

Hymns for Young Hands

Teacher's Guide

Updated September 27, 2017

These supplemental books use hymns from Lutheran hymnals and arrange them for beginning piano students. Each of the books is designed around the church year, with 12 hymns arranged at a specific level for use monthly, starting with September and going through August. The keys of the original hymns are modified to fit the difficulty level, but all of the original rhythms and melodies are kept intact.

At the back of the book, a very short, concise “Hymn Fact” is given for each of the hymns to highlight a specific aspect of the hymn and to encourage the student to consider if he or she could someday be a church musician, hymnwriter, composer or translator. These hymn facts were kept very short so they don't consume too much time during the lesson. You may even like to supplement with additional background material to what is provided.

While the hymns are arranged in a specific order in the book, they may be taught in any order as the teacher sees fit. You can even use two books at the same time. For very early beginners, it can make sense to use both Set A and Set B or Set B and Set C, alternating books as each piece is learned.

Early Elementary

All books in the Early Elementary level use a ‘thumbs together on Middle C’ position. A duet part is included for each to encourage rhythmic and expressive playing as well as to flesh out the hymn for playing in church, chapel or recital. When the duet part is used, the student moves an octave higher. Teachers playing the duet part should use dynamics as appropriate to the hymn and may add a “rit.” and a fermata at the end of the hymn. Occasionally, when the melody uses a black key, a different fingering is preferable. See the suggestions below or mark as you see fit.

Early Elementary, Set A – This book does not use eighth notes and very few accidentals. The difficulty level is equivalent to a Primer through Level 1 for most method books. Words are given for one or two stanzas of each hymn. Students need to be able to read notes on the staff to use this book.

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word – Page 4

The sharp in m. 10 may be taught by rote if the student has not yet been learned about accidentals.

I Know that My Redeemer Lives – Page 14

B-flats in the LH are used throughout this piece. Students can be instructed to leave LH 2 on the B-flat key.

Oh, that I Had a Thousand Voices – Page 20

You may prefer to reposition the RH entirely. Since it only plays C# and D, rather than RH thumb on Middle C, chose RH 2 on C# and RH 3 on D. This works much better.

Early Elementary, Set B - This book does use eighth notes and some accidentals. The difficulty level is equivalent to a Level 1 for most methods, possibly into Level 2. Words are given for one or two stanzas of each hymn.

I Come, O Savior, to Your Table – Page 2

LH 2 will use both B-flat and B natural. If the student hasn't learned about flats yet, teach the B-flat by rote.

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God – Page 4

See previous remarks regarding LH B-flat and B natural.

If You But Trust in God to Guide You – Page 6

The number of flats in this hymn can present a challenge, but when the duet part is added, it will be so worthwhile. RH 3 stays on E-flat throughout. Especially in young players, RH 4 will have a tendency to hover over E instead of F. This is true in m. 9 and m. 11. Tell them to watch and stretch up for the F's. The only flats in the LH are in m. 5, so that isn't too complicated.

Let All Together Praise Our God – Page 10

See previous remarks on RH 3 and RH 4 with E-flats.

Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing – Page 12

LH 1 on C# is problematic. For m. 2 and m. 11 you may opt to have the student use LH 2 on C# and then stretch to reach A with LH 3.

Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted – Page 14

If your student likes to do cross overs, you may prefer to have RH 2 play all G#'s instead of LH 4.

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today – Page 16

In m. 10, the LH will play the A, as marked. Pointer fingers are awesome at this.

Lord of My Life, Whose Tender Care – Page 20

See earlier comments regarding RH 3 on E-flat and RH 4 on F. LH 2 uses both B-flat and B natural.

Early Elementary, Set C - This book adds dotted quarter and eighth note combinations. Students should feel quite comfortable with this rhythm when starting this book as most hymns contain this rhythm. The difficulty level is equivalent to a Level 1 into a Level 2. Words are given for one or two stanzas of each hymn.

The Church's One Foundation – Page 2

RH 4 uses F# throughout. You may prefer to do a RH 2 cross over to play the G# in m. 16.

Speak, O Savior; I am Listening – Page 4

LH 2 stays on B-flat throughout.

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come – Page 8

LH 2 stays on B-flat throughout.

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise – Page 10

LH 2 stays on B-flat and RH 3 stays on E-flat. See previous comments regarding RH 3 on E-flat and RH 4 on F.

Go to Dark Gethsemane – Page 12

In m. 12, you may prefer RH 2 to cross over to play F#.

O Sons and Daughters of the King – Page 14

RH 4 stays on F#. Your student may experience a bit of a stretch to reach RH 3 on E. In m. 17, you may prefer to use RH 2 to cross over to play G#.

Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise – Page 16

If a student likes to do crossovers, you may use RH 2 to play F# in m. 2 and m. 9.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty – Page 20

LH 2 stays on B-flat throughout. See previous remarks on RH 3 on E-flat and RH 4 on F natural.

Praise the Almighty; My Soul, Adore Him – Page 22

LH 2 crosses over in m. 19 to play A, as marked.