

B

BRASS TUTOR GUIDE

PSALM 150:
**JOIN THE
CRESCEND** **JTC**



Music and
Creative Arts



SEARCH FOR MUSIC AND
CREATIVE ARTS ON YOUTUBE

A

LEADERS GUIDE FOR ALL

A

B

SPECIFIC GUIDES

B

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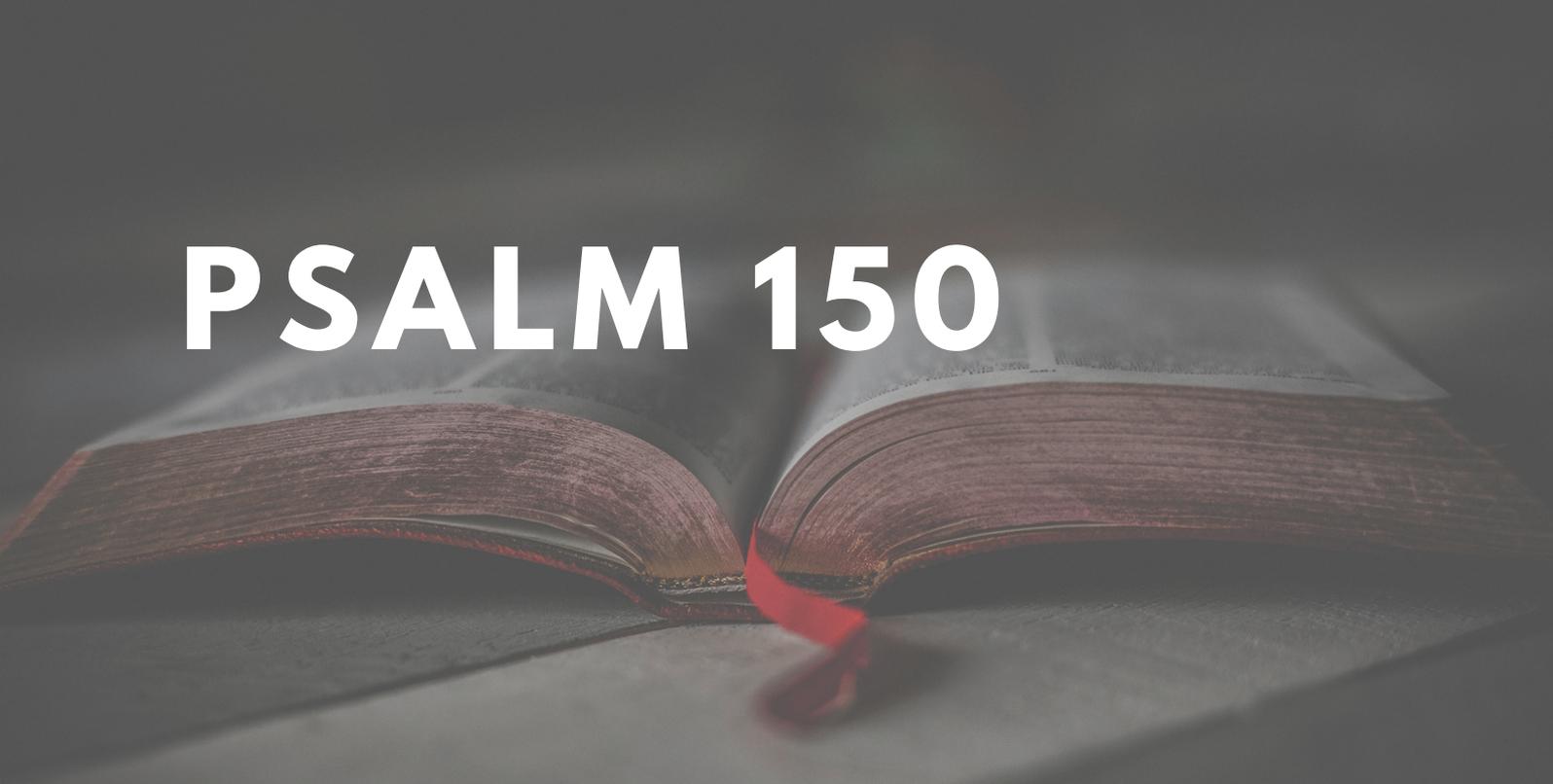


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'God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible.' - 2 Timothy 1:7 MSG

PSALM 150



Psalm 150 is the driving force behind this resource, as the Psalmist depicts a sense of joy and enthusiasm we hope that you may be able to draw from this in your ministry. God is good and we will praise him in anyway possible in the hope that our efforts will join together in a crescendo of praise to the Lord.

