

Horizontal ↔ Vertical Scoring Rubric

Score each song by how it speaks: 1 (about God) to 5 (to God)

Score	Name	What it means
1	Horizontal	Sung about God, for the edification of the church. Declares truth, teaches, or tells a testimony. Describes who God is and what He has done, and never speaks to Him for long.
2	Mostly Horizontal	Mostly declaration. A bridge, a tag, or a line or two speaks directly to God, but most of the song is about Him.
3	Blend	A real mix. For example, the verses tell about God and the chorus speaks to Him, and both carry equal weight.
4	Mostly Vertical	Mostly sung to God, with some declaration. The verses often set up a chorus that's sung directly to Him.
5	Vertical	Sung to God from start to finish: prayer, praise, thanks, confession, or surrender. Says "You" to God throughout.

Four questions to ask

Ask these about each part of the song, then go with the overall balance.

1. Who is the song talking to?

- God → toward 5
- The congregation (*come, sing, let us*) → toward 1
- The singer's own soul → toward 1
- Creation, angels, nations → toward 1

2. How does the song refer to God?

- *You, Your, Thee, Thou* → toward 5
- *He, His, the Lord, God, Jesus* → toward 1

Situations that come up often

- **Hymns that speak to people** (*ye saints, my soul*) are horizontal, even with "you."
- **Gospel-story songs** (birth, cross, resurrection, in "He" language) are horizontal.
- **Prayer songs with a testimony verse** usually land at 4.
- **Call-and-response** about God is horizontal.
- **A declarative song with one bridge sung to God** is a 2.

3. What is the song doing?

- Asking God (*lead, come, fill, help*) → toward 5
- Telling God who He is (*You are holy*) → toward 5
- Telling people who God is (*He is holy*) → toward 1
- Calling people to worship (*praise Him*) → toward 1
- Testimony (*I was lost*) → toward 1, unless told to God

4. Verses and chorus point different ways?

The chorus usually matters more, because it's what the congregation repeats. If both carry equal weight, score a 3.

Stuck between two numbers?

Pick the number on the side the song **leans toward**. A song that's almost all prayer with one line of declaration is a **5**, not a 4.

Save 2, 3, and 4 for songs that really mix both.

Notes column (optional)

A few words about *why* you chose a score helps whoever reviews your work. For example: "verses tell about God; chorus speaks to Him," "call to the congregation to praise," "prayer throughout," or "retells the Christmas story." **Don't copy lyrics into the notes.** Lyrics are copyrighted, and the note should make sense without them.

Horizontal-Vertical Song Tagger for Planning Center · see ADMIN_GUIDE.md for step-by-step instructions