



ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL
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Diocese of Newark: Presentation on the St Paul's Choir School
Friday, January 24, 2014

The **St Paul's Choir School** is a unique after-school program that offers professional choral training, voice and piano lessons, leadership development, academic tutoring, and mentoring to children and teenagers. Our students come from Englewood and surrounding towns, representing a wide range of cultural communities, and from all faith traditions. The program is based on the idea that all children are able to sing, given encouragement and instruction. Choristers need not be members of St Paul's; they must only agree to rehearse and perform as scheduled. While many such programs charge tuition, we do not. Instead, choristers are paid stipends that increase as they advance. The School is a musical and educational outreach of St Paul's Episcopal Church—all are welcome.

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St. Paul's Choir School Chorister Program



www.stpauls-choirschool.org

ST. PAUL'S IN ENGLEWOOD

in the Episcopal Diocese of Newark

113 Engle Street

Englewood, NJ 07631

201.568.3276

Mark A. Trautman, Director of Music
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January 2014

ST. PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL is based on the idea that all children are able to sing, given encouragement and instruction. We offer free music education and performance opportunities for girls and boys, 8-14. The School is a musical and educational outreach of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Englewood, New Jersey. While many such programs charge tuition, we do not. Instead, choristers are paid stipends that increase as they advance. We accept children from Englewood and surrounding communities, all economic circumstances and all faith traditions—all are welcome. Choristers need not be members of St. Paul's; they must only agree to rehearse and perform as scheduled.

THE MISSION OF THE ST. PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL IS TO:

- Provide solid musical instruction in a friendly and fun environment of mutual respect and achievement;
- Create an opportunity for children to grow in musical and spiritual strengths that nurture their growth;
- Provide children of diverse abilities and backgrounds with a program of music appreciation and choral performance that seeks to fulfill each child's musical potential;
- Provide homework assistance and tutoring.

IT BEGINS WITH AN INTERVIEW

The Director conducts a low-key, friendly meeting with each family. This helps us evaluate the Chorister's conduct, singing ability, and reading skills, as well as potential commitment to the choir. This interview is informal, and scheduled when mutually convenient. Sometimes, when a potential Chorister has attended our summer Music Camp, it has already taken place! Potential and needs of each chorister are taken into consideration. Everyone can relax because no preparation is required for the interview!

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

1. Deportment—the professional conduct or behavior of a chorister.
 - Posture
 - Concentration
2. Singing
 - Pitch
 - Range
 - Rhythm
3. Reading
 - Accuracy
 - Singing diction

SCHOLARSHIPS

St Paul's Choir School interviews and accepts children and youth from a broad geographic area, economic circumstances, and from all faith traditions. We offer free music education and performance opportunities for girls and boys, ages 8 through high school. We are tuition-free, and choristers are paid stipends that increase as they advance. We accept children from Englewood and the surrounding towns, all economic circumstances and all faith traditions—all are welcome. Choristers need not be members of St Paul's; they must only agree to rehearse and perform as scheduled.

Many high-quality choirs charge tuition for their programs. Our program is free! If you were to purchase private music lessons at current rates for the number of lessons we offer, it would cost up to \$5000 per year. St Paul's provides this professional education at no cost to the student.

COMMITMENT

The growth and development of each chorister is realized by a mutual commitment to excellence that is shared by The St Paul's Choir School and its participating families.

1. The commitment of St. Paul's Choir School

- To provide an excellent musical education in the context of the spiritual and liturgical life of the parish;
- To nurture the best examples of citizenship.

2. The commitment of participating families

- To review the choir schedule;
- To participate in all scheduled rehearsals, services and concerts;
- To communicate *limited* but necessary absences to the Director *in advance*;
- To keep the Director up-to-date on all contact information: phone numbers, emails, and addresses.

3. Other issues

- Choristers may not leave the building upon arrival, and students may not leave any rehearsal or performance without prior parent/guardian authorization.
- Three unexcused absences may result in a chorister being asked to leave the program for one semester.

TIME COMMITMENT

1. During the week the Choristers meet every Wednesday:

2:30 pm: Snack/arrival

3:00 pm: Homework help, free time, and individual instruction

4:15 pm: Choir Rehearsal until 5:00, Probationers

5:15 pm: Choir Rehearsal until 6:00, Choristers

Middle and High School Choristers also meet on Mondays, 5-6 p.m.

2. Sunday mornings

- During the academic year, choristers are required as part of their training to sing on certain scheduled Sunday mornings. ***These are not optional***—this is the main purpose of the choir, and we expect perfect attendance each time, except in case of illness or emergency. Families are expected to communicate any need for absence ***in advance***. The phone number of the church is 201.568.3276, and Mr Trautman’s cell is 732.213.2155
- This choir is different from some of your other activities. We are a team and we are only complete when everyone is here. It is important not to let your teammates down. On other teams you don’t always get to play all the time. Sometimes you sit on the bench while others play. In our choir, you get to “play” (sing) ***ALL*** the time. You never sit on the side. Your contribution is important all the time.

