



Written by
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"The Christian Hope" *A Choral Reading of Resurrection Scriptures*

Scripture: Paraphrased from Matthew 28, John 20, and Luke 24

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.

Topic: The resurrection of Jesus Christ

Performance Time: 3 minutes

Number of Readers: 3 female readers (F) + 2 or more singers (*or a full choir*)

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, or "biblical attire" for the three women readers.

Sound:

A thunderclap sound effect
5 standing mics (3 for readers, 2 for singers), The readers must have their hands free.

Background Music:

An instrumental version of "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" or another resurrection song
Stirring instrumental for the resurrection sequence
Music is played down and under throughout.

STAGING NOTE:

Use levels to create the readers, slightly above the singers, so the readers can look to the singers during the musical interludes. For example:

1 (F) 2 (F)

3 (F)

Singer 1

Singer 2

LIGHTING NOTE:

A gentle blue light, blending into a soft rose suggesting the early morning would be effective.

The Script:

MUSIC: *Begin with a stirring instrumental under the following dialogue:*

- 1:** **On the first day of the week, very early in the morning,
the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.**
- 2:** **There was a violent earthquake,
for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven,
and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.**
- 3:** **His appearance was like lightning,**

SOUND: *(clap of thunder)*

**and his clothes were white as snow.
The guards were so afraid, they became like dead men.**

MUSIC: *Transition as music intensifies:*

- 2:** **Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed.
She ran to Simon Peter and to John and said,**

3: "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,
and we don't know where they have put him!"

MUSIC: *Builds to a climax then goes silent*

1: So Peter and John started for the tomb.
John out ran Peter and reached the tomb first.
He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there, but did not go in.

MUSIC: *Background to the hymn begins: "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"
(or another resurrection song)*

3: Then Simon Peter arrived and went into the tomb.
He saw the strips of linen lying there
as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head.

MUSIC: *"...He lives, he lives ... Who once was dead..."*

2: Finally, John also went inside.
He saw and believed.

1: They still did not understand from scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

MUSIC: *"He lives, he lives, he lives, he lives
He lives and grants me daily bread.
He lives and I shall conquer death,
He lives my mansions to prepare
He lives to bring me safely there"*

2: Then the disciples went back to their homes,
but Mary stood outside the tomb crying.
As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white,

MUSIC: *"... He lives all glory to his name"*

1: "Woman, why are you crying?"

3: They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they have put him."

2: At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there,

MUSIC: *"... He lives my savior still the same..."*

2: but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

1: "Woman, why are you crying?"

Who is it that you are looking for?

2: Thinking he was the gardener, she said,

**3: "Sir, if you have carried him away,
tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."**

MUSIC: *"... What joy the blessed assurance gives..."*

2: Jesus said to her,

1: "Mary."

2: She turned toward him and cried out,

3: "Rabboni!"

2: Jesus said,

**1: "Do not hold on to me,
for I have not yet returned to my Father and your Father,
to my God and your God."**

MUSIC: *"... I know that redeemer lives... He lives, He lives..."*

2: Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news:

MUSIC: *"... I know that redeemer lives..."*

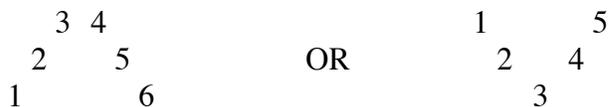
3: "I have seen the Lord!"

MUSIC: *"... He lives... He lives!"*

MUSIC: *Big instrumental finish!*

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**.