



Parent Handbook

2023–2024

It is good to praise the Lord and make music
to your name, O Most High.

Psalm 92:1

September 2023
Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

Welcome to the Moody Church Children's Chorus for 2023–2024! We're so glad that you and your children are going to be a part of this ministry and look forward to the growth and experiences that we will have together this year.

We were created to know and worship God. Scripture shows us the multitude of ways we accomplish this purpose—everything we think, say, and do can be an act of worship. Music allows for a particular expression of worship as it combines intellect, emotion, and will, all being poured out to God in praise, lament, or affirmation. We delight in music's power to encourage, exhort, and edify as we personally and corporately express our worship. It is the goal of the Children's Chorus that each child would develop an appreciation for and an ability to worship through music. God did give everyone a voice, after all!

This handbook outlines the vision we have for The Moody Church Children's Chorus ministry and serves as an information guide regarding our policies and commitments for the year. We look forward to being in contact with you throughout the year, and please feel free to contact us as well.

Thanks for joining us!

Sincerely,
Elsa

Elsa Wiese, Director
The Moody Church Children's Chorus

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FALL 2023 SCHEDULE

September

9/6	5:30–6:30pm	Kick Off Rehearsal
9/13	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal/Musical Tryouts
9/20	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal/Musical Tryouts
9/27	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal/Musical Tryouts

October

10/1	12:30–2:30pm	Speaking roles only
10/4	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
10/11	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
10/18	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
10/22	12:30–2:30pm	SUNDAY Musical Rehearsal
	2:30pm–3:30pm	Speaking roles only
10/25	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
10/29	12:30–2:30pm	SUNDAY Musical Rehearsal
	2:30pm–3:30pm	Speaking roles only

November

11/1	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
11/8	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
11/12	12:30–2:30pm	Speaking roles only
11/15	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
11/19	8:30am	Sing in Morning Service
11/22	Thanksgiving Eve	NO REHEARSAL
11/29	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal

December

12/3	12:30–2:30pm	Dress Rehearsal (costumes)
	2:30pm–3:30pm	Speaking roles only
12/6	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
12/13	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
	6:30–8:00pm	Speaking roles only
12/16	8:30am–9:30am	SATURDAY speaking roles only
	9:30am–12:30pm	SATURDAY Dress Rehearsal
12/17	8:00am	Musical in AM Service

SPRING 2024 SCHEDULE (subject to change)

January

1/10	5:30–6:30pm	Musical viewing party
1/17	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
1/24	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
1/31	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal

February

2/7	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
2/14	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
2/21	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
2/28	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal

March

3/6	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
3/13	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
3/20	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
3/24	8:30am	Sing in the morning service
3/27	Spring Break	NO REHEARSAL

April

4/3	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
4/10	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
4/17	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
4/24	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal

May

5/1	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
5/5	1:00–2:30pm	End of year party
5/8	5:30–6:30pm	Rehearsal
5/12	8:30am	Sing in morning service

I. Personnel

The following team oversees and participates in the ministry of the Children's Chorus. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Elsa Wiese	Director	(847) 858-3920
Shannon Carter	Assistant Director	(773) 454-1511
Kate Kavanaugh	Assistant Director	(708) 514-2991
Song Chen	Accompanist	

II. Vision

- A. To glorify God through the gift of music.
- B. To develop friendship with the children in the chorus, and to deepen their appreciation for church music ministry.
- C. To enlighten the children as to the importance of church music ministry, and to channel their talents and interest in an edifying way.
- D. To stimulate and promote interest in high quality music in a variety of styles and knowledge subsequent to this.
- E. To challenge the children spiritually and to teach scriptural attitudes.
- F. To expose choristers to activities designed to teach musical notation, rhythm, and sight-reading, as well as basic principles of vocal technique.

III. Philosophy of Church Music

Music plays an integral part in the life and worship of the church. Three of its primary functions include assistance in worship, education, and evangelism. Beginning to appreciate these functions from one's youth will be of benefit through one's entire lifetime.

