Effective Rehearsal Techniques

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Highlights

- **Introduction**
- □Practical Steps
- □ Rehearsal Plans

Sources

INTRODUCTION

Like most church choirs, you probably have a mid-week rehearsal.

This is a great time to prepare music for Sunday worship service, weekly bible study, special events like crusades, outreaches, retreats and the next few weeks.

Please do not spend an entire rehearsal on sunday's song! Plan your time carefully, use it wisely in rehearsal, and everyone will leave happy and encouraged.

A successful, productive choir rehearsal takes

- 1. Proper preparation
- 2. Good time management skills
- 3. Careful planning
- 4. Attention to detail.

I recommend dividing your rehearsal time into six components:

- 1. Opening Prayer / Exhortation
- 2. Warm-ups (vocal / instrumental)
- 3. Music for Sunday
- 4. Weekly Services / Other events
- 5. Announcements
- 6. Benediction
- Total (I hour 30min.)

- 8 min.
- 4 min.
- 15 min.
- 55 min.
- 4 min.
- 4 min.
- = 90min

Plan each category carefully the day of (or one day before) your rehearsal. Walking into a choir rehearsal without a clear plan will amount to wasting your time and that of the people.

> Success in the choral rehearsal is a direct result of thorough planning

-Katherine Tiefel

OPENING PRAYERS AND SCRIPTURAL EXHORTATION

- 8 MINUTES

- The opening prayers should be short and brief.
- It is not the time for long sermon.
- Prayer session should not be used as delay tactics to wait for late comers. Go straight to the point.
- Start on the record time.

WARM-UPS

- 4 MINUTES

- Warm-ups are a practical way to warm up the voice, but₁₀ they're also a good way to get focused, improve listening skills, and prepare or reinforce new concepts.
- Include stretches, breathing exercises, vocal slides/sirens, and a few patterns that focus on vowels, tone, resonance, and breath support.
- Warm-ups or vocal exercises are pivotal to getting the voice and the entire group ready for singing.
- Think about a challenging phrase or motive in a new song and create a warm-up to introduce it.
- See if your singers make the connection when you pull out that anthem later in rehearsal! You may use some wellknown pieces as warmups.

MUSIC FOR SUNDAY - 15 MINUTES

- I like to rehearse Sunday's song(s) and any service music at the beginning so there are no surprises at the end of the night.
- Ideally, your choir will already be familiar with Sunday's song, so a quick run-through might be all you need.
- However, I usually allocate 10 minutes, or so, to give us plenty of time to review sections and parts, as needed.
- Then, spend the last 5 minutes to go through the entire piece together.
- This is also a good time in the rehearsal to review GHS.

WEEKLY SERVICES / OTHER EVENTS - 55 MINUTES

- Choose 4 to 5 other songs already prepared and photocopy or pre-selected from hymn books to rehearse (in full or in part).
- Make sure the copies are ready to be distributed or the pages of song books are well written out.
- The idea of dictating tonic sol-fa or stanzas for all to write is unethical, obsolete, and time killing.
- It simply shows that the choir leader wasn't prepare for the rehearsal of that day.
- I tend to start with new or newer songs. Save the favorite (familiar) songs for the very end of rehearsal.

- Plan out how much time you want to spend on each, piece.
- Songs tend to fall into three categories:
 - *NEW,
 - *IN PROGRESS, and
 - *FAMILIAR.
- New and familiar songs may need only 5-10 minutes while in progress songs may need 15 minutes for more detailed work.
- This may change a little in rehearsal, so be sure to leave yourself a little wiggle room (+/- 5 minutes).

Spend a little time reviewing each anthem before rehearsal and choose rehearsal segments for each one.

- * What are your goals for the rehearsal?
- * What would you like to get through?
- * What will you focus on?
- * What do you want to remind them about?
- * Jot down a few reminders for yourself.

Announcements

- 4 Minutes

welcome any new members, etc.

If you do not have any announcements, give the choir a projection on the songs you may likely look into at the next rehearsal so they can prepare ahead of time.

Benediction

- 4 Minutes

- The church choir is a platform to grow in faith 20 and fellowship with one another.
- Give people an opportunity to share prayer requests and leave a few minutes at the end of rehearsal for a quick prayer.
- If you don't feel comfortable praying on prayer requests every week, read an excerpt from a prayerful song you're working on, or a verse of a hymn from your songbook and lead the choir to pray as you bring the rehearsal to a close by sharing the grace.

REHEARSAL PLANS

- Some people feel most prepared for rehearsal when they have a multi-page lesson plan in hand.
- I find it hard to follow a detailed plan in the moment, so I usually simplify my rehearsal plans to a bulleted outline that fits on a single page.

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Thank You

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