

Chapter Ten

Ordinal numbers for more advanced ringers

The work of Ellen Vanderslice

The most useful aspects of this method

Sample score and grid for one ringer

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Ordinal numbers for more advanced ringers

Since I first encountered this method in use with a handbell choir in a special education setting, I have learned that many traditional choirs around the world have used this method for many years. The grids that are produced for each ringer are like the individual parts for members of a band or orchestra – only containing the information required for each person.

The grid shown at the right has ordinal numbers that are not measured – that is, they go on and on until the piece is finished. These can eventually involve some very large numbers, if the piece has significant length.

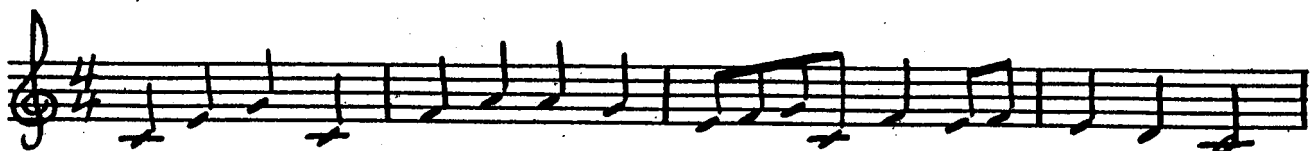
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
ETC. ETC. ETC.							

This method may be made more accessible to other populations by designing the grid with the same numbers in each line, with the exception of the first that indicates the number of the measure. Each number on the grid represents the smallest note value in the handbell arrangement. The grid shown in the example below could be used for a piece in 4/4 time in which the smallest note value is the eighth note. If a ringer is only responsible for one bell, his/her time to ring would be indicated by circling the number that corresponds to the part of the rhythm where the bell is rung.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ETC. ETC. ETC.							

If a ringer can handle two bells, you may use a second shape or color coding to indicate each bell and the time at which it is to be rung. Many special groups do not use damping, but if this is an option, it may be indicated by an "X" through the number where damping will occur.

Below is an example of a standard hymn tune for a ringer who is assigned C5 (indicated by the circle) and E5 (indicated by the square). In the grid on the left there is no damping indicated. In the grid on the right damping has been added. In a complete arrangement harmony notes and melody notes played by other ringers would be indicated in a like manner on the grid of each individual.



①	2	③	4	5	6	⑦	8
2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
③	2	3	④	5	6	⑦	8
④	2	3	4	⑤	6	7	8

①	2	⊗	4	⊗	6	⑦	8
⊗	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
③	⊗	3	④	⊗	6	⑦	⊗
④	2	⊗	4	⑤	6	7	8

The work of Ellen Vanderslice

Ellen Vanderslice, a special education teacher in Dallas system, used ordinal numbers very successfully with her choirs. They used grids of continuous numbers – similar to the first one that appears in this chapter. Counting in rhythm is sometimes very difficult for persons with limited abilities, so she had aides placed at different positions in the choir to assist the ringers and to help them keep up the pace.

It is because of this difficulty with counting that I have labeled this chapter "for more advanced ringers". In actuality ringing with ordinal numbers is just step away from ringing from printed music. I tried this method with persons with developmental disabilities, and without the luxury of having aides, it was simply too difficult for them. It is one thing to count – which most of them could do. It is quite another to count **internally** and keep a steady beat. It is this ability that keeps some traditional handbell choirs from progressing to a higher level of musicianship.

Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages

1. Each player has his/her own chart.
2. Each ringer responsible for responding to cues for right hand and left hand.
3. This method is only a small step away from reading standard notation.

Disadvantages

1. Requires ringers to be aware of the count in each measure of section of the grid.
2. The concept of an internal count is very difficult for many persons with disabilities.
3. When this method was used with persons in a special education class, monitors were required throughout the choir to help them stay with the count.
4. Director is very limited in maintaining control of the rhythm, because the ringers must concentrate on their individual parts.
5. Set up for each piece will differ, according to key selected and any internal modulations required.

Sample score and grid for one ringer

On the next page is a sample score that might be used with ordinal numbers. The smallest note value is the eighth note, so the grid that follows the score has lines that are divided into eight sections.

The grid represents a part for a ringer who is assigned G5 (represented by a circle) and A5 (represented by a square). No damping is indicated on the grid. It is possible to teach ringers functioning at this level to damp one bell when the other plays. This would cover most of the changes in this piece. Note that when **both** bells play there is a circle **and** a square on the grid.

①	2	③	4	⑤	6	⑦	8
②	2	3	4	⑤	6	7	8
③	2	3	4	⑤	6	⑦	8
④	2	3	4	⑤	6	7	8
⑤	2	3	4	⑤	6	⑦	8
⑥	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
⑦	2	③	4	⑤	6	7	⑧
⑧	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
⑨	2	③	4	⑤	6	⑦	8
⑩	2	3	4	⑤	6	7	8
⑪	2	3	4	⑤	6	⑦	8
⑫	2	3	4	⑤	6	7	8
⑬	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
⑭	2	3	4	⑤	6	7	8
⑮	2	③	4	⑤	6	7	⑧
⑯	2	3	4	5	6	7	8