

Concert Choir Syllabus Winnebago Lutheran Academy 2015-2016

Instructor: Dale Witte

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Grade Level: 9-12

Course Hours: Block 7

Prep Block: 1, 8

Prerequisite: love of singing, willingness to learn

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DESCRIPTION: Concert Choir is a "Class C or B", non-auditioned, mixed choir (SATB) of Freshman through Senior students. The Concert Choir performs as part of the curriculum for all five major concerts at WLA, the Area Reformation Service, Solo/Ensemble, and may also sing in chapel or Concert Festival as occasion permits.

GOALS: The student will...

1. Use his or her gift of vocal music to God's glory and praise singing both sacred and secular choral literature literature ([*1 Cor. 10:31*](#) – "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." [*Ps. 104:33*](#) – "I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."); and
2. Put his or her musical talents to faithful use to improve his or her vocal skills, sight reading ability, and knowledge of music theory and music history through choral performances ([*Matt. 25:14-30*](#) – *The Parable of the Talents: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"*); and
3. Learn and prepare a body of choral literature for concerts which is representative of varied historical periods and styles, and which promotes and extols God and His Word in both text (sacred and secular) and music ([*Ps. 27:6b*](#) – "I will sing and make music to the LORD."; [*33:1-3*](#) – "Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy"); and
4. Be prepared to join Traveling Choir after one year of faithful singing.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR EACH CLASS:

1. Choir Folder
2. Pencil
3. Choir Music

MUSIC AND FOLDER RENTAL: The music that is handed out is the textbook from which all musical concepts are taught and applied and is the property of WLA. A black choir folder will be handed out to those who don't have their own. All choir music and black folders must be returned at the end of the school year in the same condition in which they were handed out or the student will be charged for the replacement cost of each damaged or lost item.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Students are responsible for keeping the music given to them in their folders and keeping that music in good repair.** Please only make marks in pencil! Each copy of music will cost at least \$2.00 and a student will get 3-5 pieces of music to sing per concert. WLA buys all the music needed for choir. Music which is not returned to WLA will be charged to the student at replacement cost and if not turned in could result in retention of semester grade (e.g. incomplete), loss of course credit, or, in extreme cases, possible retention of diploma for seniors.
2. **Students are encouraged to practice their singing outside of class.** Singing practice should include the following:
 - *Vocalizing*, that is, singing the warm-ups we do at the beginning of each class, to extend range & flexibility of the voice
 - *Singing the songs which are being sung in class.* A piano could be used to “plunk out” the notes while the student sings along; concentrate on problem spots and sing them through **many** times, not just once
 - *Learning a solo, duet, trio, or quartet for Solo/Ensemble participation.* See Mr. Witte for the [WSMA Solo/Ensemble music list](#) and music in September or check it out online at www.wsmamusic.org and click on “Festival Music List” on the left column.
 - Consider purchasing SmartMusic (www.smartmusic.com) for extended solo ensemble practice at home with your computer acting as an intelligent accompanist. Student subscriptions are \$40.
 - *Learning music for small ensemble performance in chapel* (sacred songs, psalms, hymn verses, or canticles) which Mr. Witte has chosen for chapel worship, or prepare your own sacred solo, duet, or quartet for chapel. See Mr. Witte for ideas and music.
3. **Students in Concert Choir are required to sing in all WLA concerts (Fall, Reformation Service, both Christmas Concerts, Let’s Celebrate Day, Hymn Festival, and the Spring Concert).** Each concert for a choir student is the culmination of a quarter’s worth of work. If a student misses a test in any class, they are expected to take the test before getting a grade for the marking period. Unfortunately, if a choir student misses a concert, the concert cannot be “made up.” Therefore, every effort should be made that the choir student is present and performs to the best of their God-given ability at every concert. **Failure to sing at a concert will result in a reduction of the student’s grade for the current marking period.** (e.g. If the student had an A+ but missed one concert for a semester, the grade could drop as low as a C. If the student missed two concerts in a semester, the grade could drop to an F.) Under special circumstances, such as extreme sickness or a family emergency, such as a death in the family, a student may be allowed to make up the concert by singing privately for Mr. Witte. Such special circumstances are rare but need to be discussed with Mr. Witte as soon as possible **WELL IN ADVANCE** of the day of the concert. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to miss a concert because of their work schedule. Students are expected to ask off for all concerts well in advance of the concert. Students who miss a concert because of work will not be allowed to make up the grade.
4. **Concert Choir concert attire is a black dress shirt and black dress pants.** Students

are responsible for purchasing their own concert clothing

Concert Choir Boys

- Black long-sleeved dress shirt
- Black dress pants
- Black dress shoes
- Black socks

