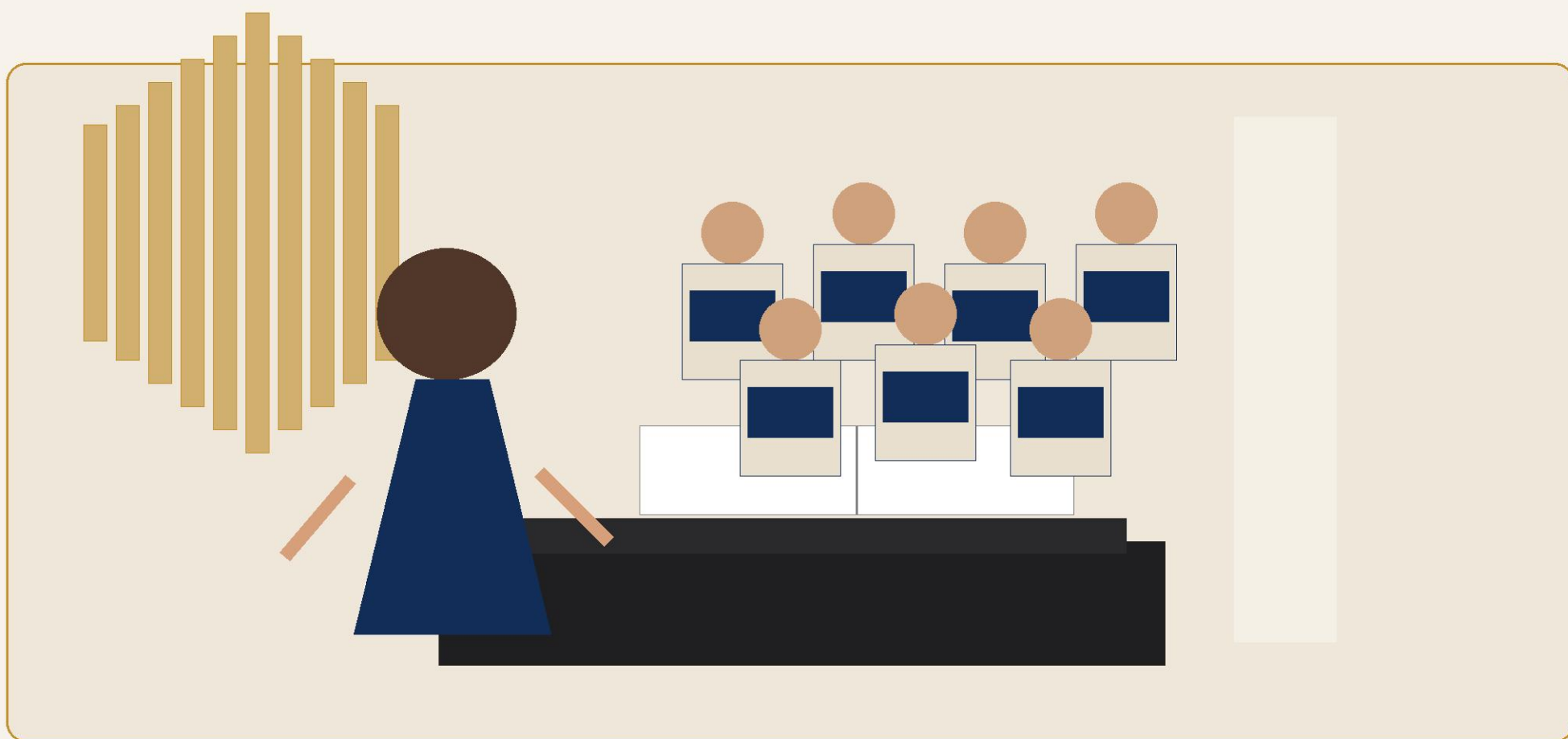




The **WARD CHOIR** **SURVIVAL GUIDE**

QUICK REFERENCE FOR NEW DIRECTORS

A companion to The Song of the Righteous



**BUILD UNITY
THROUGH MUSIC**



**TEACH THE MUSIC
WITH CONFIDENCE**



**SUPPORT WORSHIP
AND THE SPIRIT**



**SERVE JOYFULLY
AND FAITHFULLY**

YOU WERE CALLED FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS.
You can do this. And you don't have to do it alone.

