



Written by
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“The Sovereignty of God” *A Choral Reading of the Psalms of David*

Scriptures: Psalm 29:1-9; Psalm 140:1-8; Psalm 27:1-3; Psalm 62:1-2, 5-8; Psalm 23.

Dramatic Category: Choral Reading

What is “Choral Reading”?

Choral Reading is “literature in vocal dimension,” which means that multiple voices interpret literature, thus giving it dimension that a single voice-oral interpretation cannot give.

NOTE:

Please consult the “Choral Reading Guidelines” that follow this reading. There, you will find helpful hints to maximize this beautiful art form that uses the syncopated reading of scripture to communicate the truth of God’s Word.

Performance Time: 8 minutes (4 Psalms @ 2 minutes each)

Number of Readers: 6 readers (2 men (M), 4 women (F))

Suggested Configuration and Lighting Notes:

1 (M)	2 (M)		
3 (F)	4 (F)	5 (F)	6 (F)
<i>(spotlight at stage right)</i>		<i>(spotlight at stage left)</i>	
<i>(spotlight on pastor at center)</i>			

Background Music: Any recognizable, instrumental tune of the Psalms of David set to music.

Sound Needs: Six standing microphones. The readers must have their hands free.

Props:

Small black notebooks in which readers keep their scripts.

(The notebooks are held waist-high, in the left hand, leaving the right hand free for gestures that “physicalize” the meaning of the words.)

Costume Suggestions: Black and white, with the addition of one other color, shared by all readers

Music: Begin the background music while the readers get into place.

Pastor Introduction:

He gives an introduction to David as a writer of Psalms or gives the background to Psalm 29: 1-9, then he steps out of the way.

LIGHTS: ALL THREE SPOTS UP (so both groups of readers blend into one)

The Script:

Women: Ascribe to the Lord,

Men: O mighty ones,

Women: Ascribe to the Lord,

Men: the glory due His name;

3: Worship the Lord,

6: in the splendor of His holiness.

2: The voice of the Lord

3, 4 is over the waters;

All: The God of glory thunders,

1, 2: The Lord thunders

Women: Over the mighty waters.

2: The voice of the Lord

5, 6: is powerful;

1: The voice of the Lord

3, 4: is majestic.

2: The voice of the Lord

3, 4: breaks the cedars;

1, 2: The Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

4: He makes Lebanon skip like a calf
5: Mt. Zion is like a young wild ox.
2: The voice of the Lord
3, 4: Strikes with flashes of lightning.
1: The voice of the Lord
5, 6: Shakes the desert;
Women: The Lord Shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
2: The voice of the Lord
3: Twists the oaks,
4: And strips the forests bare.
5: And in his temple
6: all cry,
A: "Glory!"

LIGHTS: STAGE RIGHT AND STAGE LEFT SPOTS OUT
CENTER STAGE SPOT FOR PASTOR UP

Pastor: (*Steps back into his center spot and gives a transition to Psalm 140:1-8*)

LIGHTS: CENTER SPOT OUT
STAGE RIGHT SPOT UP

3: Rescue me,
O Lord, from evil men;
4: Protect me from men of violence,
1: Who devise evil plans in their hearts
and stir up war every day.
They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent's;
The poison of vipers is on their lips.
3: Keep me, O Lord,
from the hands of the wicked;
4: Protect me
from men of violence
Who plan to trip my feet.

1: Proud men have hidden a snare for me;
They have spread out the cords of their net
And have set traps for me along my path.

1, 3, 4: Oh Lord,

3: I say to you,
"You are my God."

1, 3, 4: Hear, O Lord,

4: my cry for mercy.
O Sovereign Lord,
my strong deliverer,

1: Who shields my head in the day of battle--

3, 4: Do not grant the wicked their desires,

1, 3, 4: O Lord;

1: Do not let their plans succeed,
Or they will become proud.

