

SING, DANCE, PLAY: LEARNING MUSIC GOD’S WAY  
A CASE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN ELEMENTARY MUSIC CURRICULUM IN ACTION

By  
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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to three brilliant women: Rosemary Collins, Carrie Fuoco, and Jeanne Reynolds, without whom my passion for music education would not have grown.

Rosemary Collins was a force of nature, the best musician I have had the pleasure of knowing, a kindred spirit, a mother, a comedian, and a consummate music educator. She taught me to go after my dreams, laugh all the time, and face everything with confidence.

Unfortunately, Rosemary died from the COVID-19 virus in December 2020. Her death left a hole in music education in the state of Florida. I work diligently towards my goals, inspired by her never-ending energy and confidence. Rosemary, I miss your face.

My middle school music experience started in the classroom of Carrie Fuoco. She was brand new to teaching, and I was an eighth grader who was eager to please. She showed me the love of Christ from her first hello to our last in-person meeting in 2020. She helped me through the twists and turns of life as we worked side by side for ten beautiful years. She is my mentor, sister in Christ, and the woman I aspire to be.

Jeanne Reynolds was my high school choir director and became the music supervisor for Pinellas County Schools in Pinellas County, Florida, until her retirement in 2021. She is the reason I sing today. She is why I pursued music education and has been in my life in some fashion for the past 28 years. Under her leadership, Pinellas County flourished musically by spearheading referendum funds to adequately fund music classrooms and technology. She is whom I hope to be in the future.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### **Psalm 150 (New International Version, 1978)**

Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; Praise him in his mighty heavens.

Praise him for his acts of power; Praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, Praise him with the harp and lyre,

Praise him with timbrel and dancing, Praise him with the strings and pipe,

Praise him with the clash of cymbals, Praise him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

Glory to God in the Highest! Thank You, Lord, for giving me parents who love education and want the best for me. Thank You that Mama and Daddy never gave up on me and continually prayed for me. I thank You for their constant reminder that I am a child of God, I am loved, and I have worth. Mama, buy the tickets; Scotland here we come!

Chris, Finn, and Lydia, you all have endured all the times that I didn't make dinner because I was writing and studying. You all have stood by and watched me suffer through health issues and loved me through them. Thank you for supporting me and encouraging me to keep going. Kids, now you have to call me Dr. Mama for a whole year!

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always being willing to hold a video chat. Dr. Yates, your energy and passion inspired me on the first day of class. Thank you for praying for me and with me.

Sunni Christine Baerwalde, editor supreme, master of Canva, graphic designer, and overall best older sister, thank you for helping me with the formatting and editing of the Teacher's Manual for my curriculum. You have carved out a niche in this world for yourself and you are exceeding all expectations. I always knew you were smart.

To Christina, my best friend: who knew all those years ago that sitting next to me in guitar class, with pink hair, was a person that was going to be my friend for 20+ years? Thank you for helping me get through this process. Dr. Sisson in the house!

## **Abstract**

This dissertation presents a multiple case study exploring the perceptions of Christian school music teachers regarding a biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum. The study was conducted through the implementation of four lessons, crafted for this study, in six schools across the United States and Canada. The purpose of the study was to gain insights into how the participants perceived the curriculum and how it aligned with their pedagogical goals and faith. Through qualitative analysis of data collected through interviews, this study provided a positive view of a newly crafted, biblically integrated, musically sound, and standards-aligned curriculum for elementary general music in Christian schools.

*Keywords:* Christian schools, music, music education, curriculum, biblical integration, curriculum development, teacher perspective

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## I. INTRODUCTION

For centuries, music has ruminated in the minds of philosophers all over the world. From the great minds of Aristotle, Plato, and Longfellow to scientists and mathematicians such as Einstein and Eddison, music has remained a constant topic of discourse. Each culture creates and performs specific music for various cultural purposes. For professional musicians, music becomes a staple food group in daily life when, from dawn to late night, they create, listen, respond to, connect, or perform music. Music represents elective classes, extracurricular activities, or possibly “non-essential” classes in public school for students. For school administrators, the elective courses may be labeled "specials" or "enrichment" classes, further solidifying the non-essential perception of music. Music pervades daily life as people grocery shop or work in offices, or through the constant companion of earbuds. Even the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the most significant global sports event, would be nothing without music.

The power of song to evoke memories through the senses is undeniable. A song can bring the memory of a smell, the sound of a voice, or the feeling of a departed family member's hug. Peterson (2019) described this power of music as the catalyst for growth in music therapy, as practitioners used music to help patients navigate through Alzheimer's and other brain-related

illnesses. Peterson pointed out that music and other arts also relate to other courses. Cross-curricular activities build new neural pathways which move ideas from working memory into long-term storage. Finally, Peterson (2019) recognized the gap in research literature dealing with faith and learning in music. The *Bible* references musicians and music as part of daily praise and adoration of the Lord Creator. Still, many educators do not know how to use biblical principles to guide music education today. If music educators are committed to the Christian life, combining music and faith deserves additional research.

Leading scholars have stressed the importance of music during brain development. Music is the connection between the right and left hemispheres of the brain (Sousa, 2017). Specific areas in the brain, such as the auditory cortex, respond to musical sounds and process musical tones. Sousa (2017) expounded, "our brain has developed elaborate neural networks to process both language and music as different forms of communication" (p. 245). Sousa (2017) described the nature of the arts as "basic to the human experience" (p. 243) and pointed out that every civilization known has included music in their culture, from cave dwellers to the modern human experience. Music existed long before writing, mathematics, or science developed. Human ancestors communicated history from generation to generation through music. The Israelites of the Old Testament gathered to sing and make music during daily tasks and worship (Peterson, 2019). Peterson (2019) also described the creation of music as a "form of beauty gifted to us by our Creator" (p. 168). In the New Testament letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul called the believer to sing praises, with others and alone, to the Lord.

"Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks

to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (New International Version, 1973, Ephesians 5:18-20).

Music has played an integral role in teaching children to worship and celebrate the Lord in Christian schools. Some private schools hire worship leaders, and some schools use the talents of the student body to lead worship. Elementary teachers use songs to teach biblical principles, such as the books of the *Bible*, the full armor of God, or the beatitudes. Christian schools may have instrumental ensembles, full bands, choirs, vocal ensembles, and praise band instrumentation courses. Christian schools include music in daily instruction, even if it is not in a dedicated music class.

### **Background of the Study**

#### **Education, Music, and Religion**

With the cynosure of secular school music education being music for music's sake and religious academia focusing on theology, where does music education in Christian elementary schools fit? Music is a principal player in religious rituals, worship, and fellowship. Theologians do not research best practices in music education; vice versa, most music research does not focus on religion. To musicians, religion represents the vessel through which music was first written down and proliferated. Laack (2015) explained that the relationship between music and religion exists, but the relationship has "been studied only marginally to date" (p. 221). The research gap began during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment when religious academia separated from the secular music culture. Music and religion are bifurcated into subgroups with different functions and objectives (Laack, 2015). The researchers of the Enlightenment period ended the study of personal experience in religion.

The divide between music and religion widened as arts and sciences became more specialized, causing them to grow further apart. Inventors and artists like Leonardo da Vinci (AD 1452-1519) studied science and art in unison. Again in 1802, the gap widened as the separation of church and state began to take shape. Likewise, in education, the landing of Sputnik in 1957 further separated the arts from the sciences. Finally, the divide solidified when prayer vanished from the typical school day in 1963, and religious music was deemed inappropriate for the public-school population.

Laack (2015) used a transdisciplinary approach to research, in which neither music nor religion was separated; instead, he investigated the relationship between the two disciplines. Most research recognizes the role of music in ritual and how music evokes the aesthetic, but music "remains a topic of non-interest in the study of religion" (Laack, 2015, p. 222). Likewise, musicologists have studied religion on the periphery. In American education, western musicology study exists for music's sake. This divide intensified during the Renaissance era, as the bourgeois began to partake in secular music for pleasure and entertainment. The separation of religion and music bled into the education system and can be a stumbling block for Christian educators today.

### **Defining the Elements of Music**

After looking at the history of music education, defining music conceptually clarifies curriculum development. For example, Smith (1944) described the essentials of music (also known as fundamentals or basic elements) as the curricular items in an elementary music class that are "important in the highest degree; indispensable" (p. 16). After establishing its importance, Smith subdivided the essentials of music into two sub-groups:

- Feeling and emotion
- Intellectual concept and training

Conceptually, the essentials of music were: "pitch, note-reading, harmonic discrimination, tone color, timbre, shading, rhythm, patterns, articulation, expression, form, and performance" (Smith, 1944, p.16).

In 1968, the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project (MMCP) convened to answer the call toward higher order thinking in music education. Sputnik's launch drew attention to the necessity for thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as a necessity in the daily curriculum of schools (Pogonowski, 2001). Focusing on higher order thinking skills caused a chain reaction in curriculum design. The MMCP began working on a spiraling curriculum based on the work of Jerome Bruner. Bruner (1960) stressed the importance of understanding the fundamentals of a subject as it leads to transfer.

Faultley and Daubney (2019) described music's nature as naturally following Bruner's hypothesis that "the foundations of any subject may be taught to anybody at any age in some form" (Bruner, 1960, p. 12). Pedagogically, music teachers consistently review old topics, revisit concepts, and build upon prior knowledge to move the students from one grade level to the next. The results of the MMCP included five essential elements of music: "pitch, duration, volume, timbre, and form" (Thomas, 1970, p. 2). In addition, interactions with music interpolate higher order thinking skills such as "composition, improvisation, interpretation, performance, analyzation, conducting, and listening" (Thomas, 1970, p. 3). Adding the higher order thinking skills to the essential elements provided a more in-depth concept list for music educators to



utilize during curriculum planning. However, within the MMCP's essential elements, expression, quality, and aesthetic experience are absent.

In 2016, researchers described a new way of thinking about curriculum. Based on the works of music philosophy scholars, Rifai (2016) devised a contextual learning experience that addressed the educational needs of the whole child, including thinking critically and creatively. Rifai explains, "in order to create an educationally sound program, teachers must consider the essential elements of musical experience, the strength of connections between and among disciplines, and broad goals or aims of the curriculum" (Rifai, 2016, p. 35).

This contextual study suggested that teaching the scientific elements, such as pitch, form, and duration, would not lead to a deeper understanding of music and would not translate into a life full of meaningful music experiences. During the methods portion of the study, Rifai (2016) suggested a design process that included meeting with the teachers, in his case, the classroom teachers, and obtaining the scope and sequence for their class. In addition, Rifai suggested that students' use of music outside of school should drive curriculum development. In this way, the artistic aspects of a music curriculum developed contextually. As Rifai suggested, the "Sing, Dance, Play" study methodology included a focus group to procure the current trends in Christian music education.

### **The Role of Music in Christian Education**

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) once said that "music is the universal language of mankind" (Watson, 1994, p.7). Others have expressed the healing nature of music or how music says what words cannot. Therefore, the Holy Bible is the textbook for Christian education in which music is the focus of many scriptures. To eliminate music in Christian

education would be akin to ignoring the book of Psalms altogether. Yet, music education has not risen to the top of the priorities of the Christian school curriculum, as Peterson (2019) pointed out.

Music instruction has many purposes in modern Christian education. The Bible includes over 600 references to music (Wolf, 2018). Music is used to teach essential beliefs, as a method for communication with God, as a vehicle of worship, and ultimately point the heart to the true message of the Gospel (Young, 2021). In her study of the role of music in Christian education, Young (2021) developed seven purposes: “teaching, spiritual development, communication, reminder, instruction, deliverance, and attracting and retaining youth” (pp. 191-193). Teaching music to young people in the Christian setting allows the music to open the hearts and minds of the listener so that the Gospel can work in their lives. The combination of chords, structure, and lyric content allows the emotions to move. Music used for spiritual development is standard practice in Christian schools. In elementary years, students are exposed to short refrains and easy-to-learn songs to make possible connections to concepts, people, and God (Young, 2021). Young (2021) explains that this exposure “boosts their love for God early in life” (p. 192). In addition, children are taught to “put on the full armor of God” (New International Version, 1970, Ephesians 6:10-18) or learn the books of the Bible through songs that are not easily forgotten.

Music is a communicator. Music is a way to speak to God and a way for God to speak to the church (Young, 2021). Music used in worship allows self-expression in ways that words fail. Corporate prayer may not be easy for some children; they cannot find the words to express their emotions, but they can remember the lyrics to “Jesus Loves Me” and be grateful to God for His love. Many scriptures have been translated into music lyrics, providing a way to remember those

precious words. The brain processes music in both hemispheres of the brain and allows for long-term memory to be accessed (Sousa, 2018). From this long-term memory, Sunday school songs like “Deep and Wide,” in which the student learns that God’s living water extends deeper and farther than a water fountain, stick with the Christian child through to adulthood (Cox, 1909). Christians are called to go out into the world, teaching children the way to eternal life. What better way to validate music education could there possibly be? Christian educators remember the words of Paul the Apostle and Timothy, "let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (New International Version, 1970, Colossians 3:16).

Garren Wolf (2018) wrote a new philosophy of music education from a Christian perspective. Wolf (2018) reminded the Christian educator that music is vital to the Christian school experience. In 1 Chronicle 25 (NIV), the scribe detailed the work of the musicians in the court of David, the king of Israel. Following David’s example, music teachers instruct children in the “ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres, and cymbals” (New International Version, 1970, 1 Chronicles 25:1). In the twenty-first century, music educators in a Christian school can impact the world for Jesus Christ as they instruct children musically. Given the historical and biblical nature of music, it is “strange that so many Christian elementary schools” offered “little or no music classes” (Wolf, 2018, p. 99). Wolf (2019) delineated the need for parents who love and serve the Lord to recognize that the next generation requires musical training and act on that belief.

## The Experience of the Elementary Music Teacher

Delivering elementary music education involves a myriad of responsibilities, character traits, and tasks. Trained music educators have consulted the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) standards and individual state standards to guide the development of lessons. In Christian schools, the music teacher creates a curriculum with little guidance and possibly no standards (Peterson, 2019). In recent years, incredibly well-written curricula have been developed, such as *GamePlan* (Kriske & Delelles, 2004) and *Quaver Music* (Quavermusic.com LLC., 2009). However, the price tag of the *Quaver Music* platform may make purchasing unattainable by smaller school districts because it requires an annual purchase of \$1,500.00 (Quavermusic.com, LLC., 2021). Moore (2014) stated that Christian schools might be “unwilling or unable to hire qualified music teachers” because they are not willing to “invest their energies and funds to support a qualified music teacher at their school” (p. 63). Therefore, music teachers paste different supplemental resources together to create an engaging yet musically sound scope and sequence (Walters, 2020). In the Christian school, the music teacher has another aspect to add to the daily curriculum: biblical integration (ACSI School Accreditation Documents, see Appendix A).

It bears mentioning that many Christian schools have chosen music teachers from the congregation or staff, like the organ player or a parishioner who happens to like to sing. Congregants are well-intentioned but may not have been trained or certified in music education. In a 2014 study, Moore surveyed teachers in Christian music education. Within the survey, Moore (2014) discovered that 34% of the surveyed teachers held a certificate in music education. Of the teachers with bachelor’s degrees, 19% held only a minor in music. Moore (2014) concluded that “some administrators and teachers are limiting their music curricula to prepare for

specific performances and competitions, neglecting the need for a year-round, sequential music curriculum” (p. 62). The lack of curriculum has left the Christian school music educator, who may or may not be well trained in music education, in a unique position of theologian, worship leader, curriculum writer, standard maker, and music teacher. Moore (2014) found that:

“... qualified music teachers are central to biblically based, quality music education, yet many AACS member schools do not employ music teachers with a music degree. The lack of qualified music teachers in AACS member schools is most likely due to a combination of related factors. First, qualified music teachers currently teaching in AACS member schools may be unwilling or unable to remain in their music teaching positions, forcing schools to fill those positions with persons who are willing to teach but may not be professionally prepared” (p. 62).

### **Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Foundation**

#### **Conceptual Framework**

In 2014 the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) developed the National Standards for Music Education in conjunction with the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS). The researchers involved revised the 1994 standards that focused on skills and knowledge. In addition, the document’s framework was updated to reflect the artistic processes and music literacy. Wolf (2018) analyzed the 2014 standards and found the standards to be acceptable, as they did not violate any precepts of the Bible. Wolf recommended that all Christian schools include the 2014 national standards in their philosophy of music education.

## *The Artistic Processes*

Before the revisions were published, the NCCAS (2014) defined a conceptual framework for the National Standards with the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE). This document divides the artistic processes into four key areas: creating, performing, responding, and connecting. In addition, anchor standards, such as imagine, plan and make, select, analyze, interpret, and evaluate, were defined (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*National Core Arts Standards, Artistic Processes, and Anchor Standards*

National Core Arts Standards Artistic Processes and Anchor Standards			
Artistic Processes			
<b>Creating</b> Definition: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.	<b>Performing/Presenting/Producing</b> Definitions: <b>Performing:</b> Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation. <b>Presenting:</b> Interpreting and sharing artistic work. <b>Producing:</b> Realizing and presenting artistic ideas and work.	<b>Responding</b> Definition: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.	<b>Connecting</b> Definition: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.
Anchor Standards			
Students will:  1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.  2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.  3. Refine and complete artistic work.	Students will:  4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.  5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.  6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.	Students will:  7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.  8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.  9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.	Students will:  10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.  11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

### ***Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions***

Organizing information into "big ideas" (NCCAS, 2014, p. 14) allows the student to transfer that information to other areas of study. The enduring understandings are the answer to the essential questions. For example, under the Creating process and Imagine anchor standard, the essential question is: "How do musicians generate creative ideas?" (NCCAS, 2014, p. 14). The enduring understanding answers that question: "The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work emerge from a variety of sources" (NCCAS, 2014, p.14). The "variety of sources" are delineated into performance standards.

### ***Performance Standards***

Each anchor standard was articulated by grade-level performance standards used to demonstrate student achievement. The standards allowed the music educator to interpret the anchor standards and select specific and measurable learning skills. For example, under the Creating artistic process, in the anchor standard Imagine, MU:CR1.12a states, "improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns and musical ideas for a specific purpose" (NCCAS, 2014, p. 1). The trained music educator then interprets this standard and assigns a specific activity to implement the standard. The second-grade standards from NAFME are used in the "Sing, Dance, Play" research study and guided the creation of the curriculum.

