

## Know Your Children

- Stay current. Read, listen, watch resources to help you learn.
- Observe others who have experience with children. Learn from them.
- Take note of children around you, their habits, their likes and dislikes.
- Evaluate and choose the best and most appropriate experiences for your children.
- Pray for God's guidance as you prepare to minister to children.

## Plan and Organize

- Plan early-arriver and activity groups.
- Include spiritual nurture, worship, vocal warm-ups, singing skills, familiar material, performance skills, body energizers, new materials, musicianships skills, and fun in the choral rehearsal.

## Listening Strategies for Teaching Songs

- Listen for specific textual content.
- Listen for specific rhythmic characteristics or patterns.
- Listen for specific melodic characteristics or patterns.
- Listen for the identical, similar and different phrases.
- Identify the word on which the melody stops.
- Listen as melody is sung or played and lip sync" words (magic lips).

## Singing and Speaking Strategies for Teaching Songs

- Echo speak phrases of text.
- Echo sing melody on neutral syllables (loo, doot, bah).
- Echo sing melodic syllables (*sofège*).
- Echo sing phrases of text.
- Sing or speak in question and answer style, or isolated patterns or phrases.

## Moving Strategies for Teaching Songs

- Pat, clap, or step the beat.
- Conduct the meter.
- Sing *solfége* using the body scale or hand signs.
- Sing and draw phrases in the air, or with scarves.
- Create motions to illustrate text, phrases, or melodic direction.

## Reading Strategies for Teaching Songs

- Read and speak rhythm syllables.
- Play “Which phrase did you hear” game while looking at notation.
- Read silently, developing inner hearing.

## Evaluating Your Rehearsal and Sharpening Your Teaching Skills

- Did you speak clearly?
- Did the choir sing unaccompanied sometimes?
- Did you call each child by name?
- Did you communicate encouragement through smiles and eye contact?
- Did you use a variety of accompaniments for the choir?
- Did you acknowledge appropriate behavior more than negative behavior?
- Did you vary the inflection and tempo of your voice?
- Did your body language communicate the mood and style of the music?
- Did you know the music well before presenting it to the children?
- Did you move smoothly through transitions from song to song?
- Did you hear each child sing alone?
- Were your comments mostly positive?



## And the Director Said...

- Chin down, chest up.
- Be a vocal athlete.
- Fall up.
- Don't let the back of the chair hold you up.
- Reach for the stars.
- Don't let your body sag!
- Reach for the stars
- Breathe through your feet.
- Feel your body expand around the middle.
- Sing with a yawny feeling, not a swallowing feeling.
- Take a silent breath.
- Dive into the tone.
- Sing north and south.
- Sing with a surprise in your eyes.
- Make the vowels stand up in the back of your throat.
- Sing thoughts, not words. Think spaghetti, not macaroni.
- Curtain up.
- Be a buoyant singer.
- Listen louder than you sing.
- Sing on the top half of the pitch; we are birds, not bats.
- Aim for the basket, and sing the phrase like a three-pointer.
- Hit a home run.
- Sing above the cheekbones.
- Sing like a waterfall. At the end of the phrase, float the foam back up.
- Sing as beautifully as you can.
- Turn up the flame.
- Sing with a fuller sound.
- Fill the room with sound.
- Start singing on the inside before you sing on the outside.
- Is your pitch computer working?
- Make your eyes smile.

# Rehearsal Helpers



- Visible incentive chart • Children's notebooks/binders
- Engage early-arrivers • Assigned seating (strategic)
- Pace that is not too fast or too slow • Name tags
- Know the music, and sing more, talk less • Connect with children as they enter the room
- Call on singers to sing solos • Senior adult helper
- Post rehearsal agenda/checklist • Well-lit, well-ventilated, adequate space
- Variety of activities, songs, singing games • Chairs in rows with access to each child
- Routine spiced with surprise • Limit visuals, avoid over-stimulation
- Purposeful, learning (not rowdy) fun • Space for movement



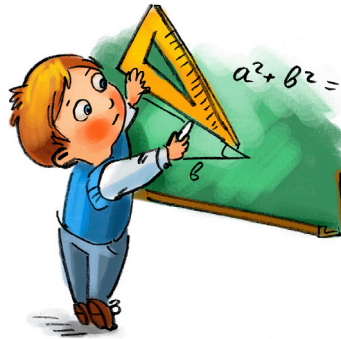
# How Are You Smart?

## Plays with Words



reading,  
writing,  
spelling,  
listening  
to words

## Plays with Numbers



computer games,  
puzzles, problem  
solving, thinking  
games

## Plays with Music



music,  
rhymes,  
singing,  
playing  
instruments

## Plays with Nature

outdoors,  
animals,  
plants, using  
natural  
materials



## Plays with Images

visual  
art,  
painting,  
drawing,  
building,



## Plays with Movement



sports,  
dance,  
motor  
skills

## Plays Alone

enjoys  
independent  
projects,  
works  
well alone



## Plays with Others

enjoys  
presenting,  
social and  
group  
activities,  
leader



# Choosy Director's Song Selection Checklist



choosy *adj.* Careful in choosing; committed to excellence

## Text

- Is the text true? Does it present age-appropriate theology?
- Is the text worthy of staying in the child's memory bank for a lifetime?
- Does the text offer opportunities for spiritual growth and "teachable moments?"
- Does the text have rhyming patterns that will aid memorization?
- Does the text avoid excessive symbolism or abstract concepts?

