INTRODUCING

ORTHODOX LITURGICAL MUSIC

TO CHILDREN

BY

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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. 2nd Grade to 12 years old (8th 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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Liturgical Use:**

1. Responses: Lord have mercy; Grant this, O Lord;  
   Alleluia; Most Holy Theotokos;  
   Threefold Lord have mercy;  
   & Evlogetaria (Refrain only)  
   Antiochian Tradition
2. Troparion of Pascha  
   Antiochian Tradition
3. God is the Lord from Matins, Tone 1  
   Basil Kazan
4. Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 1  
   Basil Kazan
5. God is the Lord from Matins, Tone 8  
   Basil Kazan
6. Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 8  
   Basil Kazan
7. Troparion of the Elevation of the Cross, Tone 1  
   Frederick Karam
8. Troparion of the Nativity of Christ, Tone 4  
   Archpriest James Meena
9. Troparion of Pentecost, Tone 8  
   Antiochian Tradition
10. Troparion of St. Nicholas, Tone 4  
    Christopher Holwey
11. Communion Hymn, Sunday, Tone 8  
    Michael G. Farrow
12. Trisagion Hymn  
    Michael Hilko/Farrow
13. More Honorable than the Cherubim, Matins  
    Basil Kazan
14. Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Tone 5  
    Bishop BASIL Essey
15. Blessing for Priest and Bishop (Many Years)  
    Antiochian Tradition

**Non-liturgical Use:**

1. Noah and the Ark, with verses  
   Michael G. Farrow
2. Every Generation Shall Call Her Blessed  
   Priest Michael Shanbour
3. Hymn to St. Nicholas  
   Carpathian Melody
4. A New Commandment  
   Bishop JOB
   Michael Farrow/Elizabeth McMillan
6. Prayers at Mealtime  
   Michael G. Farrow
Responses

Lord Have Mercy / Grant This O Lord

Byzantine Tone 8

Lord, have mercy.
Grant this, O Lord.

Alleluia

Byzantine Tone 8

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Most Holy Theotokos

Byzantine Tone 8

Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

Threefold Lord Have Mercy

Byzantine Tone 4

Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.
Ya rub ur ham, Ya rub ur ham, Ya rub ur ham.

Refrain for the Evlogetaria

Byzantine Tone 5

Bless ed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes.
A - men. Christ is ris - en from the dead, tram - pling down death by death, and up - on those in the tombs be - stow - ing life.

Third time with final ending

Christ is ris - en from the dead, tram - pling down death by death, and up - on those in the tombs be - stow - ing life.

* Traditionally, the clergy sing "Christ is Risen," and only on the final time does the choir finish with "bestowing life."
A-men. Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

Third time with final ending

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.
God is the Lord

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.
Byzantine Tone 1

Ison

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding thy most pure body, thou didst arise on the third day, O Saviour, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly pow'r's cried aloud unto thee, O Giver of life:

Glory to thy resurrection, O Christ! Glory to thy kingdom! Glory to thy providence, O thou who alone art the Lover of man-kind.

1. Quickly

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

2. Both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese 09/13/08 Rev 0.1 MK
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)

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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.
From the heights thou didst descend, O compassionate one, and thou didst submit to the three day burial; that thou might deliver us from passion;
thou art our life and our resurrection, O Lord, glory to thee.

1. Quickly
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

2. Both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.
O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserving Thy commonwealth.

Final Ending

Byzantine Chant Tone 1

Arranged by Frederick Karam (1926-1978)
December 25th

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Troparion

Byzantine Tone 4

Archpriest James C. Meena
(1934-1995)

Thy nativ-i-ty O Christ our

God, hath giv-en rise to the light of know ledge in

the world, for they who did wor-

ship the stars did learn from them

to worship thee, O Sun of jus-

and to know that thou didst come from the East of the high-

est. Glory to thee, O Lord.

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 4/9/09, Rev 1, DA, CAH
Bless-ed art Thou, O Christ our God,
who hast revealed the fisher-man as most wise,

having sent upon them the Holy Spirit,

and through them Thou hast fished the universe,

O Lover of mankind, glory to Thee.

Final ending

glory to Thee.
Thy right-eous acts have manifested thee to thy flock as a model of faith, a reflection of humility, and a teacher of abstinence,

Therefore, through humility thou hast achieved exaltation, and through poverty, riches.

Intercede thou with Christ, God to save our souls.
Communion Hymn for Sundays

Byzantine Tone 8

Praise the Lord from the heavens.

O praise ye him in the highest.

Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.
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.

Am e n.
Qud du son il Lah, Qud du son il qa wi, Qud-

Ho ly Im mor tal, have__ mer cy on__ us.

du son il la dhi, la ya moot__ ur ham na.

