

**The  
Struggling Church Pianist's  
Chord Primer  
Lesson #3 - Filling Out the Right Hand**



Brought to you by [The Struggling Church Musician](#)

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## **Introduction**

I get a lot of questions about what am I doing with my hands when I play piano. These questions usually come from people who can read basic piano music and might even know a smattering of chords.

I don't do much but it doesn't take much to make a difference. I put together this little series e-books to show a little of what I do to make a difference in my piano playing.

## **What's in This Book**

This book is the third in my series for the beginning church pianist.

To use these mini books here are some things you should already know about playing the piano.

You've taken lessons or whether by book ,video or individual. You know how to form simple triad chords. You might even feel a bit comfortable in front of people at the piano and accompanying people as they sing or play other instruments. But you would like to increase the sound you make at the piano.

You don't have a lot of time but you know you can add a little more to your music. You don't necessarily want an extreme sound just a little something more.

Well follow along and maybe you'll be able to use a little of what I use to embellish a song at the piano.

## Filling Out the Right Hand

As you begin to get more comfortable at playing the piano you may find yourself wanting to do a little more with your right hand. If you're reading sheet music note for note you may think that's already covered in the music and you have no wish to go further. That is fine but sometimes your music may be a little bland. Even the sheet music. Especially for beginners. Long pauses as your singers take breaths or between verses are some common areas where you might notice a need to fill in.

This is where knowing your scales can come in very handy. And it let's you see the results of what you once thought were those dreary rote exercises.

I was watching a pianist on a Gospel Music video the other day who put knowing his scales into practice in a big way. He had two singers he was accompanying and all he did the entire song was play the scales of the song...but he played them very fast and and he played them without any music (you know by ear).

This was a person who practiced their scales!

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What I'm trying to show you that one of the ways you can really add to your music is with practicing your scales.

**Let's look at a small example.**


We have *Amazing Grace*. A very familiar, very easy song to play. I have first notated it using simple chords and basic notes. One or two notes in the right hand.

Very very easy and simple although not as easy and basic as one note playing.

## Amazing Grace Easy Key of F

Arr by K Quinn


F F C Bb



F F F



C F C F

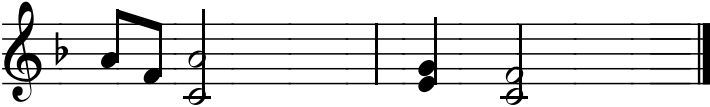


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Bb                      Bb      F                                      F



F                      C      F



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What can we do in the right hand in terms of the scale here? Now remember this is just a very easy version of *Amazing Grace* and we're not necessarily going to make it harder, we're just looking at some things we can do to add more to it.

Some times all I do is add a few triplets at different points along the music.

Such as...



This is the beginning of *Amazing Grace*. Measures 1 and 2. All I did here was exchange the single note in measure 2 for a triplet.

This is just a very tiny example but that's just it. It only takes a tiny addition here and there to add a special touch to your music.

This one of the main things I do in my right hand. Most pianists become comfortable in the right hand long before the left hand has caught up to speed.

Try playing through the song and whenever you see a bit of a pause try adding a few notes within the scale until you reach the next note.

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Now although I've given you this nice version of Amazing Grace. I will leave it up to you for more ideas on how to embellish this lovely song. That's up to you and the possibilities are endless.

The sheet music here is simple and basic enough to leave the path for new sounds open.

Some ideas?

1. Give it more of a gospel sound by adding chord progressions.
2. Add a 2nd to the F and C chords for a pretty sound

## Other Ideas

In addition to playing along the scale to fill out open spaces within your music you can also...

- 1) Play arpeggiated chords up or down the piano. Sometimes when I do this I will play the separate notes as triplets so that I can play more than one octave. Such as at the end of the stanza in Amazing Grace, “saved a wretch like me...”. On the me I play whatever chord I’m playing in four sets of triplets because the “me” is held for four beats.
- 2) Play octave notes again walking or moving up the scale or sometimes down. This gives a big sound where you need to make an impression or a point is coming across. You know as in “like meeeee!” and then walk up the piano as that meeee is stretching out.
- 3) Learn what chords correspond to the notes in the key you are playing and play those chords in your right hand instead of simple one note melodies. In the first measure of our Amazing Grace rocking back and forth between F and Bb (both majors) gives you A-a-a-ma-zing and our ..zing would land on the triplet.

God Bless and we’ll see you back here for lesson #3 Filling Out The Right Hand

*K Quinn*

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Other lessons by the Struggling Church Musician

- **#1 Chords in Both Hands**
- **#2 Octave Notes in the Bass.**
- **#4 Knowing Your Scales...coming soon**
- **#5 Learning Some Extra Chords...coming soon**