'1 Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Praise God in his holy sanctuary!

Praise him in his stronghold in the sky!

2 Praise him for his miracles of might!

Praise him for his magnificent greatness!

3 Praise him with the trumpets blasting!

Praise him with the piano and guitar!

4-5 Praise him with drums and dancing!

Praise him with the loud, resounding clash of the cymbals!

Praise him with every instrument you can find!

*6 Let everyone everywhere **JOIN IN THE CRESCENDO***

of ecstatic praise to Yahweh!

Hallelujah! Praise to the Lord!

(Psalm 150:1-6 The Passion Translation)



WHAT IS 'JOIN THE CRESCENDO'?

'Join the Crescendo' is an educational resource, with video supplements found on YouTube, designed for any current and future leaders in The Salvation Army involved in music and creative arts.

'JtC' has been inspired and informed by frontline expressions of music and creative arts across the United Kingdom with Republic of Ireland Territory. This comes to you from the Music and Creative Arts team (MACA).

Guide 'A' is pertinent to all leaders involved in music and the arts and is designed to support, mentor and inspire both current and future leaders.

Guide 'B' follows on from Guide 'A' and gives more detailed guidance relevant to your particular discipline.

Whether you teach one-to-one or in small groups, the material in this document will aid you to teach to the best of your ability. We will also discuss the opportunities for **missional priorities**, **discipleship** and **evangelism** through your tuition; **teaching aims** and areas to consider **before you begin; getting started** followed by **specifics, technical know-how**, some **tips for success** and **what next?**

'JtC' has been created to help enhance your ministry, to enable you and your group to experience the spiritual joy and enthusiasm that the Psalms reflect. The following six sections have been carefully considered in sequence and strive to keep God integral in all that we do. We believe that whatever art form you are teaching, following the principles and advice that are set out in this resource will result in amazing, God-inspired work for his Kingdom!

'For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.'
(Philippians 4:13 NLT)



INTRODUCTION & MISSIONAL PRIORITIES

Welcome to your teacher's guide!

These handy tips and suggestions will hopefully prove valuable in your ministry as a brass teacher within The Salvation Army.

Discipleship and Evangelism

Learning a brass instrument is currently very popular among children at school, with many teachers oversubscribed. The brass banding scene across the United Kingdom is highly active with hundreds of bands performing and contesting regularly. Within our own movement, brass bands have played a vital role in evangelism, worship and affirmed discipleship. So it seems right that we should continue to educate and encourage brass playing to the glory of God and the sharing of the gospel.

'In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.'

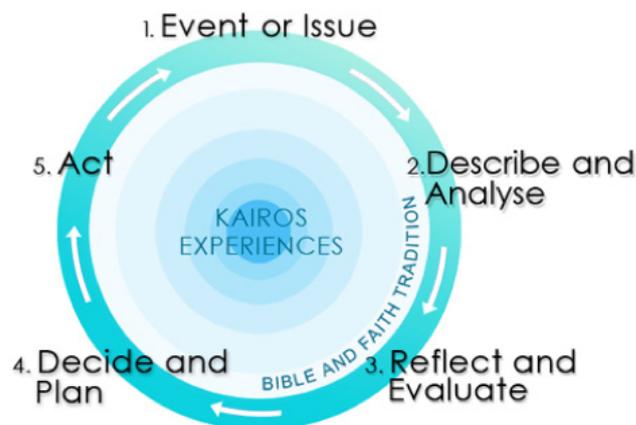
(Titus 2:7-8)

TEACHING AIMS

Key objectives

How do we impart knowledge with the maximum chance of it being memorised? **Repetition, confidence, analogies**, being **passionate** about your subject, **knowing your pupil** and building a **rapport** – all teachers need to remember these important points to build a better understanding.

Always begin with a lesson plan or goal, but be prepared to adapt to your student's needs. The following flowchart is The Salvation Army's 'Faith-based facilitation' cycle, which is a very useful tool when teaching, particularly when planning a lesson or dealing with any issues. Some lessons may start at the 'Decide and Plan' point on the FBF wheel, and when you reach 'Act' you may find you need to respond to an obvious 'issue'.



TEACHING AIMS...