Concert Choir Girls

- Black long-sleeved loose-fitting blouse
- Blue camisole or some other blue accent (scarf?)
- Black dress pants or long black dress skirt (calf length or lower)
- Black closed-toe dress shoes (as little heel as possible)

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:

1. Be in their seats by the time the class bell rings,
2. Be present and on time for all rehearsals and performances, (warmups are 1 hour before concerts)
3. Bring their own choir folders, music, and pencil to all rehearsals,
4. Be quiet in rehearsal when not singing, listening attentively,
5. Keep school property (music, robes, furniture, musical instruments, sound equipment, etc.) in good condition,
6. Participate in all events during rehearsals and perform in every WLA concert,
7. Learn the repertoire and be a contributing member of the choir, seeking extra help when needed,
8. Talk to the director well in advance of a scheduling conflict and try to work out the conflict on their own without starting with the statement “I can’t make this performance...”), and
9. Use faithfully and fully the gifts God gave to you.

STUDENT REHEARSAL BEHAVIOR:

Students are expected to exhibit proper rehearsal behavior, which includes

1. “Be Still” and listening when the teacher or another student is talking.
2. Use appropriate singing posture (standing or seated) for good vocal production.
3. Sit in assigned seating.
4. Drink only water in rehearsal or concert (Not eating food, candy, gum, or drinking soda)
5. Focus on the music, not homework from another class.

Students who routinely do not exhibit these behaviors could be (a) removed from rehearsal, (b) given a detention for each rehearsal from which they have been removed, (c) counseled by the choir director with God’s Word why they were removed from rehearsal, how to change their behavior, and when they might return to rehearsal. If the situation should warrant further action, the student will be sent to the Vice-Principal and either a phone call will be made to the student’s parents or a meeting will be set up with the parents and student to correct the behavior. It would be very sad to have to get this far. Every effort should be made by the student to use their musical gifts to God’s glory at all times.

CONCERT SCHEDULE: Please be at WLA (or St. Peter’s FDL) one hour prior to the concert time for warm-ups (remember, you lead by example!). All concerts are held in the

WLA gymnasium unless otherwise indicated. The WLA Choir Calendar can be viewed on Google Calendars at <http://bit.ly/WLAchoirca>. This online calendar will be updated throughout the school year. Please check it often! (Look for the link off the front page of the WLA website as well www.wlavikings.org and www.dalewitte.com .

2015-2016 Concert Choir Performances

Subscribe to WLA Fine Arts Google Calendar at
<http://www.wlavikings.org/for-wla-families/calendars/>

Fall Concert - WLA Gym

- October 25, 2015
- 6 PM warm ups, 7 PM performance

WLA Area Reformation Service at St. Peter's, FDL

- November 1, 2015
- 2:00 PM warm ups, 3:00 PM service

Christmas Concert #1 - WLA Gym

- December 21, 2015
- 6:30 in building, 6:45 line up, 7 PM performance

Christmas Concert #2 - WLA Gym

- December 22, 2015
- 12:45 line up, 1 PM performance

Let's Celebrate Day - WLA Gym

- January 31, 2016
- 11:30 am 4:30 am (perform as Concert Choir for 15-20 minutes sometime during the day and at 4 PM with all mass choir & band)

WSMA District Solo Ensemble (WLA hosts) - optional

- Saturday, February 27, 2016 (Vocal/Piano) 8 am - 4 pm
- Saturday, March 5, 2016 (Instrumental/Piano) 8 am - 4 pm
- prepare a solo, duet, trio, quartet, or small ensemble to be performed before a judge

Hymn Festival at St. Peter's, FDL

- April 10, 2016
- 1:00 PM warm ups, 2:00 PM performance

Spring Concert - WLA Gym

- May 22, 2016
- 6 PM warm ups, 7 PM performance

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION:

Since Concert Choir is a performance ensemble, class time will be spent largely preparing for concerts. Each class period is structured in a similar manner, including time for vocalizing (vocal technique), sight reading, music theory, and performance practice. The success of each rehearsal lies in (1) the student's attention and willingness to work, (2) their preparation, including practice time, and (3) the director's preparation and knowledge of the music.