FIRST SUNDAY

What to do in your first few days as ward choir director.

YOUR FIRST STEPS CHECKLIST

- ✓ 1. MEET THE BISHOPRIC MUSIC ADVISOR
Build unity, understand expectations, and learn how you can work together.
- ✓ 2. MEET OR CONTACT THE ACCOMPANIST
Introduce yourself, express appreciation, and confirm rehearsal plans.
- ✓ 3. LEARN THE REHEARSAL TIME AND LOCATION
Confirm the regular schedule and where rehearsals and warm-ups take place.
- ✓ 4. ASK WHERE WARD CHOIR MUSIC IS STORED
Digital folders, binders, or the ward clerks—know where to find what you need.
- ✓ 5. REVIEW RECENT REPERTOIRE
Look at the music you've sung recently to learn the style, strengths, and preferences of the choir.
- ✓ 6. ANNOUNCE THE FIRST REHEARSAL
Share the time, place, and a brief invitation to all singers.
- ✓ 7. BEGIN WITH PRAYER AND PURPOSE
Seek the Spirit's guidance as you lead and serve together.



DON'T PANIC

You are not expected to have all the answers.
Slow down, listen, and take it one step at a time.

*The Savior qualifies those He calls.
You are exactly who this choir needs.*



You don't have to solve everything today.
JUST TAKE THE NEXT RIGHT STEP.

YOU WERE CALLED FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS.
You can do this. And you don't have to do it alone.



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FIRST REHEARSAL

Set the tone. Build confidence. Invite the Spirit.

1

OPEN WITH PRAYER OR A BRIEF SPIRITUAL THOUGHT

Invite the Spirit and center your purpose.

Suggestion: Ask a different member to open with a prayer each week.

2

WELCOME SINGERS WARMLY

Greet everyone by name. Thank them for being there and express excitement for what you'll create together.

3

DO A SIMPLE BREATHING AND HUMMING WARM-UP

Diaphragmatic breathing, gentle stretches, and humming help blend voices and build focus.

4

TEACH ONE MANAGEABLE PIECE OR HYMN ARRANGEMENT

Learn small sections at a time.

Work on melody, rhythm, and words.

Keep it musical and encouraging.

5

SET EXPECTATIONS FOR REHEARSAL HABITS

- Arrive on time and prepared
- Silence phones and limit distractions
- Follow along in music
- Listen, adjust, and support one another

6

CLOSE WITH NEXT STEPS

Recap what you learned, express gratitude, and share the next rehearsal date.

End with a short prayer or thoughtful moment.



KEEP IT SIMPLE



One short warm-up.



One manageable piece.



One encouraging word.



One Spirit-focused rehearsal.

Small steps create strong choirs.



NEXT REHEARSAL

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

FOCUS: _____

Let all things be done in a fitting and orderly way.” Doctrine and Covenants 45:64

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Prepare with purpose. Sing with reverence.

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- ☒ **CONFIRM THE DATE AND PURPOSE**
*Verify the date, time, and location.
Understand the purpose of the performance.*
- ☒ **REHEARSE ENTRANCES AND CUTOFFS**
*Practice how you will enter, take your places,
and hold final cutoffs together.*
- ☒ **PRACTICE STANDING, HOLDING FOLDERS, AND LOOKING UP**
*Stand tall with good posture. Hold your folder
at a consistent height. Lift your eyes to the director.*
- ☒ **RUN A SHORT CHAPEL REHEARSAL**
*Sound the space. Review key pieces from start
to finish. Adjust as needed.*
- ☒ **COORDINATE WITH THE ACCOMPANIST**
*Confirm tempos, cues, and any introductions
or transitions.*
- ☒ **REMEMBER OUR WHY**
*Our goal is worship, not showmanship.
We sing to lift hearts and invite the Spirit.*

PERFORMANCE ETIQUETTE



EYES ON THE DIRECTOR
*Follow the pattern and
stay connected.*



STILL HANDS
*Keep hands quiet and
away from your face.*



UNIFIED FOLDER POSITION
*Hold at the same height
and distance.*



**REVERENT ENTRY
AND EXIT**
*Enter and exit with
dignity and purpose.*



SIMPLE CHOIR SETUP



● SOPRANOS
& ALTOS

● TENORS
& BASSES

SING WITH FAITH. SERVE WITH JOY.

