

DEVOTIONAL
WARM-UPS
for the
CHURCH
CHOIR

Also by Kenneth W. Osbeck

25 Most Treasured Gospel Hymn Stories

52 Bible Characters Dramatized

52 Hymn Stories Dramatized

101 Hymn Stories

101 More Hymn Stories

Amazing Grace: 366 Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions

Amazing Grace: Illustrated Stories of Favorite Hymns

Hallelujah, What a Savior!

Joy to the World!

The Ministry of Music

Pocket Guide for the Church Choir Member

DEVOTIONAL
WARM-UPS
for the
CHURCH
CHOIR

SECOND EDITION

KENNETH W. OSBECK

 Kregel
Ministry

*To the many choir members that I have had the
privilege of leading over sixty-five years in seven
churches in the Grand Rapids area*

*Devotional Warm-Ups for the Church Choir: Preparing to Lead Others
in Worship*

© 1985, 2016 by Kenneth W. Osbeck

Second edition © 2016

Published by Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel, Inc., 2450
Oak Industrial Drive NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored
in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—
electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—with-
out written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations
in reviews.

Distribution of digital editions of this book in any format via the
Internet or any other means without the publisher's written permis-
sion or by license agreement is a violation of copyright law and is sub-
ject to substantial fines and penalties. Thank you for supporting the
author's rights by purchasing only authorized editions.

Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version®. Copy-
right © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights
reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Osbeck, Kenneth W.

Devotional warm-ups for the church choir / Kenneth W. Osbeck.

p. cm.

1. Choirs (Music)—Prayer-books and devotionals— English.

I. Title.

BV4596.C48072 1985 242'.68 85-17222

CIP

ISBN 978-0-8254-4423-4

Printed in the United States of America

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 / 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

<i>Foreword by C. Harry Causey</i>	7
<i>Preface</i>	8
<i>Introduction</i>	9
September—The Marvel of the Human Voice	10
Respect and Concern	
Instrument of Highest Praise	
Instrument of Healing	
Instrument of Witness	
October—Music and the Old Testament	18
A Way of Life	
Misusing the Gift	
A Musical Overview	
Requirements of Leaders	
November—People of Praise and Thanksgiving	26
For Our Heritage—All Saints' Day	
For Our Present Blessings	
For Our Future Inheritance	
Knowing and Doing	
December—The Songs of Christmas	34
The Song of Mary—"The Magnificat"	
The Song of Zacharias—"The Benedictus"	
The Song of Simeon—"The Nunc Dimittis"	
The Song of the Angels—"Gloria in Excelsis Deo"	
January—Lessons from the New Testament	42
Early Christian Worship	
Sing Psalms	
Sing Hymns	
Sing Spiritual Songs	
February—The Local Church	50
Its Purpose	
The Role of Music	
The Adult Choir	
Graded Choirs	

March—The Worship Service	58
Its Importance	
New Testament Principles	
Forms of Worship	
Revitalizing Worship	
April—The Resurrection Message	66
Lent—A Time of Preparation	
Holy Week—A Time of Contemplation	
Easter—A Time of Celebration	
Emmaus—A Time of Dedication	
May—The Creative Spirit	74
New Awareness and New Appreciations	
A New Awareness and Appreciation of Family	
A New Awareness and Appreciation of Pentecost	
A New Awareness and Appreciation of Country	
June—Effective Singing, Effective Service	82
Round, Clear Tones—Full, Pure Lives	
Rhythmic Vitality—Spiritual Dynamic	
Interpretation and Communication—Witnessing and Sharing	
Vocal Blend—Christian Unity	
Additional Devotionals	90
Reformation Sunday	
Advent	
Epiphany	

Foreword

THE PASTOR OF one of the largest churches in the world rises early and spends several consecutive hours in prayer each day! Those who know his demanding schedule and massive responsibilities are amazed. They ask, “How can you afford so much time in prayer?” His response is always calmly consistent: “I can’t afford not to!”

No choir, which is *called to lead* in the *worship* of our Lord Jesus Christ, can afford not to spend some of its precious preparation time in focusing on Him. The worship choir has one primary purpose, and that is to minister to the Lord. Oh, that every director and choir member would fully understand the absolute necessity of those quality moments in that rehearsal spent with the Father. Our spiritual preparation is really more vital than our musical preparation!

Ken Osbeck is qualified to bring these spiritual pearls, for his own heart, mind, and spirit are dedicated to the lordship of Christ. His approach is to teach us, equip us, inspire us, and then move us to involvement with one another as he follows each devotional with stimulating and sobering discussion questions.

Your choir will grow through the use of *Devotional Warm-Ups* . . . They will grow close to their Lord, they will grow in depth of understanding of their true ministry, and they will grow closer to one another. And when these growth points are truly evident, I would not be surprised to see them also grow in number!

So I encourage you to allow God’s Holy Spirit to work through the ministry of Ken Osbeck, allowing your choir to be all that God wants it to be. And don’t be surprised when these warm-ups cause your choir to sing better!

C. Harry Causey
President, Music Revelation
Conductor, The National Christian Choir

Preface

THIS BOOK IS written to provide weekly inspirational and instructional material for use in church choir rehearsals. Its primary purpose is to help choir members focus their attention upon God and to strengthen their music ministry. Choirs that conduct their rehearsal during the midweek service will find this book ideal for their own devotional times. It will serve well as a basis for helpful discussion in these sessions.