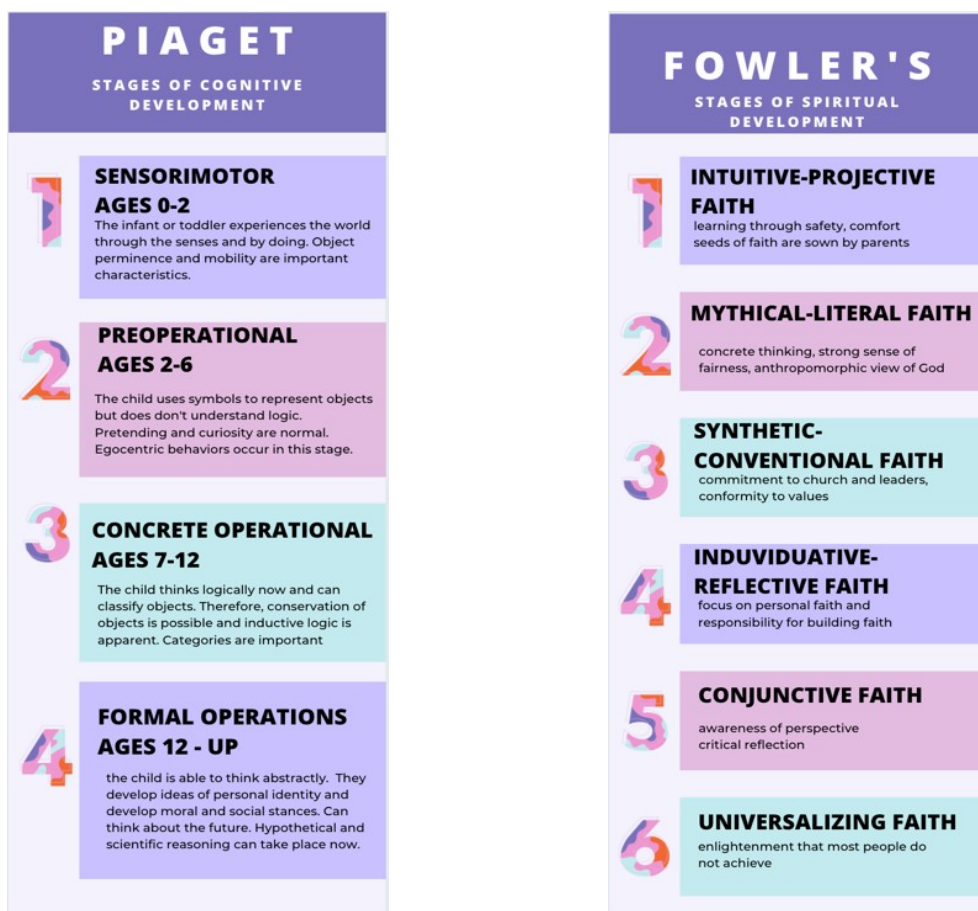
### **Theoretical Foundation**

In addition to the conceptual framework defined by the NCCAS and NAFME, two theories guided the development of the "Sing, Dance, Play" curriculum: Piaget's "Stages of Development" (1969) and Fowler's "Stages of Spiritual Development" (1981), as illustrated in Figure 1. The two theories aligned, as Fowler employed the dialogue technique to explain two

significant development ideas as told by the theorists Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erickson. Fowler (1981) described how the work of Jean Piaget contributed to the research involved in the creation of his “Stages of Faith.” As detailed by Piaget (1969), the focus on the epistemological, how we know what we know, and the structure of knowing what we know proved essential in "describing the structural features of faith" (p. 99). Like Piaget (1969), Fowler (1981) described faith development because of revelation brought forth from trials and tribulations.

**Figure 1**

*Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development and Fowler's Stages of Spiritual Development*





### *Piaget's Influence on Music*

In 1985, John Warrener brought learning development theory and music together to define musical development in the manner of Piaget (1969). Warrener (1985) found that during the concrete operational stage of development, musical aptitudes develop with rapidity. Children ages 7-11 can now move beyond the basic rhythm exercises and melodic patterning into analyzing and interpreting musical works (Warrener, 1985). The students in this stage can hear harmony and distinguish different instrument sounds when listening to an ensemble. Changes in tonality, major to minor, are easily recognized and appropriate for second-grade exploration. In other words, musical maturity is a natural outcome of moving through the concrete operational stage.

In 1986, Swanwick and Tilman developed eight modes for musical development, or an “orderly unfolding of musical behavior as stages through which the musical utterances of children can be traced” (p. 305). Swanwick and Tilman’s (1986) work were influenced by Piaget (1969) and showed the necessity for play as a developmental tool for growth. Play is an exploration of the environment where the learner seeks out mastery. The “Sing, Dance, Play” study focused on children seven to nine years old and encompassed the first three stages of Piaget.

Stage one of Warrener’s (1985) theory describes the sensory stage where children ages 0-3 are fascinated with sound, dynamics, and sound sources. Children in the sensory stage played egg shakers, tapped drums, and moved their bodies to the music. The concept of a steady beat is not developed, and the elements of music are basic in word choice and practice. Stage two incorporated increased control when handling instruments, increased technical ability, and a

better grasp of steady beat. Children ages four to five years old demonstrate the manipulative stage. The vernacular stage included patterns of melodic and harmonic materials, repetitions, structured phrases, and incorporated the “first stage of conventional music-making” for children ages 5-8 years old (Warrener, 1985, p. 332). The vernacular stage aligns with the concrete operational stage in Piaget’s (1969) developmental theory and is the focus of this study.

### ***Stages of Spiritual Development***

Like Piaget (1969), Fowler (1981) defined stages of development but conversely focused on the stages of faith. For this study, stage two, the "mythical-literal" (p. 135), fit the population of second-grade students ages nine to ten. Children in stage two of spiritual development experience faith through storytelling as they derive meaning from the stories. If engagement is the lesson’s focus, adventure and real-life situations in stories will capture and keep the stage two child's attention. Children in stage two discover and sort out reality versus imaginary people and things; they can still imagine fantasy worlds, but the child's prior knowledge limits the imagination. Also, the self-focused, egocentric stage of infancy and toddlerhood has disappeared. Children in the mythical-literal stage relate to their world through literal symbolism, substituting concepts with actual pictures or illustrations. For example, the child might understand the use of the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity rather than a detailed definition. In this case, the concept is beyond their developmental stage, and the symbol of the shamrock is understood and relatable. The stage two child still imagines God as an old man with a white beard sitting on a cloud in the sky, and this anthropomorphic view of God follows them through the mythical-literal stage of faith. In addition, stage two children are aware of the inequalities in our world and are focused on fairness.

Keeping in mind Fowler's (1981) stages and the critical characteristics of the stage two child's faith, the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum developed with symbols, stories, realism, fairness, and logic. The curriculum developer chose activities that align with the mythical-literal stage of faith. For example, telling the story of the actual historical St. Patrick helps students differentiate between reality and fiction. St. Patrick still may be known more for the modern holiday depiction, but the seeds of truth are planted and understood. This understanding helps form a clear vision of the Saint's past work and how it relates to the work Christians do today.

*Table 2*

*Comparison chart of developmental theories*

	Learning Development Concrete Operational Piaget (1969)	Spiritual Development Mythical-Literal Fowler (1981)	Musical Development Warrener (1995)
Ages 7-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>logical thought is developing</li> <li>categorical information</li> <li>conservation</li> <li>inductive reasoning</li> <li>internal dialogue is possible</li> <li>the child assumes all children think the same as them</li> <li>knowledge is gained through the senses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concrete thinking</li> <li>strong sense of justice</li> <li>anthropomorphic God</li> <li>stories and adventures appeal to them</li> <li>cause and effect are realized</li> <li>meanings are conveyed through stories</li> <li>use of literal symbols</li> <li>can relay their own story through narration</li> <li>egocentrism is all but gone</li> <li>sorting out the real from the make-believe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>timbre distinction</li> <li>increased vocal range</li> <li>major and minor tonality recognition</li> <li>strong sense of melody</li> <li>able to sing without changing tonality (keys)</li> <li>conservation of the melody no matter the pitch center</li> <li>able to hear and process harmony</li> <li>vocal independence</li> <li>able to experience meter changes</li> <li>the purpose of listening is exposure</li> </ul>

### **Problem Statement**

Because a comprehensive, biblically integrated music curriculum has not surfaced to date, teachers in Christian schools choose between using a secular curriculum that includes

benchmarks and standards or creating lessons for musical concepts that integrate Christian themes, stories, and existing songs. Creating new lessons is compounded when one considers that the music teacher might be the only person teaching the subject area within the school. The responsibility for a scope and sequence, curriculum map, biblical integration, and standards application can seem overwhelming to a new teacher or untrained musician. As a result, questions arise when considering the next steps in creating a new curriculum for Christian music educators. What do teachers need to help students succeed in the music classroom? Are there ways to integrate faith meaningfully into the music curriculum? Is it possible to develop a curriculum focused musically and biblically in conjunction?

As a gap exists in the Christian school music curriculum research, further research and development became necessary. Researchers have explored the need for the Bible to be the center of the curriculum as Christian schools have grown in the past few years (Tucker, 2016). Tucker reminded researchers that Christian schools are expected to deliver biblically integrated instruction as outlined by an accrediting agency, such as the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

At the time of this research, studies in music curriculum and biblical integration have been explored in the pre-school setting, but not the elementary school setting (Finke, 2018). Finke (2018) acknowledged that teachers have access to great curricular programs designed for the non-music educator, like Kindermusik (Pratt, 1978). However, the Bible is not integrated into the Kindermusik (1978) lessons or scope and sequence. Slater (2021) developed a curriculum for pre-school children and their parents to experience together. Slater acknowledged that "an even greater divide exists in current curriculum between education and religion" (p. 2).

Creating a well-rounded music curriculum that includes Christ-focused lessons is akin to studying a score of Igor Stravinsky's Rite of Spring (Stravinsky, 1889): it is overwhelming. As music theory students know, the first step in score analysis begins with studying the essential elements of the piece, such as the meter, key, and expression markings. The “Sing, Dance, Play” study defined these musical elements and explained their importance to a music curriculum. After analysis of the score comes interpretation, a very subjective activity. The “Sing, Dance, Play” study discovered how current music educators in the Christian school setting felt about a newly developed curriculum and its effectiveness. The final step in score analysis is performance. The collection of research data from the performance of curricular activities was essential in developing a music curriculum for Christian elementary schools.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to interpret Christian school music teachers’ perceptions of a biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum through the implementation of crafted lessons in 10 selected Christian schools across the United States.

### **Overview of Methodology**

The multiple case study format permitted the researcher to observe and collect data from multiple research sites, allowed for replication, and assembled various viewpoints regarding the problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, six Christian schools utilized the “Sing, Dance, Play: Learning Music God's Way” curriculum for four weeks of the third quarter of the 2022-2023 school year. The music educators involved were provided the necessary materials for implementation and received professional development training that answered any questions

regarding the curriculum materials. In addition, each educator was pre-screened through a Google Form (see Appendix D) sent out after the educator expressed interest through solicitation in multiple Facebook groups geared toward elementary music educators. The 10 schools from the list of interested parties were contacted, the administration personnel were asked for permission to participate, and the educator was notified of their selection.

### **Research Question**

This study addressed the following research question:

1. What are the Christian school music teacher's perceptions of the biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum?

### **Research Design**

The curriculum for the study was designed after the researcher worked in music education in a Christian school for ten years without an explicit curriculum. The scope and sequence for "Sing, Dance, Play" were completed after researching a theoretical framework and unpacking the National Standards. Next, the researcher developed musically sound and biblically integrated lessons. The New International Version (1970) of the Holy Bible was utilized for all scripture references.

This multiple case study identified a real-life problem: the lack of Christian music curricula experienced across the field of Christian music education. In addition, the collective case study was helpful, as it provided a "detailed description of a particular situation" (Joyner et al., 2013, p. 123) for the researcher through the collection of qualitative data from pre-implementation and post-implementation interviews.

## **Data Collection**

Each music educator participated in one focus group combined with professional development prior to implementing the curriculum. The focus group questions focused on the preferences and current use of curriculum data gathering. In addition, the researcher served as a mentor to the music teachers. After four weeks of implementation, the educators convened with the researcher to answer the research questions in a post-implementation interview. The Zoom application recorded the interview sessions and provided transcripts for analysis. From these interviews, qualitative data was collected through coding. Again, the researcher's role was as a participant-observer.

## **Procedures**

Curricular needs were at the heart of this study. Therefore, it was necessary that a scope and sequence, concept map, yearly objectives, and detailed explanations of the national standards were included at the beginning of the Instructors Manual. Symbolic icons were used to help the participant organize activities and provided links to the assessed standards. Additionally, a glossary of terms was included for the teachers and the students to clarify terms for all involved. Following the development and revisions of the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum, a collection of potential participants was populated through Facebook groups geared to music educators. A participant survey was sent to those interested to narrow the sample group to ten schools and teachers. Two alternates were chosen as well to alleviate any attrition. Each school received the forms for participation that Southeastern University IRB required. During the collection of the documents, final preparations were made for printing, shipping, and purchasing materials needed for implementation. Once the pilot schools received the materials, the researcher engaged the

teachers in a professional development session describing the curriculum's implementation. Participants were given a start and finish date for the four-week implementation period following the professional development session. The data collection concluded with post-implementation interviews of no more than 30 minutes for each participant.

### **Overview of Analyses**

The analysis for this study included qualitative coding looking for themes throughout the multiple sites and teachers. The teachers' opinion was crucial to the development of future curricula. Note that each educator's responses remained anonymous in the analysis.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

Each pre-implementation interview included questions concerning the current materials used in the ten pilot classes. Participants described the secular curricular materials, as well as biblical materials used daily. In addition, each participant was asked about curriculum mapping, the accreditation procedures at the school, and biblical integration techniques. This information helped the researcher define music education's current status.

### **Limitations**

This study was limited to six schools due to the scope of data collection. This study did not intend to argue the necessity of concepts or seek input regarding essential elements. However, it required the participants' opinions regarding the effectiveness of applying the essential elements of music as outlined in the National Standards for Music Education.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The following words and phrases were important terms for the study.



- **Creating:** conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work (NCCAS, 2014, p. 11).
- **Performing:** realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation (NCCAS, 2014, p. 11)
- **Responding:** Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning (NCCAS, 2014, p. 12)
- **Connecting:** relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context (NCCAS, 2014, p. 12)
- **Anchor standards:** describe the general knowledge and skill that teachers expect students to demonstrate throughout their education in the arts (NCCAS, 2014, pp. 12-13)
- **Artistic literacy** requires the individual to engage in the creative creation processes directly through the use of appropriate materials and spaces. Also, it fosters connections among the arts and between the arts and other disciplines (NCCAS, 2014, p. 17)
- **Artistic processes:** the cognitive and physical actions by which arts learning and making are realized (NCCAS, 2014, p.17)
- **Aesthetic Experience:** a listener's perception, interaction, and response to a piece of music, including its expressive qualities (Wolfe, 2018, p. 266)
- **Essential elements of music**
  - **Duration:** length (Harnsberger, 1997, p. 147)

- **Form:** the organization and structure of a composition (Harnsberger, 1997, p. 156)
- **Melody:** a succession of single notes (Harnsberger, 1997, p. 81)
- **Pitch:** the relation of the note related to highness or lowness (Harnsberger, 1997, p. 99)
- **Rhythm:** the organization of music in time using short and long note values (Harnsberger, 1997, p. 109).
- **Sacred music:** music that meets all the requirements of being theologically correct, respectful of God, and appropriate and congruent with the purposes of worship (Wolfe, 2018, p. 179)
- **Secular music:** music that is not religious or addressed to God (Wolfe, 2018, p. 166)
- **Timbre:** tone color or quality (Harnsberger, 1997, p.132)
- **Volume:** the softness or loudness of sound (Harnsberger, 1997, p.144)

### **Significance**

This multiple case study contributed to the development of curricular materials for Christian schools that involve the educators' preferences and voices. This study was significant because the music educators in Christian schools do not have a standard to measure their daily lessons. The outcome of this study will be a practical, musically sound, biblically integrated, and effective curriculum that music educators in Christian schools can use for many years to come

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this multiple case study was to interpret Christian school music teachers' perceptions of a biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum through the implementation of crafted lessons in six selected Christian schools across the United States.

### **Designing a Music Curriculum**

Two contrasting views exist among music educators regarding curriculum. Within the profession, there are teachers who see no value in written lesson plans exist. In contrast, other music educators crave ready-made curriculum guides, lesson plans, manipulatives, digital visual aids, and slides. The written curriculum helps novice teachers, teachers teaching out of the certified subject area, and volunteer teachers access well-vetted, standards-based, and assessment-aligned materials. Unfortunately, as previously stated, no such curricular materials exist for elementary music educators in Christian schools.

Fautley and Daubney (2019) explained the curricular design process for music curricula in an article published by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM). The authors delivered a template that not only supported teachers but additionally helped them consider their values and philosophical beliefs in relation to the curriculum. Regarding assessment in the music classroom, Fautley and Daubney found that teachers were not adept at distinguishing the

similarities and differences in process and product. This duality has relegated the process portion of teaching music to the sidelines as time limitations and administrative expectations for the product (performances, events) outweighed the process. Fautley and Daubney (2019) outlined principles that would guide the creation of the material as follows:

- They should be rooted in the contemporary research into teaching, learning, and assessment in primary and secondary schools
- They should be amenable to local tailoring depending on the contexts for which they were being used
- They should promote musical learning
- They should be cost-free for teachers to use or discard as they see fit

The principles and design rooted in the research were easily adapted for use in any public school focused on music learning, easily attained, and affordable to all schools.

In England, the National Curriculum (akin to the Common Core in the United States) dictated three constructs: composing, listening, and performing. Fautley and Daubney (2019) further delineated six instructional strands useable in most situations: “singing, composing, improvising, playing, critical engagement, and SMSC or social, moral, spiritual, and cultural activities” (p. 20). Critical engagement was defined as “listening, appraising, evaluating, describing, identifying, aural perception, and many other aspects of musical learning” (Fautley & Daubney, 2019, p. 20). Using the six instructional strands, the researchers developed a new spiral curriculum based on the work of Jerome Bruner. This study was necessary for any musician seeking to write curriculum as it serves as a checklist for design. Using Fautley and Daubney’s

techniques as checks and balances helped to ensure validity in the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum.

Ireland and Mouthaan (2020) compared Bruner’s spiral curriculum with network and web models to guide curriculum design, focusing on math and science curriculum, in which the knowledge domains are structured, compared to the more abstract learning domains of the humanities. Ireland and Mouthaan believed that arts curricula could benefit from the structure found in math and science curricula. The purpose of the research was to “contribute to the ongoing debate about curricular design in different subjects” (Ireland & Mouthaan, 2020, p. 7).

