

Sight Singing for Others at Your School

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Sight reading is often something we practice in the comfort of our own classrooms. Maybe once or twice a year, we sight read at a festival or at an adjudicated event. That is all well and good, but I'd like to challenge you to do something that might make you a little uncomfortable—sight read in front of an audience. Not in front of judges or other choirs, but in front of non-choir folk, or as I like to call them, regular people.

So who are the people that you could invite to hear your choir sight read?

- Teachers who have a free period
- Teachers who have a small class
- Teachers who are willing to bring their entire class
- Administrators
- Custodians and other staff

Choose a day for your sight-reading performance. A week before the actual date, send out a school-wide email like the one you will find below.

I'd like to invite you to our classroom on (insert date and time) for a preview performance before we compete at _____. It will take about 15 minutes. We would really appreciate the pressure that comes with a live audience to help us prepare for this event. Feel free to come alone or with your entire class! We'll have plenty of seating. Let us know if you can make it!

Set up chairs in your room, or meet in the auditorium if your classroom won't accommodate a crowd and you are ready to go! Inviting an audience will achieve three impor-

tant things:

1. It gives meaning to the phrase "practice like you perform." This is essential during festival season or if you are taking your ensemble to an adjudicated event.

Even though there is an audience, it is a practice session because you are still in the comfort of your classroom or in your school. You don't want to give the ensemble music they can read flawlessly or that will completely stump them, leaving them embarrassed.

Plan for a normal rehearsal. The only difference will be that there are people watching and listening. Your kids will be on their best behavior, of course.

This event will create an atmosphere very similar to the one at the upcoming competition. The singers will be experiencing the same process in sight reading though there are people watching. The element of pressure will be there.

2. It educates those who rarely walk down the music classroom hallway as to what goes on in your classroom. The students who don't walk down the music hallway during the day are probably unaware of how a choir class functions. They will hear unfamiliar music and likely be puzzled by the solfege they will likely be hearing. An experience like this will reveal the academic side of a choir rehearsal.

Sight singing for others is a recruitment opportunity. Inviting students who attend your school could spark an interest in singing. Be sure to invite them while they are attending the sight-singing demonstration.

3. This is an opportunity to invite your colleagues into your classroom.

I love observing other teachers, even those outside the arts realm. There is much to learn from one another, and you may have a way of doing things that will help a peer! Plus, like the students who don't travel down the music hallway, your colleagues may not know what goes on in a choir class either.

This is a great way to get other teachers involved with your

program! You never know when you will need a helping hand. Other teachers may be inspired to invite your choirs to sing in one of their classes or club events! It's a win-win situation.

Whether you are preparing for an event or just working on concert repertoire, bringing in an audience will help you, your students, and other teachers and students at your school. Pick a day, send an invitation, and practice for an audience!