



## Leader Guide

### Why Should We Sing?

Greetings and thank you for downloading this resource. We hope that it will give you ideas, guidelines, and an easy jumpstart to “fill the night with music and light.” Your presence in the world will help others see the light of hope and the music of good will for all people in this challenging time. This is why we sing. Whether you are worshiping online or in adapted in-person gatherings, singing in enclosed spaces is still not advised. So what do we do when it isn’t safe to sing inside? We take it outside! Let us reclaim and amplify this beloved tradition of caroling, bringing more hope, love, joy, and peace to the world.

### Who Should Sing?

Everyone! This could be an endeavor led by members of your choir and musical ensembles. Perhaps they are leaders of small groupings of people from your church, ensuring that everyone gets a chance to participate and have solid, confident leadership. If you have a larger choir, perhaps smaller groupings of singers from the choir are sent out to different parts of your community or member’s homes (especially those that will not be able to get out themselves). You may have already-established groups of people who meet for small group fellowship and study and they could form a caroling group. The booklets and recordings are set up in such a way that even households with no prior caroling experience could engage in singing together for their own enjoyment.

## How Shall We Sing? Safety Guidelines

While we all continue to yearn for a sense of normalcy and to be able to celebrate this important part of the Christian Year, we also take our responsibility to “love thy neighbor” very seriously. While the scientific and governmental guidelines continue to change often based on new information, we urge you to stay on the side of caution. Below are our suggestions for how to sing and celebrate without endangering others, however we encourage you to follow your local, state, and national guidelines.

For full updates on current recommendations concerning group singing and religious gatherings, please go to the following sites:

- o <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>
- o <https://thehymnsociety.org/covid-19/>

Singers who are quarantined together (example: family members living in the same household or roommates sharing living space) can sing together without masks or precautions unless someone has been recently exposed to a COVID-positive person.

Singers who are not quarantined together (example: choir members of a church, neighbors from a local neighborhood, etc...) can sing together outside with *properly fitted* masks, staying at least 6 feet—but preferably 12 feet—away from other singers.

Instruments, papers, folders, or any other physical props should not be shared. If multiple people do touch something, use hand sanitizer immediately before touching anything else.

Listeners / Audience should stay at least 12 feet away from the performers.

## Where Shall We Sing? Ideas for Venues and Setting the Scene

The title of this resource came about from imagining music filling the night in various places in a community. Filling the night with music *and light* can be accomplished with luminaria that will be beautiful as well as practical. You will notice in these photos of people demonstrating safe distancing configurations, that you can have an “advance” person measure out a space and place luminaria where singers should stand. This helps keep people from drifting too close to one another. You can also have a line of luminaria in front of the singers in order to keep the audience a safe distance away. We are sure you will think of ideas for locations based on your own context but here are some ideas to jumpstart your brainstorming:



*In this example, the luminaria are supplemented with inexpensive silk poinsettias that are easy to use and transport, creating a safety barrier for the audience.*

**“Park”** - Set up in an open common area in your town/city/community or at your church. Be sure there is enough space for safe distancing of the number of singers in your group. This “stationary” setting would be great for the longer 25-30 minute set.



**“Porch”** - Whether the entrance area of a home is a porch, stoop, steps, or the entrance to your church, this traditional version of caroling is why we put together the shorter, repeatable 10-minute set. It could be that you are caroling from house to house (as is the tradition) or you are going out to the entrance area of your own house to serenade the neighbors within earshot!



If you are visiting from home to home, stay far enough away from the entrance to be safe as well as safely distanced from each other.



**“Sidewalk”** - If you are in a neighborhood, you could divide your singing group in half and face one another across a road by spacing yourselves out on the sidewalks. Be sure not to let people pass in front of you too close as you sing! You could also place four parts of your group on four corners of an intersection in a neighborhood (probably harder to do in a busy city intersection).





Get creative with groupings of luminaria and poinsettia, especially if you are doing a more “stationary set.” One great way to get more people involved is to invite those who are too vulnerable to come out and sing to decorate the luminaria bags that will go with you. This is one way they can still be part of “filling the night with music and light!”

*Please note: we highly recommend using battery-operated candles in the luminaria. Besides being safer, this works great for moving them around. You’ll need something weighty (like a rock) in the bottom of each bag (our demonstration photo shoot included lots of bags blowing over until we put a rock in the bottom of each one).*

Check out the [Worship Design Studio Pinterest Board](#) for more luminary ideas.

Here is a good [DIY Luminary](#) idea.

You can also purchase bags and battery-powered tea lights: See an example [HERE](#).



## What Shall We Sing? Song Sets

We have created two different “sets”—a longer “**concert set**” for a more stationary scenario and a shorter “**caroling set**” that you can repeat as you move from place to place. There is a **narration** that you can choose to use in between songs that is included in the participant songbook. Using the narration for the longer “concert” set is an easy way to create a simple “**cantata-like presentation**” if you live in a place that isn’t too cold for people to experience a longer setting outdoors. If it is too cold for an audience, you could also record your musicians and play the video at a community gathering **on Zoom or other livestream platform** (yes, you have permission to use these resources in that way with credit).