Ireland and Mouthaan (2020) defined two different forms of knowledge acquisition, the Hierarchy (for science and math) and the horizontal (for the humanities), modeled after the design of Bernstein (1999). The issue of applying a single curricular model, whether hierarchical or horizontal, is that students should be able to experience the concepts on multiple levels simultaneously. Additionally, Ireland and Mouthaan described the MMCP as a curricular model in which the content is defined in contrast to the developmental stages. The spiral model is not always a perfect fit for every subject, as each spiral level does not include mastery but rather the repetition of concepts. The researchers stated that the spiral could prove unmotivating for students who have previously mastered a skill (Ireland & Mouthaan, 2020).

In contrast to the spiral curriculum, Ireland and Mouthaan (2020) also offered alternatives by providing definitions of the network and web models that focused on the meaning of a concept. The network and web models provided cross-curricular connections to be made and the transfer of learning from topic to topic within the concept. In a web model, the sequence was not deemed as important as flexibility. For the elementary school music student, the spiral design

ensures that each year of development increases in difficulty. Ireland and Mouthaan suggested that adding a web model and understanding to the concepts could become the bridge to more in-depth music learning (2020).

In 2016, a study was published regarding designing “contextualized music instruction” (Rifai, 2016, p. 35). The researcher attempted to ...

“Delineate how it (contextualize music instruction) contributes to a sound elementary music program that allows teachers to both educate musically and teach music as and for social justice, through the integration of critical pedagogy, and the promotion of interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and empathy” (Rifai, 2016, p.35).

In other words, the researchers suggested designing a curriculum that combines music education and music for the purpose of gaining extramusical skills could be accomplished through units of study. Rifai began with a four-step process that included selecting content, researching, providing instruction, and evaluating success. Rifai suggested that teachers and scholars evaluate the end goal and work backward during planning for each unit portion. The units included writing projects, singing, playing instruments, performing choreography, text analysis, active listening tasks, and class read-alouds. Within each of the units of study, Rifai suggested that each child’s culture should be reflected in the repertoire and lesson plans (2016). Music curricular materials need to show the interconnectedness of the core subjects, cultural differences, critical thinking skills, and creativity required to complete musical tasks.

### **The Stages of Musical Development**

Ireland and Mouthaan (2020) looked to researchers Swanwick and Tilman (1989) in reference to the stages of musical development. In their 1989 study, Swanwick and Tilman developed

hierarchical music learning objectives for a study of the sequence of musical development in which a spiral model was employed for curricular mapping and used Piaget's stages of development in conjunction with music skills and concepts. For example, The Piagetian concept of mastery, ages zero to four, was paired with sensory exploration and manipulative skills. These sensory exploration skills would include listening, shaking maracas, or moving to the music. Likewise, the stages of imitation and imagination included echo singing and composition respectively. The final stage of meta-cognition included being able to understand feelings as they correspond to music listening . Swanwick and Tillman developed their spiral of music learning while acknowledging that it was not the only way to visualize the curriculum for music (1989). The researcher realizes the Swanwick and Tillman study is outdated but recognizes its importance and model to the body of music education curriculum.

Music instruction cannot be focused solely on the process of making music but must also include the product. Haning (2021) investigated the role of performances as perceived by the music teacher and how the preparation for performances impacts music's daily learning and teaching. Haning ventured to answer the following research questions:

1. What role do performances play in school music?
2. How are music teachers' pedagogical decisions informed or influenced by their efforts to mount performances?
3. What other aspects of the music teaching-learning process are influenced by the efforts to mount performances, and what form does this influence take?

Haning (2021) found five aspects that influence curriculum, scope, and sequence that are affected by performances: "community expectations, student motivation, time management,

teaching strategies, (and) teachers' views of performance" (p. 85). From the five aspects that influence curriculum, Haning developed a theoretical model that showed how performances were influenced by community expectations, teacher views, student motivation, teaching strategies, and time management (2021).

Haning (2021) used a grounded theory design for the research. Nine participants were selected using a maximum variation sampling method. The sample population included ( $n = 3$ ) elementary music teachers, ( $n = 3$ ) middle school music educators, and ( $n = 3$ ) high school music educators representing three different school districts. Each district fell into one of three categories: suburban, urban, or rural. As a token of appreciation, the participants were given a \$50.00 gift card at the end of the study. Haning used six data collection methods: interview, observation, follow-up interviews, artifacts, journal entries, and focus groups. Three months of data collection took place. Artifacts, such as programs from concerts and lesson plans, were collected and reviewed. Haning used open coding and discovered themes that crossed over each other. The researcher found that the community (the parents, administration, and community members) expected performances. The community valued the traditions or trends of the school, which outweighed the learning activities that occur daily in the classroom.

When interviewing the teachers, Haning (2021) discovered how intensely the participants internalized the performances as a measure of self-worth and situated those performances as the backbone of curricular choices. Administration and community leaders might have dictated the performances' themes, population served, venue, and the specific date on which the performance should take place. The participants felt that stakeholders' demands contradicted their philosophy of teaching and interrupted the focus on what best serves students. Student motivation was



another common theme discovered in decoding the data. The students' internal motivation significantly influenced the chosen coursework and musical selections. The teacher-participants expressed that students desired an opportunity to share what they had been learning in the classroom with their parents and the school community. Indeed, the teachers said that the students wanted a concrete product. As a result, the teacher participants were hesitant to assign a grade to performances because the positive experience was much more important than the A or F grade. This desire for positivity matched the teachers' desire to see all the students feel accomplished and experience success.

Time management was a constant struggle for the teacher participants in the Haning (2021) study. Teachers reported that scheduling performances may occur a year in advance and are difficult to change once those dates go on the school calendar. However, the participants stated that they are constantly aware of "where they were in relation to their next performance and that they were always thinking about the various things that they needed to accomplish by that date for the performance to be successful" (Haning, 2021, p. 95).

This study exposed two different music education preparation models: preparation for Concerts and the preparation for music class learning. Haning (2021) discovered that the teachers embroiled in performance mode were less concerned with concept knowledge and more concerned with product quality. In addition, Haning uncovered two different roles music educators played: the director and, in contrast, the teacher. Music teachers are opinionated and philosophically motivated, but as Haning discovered, they have a positive outlook regarding performances regardless of the difficulties and struggles those performances present (2021).

Haning's (2021) study suggested that performances provided motivation for students by allowing them to demonstrate their learned repertoire and increase their self-confidence. In addition, the study results showed how principals, parents, and district personnel may not assign value to music class activities and the process of music-making but may only see value in music solely for the performances.

### **Music Curriculum Development**

The National Association for Music Education (*NAfME*) provided frameworks and suggestions for general music educators to analyze their own curricular choices. Hedden (n.d.) developed an article for the *NAfME website* that provided directions and scaffolding for music curriculum development. Hedden described it as “a model template from which to plan a sequential, meaningful curriculum with fundamental learning experiences for all children” (Hedden, n.d.). Within the article, Hedden defined the essentials of music that must be present in all grade levels of music: melody, harmony, rhythm, and form.

Hedden (n.d) unfolded a time specification for each activity in which a minute of activity was planned for each year of age. As Hedden suggested, within the “Sing, Dance, Play” study, each activity planned was limited to 8-10 minutes to keep the activities age and development appropriate for second-grade students. Hedden elaborated that an excellently planned scope and sequence delivered from Pre-K to 5th grade will produce the skills and knowledge base that the teacher desires. Hedden specified the most critical area of developing a scope and sequence as “threading the concept” (Hedden, n.d., para. 34). In other words, the developer used the concept in all the activities planned for the unit. Immersing the student in the concept, using that essential element in activities, and delivering the information in multiple modalities allowed for the

internalization of the concept by the learner. Hedden suggested that a personal philosophy was not only important but necessary for curriculum design. Making goals, outlining concepts, using higher ordered thinking skills in each lesson, knowing the desired outcomes, and making appropriate literature choices help to make a well-rounded curriculum. Hedden encouraged the reader to use multiple modalities for assessment so that an accurate portrait of the students' learning could be formed.

In the interest of keeping the curriculum relevant, developers investigated the opinions of teachers and their priorities associated with skills and schedules. In this case, Mynatt (2018) studied the priorities of elementary general music teachers regarding the amount of time spent on skills and what exact skills were included in the curriculum. Mynatt chose an original questionnaire powered by Qualtrics to compile the data necessary for the study. The participants inhabited 33 different states and were majority female. Most participants reported one to five years of experience in the classroom. Three research questions framed the study as follows (Mynatt, 2018, p. 2):

1. What general music methods are commonly consulted by music teachers for PK-5 curricular construction?
2. What activities do PK-5 general music teachers emphasize in their curricula?
3. What proportion of music class per grade level do PK-5 music teachers spend on specific skills?

Mynatt's questionnaire, sent out to 5,166 NAfME member teachers, revealed the methods most used by practitioners were the Dalcroze, Kodaly, and Orff methodologies. The data were congruent with other relevant studies. Over the grade levels studied, listening to music, playing

instruments, and learning to match pitch were the top three activities occurring in the music classrooms. In addition, the top three resources used to create curricular activities were the 2014 NAfME standards, Kodaly methods, and Orff-Schulwerk.

Two camps of thought existed concerning curricular resources: (a) the eclectic philosophy, where multiple resources are used to create a well-rounded approach, and (b) the purist philosophy, in which one resource is used exclusively as a means of continuity. Many of the respondents in Myanatt's (2018) study subscribed to an eclectic philosophy regarding how to use music resources. In the younger grades, the highest proportion of time was spent experiencing music through kinesthetic movement. Looking across the data, the stages of development unfolded. For example, since reading music notation is an activity that requires students to be able to read letters and symbols in combination, PK and K only used this activity minimally. As the students increased in age and capacity for learning music, the teachers incorporated more reading music notation activities (Mynatt, 2018).

Second-grade results showed the majority of class time was spent on singing, gaining music literacy skills, movement, and instrumental activities that took up approximately 67% of the class time, with singing as the highest priority. The participants reported that the most emphasized activities were (in order of importance) beat competency, pitch matching, reading notation, listening to music, and playing instruments. Overall, this study provided a skeleton for the pilot curriculum "Sing, Dance, Play," as it helped to plan activities specific to the second-grade student's abilities (Mynatt, 2018).

## **The Place for Teacher Perspective in Music Curricular Development**

In recent years, there has been an outcry from the teaching profession regarding being subject matter experts and knowing what students need. In 2018, Conrad published a study in which teacher opinions and perspectives were included in the curricular development process in the Brandywine School District (BSD). The purpose of the study was to “determine music teacher perceptions of the need for curricular revision of the 1982 curriculum document” (Conrad, 2018, p. 3). The study sought to determine the teachers’ knowledge of the state standards as well as the set of 21st-century skills. The BSD defined the skills necessary for 21st-century success:

- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving
- Research skills and practices
- Creativity
- Artistry
- Curiosity
- Perseverance
- Self-Discipline
- Collaboration
- Oral and written communication
- Information and communication literacy and multicultural literacy

More importantly, the Conrad (2018) wanted to show the district officials that the music teachers knew the importance of aligning the district curriculum to these skills and updating the district curriculum. Three research questions framed the study:

1. What are music teachers' perceptions of the new National Arts Standards in the Brandywine School District?
2. What are the participant's perceptions of the current music curriculum aligning with the New National Core Arts Standards and meeting the expectations of the 21st-century learner?
3. What are teachers' perceptions in the BSD of the need for curriculum revision?

Conrad developed a mixed method case study that included ( $n = 2$ ) high school choral directors, ( $n = 2$ ) high school instrumental directors, ( $n = 1$ ) high school orchestra directors, ( $n = 3$ ) middle school general music educators, ( $n = 3$ ) middle school choral directors, ( $n = 3$ ) middle school instrumental directors, and ( $n = 19$ ) elementary music educators. The quantitative methods portion included a Likert scale assessing how familiar the teachers were with the new National Core Arts Standards, with one being very unfamiliar, ranging to five for very familiar. The qualitative methodology included follow-up interviews to assess individual opinions, understandings, and concerns.

Conrad's results showed that the teachers in the BSD knew that the 1982 district curriculum was inadequate and needed updating. However, the same teachers were not interested in beginning a project with any urgency. Most teachers felt they were somewhat familiar with the new standards and would be willing to help with the revision process, as shown in Table 3, the results are favorable for wanted change.

**Table 3***Results from the Conrad (2018) survey (pp. 39 – 48)*

#	Question	Results	Total Percentage
1	How familiar are you with the new standards?	61% familiar	61% of respondents are familiar with the new standards
2	Level of comfort with the new standards?	50% comfortable 44% somewhat comfortable	94% of respondents are somewhat comfortable with the new standards
3	How necessary is the alignment of the curriculum to the standards?	44% very necessary 39% necessary	83% of respondents feel alignment with the standards
4	Is a revised curriculum necessary for BSD?	56% very necessary 28% necessary	84% of respondents felt like a revised curriculum is necessary
5	Urgency to address revision of the curriculum	28% very urgency 33% urgent	61% of respondents felt a sense of urgency to revise the curriculum
6	How likely would you be to assist a team to revise the curriculum?	50% very likely 22% likely	72% of respondents were likely to assist in the revision of the curriculum
7	How familiar are you with 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills?	11% very familiar 38% familiar	49% of respondents were familiar with 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills
8	How likely are you to implement 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills?	44% very likely 39% likely	83% of respondents were likely to implement 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills

From this study came data supporting the need for curricular revision at the district level, that music teachers are not opposed to professional development that is relevant and purposeful, and that standards are important to music educators. Conrad (2018) pointed out that “arts educators consistently feel threatened by the lack of support from district personnel, state organizations, and building administrations” (p. 34). Adding the new National Core Arts

Standards has given music educators a connection to the common core curriculum so that they can defend or educate the administration and the community through relevancy. Regarding its connection to the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum, the Conrad study reaffirmed the need for the teacher’s voice in each part of the curriculum, that teachers are still learners, and that music educators are looking for rigor and relevance.

### **Biblical Integration in Christian Education**

Biblical integration is not easily defined. It seems to be a fluid term determined by many differing factors from different philosophies. Different denominations, theologies, and beliefs of what makes one a Christian all shape the biblical worldview the believer can adopt. In 2012, the researcher Jang studied the integration of faith and learning through the lens of a Christian elementary school teacher. Jang (2012) defined a Christian school as a place that should be “developed on a Christian perspective or biblical worldview, which forms the basis for educational practices and undergirds every discipline touched in the classroom” (p. 11). The problem, as stated by the researcher, was that teachers knew biblical concepts but did not know how to take those concepts and apply them to the curriculum. The purpose of the study was to assess the ease or difficulty of integrating biblical themes into the daily lesson plans of the teachers in a Christian school. Again, the teacher perspective was deemed important as the researcher allowed the respondents to self-report their comfort and ability to biblically integrate the subject matter. Jang used a survey to procure data from elementary school teachers who were members of ACSI. The following five research questions framed the study:

1. How proficient are elementary school teachers in ACSI affiliated schools at integrating faith and learning?



2. Which academic subjects do elementary school teachers in ACSI affiliated schools feel is the most difficult to integrate faith and learning in?
3. What, if any, is the difference in the implementation of the integration of faith and learning between elementary school teachers in ACSI-affiliated schools who attended Christian schools and those who did not?
4. What if any, is the difference in the implementation of the integration of faith and learning between elementary school teachers in ACSI-affiliated schools who attended seminars or training events on the implementation of faith and learning and those who did not?
5. What, if any, is the difference in the implementation of the integration of faith and learning by elementary school teachers in the ACSI-affiliated schools according to demographic factors?

Jang used the empirical model developed by Korniejczuk (1994, p.138-139). In the model, there are seven levels of biblical integration. The levels range from zero to six with level zero being non-use and level six being comprehensive. In Jang's results, three-fourths of the teachers ranked themselves at level three or level four. Level three teachers are described as having implementation practices that are superficial or irregular. Teachers who self-identified as level three used bible stories without context, were short on resources or only occasionally used biblical integration. The level 4 teachers were described as routinely using biblical integration in a more stable manner.

The teachers involved in the study found that math and the arts were the most difficult to integrate biblically, while science, social studies, and language arts were deemed easy. In

addition, the researcher found a significant correlation between the teachers' biblical learning experience and how well they implemented the biblical integration. If the teacher reported that they had theology courses in college, then their implementation and integration were higher than those who grew up in church but had no formal training. Individual demographics did not affect the implementation. Jang suggested that more time and money should be put into professional development sessions or training in biblical integration to increase teachers' confidence (2018). With increased confidence, biblical integration would grow.

Where Jang showed the need for training, a study by Williams (2021) sought to fill the gap with data on the actual implementation of professional development and look for significance between various variables. The purpose of the study was to “determine the impact of biblical worldview training programs on teacher self-efficacy and frequency of usage regarding biblical integration and teacher ability to implement a biblical worldview into various components of a curriculum” (Williams, 2021, p. 3). Williams looked for relationships between biblical worldview training and how teachers felt about their ability to teach. Additionally, three different components were studied. Williams investigated how a teacher's years of experience, different content areas, and different grade levels affected the frequency of biblical integration in the classroom. The researcher used quantitative methods in a nonexperimental, relationship-based model to complete the research. Two surveys were distributed to seven independent Christian schools in a specific geographical area. In total, there were ( $n = 171$ ) total teachers surveyed, ( $n = 66$ ) elementary teachers, ( $n = 44$ ) middle school teachers, and ( $n = 61$ ) high school teachers. The subject areas involved included language arts, math, science, social studies, fine arts, Bible, and self-contained classrooms (Williams, 2021).

The data for the Williams (2021) study showed no significant differences in the following areas: years of experience and the training, content area and the training, and grade level and the training. However, Williams drew some interesting conclusions. Math and social studies teachers were less confident in integrating a biblical worldview than teachers of Bible classes. In addition, language arts and fine arts teachers felt as confident in integrating a biblical worldview as teachers of Bible classes. Williams designed the survey centered around scripture and its application to the daily lessons taught in each course. When comparing the ease of integrating mathematical equations and scripture and other content areas, Williams said, “the lower scores for math were not surprising due to the general difficulty in authentically integrating scripture into mathematical concepts, especially at the middle and high school levels” (Williams, 2021, p. 92).

Williams (2021) summarized the study with explicit recommendations for school leaders and schoolteachers. For Christian school leaders, particular attention should be given to the personal statements of faith and, during the interview, the ability to connect subject matter to the Bible. For teachers, Williams recommended continual Bible study and scholarship and the discovery of how a biblical worldview shapes Christian education.

In the pursuit of biblical integration throughout curricular materials, Wiley (2021) took on the daunting task of defining and putting into practice “transformational integration” (p. 112). The purpose of the study was to “ascertain the components that must be present in the Christian school classroom for authentic student spiritual transformation to occur; acknowledging the presence of these components alone does not ensure transformation” (Wiley, 2021, p. 112).