Glo ry to the Fa ther and to the Son and to__ the Ho ly Spir it,

both now and ev er, and un to a ges of a ges. A men.

Repeat "Holy God"

Ho ly Im mor tal, have__ mer cy on__ us.
More Honorable Than The Cherubim

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

Byzantine Tone 4

More hon' ra ble than the che ru - bim, and more

glo ri ous be yond com pare than the ser a phim,

thou who with out stain bar est God the Word, and art

tru ly The o to kos, we mag ni fy thee!

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

Byzantine Chant Tone 5

Re-joice, O Vir-gin The-o-to-kos,

Mar-y, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

Bless-ed art thou a-mong wo-men, and

bless-ed is the fruit of thy womb,

for thou hast borne the Sav-iour of our souls.

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 4/13/09, Rev. 1, CAH
MANY YEARS
Sung at the end of the Divine Liturgy for a Priest

Byzantine Chant Tone 2

Protect, O Lord, unto many years,
him who blesses us, and brings us thy grace.

MANY YEARS MASTER
Sung at the end of the Divine Liturgy for a Bishop

Byzantine Chant Tone 2

Preserve, O Lord, our master and chief priest,
and grant him many years. Many years to thee, master.

Man - y years to thee, mas - ter.
Man - y years unto thee, O mas - ter.
Noah and the Ark

(Words by Michael Farrow)

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.
Noah and the Ark
Words by Michael G. Farrow
Music by Harry Dixon Loes

Refrain

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.

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.
Noah and the Ark

Words by Michael G. Farrow
Music by Harry Dixon Loes

Noah boarded animals two by two,
and the rain came tumbling down,
and all had room on the ark.

Refrain
and the rain came down and the flood went up,
and the rain came down and the flood went up,
and all had room on the ark.
Ducks and cows and camels and goats,
and the rain came tumbling down,
and the rain came down and the flood went up,
but the ark sailed on and on.
Noah and the Ark

Words by Michael G. Farrow
Music by Harry Dixon Loes

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.

Refrain

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.

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 4/6/09, Rev 1, DA, CAH
Noah sent a dove to find dry land,

and the rain came tumbling down,

Refrain

and 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.
The ark came to rest on Mount Ararat, --

and the rain stopped coming down, --

Refrain

and the rain stopped coming and the flood did cease, --

the rain stopped coming and the flood did cease, --

and all the land was dry.
Now all on the ark did disembar,

and the rain stopped coming down,

Refrain

and the rain stopped coming and the flood did cease,

the rain stopped coming and the flood did cease,

and all gave thanks to God.
Every Generation

(shall call her blessed)

Fr. Michael Shanbour

1. The Mother of Jesus, Mother of God, the Theotokos, pray for us.
2. The chosen of the human race, rejoice, O Mary, full of grace.
3. She shows me just how I should live, Holy, pure and Christ within.
4. Lift up your hands to pray for us, and keep us in His Holiness.

Paraliturgical Use Only
Hymn to St. Nicholas

Traditional Carpathian Hymn

1. O who loves Nicholas the saintly,
2. He who dwells in God's holy mansions,
3. Holy Saint, hearken to our prayer,

O who loves Nicholas the saintly,
is our help on the lands and oceans,
let not life drive us to despair,

him will Nicholas receive,
He will guard us from all ills,
all our efforts shall not wane,

and give help in time of need:
keep us pure and free from sin:
singing praises to your name:

Holy Father 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

Carpathian Chant

Arranged by Bishop JOB

1. A new commandment I give to you;
2. By this all men will know;

that you love each other,
that you are my disciples;

even as I have loved you.
if you have love for each other.

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 4/15/09, Rev. 1, MGK, CAH
Books of the New Testament

Michael G. Farrow and Elizabeth McMillan

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Acts and the
Letter to the Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus and Philemon, Hebrews and the book of James, First and Second Peter,
First, Second, and Third John, Jude and Revelation.
Prayers at Mealtime

No. 1 - Before meals
Byzantine Tone 7
Based on Psalm 33:10
Michael G. Farrow

1. They that hunger shall eat and be satisfied.
2. Always will I bless the Lord, throughout all the day;

1. And they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived.
2. his praise shall be in my mouth, at work and in play.

No. 2 - After meals
Psalm 144; Exodus 15:1-2
Michael G. Farrow

1. We thank you, O our God, who give all good things,
2. To you our eyes look with hope, for now and through the year,
3. Unto the Lord shall I sing: He is glorified;

1. for these your gifts and mercies, and all that you bring.
2. you open up your hand and blessings give us here.
3. a helper and protector he is my guide.