

Vocal Guidelines for Songwriting

CATEGORIES

- Choir
- Rap Solo
- Rap Group
- Songwriting
- Vocal Ensemble, Small
- Vocal Ensemble, Large
- Vocal Solo, Female
- Vocal Solo, Male
- Worship Team

A participant may enter the same song in more than one category. For example, the student may sing a solo version of a song that is used in a vocal ensemble. However, a student or group of students may not enter the same category twice.

Synthesizers / keyboards are only provided for Worship Team and Rap.
A piano or keyboard is provided for Songwriting, Vocal Ensemble/Solos and Choir.

GENERAL VOCAL DIVISION RULES

- Use of pre-programmed or pre-recorded loops/software is not allowed; any looping or sequencing technology must function only in response to manual and live hands-on control.
- Click tracks, metronomes, or other rhythmic stability assistance devices or technology are disallowed.
- Choir is the only Vocal Division category allowed a conductor/director as part of the presentation. No other Vocal category is permitted to have a conductor. Participants in those categories receiving rhythm, balance/blend or cut-off cues from coaches or directors seated in the audience will receive rule-violation point deductions.
- Choir, Vocal Ensemble/Solo Accompaniment:
 - Choir and Vocal entries may choose to have or not to have accompaniment.
 - Accompanists are not considered part of the entry.
 - The accompanist may be an adult or student.
 - Accompanists are allowed to use music.
 - A maximum of four instruments from the allowed instruments list may be used for live accompaniment. A piano is the only instrument that will be provided for Vocal Ensemble/Solo entries.

Songwriting

Songwriting entries are not evaluated on the presentation of the performer(s). However, the performance of the song can either strengthen or weaken the entire presentation. The criteria used to evaluate Songwriting entries will not support Rap entries.

- Songwriting is the art of writing a Christian or sacred composition including both music and lyrics.
- Songwriting entries may consist of one (1) to five (5) eligible students.
- Songwriting entries are allowed five (5) minutes to present their selection. There are 90 seconds for set up and 90 seconds for tear down.
- Three sets of lyric sheets must be hand delivered to the evaluators at each level of participation. Lyric sheets must be typed with the sections of the song clearly marked (chorus, verse, bridge, etc.) and must have a title page or heading that includes the following information:
 - Title
 - Category
 - Composer(s)
 - School name, city and state

- Songwriting entries must be entirely the original work of the student(s) and not previously submitted in this festival.
- If an accompaniment track is created for the Festival, all musicians used to create the accompaniment must meet the age or grade requirements of the Festival but do not need to register as participants.
- A maximum of four (4) instruments may be used for accompaniment (either recorded or live).
- Songwriting entries may be performed by the composer(s) or by another student or group of students.
- All music performed live must be memorized.
- The students who perform live at the Festival must meet the age or grade requirements of the Festival. Students performing live as accompanists do not need to register as participants. No adult accompanists or group members are allowed.

Songwriting Evaluation Criteria

Each entry will be evaluated on criteria established by LCS Festival including the following:

• Selection

- o Christian message – presents a clear Christian message with ministry effectiveness in mind.
- o Appropriate - appropriate level of difficulty; appropriate for this festival
- o Arrangement – well-rounded, cohesive musical statement
- o Originality – original in its concept, lyrics, and melody; demonstrates a fresh approach.

• Communication

- o Use of poetic language – employs poetic language, such as similes and metaphors.
- o Rhyme scheme – follows a rhyme scheme that is unique in its wording.
- o Lyrical hook - composed around a lyrical concept/phrase that is restated or woven throughout the selection
- o Clear message – reveals a message that is clearly understood by the listener.

• Presentation/Technique

- o Introduction/song length – an introduction that sets the mood of the song; a song that is not too long or too short.
- o Harmonic structure – the harmonic structure of the song must follow acceptable musical practice and should be enriched beyond the primary chords of I, IV, and V.
- o Phrasing – melodic and lyrical phrasing follows the concept of the song.
- o Melodic development – variations in the melody after being stated in its initial form.
- o Song form – structure of the composition is in “song” form (for example, introduction, verse, chorus, verse, chorus, bridge, modulation into chorus, coda/tag).
- o Use of figurative language – creative and effective use of descriptive words, creates a mental picture.
- o Time frame/development – develops of the overall harmonic structure that fits into a proportional time frame where one section is not emphasized to the detriment of another section.
- o Contrast/variation – variations and contrasts in the harmonic structure and the melodic line.
- o Clear theme – overall concept and melodic motif clearly developed.
- o Memorable tune – melody is memorable and singable.

• Effectiveness

- o Evident ministry – evidence of spiritual motivation demonstrated with sincerity and passion.
- o Interpretation of clear thought – consistent interpretation of the musical style and lyrical line throughout the song.
- o Relevance – music and lyrics are in a style and form that connects with the listener.
- o Understandable concept - the combination of music selection, communication, presentation/technique and effectiveness attaining a response.