

The Middle School Chorus just started last week and will be working on some new songs for Mass as well as getting a jump start early for Christmas (can you believe it!) This enthusiastic group has been very eager to song leaders at our school liturgies where they can sing with their buddies.

The 3-5th Grade Choir has been learning some new warm-ups as well as patterns of solfeggio (do-re-mi, etc.) with Kodaly hand signals. We also have been learning proper singing technique (enunciation, breath control, pitch matching) while singing two songs from “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.”

Mr. Larrabee has composed some new simple layered warm-ups for the **Honor Band**. These warm-ups fall into the category of differentiated instruction that we have been focusing on for the last few years. Basically, a simple melody is established as a base. Then, there are three other variations and harmonies that layer nicely upon that melody. Students with less experience can thus play together with students with more experience and ability in a harmonious fashion. The band is also starting an arrangement of the hymn “Make Me a Channel of your Peace” and on the secular side, an arrangement of Kelly Clarkson’s “Stronger.”

Mr Larrabee has been meeting with all of the classes and training them on some new songs that will be used in the school Masses as well as songs sung in the parish.

We are getting our roster together for the **4th Grade Beginner Band**. We had a representative from Riverton Music come in and students were able to try out several different instruments. That way they could see if their first choice was a good fit for them or not. We will be starting out first couple of notes and rhythms from our method book. By the end of the month all students should be able to make a decent tone on their instrument and hold out whole notes.

The **5th Grade Band Class** is part of the Honor Band. They get extra instruction time during their music class since they are the youngest members of the band. Some students switch instruments from what they played in 4th grade. Others may have moved into the school and did not have the opportunity to join band last year. This class allows those students to catch up and is a good refresher for the others.

The **6th graders** who are in the bell class are learning the basic of how to play and care for the bells. We use a system of very diligent counting so the students have to pay close attention to where they are in the song and play at the exact right time. They be learning two songs “Joyful Joyful” and “For the Fruits of This Creation” which they will play at some of the school Masses. They will learn several hymns and play them at Mass in the coming months.

The **7th graders** in guitar class are just starting to learn how to position their fingers properly on the fingerboard and how to pluck out their first few notes on the 1st string. We will also start some of the easy chords such as E minor, E Major, and A minor.

The **8th graders** who are in percussion class are learning basic mallet technique and echoing given rhythms on a pentatonic scale. We also will create a drum circle where there is a leader who establishes a pattern for the others to improvise over.