A. *Worship*

The Psalms speak frequently of God's people singing and praising Him with voices and instruments. Two examples are "Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob!" (Psalm 81:1-2) and "It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name" (Psalm 92:1). God asks us to sing and worship Him through music.

B. *Education*

A story is told of a couple in a communist country whose Bible had been taken from them and destroyed. They did, however, have a hymnal. For 20 years, this was an important source of spiritual teaching and sustenance for them.

Through music, we lift our hearts to God, but it should also teach us what God is like. Colossians 3:16 says "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..."

One of the easiest ways to memorize a text is to set it to music. Children who learn songs with lyrics directly from the Scriptures or with strong doctrinal content will hide truths in their hearts that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

C. *Evangelism*

Music can be a powerful tool to convict and uniquely communicate with unbelievers. Many times, church choirs or musical productions are permitted to perform in places where other gospel presentations would not be permitted. It is also a great opportunity to invite unbelieving friends and family who may not choose to come to church on their own. In Acts 16:25 we find Paul and Silas in prison — singing! God used their worship through

music to witness to those around them. Music can be used as a way to develop children's ability to evangelize.

IV. Chorus Standards

A. Attendance

1. Please have choristers ready promptly at the beginning of every rehearsal and performance. This is important in their ability to get the most from their time with us and helps us to function most effectively.
2. Please contact us if your child will be missing a rehearsal.
3. We ask that attendance at as many rehearsals as possible be made a priority for each child to receive the full benefit of being in choir. Regular rehearsal creates even greater ensemble and dynamics, and knowing the music well makes for a better response from the children. Also, a full choir at rehearsals is vital and necessary for best result during preparation and is encouraging to others.
4. Consistent attendance is required before any child can perform during a service. Two consecutive absences in rehearsal prior to performance will affect a child's ability to prepare well, and it may be necessary for them to not participate in that performance. Please contact us if extenuating circumstances will keep your child from attending more than two consecutive rehearsals prior to a performance.

B. Rehearsal Participation

1. The choristers are expected to respect the direction of the staff during rehearsals and to actively participate in each rehearsal.
2. Children should contribute to the quality of the rehearsal by not distracting other choristers with excessive talking or disruptive behavior.
3. If your child is not following the above guidelines, we will contact you and ask for your involvement in their choir participation.

C. *Attire*

Choristers are expected to follow a dress code for all performances unless otherwise designated.

Boys White shirt (tucked in), black pants, black socks, and black shoes.

Girls White shirt (tucked in), black pants or skirt (knee length or longer), black tights and black shoes.

D. *Performance Etiquette*

1. Our priority when we perform is to worship the Lord and to lead others in worship.
2. The choristers are expected to respect the direction of the director and staff during performances and to actively participate in each performance.
3. Children should contribute to the performance by not distracting other choristers by talking or disruptive behavior and should view themselves as a part of a worship leading group, not drawing attention to themselves as an individual.
4. If any child is not following the above guidelines during a performance, we may ask them not to participate in the remainder of the performance.

V. **General Information**

Facilities

Children's Chorus opens at 5:15pm on Wednesday night. Nursery (for children of parents participating in the evening ministries) and AWANA open at 6:20pm on the 2nd floor & Sankey (Awana T&T).

Visitor Registration

We look forward to welcoming visitors at our Children's Chorus Welcome Table. Our team will help you check in your child, print name

badges using the kiosk nearby, or fill out a visitor name tag, then help your child settle into the rehearsal activities.

Annual Registration

If a child is attending the ministries regularly or plans to do so, we ask that families please complete the *Annual Registration Form* available at the Welcome Table in the 1625 LaSalle street Lobby. Each child will then be added to the classroom attendance for electronic check-in.

The information on the registration form allows us to get to know the family better. We can identify allergies, special needs, birthdays, send updated ministry information, and keep our records accurate. It is never shared with outside organizations or individuals.

