

September 26, 2012

St. Gregory's Catholic School
126 Rathburn Road
Etobicoke, Ontario
M9B 2K6

RE: CHOIR PROPOSAL

Greetings CSAC Members:

As parents of our children who attend St. Gregory's Catholic School we are proud to be part of a community that enables not only the ability to bring amazing possibilities to the children at St. Gregory's Catholic School, but to other institutions as well. We have particularly enjoyed working with a community that can dramatically enhance the activities and opportunities at St. Gregory's Catholic School.

The following will outline the scope of our "Choir" initiative, more accurately defined as "**Pop Chorus**" including objectives, format, schedule and repertoire of music to explore.

OBJECTIVES:

The Students will be learning, exploring and performing contemporary or popular music. For St. Gregory's contemporary choir, repertoire will reflect a wide variety of contemporary music styles, from spiritual to classic music, for example The Beatles, to Show tunes and pop/rock music.

PRIMARY GRADES:

Our first goal is to provide young students (Grades 1-3) with an extra-curricular opportunity to participate in a choir, with emphasis on simple and recognizable popular and folk songs. Songs will generally be sung in unison, however, will be chosen based on their adaptability for singing in rounds. Choir members will be given several opportunities to perform in front of an audience, such as during Christmas and graduation concerts, and other special functions.

This popular music choir is intended to nurture and encourage enjoyment of ensemble singing and music at a young age, and will hopefully lead to the participation of these students in the "School Choir" once they reach Grade 4.

INTERMEDIATE GRADES:

Our second goal is to provide senior students (Grades 6-8) with an extra-curricular opportunity to participate in a choir, with emphasis on popular forms of music such as Broadway show tunes, top 40 songs and theme songs. Musical numbers will be chosen to reflect an appropriate level of difficulty given the experience of the singers, and will usually consist of arrangements with at least two vocal parts. Examples of possible pieces include selections from The Sound of Music and various movie theme songs. Choir members will be given several opportunities to perform in front of an audience, such as during Christmas and graduation concerts, and other special functions.

This popular music choir is intended as a complement to the existing "School Choir" which sings at school masses. Students who may not have had an interest in singing religious music will hopefully find the popular emphasis of this choir appealing.

As an aside, it is important to note that while some parents may have some expectations of a "glee club" which is really a show choir blending singing and dancing, these expectations need to be tempered given the age of the children and the fact that children will not be auditioning and are not required to have any prior music, choral or dance experience. The repertoire for most show choirs is very challenging and requires mature male voices for the tenor and bass parts.

It should be noted that the current "Junior Choir" will continue under the direction of Mrs. Kriscuin as part of the overall "School Choir" program.

FORMAT:

Participation will be open to all students (no auditions required). Participation of at least 15 students in each choir is essential to allow rehearsals and performances to take place as planned. Attendance at all rehearsals would be strongly encouraged. Students who miss more than two or three consecutive rehearsals may find it difficult to catch up.

Students will rehearse once per week during a lunch recess, with additional lunch rehearsals leading up to special performances.

The goal would be to learn at least three new numbers each term – actual size of repertoire would depend on how quickly the students learn new music, how complicated the chosen pieces are, how consistent rehearsal attendance is, etc. Repertoire may consist of: unison singing, two-part/voice singing, either acapella or with piano or CD accompaniment. Singing in harmony will be attempted if the group shows enough experience and capability (for example, if the students are able to read music).

Should there be opportunity to work jointly with any planned dramatic performances at the school; these opportunities will be enthusiastically undertaken.

Suggested Rehearsal Schedule:

30 minute rehearsal 1x weekly (extra rehearsals prior to performance to be scheduled as required)

11:55 am -12:00 pm – students make way from classroom to music room

12:00 pm – session begins

12:00 pm – 12:05 pm – vocal warm-up

12:05 pm - 12:30 pm – learn new repertoire / old repertoire rehearsal

12:30 pm – choir dismissed

Proposed Initial Repertoire List:

Two-part arrangements have been targeted as appropriate for elementary school-aged children (intermediate grades) who may or may not have prior music or ensemble-singing experience.

1. Flying Free / Don Besig (elementary school choir standard)
2. This Little Light of Mine (spiritual)
3. Penny Lane or Yellow Submarine / The Beatles
4. That's Amore
5. What a Wonderful World
6. Wavin' Flag / K'Naan soccer anthem
7. Reindeer Boogie (Christmas)
8. Count on Me / Bruno Mars
9. Turn the Lights On, Pull the Curtain Up
10. Jingle Jingle Jazz (Christmas)

For primary grades, unison arrangements of songs from The Sound of Music will provide a starting point in terms of repertoire. From there, music will be chosen based on the children's interests and ability.

PROPOSED COSTS:

To estimate the cost of music scores, www.sheetmusicplus.com has been used as a reference point. Please note that purchases of choral music often have minimum order requirements (for copyright reasons); for example, www.sheetmusicplus.com requires minimum orders of six copies for many scores. Most students will likely just use a lyric sheet, however, those who are able to read music may benefit from the use of the extra copies.

What cannot be purchased via Leslie Music Supply in Oakville, which has a comprehensive choral music selection, can be acquired from Sheet Music Plus. Also, soundtrack CDs (some of which are listed above) would be recommended as the choir does not have an accompanist and the choir director would be unable to conduct the choir if she were playing the accompaniment herself.

Based on the proposed initial repertoire list, the estimated budget is as follows:

To purchase music scores: \$200.00

To purchase accompaniment audio tracks: \$200.00

Important note: Mrs. Kriscuinas is willing to share her collection of contemporary children's choral music. While some of her collection is appropriate for the pop chorus, the majority consists of standard (or classic) choir music, not recent popular music. If we are able to find suitable music from her collection, we may be able to modestly reduce our budget estimates for the purchase of new music.

An additional fee of \$250.00/month is to be budgeted for any accompanist or other support along the way, as required.

BENEFITS:

The 2 groups of Students have been chosen in order to offer the Primary Grades (Grade 1 – 3) an opportunity to engage in an extra-curricular activity as their opportunities to various activities are limited in the Primary Grades and to progress towards joining the "School Choir" in Grade 4.

In addition, it allows the students in the Intermediate Grades (Grades 6 - 8) to gain some experience required should they wish to pursue this interest in High School.

CHOIR DIRECTOR:

Cynthia Li is a classically-trained pianist who also has private music teaching experience. She holds an ARCT from The Royal Conservatory of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Western Ontario. While she chose to pursue further education and a career in the business world for 15 years, she has now returned to her roots and is focusing on developing musical talent in pre-school and school-aged children.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide an initiative intended to nurture and encourage enjoyment of ensemble singing and music.

Cynthia Li
Vince Arone
Gina D'Alessandro