A workflow for your teaching might look something like this: be diligent and **listen and watch** your pupil when they are playing to effectively **evaluate** their playing. Once you start to evaluate what you've just heard, use the '**two stars and a wish**' method: 'two stars' are elements of the performance that stood out as an improvement over previous attempts, while the 'wish' is a suggestion that might help the performance sound even better. **Play the passage again** – the more repetition there is in a lesson, the better the chance of the pupil remembering best practice. Repeat the workflow by listening to and watching your pupil. Above all, try to remember to have **patience, consistency and diligence**.

Setting goals

This is essential for mapping the continued progress of your students, to aid your memory and help the student understand what they are working towards.

Here are a few examples to aid you with this:

Lesson goals – *remember to take a deep breath before playing anything.*

Daily/weekly goals – *try to practise 'little and often' by ensuring 5-10 minutes practice per day.*

Monthly/quarterly/term goals – *try to perform consistently well, especially when playing pieces for an upcoming grade exam or concert.*

Yearly goals – *work towards next ABRSM or Trinity grade exam.*

Playing essentials

As a teacher, these are priorities to look out for, whatever the style of music:

Sound – playing music is an art form, and a good sound is essential in brass playing.

Technique – work hard at improving technique so that the difficult bits become easier to play and therefore more pleasing to listen to!

Reading – your student should endeavour to learn more complex music and music in different styles. This will broaden their ability and help with sight-reading. The first time you read a piece of music can be crucial; if it sinks in the first time, the piece will be much easier to learn.

Posture – when playing, always be relaxed and minimise any tension in the body. This will help both sound and technique.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This guide is designed for you as a teacher to read and digest, then to interpret in your own unique way. It is not a step-by-step guide to teaching, but rather an informative supplement to brass playing in general.

Safeguarding

In modern-day life it is imperative that we understand how to interact with those in our care. If your student is under the age of 18, then you must make yourself aware of and embrace The Salvation Army's Safe & Sound training. This is essential from a legislative point of view for everyone engaging with young people and will ensure that both you and your student are kept safe.

Additionally, make sure that you speak to the relevant people regarding any additional needs that your student may have, as this may affect the way in which you teach and communicate.

This will create a safe and positive environment in which to work and will also demonstrate a clear Christian ethos. A DBS check will also be needed for each volunteer.

Contact your DHQ for details and ensure that these important steps are taken before any teaching begins.

Allocating an instrument

There are many schools of thought here, and books have been written on this very subject! One idea would be to let the students choose by trying a range of instruments; but, perhaps more sensibly, the criteria to consider are:

- personality- what will suit the pupil?
- size and weight of the instrument
- the width of the pupil's lips relative to the size of the mouthpiece

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

What is essential when choosing an instrument is that everything looks comfortable and the student is able to place their lips in the middle of the mouthpiece.

All valved brass instruments share the same valve combinations, so if you feel that your student might benefit by changing instrument from one valved instrument to another, it shouldn't be too big an issue.

Providing an instrument

Let's start with some suggestions on providing instruments. There are three things to consider: the **case**, the **mouthpiece** and the actual **instrument** itself. Even for beginners, we would prioritise quality. For instance, if a young person's first experience is an inferior instrument in a tatty case, it will give a negative vibe. Likewise, a decent looking, clean mouthpiece will be very helpful. The actual instrument can survive the odd dent, but essentially as long as the valves and slides work well and it is in reasonable condition, then it will be perfectly adequate to learn on. If in doubt, contact your regional Music and Creative Arts specialist.

Upkeep of instruments

Make sure that the instrument comes back to you, the teacher, if any issues arise. Home DIY on instruments can be a costly mistake!

What book would a good first teaching resource?

The First things Firsttutor books are a great guide for your beginner students. They cover the basics very well. As the teacher, you will need to keep at least one step ahead in terms of the stages of development.



