



# Choir Program Handbook

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St. Ignatius College Prep  
2009 - 2010

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St. Ignatius College Preparatory  
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Mr. Chad Zullinger, Director of Choral Music

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### Families and Students:

In this booklet you will find my expectations for your student in choir classes. I have outlined grading procedures and have answered many questions you may have about the choir program at St. Ignatius. I will do my best to keep in touch with parents and keep them informed of important choir events and activities. We will send home a quarterly (more or less) newsletter entitled “*The Choral Journal*”; please read it. If you need to get in touch with me my phone number at the school is 415-731-7500, ext. 403. If it is an emergency you can call me on my cell phone 925-817-7757 (please use that number sparingly). You can also e-mail me [czullinger@siprep.org](mailto:czullinger@siprep.org).

The choral ensembles at St. Ignatius College Prep are devoted to the preparation and performance of the finest traditional and contemporary music literature (ranging from Historical Sacred to Contemporary Broadway) for choral ensembles. The goal of each choir, in rehearsal and performance, is to achieve a high degree of learning and performing excellence. This can only be achieved through careful preparation and individual commitment and ownership of the goal. St. Ignatius has enjoyed a rich tradition of musical excellence. For us to continue to build on this excellence, each student must own the responsibility for the growth and success of the organization and the individual through active participation in musical development.

Singing in choir not only teaches students basic musical skills, concepts and vocal production technique, but also develops professionalism, self-discipline, teamwork, and an appreciation for the Arts. Music enhances and applies concepts taught in other subject areas including, but not limited to, foreign language, history, math, physiology, poetry and literature. These core subjects take on a deeper meaning and have more relevance when used in the performance context.

I often feel that singing in a choir we can accomplish together what would seem impossible as individuals. Students learn how to work together to accomplish our goals and discover that their talents are worth sharing and that there is always more to learn.

You have my sincerest hopes for a wonderful year of song at St. Ignatius College Prep!

Mr. Zullinger

## **CHORAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **Mixed Chorus**

These choirs are open to all students regardless of musical background or experience. The students in these classes will have an opportunity to go on to one of the advanced choirs after completing a year (sometimes less) in mixed chorus. Students in these classes must attend all festivals and concert performances as indicated on the rehearsal/performance calendar and MUST attend the after school rehearsals as scheduled on the choir's master calendar.

### **Chamber Singers**

Chamber Singers is open by audition or invitation of the director only. Usually, a year or two in mixed chorus precedes a student's participation in this class. The music in this class tends to be more sophisticated and mature, and the class moves quickly and students are expected to keep up. There are a number of after-school and evening rehearsals and performances required and choral festivals that are typically scheduled during the regular school day.

Chamber Singers is designed for students who read music well and have exhibited a high degree of commitment to the program. In a very few cases a freshman may be considered for this class if they show a high degree of musical expertise. In general, Chamber Singers is comprised of juniors and seniors with more developed vocal skills and technique, with a few select sophomores. Students in this class must attend all festivals, competitions and choir tour. This class may be repeated only at the discretion of the director.

### **Concert Choir**

The SI Concert Choir is the combination of all choir classes at St. Ignatius College Prep. Every student in any choral ensemble is a member of this choir regardless of which choir they are enrolled in. Concert Choir performs concert literature of all kinds: secular, sacred, contemporary, multicultural, etc. They perform the classics of great choral music by the master composers and perform in numerous languages. All students in Concert Choir participate in the winter and spring concerts, the SF Archdiocesan Choral Festival, and ACDA/CMEA choral festivals throughout the school year. They also perform at many collegiate-level invitational choral festivals and competitions in California.

### **A Cappella**

A Cappella is open by audition and/or invitation only. Rehearsals are after school and involve an extra level of commitment in addition to Concert Choir. Singers chosen to sing in a cappella must be current singers in Concert Choir. Students must demonstrate ability to sing in a pop style and sing it well.

## REHEARSALS

Choir is different from almost any other class offered in school because it demands teamwork – people are depending on you. As an elective course at St. Ignatius, **choir is co-curricular – it is NOT an “extra-curricular” class.** Do not make your doctor/dentist appointments during choir rehearsals. It is far easier for a student to make-up what might have been missed in a math or history class than it is to make up what is missed in an ensemble rehearsal. (ALTHOUGH YOU SHOULDN'T MISS ANY CLASSES) The ensemble rehearsal cannot be made up and it only takes two or three absences to have an impact on the student's final grade since this is a participation course.

