



Music Education

Music in the Lutheran Day School

by Rev. Stephen Rosebrock

MUSIC HAS A PLACE IN EVERY child's education, whether they attend a parochial, private, or public school. In the Lutheran day school it has a place with a two-fold purpose. The first, which is shared with other types of schools, is to cultivate musically literate students. The second, which is unique to Christian schools, is to cultivate the faith of the students.

The Educational Objective

Music's place in the school curriculum is part of the core when the instruction is based on developing the students' musical literacy skills. This means that music is taught the same way a phonics teacher teaches reading. Students are taught to decode musical notation (symbol) into sound. When students learn to read words, they learn the sounds individual letters make and they combine these sounds to make words. Reading music is similar. We read the symbols on the staff and decode the rhythm (patterns of long and short sounds) and the melody (patterns of low and high sounds). It is really just that simple. Over years of study students become better readers, whether it is text or music. This approach is what takes music from being just a fun activity to being an integral part of every child's education.

This type of musical education leads to a life of music making for many students, as singers and/or instrumentalists. Just like when a teacher teaches the

love of reading, the same happens with music. In my experience, when musical literacy was the focus in the younger grades, the participation in musical ensembles increased significantly as did the quality of the ensembles. The goal in the next few years is to focus on these fundamental skills in order to strengthen the ensembles in the upper grades.

Faith Formation

The Divine Service is the apex of the Christian's week and this service is filled with music. Students are taught the skill of singing so that they can participate in the services of the church. They are taught how to use their voice, how to read music, and how to navigate the hymnal, so that they can participate actively. The participation of singing then begins to shape their lives as Christians because they are literally filled with the Word of God, the story of salvation, and poetry that will support their faith and bring them comfort as they go through life.

All of this is intentionally taught to every student no matter what their church affiliation is. It is taught because it is central to who we are as Lutherans. Our goal is to share not just our Christian faith with *all* our students, but also the riches of our modern Lutheran tradition. It is really quite simple, children like what they know. When students start at age four being taught the language of the hymnal they grow up loving it. It is at the point that all categories are dismantled. There are no longer member students and non-member students; lower class, middle class, and upper class; students of specific races; rather, what we really are begins to show through — *the body of Christ*.

Kantor Stephen Rosebrock