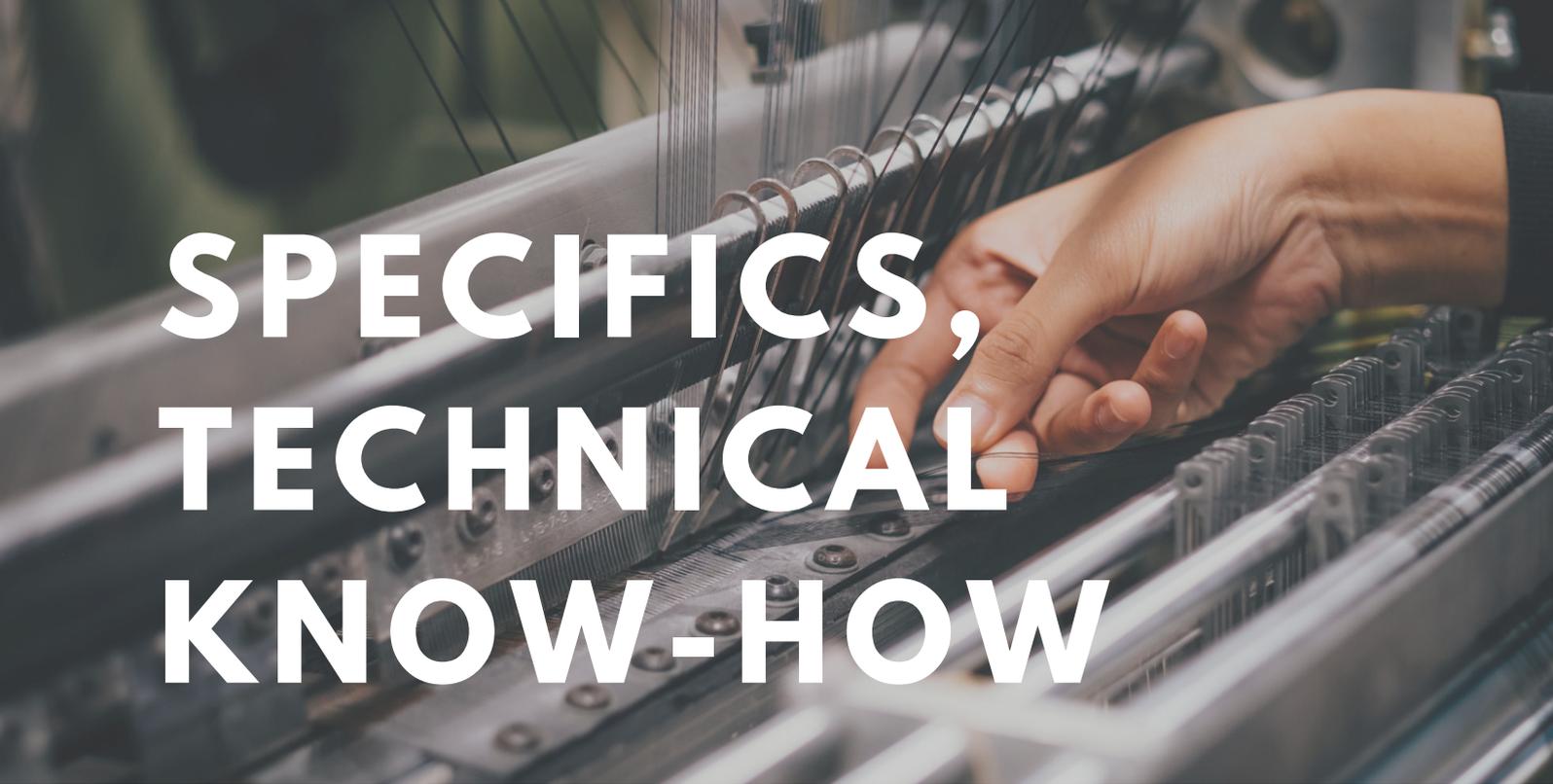
GETTING STARTED

Lesson one

When teaching an initial lesson, it is always a good idea to find out what stage your pupil is at. Start by asking some questions about their playing experiences, or what made them think that they would like to learn to play an instrument in the first place.

If your pupil is a beginner, start by making sure they know how to get the instrument out of the case, how to get the instrument ready to play, and how to hold the instrument. Depending on your pupil, some may like to start playing as quickly as possible. While it would be great to use this enthusiasm, don't cut corners as this could lead to bad habits being formed.

If they have played before, ask them to play something they have played recently in a concert or exam. Once you've heard them play, find an equivalent study or piece from a tutor book; you will now be at a good starting point.



SPECIFICS, TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW

Breathing in

Correct breathing and breath control is essential to playing any brass instrument. Firstly we need to understand how to inhale correctly. This is always done through the mouth and can be split into two movements.

1 – the diaphragm contracts and moves downwards allowing more space for your lungs to expand. This movement will push your stomach outwards and is sometimes called belly breathing.

