

Sacred Rounds

Singing rounds is fun, easy, educational and can be done anywhere! Rounds introduce choirs to ensemble singing in harmony, while keeping to their own lines. Most of these rounds will sound well with an adult choir or a children's choir. They can be used as warm-up exercises or to focus on a particular musical idea. They range from "easy" through "medium difficulty" to "challenging" and vary from two to six parts. Use them to focus on a vocal or musical element: intervals, rhythm, articulation, expression, legato, etc.

REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES

Begin by singing a round many times in unison until it is memorized. Divide the choir into two parts and when it sounds secure, add the other parts. Go back to unison singing and add the dynamics and other musical features. Then sing again in parts, aiming for accuracy of timing, pitch, diction, and expression. Sing the rounds unaccompanied. This helps the choir sing in tune, hear other singers and gain confidence, rather than relying on the accompaniment for support.

You may alter the speed and dynamics as you wish. Change the starting pitch if it feels too high or low.

These rounds can also be played on instruments with or without the singers. Percussion, finger snaps or claps can be added (see "musical features" index).

CHOIR DIRECTORS

When using rounds as warm-up exercises, ask the choir to focus on one vocal or musical aspect at a time. The same round may be used at various times to focus on different musical ideas. The key to singing rounds cleanly is to accurately keep the pulse and rhythm. As an extra challenge, stop beating time while the choir is singing and see how well they keep together! Also, try singing louder or softer with gradually controlled crescendos and decrescendos.

Divide your choir in different ways to vary the complexity of the exercise. For example, in a four-part round:

- Divide into four voice parts: Soprano, Tenor Alto, Bass
- Mix up women and men into four equal sections
- Give each choir member a number (1, 2, 3, 4...) and get them to keep to their line while those around them are singing.

Choose no more than one or two rounds at a time, aiming to make them sound as musical as you can. Use the "musical features" index to select aspects of singing you want the choir to focus on.

ENDING THE ROUNDS

Decide how many times the round is to be sung and whether the voices are going to finish separately or together on a chord, at a signal from you, on whatever note they have reached. (e.g., in round 19 all parts can stop on measure 4 making a chord of B major.) A fermata is placed over a note when the suggested end is in the middle of a round (e.g., rounds 13, 20).

MUSIC TEACHERS

These rounds can be used to teach a particular musical characteristic (see "musical features" index). Singing rather than just listening will improve students' learning curve.

Although these SACRED ROUNDS are not for liturgical use, there is a seasonal index to help the choir focus on a particular season.

Have Fun!

Christopher Walker
Summer 2004

Contents

- 1. Alleluia, Alleluia (M)**
Accents; finger snaps; keeping the pulse; sequence.
Keep three strong beats in this irregular time signature. Count the last bar carefully.
- 2. Alleluia, Praise God (C)**
Accents; articulation; repeated notes; scales; staccato.
Try this as fast as you can, keeping clear enunciation.
- 3. All That I Think or Say (M)**
Harmony (added sixth); legato; scales; sequence; vowels.
Sing through the consonants and enjoy the added sixth chord in the second measure.
- 4. Christ Is Risen from the Dead (C)**
Accents; articulation; dynamics; pulse; rhythm; scales; vocal range.
Sing rhythmically with full value to the last sung note. "Christ" has a long first vowel: "Chrah-ist."
- 5. Come and See (M)**
Finger snaps; staccato.
Pay attention to the accents and staccatos.
- 6. Go Out to the World (E)**
Articulation; finger snaps; rhythm; sequence.
Finger snaps on beats 2 and 4 help the line to swing.
- 7. Have Mercy, Have Mercy on Me (M)**
Consonants; dynamics/expression; harmony; legato; scales; sequence; tuning.
Grade the crescendos and diminuendos smoothly. Enjoy the augmented triad in measure two.
- 8. I Will Praise You (E)**
Accents; staccato.
Aim for clear diction and rhythmic accuracy.
- 9. I Will Proclaim Your Power (M)**
Consonants; dynamics.
Let this one build gradually with a strong one-to-a-bar feeling.
- 10. In the Hour of My Distress (C)**
Consonants; dynamics; harmony; repeated notes; scales; tuning; vocal range; vowels.
Sing slowly and pay attention to the tuning so that the whole tones and chromaticism are accurate.
- 11. Love One Another (M)**
Consonants; scales; sequence; vocal range.
Keep descending intervals "small" so as not to go flat. Sing through and lengthen the consonants.
- 12. Magnificat Anima Mea (C)**
Accents; articulation; consonants; finger snaps; keeping the pulse; modal; rhythm; vowels.
Keep a strong sense of the pulse. Although written in six parts, it may be sung in as few as two parts.
- 13. Merry Christmas to You (C)**
Modal; tuning.
This round uses a sharpened fourth (Lydian mode). Get gradually louder, then softer.
- 14. My God, I Always Hope in You (E)**
Compound time.
Let this one bounce along joyfully.
- 15. My Spirit Rejoices (M)**
Accents; arpeggios; consonants; harmony; sequence; triads; vocal range.
Feel this pulse as one-to-a-bar. Sing lines 1 and 2 lightly; lines 3 and 4 marcato.
- 16. Nothing Is Impossible (M)**
Accents; harmony.
Be aware of the widening intervals: half step, whole step, minor third, fourth, fifth.
- 17. One Thing I Hope For (M)**
Consonants; dynamics; harmony; legato; repeated notes; tuning; vocal range; vowels.
Sing through the consonants (n, ng, l, v, w, m). Observe the marcatos in the last line.
- 18. Open the Gates (M)**
Accents; rhythm; staccato; tuning; vocal range; vowels.
Make the rhythm crisp and strong by use of the accents and staccato marks.
- 19. Out of the Depths (E)**
Dynamics; legato; tuning.
Sing smoothly, paying strict attention to the dynamics.
- 20. Peace Be with You (E)**
Legato; scales.
Keep this soft and gentle. Listen to the falling thirds between the parts.

