

# **What Should We Be Teaching?**

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Alleluia Conference  
Baylor University  
July 2016**

“A dedicated teacher’s life becomes a pilgrimage with a destination and a purpose rather than a hit-or-miss gypsy journey. On the pilgrimage there must be a constant flow of information, preparation, application, and evaluation.”

Helen Kemp, “Children Inherit the Faith through Music”  
Pastoral Music 15, no.1 (1990): 39

**A curriculum is really as simple as a list of goals that are organized sequentially to build upon previous knowledge.**

## **Considerations for curricular planning**

1. A curriculum can grow over time
2. Curricula may look different for different people
3. Some curricular goals are repeated at each level and some are sequential
4. Rehearsal time is a factor when setting curricular goals

## **Terms to define**

1. Scope
2. Sequence
3. Musical Knowing
4. Musical Doing

## **Three Skills/ Topics to at Every Level With Adjustments for Chronological Age**

1. Healthy vocal production grounded in supportive breath
2. Understanding of beautiful phrasing and musical elements that encourage clear communication with congregation
3. Ability to read pitches, rhythms, and musical symbols

## **Examples of Published Curricula**

Britts, Judy. "Elements of Music in Every Rehearsal." *The Chorister* 61 (August/September 2009): 19-27.

Hawn, Michael, ed. *Stepping Stones* series published by Choristers Guild.  
Early Childhood, Year 1, by Ronald Nelson

Early Elementary, Year 1, by Betty Bedsole

Early Childhood, Year 2, by Randal McChesney

Primary Age (Early Elementary), Year 2, by Rebecca Gruber

Early Childhood, Year 3, by Julie Scott

Primary Age (Early Elementary), Year 3, by Judy Henneberger

Older Elementary, by Craig Singleton

Kemp, Helen. *Of Primary Importance*, Vol. I. Garland, TX: Choristers Guild, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Of Primary Importance*, Vol. II. Garland, TX: Choristers Guild, 1991.

## Implementing the Curriculum

Goal: Singers will demonstrate healthy singing voices

Requirements to meet this goal: \_\_\_\_\_

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Objectives: \_\_\_\_\_

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Potential Repertoire: \_\_\_\_\_

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Teaching techniques: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Implementing the Curriculum

Goal: Singers will maintain a steady beat

Requirements to meet this goal: \_\_\_\_\_

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Objectives: \_\_\_\_\_

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Potential Repertoire: \_\_\_\_\_

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Teaching techniques: \_\_\_\_\_

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# What Should We Be Teaching?

## Preschool-First Grade

- Steady beat
- Pitch matching
- Head voice isolation and manipulation
- Singer posture
- Tonal memory
- Aurally recognize and correctly reproduce pitch patterns
- Aurally recognize and correctly reproduce rhythms
- Visually recognize and correctly respond to patterns
- Expression (physical, facial)
- Communication (diction)
- We worship God through music

## Second-Third Grades

- Reinforce all of the above skills
- Follow notation on the staff
- Visually recognize and correctly reproduce rhythms (quarter and half notes, quarter rests)
- Apply concepts of supportive breathing to their singing
- Use their voices musically and expressively, especially legato singing
- I can be a worship leader for my congregation

## Fourth-Fifth Grades

- Reinforce all of the above skills
- Visually recognize and correctly reproduce pitch patterns from the staff
- Visually recognize and correctly reproduce rhythms (whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests)
- Visually recognize and correctly respond to expressive markings
- Increase breath control and breath support capabilities
- Sing music in two parts