

How to use these hymn transpositions

The Home Discipleship Hymnbook Instrumental editions are divided into five books:

C Instruments: flute, oboe, violin

Bb Instruments: trumpet, cornet, clarinet, soprano & tenor saxophone, baritone TC

Eb Instruments: alto & baritone saxophone

Bass Clef Instruments: Bassoon, Trombone, Baritone, Cello, Bass, Tuba

F Instruments: French Horn

These books are designed to be useful in a variety of settings, from accompanying family worship or small groups to using in a church worship with a small ensemble or large orchestra. The accompaniment is a transposition of the piano/vocal/guitar book, so it integrates seamlessly with that book. Here are some suggestions on how to best utilize this book:

Family or Small Group: one or two instruments play along with the singers on any line. Brass players may need to play with a straight or cup mute in the horn. All instrumentalists should make sure they hear the singer and not just themselves! It is easy to overplay.

Ensembles for Corporate Worship: depending on the size of your church, you may find yourself with enough musicians for a small ensemble or a full orchestra. Either way, you will find many ways to use these books to enhance the musical life of your congregation. These books are to be used primarily as accompaniment for congregational singing, but also can be used for instrumental service music as well—during communion, offering, etc.

Other uses: These books can also be used for sight reading and chorale material for bands and orchestras. Since the hymns are in a variety of keys, The CD set in conjunction with the instrumental book can serve as play-along material for the developing instrumentalist.

Tips for using these books:

- **Tuning:** before using these books in a public setting, care should be given for all musicians to “warm-up”, or get the fingers and lips moving. This can be as easy as the musicians playing through several verses of a hymn, and then tuning. Musicians should tune to the piano (if used in the service), string players to “A”, and brass and woodwinds to Bb or F (although many directors I know tune to Bb, I prefer F because it is an open valve on the French Horn and it tends to “lift” the pitch up from the Bb on most instruments). For the brass and woodwinds, tuning should be done from the lowest pitched instruments to the highest, beginning with a long, sustained tone, *mp* to *mf*, with everyone listening and concentrating on the pitch, and thus gradually joining in on that sound, from the lowest-pitched instruments to the highest. The idea is NOT to have an exact A=440, but to have everyone tuned to the keyboard instrument, and then tuned to each other, the idea being to envelope your sound with that of the ensemble, with no “wobbles” in the pitch. Generally, the order of entrance in tuning should be Tuba, Bari Sax, Bass clarinet, bassoon, baritone, trombone, tenor sax, french horn, alto sax, trumpet, clarinet, and flute. Strings should then tune separately.

- **Balance and Blend:** The idea is for all instruments to be heard and form a cohesive unit that can work together. The idea is not to have any one instrument or family of instruments predominate, but the ensemble blend together.
- **Transposition:** these books have been designed to be played by 2nd year players and up. Accordingly, the lines of music have been put in the easiest ranges for young players. You may find it necessary for transposition to occur either up or down an octave in order to utilize the ideal range for the instrument. For example, flutes or clarinets may wish to play the soprano or alto lines up an octave in order to be heard easier. On some parts, the tenor and bass lines may sound better if transposed down an octave (I'm thinking here of the tenor sax, for example).