

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CYT



**WE "R"
FAMILY**



BENEFITS OF THE ARTS!

Did you know that . . . “Every student in the nation should have an education in the arts” . . .? According to the opening statement of “The Value and Quality of Arts Education: A Statement of Principles,” a document from the nation’s ten most important educational organizations, including the American Association of School Administrators, the National Education Association, the National Parent Teacher Association, and the National School Board Association, this statement is unlikely to be challenged by anyone involved in education! Why? Because, among other things . . . children who participate in the arts . . .

Do better in school! UCLA studies show that students with a high degree of involvement in the arts outscore those with low exposure---44 points higher for math and 59 points higher for verbal SAT, according to the College Board.

Stay in school longer! The California Superintendent of Public Instruction reported that when arts are a strong component of a child’s education, absenteeism and dropout rates decline.

Win more academic awards! Research by Dr. Shirley Heath shows that children involved in the arts are 25% more likely to feel satisfied with themselves and eight times more likely to win awards for academic achievement over those students who are involved in sports, academic activities, and community service programs.

Go on to college! The National Education Longitudinal Survey found that youth who are involved in the arts are 31% more likely to continue education after high school.

Tend to have better coordination, focus and memory! Researchers Shaw and Rauscher found that involvement in the arts stimulates new and permanent connections in children’s brains, giving them a better sense of timing and physical coordination, mental concentration, stress management, and memory improvement.

Are better citizens! Stanford University and the Carnegie Foundation’s study found that youth involved in the arts became confident, considerate, pro-social, pro-civic citizens.



CYT WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...

Paul and Sheryl Russell had a dream. It was the 1970s and Paul was a teacher at San Diego State University and Christian High School. Sheryl was also a teacher and a cheerleader adviser. In 1980, Paul and Sheryl's dream of bringing wholesome family entertainment to their community became a reality as they, and a small band of theater-loving friends, mounted a fully-staged production of *The Sound of Music* at the top of Mount Helix Amphitheater for a surprising audience of 5000! The sets were cardboard, the costumes were borrowed or pieced together and the lighting was mounted on sawhorses. The actors, crew and orchestra members were all local talent from 47 different churches in the San Diego area. But they all had one thing in common - they all loved live theater and wanted to bring family entertainment to the community. Thus began Christian Community Theater, aka CCT. From the makeshift production department in their garage and the box office at the kitchen table, Paul and Sheryl added Christian Youth Theater the next year, 1981, at the request of the local parents. CYT started off slowly with a mere handful of students. Paul did all the teaching and directing; Sheryl handled the box office and business. They were a great team! Still teaching high school as well as leading CCT and CYT, the Russells gave birth to four children between 1977 and 1984. They continued to do community theater on Mt. Helix each summer, and CYT began to pick up steam around San Diego County. Musical theater training and wholesome family entertainment were growing! In 1986, Paul and Sheryl decided to take the big plunge to make CCT/CYT Paul's full-time job. There was enough money set aside to pay him for two months—only! But as he was able to give his dream full attention, it continued to grow and grow and grow and continues today. CYT is now the largest children's theater arts program in the nation! And, Paul keeps on dreaming!!



OUR MISSION

CCT/CYT is dedicated to developing character in children and adults through training in the arts and by producing wholesome family entertainment, all of which reflect Judeo-Christian values.

OUR VALUES & OBJECTIVES

- Placing the maximum worth on people and treating each individual with respect and significance.
- Developing character values in individuals including commitment, discipline, self esteem, confidence and integrity.
- Supporting the family unit through the direct involvement of each family member's talents, interests and abilities.
- Providing a quality product without compromising a wholesome environment.
- Being a godly role model promoting the awareness of a higher accountability.

WHAT IS THE C IN CYT?