In choir, if everyone does their part, the result is spectacular! If individuals do not do their part, the whole group suffers. The ultimate result of success depends upon the efforts and participation of every single person. Although the occasional absence for sickness, or emergency may occur, it must be the exception and not the rule!

### STUDENT CONDUCT AND REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

Every organization must have ground rules to define the way “the game” is played. In our choirs, some of these responsibilities are self-evident: cooperation, participation, and assistance to others. These are absolutely essential. All students are expected to conduct themselves with respect toward each other, respect for the opinions and contributions of fellow choir members. Students are also to show respect for the director, assistants, and all adults.

### REHEARSAL PROCEDURES

The group that rehearses seriously performs better. Rehearsal time is VALUABLE and every possible minute should be used for an actual rehearsal purpose. Rehearsal time is just as important early in the preparation of a piece of music as it is just before a performance. Our choir and each of its members need to look ahead – not wait until time has almost run out.

#### Rehearsal Procedures – Getting Started!

1. Enter the classroom in an orderly manner.
2. Take note of rehearsal instructions and abide by them.
3. Find your assigned seat or standing position immediately upon entering the classroom.
4. Place your personal belongings under the chair (seating positions) or along the perimeter of the classroom (standing positions).
5. Come to class prepared with your music folder and pencil, ready to sing.
6. Rehearsal begins when the conductor begins warm-ups.
7. When the full choir or your section is working, sit up and forward or stand per conductor's instructions.
8. When individuals or sections are receiving instruction, be supportive and courteous. Comments given to one section may be transferable to another.

**DURING REHEARSAL**

1. No gum, food or drinks. You may have bottled water.
2. Cell phones OFF. This includes text messaging.
3. I will not tolerate the following: insubordination, racist comments, remarks about another student's sexual orientation, inappropriate behavior.
4. When one section is rehearsing, (i.e. the sopranos are rehearsing and the other sections are not), the other sections are NOT to talk.
5. See the director after class, during lunch, or before or after school to discuss your personal needs, problems, disagreements, conflicts, etc.
6. Do not immediately approach the director with questions when you walk into the room. There will be an appointed time for questions during class. Save your question until then.
7. Do not hand items to the director (i.e. permission slips, etc.) when you walk into the room. Again, there will be an appointed time for this.
8. No one is allowed to use the phone during class time.
  - All cell phones are confiscated at the moment I see/hear them. First time I will hand back to you at the end of class, second time the cell phone stays with me until the following rehearsal, third time the cell phone is handed to the Office of the Deans.
9. Direct all musical, rehearsal, and technical questions to Mr. Zullinger.

**SECTIONAL REHEARSALS**

Frequently we will break into sectionals and go to different geographic points in the building so that the music can be learned faster within your section. When this happens, Mr. Zullinger will put someone in charge of the sectional. Often times, it will be Ben Keim, the accompanist. Whoever it is, that person is to be treated by the others with respect. Sectionals are not free time – they are to be more focused than regular rehearsals so that the music is learned quickly and efficiently.

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Remember that our ensemble is a team. We must work together to constantly improve and reach our artistic goals. A few weak members and poor attitudes ruin the effect of much hard work done by a large number of students. We are as good as our weakest member. It is each student's responsibility and obligation to give her/his personal best to the ensemble and to encourage her/his colleagues to give their best.

## **PERFORMANCES**

Public performances, whether for a small group of one's own peers, or for an auditorium full of people, is the culmination of many days of work. They serve as the culmination of much of the educational work you will do in class. It is important that you know the basic rules listed here regarding outside-of-class-time obligations. All concerts and outside events, which are scheduled more than six weeks in advance, are required as they represented major exams in our ensemble classes.

Every active member is expected to be present at every scheduled event (rehearsal or performance) except those listed as optional or select. Illness is an acceptable excuse for an absence. Other excuses will be considered on their individual merits. You may be asked to confirm an absence by presenting a parent and/or doctor's note. Regardless of the reason for absence or tardiness, failure to give advance notice will automatically result in loss of grade points. Illness not phoned in advance will not be considered an excused absence.