Wiley (2021) began by outlining the differences between an evangelistic school versus a covenant school and the principle of Christian education versus educating in a Christian way. Covenant schools behave as an extension of the learning that students receive at home and like-minded churches, whereas an evangelistic school may accept many different denominational differences, but the agreement is made with the families and the church that Christian teaching will take place. In an attempt to differentiate between Christian education and educating in a Christian manner, Wiley reminded schools that separating the curriculum of the public school would be the only way to ensure authentic life transformation. Some Christian schools were merely public schools that allowed daily prayer, devotionals, and a chapel service; in these cases, the school was educating in a Christian manner. Wiley proposed that the only type of school that can make that transformative difference is a school that adopts a Biblical worldview, and that worldview drives changes in the curriculum. Wiley defined Biblical integration as “the process of instilling a biblical worldview, and as such, the slide between a biblical worldview and biblical integration is easy and never-ending” (Wiley, 2021, p. 29).

**Table 4**

*Wiley’s principles and corresponding scripture (Wiley, 2021, pp. 105-109)*

Principle	Title	Scripture
Principle #1	The Teacher is the Key	Mark 12:28b-31
Principle #2	Students are Image Bearers	Gen 1:26-27
Principle #3	Practice is Forming	Deuteronomy 6:4-9
Principle #4	Community is Love	John 13:34-35
Principle #5	Stories Teach Best	Matthew 13:3-9

Wiley developed five principles, in conjunction with scripture, that could help ensure a biblically integrated curriculum can occur. The five principles and coinciding scriptures are as shown in Table 4. From these five principles, Wiley believed that biblical integration would naturally develop.

Wiley (2021) concluded with recommendations for educators in Christian schools. First, every Christian school and every teacher at a Christian school should develop a personal philosophy of education. Second, the teachers and the administrators at Christian schools must realize that the students they serve have come from differing circumstances and may not understand the biblical worldview. Thus, Wiley concluded that professional development should be a priority so that teachers can discover new techniques for integrating biblical themes. Additionally, Wiley pointed out that teachers need to care for their spiritual lives. As frontline workers, “teachers are likely not prepared for the spiritual battle that is currently and will increasingly be vied for Christian school students’ hearts and minds” (Wiley, 2021, p. 121).

### **Biblical Integration in Music Education**

In recent times, the push to biblically integrate all curriculum areas for Christian schools allowed for more research. Slater (2021) identified the lack of curriculum for biblically integrated preschool music classes, and more specifically, multigenerational classes with parents and their preschool children exploring music at the same time. Slater pointed out that there are two major curricula, “but ones with a biblical worldview are seldom found, even though such a curriculum would prove beneficial for the evangelical church community” (p.1).

As with previous studies, Kodaly, Montessori, Vygotsky, and Orff methodologies were mentioned as methods used in the preschool curriculum, like *Kindermusik*. Slater shared Psalm 33:1-3, in which the psalmist encouraged the people to play skillfully as they worship as the rationale behind music education in Christian schools.

1 Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous.

It is fitting for the upright to praise him.

2 Praise the LORD with the harp.

Make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

3 Sing to him a new song.

Play skillfully, and shout for joy.

(New International Version, 1978, Psalm 33:1-3)

The purpose of the study was to provide a plan founded upon a biblical worldview, for teachers in any form of music education to use when instructing Pre-K and adults in unison.

Three research questions framed the study:

1. How does the relationship between a child and parent impact the music-making process when learning concurrently?
2. What characteristics of a multigenerational music curriculum might make the experience attractive to both parent and child?
3. In what ways can multigenerational music curriculum provide biblical truth in the student learning environment?

Slater (2021) chose to study the existing curriculum and perform historical research with a qualitative method. The outcome was expected to be a praxial, multigenerational program that

was taught through a biblical worldview lens. In conducting this research, the data helped Slater to create a curriculum for a multigenerational music class that was biblically integrated for all users.

Kenneth Gangel (2005), in an article for bible.org, revealed the opinion that music serves as a universal language that has the power to cross the divides of cultural and language differences to bring the gospel to any human. With this in mind, Gangel set forth to explain how the church is responsible for music education:

“The church has failed to take seriously its important responsibility in music education. Since Christian music is distinctly related to the church, the complete task of church education includes confronting children, youth, and adults with the best of Christian music and training those who possess talent to use it for Christ” (Gangel, 2005, p.1).

Gangel (2005) discussed the issues that music educators face when students are not free to express themselves through music and concurrently learn the text's message. Christian schools are not offering courses in music that allow this expression. Additionally, the necessity for execution of music pedagogy in listening, creating, and instrumental playing as well as singing. Gangel listed six principles for music education:

- Music should fit the child rather than the child fitting the music.
- Music teachers should utilize the simplest instruments of the earliest ages to encourage participation and build musical interest.
- Music teachers should teach the unknown by appealing to the known.
- Music students should spend time in listening exercises.

- Music teachers should be positive, encouraging, and create a joyful atmosphere at all times.
- Music teachers should use effective groupings.

Keeping Gangel's list in mind, the "Sing, Dance, Play" curriculum attempted to fuse established music pedagogy and Christian music with a seamless biblical integration of the Gospel.

The role of music in Christian education has been up for debate for many years. Young (2021) believed that music had a purpose and, in the Christian education forum, had a prime position in the curriculum. Young stated that the Bible should be the textbook for educating students in Christian schools to fulfill the scripture in Colossians 3:16, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (New International Version, 1978, Colossians 3:16). Not only is the *Bible* to be the textbook, but also the songbook and, the worship leader of the heart. Young outlined six roles that music plays in education, beginning with teaching. In particular, the hymns are singled out for their ability to teach the doctrine and principles of the faith. These songs taught people, over the years, in a more effective way. Songs remained with the believers long before and long after sermons are over. Young explained that music (melody and lyric in conjunction), opens the doors to our hearts so that the message of the Gospel can take root and bloom (2021).

Young's (2021) second role of music in Christian education brought to light how music could lead to growth in spiritual and moral development. Children, in their most formative years, learn songs that help them understand their world, understand God's love for them, and help build values. Young explained how children become adults who, in turn, teach their children



songs of the Bible. The third role designated music as a communication tool. Young detailed that music helps people communicate with God and is an avenue for God to communicate with His church. Music is a tool for worship and for the expression of emotions (2021).

The fourth role of music established its advantage in helping move ideas from short-term to long-term memory. Additionally, Young (2021) delineated the fifth role of music as an instruction and correction tool. The sixth role of music is deliverance as seen in the stories of David and Saul, or Paul and Silas. Finally, the seventh role is to attract youth and help them to stay in a body of believers.

In 2018, Tucker studied biblical integration in a Christian school by looking at the modes of teaching and learning. The purpose of the case study was to “examine biblical integration as demonstrated in the written and taught curriculum of one Christian school accredited by the International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA)” (Tucker, 2018, p. 2). The study was focused on the following research question: “How does a Christian school accomplish biblical integration through its written and taught curriculum?” (Tucker, 2018, p. 2).

Tucker (2018) utilized the school website, artifacts, syllabi, accreditation documents, in-service documents, and multiple interviews for data collection. The school population was upwards of 1,000 K-12 students over two campuses. The researcher uncovered the school’s goal for biblical integration, a software to map out the biblical integration, and provided biblical worldview training to teachers through *The Truth Project* (Tucker, 2018). Tucker found that follow-through was not a strong suit of the administration and teachers alike. The teachers at the study school desired more training in biblical integration of curricula. In addition, Tucker found that the administration left the teachers to biblically integrate their curricula without much

guidance. Tucker recommended that schools begin by documenting all use of biblical integration, providing clear expectations for teachers, including but not limited to, an implemented biblical worldview. Tucker also recommended that the school develop a mentor program with continual training (2018).

Within this chapter, it has been established that music curriculum for Christian schools does not currently exist. To solve this problem, different points of view were established through the research. The research studied helped develop music curricula, delineated stages in musical development, showed the importance of biblical integration and worldview, took into account the teacher perspective, and ultimately, solidified the need for a biblically integrated music curriculum. The synthesis of each of the sections of research has led to the development of a biblically integrated, musically sound, and developmentally relevant curriculum for music in elementary Christian schools. Each research study helped to shape “Sing, Dance, Play” by establishing a developmental stage for the grade level selected to pointing out the necessity for music in the Christian education world. From this literature review, the research moved to pedagogical development. In the next chapter, the curriculum will be explained, the method for studying the curriculum will be laid out, and the method for collecting teacher opinions will be outlined.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this multiple case study was to interpret Christian school music teachers' perceptions of a biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum through implementation of crafted lessons in six selected Christian schools across the United States and Canada.

#### **Description of Research Design**

The curriculum for the study was designed after the researcher worked in music education in a Christian school for 10 years without an explicit curriculum. The scope and sequence for "Sing, Dance, Play" were completed after researching a theoretical framework and using the National Standards as a guide. Next, the researcher developed musically sound and biblically integrated lessons. The New International Version (1970) of the Holy Bible was utilized for all scripture references.

This multiple case study was important to investigate as it would solve a real-life problem: the lack of Christian music curriculum experienced across the field of Christian music education. In addition, the collective case study was helpful, as it provided a "detailed description of a particular situation" (Joyner et al., 2013, p. 123) for the researcher through the collection of qualitative data from pre-implementation and post-implementation interviews. The multiple case study format permitted the researcher to observe and collect data from multiple research sites, allowed for replication, and assembled various viewpoints regarding the problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, six Christian schools implemented the "Sing, Dance, Play: Learning Music God's Way" curriculum for four weeks of the third quarter of the 2022-

2023 school year. The music educators involved were provided the necessary materials for implementation and received professional development training, answering any questions regarding the curriculum materials. In addition, each educator was pre-screened through a Google Form (see Appendix C) sent out after the educator expressed interest through solicitation in multiple Facebook groups geared toward elementary music educators. The six schools from the list of interested parties were contacted, the administration personnel were asked for permission to participate, and the educators were notified of their selection.

Following approval from administrators, the participants received their materials through the United States Postal System. The researcher followed up with a confirmation email, making sure of receipt. The next steps included instruction as to the length of time necessary for completion and instruction to contact the researcher when the participants were finished with the lessons.

## **Participants**

The participants ( $n = 6$ ) were chosen using selective sampling. The original participant pool ( $n = 10$ ) was reduced 40% due to attrition. The method for selecting participants was purposeful, as the teachers involved needed to meet certain requirements to participate. First, they needed to be teaching music to second-grade students at a Christian school. Next, they needed to be willing to take four class periods or four lesson times to implement the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum. The classroom requirements included melodic instruments, such as xylophones, boomwhackers, and non-pitched percussion, such as hand drums or tubanos. Additionally, the participants needed to have a method of projection, either a digital board or a

screen and projector. Finally, the participants were required to have a consent form signed by their site administrator to receive the materials.

The participants involved ranged in age from early 30s to mid-60s and were all female. Mrs. Autoharp hailed from Canada where music is taught in conjunction with art. Mrs. Bassoon lived in South Carolina, Mrs. Clavier lived in Indiana, Mrs. Dulcimer lived in Iowa, Mrs. Euphonium hailed from Wisconsin, and Mrs. Flugel from Tennessee. The differing perspectives were important to the data collection, as they represented three distinctly different geographical areas and cultures. In an article for *Business Insider*, Abadi (2018) identified 11 different cultures in the United States as separated by geographical area. For example, the state of Indiana was included in the “Midlands” area, where the middle class was set as the priority and the people believed “that society should be organized to benefit ordinary people, though it rejects top-down government intervention (Abadi, 2018, Midland’s section). Additionally, the state of South Carolina was included in the “Deep South” region, where residents tend to resist regulation and government control. Both geographical areas and their belief systems affected the attitudes toward education. In addition, the country of Canada was included to gain a non-American point of view.

During the initial Zoom meeting, the researcher gained the trust of the participants by connecting with each of them through shared experiences. Additionally, questions were carefully crafted to assist each participant in disclosing their personal demographic information and describing their current curricular situation. This data set was used to produce the descriptive codes for the participants’ demographical information. Multiple video sessions allowed for differences in time zones and accommodated personal schedules.

## **Role of Researcher**

The researcher, in qualitative research, takes on many roles, such as transcriptionist, interviewer, instructor, mentor, encoder, and analyst. In the “Sing, Dance, Play” study, the researcher, being a teacher in a Christian school by profession, acknowledged bias in regard to curriculum for music teachers in Christian schools. As a teacher, the lived experiences of not having curriculum, a guide, texts, method books, CDs or MP3s, or instruments, the researcher knew well how frustrating creating a curriculum from scratch was. Through this experience, the participants and researcher had some shared language specific to music teachers in Christian schools. This shared vocabulary was defined in chapter one. The researcher practiced epoché, a separation from emotions, when moving from the research stage to the data collection stage (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Stepping into the role of interviewer, the researcher established a professional rapport with the participants using empathy to gain their trust. Each of the participants was made aware of the researcher’s shared experiences during an initial email. The email stated the purpose of the study, the necessary equipment, and the time involved in participating. Following this stage, the use of a secure Google Form was employed to gather basic demographic information.

The role of the instructor developed during the professional development Zoom sessions as the curriculum was reviewed, the manipulatives were explained, and basic demographic information was shared. Each package of materials contained the necessary materials for the teachers to use during implementation. The materials were as follows:

- Teacher’s manual for second grade including copy masters for worksheets
- Laminated signs to be used during centers

- Game pieces for the music dynamics memory game
- Large foam dice with music notation on each side
- A copy of *One Big Heart* by Linsey Davis
- A copy of *Who Sang the First Song* by Ellie Holcomb.

The researcher instructed the participants in the desired instructional output using the materials given.

As the research moved forward, the use of Zoom made for easy transcriptions. The researcher listened to the recordings and proofread the transcripts to make sure that the data were transcribed correctly. The interviews were encoded through topic/thematic coding. A several-step process followed, in which the researcher reviewed and became familiar with the data set. The researcher began to work as an analyst using standard qualitative methods of thematic analysis and numeration. The researcher then interpreted the data, acting as the primary instrument for data analysis.

### **Measures for Ethical Protection**

Practicing ethical protection of the study participants, the researcher began with IRB approval from Southeastern University. Each of the participants were given the Informed Consent form for approval from the site administrator. The return of the Informed Consent form allowed for the dissemination of the curricular materials. The volunteer participants were free to decline participation at any time during the process. Each of the participant's identities were disguised by assigning an alias, such as "Mrs. Bassoon" The researcher and committee were the only people with access to the original identities. All data were secured on a personal computer and password protected. The participants involved were aware of the nature of the study and

knew that there was no harm intended in the study. And finally, the participants were given a copy of the results so that they could validate an accurate depiction of their thoughts and opinions.

### **Research Question**

This study addressed the following research question:

1. What are the Christian school music teacher's perceptions of the biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum?

### **Data Collection**

#### **Instrument Used in Data Collection**

As described in Creswell and Poth (2018), the researcher must be the first instrument in data collection. At the basic level, data in a qualitative study are expressed in words, whereas quantitative data are numerically expressed. The source of these qualitative data came from two interviews: one pre-implementation and one post-implementation. In this case, music making or difficulty in making music were both considered qualitative data as it applies to the workability of the curriculum.

#### ***Validity of Interviews***

The validation process in qualitative research assesses the accuracy of the data collected and the results, as described by the researcher. The participants reported their responses in the interview, the researcher collected, coded, and analyzed the data, and the dissertation committee at Southeastern University read the results. Three professors read and collaborated to determine the accuracy of the data analysis process and the reporting of the results. The interview protocol could be duplicated, and additional participants or studies could ensue.

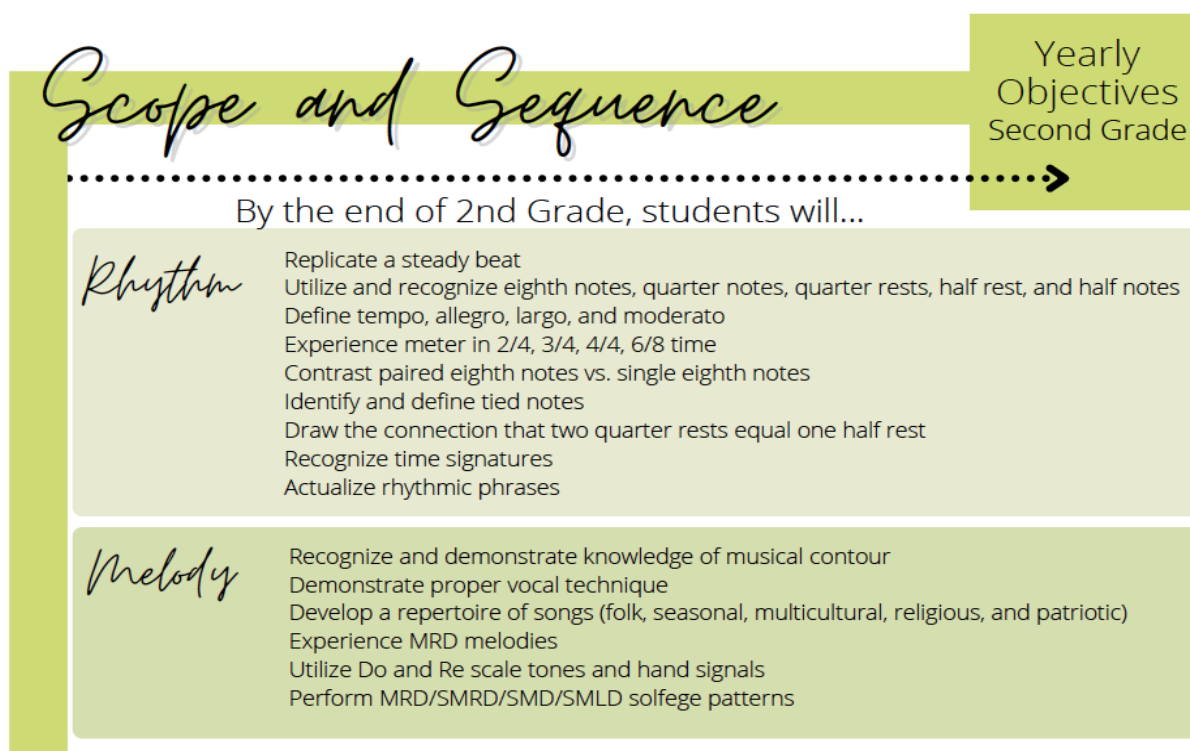


## Procedures

Curricular needs were at the heart of this study. Therefore, it was necessary that a scope and sequence, concept map, yearly objectives, and detailed explanations of the national standards were included at the beginning of the Instructor's Manual. The scope and sequence included yearly objectives within the essential elements (see Figure 2). Each essential element contained objectives beginning with "by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, students will..." followed by a list of items that are measurable in formal or informal assessments.