21. Plant Your Word in Our Hearts (E)

Accents; finger snaps; rests; rhythm; triads.
Divide the choir into three parts. 1 and 2 keep singing their own line. 3 sings line 3a and at a signal from you sings line 3b, then back to 3a. To finish, gradually diminuendo into silence.

22. Praise God with Sounding Trumpets (M)

Accents; consonants; keeping the pulse; rhythm; scales; sequence; vocal range.
This has two time signatures. Keep a strong beat and differentiate the “accents” and “marcatos.”

23. Praise God with Trumpets (E)

Accents; Dorian mode; vocal range.
Keep a firm two beats in a bar. This goes well with some added percussion.

24. Pray for Me, As I Do for Thee (M)

Dynamics; modal.
Gradually build the volume. At the end, each part holds “Lord” until all are singing unisonally “D.”

25. Rejoice in the Lord Always (E)

Accents; keeping the pulse.
The last line has an implied syncopation. Keep the pulse strong.

26. Send Forth Your Spirit (M)

Accents; dynamics; finger snaps; rhythm.
Parts 1, 2 and 3 repeat their own line. Sing softly, but rhythmically, while the soloist is singing.

27. Sing to the Lord a New Song (C)

Accents; arpeggios; consonants; dynamics; finger snaps; harmony; keeping the pulse; rests; rhythm; triads; tuning; vocal range; vowels.
Make this sound as jazzy as you like. Careful with major to minor in lines one and two!

28. We Believe (C)

Articulation; consonants; keeping the pulse; scales; vocal range.
As they get to know this one, speed up – see how fast you can go, still keeping the time exactly!

29. You Are My Refuge/Dios Mi Refugio (E)

Dynamics; legato; triads; vowels.
Sing in English or Spanish. Aim for smooth dynamics and legato singing.

30. You Are the Holy One (M)

Accents; articulation; modal; rhythm; vocal range.
Make the dotted notes and “Scotch snap” rhythms very precise.

Degree of Difficulty

- E = Easy**
- M = Medium Difficulty**
- C = Challenging**
- Especially for Children**

- 6** 4, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 29
- 1** 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 30
- 2** 4, 10, 12, 13, 27, 28
- 3** 6, 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 29, 30

Musical Features

- Accents** 1, 2, 4, 8, 12, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 30
- Anacrusis (upbeat)** 6, 8, 13, 14, 15, 23, 25
- Arpeggios** 15, 27
- Articulation** 2, 4, 6, 12, 27, 28, 30
- Consonants** 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 22, 27, 28
- Dynamics/Expression** 4, 7, 9, 10, 17, 19, 24, 26, 27, 29
- Finger snaps/claps** 1, 5, 6, 12, 21, 26, 27
- Harmony** 3 (added 6th), 7 (augmented triad), 10 (chromaticism), 15 (diminished 7th), 16 (added 6th), 17 (major 7th), 27 (major/minor)