SET	30-Minute Stationary Set - “concert”	10-Minute Moving Set – “caroling”
1	O Come, O Come, Emmanuel	O Come, All Ye Faithful (fun “Covid Carol” stanza included!)
2	O Come, All Ye Faithful (fun “Covid Carol” stanza included!)	Go, Tell it on the Mountain
3	It Came Upon A Midnight Clear (fun “Covid Carol” stanzas included!)	Silent Night
4	O Little Town of Bethlehem (text from “Covid Carols”)	We Wish You A Merry Christmas (“We Wish You A Happy Quarantine” included)
5	This Little Light of Mine	
6	Go, Tell it On The Mountain	
7	Silent Night	
8	Joy to the World	
9	We Wish You A Merry Christmas (“We Wish You A Happy Quarantine” included)	

The songbook includes the **music notation**—you’ll get creative with figuring out a variety of ways to sing the songs depending on your singers (solos, unison, parts, full or partial ensemble, etc). Or just stay simple and go for it!

The **accompaniment recordings** were part of the downloads for you to put on the device of your choice or you can go to the webpage link below and play each one directly from there (provided you have the internet or cellular connection to facilitate that outside).

**Links to play accompaniment from a computer or phone:**

[10-Minute Playlist on Soundcloud](#)

[30-Minute Playlist on Soundcloud](#)

Besides using the “karaoke” tracks, you may decide to utilize your own musicians instead, creating your own accompaniment tracks or supplementing the included recorded tracks. The next couple of pages include tips and ideas for supplemental accompaniment. Be sure you check out the fun ideas for body percussion rhythms!

## Ideas for Supplemental Instrumentation

- o O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
  - Use chimes or handbells
  - Use any E bells and ring on the downbeats during the stanzas. Use G, A, B, D bells (with G in the bass) on the refrain “rejoice”, switching back to the E octaves on the very last note of the refrain.
- o O Come, All Ye Faithful
  - Have someone keep this rhythm on their thighs or in some other way. Then sing the hymn with that as your accompaniment. See a video example [HERE](#).

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful". The top staff is a vocal line in G major, 4/4 time, with the lyrics: "O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri -". The bottom staff is a rhythmic accompaniment line, consisting of a series of eighth notes with accents and slurs, representing the rhythm to be kept on thighs or another percussive instrument.

- o It Came Upon A Midnight Clear
  - Speak this poem instead of singing it. Think about it like a dramatic reading or a story.
- o This Little Light of Mine
  - Have children lead this song and/or use the [sign language](#) or [simple hand motions](#)!
- o Go, Tell it On The Mountain
  - Get a drum or something percussive to strike and use this rhythm as your accompaniment on the refrain each time. See an example video [HERE](#).

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Go, Tell it On The Mountain". The top staff is a vocal line in G major, 4/4 time, with the lyrics: "Go tell it on the moun - tain. O-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where." The bottom staff is a rhythmic accompaniment line, consisting of a series of eighth notes with accents and slurs, representing the rhythm to be used as accompaniment on the refrain.

- o Silent Night
  - Silent Night is lovely with just a simple guitar accompaniment. Learn a simple guitar part [HERE](#). Sing with the guitar [HERE](#).

- o Joy to the World
  - Joy to the World is a great piece to have fun with rhythm! Start a simple clapping rhythm for the first stanza. That person should keep going with their part, and with each stanza, have someone add another clapping part that's different than the first. See a video example [HERE](#)
  - Sing Joy to the World in a lower key (the key of G) and use the same bells you used for "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel". Playing any combination of G, A, B, and D in random order (make sure G is the lowest bell). With each stanza, make the bell playing faster and more random until it's a cacophony of bells!
- o We Wish You A Merry Christmas and/or CC We Wish You A Happy Quarantine
  - Make up a dance or movements for your closing song! Nothing brings a smile to people's faces like seeing others enjoy themselves. Be silly! Be goofy! Have fun!

### **For Handbell Ensembles!**

If you want more handbells (we said, handbells, not cowbells!)... these two resources have lots of carols in them with easy handbell parts.

***Ring Along Christmas Favorites & Ring Along Christmas Favorites II*** by Artis Freeman, published by [Cantabile Press](#). Catalog number CACP3001 and CACP3007 No music experience necessary! Each book is for a specific bell/chime and the words or syllables are circled to indicate when you ring and underlined to indicate when you damp.

***Porta Bell System of Caroling 77, 78 & 79*** by Robert Groth Traditional Christmas carols are arranged for a few ringers to go caroling with only bells and music. A division of [Jeffers Handbell Supply](#). Each volume contains several carols.

**Let's Celebrate Together! Post your photos and videos online at:  
[Park, Porch, and Sidewalk Sings Facebook Group](#)**

**Instagram and Twitter: [#carol2020](#)**



## Giving Credit

When posting your videos to public forums (livestream, social media, YouTube, etc) please use the following notation:

“Park, Porch and Sidewalk Sings” used with permission of Worship Design Studio ([www.worshipdesignstudio.com](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com)) and The Center for Congregational Song (<https://congregationsong.org>).

*Resource Design and Production of Musical Settings, Leader Guides and Narration:  
Brian Hehn, Center for Congregational Song and Marcia McFee, Worship Design Studio*

*Music Notation Engraving: Glenn Osborne and [hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org)*

*Songbook Layout and Graphics: Jenna Johnson*

*Thanks to Dr. McFee’s students at San Francisco Theological Seminary for demonstrating safe distance singer scenarios!*

