

**Carmel Middle School Choral Music Program: Course Description 2019-20**  
*Chamber Choir (Period 5), Boys' Choir (Period 6), & Concert Choir (Period 7)*  
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**Course Goals:**

Choir is a performance-based class designed to introduce the fundamentals of individual vocal technique and ensemble singing. The course will seek to develop healthy vocal habits, improve the singing tone, expand the vocal range, and teach how to sing expressively. Music reading skills will be developed through training in moveable-do solfege technique and a variety of musical repertoire. Emphasis is placed on participation, both in and out of the classroom. In-school and after-school performances are a required part of this course. Performances will include concerts in October, December, March and May. Advanced and highly motivated students will also have the opportunity to audition for the CCS Honor Choir Festival, which will take place in late January and the ACDA All State Junior High Honor Choir which takes place in February.

**Course Objectives:** These content areas are not taught sequentially but rather in a parallel fashion, ongoing throughout the year as applicable.

*1) Musical Literacy*

- develop sight reading skills using moveable-do solfege with additional ear training through scales, dictation, and tonal and rhythmic memory exercises
- define and understand basic music terminology for tempo, dynamics, expressive markings, and articulation
- recognize and read rhythmic notation using the basic pitch and rest values of whole notes and rests through 16th notes and rests including dotted rhythms

*2) Individual vocal technique*

- use daily vocal warm-ups to expand the vocal and dynamic range of individual voices and improve tone quality and intonation
- study vocal anatomy to gain “instrument” knowledge critical for proper breathing and tone production

*3) Ensemble vocal technique*

- develop the ability to modulate one's individual sound to create a blended vocal sound within and across vocal sections
- learn the mechanics of good ensemble singing: blend, coordinated onsets and cut-offs, staggered breathing, and diction
- perform repertoire in a variety of genres including classical, folk, jazz, and pop

## **Instructional Methodology and Resources**

Performance concepts and choir repertoire are learned through a musical rehearsal regimen incorporating daily warm-ups, sight-reading, and the rehearsing of musical selections using a variety of techniques including teacher modeling, student modeling, and critical listening and repetition. Students will frequently break off into sectionals to work on repertoire. Musical literacy is developed through a rigorous study of the moveable-do solfege technique.

### **Resources & Materials:**

- *SmartMusic* – interactive software for recording and assessing individual student practice and performance
- *Sing at First Sight, Volume 1*, Beck, Andy & Surmani, Karen Farnum & Lewis, Brian
- age appropriate vocal repertoire from the CUSD music library
- other teacher selected resources

### **Grades:**

Assessment for compiling student grades will be delivered in five areas. The weighting percentages listed here are approximate and will vary depending on the number of assessments for each area.

### **PARTICIPATION – 40%**

Each student is automatically given 1 point per 50-minute class and 2 points per 95-minute block class for a total of 5 points each week. Students **earn/keep these points** by participating as follows:

- 1) Being in class – this class is built 100% on class participation. There is no way to realistically “make up” the work that takes place in a rehearsal process.
- 2) Standing on the risers, ready to sing, when the bell rings to start class.
- 3) Participating fully in the warm-up and rehearsal including stretching and massage exercises, vocal exercises, and the use of Solfege, Curwen hand signs, and the Body Metronome technique.
- 4) Standing, when required during the rehearsal, in recognition of the fact that this is the best body alignment for singing healthfully and beautifully.
- 5) Listening attentively when a teacher or student is addressing the class.
- 6) Following the rehearsal process during non-singing times for your section (for example, if the teacher is working with the sopranos and altos only on a section of the music, tenors and basses are expected to follow along in the music and follow teacher instruction).
- 7) Interacting with students and teacher in a polite and respectful manner during discussions, rehearsing, and break times.
- 8) Keeping your class materials in order (folder, music, pencil, water bottle)

**Points will be deducted** on a weekly basis according to the following criteria:

- 1) Unexcused non-participation (earns a “0” for the day): defined as follows – student is present but does not sing and does not have a written note from a parent/guardian or doctor for illness. An extended illness (defined as more than 3 days) requires a doctor’s note specifying the number of days of excused non-participation.