When CYT began in 1981, we did not want to be a church or para-church ministry because we desired to reach out to the greater population and welcome all denominations and faiths. We wanted all children and families who were interested in the arts to get involved without feeling they had to join a "church" or agree to a "creed." That said, the "C" in "Christian Youth Theater" is proudly there to proclaim that we base our values and worldview solidly on a Judeo-Christian foundation.



Director's Notes:

Welcome to CFT! We're so glad you've chosen to be a part of our family, and we're here to make the entire process a fulfilling experience for your family. You are about to take a journey that will have a positive impact on your lives. The joy and fun that come with being part of CFT can truly be amazing!

You and your child can be part of a team that brings a CFT show to life. It takes all types of people to make a CFT production happen--people with servants' hearts, smart people, shy people, slow people, dramatic people, technical people, funny people, serious people, and flexible people. As each member of your family finds a niche in CFT, the experience of new

DEAR PARENTS AND KIDS

friendships with others, as well as within your own family, can be very fulfilling. Children desire to connect with their parents. CFT is the perfect avenue for that to happen!

CFT is all about team players! You and your child will learn to be more creative as you work to be team players in CFT. You will be called upon to use all of your senses - sight, sound, touch, and even smell - combined with your intellectual side to help bring about an experience that will touch the lives of your family, other CFT families and families in your community.

CFT is about building character and confidence in parents and kids by encouraging them to be a part of something that is bigger than themselves.

Be who you are. Be the person God made you to be and be proud of it. In fact, show it off on stage, as well as off stage, and tell the world a story through your gifts and talents!

Paul Fussell
Executive Artistic Director
& Co-Founder of CFT USA

WHERE DO PARENTS FIT INTO CYT?



Unlike many children's theater programs, parents are essential to CYT. Not only does CYT welcome parents to all aspects of our program, CYT requires parent involvement at a number of levels. First and foremost, CYT depends on parents to get their children to class, to rehearsals, and to shows on time and prepared.

If your child is cast in a show or is on crew, there are two mandatory Parent Meetings (one usually the week after auditions and one usually two weeks before show opening) that will give you all the information you need for the weeks to come. Each cast and crew member must have at least one parent (or representative 18 years or older) attend these meetings.

Likewise, at least one parent (or adult family representative) is required to be involved in preparing for the session production. CYT has found that "Parent Committees" are the best way to get the essential jobs done! You will actively serve on one of the many Parent Committees throughout preparation for the show and/or during the show. Working side by side enables families to share a common goal.

***CYT PARENTS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART
OF THE CYT PROGRAM!***

THERE IS A JOB FOR EVERYONE AT CYT!

JOBS FOR PARENTS:

- Costumes
- Publicity and Advertising
- Backstage and Technical
- Props
- Sets
- Make Up
- Special Activities
- Refreshments
- House Management
- Greenroom
- Docent
- Program



COSTUMES



PROPS AND SETS

WHY DO MUSICALS?

Musicals offer a variety of opportunities for ages 8-18 to sing, dance, act, crew, usher, and carry out all of the essentials of putting on a fully-staged production. CYT is “musical theater for kids by kids”—and we want to offer as many experiences to our CYT children as we possibly can. Because every CYT participant’s job onstage or offstage is essential to the musical, CYT’s mission of “developing character . . . one stage at a time” is in full force at all times as students are trained to do their best no matter what their role (or job) is in a production, and to work together as a team for the greater good of the entire CYT program. There are no “stars” in CYT—every student’s role in a CYT production is important!



WHY DOES CYT REQUIRE CLASS PARTICIPATION TO BE IN A SHOW?

CYT is an *educational* non-profit 501(c)(3) theater arts organization for children and youth. As an educational program, CYT is about teaching the skills and techniques of performance and theater environment. All aspects of musical theater performance and production are addressed in the variety of classes CYT offers throughout the year. Each 10-week session brings a new set of classes from which your child can choose. Auditioning and participating in the session CYT production are extracurricular activities for presentation to the community. A CYT show is really the “icing on the cake” of CYT classes, as opposed to an extension of CYT classes.