- Keeping the pulse** 1, 4, 12, 22, 25, 27, 28
- Legato** 7, 17, 19, 20, 29
- Modal** 2 (Dorian), 13 (Lydian), 23 (Dorian), 27 & 30 (incomplete Aeolian)
- Repeated notes** 10, 17
- Rests** 2, 4, 21, 27
- Rhythm** 4 (dotted, syncopated), 6 (dotted, syncopated), 8 (syncopated), 12 (dotted, syncopated), 18 (dotted), 21 (dotted), 22 (multiple time signatures), 26 (syncopated), 27 (syncopated), 30 (dotted)

Scales

2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 20, 22, 28,
(whole tones: 10)

Sequence

1, 3, 6, 7, 11, 15, 22

Staccato

2, 5, 8, 18

Tonality

Major 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15,
17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 26
Minor 10, 14, 16, 19, 29
Major/Minor 27

Triads

15, 21, 27, 29

Tuning

7, 10, 13, 17, 18, 19, 27

Vocal range (extended)

4, 10, 11, 15, 17, 22, 23, 27, 28, 30

Vowels

3, 10, 12, 17, 27, 29

Time Signatures

2/4 2, 4, 5, 8, 16, 30

3/4 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 29

4/4 6, 10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 26, 27

5/8 28

6/8 3, 14, 23, 24, 25

7/8 1

Multiple 22

Intervals**Steps**

3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 15, 20, 22, 29

Thirds

7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 30

Fourth

7, 8, 12, 14, 16, 23, 24

Fifths

12, 14, 15, 16, (19), 22, 25, 30

Sixths

11, 13, 17, 18

Sevenths

19, 27

Octaves

2, 9, 11, 20, 23

Index of Seasons & Non-Liturgical Use

Most of the rounds can be sung at any time.

Here are suggestions for your rehearsals in seasons and at other times:

Advent

12, 25

Christmas

13, 23

Presentation of the Lord

18

Lent

7, 10, 19, 29

Easter

1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 20, 22, 27

Ascension

1, 18, 22, 23

Pentecost

6, 20, 26

Christ the King

2, 18

Reconciliation

7, 10, 11, 19

Morning/Evening Prayer

3, 15, 27

Funeral

17, 19

Marian Feasts

12, 15

Alleluias

1, 2, 5, 16, 21

Creed

28

Mission

5, 6, 9, 23

Praise

1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 14, 17, 22, 25, 27

Faith

5, 16, 28, 30

Reflection

3, 7, 17, 19, 20, 29

Supplication

3, 7, 10, 19, 29

Trust

3, 14, 16, 29

Sacred Rounds

Christopher Walker

1 [M]

Alleluia, Alleluia (keeping time)

(♩ = ca. 116)

mf

1 u - ia,

2 al - le - lu - ia,

3 al - le - lu -

4 a.

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2 [C]

Alleluia Praise God (articulation and enunciation)

(♩ = ca. 88)

mf

1 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

2 Praise God the man - ders that we see.

3 Great King o - ver all the earth.

4 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

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All That I Think or Say

(major and minor steps)

3 [M]

Based on Psalm 19:14

Gently (♩ = ca. 54)
mp

1 All that I think or say,
2 may it please you this day,
3 God, my strength, my re - deem - er,
4 may it please you this day.

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Christ Is Risen from the Dead

(articulation and rhythm)

4 [C]

Joyfully (♩ = ca. 84)
f

1 Christ is ris - en from the
2 dead.
3 le, al - le - lu - ia, al -
4 dead, ris - en from the dead.

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5 [M]

Come and See

(major and minor steps)

Jauntily (♩ = ca. 100)
mf

1 "Come and see, come and see,
2 come and see - sus.
3 He is the Mes - ah,"
4 Al - ia.

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The music is marked 'Jauntily' and 'mf'. The lyrics are: "Come and see, come and see, come and see - sus. He is the Mes - ah," Al - ia.

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6 [E]

Go Out to the World

(keeping the pulse)

Swing (♩ = ca. 104)
f

1 "Go out to the world, pro -
2 claim the Good News, pro -
3 claim the Good News," Al - le -
4 lu - ia. "Go

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The music is marked 'Swing' and 'f'. The lyrics are: "Go out to the world, pro - claim the Good News, pro - claim the Good News," Al - le - lu - ia. "Go

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Have Mercy, Have Mercy on Me

(stepwise motion with augmented triad)

7 [M]

(♩ = ca. 100)

1 Have mer - cy, have
2 mer - cy on me.
3 Have mer - cy, have
4 mer - cy on me.

Detailed description: This is a four-part vocal score for the hymn 'Have Mercy, Have Mercy on Me'. It is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The tempo is marked as approximately 100 beats per minute. The score consists of four staves, each with a vocal line and lyrics. The lyrics are: 'Have mercy, have mercy on me. Have mercy, have mercy on me.' The music features stepwise motion and augmented triads. There are large black redaction marks over the lyrics on staves 1 and 2.