2 – the ribcage needs to move upwards and outwards. This movement is controlled by the muscles between your ribs called the intercostal muscles. Be careful not to raise the shoulders as this will create tension.

Firstly, try these two movements separately. This will help you to better understand the mechanics of breathing. Now join the two movements together and try to emulate what you see when filling up a glass of water; just as the water fills the glass from the bottom upwards, try to imagine you are filling up with air from your stomach to the top of your chest.

Breathing in as much as you can is paradoxical; the harder you try, the worse it will be! You need to remain relaxed whilst breathing in, concentrate on making a 'haw' sound as you breathe in through your mouth. Lowering your jaw and keeping your throat open can make a huge difference.

SPECIFICS, TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW

Breathing out

When you exhale, your diaphragm relaxes and moves upward into the chest cavity. The intercostal muscles between the ribs also relax to reduce the space in the chest cavity. As the space in the chest cavity gets smaller, air is forced out of your lungs and windpipe, and then out of your nose or mouth.

Exhaling normally requires no effort from your body, but when we are playing a brass instrument your abdominal muscles contract and push your diaphragm against your lungs. This rapidly pushes the air out of your lungs.

Buzzing

Remind your student that brass instruments are silent! They don't make any sound without your lips buzzing inside your mouthpiece.

One of the most important factors in learning how to buzz or improving your buzz is to set up correctly. The easiest way to form an embouchure is to use a drinking straw. Place the straw between your teeth at the front of your mouth and gently bring your teeth down on the straw. Don't squash the straw but leave it open. Say the word 'dim' and freeze when you reach the letter M. You should feel your lips against your teeth and the straw. This 'M' shape is helpful when trying to position your lips in the best way.

Now blow down the straw pretty hard, as if you're blowing out candles on a birthday cake. After trying this a few times, repeat it but this time pull the straw out of your mouth as soon as you start to blow, keeping the lips and jaw in the same position. Hopefully there was a buzz. If there was no buzz, don't panic! 'Free buzzing' is quite hard to do, but at least now you know how to form a correct embouchure.

Try one last time (with the straw). Blow out and remove the straw. Hold that position while you inhale through the nose (you would usually breathe through the mouth, but for the purposes of this exercise this ensures you don't move your lips or jaw), place your mouthpiece on to your lips and try to buzz again. Once again, don't worry if initially there is no buzz – the brass instrument provides resistance as we exhale which makes buzzing much easier. However, if you can buzz without the instrument or mouthpiece you certainly will be able to do so with the instrument.

SPECIFICS, TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW

Articulation

Something that goes hand in hand with learning how to buzz is how to start notes clearly on your instrument. This is often referred to as tonguing, as we use the tongue to achieve this. Use the tip of your tongue to find the hard ridge just behind your teeth on the roof of your mouth. Ideally, this is where the tip of the tongue rests when you are about to play. This initial tongue position can also be found if you form your mouth as if you are about to say 'two'.

'tOH' is the preferred sound we need to replicate when we are starting notes on our instrument. This puts a strong emphasis on the air following the initial articulation, so that the note that follows is secure. Try making this 'tOH' sound after breathing in with a 'haw' breath. Now do the same exercise but blowing air down your mouthpiece. Don't attempt to buzz at this stage as we are learning how to control the air column and your tongue position as you begin to make a sound.

When starting a note, the tongue is merely interrupting the flow of air, not stopping the air flow. Think of a running tap and quickly swiping your finger through the stream; the water does not stop but is interrupted. This should be the same when tonguing on your instrument. Try to keep the air moving as this is the most important factor when playing well-supported, great sounding notes.

Try it!

Try putting together all the elements we have discussed in these three sections. Make an 'M' shape with your lips, breathe in 'haw', don't hold the breath but release it smoothly combined with the 'tOH' sound, and keep the notes going for as long as you can.

The other area worth mentioning at this point is posture. Standing promotes the best route for air flow, but this can be tiring. So whether it's for a lesson, or certainly when they sit and play in a group, ensure the student has their feet on the ground (if possible!) and their back straight against the back of the chair. The chest ideally needs to be as straight as possible so that the air flow has minimal restriction. Keep a close eye on the embouchure so that it is as central as possible and there is no straining with either mouthpiece pressure or squeezing from the throat. The shoulders need to be as relaxed as possible too. Lastly, ensure that for best practice, the valves are played with the fingers square on (90 degrees right angle) and with the pads of the fingers.

Music Theory

An understanding of musical theory will aid your student's progression, and teaching this as they learn to play should help this understanding.