First Class Day Orientation Meeting is an important opportunity for families to learn about what the new CYT session will bring. Once students are welcomed, the session production and events are explained. Teachers are introduced and students are dismissed to their classes, while parents receive detailed information regarding classes, auditions and everything CYT. This is a great time to get all your questions answered!



AUDITIONS AND CALLBACKS



Auditions are limited to one minute in length. This is a time for your child to show the best of his or her talents. We recommend that your child sing a song in his/her range, add movement or dance, and introduce him/herself with energy and confidence. It is important to smile, project, make eye contact with the directors, and be well prepared in every way. Some students only have one skill that they feel confident with, and they may adapt the audition to highlight that talent. For example, a one-minute monologue or comic routine, or a one-minute dance routine, may show a student's talents better than a song. As part of the audition process, however, your child may also be asked to sing and/or learn a short dance routine.

Callbacks are typically held the evening of or day after auditions. CYT callbacks are closed to everyone except the show directors. The directors will "call back" certain students to sing again, read a scene, dance some more or any combination of these. They will often ask pairs or groups of students to read scenes to see how different combinations of sizes and personalities work together. However, just because a student is not "called back" does not mean that he or she will not be cast in the show. On the other hand, being invited to callbacks does not automatically mean your child is cast in the show either.

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?



**AREA
COORDINATOR**



DIRECTOR



**MUSICAL
DIRECTOR**



CHOREOGRAPHER



ACCOMPANIST

Area Coordinator - Oversees all aspects of the show; coordinates artistic team, parents, performers and crew.

Director - The artistic leader; responsible for putting the whole show together; teaches all dialogue, blocks the scenes.

Musical Director - Teaches the music of the show; works with all singers and musicians.

Choreographer - Teaches all the dances; creates choreography that fits the musical numbers.

Accompanist - Plays piano or keyboard at rehearsals and performances.

COUNTING THE COST . . .

Before signing up for CYT auditions, there are a few things parents and children need to discuss:

TIME COMMITMENT



- A musical production is a commitment of time and energy--make sure you review the rehearsal and performance schedule in advance
- Cast and crew members may be required to miss a day or two of school as daytime performances are presented as field trip opportunities for public and private schools
- Parents are required to attend two parent meetings and actively serve on a Parent Committee during the session

MONEY



- All cast members must pay a production fee
- You may be required to purchase some personal costume and make-up items
- You may be required to sell a designated number of tickets to the production
- You will probably purchase other optional items, such as souvenirs, flowers, photos, etc.

ATTITUDE



- Working as a team is critical to a successful production
- All members of the production are essential--there are no "stars" in CYT
- Patience is required at all times
- Positive, encouraging words and actions make a good team member
- Whatever your or your child's part in a production, it is essential to do it the VERY best you can!

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR AN AUDITION

First of all, help your child understand that besides the talent he or she shows at auditions, height, coloring, overall “look” for the part, what part he/she sings (soprano, alto, etc.), as well as what specific parts are available in a particular show all enter into the final casting decisions. Likewise, the sizes, coloring, etc., of the other auditioners being considered for parts, the chemistry between possible on-stage couples or groups, and the director’s “vision” for various roles, influence casting decisions.

Now, the things you, as a parent, really can do something about to help prepare your child for auditions:

1. **PREPARATION:** Help your child prepare the best audition he/she can. Practice the audition over and over. Research the show with your child and learn about the parts. Watch a video, if available, and become familiar with the songs.
2. **BEHAVIOR:** Directors want to work with cast members who behave well, and they will ask the Area Coordinator and other directors and teachers about your child’s previous behavior. Encourage your child not to harm his/her chances of being cast by poor behavior at class, at rehearsals, at shows, or even at auditions and callbacks (it happens!).
3. **VOCAL TRAINING:** Encourage your child to take CYT classes and/or private instruction on an ongoing basis to improve vocal range and performance skills.
4. **DANCE TRAINING:** Lack of dance ability often keeps good singers and actors from getting parts in musical theater. Encourage your child to keep learning and practicing—always moving with energy!
5. **COLD READINGS:** For callbacks, practice reading any script/dialogue out loud with your child. Encourage good character development and appropriate emotion. Challenge your child to take a risk and stand out during a cold reading.