3. Additional events

- Additional services and concerts are presented, on average, once a month, many on Sunday afternoons. These also are required events and are scheduled well in advance.
- Choristers may also experience additional performance opportunities as invitations may be extended. We will make every effort to schedule these well in advance, in order to get them on your calendars with no conflicts.

4. After-School Activities and Mentoring

- St. Paul’s choristers are fortunate to have several dedicated adult volunteers who come after 3 PM on Wednesdays to offer afternoon enrichment opportunities. All Choristers are encouraged to come early and take advantage of this time together.

INTERGENERATIONAL CHORAL TRAINING

The St. Paul’s Choir School is an after-school program that trains boys and girls to sing professionally with adult singers, working together as equals in an art and ministry that knows no age boundary. We use the curriculum from the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) called *Voice for Life*, which focuses on age-appropriate vocal training, sight-singing, and music theory. Good, challenging repertoire is employed to put into practice the musical skills that are taught.

Voluntary social gatherings, as well as outreach to those in need provide members with additional opportunities for developing lasting friendships within the group, as well as empowering them for service to others in the community. It is our belief that a close-knit choir community is an important tool in the fight against gangs, drug use and other negative influences on children’s lives. St Paul’s Choir School Chorister Program takes pride in its diverse student body and is open to children and youth of all faith traditions.

BENEFITS OFFERED TO CHORISTERS

1. Professional Choral/Vocal Training

- Receive classical singing instruction, including breathing techniques and healthy vocal production
- Learn how to read music fluently
- Perform a variety of choral music that spans five (5) centuries

- Sing in a variety of languages, including English, Latin, Spanish, German, Hebrew, and Swahili

2. Music Theory

The study of music theory helps students to read music and better understand the building blocks of music. Specifically, students learn about pitch notations, rhythm notation, intervals, scales, keys and key signatures, time signatures, chords and harmony. Understanding music theory helps students become better musicians.

3. Leadership

Leadership skills are introduced and reinforced in the context of every rehearsal and performance. Citizenship and social skills are fostered as Choristers learn how to interact in an intergenerational community and relate to a wide range of personalities and backgrounds. A healthy work ethic is instilled as Choristers work and grow together, developing good habits that sustain them throughout their adulthood.

Specifically, Choristers learn to:

- Derive satisfaction from hard work;
- Compete in a healthy fashion;
- Focus on the task at hand;
- Develop individual stipends and leadership skills;
- Become team players.

5. Choir Trips

The Choristers may make occasional trips to sing elsewhere in New Jersey and surrounding states, as arranged and scheduled. Several trips are already planned and are included in this year's schedule.

6. Music Camps

The St. Paul's Choir School will present an "Exploring Music" camp this spring, free and open to the public, at which older Choristers in the Chorister Program assist, and younger ones may attend.

Choristers who have been in the program one year or more are eligible to apply for scholarships to one of the many national RSCM camps held each summer. These camps are held all over the country, and enable girls and boys to perform top quality music under a noted conductor, while enjoying the company of other girls and boys in similar choirs.

BENEFITS OFFERED TO CHORISTERS

Stipends/Pay:

Choristers receive a stipend (pay amount) for each rehearsal, service and concert in which they participate. Pay depends on punctuality (ARRIVING ON TIME, ready to work), quality of work, and length of participation in the Chorister Program, and is determined by the number of standards earned at each appearance.

Stipends that determine pay are awarded for each rehearsal, service or concert in the following manner:

- Being on time: one (1) **standard**
- Quality of work in rehearsals:
 - Three (3) **standards** awarded for OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP
 - Two (2) **standards** awarded as CREDIT for passing work and progress
 - One (1) **standard** awarded for ATTENDANCE with the need to put forth more effort to achieve passing work and progress.
- Attendance at Performances also result in **standards** being awarded, with up to six (6) awarded depending on punctuality and quality of work.

Standards are worth:

- \$.05 each before a Chorister has earned the surplice
- \$.10 each with the earned surplice
- \$.25 each with the earned pin
- \$.30 each with the earned light blue ribbon and badge
- \$.35 each with the earned dark blue ribbon and badge
- \$.40 each with the earned red ribbon and badge
- \$.50 each with the earned yellow ribbon and badge
 - Five standards will be awarded when a Chorister makes the honor roll at school. A certificate or note from a teacher is required;
 - Extra standards are often offered during rehearsals for increased effort and quality work.
 - A \$2.00 bonus will be given to Choristers who have perfect attendance at all rehearsals AND services during that pay period.

