

**Hymn Facts**  
**Hymns for Young Hands, Late Elementary, Set A**  
**Created by Valerie A. Floeter**

**Jesus Loves Me - Page 2**

Did you learn to sing this song when you were little? One person wrote the “Jesus loves me” part and the person who wrote the music added the “Yes, Jesus loves me” part. What is the hymn tune name? (Look for the word with all the capital letters.) I always wonder how the hymn tunes get their names. Nobody knows why it is called CHINA, but it might be because missionaries use this hymn so much.

**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God - Page 4**

In my hymnal there are two versions of “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”. The words are the same and the notes are almost the same, but the rhythms are different. The original version is the bumpier one with no time signature at the beginning. The updated one has a time signature and is smoother to sing. Do you know both versions? Which is your favorite? Other hymns have also been updated in this way. There are words used to describe the two versions – rhythmic is the older, bumpier version and isorhythmic is the smoother, updated one with the time signature.

**Savior of the Nations, Come - Page 6**

Martin Luther started the Reformation in 1517. Seven years later (1524), three music books were published under his authority to encourage people to sing in worship. This hymn is found in those early hymnals. Luther took a very old hymn written in Latin by Ambrose who lived in the 300’s AD and translated it into German so his congregation could sing it. The melody is very old too. It was probably over 200 years old when Luther used it.

**From Heaven Above to Earth I Come - Page 8**

Martin Luther always planned special musical games for his family on Christmas Eve. He used a pattern of a popular riddle game to start his hymn “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”, but he tells the story of Jesus’ birth. It is said that someone would dress like an angel and sing the first five stanzas, everyone sang Stanza 6, and the children sang the rest. What a great family tradition!

**O Jesus Christ, Your Manger Is - Page 10**

Have you ever sung this hymn? This Christmas hymn is hardly ever used. Pastor Paul Gerhardt wrote it and the original version had 15 stanzas! Musician Johann Crüger worked with Pastor Gerhardt. They made a great team. Johann wrote melodies for 21 poems written by Pastor Gerhardt. (The word “Kripplein” in the hymn tune name is pronounced “krip-line” and means “crib”.)

**O Dearest Jesus - Page 12**

Johann Crüger wrote this melody. (He wrote the melody for the previous song, too.) He wrote it specifically for the words to this hymn, but the tune is similar to two other melodies, too. He might have actually taken those other songs and adjusted some of the

notes to work better with these words. Being a good musician means that you know how to adapt music to work in your situation.

### **O Dearest Lord, Thy Sacred Head - Page 14**

This melody was first published in 1820, so it is now 200 years old. It is an American tune. I don't know why it is called DETROIT. I don't think it was written in Detroit, because it was published in Virginia, even though the title of the book mentions Kentucky. That's all rather confusing. The words were written in London, England.

### **Christ the Lord Is Risen Again - Page 16**

In many congregations, all the Easter hymns are sung in happy, major keys. I suppose such an old, interesting melody like this one might seem out of place. This melody is a very close relative to the hymn tune CHRIST IST ERSTANDEN. Even their names are close. Martin Luther said that he never grew tired of singing it. Did you know that songs can be written in more than just major and minor? This melody is such an example. It is written in the Dorian mode. If you play a scale from D to D on only white keys, you will hear what Dorian sounds like. It's an interesting sound.

### **Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise - Page 18**

This melody was used in the 1200's during a church festival to honor the donkey that carried Mary and baby Jesus to Egypt. During the worship service, instead of singing in beautiful sounds, the choir tried to sing like donkeys and instead of singing "Alleluia", they sang "Hez-va" (French for "hee-haw"). I bet this made everyone laugh. You can see why many church services had gotten silly and why Martin Luther removed many things that were not appropriate. This melody is lovely and I'm glad we still get to sing it, but with good words.

### **Abide, O Dearest Jesus - Page 20**

Who is our composer? He died when he was only 45 years old. He was a church musician and a schoolteacher. Even with his short life, he wrote over 400 hymn tunes, 200 songs and a special kind of musical play called a passion. My hymnal has three other melodies written by Mr. Vulpius. Does yours?

### **Crown Him with Many Crowns - Page 22**

Sir George Elvey, from England, wrote this melody. Anyone named "Sir" has been knighted by the king or queen of England, which means they were noticed because of something special they did. Musicians who are knighted wrote special music that the royal family liked. Sir Elvey wrote the wedding music for Princess Louise's wedding in 1871. Not only did he compose, but he was also the music teacher for the royal family. Queen Victoria had seven children. That's a lot of piano lessons. He worked in the castle for 47 years.

### **Beautiful Savior - Page 24**

Where did this melody come from? What is a "Silesian folk tune"? Silesia was a country connected to Germany, but now is mostly a part of Poland. This change happened in 1945. So up until then, the people living in Silesia spoke German. A "folk

tune” means it was a common melody probably not connected to church music. “Mary Had a Little Lamb” would be considered a folk tune. It might be a fun project to write words for “Mary Had a Little Lamb” that you could use for a Sunday school class. I bet little kids would like to sing it. Maybe, “Jesus came to die for us, die for us, ...So we can go to heaven.” You should try it. You can pick any melody you like. Maybe someday you’ll write a whole hymn. That would be cool.