DEALING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

Auditions bring anticipation, excitement, tears, and sometimes disappointment to many who audition for CYT productions. The fact of the matter is - auditions aren't fair. With so many students auditioning and a limited number of roles, decisions are always difficult for those casting the show.

There are three ways your child can react to audition disappointment:



1. Give up and never try again.



2. Say, "This is something I really want, and I'm going to work on my skills, so that the next time I audition, I will have a better chance of landing a part."



3. Say, "Singing, dancing, acting aren't really my thing. I don't have a driving desire to be on stage, but I would like to be involved in another aspect of the show."

How a parent reacts to disappointment after auditions has a tremendous influence on how the child reacts. Although disappointment is painful, it can also bring about a new understanding of goals—and what needs to be done now for future success. If your child is upset about a casting decision, encourage him or her to speak personally with the director about the decision and how he/she can improve the audition next time. Remind your child that every part in a CYT production is an important part--whether onstage, behind stage, or in front of the stage!



CYT TAUGHT ME...

- To have compassion.
- To have friendly competition—to work as a team with those sharing my struggles and passions.
- To gracefully deal with rejection—that's one I am still working on!
- To push myself and to be willing to work very hard—to know that nothing worth having comes easily!
- To hold on to my dreams and who I am . . . no matter what anyone else says or thinks . . . because the Lord instilled those dreams in me for a purpose that is now manifesting itself.



A HEARTFELT WORD FROM FORMER CYT STUDENT, ELENI GIANULIS:

For me, CYT audition weekend always meant lots of tears and unanswered prayers. When I wanted more than anything to be Glinda the Good Witch in *The Wizard of Oz*, I was a jitterbug. I just hoped to be in *Snow White*, and I ended up pulling curtains on *Crew*. And I know I must hold some kind of CYT record for consecutive times cast as an old woman!! These things that are laughable today were heartbreaking to a 10, 12 and even 15 year old!!

But, what I did not know at the time was that the Lord would use all the 'pain and failure' I faced in CYT to harvest the qualities He knew I would need in the life He had planned for me. Not only did CYT fuel my love for the arts and my talent, it was a vehicle God used to build my character and the person I was meant to become."

THERE IS A ROLE FOR EVERYONE IN A CYT MUSICAL!



ACTOR



**STAGE
MANAGER**

JOBS FOR KIDS:

- ACTORS
- BACKSTAGE CREW
- SPOT LIGHTS
- SOUND BOARD
- USHERS
- TICKET TAKERS
- STAGE MANAGER
- HAIR AND MAKEUP



USHER



**BACKSTAGE
CREW**



**SOUND
BOARD**

REHEARSAL & THEATER ETIQUETTE

Theater is a discipline! Part of the great tradition of the theater is a code of ethics that belongs to every worker on or behind the stage. This code has been observed throughout the centuries and will continue long after us. It is neither a superstition, nor dogma, nor a statute enforced by law. It is an attitude toward craftsmanship, a respect for other actors and a dedication toward the audience.

This code helps build self-discipline which, far from robbing one of individuality, increases personal esteem and dignity through cooperation and common purpose. Therefore, being a part of CYT is a discipline in which only good behavior is accepted and respect for directors, parents, and other students at all times is paramount.