Pay is given out the last Wednesday of every other month.

RSCM Badges and Skill Cards

1. Choristers receive choir vestments and Royal School of Church Music ribbons and badges as they are promoted from one level of achievement to the next.
2. Progress is recorded on Skill Cards—when the appropriate card is filled completely, the Chorister is promoted to the next level.
3. Periodic reports may be mailed to each Chorister's home, with evaluations on
 - Attendance;
 - Communication;
 - Punctuality;
 - Standards;
 - Musical skills;

- Liturgical education;
- Leadership development.

FAMILY SUPPORT OF THE CHORISTER

The St. Paul's Choir School Chorister Program has many built-in incentives and rewards, but family support and encouragement is very important. It is our desire that family members feel equally committed to the program, and to their Chorister's involvement in it. In the course of the choir season, the Chorister will experience many high points and exciting opportunities. Parents and family members can provide praise and share in the joy and satisfaction of these achievements.

Families will also need to provide the Chorister with encouragement and support during those times when s/he may be tired or need a boost in maintaining a positive attitude.

The Chorister Program, which includes a combination of short-term and long-term goals, discipline and a nurturing environment, can be a significant investment in a child's future.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHORISTER PROGRAM

Participants in the Chorister Program do not have to be Episcopalian or parishioners of St. Paul's in Englewood.

Choristers accepted into the Program must adhere to the choir schedule.

A family member responsible for the child's attendance will be required to attend one informational meeting at the beginning of the season. This is to help you and your Chorister understand what will be involved, offer you ways to help, and answer your questions about the program.

Family attendance at St. Paul's services and concerts is optional, but Choristers seem to blossom especially when family members attend services and concerts at which they sing. It's important to your Chorister that he/she knows you think this is important.

Family members may also wish to volunteer their help in the Program as it continues to grow. Ways you can help:

- Help with driving and serve as a chaperone for Choristers when we travel;
- Provide occasional snacks for Wednesday afternoons if you have extra cookies or fruit on hand;
- Offer any administrative skills you may have – filing, organizing;
- Offer to help with vestment care – washing, fitting, organizing;
- Fundraising.

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE REPORT

Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning is a report developed by The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities in 2000, which highlights some important information on arts programs like ours, such as:

“As a result of their varied inquiries, the Champions of Change researchers found that learners can attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts. *Moreover, one of the critical research findings is that the learning in and through the arts can help ‘level the playing field’ for youngsters from disadvantaged circumstances.*” (*Executive Summary*, p. viii, emphasis added)

“Schools are not the only venue in which young people grow, learn, and achieve. Shirley Brice Heath spent a decade studying dozens of after-school programs for disadvantaged youth. These programs were broadly clustered into three categories— sports/academic, community involvement, and the arts. This research shows that the youth in all these programs were doing better in school and in their personal lives than were young people from the same socioeconomic categories, as tracked by NELS:88. To the researchers' surprise, however, the youth in the arts programs were doing the best.” (*Executive Summary*, p. viii, emphasis added)

“When well taught, the arts provide young people with authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts, and bodies. The learning experiences are real and meaningful for them. While learning in other disciplines may often focus on development of a single skill or talent, the arts regularly engage multiple skills and abilities. Engagement in the arts— whether the visual arts, dance, music, theatre or other disciplines—nurtures the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies.” (*Executive Summary*, p. ix)

The full report may be found on the Internet:

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/exec_summ.html

We are indebted to Diane Caruso, Director of Music at Trinity Church in Asbury Park, for her assistance and support in preparing this handbook.



St Paul's Choir School
Evensong at Christ Church in Teaneck
December 8, 2013

Photo by James Porter

ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM, 2013-14

Child's Name _____

Address _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Cell phone number _____ Home number _____

Child cell number: _____ Child email: _____

Parent email: _____ Child's date of birth _____

School and Grade this year

Food allergies, other health issues _____

The commitment of participating families

- To review the choir schedule;
- To participate in all scheduled rehearsals, services and concerts;
- To communicate ***limited*** but necessary absences to the Director ***in advance***;
- To keep the Director up-to-date on all contact information: phone numbers, emails, and addresses.
- To attend all Wednesdays, scheduled Sunday mornings;
- **We look for perfect attendance each time, except in case of illness or emergency. Families are expected to communicate any need for absence *in advance*.**

I give my permission for photographs and/or video footage of my child/children to be used by St Paul's Choir School and its various programs for promotional purposes (brochures, websites, promotional videos, presentations, etc).

