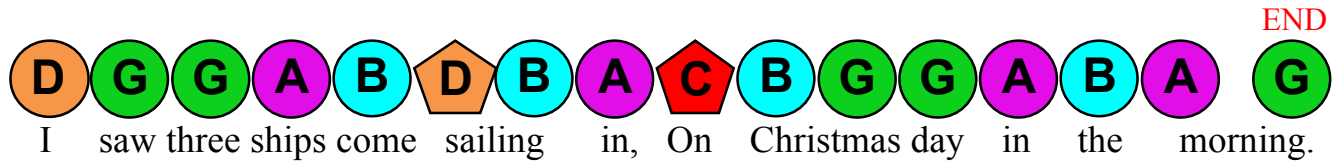
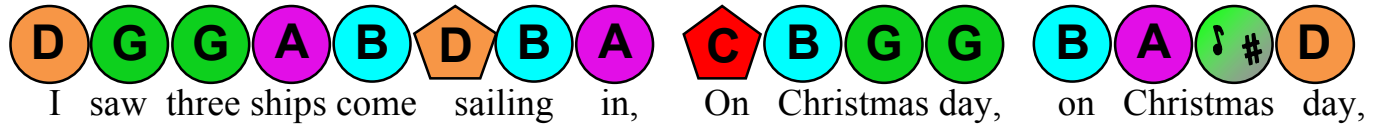


