

# WARM-UPS FOR YOUNG SINGERS

## 1. Finding good singing posture

- a) Give silent direction to stand, and then sit. Take your time at first. Then vary the tempo of your movement, but never go too fast. You may have to indicate speed with your hands too.
- b) Then sit and change your posture in different ways – slouch, stiffen up, throw one leg over the other, put your elbows on your knees, cross your hands on opposite knees, scratch your head etc. Feel free to vary this with any other ‘poor postures’ for singing (Don’t move too quickly. Make sure all the singers are copying you). End this exercise with a slouch, followed by stiffening straight up and finally settling into a relaxed but balanced posture at the edge of your seat with your sit bones supporting you and your back ‘lengthened’ comfortably. Avoid expressions like ‘sit / stand up straight’ or sit / stand like soldiers’. This creates tension in children and they then bring that into their singing.
- c) No talking is necessary throughout the above and your rehearsal can now begin in a relaxed environment. Thank and praise your singers with a gentle voice for a nice start to your class.

**N.B:** If you think your pupils would never be silent or calm enough to do the above, you could just start straight in with the next warm up.

## 2. Physical warm up

- a) Ask your singers the following if they stand or sit to play golf / hurling. Who can tell me how to swing / hurl? Let’s take a ‘practice’ swing / hurl. Make the sound **whish**  
Let’s hit it higher and further: **whisssssshhhhhhhh**
- b) Ask if there any basketballers in the room? Can you show me how to bounce and shoot?  
‘Bounce’ the ball 4 times and then **shoooooot**  
Take the shot from further back and **shoooooooooooooooooot** again, and a third time.

The activity does not matter; it is the sound that matters. If the school sport is hockey or volleyball, use those sports instead.

## 3. Posture

- a) Ask, ‘would my posture for hurling or basketball (substitute your own sports) be good for singing?’ Accept all answers and then ask your singers to follow you again while you help them find a good posture for singing.
- b) While standing, tilt yourself forward, then lean back and finally, find a balanced stance, somewhere in the middle, where your feet are firm but not tense and your body is softly aligned.

## 4. Breathing

When asked to ‘take a breath’ children often do the opposite to the normal body motion for breathing. They pull in their tummies, tighten the ribcage and lift the shoulders. The opposite should be the case. The following exercise, first of all, encourages correct breathing and then, progressively, deeper breathing without even drawing attention to it. By blowing out the candle the children’s attention is drawn away from what is happening in their bodies. Gradually, explanations of how the body takes in breath can be introduced but for now the action is enough. Always avoid



Two new blue\_ bal - loons for you. Two new blue\_ bal - loons for you.

Use the kinaesthetic aid for 'ah' while singing this exercise. Keys F, F#, G, Ab and A.

Snug as a bug in a rug. Sung as a bug in a rug.

## 8. Diction

- Whisper – T, T, T – class echoes
- Whisper – T, K, P – class echoes
- Whisper – TKP, TKP, TKP as lively triplets – class echoes
- Whisper – ‘Tip of the tongue’
- Whisper – ‘Tip of the tongue and the teeth’
- Whisper – ‘Tip of the tongue and the teeth and the lips’
- Now sing and ask the class to echo:

Echo Echo

Tip of the tongue. Tip of the tongue and the teeth.

Echo Echo

Tip of the tongue and the teeth and the lips. Tip of the, tip of the tongue.

- And now sing it all and ask the class to echo:

Tip of the tongue and the teeth and the lips. Tip of the, tip of the tongue.

## 9. More Diction

- Sing the following and ask the class to echo.

Ches - ter the chee - tah he chewed a chunk of cheap ched - dar cheese.\_\_\_\_\_

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Ches - ter the chee - tah he chewed a chunk of cheap ched - dar cheese.\_\_\_\_\_

- Move up a semitone and repeat.
- Move up one more semitone and repeat.
- Now sing again, this time introducing the upbeat with the word ‘Old’.

Old Ches-ter the chee-tah he chewed a chunk of cheap ched-dar cheese.\_\_\_\_

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Ches-ter the chee-tah he chewed a chunk of cheap ched-dar cheese.\_\_\_\_

## 10. Agility – Plus one

‘Plus one’ can be used with all age groups but adjust it according to the ability of the group. Explain that each time you sing you will add something extra for them to remember. Sing number 1. Children sing it. Sing 2. Children sing it. Sing 3. Children sing it. Sing 4. Children sing it.

As with the sizzling echoes, repeat a phrase if it’s not completely accurate.

**1.** **Echo**

doo-bee doo-bee, doo-bee doo-bee, doo - bee - doo

**2.** **Echo**

doo-bee doo-bee, doo-bee doo-bee, doo - bee - doo-bee-doo-bee - doo

**3.** **Echo**

doo-bee doo-bee, doo-bee doo-bee, doo - bee - doo-bee-doo-bee, doo - bee - doo

**4.** **Echo**

doo-bee doo-bee, doo-bee doo-bee, doo - bee - doo-bee-doo-bee, doo - bee, doo-bee-doo-bee - doo

## 11. Question and Answers

- Ask a question – favourite sport, TV programme, ice-cream flavour. Ask two people (Ask another if you get the same answer). Ask a second question to two people. Explain that like your questions and answers music often asks a question in the form of a musical phrase and can then give different answers.
- Sing **s l s m s l s m** using hand signs. Class echoes. Repeat. Ensure the children use their hand signs too. Now ask the class to ask you the question **s l s m s l s m**. They listen to your answers. Class sings **s l s m s l s m**. Continue to do hand signs with them as they sing and sign. You respond with **r m f m f s**. Use hand signs as you sing.
- Class sings **s l s m s l s m**. Continue to do hand signs with them as they sing and sign. You respond with **r f m r d**.
- Now ask the singers to join you singing it all together with hand signs. Take it slowly. **s l s m s l s m; r m f m f s; s l s m s l s m; r f m r d.**

e) Tell them you know a song that uses question and answer phrases and sing

To - ny Chest - nut knows I love you. To - ny knows, To - ny knows.

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To - ny Chest - nut knows I love you. On - ly To - ny knows.

d) Then let them sing it with you while you and they also sign. Ensure the tempo always allows them to sign comfortably.

e) Finally, add the gestures. (Toe, knee...etc)

**This leads onto ‘TO MARKET’ which begins with a Q & A theme.  
Open the PowerPoint presentation and teach the song.**

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**Warm-ups for the song, ‘REMEMBER’.**

Sing the following using hand signs and ask the singers to echo each one:

1. s m s      2. m s m      3. m s l s      4. l s d      5. d m l s d

Then do the same, using words:

1. Fol-low me.      2. Fol-low-me.      3. Come and fol-low.      4. Fol-low me.      5. Come and fol-low me.

**‘Remember’ – poem by Christina Rossetti**

*Remember me when I am gone away  
Gone far away into the silent land.  
When you can no more hold me by the hand  
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.  
If you should forget, forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve.  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.*