Your preparation helps the message reach every heart.

First Problem

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR REAL MOMENTS

Every challenge has a next step. Let's find it.

TROUBLESHOOTING FLOWCHART

What's the first challenge you're facing?



ATTENDANCE IS LOW

- Are people missing regularly?

Next step
Reach out personally to reconnect and encourage.



PARTS ARE UNBALANCED

- Is one section overpowering the others?

Next step
Adjust seating and balance with simple exercises.



THE CHOIR FEELS NERVOUS

- Is anxiety impacting confidence?

Next step
Start with a short warm-up and celebrate small wins.



THE PIECE IS TOO HARD

- Are we struggling with too many challenges?

Next step
Simplify: choose key sections and build in layers.



THE ACCOMPANIST IS UNAVAILABLE

- Do we have no piano support?

Next step
Use a cappella rehearsal tools or practice tracks.



REHEARSAL TIME IS SHORT

- Do we feel rushed and unprepared?

Next step
Prioritize, set a focus, and end with encouragement.

QUICK CHECKLIST

- ☒ Pray and set your focus.
- ☒ Communicate clearly and kindly.
- ☒ Start with what you can control.
- ☒ Keep the mission in view.
- ☒ Celebrate one step forward.

*Pause.
Simplify.
Communicate.
Keep Going.*

YOUR MUSICAL TOOLKIT



You don't have to solve everything today.

*A steady light, one step at a time,
leads your choir forward.*

You are not alone in this.

*Faithful leadership doesn't mean having no problems.
It means leading well through them.*



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FIRST CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Plan prayerfully. Prepare purposefully. Point hearts to Christ.



START EARLY

Give your choir time to learn, grow, and serve with confidence and joy.



CHOOSE FAMILIAR HYMNS AND CAROLS

Blend beloved songs with meaningful selections to help the congregation worship together.



COORDINATE NARRATION AND ACCOMPANIST SUPPORT

Thoughtful readings and strong musical support bring the story to life.



SCHEDULE A FINAL RUN-THROUGH

A full dress rehearsal helps everything flow smoothly on the day.



BLEND CHOIR AND CONGREGATION WHERE APPROPRIATE

Moments of unity in song lift hearts and strengthen worship.



KEEP THE SPIRIT MORE IMPORTANT THAN SPECTACLE

Focus on the message, the music, and the Savior we celebrate.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM IDEAS



OPENING HYMN

Begin with a joyful hymn that invites hearts into worship.



CHOIR SELECTION

Share a meaningful anthem that proclaims the wonder of Christ's birth.



NARRATION

Use Scripture readings and narration to guide the story.



CONGREGATIONAL CAROL

Invite the congregation to join in a beloved carol together.



CLOSING NUMBER

End with a song of praise and hope for the season.



MAY OUR MUSIC DECLARE THE GOOD NEWS
and our hearts reflect the Light of the world.



THE WARD CHOIR SURVIVAL GUIDE

SIMPLE CONDUCTING & SEATING DIAGRAMS

Clear patterns. Orderly seating. Unified sound.