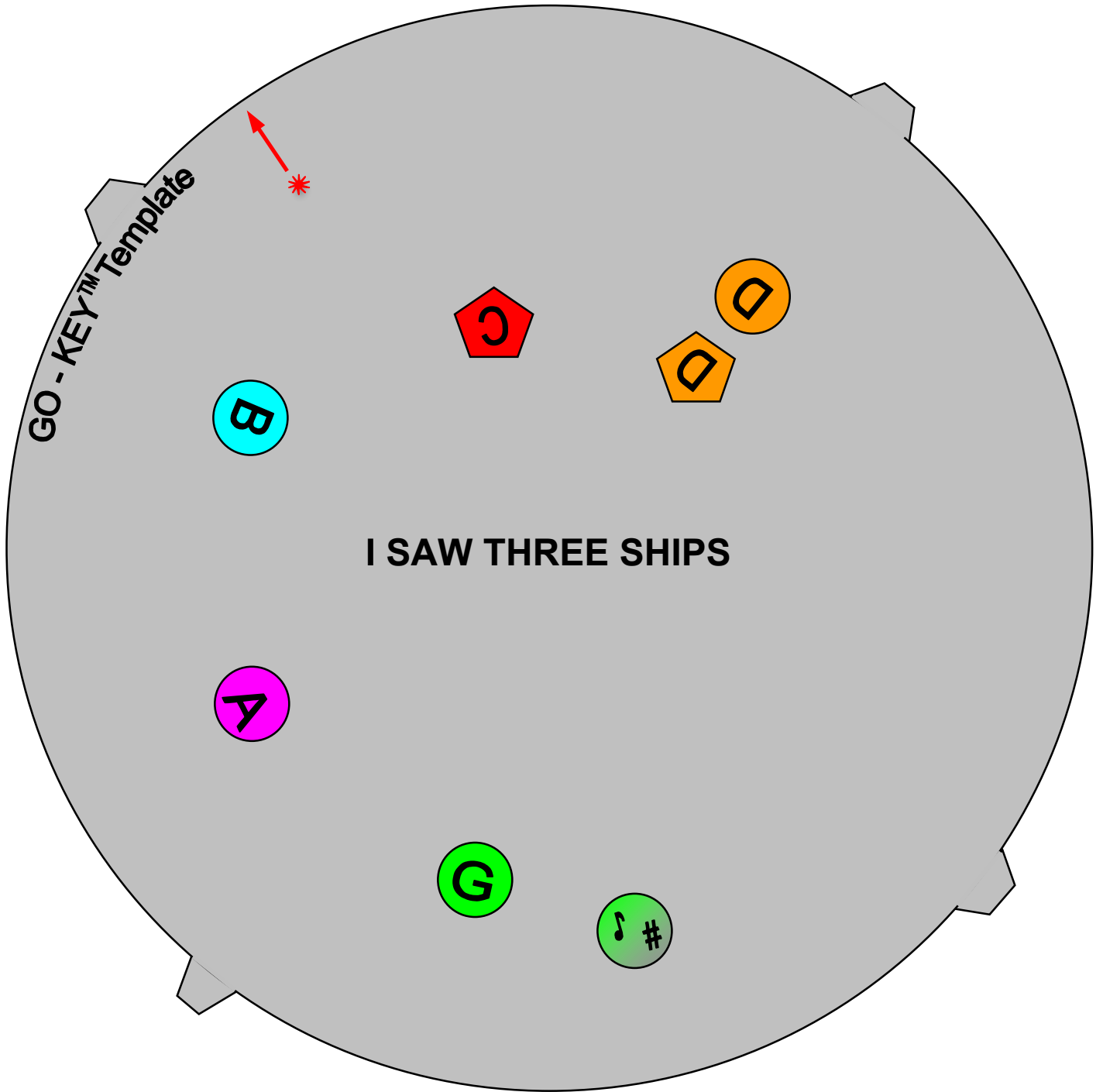
I Saw Three Ships

START



Lyrics

1. I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas day in the morning.
2. And what was in those ships all three?
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
And what was in those ships all three?
On Christmas day in the morning.
3. The Virgin Mary and Christ were there,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
Our Saviour Christ and his lady,
On Christmas day in the morning.
4. Pray whither sailed those ships all three?
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
Pray whither sailed those ships all three?
On Christmas day in the morning.
5. Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas day in the morning.
6. And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas day in the morning.
7. And all the Angels in Heaven shall sing,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
And all the Angels in Heaven shall sing,
On Christmas day in the morning.
8. And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas day in the morning.
9. Then let us all rejoice, amain,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
Then let us all rejoice, amain,
On Christmas day in the morning.



History and Origin

"**I Saw Three Ships (Come Sailing In)**" is a traditional and popular Christmas carol from England. The earliest printed version of "I Saw Three Ships" is from the 17th century, possibly Derbyshire, and was also published by William Sandys in 1833. The lyrics mention the ships sailing into Bethlehem, but the nearest body of water is the Dead Sea about 20 miles (32 km) away. The reference to three ships is thought to originate in the three ships that bore the purported relics of the Biblical magi to Cologne Cathedral in the 12th century. Another possible reference is to Wenceslaus II, King of Bohemia, who bore a coat of arms "Azure three galleys argent". Another suggestion is that the ships are actually the camels used by the Magi, as camels are frequently referred to as "ships of the desert".

An arrangement by Martin Shaw appears in the Oxford Book of Carols. The Carols for Choirs series of carol books features arrangements of the carol by both Sir David Willcocks and John Rutter. Organist Simon Preston and former conductor of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Sir Philip Ledger, have also written arrangements that the choir have performed at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in recent years. This carol is also featured in the musical *Caroline, or Change*, but as a counterpoint. Adapted by Jon Schmidt on Jon Schmidt Christmas album. John Renbourn has arranged it (in a rather free adaptation) for guitar. The song appears on Nat King Cole's 1960 album *The Magic of Christmas* "The Christmas Song", arranged by Ralph Carmichael.

Other Uses

1985, Rock singer Jon Anderson released a version as the title track of his album *3 Ships*.
1988, Keyboardist Keith Emerson recorded an instrumental on his *The Christmas Album*.
1993, Canadian singer Bruce Cockburn recorded a version on his Christmas album "Christmas".
1995, Glen Campbell recorded it on his Christmas album "Christmas with Glen Campbell".
1997, English musician Sting recorded a version for the album "A Very Special Christmas".
2002, In their album, *Twenty-Four Seven*, folk trio Coope Boyes and Simpson.
2004, The Barenaked Ladies recorded it on their Christmas album "Barenaked for the Holidays".
2006, Blackmore's Night recorded the song on their Christmas-themed album *Winter Carols*.
2009, The Barenaked Ladies recorded it on their album "Snacktime: Live at Massey Hall".

- Lindsey Stirling released her version on her holiday album *Warmer in the Winter*.
- Three ships appear as an instrumental version of Teletubbies.
- At the end of *A Muppet Family Christmas*, during the Christmas caroling medley, the Count leads everyone in singing "I Saw Three Ships".