

SOME TIPS ON CONDUCTING

Now that you have learned all the patterns and know everything you need to do to direct an entire hymn, you can begin to develop an appropriate conducting style. Here are some tips on how to do this:

1. Practice conducting in front of a full-length mirror. Try to make your arm movements smooth and even. Move only your arm. Don't let your body sway or move in rhythm with the music, but don't hold it stiff either. Be still but relaxed.
2. Avoid floppy wrist motions.
3. Keep your beat patterns simple. Fancy flourishes and curlicues are unnecessary and can confuse the accompanist and congregation. A good director is easy to follow.

4. Don't make your arm motions too large or too small. They should be large enough to be seen from the back of the congregation yet never exaggerated or uncomfortable for you.
5. Look at the congregation as you direct, moving your eyes from one part of the group to another to encourage the group to sing. (Memorizing the hymns frees your eyes from the book.) Eye contact with the congregation is most important at the beginning and end of the hymn and between verses.
6. Let the expression on your face reflect the mood of the hymn; be sure it is a pleasant expression.

7. Let your arm movements help express the mood of the hymn. Use energetic movements for a joyful hymn and calm movements for a reverent hymn.
8. While conducting, if you lose your place in the beat pattern, move your arm in an up-and-down motion in time with the music until you find your place again. Another all-purpose pattern that can be used in any instance is a sideways figure eight.

