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# Amazing Grace

Arr by: Vince Lewis

Slowly and Freely ♩ = 80

Chords: G7, C6, C7, F7M, Fdim, C, Am7, D9, G7sus4, G7sus, C6add9, C7, F, Fdim, C, Am, D7M9, Fm7, Bb7-5, Eb6, Bbm7 A7, Ab7M, Adim, Eb, Gm7, Cm, F713, F7-9Bb7sus4add9, Bb7, Bb7, Eb7M, Eb7add9Bb7-5, Ab7M, Adim, Eb, Gm7, Cm7, Fm7, Bb7, Am7-5, Abm7, Gm7, Gbm7, Fm7, D9, Eb6add9

## Amazing Grace

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## Amazing Grace

John Newton

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, I once was lost but now I found,

**Amazing Grace** words by  
John Newton, 1728-1807

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved,  
 How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.  
 Through many dangers, toils and wars, I have already come,  
 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 'Twas he've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,  
 'Tis he no less days to sing God's praise than when we 'G first begun.  
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**Amazing Grace**  
arr. by John Troutman  
(YouTube Version Feb. 2010)

Traditional Hymn  
John Newton 1779

*Prayerfully*

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Author: Mary Hoffman Illustrator: Caroline Binch Publisher: Frances Lincoln Grace loves to act out stories. Sometimes she plays the leading part, sometimes she is 'a cast of thousands.' When her school decides to perform Peter Pan, Grace is longing to play Peter, but her classmates say that Peter was a boy, and besides, he wasn't black... But Grace's Ma and Nana tell her she can be anything she wants if she puts her mind to it... This classic story clearly communicates an inspiring message that anything is possible. A warm-hearted tale about following your dreams. Albaraa, 06 February 2016 Kayleigh, 31 January 2016 I wrote the picture book Amazing Grace over 25 years ago and it's hard to imagine where all the time has gone. Basically, I started from the title, which is how books often come to me. Not always; sometimes the title is the very last thing and really hard to come up with. But I was lucky with Amazing Grace. It is the name of a very well-known American hymn and I was thinking about what sort of book you could write with that title if the main character were actually called Grace. What would make her amazing? I thought I'd want her to meet and overcome challenges so I started imagining what those might be. Diverse voices: the 50 best culturally diverse books When I was young, it was quite common to be told there were things you couldn't do because you were a girl. I hoped by the time I was writing Amazing Grace, that would be less true. Sadly, 25 years on, it's still an issue, even if we've had women astronauts, prime ministers and presidents, Nobel Prize-winning scientists, and so on. So I decided right from the beginning that Grace would be a black girl, just to add to the challenges she might face. "You can't be Peter Pan," says a classmate, when Grace goes to audition for that part in the school Christmas play. "He wasn't black." Another has already said she can't play that part because she's not a boy. What are the best diverse books for children and teenagers? There were very few black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) characters in children's picture books at that time. And not too many single parent families either. The only writer I knew who was being more inclusive was Petronella Breinburg, who wrote My Brother Sean and Sean's Red Bike about a black boy. I had already written Nancy No-Size (Methuen) about the middle child in a bi-racial family. Partly because my own husband is half-Indian and our children are dark and did not see themselves reflected in children's books. Their Parsi grandmother from Bangalore lived with us for 16 years. Caroline Binch's beautiful illustrations made Grace, Ma and Nana come alive. Illustration: Caroline Binch So I was keen to extend the range of families shown in picture books and I am still banging on about that to this day. (See The Great Big Book of Families and Welcome to the Family) But this time I was writing a story - and what's more a story about stories and how they are for everyone - not an essay. Story comes first every time. I based Grace on me. I was a girl who loved stories more than anything, whether read or told or seen in films, and I'm still that same person. In particular, like Grace, I was a child who liked to act stories out after I had heard or read them. I had two much bigger sisters and the one seven years older than me invented a game of "Potted Pantomimes" (soon reduced to "Potty Pantomimes"), which she came to regret, because I wanted to play it all the time and to take all the main roles. But sometimes, when my sisters were busy, like Grace again, I had to play all the parts myself. I am absolutely sure that's what turned me into a writer, someone who invents stories to amuse herself and entertain others. The other thing Grace has going for her is a very supportive and loving family, composed of her Ma and her Nana, the latter the source of many of the stories Grace knows. It's Nana who tells her "You can be anything you want if you put your mind to it" and takes Grace to see a black ballerina dancing the part of Juliet. Part of the success of this