Twelve top tips for leaders of Youth Choirs

1. Endless enthusiasm and energy are needed from you to keep your choristers attending each week.

2. The better your personal preparation of a piece, the better you will teach it.

3. Start your preparation by understanding the text. Then work out phrase lengths and breaths by singing through the song yourself. This will give you a tempo.

4. Notice where sections are repeated and clock places which choristers will find hard.

5. Practice singing all the lines yourself so that you can teach them with confidence.

6. Get out from behind the piano and teach the parts voice to voice. Young singers pick up lines much more quickly this way.

7. For me, warm - up session always contains some exercises focusing on posture, breathing, sirening and primal sounds.

8. Include pieces of differing difficulty level in your rehearsals. The easier pieces will create a sense of achievement while the harder pieces will be longer-term challenges.

9. Young choirs find it easy to sing pieces from memory. They will listen and perform better.

10. Work hard to make the faces of your choristers expressive. They need to live the text and convey its meaning to the audience.

11. Always be working towards something and a deadline. This keeps everyone focused.

12. Take your choir out on a bus to perform somewhere. The act of travelling and eating together creates a bond that improves the singing. Your choristers make friends. This helps to keep them attending.

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