

## Script Writing Instructions

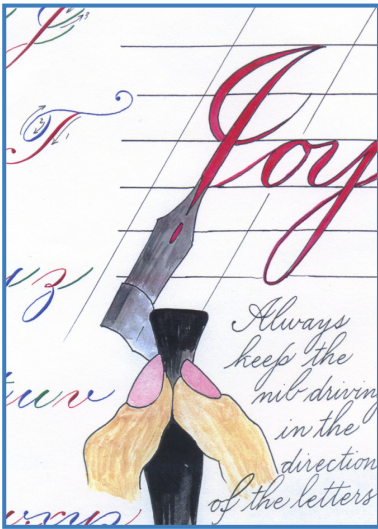
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Script writing is lots of fun to do. This elegant fine art flourished in the late 1800s and early 1900s during the *Golden Age of Ornamental Penmanship* when master, itinerant penmen competitively promoted and propagated their particular styles and alphabets among school students and in business. I like to use this art form to convey the beauty of Scripture.

Script writing may be executed with a pointed brush with paint to create large, colorful letters like this...

...or with a pointed nib in an oblique pen holder for delicate letters. If you want to learn, you may download and print my free 11 x 17 **Script Writing Handout** and use it with the following brief instructions. An excellent source for more detailed understanding is *The Zanerian Manual of Alphabets and Engrossing* published by Zaner-Bloser, Inc.

Rest



- Look for an oblique pen holder and nibs at an art store.
- Use an abrasive material or steel wool to roughen the nib to take off the coating from the manufacturer. Some calligraphers simply burn this coating off with a match. Be careful not to bend the point of the nib in any way. If the point is damaged or bent, it cannot be used.
- Dip the nib in the ink or paint just past the eye of the nib and clean the nib often.
- For thick marks pull down; for thin marks, gently push up. Do not grasp the pen tightly. Relax your hand.
- Keep the point of the nib driving in the direction of the mark you are making as if it is driving down a road.
- Think about the stroke you are making before you make it. See the shape on the paper, then pen over that shape.



- Keep shades (thick marks) gradual and hairlines (thin marks) light.
- Keep the pen, nib and letter angles consistent.
- The letters on my **Script Writing Handout** have numbers showing which mark to make first, e.g., the red marks are made first. The letters also have arrows showing the direction to make the mark with the nib.
- Within a word, the letters are connected to each other.
- Keep loops long, thin and elliptical at the turning point. All turns should be mellow and unobtrusive.
- Keep eyelets small with gentle turns. Come out of loops and eyelets gracefully with no sharp turns.
- The first mark for many upper case letters is a balanced compound curve. A compound curve is a continuous, subtle s-shaped curve. It has no straightness in any of its parts. The beginning of this curve is a hairline which gradates into a shade with the heaviest part of the shade in the middle of the curve, tapering off into a hairline once again.



- All other shapes are elliptical, but some alphabets, such as the one in the handout, use small perfect circles at the end of the curves.
- Never put a shade over a shade. Never draw a thin upward mark through a shade (since it is wet), but skip over it.
- The ink or paint must be the right consistency to flow properly through the nib, so you may need to add water or liquid gum arabic. Stir your mixture every 20 minutes. If the ink doesn't flow, it is too thick or the pen needs to be cleaned; if it falls out of the pen or leaves a splotch, the ink is too thin or the nib is too slippery.

- Make your marks slowly and thoughtfully.
- Be encouraged and enjoy the practice.

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