## Melody

- Will the melody encourage singing in the head tone?
- Is the range of the melody age-appropriate?
- Does the melody have lots of repeated pitches or descending patterns which may encourage flattening?
- In what range do most of the notes lie (the tessitura)? Are most notes midrange?
- Does the melody complement the mood of the text?
- Does the melody offer opportunities for rise and fall of a phrase?
- Does the melody offer opportunities for children to be expressive and experience excellent musicianship?
- Will the song encourage good vocal habits?
- Does the melody place appropriate vowels in ranges where they can be sung with beauty?
- Is the melody memorable and engaging?
- Does the melody have good voice leading, avoiding awkward intervals? Where are the half-steps? Where and how are *fa* and *ti* used in the melody?
- Does the melody provide variety without having tricky similarities?

## Rhythm

- Do the rhythms fit the natural inflections of the words?
- Are the syncopations natural, and seem to fit and flow?

## **Accompaniment**

- Does the accompaniment complement the mood of the melody and text?
- Does the accompaniment support the melody at the beginning of the song, and in other strategic areas?
- Does the accompaniment support harmony parts?
- Does the accompaniment "do its job" with the fewest notes possible? Does the texture support without being overpowering?
- Is this anthem within the ability of my accompanist?
- Will you use taped accompaniment?
- How will taped accompaniment impact the quality of the singing?

## **Harmony/Part Singing**

- Is the harmony optional, or is it vital to the success of the song?
- How difficult is the harmony to learn and sing with the melody? (Parts like ostinati and rounds are easiest, and parallel thirds and sixths are the most difficult.)

## **Form**

- Is the form clear and logical?
- How does the form impact the ease or difficulty of learning and memorizing the song?

## **Overall...**

- Does the song offer rhythmic vitality and interest?
- Does the song avoid excessive chromaticism?
- Is there a passage in the song that offers the children a break from singing, to rest vocally and gather their thoughts?
- Will the song be easiest caught or taught? How does this song fit the ability of my choir?
- What will be the primary challenge of the song?
- What will be a greatest value and reward of the song?
- Will the song allow you to teach musicianship?
- Will the song enrich the worship of the congregation?
- What is the dominant musical feature of the song? Melody, rhythm, harmony, form, text, other?
- Are you enthused about the song? Has it captured your imagination and the imagination of the children?
- Does the song offer something intangible or unique?
- In what ways can I make this song appealing to multiple learning styles and modes?
- Will this song grow with time, or will everyone be tired of it by the third rehearsal?

# A Classroom Management Check-up

## Make Discipline a Team Effort

- Discuss your classroom management expectations with your co-workers, so everyone can respond consistently.

## Engage Children from the Beginning

- Plan activities for children who arrive early to focus attention.

## Maintain a Balanced Pace

- A rehearsal that is too slowly paced will foster restlessness. If the pace is too fast, children can become hyper. Use a purposeful pace to maintain interest and control.

## Have a Recovery Plan

- When chaos erupts, have a activity or signal that will refocus attention.

## Use Humor

- Healthy laughter can ease many awkward moments, but avoid ridicule and sarcasm. Laugh at yourself! Take your work seriously, but don't take yourself too seriously.

## Make Big Projects Seem Small

- Present big projects in small segments so children are not overwhelmed. Give children opportunities to achieve many small successes.

## Ignore Some Behaviors

- Use your intuition to determine when you should let a situation run its course. Sometimes, a child just needs a little attention. Ignore the action, and offer some positive attention.

## Explain Why

- Help children understand the purpose of an activity. Sometimes, children may not understand why something is worthwhile.

## Use Seating Assignments

- Use a seating chart as a part of your classroom management. Allow plenty of space between seats. Move a child when necessary.

## Create Purposeful Space

- Make sure your rehearsal space is attractive, well-lit, and well-ventilated to promote successful rehearsals.

## Cooperate with Parents

- In a caring, loving manner, ask a parent or guardian for information. Your gentle, concerned approach will offer valuable insight, and let the parent know of your appreciation for their child.

## Praise Often

- Praise should be immediate, specific, and sincere.

## Be Positive

- A misbehaving child is a discouraged child. Demonstrate Christ-like love. Evaluate your tone of voice and non-verbal signals. Do they affirm children? Do you smile? Ask a trusted friend to help you evaluate your approach with children.

## Keep Cool

- Do not take bad behavior personally. Be consistent. We all have undisciplined areas in our lives.

## Pray

- Pray for your choir children. Pray for sensitivity to understand your children and relate to them redemptively. Pray that each rehearsal will be orderly, well-disciplined, and affirming.



# Blueprint for Success

## The Ministry of the Choir Coordinator What do I do now?



### Remember your calling...

- John 15:16
- Gifted for ministry—know your gifts and work from those gifts.

### Develop a philosophy/mission statement.

- Why do we do what we do?
- Is it necessary to have a philosophy or mission statement?
- Are you open to expanding and to change?

### Things that make a difference . . .

- Galatians 1:10
- Setting goals
- “Enjoy” critics
- Be correctable
- Surrender to authority
- Make lists
- Let God give you the dreams
- Evaluate the views of others
- Be patient (pick at the edges of hard things)
- Practice good time management
- Study, experiment, investigate, and look at things from different angles
- Build a network of praying partners
- DELEGATE—ask for help
- Is the simple way the better way?
- As God gives you ideas, give them away “without strings.”
- Give others credit.
- Strive for a servant’s attitude.
- Be joyful and enthusiastic.
- Build others up, be a nurturer.
- Look for the “hunger” in your teachers: love, acceptance, information, friendship, smiles, confidence
- Build a family of leaders...a clique where everyone is part of the group.
- Plan individual conferences with each director...maybe over lunch, at or away from church.
- Think/plan way ahead.