Check In & Check Out Procedures

Parents will check in their child at a kiosk in the 1625 LaSalle St Lobby and then drop off their children in Kappeler. Children in 3rd–5th grade will be checked out by a team member and can walk to T&T. Children in 1st–2nd grade will be escorted by a staff member in groups to Sparks. If a child is not attending the Awana program, parents must present the matching security tag to a team member to check their child out.

Special Needs

We will make every effort to minister to children with special needs or disabilities and to make their involvement successful and enjoyable.

- If your child has a particular medical condition or health need (ie, severe allergies, requires an epi pen, etc), please connect with one of our directors so we can talk with you and plan how your child can safely participate.
- 139 Disability Ministries is also available for families whose child has physical or developmental needs that may require a buddy to help them participate well. 139 Buddy request forms are available at the Welcome Table.

Snacks

A snack is served during our weekend rehearsals and after singing in a morning service. We seek to provide safe and suitable snacks for your children excluding any nut products.

Health & Hygiene

To protect the health of all the children we serve, our policy is to not

admit children who are ill or show signs of illness, including those associated with the common cold.

Children will not be admitted who show signs of:

- Fever
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Chicken Pox
- Diarrhea
- Skin infections
- Measles
- Rash
- Eye discharge
- Mumps
- Vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Impetigo (skin infection caused by bacteria, usually appears on face around mouth & nose)

If the child is being treated with antibiotics, they should be on the medication for at least 24 hours prior to coming to Chorus. Medicine is not permitted in the classroom. If a child requires medication, it must be administered by the parent/guardian.

If you discover that your child has come down with chicken pox or lice and you believe other children in the Chorus may have been exposed, please contact the Director so we can determine if any action is needed.

COVID 19 Information

Special safety measures may be taken during the time of the COVID 19 health crisis. The Children's Chorus will follow the directions and guidelines of The Moody Church Elders for the best safety practices

If you discover your child is positive for COVID 19 and attended a children's chorus activity during their contagious period (two days prior to symptoms or positive test result if asymptomatic), please contact the chorus director immediately. We will then notify parents via email of any known cases of close contact with an individual who tested positive. We define close contact as within six feet of the positive person for 15 minutes or longer during a single day- this is with or without a mask. We will also notify via email any choir members present onsite during the contagious period of a positive individual.

Child Behavior Plan

We believe that children are a gift from the Lord and want to make sure they feel safe within the environment of TMC Kids. This includes understanding expectations and consequences of disobedience.

Expectations for all classrooms: Are you A-O-K?

A. Attention

- Be good listeners.
- Listen when your teachers are talking and help your neighbors stay focused by not talking during rehearsal.

O. Obey

- Obey your teachers cheerfully & quickly.
- Participate in the rehearsal (as defined in section IV).

K. Kind

- Be kind to each other in words and actions, showing respect for others created in God's image.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Distracting others is stealing what they may learn from the lesson.

Good Behavior Card

Each child will be given a Good Behavior Card at the beginning of rehearsal. The card will then be turned in at the end of the rehearsal in exchange for a sticker. Every time a child reaches a multiple of 5 stickers, they will be allowed to choose a prize from the prize box. The Good Behavior card can be taken away by any of the team members for not following our behavior standards and rehearsal/performance expectations.

Addressing Misbehavior

1. Warning/redirection – If a student is failing to meet expectations, volunteers will kindly redirect and help them correct their actions, reminding them of the expectations and consequences of misbehavior.
 - a. Redirection 1 – Team Member identifies which expectation the student is neglecting and helps them get back on track. If needed, the Team Member will remind them that if they need correcting again, they will lose their Good Behavior Card.
 - b. Redirection 2 – Team Member identifies which expectation the student is neglecting, asks for their Good Behavior Card, and helps them get back on track. If needed, the Team member will remind them they will lose out on

rehearsal time if they persist in ignoring the rehearsal expectations.

