

**Let's Read Music** was written to help you be a better singer and choir member, and to help you master some of the concepts of music reading. Let's get started....

### The Choir Rehearsal...Be There

1. Try not to let "other plans" keep you away.
2. To be on time, arrive early.
3. Come to sing, not to visit with friends. Visit after the rehearsal ends.
4. Follow the director's instructions to the best of your ability.
5. Show respect for your director, even though you may know more about music than he or she does.

### Get Excited

Use proper vocal technique throughout the rehearsal. Inspired singing means singing with an "excited" state of mind.

1. As you sing, be alert, attentive, enthusiastic, and expressive.
2. Reflect the director's enthusiasm in your facial expressions.
3. Give the message of the music as though it were your personal testimony.

### No Slouching

1. Maintain good posture to support an "excited" state of mind.
2. How you stand or sit affects your sound, so "stand tall" when singing.
3. Try sitting away from the back of the chair during rehearsal so that you can maintain the "stand tall" posture even while seated.

### Bad Breathing

Breathing in the wrong place can distract from a performance and from the message of the song. Don't be guilty of "bad breathing."

1. Starting doesn't begin with the first note, it begins with the first breath. Take that first breath together with your choir director. (By the way, stopping together is just as important as starting together.)
2. Breathe so that the thought or phrase of the music makes sense.
3. Do not breathe between different syllables of the same word.
4. Do not breathe before the last pitch of the song.
5. For special effects, ignore rules 2 through 5.

### Blend

Don't try to "out sing" your neighbor. This is a choir not a solo. Besides, we already know how good you are! A choir is one of the times that you do not want to stand out in a crowd. Remember, the beauty of the choir is the blend.

### Diction

"Saying your words clearer" will not make the audience better able to understand your performance. The secret to "understandable" singing is the entire choir placing consonants and vowels at the same place. Sing the vowels, connecting the final consonant of the previous word to the beginning consonant of the next word. For example:

**I-ti-zuh-guh-dthi-ngto-gi-vtha-nksuh-nto-thuh-Lo-rd.**



"Blending" applies to *all* choir members.

## The Spice Of Music

As “variety is the spice of life” so “dynamics are the spice of music.” Don’t just sing loud or soft, sing all the way from very soft to very loud. Have many different volumes, and change constantly to keep the music alive and interesting. For example, on a long sustained note, increase or decrease the volume (as your director indicates) to keep the pitch alive.

### Intonation, or “You’re Out Of Tune!”

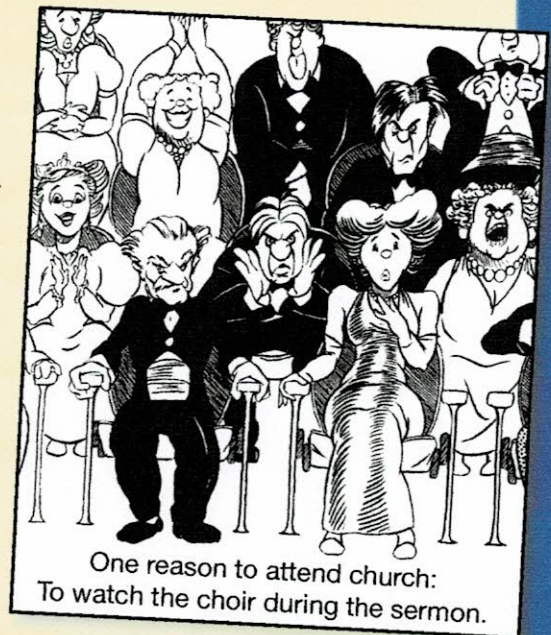
Singing “out of tune” means singing slightly lower or higher than everyone else. To keep from singing “out of tune” try this...

1. Keep an excited state of mind.
2. Maintain proper posture.
3. Know and sing your part accurately.
4. Listen to the melody and other harmony parts in relation to your part.

There’s no easy way to say this, but if none of the above work, you should probably consider making a “joyful noise to the Lord” from the pews rather than from the choir loft. (Consolation prize: Make the choir director buy back your “Let’s Read Music” book!)

### “Look At Me”

1. Dress neatly and modestly, and leave the “look at me” dress or shirt at home.
2. Choir is not about “me,” it’s about “togetherness.” So whether standing, being seated, coming in, or going out, do it with determination and do it together.
4. If you are seated behind the pastor during the sermon, please make sure that your actions do not distract from the sermon.
5. Never acknowledge a mistake during a performance. Most listeners will never detect a mistake unless a choir member “confesses” with their facial reaction. And never shake your head and whisper to the congregation “it wasn’t me,” unless, of course, it *was* you!



Mark “T” for “True” or “F” for “False:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. “Rehearsal” means “visit with your friends and talk on your cell phone.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Show your knowledge of music by correcting the director often.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Don’t get excited while singing or you may scare someone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The basic slouch posture is acceptable singing posture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. While singing, feel free to breathe or even yawn whenever necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. “Blend” means trying to out sing the person next to you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Always sing at the same volume level so as not to startle the congregation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. If you sing out of tune, you should sing out of choir.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Choir members should always wear red or hot pink.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. If you make a mistake, deflect attention away from yourself by pointing to the person next to you.