**Figure 2**

*Scope and Sequence: Yearly Objectives*

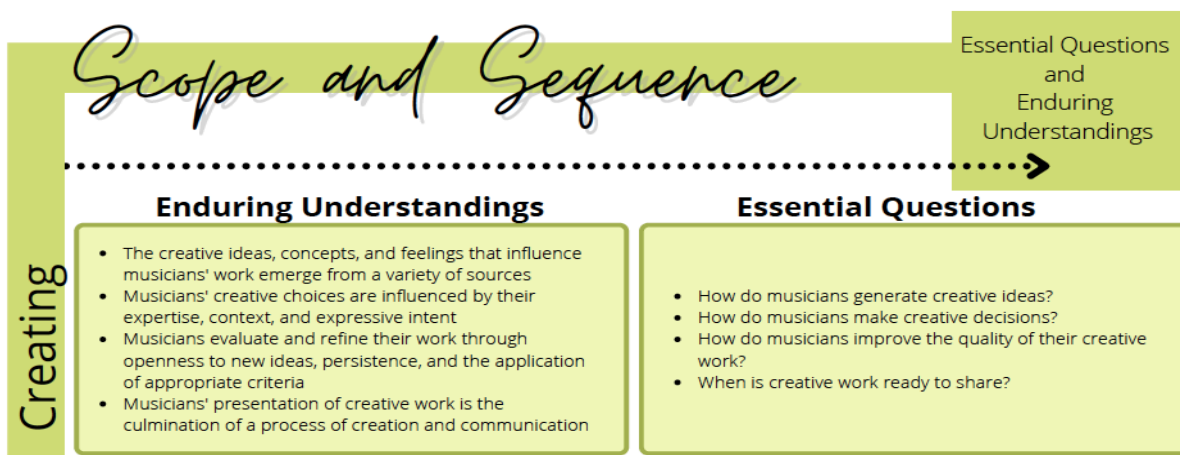


The following section in the introduction of the teacher's manual included the essential questions and enduring understandings as outlined in the National Standards for Music Education. The national standards are separated into four categories: creating, performing,

responding, and connecting (National Core Arts Curriculum, n.d.). The enduring understandings provided a direction for lifelong learning and the essential questions aided in guiding the curriculum. These can be found in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions*



The next list showed the “Quarter 4 Week at a Glance” in which the theme, activities, songs, assessments, and concepts were listed. The “Week at a Glance,” show in Figure 4, was created to help the teacher to fulfill the necessary components of a lesson plan as dictated by their administration. School administrators may have dictated that lesson plans be turned in weeks in advance and may have listed different components. The scope and sequence were put together so that each individual teacher could mold the curriculum to fit their school situation and needs.

**Figure 4**

*Quarter 4 Week at a Glance*

Scope and Sequence			Quarter 4 Week at a Glance Second Grade
Week 1	Theme: Activities: Songs: Assessment: Concepts:	<b>World Music: Music of Ireland</b> Irish Jig movement in triple meter, creating a melody with SMD, singing our best <i>Rakes of Mallow, Trinity Song, Who Sang the First Song?</i> Personal reflection worksheet 6/8 time, meter, composition, singing with others	
Week 2	Theme: Activities: Songs: Assessment: Concepts:	<b>Spring Time: The Music of God's Creation</b> Spring critters rhythm patterns, Mallet Time, High or Low? <i>Blue Bird, This is My Father's World</i> Observation of mallet technique Pitched percussion, mallet technique, bordun	

**Figure 5**

*Weekly Biblical Integration*

Scope and Sequence			Quarter 4 Weekly Biblical Integration Second Grade
Scripture retrieved from biblegateway.com in the New International Version			
Week 1	St. Patrick and the Shamrock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Mark 28:19-20) "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."</li> <li>The Holy Trinity</li> </ul>	
Week 2	God's Creation is Musical!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Psalm 147:8-9) "He covers the heavens with clouds; prepares rain for the earth; he makes grass grow on the hills. He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry."</li> </ul>	

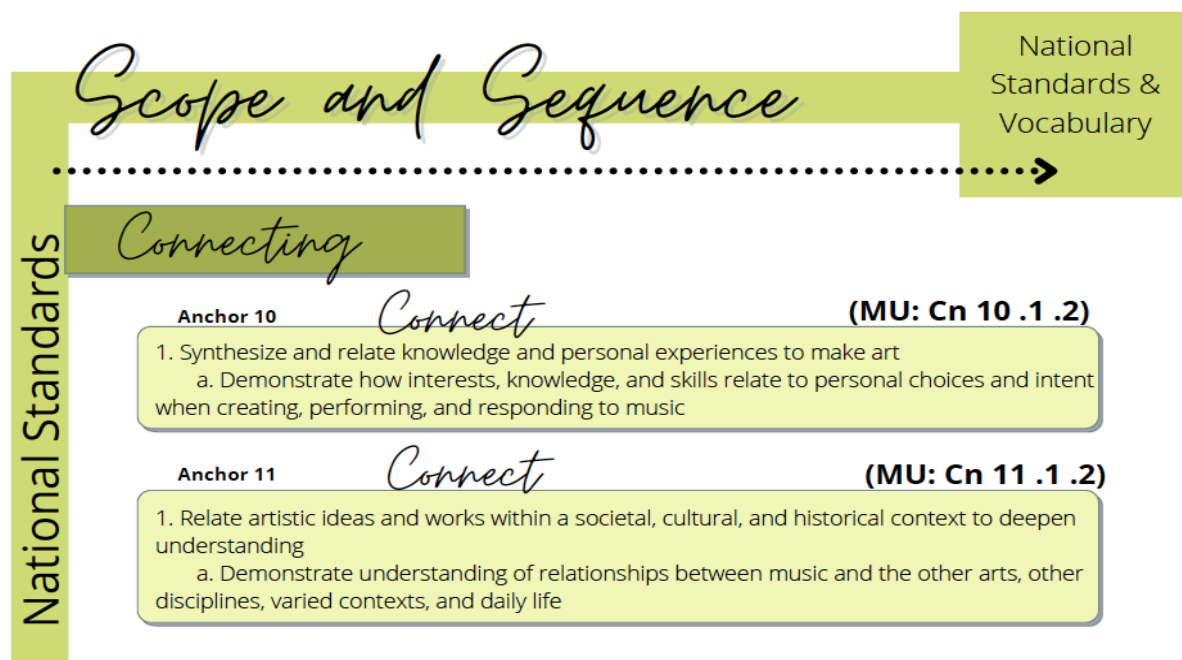
The researcher had established the need for biblical integration in the curriculum. The next section established the weekly Bible theme and the corresponding Bible verse and is shown

in Figure 5. This step is useful to teachers as they move through accreditation cycles and need to justify the curriculum to evaluators.

The National Standards followed and are shown in Figure 6. The standards were listed exactly as they were written in the documents drafted through the National Core Arts curriculum (n.d.). Additionally, the vocabulary that second-grade students should know by the end of the school year was included.

**Figure 6**

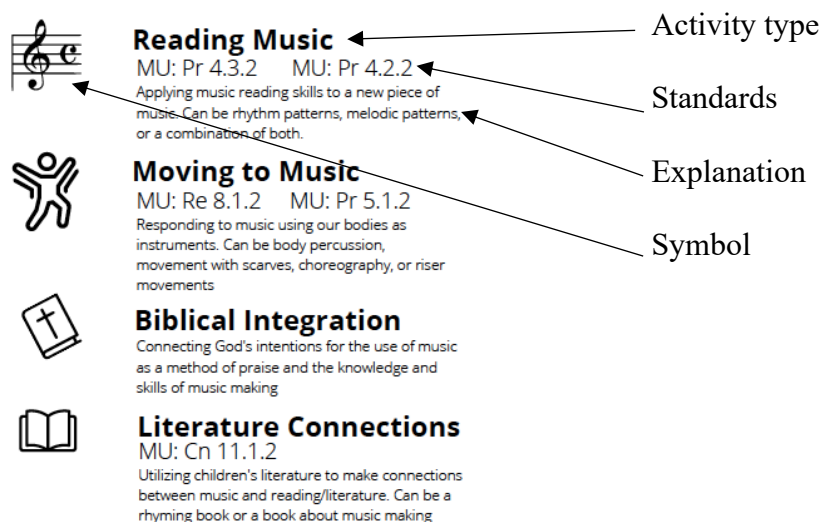
*National Standards and Vocabulary*



Symbolic icons were used to help the participant organize activities and provided links to the assessed standards. The visual reminders allowed the teachers to take a quick look at the lesson plans to keep them on track. If being evaluated, the teachers would be able to justify the lesson through the symbols explained page in the teacher's manual and shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Symbols, corresponding standards, and definition*



Each of the lesson plans included were structured with multiple modalities for explaining to administrators what is being accomplished in the class. “I can” statements, stages of learning, biblical integration, and materials needed were developed for each lesson and are shown in Figure 8. Additionally, the teacher could have referenced the Essential Questions, Enduring Understandings, or national standards as justification for activities.

The following sections contained worksheets for duplication, written assessments, game pieces, and centers signs. The purpose for these sections was to provide the educator with the materials that they need to perform the entirety of the activities. Adding manipulatives that are easily duplicated allowed for shorter planning sessions and hours of additional work. Additionally, a glossary of terms was included for the teachers and the students to clarify terms for all involved.

**Figure 8**

*Lesson Plans*

*Lesson Plans* Quarter 4 Week 1

## World Music: Ireland, St. Patrick, and the Shamrock

**Materials**

- Rakes of Mallow recording
- Stretchy band for circle dance
- YouTube video *Sing* by Ellie Holcomb
- *Who Sang the First Song* book by Ellie Holcomb
- Crayons and Personal Reflection worksheet
- Google Slides - Quarter Four

**Stage of Learning:** Exploration, imitation, connection

**I Can Statements:**

- I can learn about the Holy Trinity
- I can move to 6/8 time
- I can recognize music of different cultures

**Biblical Integration**

- **(Mark 28:19-20)** "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- The Shamrock is a representation of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Greetings!**

Tune of "Happy Birthday"  
Good Morning to you, Good morning to you  
It's time to start music, Good morning to you!

**Warming-Up**

Following the development and revisions of the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum, a collection of potential participants was populated through Facebook groups geared to music educators. A participant survey was sent to those interested to narrow the sample group to six schools and teachers. Each school received the forms for participation that Southeastern University IRB required. During the collection of the documents, final preparations were made for printing, shipping, and purchasing materials needed for implementation. The shipping box included dice with music notes for the dice game, laminated memory game cards, laminated centers signs, laminated rotation cards, two story books, and the teacher’s manual. The two storybooks, *One Big Heart* by Linsey Davis and *Who Sang the First Song* by Ellie Holcomb, were given to the participants at no expense. The covers are shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9**

*Storybooks included in the curriculum materials*



Once the schools received the materials, the researcher engaged the teachers in the first round of interviews. One of the Zoom sessions included two participants, and the others were all scheduled according to the participants' schedules. A professional development session describing the curriculum's implementation, the materials, and answering questions followed the descriptive data collection. These Zoom sessions were not only beneficial to the participants, but also to the researcher because further editing of the materials took place in real-time as the participants asked questions.

Participants were given a start and finish date for the four-week implementation period following the professional development session. Although the timeline did not have to be strictly followed due to differing schedules, the total time was limited to 4 weeks of instruction. The data collection concluded with post-implementation interviews of no more than 40 minutes for each participant.

## **Methods to Address Assumptions of Generalizability**

The nature of a qualitative case study did not lend itself to generalizability. According to Mills and Gay (2019), the overarching goal of qualitative research is not to “define ultimate truths” (p. 563) or to solve the world’s issues but rather to answer why and what of a phenomenon. Additionally, Mills and Gay pointed out that the research findings will be more helpful and applicable to the researcher and the intended audience of the research. In the case of “Sing, Dance, Play,” the researcher acknowledged the possibility of taking the findings, looking for themes, and applying those findings to additional grade levels of the curriculum. Therefore, the voice, perspective, and opinions of the music educators will be carried throughout further iterations of “Sing, Dance, Play.”

## **Data Analysis**

### **Research Question**

1. What are the Christian school music teacher’s perceptions of the biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum?

Perceptions are difficult to measure quantitatively, so qualitative data collection was used for this study. There were two sections of questions for the pre-implementation interviews. The first section enabled data collection for basic demographics, such as name, email, address, age, and years in teaching. In addition, the first interview provided a chance for each participant to describe their educational environment. Each school had a unique arrangement of classes taught, hours of operation, and instructional hours. Finally, the participants described their current curriculum and what they desired in a new curriculum. These data were handwritten into the form as seen in Appendix B. Descriptive coding was used to help explain the data.



The second set of interviews included 13 open-ended questions. Each question was reduced into a theme and was written into the codebook for this study (see Table 5). As described in Creswell and Poth (2018), the researcher began a spiraling process of data analysis that began with preparing the transcripts from the Zoom-recorded interviews. Each transcript was reviewed for accuracy, and a plan was made for long-term storage in a secure place. The next step included reading the transcripts and taking meaningful notes in the margins. The following was the table used to record the notes made.

**Table 5**

*Data Collection Tool*

	Quote	Successes	Needs Improvement	Biblical Integration	Musically Sound	Student responses	Materials and Design	Developmental Appropriateness	Teacher expectation	Nothing Available
1										
2										

These notes were then analyzed and coded. A code list was created and recorded in the codebook. Using the codes, the statements in the transcripts were highlighted according to their correlation to the codes. All the codes were then arranged, according to likeness, so that larger themes could be drawn. The codebook was finalized with descriptions and examples of each code drawn from the interview texts.

### Summary

The collection of data in a qualitative study could be interpreted by different people in different ways. In the case of the “Sing, Dance, Play” study, the data have been collected and verified through the committee. In the next chapter, the researcher reports the findings and

determines how the participants perceived the curriculum's effectiveness, level of Biblical integration, and ability to deliver quality music instruction.

## IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this multiple case study was to interpret Christian school music teachers' perceptions of a biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum through the implementation of crafted lessons in six selected Christian schools across the United States and Canada.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

Qualitative case studies involve in-depth examination of a particular phenomenon, event, or case. To gather data for a qualitative case study, researchers typically use multiple methods to collect a rich and diverse dataset that captures the complexities of the case. (Creswell & Poth, 2018 ). In this case study, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, a commonly used method for data collection, were utilized. The pre-implementation interview was more of a conversation, an unstructured interview. The post-implementation interview served as a formal interview to help gather more detailed information about the participants' experiences, perspectives, and suggestions for improvement. In summary, using multiple data collections in this qualitative case study allowed the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of the participants' preferences in a music curriculum for music teachers in Christian schools.

## **Pre-Implementation Interviews**

The first set of interviews provided the researcher with vital demographic information, current schedules, and practices in each selected school. As stated previously, the original intention was to have more of a focus group with all participants, but individual sessions were conducted because of scheduling conflicts. Within the pool of participants, ages ranged from 34-62, and all involved were female. All the participants worked in Christian schools from different denominations, including Catholic, Protestant, and Evangelical theologies. The participants had been teaching for 5- 40 years. All the educators involved taught general music classes, supplemented with courses, such as elementary orchestra, worship bands, and elementary choirs. Classes ranged from 30 minutes to 60 minutes, with classes meeting one, two, or three times a week.

Mrs. Autoharp, hailing from Canada, reported that her undergraduate degree was in music and literacy. In Canada, classes taught by music educators included lessons in fine arts as well. The courses were called Arts Education. Mrs. Autoharp was certified in levels one and two of Orff Methods and levels one and two of Kodaly methods. The participant's class schedule included kindergarten through sixth-grade classes that met two or three times a week for an hour. Additionally, Mrs. Autoharp taught seventh and eighth-grade general music and ninth and tenth-grade worship band. Kindergarten and first grade were reported to meet for 45 minutes per class.

Mrs. Bassoon, from South Carolina, was teaching for the second year in a Christian school. She reported having an "eclectic journey" that included 14 years as the director of a home school co-op choir. Mrs. Bassoon was certified in music through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). She taught first through fifth grades for 40-minute

classes once a week and an additional combined class for all fifth-grade students. Mrs. Bassoon reported the desire for lessons and songs that tie in with scripture.

Mrs. Clavier, from Indiana, taught at three different Catholic elementary schools. Her class schedule included kindergarten through fifth-grade, meeting once a week for 30 to 45 minutes, with extra time given for kindergarten, first, and second grades. The administrators at this school were concerned with the curriculum matching Catholic theology. Mrs. Clavier made sure that every theological question was answered.

Mrs. Dulcimer, from Iowa, had taught at her current school for 30 out of her 40 years in education. Mrs. Dulcimer reported that an important aspect of a music curriculum is the “balance between singing, elements of music, and instruments.” Her schedule, one of the most complicated and full of all the participants, consisted of the following courses:

- Kindergarten through third-grade general music for 30-minute classes meeting twice a week
- Fourth-grade general music met for 45-minute classes once a week and beginning orchestra once a week for 40 minutes of instruction
- Fifth-grade students met twice a week for 40 minutes of orchestra classes
- Sixth through eighth grades orchestra
- Private lessons to the fifth through eighth-grade students for 15 minutes weekly

Mrs. Euphonium, hailing from Wisconsin, had taught for 25 years in general music and choir courses. She was certified in piano pedagogy, K-12 teaching, and sixth through twelfth-grade choir. Her schedule consisted of 30-minute general music classes twice weekly for first through 5<sup>th</sup> grades, and sixth through eighth-grade general music once weekly for 50 minutes.

Additionally, she taught choir classes for fourth and fifth grades for 45 minutes once a week and sixth through eighth-grade choir twice a week for 50 minutes per class. She was interested in learning about the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum and seeing how her students received it.

Mrs. Flugel had been teaching for 15 years, with 12 of those years spent at her current school. Her education degrees consisted of Elementary and Pre-K through eighth-grade education with a reading concentration, and she also held a minor in music. Mrs. Flugel taught Kindergarten, first, and second-grade general music once a week and third, fourth, and fifth-grade general music twice weekly. In addition, she conducted an enrichment choir for third through fifth grades.