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I Will Praise You

(thirds)

8 [E]

Swing (♩ = ca. 80)

1 I will praise you as long as I live, — as
2 long as I live, — I will praise you, God. I will

Detailed description: This is a two-part vocal score for the hymn 'I Will Praise You'. It is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The tempo is marked as approximately 80 beats per minute with a 'Swing' feel. The score consists of two staves, each with a vocal line and lyrics. The lyrics are: 'I will praise you as long as I live, — as long as I live, — I will praise you, God. I will praise you, God. I will praise you, God.' The music features a swing feel and includes triplets. There are large black redaction marks over the lyrics on both staves.

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10

9 [M]

I Will Proclaim Your Power

(steps, thirds, fourths, and an octave)

Based on Psalm 71

Confidently (♩ = ca. 69)

mf

1 I will pro - claim your pow - er.

2 I will pro - claim your won - der - ful deeds.

3 I will pro - claim sal - va - tion,

4 and your faith - ful love.

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10 [C]

In the Hour of My Distress

(major and minor steps and chromatic harmony)

(♩ = ca. 69)

p

1 In the hour of my dis - tress,

2 Lord, be with me.

3 Be my sal - va - tion, the

4 Rock in whom I put my trust.

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Love One Another

(rising sequence with rising sixths)

11 [M]

(♩ = ca. 108) *mp cresc.*

1 "Love one an - oth - er, love one an - oth - er,

2 love one an - o - er as I have loved you.

3 Love one an oth - er, O

4 *dim.* love one an - oth - er, as I have loved you."

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Magnificat Anima Mea

12 [C]

(keeping the *♩* = ca. 84; Dorian mode)

Joyfully (♩ = ca. 84) *mf*

1 Mag - mag - ni - fi - cat

2 a - ni - ma me - a.

3 Can - ta - te, can - ta - te

4 Do - mi - no, glo - ri - a!

5 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

6 sem - per.

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13 [C]

Merry Christmas to You
(an encounter with the Lydian mode)

(♩ = ca. 132)
mf

1 Mer - ry Chr - ist - mas to
2 you, and a
3 Hap - py New
4 Year. A Mer - ry, Mer - ry

Detailed description: This is a four-part vocal score for the song 'Merry Christmas to You'. It is written in the Lydian mode (F major) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked as approximately 132 beats per minute. The dynamics are mezzo-forte (mf). The score consists of four staves, numbered 1 to 4. The lyrics are: 'Mer - ry Chr - ist - mas to you, and a Hap - py New Year. A Mer - ry, Mer - ry'. There are large black letters 'L', 'M', and 'S' overlaid on the score.

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14 [E]

My God, I Always Hope in You
(commemorative time)

(♩ = ca. 108)
mf

1 My God, al - ways hope in you, and
2 praise you more and more. My

Detailed description: This is a two-part vocal score for the song 'My God, I Always Hope in You'. It is written in the E major mode and 6/8 time. The tempo is marked as approximately 108 beats per minute. The dynamics are mezzo-forte (mf). The score consists of two staves, numbered 1 and 2. The lyrics are: 'My God, al - ways hope in you, and praise you more and more. My'. There are large black letters 'M', 'S', and 'S' overlaid on the score.

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My Spirit Rejoices

(arpeggios, scales and falling fifths)

15 [M]

Joyfully (♩ = ca. 144)
mf

1 My — spir - it re - joic - in God my Sav - ior,
2 who on his ser - vant's with fav - or has looked.
3 God works mar - vels for me.
4 My — me, bless - ed shall be. My —

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Nothing Is Impossible

(steps, thirds, fourths and a fifth)

16 [M]

(♩ = ca. 112)
mf

1 Al - le - lu - ia,
2 Al - le - lu - ia,
3 "Noth - ing im - pos - si - ble,
4 God can do all things."

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17 [M]

One Thing I Hope For

(falling sixths)

(♩ = ca. 84) *mp*

1 One thing I hope for,
 2 one thing for which I long:
 3 to live with - in your house, O God, all the
 4 days of my life.

The musical score consists of four staves in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is characterized by falling sixths. The lyrics are: "One thing I hope for, one thing for which I long: to live with - in your house, O God, all the days of my life." There are large black graphic overlays on the score: a 'W' shape on the first two staves and an 'L' shape on the third and fourth staves.