- 2) Selective participation: student chooses to do some activities, like the stretching exercises/Curwen Hand Signs, but not others, like the group massage/Body Metronome. All students are expected to help with setup and breakdown of equipment (including risers, piano, chairs etc.). Students who choose not to do their part will lose participation points.
- 3) Disruptive Participation:
- a) Speaking out of turn (blurting, talking over teacher or student who is addressing the class etc.).
  - b) Socializing during the rehearsal process.
  - c) Cell phone use (students may record events and take pictures of announcements only with teacher permission, otherwise cell phone should not be visible at any time during the class).
  - d) Sitting when the class is rehearsing in a standing position.
  - e) Communicating with students or teacher in a disrespectful or impolite manner.
  - f) Missing/damaged/misplaced materials: does not have a pencil in the student's assigned folder to make important markings in the music (getting a pencil from your bag is not an acceptable alternative); does not have music previously handed out (students who miss class are required to check with the Librarian before class for new music); damages music and/or writes on music something other than musical markings made lightly in pencil; damages assigned folder; does not return folder to assigned slot in folder cabinet at end of class.
  - g) Regular/repetitive bathroom use: students should use the bathroom in between classes. Bathroom use will be monitored with a sign-out sheet – students using the bathroom more than 2 times in any week will lose 1 participation point. All students should have a water bottle in class to stay hydrated – students will not be allowed to leave class for water.

*ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE - 30%*

- Attendance for all performances is MANDATORY. Excused absences are limited to illness and major family emergencies. Tardiness for the warm-up ("call time") will result in an automatic 10% reduction of the grade. Students are expected to support their peers and stay for the entire performance. Students who leave a performance early will have their grade reduced by 10%.

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*INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE - 10%*

- In class performance and recording of teacher created solfege exercises and excerpts from our current repertoire as well as exercises taken from the *SmartMusic* library.

*MUSICAL LITERACY- 10%*

- Vocabulary and concept quizzes and tests related to mastering understanding of musical notation and vocal technique.

### HOMEWORK - 10%

- Miscellaneous assignments related to the mastery of the musical scores for our performances – memory, translation, research on historical background etc.

### Mandatory Performance Dates

This is an abbreviated list of our performance dates. A complete list of our performance activities, including audition deadlines for Honor Choir Festivals, is available on our My School page. Please put them in your calendar now to avoid scheduling conflicts. The running time for concerts is approximately 7:00-8:30 p.m. with a 30-minute warm-up rehearsal preceding the start of the concert.

Event	Date	Time	Location
CHS/CMS Combined Choir Fall Concert	Thursday, September 23	7:00	CHS PAC
Red Ribbon Day Tour	Friday, November 5	All day	River, Cooper, Tularcitos
CMS Winter Concert	Tuesday, December 7	7:00	CMS Gym
CMS Winter Concert Assembly	Wednesday, December 8	11:00	CMS Gym
CUSD Choral Festival	Tuesday, March 1	7:00	Sunset Center
Elementary String & Choir Tour	Friday, April 8	All day	Tularcitos & River
CMS Spring Concert	Tuesday, May 10	7:00	CMS Gym
CMS Spring Concert Assembly	Wednesday, May 11	11:00	CMS Gym
Great America/SJSU Adjudicated Festival	Saturday, May 14 (TBC)	All Day	SJSU/Great America

### Performance Uniform

Top: CMS Music Polo T-shirt (to be purchased at the beginning of the year)

Bottom: Black slacks (no jeans) or knee-length black skirt; black socks or tights; black dress shoes (no sneakers, flats or heels are fine for girls)

### CUSD Music Boosters

Music Boosters supports music at all school levels, grades K-12. This vital organization helps CMS purchase music, instruments and equipment and offset travel and festival fees. The CMS Choir Music Department will be participating in the Music Boosters' Halloween Dance Fundraiser. Your family participation in these events and other Booster activities will enable the Music Department to provide more musical opportunities for students. If you have not done so, please consider joining the CUSD Music Boosters. A sign-up form will be distributed the first day of class and will also be available on our MySchool page. Meetings for board members are held once a month and we always welcome additional help.

**Parent Involvement**

I will be seeking parent volunteers throughout the year to serve in a variety of vital functions including field trip chaperoning, photography, providing refreshments, and backstage assistance at concerts. Any help you can provide will be greatly appreciated.