

Why use choral reading

Choral reading involves reading aloud in unison. It can strengthen fluency and comprehension, engage students by providing an authentic reason to read and reread while practicing reading, speaking and listening in an authentic context. Additionally, it provides opportunities for students to work together co-operatively, creates confidence and more fluent readers role model sound, stress, pitch, volume, diction, enunciation and interpretation of texts for the less fluent. Choral reading can increase reading enjoyment and is cost effective.

Choral reading provides support for those who may be ELL, less skilled, withdrawn, shy anxious about reading or reading aloud or hesitant to take risks. Used on a regular basis, students internalize fluent reading.

As David often alluded to in the Psalms, having God's word firmly planted in the heart is a blessing for all time.

How to do choral readings

For most, a minimum of three readings is needed to fully develop fluidity, comprehension, inflection and improve confidence. Additional readings may help with memorization.

Teachers may want to start with a read aloud. After developing a schema and background, introduce and practice key vocabulary in an interactive and visual way. Then read a portion of the text aloud to the students. Many teachers read through shorter pieces in their entirety for continuity, but only model an excerpt of longer pieces. Encourage visualization.

Have stronger, more confident readers take the leader or solo roles.

Most participants will be motivated to do multiple readings diligently when the prospect of performing the piece is possible. Break things up while practicing by assigning different roles to different readers. Older participants can discuss the tone of the selection and research the Biblical author and his circumstances when writing. This helps a performer decide how to deliver the lines to best capture the meaning.

When reading and dwelling on the word of God do so with reverence and an openness to His message. When speaking it aloud, do so to His Glory.

Jigsaw method

Divide longer readings (such as the Sermon on the Mount) into smaller chunks and break readers into groups. Each group practices a chunk several times. Then all readers come together to listen and perform in turn. Rehearse a few more times allowing all readers to take part in all of the ALL: parts while leader parts remain assigned to the original leaders.

The key to the jigsaw is when students bring the pieces together. By teaching the others, the ones teaching truly understand the material. When members of one group are responsible to model and teach the others, those doing the teaching may arrive at a clearer understanding, because it's hard to share and model something you don't understand.

The jigsaw is a sophisticated strategy and may need some scaffolding by the teacher the first time it is used. It allows for a performance (for other readers) before a performance (in front of non-readers) and shifts some of the responsibility for competence and understanding to the readers.

Performance of Choral reading

Choral reading pieces can be used in classes, discussion groups, worship, between scenes during plays while the set is being changed, etc. Choral readings can be just that – seated reading relying on the performer's voice to do it all or may include blocking, costumes and props as Greek theater did. Your imagination and creativity are the only limits.

For performance that includes audience participation, consider using a Power Point. Strong voices that can enunciate clearly and slow their pace to an unrehearsed audience's is essential because the more voices joining in, the less quickly the speaker can lead them.

Biblically based science power points aligned with Virginia SOLs and National standards are also available free of charge through the Teacherpayteachers website. Because of file size limitations on this site I can only offer a limited number of Power Points through this site. God bless.

For further information on reader's theater and choral reading, check out these websites.

<http://myweb.stedwards.edu/mikekb/ReadStrong/choralreading.html> Read Strong
http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/literacy/index.php?page=fl_choralreading_1 includes video instruction