**Table 6**

*Demographic, Certification, and Education Information for Study Participants*

Participant	Age	Years in Teaching	Certification	Undergrad	Advanced Degree
Mrs. Autoharp	51	30	Canadian	Music and Literacy	Masters in Elementary Education with Music
Mrs. Bassoon	53	15	ACSI	BA in Music	Masters in Performance
Mrs. Clavier	34	5	State of Indiana	BA in Music Education	
Mrs. Dulcimer	62	40	State of Iowa	BA in Education Minor in Music	
Mrs. Euphonium	55	25	State of Wisconsin	BA in Music	Master of Music Education
Mrs. Flugel	40	15	State of Tennessee	BA in Elementary Education Minor in Music	

All participants were certified either by their state, country, or religious school association. Three participants (Mrs. Autoharp, Mrs. Bassoon, and Mrs. Euphonium) earned master's degree and all participants had, at minimum, a bachelor's degree. Two participants held BA in Music degrees, two held Bachelor's in Education, one held a BA in Music Education, and Mrs. Autoharp from Canada had a degree in Music and Literacy. The researcher recognized that the teachers selected for the study might have been atypical, as most of them had some experience in music education. However, when looking at their educational pathways, two teachers moved into music teaching from an education degree, and two majored in music without a concentration in music education. Within the participants, only one Bachelor of Music Education and one Master of Music Education were reported.

Most participants reported that they “made-up” the entirety of their curriculum and pulled activities from outside sources. These sources may or may not be secular education products, and none of the supplemental sources were biblically integrated throughout the resource. The participants reported using the following curriculum selectively:

- *Essential Elements for Music*
- Hal Leonard products
- “Beth’s Notes”
- “Harmony” online
- Composer studies
- *Recorder Karate*
- Orff and Kodaly Methods
- Musicplayonline.com

- *God Made Music*
- *Musikgarten* Toddler

The significance of these reported curricula could not be overlooked. Music teachers in Christian schools reported that they do not have a single source for music curriculum incorporating the Bible as a primary source and are developmentally appropriate. Mrs. Euphonium reported, “I feel that a lot of the curriculum is not relatable to the older kids and even find that some of the younger elementary grades find things ‘too babyish.’ I am also looking for more incorporation of religious material in songs and activities.” The educators in the field reported wasted time as a significant problem as they tried to work through different curricula that may or may not be appropriate for use at a Christian school.

The penultimate question in the pre-implementation interviews was, “What is one thing you wish was in a curriculum for music educators in a Christian school.” The consensus wished for a well-organized, comprehensive, biblically integrated, and theologically sound curriculum. Additionally, the teachers close to retirement wished to leave behind curriculum and lesson plans to help the next educator transition into the position. The generous spirits of the educators shone brightly as they expressed concern for the beginning or future educators in the field. The participants also desired a complete scope and sequence that included “all the things” ensuring the students received the best music education possible. Mrs. Flugel expressed the need to “have things in their hands” for third, fourth, and fifth-grade students. The “things” might consist of auxiliary percussion, scarves, stretchy bands, or anything that will help the student stay engaged throughout the lesson. Mrs. Autoharp expressed a desire for a scope and sequence that included a



Biblical worldview. Likewise, Mrs. Clavier desired a comprehensive music curriculum that must not disagree with Catholic theology.

## **Findings by Research Question**

### **Research Question**

This study addressed the following research question:

1. What are the Christian school music teacher's perceptions of the biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum?

## **Themes**

### **Theme 1: Successes**

#### ***Overall experience***

The overarching theme in the interview's first question was that the "Sing Dance, Play" curriculum implementation was a positive experience for all six participants. When asked, participants described the experience as "very positive" and "easy and accessible." The variety of materials, the variety of activities, and the developmentally appropriate lessons were detailed by the participants. For example, Mrs. Flugel commented, "I was able to jump right in with the lessons with little trouble." The ease of use was reflected in each of the interviews.

#### ***Pre-Implementation Interview***

The participants, save Mrs. Autoharp and Mrs. Euphonium, found the pre-implementation interview to be an experience that was necessary and welcomed. The researcher established a friendly yet professional rapport with each participant as they shared their experiences in the world of music education. Demographic data was easily shared, and by the end of the interviews, the participants felt ready to implement the materials in their own classrooms. Mrs. Dulcimer

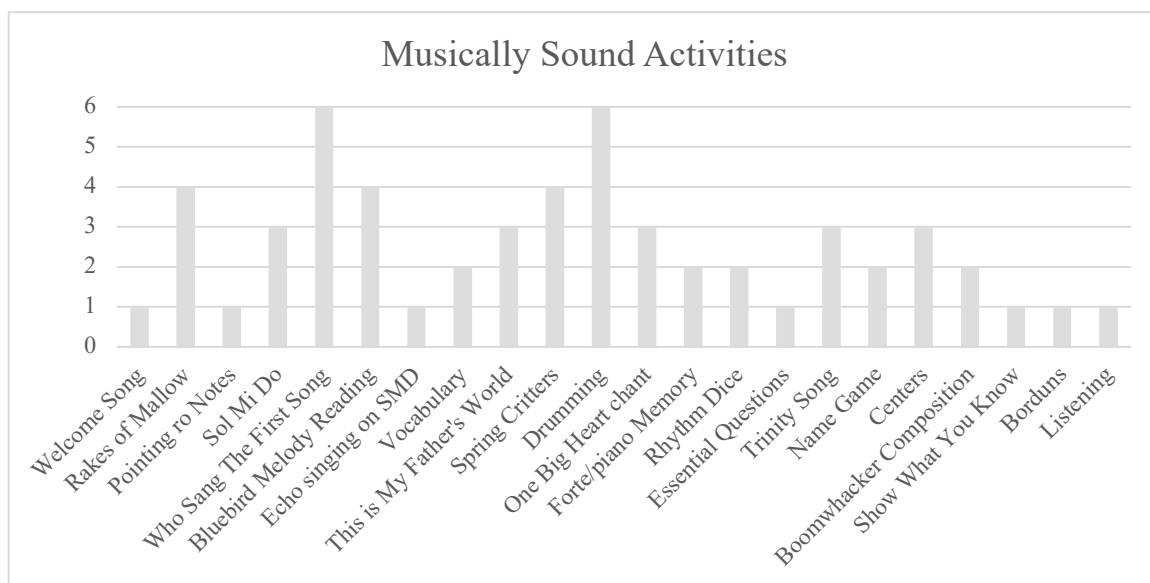
found the pre-implementation interview helpful and said, “It was great to get your feeling on it and just about education in general and music education.” Mrs. Clavier expressed the helpful nature of seeing the curriculum before implementing it. Mrs. Flugel commented on how the pre-implementation interview “saved time in understanding the symbols.”

### ***Musically Sound Curriculum***

While in development, the curriculum took shape based on the National Standards developed by NAfME. It was essential to the researcher for the curriculum to be aligned with standards, spiraled in skills, and Biblically integrated. At the forefront of the researcher’s mind were the multiple attempts she made while working in a Christian school for 10 years without a curriculum and wanting desperately to provide the students with the best possible music courses available. Mrs. Euphonium explained, “I am all about rigor (it’s in our school mission statement), and students were engaged and active the entire 30 minutes of class.” Mrs. Euphonium, in particular, was focused on the potential for the curriculum as she reflected that “Sing, Dance, Play” had “everything needed to be successful not only as a teacher, but for the students” as well and it provided “fun, creative, and engaging activities.” The participants identified the activities and materials that met the demands of rigor, as listed below:

**Table 7**

*Activities and Materials That Participants Found Musically Rigorous*



***Student responses***

***Who Sang the First Song? by Ellie Holcomb***

By far, the most successful portions of the curricula were the two storybooks incorporated into two of the four lessons. Mrs. Autoharp described the positive effect that *Who Sang the First Song* had on teachers and students alike with the following statement:

“Wow, this was just lovely. Thank you for sending the book, such a beautiful book. Then I said, would you like to hear the girl who wrote this? So, when that stopped, what was so interesting to me was like, I had Teacher Assistants in class, and when she (Ellie Holcomb) started to sing, it was like everybody just calmed down. They sang it, it brought peace to the whole place.”

Mrs. Autoharp previously explained that her second-grade students were struggling with behavior issues this year. To report that the class was peaceful surprised her and affected the entire lesson. Likewise, Mrs. Bassoon's students enjoyed the book and song combination so much that she used the lesson on a different occasion when she had a substitute. Mrs. Clavier and Mrs. Dulcimer both reported that their students loved the book and song as well. Mrs. Euphonium added, "I loved your choice of the storybooks. I believe incorporating reading into music lessons is very important as it also helps reinforce rhythms through use of syllables."

Overall, this book achieved a level of success enjoyed by students and teachers alike. In addition, teachers in the music classroom using this book were meeting literacy goals for their schools.

### **The Bluebird Song and Game**

This portion of the curriculum was also received well by the participants. Mrs. Autoharp reported that "everyone was happy, no one was fighting. It was a wonder." Mrs. Bassoon said that her kids loved the bluebird song and that it was easy for them to learn proficiently. Her students asked for the bluebird game and song the following week, which is a sign of success to a music educator. Mrs. Bassoon also reported that she added another step to the process by using tennis balls cut to make a mouth and googly eyeballs attached to help represent the melodic direction of the song. Mrs. Dulcimer added a discussion with her students about the bluebird song where they recalled a priori knowledge by identifying where and if they had ever seen a bluebird. The children in Mrs. Dulcimer's and Mrs. Euphonium's class loved the song and game. Mrs. Dulcimer expressed gratitude for the explicit directions that were "so clear" to her. Mrs.

Euphonium extended the lesson to include melodic direction and used her own solfege ladder on her wall to enhance the lesson.

### **Additional Student Response Success**

Mrs. Autoharp was surprised by the reception of a traditional hymn and said, “I haven’t taught as many hymns to the children. I thought, ‘nice, like wow, look at them. Look at them eating this up’.” Mrs. Bassoon’s students loved this hymn and even used it as a concert piece for performance. Overall, the introduction of a traditional hymn elicited a positive response from the students. Mrs. Autoharp’s and Mrs. Dulcimer’s students found success in the name game in the week three opening activity. “They were so pleased to be able to have that moment to shine and have healthy engagement,” reported Mrs. Autoharp. The students in Mrs. Flugel’s class particularly enjoyed the Spring Critters activity, or in their words, “the bugs with the rhythm,” and even proclaimed it their favorite lesson. Mrs. Euphonium’s students enjoyed the Irish jig dance and were “fully engaged throughout the process.”

The music centers in week four were particularly received well by all students. The boomwhacker improvisation, the forte and piano memory game, and the rhythm dice compositions made an impression on Mrs. Autoharp’s class. She stated, “The rhythm dice was fun. And I thought, are they gonna stay focused with this? but they did.” Mrs. Bassoon’s classes were engaged in centers as well. She reported, “I really saw them working together, teamwork, and they were all engaged. Everybody was engaged and focused.” The students in Mrs. Clavier’s class enjoyed the cross-curricular responses to music as they imagined situations that might accompany the music. Mrs. Clavier reported, “The kids love to draw so much so they didn’t really get to spend much time on the comparing and contrasting.” A response with fine art proved

to be a worthwhile activity for the second-grade students. Mrs. Dulcimer stated, “This was probably my kids’ favorite of all, and they really liked this. The centers worked so well, and it was laid out so well.” Mrs. Flugel had never implemented centers in her class because “I thought it would be too hard, but I loved these!” She went on to explain how she implemented the centers in multiple other classes and varied the centers that each class used.

### ***Materials and Design***

For the most part, the materials and design were met with positivity from the participants. The researcher collected adjectives that the participants used to describe the materials, as shown in Figure 10. The result was a list of adjectives shared between all six participants and was overwhelmingly positive.

**Figure 10**

*Adjectives Used to Describe the Materials Used for the Study*

easy	helpful	enjoyed	variety
accessible	beautiful	cute	hard
exciting	Best thing ever	engaged	organized
nice	pleased	learning	variety
worthwhile	Easy to follow	impressed	positive
a keeper	juvenile	impressive	clear
a wonder	neat	worshipful	smart
wonderful	fun	fine	perfect
successful	concise	effective	creative

The materials with the most positive comments were the storybooks, echo singing melody cards, the layout, the variety of activities, and the centers. A few participants referenced the multicultural aspects of the Irish jig activity, the drumming, and the diverse faces used in the *One Big Heart* book. They referenced how nice it was to see their student’s faces reflected in the book.

Overall, there were 29 comments made referring to the professionalism, organization, graphic design, color, and clarity of the teacher's manual. Mrs. Euphonium stated, "It (the teacher's manual) is filled with a very user-friendly 'scope and sequence' inclusive of the National Standards, vocabulary, objectives, and symbols which easily identify and connect with the standards." She proclaimed, "When I first opened this curriculum, I thought it was very well organized with all the necessary and needed information in view to be successful as a teacher." Mrs. Flugel reported, "My first impression was that it was laid out well and it was easy to follow as while also full of ideas." Mrs. Dulcimer explained,

"I appreciated the scope and sequence and all the things that (the researcher) took the time to put in there. You never know what your school is going to be looking for in lesson plans. Teachers don't always have time to do a scope and sequence and that's really nice to have, just having all the things right there. I felt very privileged to be able to just pull the manual out and use it as it was."

Mrs. Clavier echoed Mrs. Dulcimer's feelings, as she thought, "It looks very nice and it's well organized. I could find everything I needed without having to ask (the researcher) questions after I received it." These sentiments were also explained in Mrs. Autoharp's response when asked about the teacher's manual: "The icons helped in the moment, just to find where you are when you are doing something new."

The varied activities, including pointing to notes as the students read the music, the organization of the centers, were appreciated by participants because of, "having all of it right in front of me," as Mrs. Dulcimer claimed. Mrs. Flugel appreciated the directions for the Irish jig and how easy they were. The song selections were well received with *Who Sang the First Song*

being the favorite. Mrs. Dulcimer and Mrs. Bassoon both reported that their principals were impressed. The techniques shared for drumming, “hot stove,” high sounds, and low sounds connected with the participants and students alike.

### ***Developmental Appropriateness***

Most of the activities were reported to be on grade level by the participants. Mrs. Autoharp pointed out that hymn singing is not a constant in elementary music classes. Of *This is My Father's World*, arranged by Chris Rice, Mrs. Autoharp said, “I haven’t taught as many hymns to the children. I thought, nice, wow, look at them. Look at them eating this up.” Her students connected with this song despite the hymn being currently out of fashion and older.

Mrs. Bassoon and Dulcimer both commented on the centers in week four. Mrs. Bassoon said it made her look at the children with wonder as she saw them “working together, engaged and focused.” Mrs. Dulcimer exclaimed that the lesson’s four centers “worked perfectly with what we are doing in second grade.

Mrs. Dulcimer was impressed with the personal reflection portion of the week one lesson. The students were given a copy of four faces and were asked to color in the face that described how the music made them feel. In this way, the participant/teachers could gauge the students’ reactions. Mrs. Dulcimer reported, “It was interesting what they came up with. It was a chance for them to express themselves.” In addition, Mrs. Dulcimer reported that her second-grade classes were learning “the Great Commission” in their homeroom classrooms and that the scripture was “on grade level.” Mrs. Dulcimer said of the curriculum, “so overall, wonderful, very fun to do, different activities, and a lot of it was really geared to second grade.” Mrs. Flugel



reported that the activities were adaptable for classes learning on different levels. The adaptability of the lessons was reported to be a success by all participants.

### ***Teacher Expectation***

One of the most surprising results was the willingness of the participants to identify their expectations, both positive and negative. Mrs. Dulcimer shared that she “wasn’t sure what to expect” and was “impressed at the quality and professionalism’ of the manual.” Mrs. Dulcimer expounded on the idea that some of the activities were surprisingly well-received by the students. Of the bluebird song and game, Mrs. Dulcimer stated, “I was surprised that it went so well.”

Mrs. Autoharp, when looking through the teacher’s manual for the first time, said, “It was a breath of fresh air not having to plan, just do what’s here and save myself a bit of time.” This sentiment was shared by others in the study. Music teachers in Christian schools do not have a “bar” in which to set expectations, so not knowing what to expect and being surprised by the outcome was a common theme. Mrs. Autoharp shared this story of her experience, expectations, and surprising outcome:

“I looked ahead to *Who Sang the First Song*, and the staff that’s on that page, I was like, oh, that’s not in the right range for typical children, right. It’s got a lower range and I don’t know who this is going to work at all. I was so skeptical, but then after hearing the artist sing on YouTube, and how the children sang it so easily even though it is in a low register, it was a non-issue. So, what I thought would be an issue was a non-issue. I was like, well, this is a keeper, I’ve got to do this again with maybe some other classes too. So that was very lovely and surprising for me.”

The response from Mrs. Autoharp is typical of teachers who have been trained in Western tradition. There are rules, ranges, and understood norms. In this case, the researcher selected the song because of its singability and worshipful nature. The purpose of the song was not to create great singers but to connect those singers with their Creator. Expectations can get in the way of a beautiful musical moment with students.

## **Theme 2: Items needing improvement**

One of the most important parts of this process was to get the teacher's perspectives (positive, negative, or suggested improvement) and incorporate those ideas into the final product, the "Sing, Dance, Play: Learning Music God's Way" curriculum. Overall, the response to the study was positive. There were suggestions for improvement, overlooked mistakes, and suggestions to make the curriculum more accessible to more music educators in Christian schools. Materials and designs and stages of development were the two main categories in which improvement needed to be made.

Mrs. Autoharp made the most suggestions for improvement, and these are shown in Table 8. The researcher was thankful for the participant's attention to detail, such as spelling errors and inconsistencies between the Google Slides and the Teacher's Manual. Mrs. Autoharp also included the ways in which she modified the lessons to meet her needs. The most important suggestions were the ones that included suggestions for how to fix the problem. For example, Mrs. Autoharp liked the way that the curriculum was planned out and organized. However, she suggested adding more manipulatives, additional ways to expand lessons, and ways to transfer skills to new grade levels. From each suggestion a plan to correct and improve was made.

**Table 8***Suggestions for Improvement – Mrs. Autoharp’s Suggestions*

Item needing improvement	Comments	Category for Improvement	
		Materials	Stage of Development
Trinity Song	“The trinity song, I think it was a good review for the grade twos. I definitely think maybe more appropriate for kindergarten.”		X
Irish Jig Dance	“Like, so what I ended up doing was I looked up the dance on YouTube. And I found that a little more helpful to follow.”	X	
“Who Sang the First Song”	“The lesson could be expanded. I think it would work like maybe acted out. Or characterized and sang it, or maybe our instruments to it or maybe just did a whole art piece with her singing.”	X	
“This is My Father’s World”	“This is my Father's world, in the manual it says Chris Tomlin, but it is actually Chris Rice”	X	
	“I got the lead sheet for myself so I would have found that helpful, just to help me with echo singing with them.”	X	
Bordun	“You don’t have the bordun as an open fifth on the google slides, but it is in the glossary in the back”	X	
Spring Critters Rhythms	“I made copies, cut them into small pieces and put them in pairs and then just arranged them for their partner.”	X	
	“I just wrote a word bank on the whiteboard by that station.”	X	
Centers	“The only thing I didn’t like about the timer is there was no buzzer to cut it off, so it just went right into the next timer.”	X	
Canon	“There was one spelling error. Cannon is spelled like a blasting cannon. But the music canon has two ns not three.”	X	

Mrs. Autoharp found mistakes with the curriculum that others missed. The improvements can be made easily and deemed valid by the researcher. For the Irish Jig dance, Mrs. Autoharp

was more comfortable with a video of a dance, whereas Mrs. Bassoon was comfortable with calling out the moves like a square dance leader. Each participant had their way of implementing curriculum based on their values and comfortability with the activity. To meet this need for differentiation, the researcher added a link to a YouTube recording, including an example of the dance in future iterations.

