

Let's Bring Back The Choir!

With Fall upon us, we are filled with lots of wonderful memories. The smell of crisp cool air, the crunch of leaves under our feet, the sight of school buses on the way to the first days of school. They all remind us of the start of a new season. Fall is often the start of a new year for the choir too, but wait... where did the choir go? You may still find choirs prevalent in some parts of the United States and in some larger churches, but for the most part, a choir serving regularly on Sundays is a thing of bygone days. Why is this and what can we do to bring back the choir?

I believe there are several reasons that traditional choirs have died out. Here are a few:

- Changes in musical style
- Lack of commitment.
- Lack of choral skills (ie sight singing).
- Perception of choirs.
- Lack of leadership skills to direct a choir.

But do these things really have to translate into the ultimate demise of the “church choir”? I think not, and here’s why; Choirs are Biblical. Not only that, choir is fun! Here are some good reasons to get a choir going in your church and some easy ways to get started.

Why?

Not only are choirs biblical... and fun, but they truly minister to people. A choir can become like a mini-church in itself. The director can function like a pastor in many ways, and the folks can become quite close. Music is a powerful thing, and when you engage in singing with others it can create a wonderful bond between the members. Praying for each other, fellowshiping together, learning and growing together, and experiencing the joy of serving can all be part of being in choir. It’s also a way to help folks, who might not otherwise have the confidence to serve in the music ministry, get started. Lots of people love to sing but might not feel qualified to join a team. A choir can be a wonderful place to grow skills and gain confidence.

Start With A Seasonal Choir

Are you looking for more singers on your team? Start a choir! Start an annual choir drive. Fall is a great time for new beginnings, and with Christmas right around the corner, Fall is the perfect time to hold auditions for a seasonal choir. Many people who might not feel ready to commit to a weekly choir will absolutely sign on for an “event” choir. If you purpose to put on a Christmas presentation, you will drum up support for not only choir, but perhaps other areas of artistic expression as well. Do a good job with this first step and you will set the tone for how fun, powerful and meaningful a choir can be.

An Extension of Your Worship Team

Think of a choir as an extension of your worship team. This might help to make the concept less threatening to you and your potential members. To get a choir rolling, have them simply sing the same songs as the worship team, with similar harmonies. Choirs can really encourage a congregation to sing. If they are free to express their worship visually as well, they can truly be inspirational. The choir can also become a growing ground for potential members of the frontline team. Be careful not to make too much of the difference between the “frontline team” and the choir though. Each are powerful in their own way, and we want to carefully avoid feeding the diva syndrome that can easily sneak in if the choir singers are viewed as somehow not as valuable. Both the choir and the frontline singers are serving the Body of Christ by facilitating worship. This is why I recommend that all the singers on your team serve in the choir when they are not on mic.

Have Fun!

One of my mantras is this: "People don't mind rehearsals, people mind having their time wasted". If you plan out rehearsals so that much is accomplished, they can be fun! Singers love to sing, and you are creating an opportunity for them to do just that. Just make sure that the time spent is well thought out in advance and do your best to reach those goals. If you consistently make progress and the choir has the chance to experience making great music together, it will not only be powerful, but it will be fun! Do a good job and your music ministry will begin to attract others and grow.

In conclusion, choirs can be a wonderful, regular addition to your music ministry. Start off easily and work with the level your members are at, but don't forget to slowly challenge them by teaching them a little each week and encouraging them to grow on their own as well. You will be challenged and blessed in the process!