2. Time-out given for an age-appropriate amount of time.
 - a. When a student is given a time-out, they will be directed to sit in a designated chair and bring their folder with them. They are expected to participate fully in rehearsal and will be asked to return to rehearsal after they have displayed the proper rehearsal participation for an age-appropriate amount of time, usually 1–3 min. The goal is not to shame or embarrass them, but to give them time and space to get back on track!
 - b. At an appropriate time, the student should apologize to the teacher or other class member for their behavior and ask for forgiveness.
3. Parental Involvement – If a child persists in disobedience or a poor attitude, the director will contact the parent or caregiver, and request their involvement and assistance with the situation.
4. Parent/Leadership Meeting – If needed, the director will work together with the parents to construct a specific behavior plan.

Hitting and other physically aggressive behavior (kicking, biting, bullying, etc.) will not be tolerated in any classroom and will be addressed directly with a time-out (no redirections).

VI. Parental Support

We appreciate the support we receive from you as parents. You play a vital role in this ministry and your involvement is important to us. Specifically, we ask for your partnership in the following areas:

- A. Upholding the vision of The Moody Church Children's Chorus within the frame of The Moody Church ministry.
- B. Maintaining accountability and fellowship among parents and staff and praying for the ministry of the Chorus.
- C. Encouraging the children to remain faithful to the vision and standards of the Chorus.

- D. Participating and assisting in activities such as rehearsals, socials, performances, concerts and ministry outings, as possible.

VII. Rehearsal

- A. Day & Time: Wednesdays, 5:30pm–6:30pm
- 5:15pm – Welcome activities in Kappeler Hall
 - 5:30pm – Chorus rehearsal begins

For those who arrive prior to 5:30pm, tables are available in the lobby for eating dinner, and welcome activities (fun, skill-building musical games or instruction) will be led each week by our teaching team.

Please plan to stay with your children until 5:15pm. Please have your children use the restroom before rehearsal begins.

- B. Location: Choir Room, Christiansen & Kappeler (LL)
Please drop off and pick up your children from the 1625 N LaSalle St lobby. If arriving after 5:40, please walk your child to their rehearsal room to be checked-in at the door (1st–2nd: Kappeler, 3rd–5th: Choir Room).

- C. Elements:
1. Graded & combined choir rehearsal (1st–2nd & 3rd–5th)
 2. Vocal warm-up & pedagogy
 3. Repertoire rehearsal
 4. Develop understanding of hymn/chorus/anthem text
 5. Music theory activities

VIII. Winter Christmas Musical

All the choristers will have the opportunity to participate in the Christmas Musical. Each child will be a vital part of the chorus, need to learn the group choreography, and wear a costume. In most cases, only children in grades 3–5 will try out and be assigned speaking and solo roles.

- A. Please make the additional rehearsals a priority for optimal preparation.

- B. Most years, parents are responsible for their child's costume once they have been determined. Please let the chorus staff know if you need any assistance.
- C. Speaking roles require more time to prepare. If your child is assigned a speaking role, please make sure you can attend additional weekend rehearsals.

IX. Goals for the 2022–2023 Season

1. To help the chorister understand that each voice is a gift from God and should be used entirely for His glory and not for human gain. This includes the understanding that “performances” during the worship services are not a time to “show off” or charm the congregation, but rather to lead in worship and, as God wills, to bring blessing to those that hear us.
2. To expose the chorister to a song repertoire that will be used in the worship service as a children's chorus or combined with adult vocal/instrumental ensembles and choir.
3. To teach performance etiquette and poise.
4. To teach appreciation of different musical styles.
5. To continue to familiarize choristers with hymns and choruses through performance and study.
6. To continue to instruct choristers in the basics of healthy vocal sound production. This includes proper breath control, the use of the “head” voice (rather than a stressful, forced “chest” voice), articulation of vowels and consonants and cooperative choral singing.
7. To teach pitch/rhythm recognition and production.
8. To teach basic music theory knowledge and skills.
9. To minister through performance at various ministries within The Moody Church.



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moodychurch.org/parents-2/

Questions about Children's Chorus?
Call Elsa in the church office at 312.327.8600 x1023
or email elsa.wiese@moodychurch.org.