Rhythm – this is an ideal starting point and can even be good fun to learn. Using words such as *tea*, *coffee*, *soup* are ideal to describe the length of a crotchet, two quavers and a minim. Another example is *walk*, *running*, *stroll*. Other word examples for different rhythms include: '*God save our gracious Queen*' being the rhythm of a dotted crotchet; *Amsterdam* for a dotted quaver; *pineapple* for a triplet.

SPECIFICS, TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW

Pitch – when learning the different notes of a clef, try using an acronym to aid memorisation. Examples for treble clef lines include: *Every Good Boy Deserves Football* or *Every Green Bus Drives Fast*. For the spaces in the treble clef, *FACE* is an easy way to remember this. For bass clef, examples include *Great Big Dogs Frighten Animals*, and for the spaces *All Cows Eat Grass*.

Metre – this is an important first step in when reading music. Start with simple time signatures such as 4/4 and make sure that your student knows that the top number denotes the number of beats in the bar. Don't worry too much about explaining the bottom number to start with.

Key signatures – like metre, these are essential when reading music. Start with easier keys with accidentals that occur most often such as Bb and F# (keys of F and G).

Aural skills – are also very important and are fundamental in shaping good musical skills. Playing in ensembles together is surely the quickest and easiest way to improve this skill, with the added benefit of being able to socialise together.

Braces for teeth

What is the best way to continue teaching/playing with newly fitted braces?

Braces can be a real hindrance for brass players. Having braces fitted will drastically change the embouchure and the ability to play. Unfortunately, there is no 'quick fix' when students have braces fitted. This may be a chance to return to playing basics.

The importance of correct breathing and long note practice cannot be overstated when your embouchure is weak. In turn, this will definitely improve playing efficiency when the braces eventually come off.

To keep pupils engaged, try picking out pieces that have challenging rhythms or keys but don't have a large range of notes, especially in the upper register. It may be an idea to try out a few easy scales to confirm what can be comfortably reached.

HELPFULL HINTS



Pastoral principles for the tutors:

- Be a positive role model, showing genuine interest in the young people and what they are interested in.
- Remember details! For example, 'How was last weekend's visit from the grandparents?'
- Show care and patience at all times.
- Engage in positive feedback regarding progress with the parents and build a healthy relationship.
- Celebrate achievements! Provide certificates (these are available) and ensure lots of praise is given within the group setting.
- Remember to have fun and make the enjoyment aspect a key part of the lessons!

Missional opportunities for the corps:

- Coffee fellowship with corps members for parents during lesson times.
- Conclude each session together with a Bible / Sunday school story led by someone the children know, ie, one of the teachers. 'Play through the Bible' could be a good resource to consider.
- Other possibilities include Messy Church material and also inviting a trained advocate of Godly Play
- Ensure invitations for pupils and their families to Sunday school / youth club etc.
- Offer an invitation for students and parents etc to listen to a senior band rehearsal.
- Make natural inroads of integration for the families, eg, café church; parent-and-toddler group; Messy Church etc.
- Are there opportunities for parents to volunteer in any other part of the corps programme? This could be setting out chairs, refreshments, information passing.
- Hold progress concerts as often possible – it can be as small as simply playing to the parents, right through to participation in café church, Messy Church or Sunday meetings.
- When it feels appropriate, offer prayer support. This could be in the form of a 'Prayer Jar' where students can write their thoughts and leave them in the jar.

WHAT NEXT?



Resources

The AB Guide to Music Theory

My First/Second/Third Theory Book – Lina Ng

Studio scales

First Things First – tutor and ensemble

A Tune a Day

Abracadabra Brass

Team Brass

<https://www.samagacb.com/brass>

How Brass Players Do It

The Arban Method

Allen Vizzutti Trumpet Method Books 1, 2 & 3

Herbert Clarke – *Technical Studies*

Charles Collins – *Advanced Lip Flexibilities*

The Brass Gym

The Breathing Gym

'It's better to have a partner than go it alone.

Share the work, share the wealth.' (Ecclesiastes 4:9 MSG)



CONTACT US

We pray that this resource has been helpful to you in your ministry. If you would like to know more about any of the different subjects included here, why not contact one of the Music and Creative Arts team.

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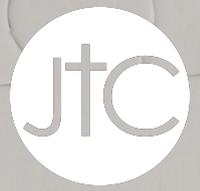
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