A CYT PERFORMER'S PLEDGE

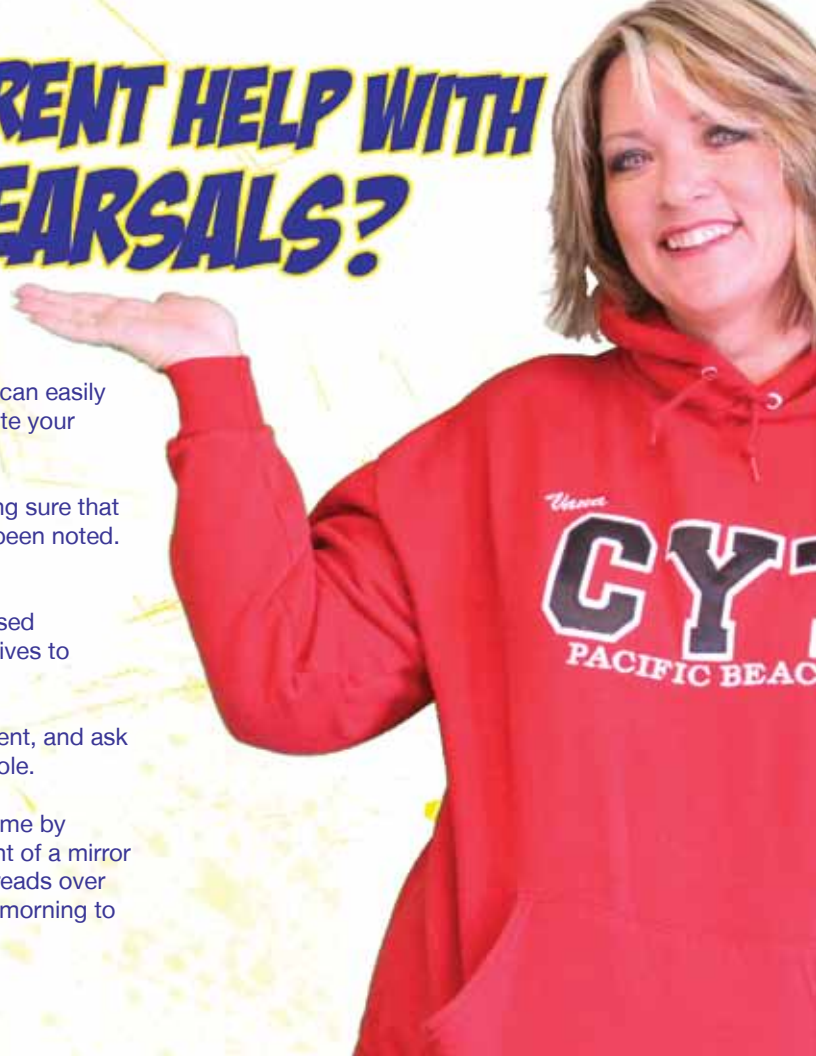
1. I will always be prompt, in fact early, and fully prepared for every rehearsal.
2. I will never miss a performance. The show must go on!
3. I will play every performance to the best of my ability, regardless of the size of my role.
4. I will never miss an entrance or cause a curtain to be late.
5. I will remember that my aim is to create illusion; therefore, I will not destroy illusion by appearing in costume and make-up off-stage, prior to the end of the show.
6. I will not allow the comments of friends, relatives, or critics to change any phase of my work without proper authorization. I will not alter lines, actions, props, costumes, or any part of the production without asking permission from the director.
7. I will never criticize another person's work from jealousy or an urge to increase my own prestige.
8. I will use stage properties and costumes with care, knowing they are tools of my craft and a vital part of the production.
9. I will observe backstage courtesy and will behave myself in strict compliance with the rules of the theater in which I work.
10. I will use honoring language and behavior at all times.



HOW CAN A PARENT HELP WITH CYT REHEARSALS?

