

## **THOU SHALT BUILD A CHOIR: TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN'S CHOIRS**

The first four commandments take place prior to the start of a children's choir:

1. Thou shalt discuss the advantages of having a children's choir with thy clergy members.
  - a. An effective way for children to become worship leaders.
  - b. A continuation of Christian Education through music.
  - c. A guarantee of more people in church on the Sunday when the children sing.
  
2. Thou shalt take other children's choir directors to lunch and pick their brains about starting and carrying out a children's choir.
  - a. Rehearsal days and times that work for them.
  - b. How often their children sing in worship.
  - c. How they involve parents in planning and rehearsals.
  - d. Where they find useful music and resources.
  - e. Whether their children sing musicals, and if so how they are planned and organized.
  
3. Thou shalt place an enticing article in the church newsletter about the beginning of the children's choir.
  - a. Starting day and time for rehearsal.
  - b. How often the children will be singing.
  - c. What other activities besides singing will be involved in weekly rehearsals.
  
4. Thou shalt recruit like crazy!
  - a. Telephone as many parents with children as possible and share your enthusiasm with them.
  - b. Send follow-up emails to those parents who plan to involve their children in the choir. Construct an email list to use for future mailings.
  - c. Visit Christian Education classrooms on Sunday mornings to speak directly to children about the choir.
  - d. Speak to children individually, between services and at various church events. Introduce yourself and encourage them to come.

The next six commandments take place after the start of your year:

5. Thou shalt plan thy work and work thy plan.
  - a. As much as possible, plan all singing dates and anthems for the upcoming year. Provide dates for parents at the first rehearsal.
  - b. Have the rehearsal room clean, neat, and ready.
  - c. Have music in the folders and all necessary tools and resources on hand.
  - d. Have your rehearsal plan on the board before the children arrive.
  - e. “If you feed them, they will come.” Provide a light snack before rehearsal (lemonade and puffed popcorn, e.g.)
  - f. Involve the children in various ways during rehearsal (i.e. passing out pencils, checking rehearsal items off the board, etc.)
  
6. Thou shalt educate the children about the parts of the worship service and appropriate behavior.
  - a. Discuss important parts of your worship service and what they mean. Invite the clergy to attend rehearsal and share these things with the children.
  - b. Teach the children to respect other worship leaders as they would be respected.
  - c. Teach them how to process and recess, taking time to go into the church and practice this.
  
7. Thou shalt teach hymns as well as anthems.
  - a. If the church doesn't teach hymns, who will?
  - b. Use a hymn-of-the-month plan.
  - c. Be sure to use the hymn in church the day the children sing.
  - d. For resources, consult back issues of the *Chorister* for monthly hymn studies.
  - e. Show children several aspects of the hymnal (title index, metrical index, tune index, etc.)
  
8. Thou shalt teach musicianship to the children as you teach the music.
  - a. Form.
  - b. Phrasing.
  - c. Tone.
  - d. Diction.

9. Thou shalt build an atmosphere of mutual respect.
  - a. Check your tone of voice and attitude during rehearsals.
  - b. Smile a lot.
  - c. Eliminate the word “no” from your vocabulary.
  - d. Turn questionable answers into right answers.
  - e. Be generous with your praise and abundant with your encouragement.
  - f. If you are enthusiastic, it will rub off.
  
10. Thou shalt pray with thy children.
  - a. Opening and closing prayer at each rehearsal.
  - b. Prayer on Sunday morning before singing the worship service.
  - c. Discuss the power of prayer with children on their level.

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith: Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy children’s choir as thyself.