CONDUCTING PATTERNS

2-BEAT PATTERN

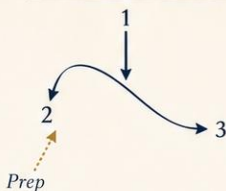


1 Down • 2 Out

Prep: Small upward motion

Cutoff: Lift and hold

3-BEAT PATTERN

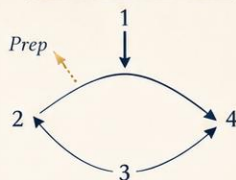


1 Down • 2 In • 3 Out

Prep: Small upward motion

Cutoff: Lift and hold

4-BEAT PATTERN



1 Down • 2 In • 3 Out
4 Up

Prep: Small upward motion

Cutoff: Lift and hold

COMMON CHOIR SEATING SETUPS

SATB IN ROWS

SOPRANOS

ALTOS

TENORS

BASSES



DIRECTOR

MIXED QUARTET PATTERN

S

A

T

B



DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST POSITION



QUICK REMINDERS



CLEAR GESTURES

Use confident, well-defined motions that are easy to see.



STEADY TEMPO

Keep a consistent pulse. Your beat builds confidence.



EYES UP

Watch your choir, not your hands. Connect and lead.

LEAD WITH CLARITY. SING WITH UNITY.

Your pattern guides them—your spirit unites them.

EMERGENCY REHEARSAL

Keep calm. Lead well. The Lord will help.

Things don't always go as planned—but you can still lead a reverent, beautiful musical experience. Use this guide to respond with confidence and kindness.

COMMON CHOIR EMERGENCIES



ONLY HALF THE CHOIR CAME

Rebalance parts, reduce the piece, and choose music the group can cover well.



ACCOMPANIST IS ABSENT

Sing a cappella, choose unison or simple SATB, or use a recording if appropriate.



NO TENORS SHOWED UP

Move tenor lines to baritones/basses or let altos take the melody. Keep it strong and full.



THE PIECE STILL IS NOT READY

Simplify, focus on the message, and rehearse key sections only. Don't chase perfection.



THE BISHOPRIC REQUESTS MUSIC SOON

Have 2–3 reliable options ready. Be prepared to pivot quickly.



WHAT TO DO RIGHT NOW

- ✓ **Simplify** – Cut to the essentials.
- ✓ **Switch to a hymn** – Choose one your choir knows well.
- ✓ **Sing in unison** – Unity over complexity.
- ✓ **Rehearse trouble spots** – Focus where it matters most.
- ✓ **Communicate with leaders** – Set expectations and stay aligned.

QUICK RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Pray and stay calm. | ☐ Choose the best music option. | ☐ Rehearse key sections. |
| ☐ Assess the situation quickly. | ☐ Adjust parts and/or keys if needed. | ☐ Encourage and uplift the choir. |



PRO TIP Keep a short list of "Always-Ready" songs: 1 hymn, 1 anthem, and 1 unison. You'll be glad you did!

YOU DON'T NEED A PERFECT PLAN.
YOU NEED A WILLING HEART.
THE LORD WILL MULTIPLY YOUR EFFORTS.



FOUR-WEEK STARTER PLAN

A simple plan to build unity, lift hearts, and lead with confidence.



1 WEEK 1

GATHER & CONNECT

- ☐ Review the mission and goals.
- ☐ Gather information about current music, calendar, and resources.
- ☐ Meet with the bishopric music advisor and key leaders.
- ☐ Meet the choir and build relationships.
- ☐ Communicate your vision and next steps.



2 WEEK 2

CHOOSE & PREPARE

- ☐ Select music that fits the season and your choir.
- ☐ Plan the rehearsal schedule.
- ☐ Invite and encourage new singers.
- ☐ Confirm resources and materials.
- ☐ Set clear expectations.



3 WEEK 3

REHEARSE & REFINED

- ☐ Begin learning the music.
- ☐ Focus on blend, diction, and dynamics.
- ☐ Address challenges with patience and encouragement.
- ☐ Build unity through warm-ups and devotion.
- ☐ Celebrate progress together.



4 WEEK 4

POLISH, SERVE & INSPIRE

- ☐ Refine musical details and transitions.
- ☐ Prepare spiritually and practically.
- ☐ Communicate service details clearly.
- ☐ Encourage one another.
- ☐ Serve with joy and confidence!

NOTES 

Faithful planning today
leads to beautiful worship tomorrow.
You were called for such a time as this.

