

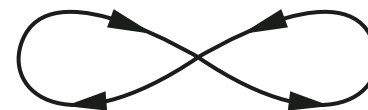
SOME TIPS ON CONDUCTING

Now that you have learned all the patterns and know everything you need to do to direct an entire hymn, you can begin to develop an appropriate conducting style. Here are some tips on how to do this:

1. Practice conducting in front of a full-length mirror. Try to make your arm movements smooth and even. Move only your arm. Don't let your body sway or move in rhythm with the music, but don't hold it stiff either. Be still but relaxed.
2. Avoid floppy wrist motions.
3. Keep your beat patterns simple. Fancy flourishes and curlicues are unnecessary and can confuse the accompanist and congregation. A good director is easy to follow.

4. Don't make your arm motions too large or too small. They should be large enough to be seen from the back of the congregation, yet never exaggerated or uncomfortable for you.
5. Look at the congregation as you direct, moving your eyes from one part of the group to another to encourage the group to sing. (Memorizing the hymns frees your eyes from the book.) Eye contact with the congregation is most important at the beginning and end of the hymn and between verses.
6. Let the expression on your face reflect the mood of the hymn; be sure it is a pleasant expression.

7. Let your arm movements help express the mood of the hymn. Use energetic movements for a joyful hymn and calm movements for a reverent hymn.
8. While conducting, if you lose your place in the beat pattern, move your arm in an up-and-down motion in time with the music until you find your place again. Another all-purpose pattern that can be used in any instance is a sideways figure-eight.



INTERPRETING HYMNS

As a music director, you need to interpret the mood of each hymn and convey that mood through your gestures. When singing hymns, the congregation is worshiping the Lord. Through your conducting style, you can make this worship an ordinary experience or a meaningful one.

To help make hymn singing a meaningful experience for the congregation, you must prepare yourself. Study the hymns before the meeting and decide how you will direct them. Some suggestions about how to do this are listed below.

First, determine what the general feeling or spirit of the hymn is. Each hymn has a mood marking, such as *prayerfully* or *joyfully*, located above the first line of notes. It suggests the tempo or speed of the hymn and how loudly or softly to sing. Read the following mood markings and try to describe how a hymn marked by each word might be sung.

<i>reverently</i>	<i>with exultation</i>
<i>energetically</i>	<i>solemnly</i>
<i>cheerfully</i>	<i>majestically</i>
<i>peacefully</i>	<i>with conviction</i>

After reading a hymn's mood marking, read its text and decide what the message is. Is the hymn a prayer, a statement of praise, or some other message of worship? As you read, try to feel what the author felt while writing the words. Read the scriptures referenced below the hymn to help you determine the hymn's message.

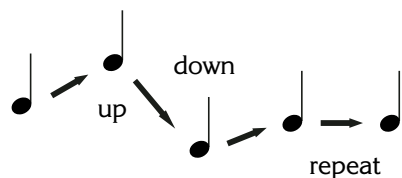
The metronome markings that follow the mood markings also tell you how fast to sing the hymn. (A metronome is an instrument that can mark a steady beat at different tempos.) The metronome marking has a small note, which shows the basic beat of the hymn, and numbers, which suggest how many beats to have in one minute. The marking ♩=66-88 shows that the tempo should allow between sixty-six and eighty-eight quarter notes in one minute. Since a minute has sixty seconds, a marking of 66 tells you that quarter notes should be a little faster than one per second. Fitting eighty-eight quarter notes in sixty seconds makes the beat even faster.

When you've decided on a mood and tempo, practice conducting the hymn a few times. Set the tempo and reflect the mood of the hymn with your preparatory beat and then keep the same tempo and mood throughout the hymn. Practice with the accompanist so he or she knows what to expect.

As you conduct, show the spirit of the music through facial expressions and arm movements. Be conservative in your expressions. Keep your conducting style simple so that nothing in your manner is distracting. Most important, seek the Spirit as you fulfill your calling. Let it fill you with the joy of true worship so you can communicate that joy to the congregation.

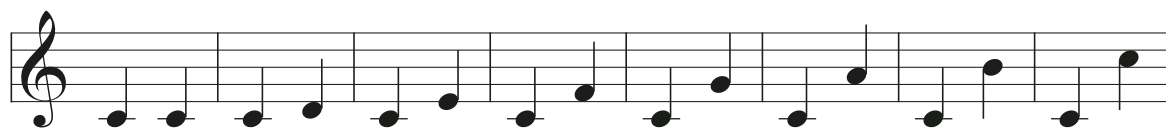
SIGHT SINGING

Sight singing is following a line of notes and singing their pitches. This brief introduction to sight singing will help you gain note-reading skills that will help you learn the melodies of unfamiliar hymns and songs. These skills will be useful in teaching simple note reading to others and in working with choirs.



Written notes move up or down in pitch or they repeat a pitch. With practice, you can become familiar with the distance between two written notes and how far you must raise or lower the pitch of your voice to match the notes. The distance between one note and the next is called an **interval**. The music at the right shows common intervals, beginning with the smallest interval—a unison, or repeated note—and moving to an interval of a second, third, and so on to an eighth, or octave.

Interval Names:



Unison Second Third Fourth Fifth Sixth Seventh Eighth



74 Listen to the taped examples of these intervals. Sing the intervals (sing “dah, dah”) after hearing each one. Look at the table of intervals as you sing, following the notes with your eyes.

To become more familiar with these intervals, associate them with hymn melodies you already know. The common intervals and the hymns they occur in are listed below.

Unison

“Abide with Me!”
(*Hymns*, no. 166)



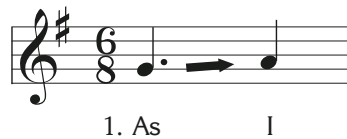
Fifth

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”
(*Hymns*, no. 72)



Second

“Love One Another”
(*Hymns*, no. 308)



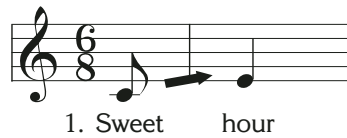
Sixth

“We’ll Sing All Hail to Jesus’ Name”
(*Hymns*, no. 182)



Third

“Sweet Hour of Prayer”
(*Hymns*, no. 142)



Seventh

“The Light Divine” (last line)
(*Hymns*, no. 305)



Fourth

“Come, We That Love the Lord”
(*Hymns*, no. 119)



Eighth or Octave

“Called to Serve”
(*Hymns*, no. 249)

