

## PREPARATION

I prepare well in advance for all graded choirs, but especially for older children and middle school choirs. Since these choirs participate in more music preparation, all music for the year should be secured before the first rehearsal. For our groups, festivals occur in February and March. In addition to learning Christmas music we must begin festival music as early as possible, often beginning both Christmas and festival preparation with our first rehearsal in September.

One of the highlights in our church and community is the Christmas musical presented by our older children and middle school choirs. As soon as music is passed out the boys and girls begin asking when they will be able to audition for parts. Sometimes competition for special parts can become tense. It is critical to make each choir member feel significant even when they are not assigned a leading part.

## ATTENDANCE

In our program, both the older children's and middle school choirs have criteria for qualifying for an annual trip to Disney World each summer. Each member must have 75% attendance, sing for both musicals, and attend either the District or State Festival. If they attend both Festivals they receive extra credit which may allow some children to make up points on attendance. Naturally, this trip becomes a wonderful incentive for participation and is a fun way to end the choir year. Our church budget subsidizes this trip as a part of our music budget. The church also provides two scholarships for State Music Camp for both older children and middle school choirs.

How do you keep 'em? With a supportive church and staff, dedicated leadership, parental participation, a good music budget, and parents and children who spread the word about an exciting music program in your church.

My word to other choir directors is, "evaluate what you are doing and be willing to change and adjust to provide for the children the very best that God has entrusted to us as church musicians."

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Recruitment and Organization:

Ideas for Children's  
and High School Youth Choirs

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