Choir rehearsal time is usually far too short to accomplish musically all that any director desires to achieve. Even so, time should be set aside for reflection on the spiritual content found in this book. The devotional warm-ups can be used in a variety of ways, depending upon the needs of the choir and the time allotted. The choir experience should include a time and place for individual spiritual growth and fellowship. Because in a sense a choir is a church within a church, the members should be encouraged to share their joys and prayer concerns as an integral part of each rehearsal.

The general topics covered are spread over a proposed ten-month choir season with four devotional discussions each month. Three additional topics are provided for those months having five rehearsals.

Christian leaders and choir members also need to develop a greater understanding and deeper appreciation of the important days and seasons throughout the church year. Included in these devotional studies are discussions for the following days and seasons:

Reformation Day, All Saints' Day, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and patriotic days

My prayer is that God will use these devotional warm-ups to help you grow spiritually, to strengthen your choir ministry, and to bring rich blessing to your congregation and community.

Introduction

WHILE I WAS working recently on an updated edition of the *Pocket Guide for the Church Choir Member* with the book editor of Kregel Publications, Paul W. Bennehoff, he remarked: “But, Ken, don’t choir members also have to be prepared spiritually as well as musically? Don’t we need a complementary book for choirs that would give more emphasis and training to the biblical and spiritual implications of the church music ministry? Don’t choir members as well as the pastor and director need training to lead others in worship?” The more we talked, the more enthused we both became about such a project. I began to realize anew the unusual potential that exists in an adult choir. If members became better informed and more earnestly concerned about relating their musical ministry to the furtherance of the Christian message as committed leaders for God, much could be accomplished for His glory.

I shared these thoughts with David Egner, writer and editor with Radio Bible Class and contributor to *Our Daily Bread*. Together we developed a growing awareness that the church choir should be one of the key influences in the spiritual dynamic of any local church. We also realized not only that choir members must be trained musically and spiritually for public leadership but that the choir experience itself represents opportunities for unusual spiritual growth and Christian fellowship for the individual member.

The earnest prayer of each of us is that this devotional book will stimulate church choir members to appreciate anew the importance of their local church and the role of the choir in providing inspiring leadership in the services. May they also realize that individual living must always model the reality of the truths proclaimed in one’s public ministries.

*Oh God of eternal beauty and harmony, who has ordained
that we shall declare Your glory in the joy of music,
Anoint with Your Spirit all who, by voice or instrument,
lead the praises of Your people,
That in sincerity and truth we may ever magnify Your name
in concert with saints and angels. Amen.*

The Marvel of the Human Voice

Respect and Concern

My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You. (Ps. 71:23)

THE VOICE IS one of God's choicest gifts to humanity. It gives us the ability to communicate our thoughts and feelings vocally. One of the important arguments in support of creationism—that humankind bears the image of God and is not the result of mere chance evolution—is that only humanity has been given the ability to communicate an organized language with a voice. Even more, we can enhance our verbal and emotional expressions with musical sounds of pitch, duration, harmonies—we can sing!

The psalmist exclaimed: "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). Part of the awe-inspiring and marvelous makeup of our bodies is the voice. We do not need to understand all of the scientific intricacies of our vocal mechanism to appreciate the wonder of communication. One of life's most difficult burdens is simply the loss of the human voice.

"It is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful" (Ps. 147:1). There is a personal therapeutic value for the individual who learns to enjoy the activity of singing. It is also an activity that pleases God. Because singing is normal human behavior, almost without exception everyone can learn to sing. The voice, researchers tell us, is one of the best reflections of the personality, for it reveals the real "you" of any person. It follows, then, that developing oneself as an individual should improve the voice—and, in turn, that improving the voice should make a better person.

Choir members should learn to treat their voices with respect and to take proper care of this choice instrument. To sing well on Sunday requires not only musical and spiritual preparation but also adequate rest on Saturday night. A singer must be careful not to strain the voice with overuse before the Sunday services. It is also important to eat and drink properly prior to singing. If hoarseness and laryngitis persist, one should seek professional medical advice.

Above all, choir members need to be in tune with God with their

mind and heart, so that the voice will reflect the genuineness of their personal relationship with the Creator.

Come, we that love the Lord,
and let our joys be known;
join in a song with sweet accord,
and thus surround the throne.

—Isaac Watts

Group Discussion

In what ways can our voices reflect our physical, emotional, and spiritual condition? If our individual hearts and voices are not singing, what might this possibly say about our total view of life? If this congregation does not sing well, what can this reflect about our church life?

Suggested Group Singing

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee,” No. 51 in *101 Hymn Stories*

“In My Heart There Rings a Melody,” No. 45 in *101 More Hymn Stories*

Thought

The voice you are born with is God’s gift to you; the use of your voice is your gift to God.

Oh God of creation, thank You for the gift of my voice. Thank You for the opportunity to use it for Your glory during this new choir season. Together may our voices and our lives blend well that we may offer You the praise You deserve. May the sounds of our voices be pleasing to You. We pray this in Your Son’s holy name. Amen.