book - which has led to several sequels, plays and even an opera! - comes from Caroline Binch's beautiful naturalistic pictures. She brought Grace and her family to life in a way that has helped to keep her popular for so many years. The reaction to our book was very heartening. I remember being told in a bookshop in Denver, Colorado that it was the first picture book with a black child on the cover to go out of the shop with customers of all races. In other words, Grace made a black heroine mainstream. Picture books still have a long way to go in showing the diversity of our culture and the variety within families. Things are better than they were 25 years ago but they won't really become fully inclusive until more books are written and illustrated by members of the BAME community themselves. I got a little flak for writing about a black child when I was myself white but I didn't mind. What was important was that someone should write that book and no-one else was doing it. It was also ironic since one of the points of the book is that all stories are for all people. Twenty-five years later, I still believe that. This time last year we ran a discussion to share our favourite diverse reads has anything changed in the past year? Got any more to add? Tell us on Twitter @GdnChildrensBks or by email childrens.books@theguardian.com Mary Hoffman is the UK author of well over a hundred published books, mainly for children and teenagers. Recently she has written two adult novels under the pseudonyms Kate Snow and Amy Lovell. She is well known for picture books like Amazing Grace and its sequels and the YA sequence Stravaganza as well as historical fiction like The Falconer's Knot and information book like The Great Big Book of Families. She has won a few prizes and her books have been translated into 30 languages. She lives in a converted barn near Oxford and has three grown-up daughters all working in the arts. "Grace was a girl who loved stories." Empowered by the strength of her imagination and the love of her mother and Nana, this dramatic, creative girl constantly adopts roles and identities: Joan of Arc, Anansi the Spider, Hiawatha, Mowgli, Aladdin. When her class plans a presentation of Peter Pan, "Grace knew who she wanted to be." She holds fast despite her classmates' demurrals; Nana, meanwhile, reminds her granddaughter that she can do anything she imagines. When Nana takes Grace to see a famous black ballerina—"from back home in Trinidad"—the determined youngster is aroused by the performance, and wins the role of her dreams. Featuring colloquial dialogue and endearing characters, Hoffman's (My Grandma Has Black Hair) tale is truly inspiring. First-timer Binch contributes evocative, carefully detailed watercolor paintings, which add their own share of emotional power and personal passion. Ages 4-8. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. Kindergarten-Grade 2-- Grace loves stories, whether she hears them, reads them, or makes them up. Possessed with a marvelous imagination as well as a strong flair for the dramatic, she acts the stories out, always giving herself the most exciting parts. Thus, it is natural when her teacher announces a classroom production of Peter Pan, that Grace wants to play the lead. One classmate says she can't because she's a girl and another says she can't because she's black. When a saddened Grace relates the days events to her mother and grandmother, they tell her she can be anything she wants to, if she puts her mind to it. Inspired by her family's support, her own indomitable spirit, and an excursion to a weekend ballet starring a lovely Trinidadian dancer, Grace shines during her audition, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind as to who will play Peter Pan. Gorgeous watercolor illustrations portraying a determined, talented child and her warm family enhance an excellent text and positive message of self-affirmation. Grace is an amazing girl and this is an amazing book. --Anna DeWind, Milwaukee Public Library Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. Grace loves to act out her favorite stories, taking every part from Joan of Arc to Mowgli. But when her class learns that they will be doing Peter Pan, the other kids tell Grace she can't have the lead: Peter's neither black nor a girl. Fortunately, Nana and Ma have contagious confidence in Grace's ability, and at the tryouts the class also agrees that Grace is best. It's easy to catch the wholesomely assertive spirit here—as Binch does, in this excellent debut, with her detailed, realistic watercolors; vibrant Grace almost springs from the page. (Picture book 4-8) -- Copyright © 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. Mary Hoffman has written more than 70 books for children, and her powers of observation bring vitality and humour to all her stories and retellings. Her previous titles for Dorling Kindersley include Henry's Baby and A First Bible Story Book. Her best-known picture books are Amazing Grace, Three Wise Women, and An Angel Just Like Me. Mary lives in Oxfordshire with her husband and they have three daughters. The girls were brought up on myths and legends, of which Mary and her husband have an extensive collection. Caroline Binch lives in Cornwall. SPARK BOOK OF THE MONTH - M.G. Leonard is back with another thrilling wildlife