## **CONDUCT IN PUBLIC**

When you attend an event, rehearsal or performance outside of school hours, especially when in performance attire, conduct yourself as if you were a model student on display. You represent yourself, your family, your school, the St. Ignatius Choral Program and our community, to the public. Choir program activities are school functions. Inappropriate behavior is dealt with the same as it occurs on school grounds during school hours, including referral to the Deans of Students.

- Be on time at the appointed place, dressed, and ready.
- The conduct of choir members in the view of the public, either before, during, or after a program must be exemplary at all times. The choir is a public relations arm of the school and as such we must represent our school and choir in a manner befitting our standard of excellence.
- Be a good audience – learn from other choirs. Do not talk, move about, or enter or leave the auditorium during a performance of another choir.
- Treat other performing groups as you would like them to treat you. If you are respectful you are more likely to be respected.
- Walk onto the risers quietly, quickly, and with a sense of purpose. Walk tall, without slouching, always remembering who we are and that it is a privilege to be part of it.
- NEVER talk on the risers during a performance.
- NEVER take your eyes off the conductor at a performance.
- NEVER chew gum during a performance.
- You ARE the show at a performance – *be the show!* Don't interact with the audience. Provide them with a performance – that is what they came to see.
- If we are at an event in which other choirs are performing, find something good that you liked about that choir's performance. Seek out the members and congratulate & compliment them! We are all in this art together – it is imperative that we build each other up and encourage one another.

- While sitting in the audience listening to a group, use decorum – don't do things like take your shoes off, put your feet on the furniture, slouch, or even sleep.
- At the conclusion of every performance no one leaves until the director dismisses you. Do not just vanish – your help may be needed.
- Do not discuss the performance in a negative way while within hearing range of your audience – or other choirs, directors or adjudicators.
- At festivals and competitions be gracious – if you win, be humble. If you didn't place as well as you would have liked or didn't get the rating you feel you deserved, compliment other choirs on their achievement. Wait until we get home to "vent".

### **TRAVEL**

There are a number of out of town festivals and competitions that we attend and participate in every year. This year they include: the CSU Sonoma Choral Festival, the CSU Eastbay Choral Invitational, the Napa Valley Choral Invitational, and the California Music Educators choir festival. Attendance at these events, as with all performances, is required.

### **GUIDELINES**

- Once started on a trip, do not change busses/vans without permission from the Director or your assigned chaperon. Students are also expected to remain in the same seats, except by mutual consent between those moving.
- Standing up is forbidden in moving school busses. In charter buses, standing up should be limited to the necessary minimum.
- Leave the bus/vans in clean condition.
- Help load and unload any additional instruments – remember you are part of the team.
- Keep quiet any instruments that are brought into the bus.

### **OTHER TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

- Students are expected to travel with the Choir to all away performances, unless other arrangements are made in advance, in writing.
- Travel to or return from a performance by other means requires written notice given to the Director in advance of the bus departure, or a parent personally contacting the Director before the return time.
- All drivers and vehicles used for the Choir Program functions must be cleared in advance through the St. Ignatius transportation department. This is not difficult but may require up to a few weeks for processing of paperwork. Parents who plan to drive need to register with the school office well in advance of the event.
- Students are not permitted to drive other students to and/or from St. Ignatius Choral functions.

**PERFORMANCE TOURS**

The choir program takes a tour every year. Every two years we take a “major” tour – outside the state of California. Chamber Singers are invited and expected to go on tour. For Concert Choir the tour is by invitation-only (*only for out-of-state tours*).

**PERFORMANCE ATTIRE**

Philosophy: Our attire should reflect the attitude and atmosphere of a professional musical performance.

**CHECKLIST FOR MEN**

- Jacket: standard, one-button tuxedo jacket
- Shirt: tuxedo shirt w/studs and cufflinks
- Pants: solid black
- Tie: solid black bow-tie
- Socks: solid black
- Shoes: solid black, dress shoes.

*Notes*

- Shirts are to be freshly pressed and neatly tucked into pants.
- Athletic shoes or any other informal shoes are not permissible.

**CHECKLIST FOR WOMEN**

- Appropriate choir dress
  - Concert Choir: Chorale, black
  - Chamber Singers: Gavotta, claret
- Shoes: dress shoes, solid black, closed toe.

