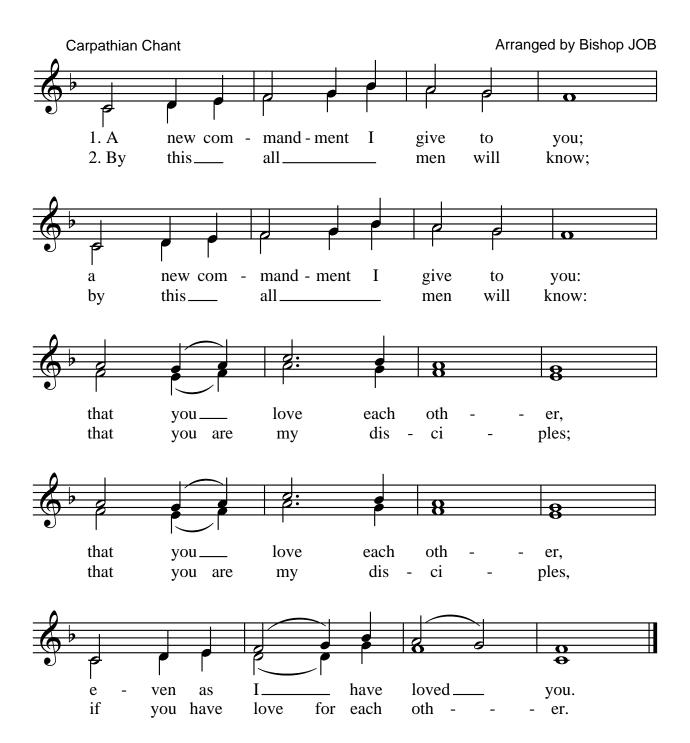
#### PARALITURGICAL USE ONLY

## Hymn to St. Nicholas



Note: Sing each verse all the way through, and then repeat the second half of each verse, as indicated by the repeat signs, before going on to the next verse.

## A New Commandment John 13:34



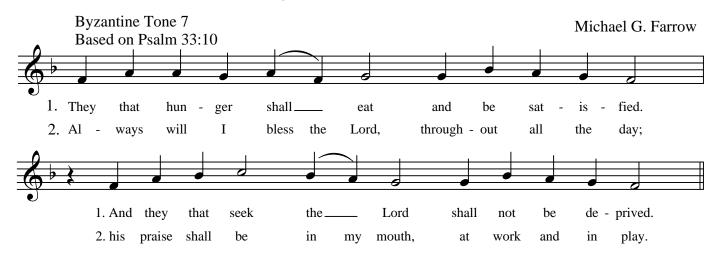
## **Books of the New Testament**

Michael G. Farrow and Elizabeth McMillan



#### No. 1 - Before meals

## **Prayers at Mealtime**



#### No. 2 - After meals