Rehearsals are *not* an option! They are an *essential* part of the production process. Thus, CYT recommends that you:

- Post the rehearsal schedule in a location where your child can easily access it (family bulletin board, refrigerator door, etc.). Write your child's rehearsal dates and times on your family calendar.
- Go over the rehearsal schedule with your child daily, making sure that any changes from the directors or Area Coordinator have been noted. Check your CYT Area website often.
- Make sure your child is prepared for each rehearsal—dressed appropriately, fed, script in hand—and insure he or she arrives to rehearsal on time.
- Encourage your child to share how he/she felt rehearsal went, and ask if there is anything you can do to help prepare for his/her role.
- Suggest that your child have his/her own “rehearsal” at home by practicing dialogue, songs and dances out loud and in front of a mirror and/or in front of you as the “audience.” Suggest he/she reads over scenes before going to sleep at night and first thing in the morning to assist with memorizing lines and words to songs.



CYT AUDITION FAQ

Auditioning and participating in the show are extracurricular activities for presentation to the community, not necessarily an extension of CYT classes. Participation in a CYT production at any level, however--acting, working backstage, ushering--can have a positive effect on the learning process.

WHY DOES CYT HOLD OPEN AUDITIONS?

An open audition consists of parents and friends who are invited to watch the initial audition in order to lend immediate support to those auditioning. CYT believes this is a learning process for those auditioning as well as those watching. Many students have improved their auditions through watching others perform. Further, we feel the role of parents is vital in positive and immediate reinforcement of a child's audition.

WHY DOES CYT HOLD CLOSED CALLBACKS?

This policy was created by the staff and directors in order to help in the selection process. During closed callbacks, no one is permitted to watch except the directors. This is to enable the directors and the actors/acresses to concentrate fully on the scene or song being presented. Providing a calm, controlled atmosphere alleviates distractions and stress for those involved.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE AREA COORDINATOR DURING AUDITIONS AND CALLBACKS?

The Area Coordinator's prime function in the audition process is as facilitator of the paperwork. Area Coordinators do not make casting decisions. Their role is objective--filling out necessary forms, compiling information for the development of the cast of characters list and formulating Parent Committees. Area Coordinators do not judge auditions, and if their child or other relative has auditioned, they are not present during the directors' discussion of that child.

HOW DOES THE ARTISTIC TEAM ARRIVE AT DECISIONS FOR CASTING THE SHOW?

The directors have developed a particular concept for the show. Going into auditions, they have a general idea of character “types” to cast (i.e. hair color, height, general coloring or “look,” vocal range, acting ability). During the one-minute auditions, directors subjectively form an opinion as to which part a student could possibly perform best. In all reality, each director would most likely cast a show differently even with the same talent presented. Auditions are not “fair” in the sense that the decision is subjective, according to the director’s concept.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE CASTING PROCESS?

The artistic team for the show presides over auditions. This group generally consists of the director, musical director, and choreographer. These directors make the final decisions in casting the show, and any questions regarding your child’s particular audition should be directed toward them.

HOW CAN PARENTS BEST EXPLAIN AUDITION DECISIONS TO THEIR CHILDREN?

Whether a child is cast in the show or not, or cast in the role of his/her choice, a young student needs to learn to have a proper perspective on the auditioning process. Explaining the concept of fairness to a disappointed child is not easy, but taking healthy risks is important in the development of lifelong character traits. Students need to be encouraged not to base their self-worth on the role they did or did not get. Encourage your child not to place blame on themselves, the director, or others. Remind your child that this is a subjective decision based on a director’s concept of the production.

DO CYT CLASSES PREPARE STUDENTS FOR LEAD ROLES?

CYT training is designed to give basic instruction in a variety of theater arts topics. This training, provided by qualified teachers, will subsequently build character, promote self-esteem, develop discipline, and cultivate commitment. No matter what profession a child chooses, our goal is that CYT training can be applied to everyday living. Taking CYT classes does not guarantee a lead role, but it is designed to offer quality theater arts training and character building that will make a difference in each child’s life.

CYT NOTES:





STAFF MISSION STATEMENT

"To value each individual—child, parent, staff, patron, volunteer—
as our highest priority while trusting God to fulfill
our vision to provide an ever improving product."



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