Mrs. Autoharp was adept at finding small errors. For instance, in the teacher's manual, the developer wrote *This is My Father's World* was arranged by Chris Tomlin, but in fact, it was written by Chris Rice. In addition, the Google slides and the glossary pictures did not match when it came to the bordun, which is supposed to be in an open, perfect fifth like it is in the glossary. And finally, Mrs. Autoharp reported, "There was one spelling error, cannon is spelled like a blasting cannon, but the music canon has two ns, not three." This fixable error was within the lesson, but in the glossary, it was correct. Again, the researcher appreciated the keen eye of the participants.

Mrs. Autoharp was forthcoming with suggestions for improvement that would only enhance the curriculum. For instance, Mrs. Autoharp suggested that the lesson including the book and song by Ellie Holcomb, *Who Sang the First Song*, could be "...expanded. I think it would work like maybe acted out, or characterized and sang, or maybe add instruments to it or maybe just did a whole art piece with her (Ellie Holcomb) singing." In another instance, Mrs. Autoharp suggested that during the "spring critters" lesson, that manipulative flashcards that the children could arrange on their own would only add rigor to the lesson. She continued, "I made copies (of the spring critters), cut them into small pieces and put them in pairs and then they just arranged them for their partner."

**Table 9***Suggestions for Improvement – Mrs. Bassoon’s Suggestions*

Item needing improvement	Comments	Category for Improvement	
		Materials	Stage of Development
This Is My Father’s World	“FYI the Gettys have a really nice version that is actually better and in their range and it shows beautiful scenes of creation.”	X	
Week 3	“This lesson needed more singing”	X	
Centers	“We did center one as a class listening as the students do not have any technology of their own or access to computers.”		
	A word bank would be helpful	X	
Overall	I would use a lot of body movement starting to focus them using the music, they’re singing, they’re standing up they’re engaged and they’re moving their bodies rather than me trying to explain something	X	X

Each participant brought new suggestions and a specific point of view on how those changes could be made. Mrs. Bassoon, whose suggestions are shown in Table 9, was well versed in different renditions of songs that are available. She suggested that the Gettys’ version of *This is My Father’s World* was “actually better in their range and it shows beautiful scenes of creation.” The addition of the visual stimulation and focus on the beauty of God’s creation was a welcomed change. In future additions, this version will be added to the listening lesson. In week three, Mrs. Bassoon suggested that there be more singing included in the lesson. This lesson was centered around drumming and rhythm chanting, but adding a melody to the refrain from the book *One Big Heart* was a valuable suggestion. Three out of four participants agreed with Mrs.

Bassoon, the “Show What You Know” assessment in week four lessons needed a word bank for the second-grade students.

Additionally, the researcher did not consider the possibility that schools exist where students are not allowed to have access to personal computers or even classroom sets. The lack of classroom technology is another area where modifications could be suggested to meet every educational need. Finally, Mrs. Bassoon evaluated the entirety of the curriculum and stated, “I would use a lot of body movement, starting to focus them using the music. They are singing, they are standing up, they are engaged, and they are moving their bodies rather than me trying to explain something.” This opinion followed current pedagogy in which physical activity is preferred to verbal instruction.

**Table 10**

*Suggestions for Improvement – Mrs. Clavier’s Suggestions*

Item needing improvement	Comments	Categories for Improvement	
		Materials	Stage of Development
Irish Jig	The version that you had the YouTube link for the Irish jig, was a little too fast for my kids. So, like, there’s a way in YouTube you can like slow it down. Later I found a slower version.	X	X
Bordun	The bordun in F, that is what is notated on the slide	X	
Centers	The center could have used a few more minutes	X	
	I ended up having to do shortened versions of the songs	X	
	It could help to have it split between the two days.	X	
	The one that was a little hard for my kids was the Show What You Know worksheet. They haven’t done all those notes	X	X

Mrs. Clavier offered yet another set of different suggestions for improvement which are summarized in Table 10. She suggested that the Irish jig YouTube link was “a little too fast for my kids, so like, there is a way in YouTube you can like slow it down. Later, I found a slower version.” There was some conversation regarding the key selected for the Orff instrumentation of the bordun. Using the written bordun will be investigated for future iterations of the curriculum.

Regarding the centers in week four, Mrs. Clavier suggested that there be a few more minutes added to each of the stations. She stated, “The centers could have used a few more minutes. I ended up having to do shortened versions of the songs.” Again, this suggestion is an easy fix. The developer can add different timers for different situations. Each participant felt the time limit in a little different way. Furthermore, Mrs. Clavier suggested that “it could help to have (the centers lesson) split between two days.” This accommodation of time, seeing that each school had a different schedule and amount of time spent in music class, could be easily explained in the introduction to the curriculum.

Mrs. Dulcimer was equally excited to share her suggestions for improvement which are shown in Table 11. She valued the stretchy band activity that helped to manage the Irish jig game and shared, “I would like to have even more with the stretchy band.” Taking this into consideration, the researcher could put additional lessons using the stretchy band into each grade-level iteration of the curriculum. Additionally, Mrs. Dulcimer pointed out that the *Rakes of Mallow* sheet music included on the Google slides that accompanied the curriculum could be larger on the screen.

**Table 11***Suggestions for Improvement – Mrs. Dulcimer’s Suggestions*

Item needing improvement	Comments	Category for Improvement	
		Materials	Stage of Development
Irish Jig	I would like to have even more with the stretchy band	X	
	I think the kids could have done things a little trickier		X
Rakes of Mallow	I would have kind of liked to have that a little bit bigger (sheet music excerpt on the google slide)	X	
	The one thing that I usually do with second graders, I don’t tie all the eighth notes together		X
Centers	We did not put the forte/piano cards, we do a lot of that in kindergarten		X
	For my kids, in second grade, that was a little easy		X

Mrs. Euphonium had many suggestions, as shown in Table 12, for improvement that other participants did not mention. First, she suggested that the single syllabic nature of the word “snail” was better represented as a quarter note which receives one beat of sound, followed by a quarter rest that receives one beat of silence. This suggestion never crossed the researcher’s mind and proves the necessity for teacher input for each lesson.

Second, Mrs. Euphonium used musicplayonline.com for her current curriculum which allows access to all materials from an online platform. The researcher also used *Music Play* and understood the ease of having all the materials at the finger’s touch. Again, in her curriculum used at the time of this study, there are examples of each activity performed by students or the instructor. The addition of example videos will be considered for future iterations. Finally, Mrs. Flugel’s only suggestion was for the Forte/Piano memory game and is shown in Table 13.



**Table 12***Suggestions for Improvement – Mrs. Euphonium’s Suggestions*

Item needing improvement	Comments	Category for Improvement	
		Materials	Stage of Development
Spring Critters	“If I could make a suggestion, it would be for the snail (used in the activity). I would use a quarter note and a quarter rest since it is only one syllable”	X	X
Spring Critters	“I also went beyond and asked students to think of more ‘critters,’ clap them, and then speak the rhythm for their ‘critter.’”	X	
Delivery Methods	“I would like to see the ‘Sing, Dance, Play’ curriculum available online. With today’s use of technology, especially in the classroom, I would like to be able to use these lessons in Google Classroom.”	X	
Links	“Honestly, I did not like having to type in the URL for videos.”	X	
Videos	“I wonder if perhaps having smaller groups of students perform some of the dances listed and other activities might be helpful for teachers to see in videos provided.”	X	

**Table 13***Suggestions for Improvement – Mrs. Flugel’s Suggestions*

Item needing improvement	Comments	Category for Improvement	
		Materials	Stage of Development
Forte/Piano Memory Game	“On the memory game, it was hard for them to tell that the boy was holding a book and the sheep confused them if they should be loud or quiet.”	X	

As the researcher looked through the results for items that needed improvement, most of the issues found by the participants were in the materials or had to do with the design. Moreover,

the issues with the materials were typographical or easy to correct. The researcher is thankful for seasoned veterans of music education that added to the rigor and design of the materials associated with the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum.

### **Theme 3: Biblical Integration**

Music teachers in Christian schools are asked to create curricula, most of the time from secular sources, and integrate biblical themes and a biblical worldview. However, integrating biblical themes takes time and effort, of which most teachers have little. In this case study, six music educators evaluated the effectiveness of biblical integration in conjunction with music activities. When asked to rate the effectiveness, the participants answers are shown in Table 14.

The participants expressed their love for the two storybooks included in the curriculum. Mrs. Autoharp explained, “The storybooks, I was like whoa, she found some like new and biblical books tying it into music. I was like, this is a breath of fresh air.” Others expressed their appreciation for the scripture used and the way the scripture was woven into the lesson. Mrs. Autoharp reported that her second-grade students had previously been working on the scripture in lesson four, saying, “I love the Bible verse. We had a discussion, you know, and I could tell their classroom teacher was doing work with them on that, so that was great.” This cross-curricular cooperation is vital for brain development and memory recall.

Mrs. Bassoon enjoyed the “Trinity Song “(sung to the tune of Frere Jacques) and the *Bible* verses that accompanied each lesson. Mrs. Bassoon shared that her students performed “This is My Father’s World” for a spring concert piece which is proof that the curriculum can be adapted for individual needs. Mrs. Dulcimer saw value in the older hymns as she commented,

“This is My Father's World, which is a song that we often use in our churches and things like that. So really nice, nicely done.”

**Table 14**

*Participants Rating Biblical Integration Effectiveness of the “Sing, Dance, Play” Curriculum*

Participant	Score	Quote
Mrs. Autoharp	9 or 10	<p>“As far as what you provided, the scripture, and then the songs also melded with that”</p> <p>“I really enjoyed your biblical integration so much.”</p>
Mrs. Bassoon	9	“The scripture and the songs that were worshipful, and all the nationalities present, and the creation, it was wonderful.”
Mrs. Clavier	7	“It doesn’t have to be like the main thing because like my kids they get religion class. Maybe like ending on that note would be a good ending.”
Mrs. Dulcimer	10	<p>“I would give it a 10, I thought you did a really good job with that actually.”</p> <p>“ I appreciated bringing in the creation, and St. Patrick with the Great Commission.”</p>
Mrs. Euphonium	10	<p>“I felt this was an extremely effective way to incorporate both musical and biblical scripture together.</p> <p>“Usually, music teachers incorporate religious aspects by singing songs, but I really enjoyed how scripture passages were utilized throughout and incorporated into the activities. I feel by doing this, it will reinforce these passages through music activities. Each week had biblical connection build into the lesson, which is very helpful and necessary, especially if you are in a Christian school.”</p>
Mrs. Flugel	10	“I especially loved the center’s (biblical integration) goal of encouraging one another”

Additionally, Mrs. Dulcimer reported “the Bible verse for kids to encourage each other and build each other up instead of tearing them down. I felt like that was just a really nice combination of the biblical verse and the music lesson” for centers in which students are working cooperatively to reach a goal. Mrs. Flugel agreed with Mrs. Dulcimer with the connection of 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing,” to the cooperative activity of center time in which children were reminded how to behave when working together.

Certain holidays have traditions that the schools’ governing bodies may have felt like are inappropriate or in opposition, theologically, to the mission of the church or school. Mrs. Flugel commented how the lesson about the works of St. Patrick was a “real-life connection to the Bible and to history.” Mrs. Dulcimer brought forth an interesting point when asked about the methods in which music teachers procure curricular material. She stated, “There's a lot of stuff out there but a lot of it we can't use, like Halloween or Santa Claus. We just can't use those kinds of things.” She added “and I've never seen a curriculum that included the emphasis on the Bible like that which is wonderful.” Both Mrs. Dulcimer and Mrs. Bassoon shared their experience and materials with their administration, and both report their principal’s excitement and support for the curriculum.

### **Evidence of Quality**

The “Sing, Dance, Play” study began with the selection of quality music educators who were ready and willing to share their thoughts and ideas about a new curriculum. In the Moore (2014) study, the researcher explained that only 34% of teachers surveyed had a degree in music or music education. In this multiple case study, 100% of the teachers were certified through state

and professional standards, and all the teachers involved had a degree in music. Three of the educators involved had advanced degrees and were considered highly qualified. The quality of participants contributed to the quality of the data collected. In addition, first-hand interviews were conducted that revealed accurate analysis of materials involved in the study. This first-hand data was transcribed, checked for accuracy, and coded leading to a rich data pool of opinion and fact-based analysis.

### **Summary**

The results from the post-implementation interviews provided positive feedback for the researcher and for the betterment of music educators in Christian schools. The data collected were detailed through narrative description and tables for clear presentation of the results. The following chapter explains how the results could shape the future of music education in Christian schools.

## V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this multiple case study was to interpret Christian school music teachers' perceptions of a biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum through the implementation of crafted lessons in six selected Christian schools across the United States and Canada.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

Qualitative case studies involve an in-depth examination of a particular phenomenon, event, or case. To gather data for a qualitative case study, researchers typically use multiple methods to collect a rich and diverse dataset that captures the complexities and nuances of the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this case study, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, a commonly used method for data collection, were utilized. The pre-implementation interview was more of a conversation, an unstructured interview. The post-implementation interview served as a formal interview to help gather more detailed information about the participants' experiences, perspectives, and suggestions for improvement.

### **Summary of Results**

Using multiple points of data collections in this qualitative case study allowed the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of the participants' preferences in a music curriculum for music teachers in Christian schools. After analyzing all data, the results were seen

by the researcher as positive and encouraging for future iterations of the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum.

## **Discussion by Research Question**

### **Research Question**

This study addressed the following research question:

1. What are the Christian school music teacher’s perceptions of the biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum?

### **Successes**

During the development phase of the curriculum, the researcher spent time defining the goals and priorities for the curriculum and then researched those areas through peer-reviewed research studies. This development process was backed by Rifai’s (2016) second step in a design process: “I describe a design process that unfolds in four stages: selecting instructional content, researching and planning, providing instruction, and evaluating curricular success” (Rifai, p. 35). The result was a well-received, biblically integrated, musically rigorous, and engaging curriculum for Christian schools.

The participants expressed their love for the storybook *One Big Heart* by Linsey Davis (2019) because of the biblical message and the diverse illustrations that reflect the faces of the children in their classes. The research results in both “Sing, Dance, Play” and research by Rifai (2016) agreed that children should find their culture represented in the music they hear and the books they read. With the addition of the storybook by Linsey Davis, the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum fulfilled that expectation of a culturally responsive curriculum. In addition, the biblical message that is interwoven throughout the text was described by the participants as “beautiful.”

Fautley and Daubney (2019) suggested that any developed curriculum must be rooted in research, easy to tailor for individual situations, and promote music learning. These three categories were met through this research. “Sing, Dance, Play” has been developed, researched, and tested through this process and emerged with positive reviews. The Bible included multiple accounts about God’s refining fire. From the book of Malachi to the letter of 1 Peter 1:7, God’s word reminds us that, “These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (New International Version, 1969, 1 Peter 1:7). This work that the researcher has developed has gone through the fire, and the researcher has been tested, and out of this fire came a work that will result in praise, glory, and honor to Jesus, our Christ.

The “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum was not only passed through the fire of the participant’s wisdom but proved to be malleable for multiple situations. Some participants only had 30 minutes to implement the lesson, so choices needed to be made. The nature of the curriculum was that it could be adapted to any situation. There were a few lessons that could have used more material, but for the most part, the curriculum filled the time necessary. During the process, the participants chose the activities that were important to them and their students. Fautley and Daubney (2019) called for curriculum to be amenable to situational modification, a task that “Sing, Dance, Play” has fulfilled.

Multiple studies have shown the importance of promoting music learning (Fautley & Daubney, 2019; Swanwick & Tilman, 1986; Smith, 1944). Fautley and Daubney (2019) outlined the essential elements and standards for the United Kingdom. The United States’ counterpart, the National Core Arts, outlined essential elements and standards for the U.S. These standards were at the forefront of the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum. From the first page to the final page, the



national standards are reflected in all the activities selected for the lessons, and the participants validated their use throughout the curriculum. validation. Hedden (n.d.) told readers that the essential elements of music must be included in the lesson plans and that the concept chosen for the lesson must be woven through all the activities. The success of the curriculum was strengthened with participant validation.

Gangel (2005) set forth six principles for music education, as seen in the reviewed literature. The first principle included music fitting the child rather than the child fitting the music . Within the successes of the “Sing, Dance, Play” curriculum, the songs chosen, and the activities through which the students learn musical skills, were seen as developmentally appropriate for second-grade students. The principles also included using simple instruments to create a love for music at an early age. Each of the four weeks included some interaction with instruments of different types. Another principle included in Gangel’s (2005)list was the necessity for students to participate in listening exercises. The participants reported success with the listening exercises in the curriculum. And the final principle was that “music teachers should be positive, encouraging, and create a joyful atmosphere at all times” (Gangel, 2005, para. 12). The fact that Mrs. Autoharp’s class, in response to a beautiful piece of music, was calm and peaceful, was a significant success.

The researcher’s goal was to include the music educator’s voice as a centerpiece for the research. This sentiment was reflected in research by Conrad (2018), which showed the need for the teacher’s voice to be heard in every part of the curriculum. Each interview moved through the curriculum discussing each activity, assessment, listening lesson, literacy connection, and musical skill builder in detail. The voice of the educator helped to shape each activity, revise each pitfall, and improve the delivery of instruction, all for the Glory of the Lord.

One of the biggest successes of the curriculum was the Biblical integration. In the pre-implementation interviews, the participants stated how difficult it was to create lessons, create a scope and sequence, align to standards, and integrate secular materials with biblical themes and songs, which reflected the research of Haning (2021) in which they found that time management was a struggle for music educators. There are simply too many tasks and no team with whom to share the workload.

One of the sentiments expressed was how the Bible verses helped to center the teacher's focus on how and why they teach music. Jang (2012) stated that teachers knew biblical concepts but did not know how to apply the concepts to the curriculum. The researcher used the Jang study to shape the biblical integration of "Sing, Dance, Play." As discussed in the literature review, Korniejczuk (1994) developed six stages of biblical integration. Level six, dynamic integration, was the goal for the curriculum. Within levels five and six, Korniejczuk delineated the platitudes shown in Table 15.

