

LET'S GET SINGING!

On the Road of Life

Music: Christopher Artley · Lyrics: Michelanne Forster

Verse 1

Life is a journey
Sometimes you're alone
Alone in the dark
Far, far from home.

Chorus

Kia kaha, have courage
Kia kaha, stay strong
Kia kaha, hold fast
Know you belong.

Verse 2

We walk together on the road of life
We stand together on the road of life
Hold fast on the road of life
Nobody walks alone.

Chorus

Kia kaha, have courage ...

Verse 3

We dance together on the road of life
Kanikani, dance, on the road of life
Stand proud, on the road of life
Nobody walks alone.

Chorus

Kia kaha, have courage ...

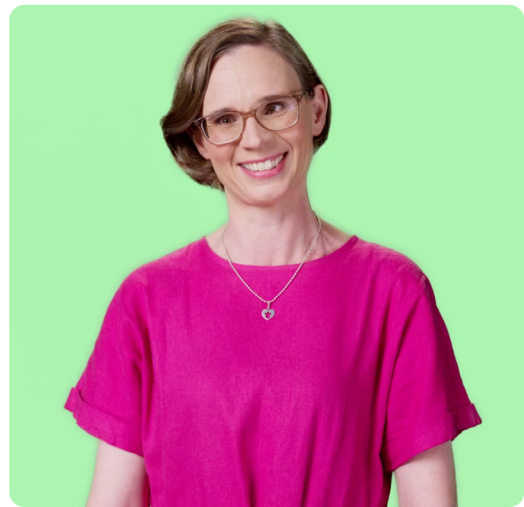
Verse 4

So share your story on the road of life
And care for others on the road of life
Speak out, on the road of life
Nobody walks alone.

Chorus

Kia kaha, have courage ...

About the presenter



Amelia Giles performs regularly throughout New Zealand as a choral singer, conductor and violinist. A qualified teacher who has taught across Years 1-13, Amelia is currently a primary school music specialist in Auckland.

About the song

This song by Chris Artley, with lyrics by Michelanne Forster, was selected as the winning entry in the World Choral Day category of the 2022 International Federation of Choral Music (IFCM) International Choral Composition Competition. As a result of this, the song became the official anthem for World Choral Day 2022-2023. It uses a combination of English and te reo Māori in the text and talks about caring for one another on our journey through life.

About the composer

Chris Artley is a prolific composer of music for choir and has won many composition awards both in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. Alongside his work as a composer, singer and pianist, Chris is a secondary school music teacher in Auckland. For more information: <https://www.chrisartley.com/biography>

About the lyricist

Auckland-based Michalanne Forster is a playwright, author and teacher. She was born in California and moved to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1972. In addition to writing and teaching, Forster also worked as a script editor, writer and director in children's television.

For more information: <https://www.nzonscreen.com/profile/michalanne-forster/biography>

Warm-ups

Warm-ups help to prepare us physically and vocally for singing. They help to relax our bodies and sharpen our minds.

Physical

1 Breathing

Objective: establish an effective and efficient breath motion for singing. You can practise this exercise breathing in through the mouth and then do it again breathing in through the nose. We need both techniques when we are singing.

Vocal

2 Diction

Objective: warm up the tongue and lips to make sure that we can pronounce the text of a song clearly as we sing. If we don't sing with clear diction, the audience won't understand what we are singing about. This is a fun tongue twister! When sung with the ascending melody, it's a very effective vocal warm-up. If you try this warm-up without the video, avoid starting this exercise too low as students will get stuck in their speaking voices. Use Amelia's starting pitch as a model. Keep the 'ooh-aah' vowels at the end tall and 'posh' just as Amelia demonstrates. This will ensure the sound rings clearly and helps to tune the notes accurately.

Teaching notes

- Amelia breaks the teaching of this song down very carefully through the video but it will take lots of repetition for the students to sing it confidently.
- Pay particular attention to the off-beat beginnings and clean, crisp cut-offs.
- Sing the long phrases with a smooth, connected character. We use the word 'legato' to describe this in music.
- Avoid pushing – this song should be sung 'no louder than beautiful'. Let the children's voices shine. This song needs a clear tone, not a loud one.

- Notice the parts of the melody that are the same and also the parts that are different. Take the time to ensure that the children are singing each line accurately and not getting mixed up.
- Sometimes the melody leaps up – prepare these moments with energy and approach the note from over the top rather than scooping up from underneath.
- The song slows down at the end. Be careful to stay in time with the backing accompaniment rather than rushing.

What else could you do with this song?

Extension/Curricular links

- This piece lends itself beautifully towards a performance by your school choir. Chris Artley has many other pieces that you might like to look at for this purpose too.
- The original arrangement of this song is in two parts and is suitable for adults too. Consider having teachers and whānau learn the two parts and sing with the children in a performance.
- Many songs use words and phrases from more than one language. What other examples can the children find?

Glossary of musical terms

Beat	The steady heartbeat of the music that continues as long as the music does. It only gets faster or slower if the music requires it. Sometimes the beat is audible and sometimes it is implied. An ensemble stays together by sharing a sense of beat. Keeping the beat means keeping in time.
Legato	The playing or singing of a musical line in a smooth, connected way.
Melody	A series of notes/pitches that make up a tune.
Phrase	A musical sentence.
Off-beat beginning	A rhythm is 'off-beat' when it doesn't begin on the beat. In this song, many of the entries begin halfway through a beat. This helps to ensure the important words land on important beats in the music.
Rhythm	The pattern of long and short sounds that move the music forward through time. In a song, the rhythm is the pattern of the words.

Important messages

- Singing is fun!
- It is important for the health of children's voices that they are singing in a pitch range that is not too low.
- Never louder than beautiful. Let the natural beauty of children's voices shine. Understand that the volume they produce is directly proportional to their age, size and stage of development. Encourage healthy singing, not shouting.
- Singing voice, speaking voice, whispering voice – we can use our vocal mechanism in different ways. Ensure that children are using their voices in a 'singing' way. A light and ringing sound will help protect young voices from overuse and possible damage.
- Our body is our instrument. That means that no two voices will sound the same – we are each unique!
- We need our whole body to sing – energy, breath, posture, expression as well as a singing voice.
- Again – Singing is fun! And important! And good for us! Singing every day will energise you and your students.

