

*Shallowford Presbyterian Church*

*Children's Choir  
Program Handbook*

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## I. Contact Information

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## II. Purpose & Goals

The purpose of the Children's Music Program at Shallowford Presbyterian is to enhance the lives of the children who participate in the program, both spiritually and musically. Our goals reflect this purpose:

1. To educate the children on how to be a leader in worship and the church at large.
2. To educate the children in healthy singing technique.
3. To support what the children are learning in Sunday School and other church programs through the music chosen.
4. To educate the children in the reading and understanding of music.
5. To present the best quality music to the children.
6. To encourage socialization of the children through rehearsals and other programs (parties, retreats, festivals, camps, etc.).

## III. Choirs & Rehearsals

Shallowford Presbyterian offers choirs for children ages 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Rehearsals for the Children's Choirs are held weekly in the Joyful Noise Room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Education Building. Rehearsal times are:

### **Cherub Choir (ages 3-5): Sundays, 11:15 am to 12:00 pm (during morning worship)**

Cherub Choir is an opportunity for our youngest singers to experience and experiment with music. Each week, we will sing alone and together, dance, play instruments, experiment with our voices and with instruments, move, and play singing games. The children will learn basic songs of the faith and the simple sung responses used in worship.

### **Trinity Choir (grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>): Wednesdays, 5:15 to 6:00pm**

Trinity Choir is a bridge between Cherub Choir and Westminster Choir. At this age, children still need to move, but they are also capable of more focused learning in music. Most children are comfortable using their head voice by this age, and they are also able to keep a steady beat to music. We continue to move to music, but we also begin to learn to read music. We learn what rehearsal behavior looks like, and we practice good singing posture. Music at this level is chosen for success of the singers and for their musical growth.

### **Westminster Choir (grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>): Wednesdays, 6:30 to 7:30 pm**

Westminster Choir is our premier children's choir. These singers are leaders, both in music and in behavior. We expect them to set the example and tone for the younger children. In Westminster Choir, we continue to practice good singing posture and rehearsal behavior. We continue our understanding of music through reading and the finer points of music literacy. We are preparing these children to step up into the youth choir and to continue their leadership roles in the church.

## *IV. Rehearsal Dismissal*

The safety of the children is vitally important in any program. To ensure that the children are safely picked up after each rehearsal, these are the pick up procedures for each choir.

- **All children must be signed in and out of activities at the church by a parent or guardian on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.**
- All singers should be picked up by 10 minutes after the rehearsal ends.
- For singers participating in the full Wednesday evening experience, singers should be signed in at the first activity and signed out after the last activity.

## *V. Leading in Worship*

Each choir will sing several times each semester in the 11:00 am morning worship service. We are calling this "Leading in Worship" because, when the children sing, we want them to understand that they are helping the congregation worship God.

On these Sundays, the children will be picked up from Sunday School at 10:30 am to robe and warm-up; robing and warm-up will be in the Joyful Noise Room. After the **Trinity and Westminster Choirs** sing, they will be dismissed to take off their robes in the Narthex, then sit with their parents for the remainder of the worship service. **Unless different instructions are sent out, all singers will wear robes to Lead in Worship.**

## *VI. Parent Volunteers*

Parent Volunteers are necessary to the success of the Children's Choir Program and to the safety of the children. Throughout the year, there will be many opportunities to sign up. Please watch for emails and sign up sheets on the check-in table. Here are a few of the jobs with which we will need help:

- Robing on Sundays when the children Lead in Worship
- Sitting with the children during worship when they lead in Worship
- Snack helpers for extended rehearsals
- Chaperones for outings
- Costume helpers for the musical (sewing is not a necessary skill!)

Cherub Choir parents are expected to assist once a semester with regular rehearsals. This job is known as the "Cherub Parent Helper", and Cherub parents will receive a link in the "Cherub Chat" to sign up for a rehearsal.

## VII. Awards

All awards will be presented at the end of the year party appropriate to the child's choir.

### Attendance Award

Regular attendance at rehearsals and performances are important because that is how singers get to know their music. Rehearsals build on one another, each rehearsal adding to the understanding and clarity of the music, as well as reading and musicality skills. All children will sign in at the beginning of each rehearsal/performance warm-up. Children can earn the Attendance Award by missing no more than 3 rehearsals and/or performances.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Hymnals

At the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, children leave the Children's Choir Program to join the Chapel Choir (Youth). To mark this achievement, 5<sup>th</sup> graders will receive a copy of the current Presbyterian Hymnal.

## VIII. Special Services

### Christmas Program

Each year, in December, the Children's Choirs present a Christmas Program. The children prepare for this throughout the fall, a little every week. The choirs sing Advent and Christmas music.

### Children's Sunday

The children take over worship one Sunday a year, in February. All the Children's Choirs participate in the worship service through song, and children are given opportunities to lead through word as well. Preparations are through Sunday School and regular rehearsals.

### Musical

During the Winter/Spring semester, the Trinity and Westminster Choirs will work on a musical to be presented at the beginning of May. Westminster singers will have the opportunity to audition for speaking parts and solos. If a singer is asked to perform a speaking part or solo, he or she will be expected to practice their part at home and to memorize it.

### Trinity & Westminster End of the Year Party

After the musical, the Trinity and Westminster singers gather to celebrate the year with end of the year awards. This party is held at the church.

### Cherub Parties

The Cherubs have two parties a year – one at Christmas and one in May. Parties are during regular rehearsal times, and include a snack and craft time. We also play singing games and sing songs of the children's choice.