Students in Concert Choir are strongly encouraged to sing either a solo or perform with an ensemble (duet, trio, or quartet) for the spring WSMA District Solo/Ensemble competition. While it is not required to perform in Solo/Ensemble, singing for Solo/Ensemble will show the director that the student wants to (1) improve their singing skills, (2) improve the Freshman Choir by their hard work, (3) have a new and different singing experience than choir, and (4) glorify God by singing a "new song" to him. See the WSMA website for the Solo/Ensemble list after the first week of September at www.wsmamusic.org. See Mr. Witte for the music or help ordering your own personal copy.

ASSESSMENT/GRADING:

Daily Work and Participation (25%) The way a choir student works and participates in class is directly proportional to their success in performance. Students who are hard working, focused, and attentive not only will advance at a faster rate than their peers, they will also be a positive role model for other students. Sight reading, class participation, behavior, quizzes, and other class work falls under this category.

Singing (25%) Students will be monitored on their singing each day for daily progress and will be evaluated on their individual singing abilities through each quarter, either with SmartMusic or in class. Each student will sing music that was prepared by their choir for the most recent concert either alone, in a small ensemble, or in a large group for a letter grade. A five-point scale will be used to describe the student's singing:

- 4 = Excellent, "wow";** a perfect model of singing at this level (100%, A+).
- 3 = Good;** how most students are capable of singing at this level (90%, B+)
- 2 = Average;** some vocal problems, not a pleasing sound (80%, C)
- 1 = Poor;** many vocal problems, couldn't match pitches, monotone (70%, D)
- 0 = Unacceptable;** couldn't be heard singing (60%, F)

Concert Dress Rehearsals and Performances (50%) All choir students are required to sing for the five major choral concerts at WLA. Each concert is both a chance to entertain the audience, teach them, and have an opportunity to demonstrate the hard work the student has put into understanding how to use the gift of vocal music that God has given to each person. *All choir students are encouraged to sing their concert literature from memory, just as they would demonstrate their knowledge and mastery of course content in other classes by means of a test. Students who sing all of their music from memory in concert can receive as high as an A+ (100%) for the concert (unless the director allows the use of music, e.g. for the performance of a larger work).* Students who use any music for a concert can only receive as high as a B+ (90%) for the concert. Other factors which may lower a student's concert grade could be, but are not limited to the following: improper concert dress, tardiness for warm-ups, improper performance etiquette,

etc.)

During or shortly after each concert, students will evaluate their performance and the performances of the other choirs in the concert. The **Choir Comment Form** will be filled out and handed in the day after each concert in rehearsal. During the choir rehearsal following each concert, each student will also evaluate their own singing and/or the performance of their choir. Concert evaluations will be graded on their completeness, accuracy, and depth of the critique.

Failure to perform for a regularly scheduled concert will result in a lowering of the student's grade at least one letter grade for the marking period (cf. Requirements).

Any other grades collected over the course of a marking period will be averaged together with the above categories to result in a final grade. Consult the WLA Student Handbook for the WLA grading scale (Class Rank/GPA/Honor Roll).

Extra Credit: Students may earn extra credit for choir by approving any of the following activities beforehand with Mr. Witte:

- singing in a small ensemble in chapel
- singing the Star Spangled Banner at any WLA sporting event
- any other mutually agreed upon performance
- going to other high school or college choral concerts, writing a one-page summary/concert evaluation, and handing in a concert program

The amount of extra credit will depend on the performance of the student and will be applied to the student's final grade for a marking period. Extra credit may raise a student's final grade by one third (eg. A to A+).