*Notes*

- Women may choose to wear nylons or not, but if they do, they must be nude-colored.
- Women may not wear beach sandals or other informal shoes.

## **STUDENT LEADERSHIP**

The choral program is both a class and an activity. The Director primarily manages the program, although many activities are student-run. Part of the leadership of our choirs will be student officers and committees. These people will be expected to lead by EXAMPLE – they will not simply delegate and walk away. For example, these are the people who are expected to perform and participate in the “*not-so-glamorous*” duties including set-up, teardown, extra duties, etc. These officers comprise the Choir Council as outlined below.

**PRESIDENT:** The student President shall be a member of the Chamber Singers. The president must be capable of planning ahead, following through and displaying team leadership at the discretion of the Director.

- The President shall be present at ALL cabinet/committee meetings.
- The president shall be responsible for greeting and introducing any visitors to the choir.
- Helps on committees (for fundraisers, concert set-up and clean-up, etc.)
- Helps plan social events
- Conducts class meetings, discussions and voting
- Serves as a liaison to Student Activities
- Understands and supports decisions made by the Director for the good of the Program
- Maintains communication with students and Director

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Must be involved as aide to President in duties listed above. This person will be, along with the president, responsible for organizing social activities of the choir and articulating those events to the various choirs.

- Coordinate publicity with Director of Communications (Mr. Paul Totah) and local media regarding St. Ignatius Choral Music events.
- Communicate with editors of school yearbook, newspaper and other publications to ensure accuracy of information being published.

### **SECRETARY**

- Take minutes of Cabinet meetings
- Keep an active/current list of choir members

### **LIBRARIAN**

- Responsible for all sheet music throughout the year
- Hands out, collects and organizes music – organizes helpers to sort music
- Maintain an organized, digital choral music library

**CLASS REPRESENTATIVES:** chosen by collaboration of the choir President and the Director, these students will help the cabinet as needed and will be depended on by the director to assist with work that needs to be done to make a program like this run.

**LETTERS AND AWARDS**

At the end of each year students are awarded letters and other special recognition at our annual Awards Banquet – *see date for this new event on Calendar*. These special awards include:

**ST. IGNATIUS AWARDS**

SI Performing Arts, Choir Award  
SI Performing Arts Program STAR Program  
SI Bank of America Certificates

**DIRECTOR'S AWARDS**

Director's Choice  
In Pursuit of Excellence  
Outstanding Service  
esprit de corps (*Spirit Award*)

**STUDENT AWARDS**

Concert Choir

- Outstanding Soprano
- Outstanding Alto
- Outstanding Tenor
- Outstanding Bass

Chamber Singers

- Outstanding Female Singer
- Outstanding Male Singer

**SENIOR HONOR AWARDS**

Senior recognition for years served in Choral Program

## GRADING

I have adopted a grading and point system that I hope and feel is equitable and fair for all involved. Every semester choir students are given 165 points (Fall 09) at the beginning of the semester. In other words, at the first rehearsal, you walk into class and are given on a good-faith basis at “C”. You are graded not so much on talent and ability as you are graded on effort and participation. The following is a point breakdown of what is needed to earn which grade:

220-200 points	A
198-180 Points	B
175-160 Points	C
160 Points or below	D/F

Points are detracted based on the following:

### TARDIES

Two (2) tardies or less are allowed per each grading period. As soon as you hit a third tardy you lose 15 points. Every subsequent tardy after that loses you another 10 points. This policy includes any excused or unexcused tardies. If you are tardy to rehearsal, you must sign the tardy sheet posted at the front of the room when you come in.

### ABSENCES

Two (2) absences or less are allowed per each grading period. As soon as you hit a third absence you lose 15 points. Your fourth absence costs you another 15 points – a fifth absence, and every absence after that costs you 25 points. This policy includes any excused or unexcused absences. NOTE: Extended illness requires a written doctor’s and/ or parent note. If you attend a funeral you must bring a program from the funeral as well as a note from your parent.

### EXTRA REHEARSALS

These are worth 20 points each. Remember – they are required!

### PERFORMANCES

The value of performing cannot be over-estimated. At SI, performing is the name of the game in the choir program. If you miss a performance, it costs you 40 points.