I have read the above information and have a copy of the handbook, and I will—to the best of my ability—work to follow the guidelines of the Choir School.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Basic Principles in Developing a Chorister Program

(Things learned over time)

1. Have a long-term vision: What does your ideal (children's) choir look like ten years from now? How many? What repertoire? What schedule? What does "cruising altitude" look like for you? This will take time to really develop – don't think instant gratification will happen, except as the occasional gift from God.
2. The real numbers to look at are your core: Who are the kids that will return next year? Is that number growing? You will always have outliers that come and go – it's your core that counts in the long run.
3. Give them something worth staying for: good repertoire, *real* stuff like the grownups (the biggest desire in a kid's life is to become a grownup – they want to do real stuff like the adult choir does), other incentives like pay, travel, fellowship, piano lessons as appropriate to your community.
4. Don't forget that your choir is a social unit *first*. However much they like you and like music, they like their friends better. Look for ways to develop that social bond in ways appropriate to your situation. It might be bowling and skating parties or choir suppers or traveling together that help develop those choir bonds.
5. Know your audience: What community are you in? What are those community's needs? Tailor your program to your community. Are you recruiting from only your parish? Is this a community outreach program? Where will they sing? Church only or community as well? No right answers – just know what is right for you and your parish.
6. But be firm with parents who want you to tailor the program to their changing schedules. The moment you change to accommodate them, you have sent a clear signal that your program is not as important as you say it is. Think what sports coaches are able to get away with!
7. Work to see that your parish buys into your vision – if they want a choral program for kids, make sure they support it visibly – it's not just a budget issue, it's making sure the vestry and parishioners repeat your goals to themselves and visitors, with pride.
8. All kids are at risk. Some have more resources than others, but they all need adults supporting them in their dreams and goals. Not all kids like sports.
9. Develop in the kids you have the expectation that they will continue to improve – give them goals and help them achieve them. Teach them real music literacy that immediately is applied to that week's music. Learning by rote is a necessary,

beginning level of music-making, but it's boring in the long run and you will lose children who want more challenges. Take advantage of a solid curriculum like the RSCM's Voice for Life – the badges add incentive to stay, especially if you tie perks to higher levels, like travel, money or singing bigger repertoire, or summer camp participation.

10. Wherever possible, schedule joint services with other choirs – kids like to know that they are not alone, and singing with other choirs reinforces that sense of community. Plus, the travel is fun and builds community bonds.
11. Don't apologize for your tradition – one thing we have going for us is a rich history of children (OK, boys in the past, but girls as well now) singing with adults on their level. Kids like a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves, and connecting them to that history helps them feel part of something important.
12. In recruiting, know that different tactics work in different communities. Try everything at least once, no matter how loony it sounds.
 - a. Try banners, newspaper and radio ads, flyers (in the schools if you can get away with it), knowing that a 1% return is really good. Figure out what works best in your community. Post something on the bulletin boards at the library and in the grocery stores.
 - b. Hold a public rehearsal/open house with pizza – food is always an incentive to get people to come.
 - c. Have the kids sing at your parish's potluck or spaghetti supper, and have a flyer ready.
 - d. Summer music camps can be *very* successful – just remember to put a good choral component (well seeded with your current choir kids) in it. Give out recruitment materials at the end of the camp.
 - e. Make friends with every child in the parish, regardless of whether or not they are choir material – tell them it's OK if they don't want to be in choir – you'll still be friends. You never know when someone will change his or her mind. Or bring a friend.
 - f. Consider a feeder choir – continually tell them that when they are old enough, they can join the big kids.
 - g. Develop in the kids the expectation that they will stay through high school. Tell them what you plan for their graduation (I always wear mourning ☺).
 - h. The kids themselves will be your best advertisement. When they start bringing their friends, you'll know you've arrived!

Diane Caruso
Trinity Church
Asbury Park, NJ
AAM 2012

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN WHILE SINGING IN A CHOIR?

When they become aware that their voice is heard above the others and they begin to blend their voices, they learn teamwork.

When they follow their music director's hands through a series of meter and dynamic changes, they learn accuracy.

When they begin to appreciate, or "grow into" a piece of music, they learn patience.

When they refrain from talking and interrupting in rehearsal, they learn respect.

When they listen and concentrate during rehearsal, they learn self-discipline.

When they sing for the local Christmas tree lighting ceremony, they learn community involvement.

When they choose a rehearsal or performance over a special event, they learn commitment.

When they bound out of their singing positions to give a "high five" because they finally sang their most difficult piece straight through for the first time, they learn perseverance.

When they perform their first solo in front of an audience, they learn risk-taking and self-confidence.

When they perform that difficult piece successfully in concert, they learn genuine pride and self-esteem.

Research shows time and again that students have only to gain from involvement in the arts.

A well-organized sustained education in music gives your child intellectual and creative skills that last a lifetime.