mystery for birdwatching detectives! Our readers loved Twitch, the first book in the series. Recommended for ages 9+ View book in many ways, Amazing Grace, written by Mary Hoffman and illustrated by Caroline Binch, is a truly wonderful story for all children, with an inspiring text and evocative, descriptive accompanying illustrations (visuals that while realistic also glow and sparkle with much power of imagination), presenting the important, essential message that anyone can be anything he/she desires to be (any role, any job, any position), regardless of race, gender, social status etc. And I also find it both refresher in many ways, Amazing Grace, written by Mary Hoffman and illustrated by Caroline Binch, is a truly wonderful story for all children, with an inspiring text and evocative, descriptive accompanying illustrations (visuals that while realistic also glow and sparkle with much power of imagination), presenting the important, essential message that anyone can be anything he/she desires to be (any role, any job, any position), regardless of race, gender, social status etc. And I also find it both refreshing and encouraging (life affirming) that when it comes to the actual voting period, everyone in class votes for Grace to play Peter Pan, including Raj and Natalie (who had previously made prejudiced comments about Grace not fitting the role because she is not a boy and is African-American, or rather considering that the author and illustrator are British, Anglo-African). Natalie even whispers to Grace that she did a wonderful job at the audition, which not only demonstrates that Natalie has learned a lesson, but that she voted for Grace because Grace showed the most talent, that the fact that Grace is a girl and not ethnically Caucasian did not much matter to anyone in the end; all that mattered was Grace's ability and talent. However, I do have a rather major problem with one part of the book. Amazing Grace is supposed to be a picture book about tolerance and fighting prejudice and stereotyping, and by extension, it should therefore also be as universally culturally sensitive as possible (or it should at least not describe or illustrate scenes or scenarios that could be deemed as being potentially culturally insensitive). And with that in mind, I do have a rather huge problem with the fact that Grace is not only described as playing Hiawatha, but that she is also illustrated as an Indian chief in full tribal regalia, as many Native American and First Nations individuals find the mere concept of people (including children) playing "Indian" massively insensitive and insulting to their culture and background, their traditions. I think that Amazing Grace would have been a much more global, and definitely a much more encouraging and sensitive offering without that little addition. It left and still leaves a rather strange, potentially massively bitter taste in my mouth, and also makes me wonder, why we are still so loath, and so seemingly unable to consider the sensitivities of our Native Americans our First Nations, even at a time when we are becoming more attuned to the sensitivities of other visible and invisible minorities. The description and depiction of Grace playing "Indian" also makes me strongly hesitant to even remotely consider recommending this otherwise excellent picture book to Native American or First Nations children (which is a real pity, because Amazing Grace does have an inspiring, essential and necessary message that should be for everyone). Maybe I am being somewhat hyper-critical here, but this did and continues to bother me, especially since both author and illustrator could so easily have made use of a less culturally insensitive example, a less potentially problematic character for Grace to imagine herself being and playing. Edited to Add in December 2016: I have just been informed by my GR friend Sheila that in the 25th Anniversary US Edition of Amazing Grace, the entire Hiawatha sequence has now been removed, and while I do much appreciate and applaud that the potential issues this specific "character playing" episode can/could pose especially to and for Native Americans and Native Canadians have now and finally been seemingly officially recognised and noticed, I am also a wee bit aghast at the removal of the entire scene as I generally tend to chafe at this kind of superimposed sanitising. But then again, leaving the Hiawatha episode out really in no way diminishes Grace's playacting and imagination either and does now make the empowering and strengthening messages and morals of Amazing Grace much more universally suitable and shareable (because no Hiawatha sequence really does neither change the messages presented in any way nor does it diminish Grace's imaginative playacting and abilities thereof). I do find it kind of ironic that the removal of the Hiawatha episode has seemingly only occurred in the US anniversary edition and that the UK anniversary edition has supposedly kept the sequence of Grace playing "Indian" as is (at the very least, there perhaps could and should have been an explanatory footnote added to the UK anniversary edition with regard to the potential issues and bones of contention that the Hiawatha scene has caused and engendered over the years). ...more

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