

What Child is This, Who Laid to Rest?

descant tutor for reading changes to accompany hymn singing

Source tune: Lever changes are marked - notice that you'll never need to play middle C string as a natural, so this can preset ahead. Just remember NOT to play that string when you are playing harmony notes, stay below this spot.

Measures 1-4 of the descant. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 6/8. The notation is in treble and bass clefs. Chord changes are marked above the staff: Em (measure 1), D (measure 2), C (measure 3), and C (measure 4). The melody in the treble clef consists of eighth and quarter notes. The bass clef provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Measures 5-8 of the descant. Chord changes are marked above the staff: B (measure 5), Em (measure 6), D (measure 7), C (measure 8), and B (measure 9). A line with the number 4 indicates a measure rest for 4 measures at the beginning of measure 5.

Measures 9-12 of the descant. Chord changes are marked above the staff: Em (measure 9), G (measure 10), D (measure 11), Em (measure 12), C (measure 13), and B (measure 14). A line with the number 8 indicates a measure rest for 8 measures at the beginning of measure 9.

Measures 13-16 of the descant. Chord changes are marked above the staff: G (measure 13), D (measure 14), Em (measure 15), B (measure 16), and Em (measure 17). A line with the number 13 indicates a measure rest for 13 measures at the beginning of measure 13.

If you aren't accompanying the hymn alone, and there's someone else playing melody, you can simplify by omitting all the altered notes. There's only one time that the altered note falls on a strong beat (m.14). Replace the D# with F# and it will fit just fine.

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25 Sometimes melody and bass lines are close, in that case, outline the chord structure with root and fifth instead.

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If you are going back to the source tune, you'll need to change the D natural. If you're repeating the descant, keep the D#.

Often, on a last verse, it's effective for all the accompanying instruments to play only melody. This is an easy way to end strong and many find that melody alone is easier than accompaniment.