

WHAT IS THE WARD METHOD?

SJCS JUNIOR CHOIR Grades 3-6

The Ward Method is named after Justine Ward's method of teaching music through games and challenges with younger children. This method, based on *Gregorian chant* elements, was designed not only to help children sing correctly but to help in *character formation*, to integrate the intellect with his or her emotional nature and to lift the child's soul into a spiritual world of truth and beauty. It had been used very successfully in Catholic schools over the past century, but fell out of practice during the 1960's. It is slowly but steadily making a comeback in elementary Catholic schools and establishing itself in excellent choral music programs (such as the choirs of Atonement Academy) as a method of choice. SJCS is the only choral program using Ward in the city of Calgary. Because our choirs are trained to sing sacred music with an emphasis on beauty, the Ward Method is an ideal method of musical formation for our junior choir. With this musical formation, the students are very well prepared for the performance and liturgical commitments of the senior choir.

Correct vocal production is taught through *Intonation Exercises* designed to perfect sight-reading skills. The Ward Method involves a high degree of class participation using sight-reading, body movement, and melodic & rhythmic *dictation*. In summary, children in the junior choir learn to:

- recognize musical tones;
- understand tonal relationships;
- associate musical sounds with printed symbols;
- transform their speaking voices into musical instruments;
- appreciate the world of ordered movement which we call rhythm;
- develop basic musical skills preparatory to the disciplined renditions of great music;
- share intimately in noble works of music art through study, appreciation and performance;
- discover the rich heritage of religious music preserved by the Church through the centuries.