LIGHTS: STAGE RIGHT SPOT OUT
CENTER SPOT UP

Pastor: *(Steps back into his center spot and gives a transition to Psalm 27:1-3 and Psalm 62: 1-2, 5-8, then he steps out of the way.)*

LIGHTS: CENTER SPOT OUT
STAGE LEFT SPOT UP

5: The Lord is my light and my salvation,

2, 5, 6: Whom shall I fear?

6: The Lord is the stronghold of my life

2, 5, 6: Of Whom shall I be afraid?

2: When evil men advance against me

5: To devour my flesh

2: When my enemies and my foes attack me,

6: They will stumble and fall.

2: Though an army besiege me,

5: My heart will not fear;
6: Though war break out against me,
2: even then will I be confident.
5: My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from him.
6: He alone is my rock and my salvation;
He is my fortress,
I will never be shaken.
2: Find rest,
5, 6: O my soul,
2: in God alone;
5, 6: My hope comes from him.
2: He alone is my rock and my salvation;
He is my fortress,
5, 6: I will not be shaken.
5: My salvation
6: and my honor
5, 6: depend on God
2: He is my mighty rock,
my refuge.
Trust in Him at all times,
2, 5, 6: O People;
5: Pour out your hearts to Him,
6: For God is our refuge.

**LIGHTS: STAGE LEFT SPOT OUT
CENTER SPOT UP**

Pastor: *(Steps back into his center spot and gives a transition to Psalm 23, then he steps out of the way.)*

LIGHTS: **CENTER SPOT OUT**
 STAGE LEFT AND STAGE RIGHT SPOTS UP

All: **The Lord is my shepherd,**
3, 4, 5, 6: **I shall not want.**
3: **He makes me lie down in green pastures,**
4: **He leads me beside quiet waters,**
5: **He restores my soul.**
6: **He guides me in paths of righteousness,**
 For His name's sake.

1, 2: **Even though I walk through the valley**
 Of the shadow of death,

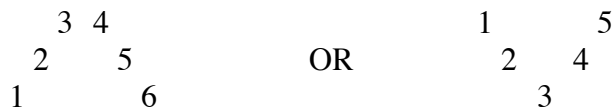
4: **I will fear no evil,**
3: **For you are with me;**
5: **Your rod**
6: **and your staff,**
3, 4, 5, 6: **They comfort me.**
3: **You prepare a table before me**
1, 2: **In the presence of my enemies.**
4: **You anoint my head with oil.**
1, 2: **My cup overflows.**
5: **Surely goodness and mercy**
6: **will follow me**
1, 2: **All the days of my life,**
3, 4, 5, 6: **and I will dwell in the house of the Lord**
ALL: **forever.**

LIGHTS: **ALL SPOTS OUT**

The End

Choral Reading Guidelines

1. Select literature that is **lyrical** such as: songs, poems, stories with repetitious dialogue, odes, or ballads.
2. Analyze the literature to determine the **theme**. Divide it into phrases that deserve more emphatic treatment, such as a single voice for effect or all voices for effect.
3. Assign each member of the choral reading team a **number**.
4. **Divide the literature up by phrases** and decide which number or numbers will read which lines.
5. Create **“phonal”** (dominant/deeper voices) and **“anti-phonal”** (softer/higher voices) effects by assigning lines to voices that come from opposite places on the team. These voices will create the same relationship as “melody” has with “harmony” in music. This keeps the audience entertained.
6. **Choreograph** the arrangement of the readers, for example:



7. Assign **gestures** to various members of the team to emphasize the lines they will read.
8. **Costume** the readers for effect if it is appropriate. Generally, readers wear black and white. It is very effective to dress the ladies in floor-length black skirts and white blouses, and the men in black slacks, white shirts, and a colored tie. Sometimes, the addition of one other color is appropriate as long as all readers use the same additional color. This uniform effect helps tie the visual image together to create the illusion of this being “one” reading with multiple voices.
9. **Props** are used sparingly if it would add to the effect of the reading. The only constant prop used is the small black notebook in which each reader keeps his/her script. It is held at waist-height in the left hand, leaving the right hand free for gestures.
10. **Rehearse** the reading over and over so that the readers are **syncopated** and there is no interruption or hesitation in the **vocal unison**.