

WORSHIP LEADER / CHOIR DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

I have prepared this template for churches that are wondering how to grow the choir directors that are on their staff. Many choir directors have been on staff a long time and have not spent much time updating how they do things. As a result, the choir has aged and also dwindled. Sometimes the choir director does not want to change. But sometimes the choir director does not know how to change. The following will give insight into the role of the choir director in a growing church so that the choir director can make changes and turn around the decline of the music program in the church. .

General Premise The role of any music director is to grow the church through the music and the arts. When the music program dwindles, the church dwindles. When the church dwindles, the music program dwindles. Dwindling feeds dwindling. Choir directors reverse that trend and grow choirs and the music program overall by:

- *Building relationships inside the church.* Choir directors need to know how to form relationships with people in the church and involve them in the music program.
- *Building relationships outside the church.* Choir directors that grow music programs network in various musical groups outside the church and invite certain people to participate in the music program in the church. Some of the people that participate here and there in the church choir may become church members.
- *Following Christianity.* Not everyone in a choir has to be a card carrying Christian to be in a choir. But it is difficult for a choir director to grow a choir in a Christian church when the choir director is not interested in personally following Christ. Many churches hire choir directors for their musical skill alone and do not inquire as to their spiritual pursuit. Choirs are collectively “worship leaders” in a worship service. It’s important for the choir director to help the choir live into that role; something that is hard to do if the choir director is not also pursuing Christianity.
- *Knowing the music of the underserved population.* We call the group of people a church wants to reach out to a “target” group, a “mission field,” an “underserved population,” a “missional focus group” – all these monikers mean the same thing. Every church that wants to grow has to know who it is they can reach out to in order to grow. No church ever reaches out to all people in order to grow. Churches tend to become homogenous when they try to be all things to all people. Churches that grow attempt to pinpoint a target population; it is a paradox. Churches that target tend to reach younger, more diverse populations. Part of “targeting” means to know the music that the target population likes to listen to. Choir directors that grow music ministries are on the same page as the church that wants to grow by reaching out to a target population. The choir director is willing to find musical choices for the choir that suit the target population. In our current culture, there are numerous options for choral arrangements that include a wide variety of more contemporary style music that is often fun for people to sing.

- *Steer away from music that is too hard to sing.* The vast majority of people in our very unchurched culture do not like to listen to “esoteric” choir music. University churches and seminary churches are typically the only place where you might find the local public appreciate class choir music (all the time). Some classic choir music is difficult for a choir to sing, especially a dwindling, aging choir. When the music is hard for the choir (because the choir is small and aging), and thus when they do not sound excellent, it is very difficult to add new people to the choir. Choir directors that grow choirs steer away from singing music that is too difficult.
- *Sing less frequently.* Choir directors that grow choirs discover a plan to reduce the number of times the choir sings, thereby reducing the rehearsal schedule and also giving the choir more time to learn music. They increase numbers of participants because some people will get involved in a choir that is fun to be part of and that sings music that is fun to sing as long as they do not have to be there weekly.
- *Sing classic choral music infrequently, perhaps at holidays.* Just make the group big enough and strong enough to pull it off!
- *Consider ways to incorporate videos.* When choir directors reduce the number of times the choir sings, they are faced with finding other ways to add music. Many music videos abound, even choir videos.
- *Create an audition system.* Growing churches audition choir and special music participants. It is an approach to find talent, but also to weed out music divas who think they are better than they are. No show boating allowed!
- *Learn loops.* Smart and professional use of loops can enhance the choir sound and make it much more current sounding and also fun for new people to be involved in. Loops are sweeping the music scene in churches.
- *Develop a children’s choir.* Growing churches invest in growing a children’s choir in the same way as you would grow an adult choir. Growth is about relationships, recruiting, teaching music that’s fun, reducing the number of times the kids sing, getting kids to invite their friends, having children’s choir leaders spend time in schools and networking with other groups that involve kids, using video smartly to enhance the kid’s music, and learning loops. Growing churches create a schedule that alternates between musical groups.
- *Caring about excellence.* Many church choir directors have lost interest in making the music program great. Some think “it’s good enough for church work” to only work with what you have and not have to work that hard. Growing churches hold up the value of excellence and expect the choir director to give a lot of time to making the program excellent.
- *Paying attention to worship overall.* Excellent music programs in churches consider choir music just a piece of the worship experience. Music in general plays an integral part of creating an environment for persons in seats to experience the Holy.
- *Starting a music school.* We see many growing churches in which choir directors and other music leaders teach kids music after hours. This becomes a feeder for music in the church.
- *Increase artistic expression in worship overall.* Be creative!