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18 [M]

Open the Gates

(rising phrase and falling sixth)

(♩ = ca. 120) *f*

1 O - pen the gates!
 2 O - pen the gates! Let the
 3 King of - ry
 4 in!

The musical score consists of four staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). The melody features a rising phrase followed by a falling sixth. The lyrics are: "O - pen the gates! O - pen the gates! Let the King of - ry in!" There are large black graphic overlays on the score: a 'W' shape on the first two staves and an 'S' shape on the third and fourth staves.

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Out of the Depths

(a rising seventh and minor thirds)

19 [E]

Based on Psalm 130

(♩ = ca. 104) *p*

1 Out of the depths I cry to you.

2 Lord, hear my crying;

3 hear my crying.

mf *mp* *p*

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Peace with You

(falling scales and a rising octave)

20 [E]

Softly (♩ = ca. 92) *p*

1 "Peace be with you. Re -

2 ceive the Ho - ly Spir - it."

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Plant Your Word in Our Hearts

(staying on one line building the texture)

21 [E]

(♩ = ca. 126)

1 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia

2 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

3a Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

3b (add this line instead of line 3a occasionally)

Plant your Word in our hearts. —
Let it bear fruit in us. —

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22 [M]

Praise God with Sounding Trumpets

(keeping the pulse in multiple time signatures)

Brightly (♩ = ca. 112)

1 *f* Praise God with sound - ing trum - pets.

2 Praise God with harp.

3 Praise God all you who have breath, sing

4 praise to God, sing praise!

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23 [E]

Praise God with Trumpets

(rising fourths; Dorian mode)

Based on Psalm 47

Joyfully (♩ = ca. 112)

mf *cresc.*

1 Praise God with trum - pets. Praise

2 God's praisings. Pro -

3 claim God's praisings to

4 all of the earth. Praise

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Pray for Me, As I Do for Thee

24 [M]

(controlled crescendo, Dorian mode, fourths and falling thirds)

Adapted from a prayer of St Thomas More

(♩. = ca. 92)
mp cresc.

1 Pray for me as
 2 I do for thee
 3 til we
 4 mer - ri - ly meet in the
 5 King - dom of the
 6 Lord.

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Rejoice in the Lord Always

25 [E]

(stepwise with a rising fifth)

(♩. = ca. 84)
mf

1 Re - joice in the Lord al -
 2 ways, a -
 3 gain I say, Re -
 4 joice! Re -

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26 [M]

Send Forth Your Spirit

(syncopation and dynamics)

[Build up lines 1, 2 and 3. Keep singing and add the solo line]

Based on Psalm 104

(♩ = ca. 138) *p*

1 Send forth your Spirit, renew the face of the earth.

2 Send forth your Spirit, renew the face of the earth.

3 Send forth your Spirit, renew the face of the earth.

Solo line

1. O bless the Lord, our God how great you
2. For you in maj - es - ty are clothed, in glo - rious
3. O God, you made the earth stand firm from age to
4. In wis - dom and strength are your works, most glo - rious
5. Your rich - es fill the earth, O bless the Lord, my

f

Send forth your Spirit, renew the face of the earth.

Send forth your Spirit, renew the face of the earth.

Send forth your Spirit, renew the face of the earth.

Solo line

1. are.
2. light.
3. age.
4. ly.
5. soul.

Sing to the Lord a New Song

27 [C]

(maintaining the pulse and keeping the character of each line)

Based on Psalm 149

Swing (♩ = ca. 144)

mf

1 Sing to the Lord a new song, in the great as-sembly.

2 Praise God, praise God, you faith-ful, with danc-ing and

3 mel-o-dy, with the and tam-bour-ines, you

4 faith-ful. Sing your praise we re-joic-ing to your Mak-er.

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We Believe

28 [C]

(5/8 time, disjuncts and scales)

f

1 We be-lieve, we be-lieve, we be-lieve in

2 one God, al-might-y, mak-er of heav'n and

3 earth; and Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of

4 God. We be-lieve in the Ho-ly Spir-it,

5 God, who is Three-in-One!

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29 [E]

You Are My Refuge/Dios Mi Refugio

(legato singing)

Based on Psalm 46

(♩ = ca. 120)
p

1 You are my refuge in the
Dios, mi re- fu- gio, en el

2 day of my trouble, O
di - a de do - lor. Mi

3 God, you are my
Dios es mi re -

4 ref - uge.
fu - gio.

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30 [M]

You Are the Holy One

(dotted rhythm)

Firmly (♩ = ca. 84)
mf

1 "You are the Ho - ly One, the
"You are Ho - ly One, the

2 Ho - ly One of God.
Ho - ly One of God.

3 You give life for ev - er."
You give life for ev - er."

4 Al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia!

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