**Table 15**

*Korniejczuk Levels Five and Six of Biblical Integration (1994, pp. 9 - 11)*

<b>Level Six</b>	<b>Dynamic Integration Platitudes</b>
1	Systematic incorporation of Christian faith into the subject
2	Concern with student's integration
3	Collaboration with colleagues to improve integration
4	Regular collegiate activity
<b>Level Five</b>	<b>Refinement Platitudes</b>
1	Systematic, ongoing implementation of integration
2	Belief that the teacher is the cornerstone in the process of integration, but that integration should take place in the students' minds and lives
3	Varying strategies of integration

The participants collaborated with their colleagues to improve integration, as suggested by the research. Additionally, the participants were appreciative of the opportunity to incorporate the Christian faith into the music curriculum as seen in the results of this study. The researcher was in regular contact with collegiate authorities, and all curriculum was reviewed for Biblical accuracy. One of the participants went into detail about how Biblical integration was commonly practiced in music classes. Sometimes, music teachers may add a religious song to secular curriculum and call that integration, which falls within Level One of Kornejczuk's model (1994). Mrs. Euphonium explained how the integration of the scripture passages were utilized throughout the lessons, therefore, the scripture will be reinforced through the activities, committing the passages to memory. Mrs. Euphonium provided the validation this research study needed, to know that the biblical integration is effective. Mrs. Euphonium explained, "My students seemed to have an enjoyable time, not only with the activities but also with the discussions which were presented about God." This synthesis of Biblical scripture allowed the participants to share with the students how music is connected to God, and how we, in turn, are connected to God through music.

### **Improving the Curriculum Based on Results**

Each participant reported how they would improve upon the curriculum, and some gave examples of modifying the curricular materials or developmental stage. Their suggestions were received with gratitude and readily given by the participants. As a response to their suggestions, the following modifications will be made to the final product.

*The Trinity Song* was well received by most of the participants, but the level of difficulty was in question. In response, the *Trinity Song* could be modified by adding a canon or melodic instruments to add rigor. The possibility of connecting with the melody of *Frere Jacques*,

learning the melodic contour of the phrases, and discovering dynamic differences also adds to the rigor of the activity.

The forte/piano memory game was received differently by multiple participants. In future iterations, the rigor will be increased by adding new sets of memory cards that include all the levels of dynamic contrast, including pianissimo (very soft), piano (soft), mezzo piano (medium soft), mezzo forte (medium loud), forte (loud), fortissimo (very loud), crescendo (gradually getting louder), and decrescendo (gradually getting softer). In this way, the teachers can vary the game level based on their students' knowledge base and to what level they are teaching at the moment of use. Additionally, some of the pictures used for the cards were difficult to understand or interpret. Therefore, the graphics used for each card will be assessed and adjusted.

Another idea for improvement came from multiple participants, including a word bank in the "Show What You Know" assessment. The second-grade students may not have known the music word for each note presented. In this case, a word bank projected on a screen or added to the worksheet would mitigate this problem.

The researcher recognized time, money, and production equipment constraints in creating video materials to accompany songs, such as the *Rakes of Mallow*. Mrs. Dulcimer and Mrs. Autoharp suggested improvements with this activity: Mrs. Dulcimer expressed the need for more dancing with the stretchy band, and Mrs. Autoharp looked for a higher difficulty level. In the future, the researcher will develop videos to accompany the dance portions of the curriculum. Mrs. Bassoon suggested that body movement activities added to the beginning of each lesson would "focus them using the music, they're singing, they're standing up, they're engaged, and they're moving their bodies rather than me trying to explain something."

In addition, all the typographical mistakes would be fixed by hiring an editor. Each presentation slide needs to be reviewed to make sure that each slide is readable and polished. Additional manipulatives could be added to enhance the engagement in the Spring Critters activity, more singing songs added to the drumming lessons, and more examples could be added to the listening exercises, as Mrs. Bassoon suggested.

One unforeseen issue missed by the researcher was the availability of computers for student use. Some schools were committed to not including technology for students as a part of their value system. For Mrs. Bassoon's school, the students could not access classroom computers or individual devices. In contrast, Mrs. Euphonium looked for online features that are offered by modern secular curricula. In future iterations, these suggestions for modifications will be added to the lesson plans to mitigate these issues. Overall, the items needing improvement were minuscule, and the remedies were relatively simple.

### **Study Limitations**

This study was limited to six schools due to the scope of data collection. This study did not intend to argue the necessity of concepts or seek input regarding essential elements. However, it required the participants' opinions regarding the effectiveness of applying the essential elements of music as outlined in the National Standards for Music Education in conjunction with a Biblical worldview. The sample of participants was not as diverse as was initially intended. However, diversity in age, years of experience, and region were accounted for.

### **Implications for Future Practice**

The future of this curriculum will go forward with the knowledge that teachers in the field had a say in what this curriculum should look like, feel like, and what it should contain. The participants offered invaluable reflections and suggestions to guide the revision process and the

development of additional grade levels and courses. Additionally, if there are any other developers working on a curriculum for music, they could use the research presented here to guide their decisions based on the teacher's perspective.

The researcher intends to complete the elementary curriculum by including Kindergarten, First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth grades. Each instructor's manual will have a place for record keeping, a place for note-taking, and different activities that are grade-level appropriate, as suggested by the participants. The kindergarten curriculum, color-coded purple for ease of identification by the educator, will include similar activities and lessons but will be tailored for the age group. For instance, the memory game in Week 4 could be reimaged to include all the levels of dynamic contrast, crescendo, and decrescendo. Some participants expressed concern over the forte/piano memory game being too easy for their students. Moving this activity from second grade down to kindergarten would be an appropriate fix.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Regarding future research projects, there are many different avenues to venture. First, this study could be replicated to get a better representation of music educator's working in Christian schools' opinions in the United States and Canada. By opening "Sing, Dance, Play" up to additional opinions, the researcher can further refine the curriculum to match the desires and needs of the population of music educators in Christian schools. The replication could include a mixed methods approach in which quantitative data were collected to support the data from the original study.

Second, the researcher could replicate the study with a more diverse population aided by ACSI and other organizations that govern Christian schools. By reaching out to organizations like ACSI, the populations outside the continental United States, such as Jamaica, could be

accessed and for further curriculum study. Additionally, connecting with music educators in Jamaica could help procure multicultural worship music and traditions. Finally, researchers could conduct a survey resulting in quantitative data that could be sent out to thousands of participating schools. This case study was the first step in a multi-tiered study.

Another field of research that could come from this study is a survey of the qualifications and certifications of current teachers employed in Christian schools who teach music classes. Music education is a specialized field that requires a deep understanding of music theory, history, and performance. Highly educated music teachers have the expertise and knowledge to evaluate, design, and implement a comprehensive music curriculum that meets the specific needs and goals of Christian schools. Christian schools have a unique mission and vision that requires music teachers to integrate biblical principles and values into their teaching. Highly educated music teachers can help students understand the spiritual significance of music and how it glorifies God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The need for highly educated music teachers is an essential component of Christian schools. Exposure to the state of music education in Christian schools, along with the development of educational materials for administrators and school boards, could potentially influence the requirements for teaching music at a Christian school.

Finally, the world of curriculum design and development for Christian schools continues to ignore music and other arts. This study could be extended with the goal being an entire curriculum that includes preschool, K-5, middle school, and high school general music curriculum. Courses in guitar, ukulele, music appreciation, musical theatre, and drama could be developed to meet the needs of Christian education. A developmental, experimental, or descriptive study could be completed to support the needs of music educators in Christian schools.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the “Sing, Dance, Play” research study it has been established that music education plays a vital role in developing students’ academic, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The results indicated that a well-designed music curriculum that integrates Biblical principles. Furthermore, the study highlighted the need for Christian schools to invest in music education and provide students with opportunities to develop their musical skills and appreciation in conjunction with the Biblical representation of music in skill and practice. The research suggested that music educators in Christian schools desire well-planned, Biblically focused music lessons with a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and skill builders. After all, music education can help children connect to God and develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of God’s creation.

Overall, the research results demonstrated the importance of music education in Christian schools and provide a compelling case for the development of high-quality music curricula that reflect the unique needs and values of Christian education. It is the hope of the researcher that “Sing, Dance, Play: Learning Music God’s Way” will be just the curriculum for the music educator teaching in a Christian school.



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## **Appendix A**

### **ACSI Accreditation Document**

#### **STANDARD JUSTIFICATION**

Biblical principles support, influence, and drive all aspects of the school's philosophy and foundations, which provide perspective for the past, give context to the present, and establish direction for the future of the school and its educational programs. The Christian school looks to the Bible as the primary source for all its foundational statements of education. Because the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God, the philosophy, mission, vision, and core values derived from it will be God-honoring. Christian schools exist because their philosophy is unique in the educational world. Christian school philosophy is based on belief in Jesus Christ, who said in John 14:6, "I am ... the truth," and in John 17:17, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (NIV). In determining its educational philosophy and guiding statements, every school must ask these questions:

1. Why does our school exist?
2. What are the biblical implications for educational priorities and practices?
3. What are the distinctives that set us apart?
4. What are the goals of our school?
5. How will these goals be achieved?
6. What are the characteristics of a student completing the school's educational program?  
(What are our schoolwide expected student outcomes?)

Philosophy and guiding statements must be written clearly and concisely if they are to give the school direction and permeate every part of its life. The faculty, staff, governing body, parents, and other stakeholders should be involved in formulating, reviewing, and revising these

documents. These statements should also be inculcated into the key elements of the school annually. Of equal importance is the value this philosophical development process has in melding the school together as an educational institution. The task of preparing, communicating, and regularly reviewing the philosophy statement is foundational to the evaluation necessary for accreditation and is central to the healthy life of the school. The more the executive leadership, staff, and governing body come to know and express the guiding statements of the school, the greater the impact will be on the families and the community. If the school is part of a larger entity, responses must include how the philosophy and guiding statements are specifically applicable to the school, including the early education program. INDICATORS

- 1.1 The statement of faith and the philosophy, mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcome statements of the school are established and are reviewed regularly and systematically in a collaborative manner. (C)
- 1.2 The school communicates its philosophy, mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcome statements to its constituents and community. (C)
- 1.3 The foundational documents are consistently applied as integrative, coordinating, and examining devices throughout all aspects of the programs, operations, and curriculum. (C)
- 1.4 The executive leadership, faculty, and staff continually support the advancement of the philosophy, mission, and vision of the school. (C)
- 1.5 From a distinctively Christian perspective, all staff demonstrate a commitment to the development of the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially (Luke 2:52).

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Protocol and Informed Consent Documents**

Southeastern University, College of Education

Sandra A. Walters, Interviewer and Researcher

#### **Introduction**

You have been selected to participate in the pilot study for *Sing, Dance, Play: Learning Music God's Way*. I am looking forward to hearing your perspectives as we traverse this process together. My research study focuses on the preferences of music educators in Christian Schools as they work through the curriculum in a classroom trial. Remember that this study does not aim to evaluate your teaching practices. Rather, I am looking forward to hearing your opinions solely based on the curriculum given your teaching experience and unique situation.

To facilitate my data analysis, I will be recording our conversations. This is an important step as it insures data validity. For your information, only the three professors and I will have access to the transcripts of our conversations and the original recordings will be destroyed following the transcriptions. To proceed, I will need your consent to meet SEU's human subject requirements. The informed consent form is listed below. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

There are two parts to our interview process. The first section will be a collective Zoom meeting online in which all ten participants will share their experiences. Following our discussion, you will participate in the professional development that precedes the implementation of the curriculum. During this session, I will walk you through all the lessons and help you to understand the layout and expectations. Our focus group will last around 90 minutes.

The second part of our interview process will be a one-on-one post-implementation interview intended to be between 30 and 60 minutes. In this interview, we will discuss your



experience using the *Sing, Dance, Play* curriculum. I encourage you to speak freely and not think about how your opinions will affect me. The goal of this interview is to make sure that the curriculum meets the needs of teachers who will be implementing it and to improve the curriculum.

## **Informed Consent Form**

Title of Study: Sing, Dance, Play: Learning Music God's Way. A Case study of Christian Elementary Music Curriculum in Action.

Investigator: Sandra A. Walters

Institution: Southeastern University, College of Education

### **INVITATION**

You are invited to participate in a research study. This form has information to help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. Please take your time to review this document. Your participation is completely voluntary. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions before you sign.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to interpret Christian school music teachers' perceptions of a biblically integrated, standards-based, elementary general music curriculum through the implementation of pilot testing in ten selected Christian schools.

### **ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE**

You should be eligible to participate in this study if you are a music teacher at a Christian school who is able to implement a new curriculum for four weeks in the second-grade classes you serve. You will also need consent from the principal or dean from the school in which you work. You will need access to the following instruments and technology:

- Orff Instruments

- Drums or five-gallon buckets

- Hand drums or frame drums

- Sound system with the ability to play mp3 files

- Computer and projection technology

- Zoom

- Access to YouTube and Google Slides

\*You should NOT participate if your school board or principal has not given consent, or you feel like the doctrine presented in the curriculum is against your affirmation of faith.

### **DESCRIPTION OF STUDY PROCEDURES**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to:

- Email a signed consent form

- Participate in the focus group and professional development session

- Implement the given curriculum for four weeks starting on arrival of the materials

- Participate in an exit interview with Sandra Walters on Zoom.

- Be in continual prayer for this program, your students, and yourself as you implement the curriculum.

### **EXPECTED DURATION OF PARTICIPATION**

The study will begin January 2023 and extend until February 2023.

The focus group and professional development will take between 60 and 90 minutes

The curriculum will need to be presented to one, second-grade class, once a week for a total of four weeks.

The exit interview will take between 30 and 60 minutes and will take place post-implementation.

## RISKS

There should be no intended risk involved in the process. You might feel uncomfortable with describing the problem areas in the curriculum. There may be risks or discomforts that are currently unforeseeable at this time.

## BENEFITS TO YOU AND TO OTHERS

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of curricular materials for Christian schools that involve the preferences and the voice of the educators in the field. This study is significant because the music educators in Christian schools do not have a standard to measure their daily lessons. The outcome of this study will be a curriculum that is both practical, musically sound, biblically integrated, and effective that music educators in Christian schools can use for many years to come.

## COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. All materials will be provided for you, including the storybooks, teacher's manual, the manipulatives, and the Google slides. You will not be compensated for participating in this study. However, my gift to you is the two beautiful storybooks to add to your classroom library.

## YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to not take part in or stop participating in this study at any time, for any reason.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Research records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available without your permission. To protect the confidentiality of the study, all data will be encrypted, names will be deleted, and numbers assigned, and all data will be kept on a password-protected computer.

## YOUR CONSENT

By signing this document, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Make sure you understand what the study involves before you sign.

I am over the age of 18 and agree to take part in this study.

Participant Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Mailing address (for delivery of materials):

Participant's email: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT

As an administrative representative of \_\_\_\_\_ school, I give my

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of School

permission for \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the *Sing, Dance, Play:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
music teacher's name

*Learning Music God's Way* study. I understand that no children will be affected by the study and that this study is not evaluating the teacher's ability to teach music.

Administrator's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrators Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions about the study, contact Sandra A. Walters, [swalters@seu.edu](mailto:swalters@seu.edu) or (727)771-3432

### Focus Group Reporting Document: Participant Response Form

Name		
Age		
Years Taught		
Current School		
Degree		
Certificate?		
email		
Schedule		
Classes taught		
Per week/ time		
Current curriculum		
Wish List		

Hope for the study		
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### **Focus Group/Professional Development Questions**

Welcome to our focus group and introduction to the curriculum. To get to know you all, we will go around the zoom and answer these questions:

1. Name, age, school you teach at, years you have taught, degree, certificate?
2. What is your schedule like at school?
3. What classes do you teach?
4. How many times per week do you see your students, and for how long?
5. What are you currently using for curriculum?
6. What is one thing you wish was in a curriculum?
7. What do you hope to get out of the study?

### **Post-Implementation Interview Questions**

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me and discuss your experience with the *Sing, Dance, Play* curriculum. Make sure you have your teacher's manual open and ready as we dive into these questions. Also, this interview will be recorded for data collection purposes.

1. How would you describe your overall experience with the implementation of the Sing, Dance, Play curriculum?
2. How did the professional development prepare you for teaching the curriculum?
3. Looking at Week One lessons, please tell me what was successful and what you would like to improve?
4. Same thing for Week Two lesson, please tell me what was successful and what you would like to improve?

5. And again, for Week Three lesson, please tell me what was successful what you would like to improve?
6. Finally, for Week Four lesson, please tell me what was successful and what you would like to improve?
7. What was your first impression of the teacher's manual?
8. How were the graphics and organization of materials?
9. Is there anything you would have done differently in the teacher's manual?
10. What was your impression of the storybooks included in your materials?
11. If you had to give the curriculum's biblical integration a number from one to ten (one being low and ten being high), how would you rate the effectiveness of integrating biblical concepts and scripture? Why?
12. Describe your experience using the Google Slides provided.
13. Did you find the lessons rigorous and on grade level for your students?
14. How well did you feel the lessons addressed the essential elements: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, expression, and creating/improvising?
15. What are your suggestions for improvement?

## APPENDIX C

### Google Form: Participant Pre-screening

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqhLkewIQ3DzCp31Vw30M2hBXbAbLqEasi7rmOiUie0JK6Q/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqhLkewIQ3DzCp31Vw30M2hBXbAbLqEasi7rmOiUie0JK6Q/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Last Name, First Name

Email address

- 1) Do you teach second-grade music in your current schedule?
- 2) How many years have you been teaching music?
- 3) Do you have a degree in Music Education?
- 4) Do you have a teaching license?
- 5) Is your license state issued, ACSI or other accreditation organization?
- 6) Do you currently work in a school in which your administration would be willing to allow you to participate in the study?
- 7) Do you have any of the following instruments in your classroom? Mark all that apply.
  - a) Orff Instruments (xylophones, metallophones, bass bars, glockenspiels)
  - b) Drums (either tubanos, bongos, or 5-gallon buckets)
  - c) Hand drums (frame drums or shape drums)
  - d) Listening station (iPad or computer that students can access to listen to two pieces of music in a YouTube link)
- 8) Do you have any of the following? Mark all that apply
  - (a) SMART Board, Promethean board, projector, and screen
  - (b) Sound system to play MP3s of selections

- 9) Do you have a designated music room?
- 10) Are you able to attend a Zoom meeting in which you will receive instruction on how to implement the curriculum?
- 11) Are you familiar and comfortable using Google Slides and YouTube?
- 12) Are you familiar with the National Association for Music Education and the 2014 National Standards for Music Education?
- 13) Are you available for two 30-minute interviews with Sandra Walters, one pre-implementation and the other post-implementation?