

VOICE LESSONS

WEEK ONE

POSTURE/BREATHING/SUPPORT

Use music team members if necessary to help with these lessons. If you end up with lots of guests assign music team members to small groups but lead the lessons.

Remember to reinforce this often during the rehearsal.

Posture:

- Feet hip-width apart
- Knees unlocked and flexible
- Ribcage up and wide
- Shoulders relaxed and aligned
- Chin parallel to floor

Breath/Support:

- Lower abdomen is the bellows
- Epigastrium - the triangle directly below where the ribs come together in front - is the control center.

Exercises:

Put one hand on the bellows and one on the control center, fill both hands with air and feel both expand, expel air and feel the bellows lifting. Fill both with air again and this time keep the control center full or wide while expelling air from the bellows. Now only the bellows needs to be filled with air.

Put one hand on the bellows and one on the control center, fill both hands with air and feel both expand, hold the breath by keeping ribs wide and control center firm, leave throat open; exhale and repeat.

Put one hand on the bellows and one on the control center, using a slow metronome beat, fill both hands with air to the count of 4, expel air from the bellows to the count of 8 (do this 3X); fill the bellows to the count of 4, expel air from the bellows to the count of 12 (do this 3X); fill the bellows to the count of 2, expel air from the bellows to the count of 16 (do this 3X)

Put one hand on the bellows and one on the control center, fill both hands with air and exhale on 2 staccato and 1 long "sh", feel the bellows pulling up and the control center pressing out firmly, breath and repeat for 30

seconds; fill with air and exhale on 4 staccato and 1 long “sh”, repeat for 30 seconds; fill with air and exhale on 7 staccato “sh”, breath on 8, repeat for 30 seconds.

Any staccato exercise will help build the support muscles.

WEEK TWO

FOCUS/SPACE

Use music team members if necessary to help with these lessons. If you end up with lots of guests assign music team members to small groups but lead the lessons.

Review last week’s lesson on Posture/Breath/Support. Remember to reinforce these during the rehearsal.

Focus

Drool Jaw – jaw should be relaxed always and should never extend below the “drool” place.

Tongue Garage – the roof of the mouth where the tongue should reside when at rest.

Loose Lips – lips should not become blankets for the teeth – air should be able to touch the front of the teeth – not to be mistaken for “fish lips”

Speak/Sing – singing as we speak with little effort in the face and mouth

Exercises:

- Choose an easy song like Twinkle Little Star and bubble it – this loosens the lips and jaw and makes the vocal cords come together without tension.
- Flah Flah Nee – don’t allow the jaw to swing lower than the “drool” place on “ah” and be sure that “ah” is a bigger opening than “ee”
- Hung-ee, Hung-ah, Hung-oo, Hung-oh – use the “ng” to feel the buzzy sound that should be maintained on the vowel; relax the tongue to the front of the mouth and let the back of the tongue stay up and relaxed near the “tongue garage”. Any exercise with “ng” will accomplish this – like Zing-a-zoo or Ding-ding-dong
- Speak/Sing – say “ee” and feel where the jaw, lips and tongue are – sing “ee” in the same place – say it and sing it until they are the same; repeat with any vowel
- Put any vowels together in an exercise and make sure that all vowels are sung in the same place – there should be a buzz maintained thru all vowels.

Space

Smile!! – smile with a twinkle in your eye and the soft palate will lift – as long as the jaw isn’t below the “drool” place.

Space is ALWAYS up (soft palate), not down (throat)

Exercises:

- On a high pitch (A or B above middle C) sing an “ng” sound with lots of forceful air, then open to an “ee” sound and feel the soft palate go up.
- Kee Kay Kah Koh Koo - any exercise with a “k” will exercise the soft palate lifting

WEEK THREE

CONSONANTS/DYNAMICS

Use music team members if necessary to help with these lessons. If you end up with lots of guests assign music team members to small groups but lead the lessons.

Review Posture/Breath/Support and Focus/Space. Remember to incorporate these into the rehearsal.

Consonants

Wall of Sound – what you get when you sing THRU the consonants.

Drool Jaw, Loose Lips and Flexible Tongue – what you need in order to accomplish Wall of Sound

Exercises:

- Choose an easy song like Twinkle Little Star and bubble it – then immediately sing it with the same amount of air used to bubble.
- EE AY AH OH OO – sing this exercise with vowels and make sure vowels maintain the buzz sound; add a consonant to the beginning of each pitch using the same vowels – feel for air coming thru the consonants, listen for legato singing; use every consonant in the alphabet for this exercise.

Dynamics

More Air = More Sound

Less Air = Less Sound

Use control center to control amount of air

Exercises:

- Put one hand on the control center, sing an “ee” at a medium volume and feel the firmness under your hand, sing louder and feel the firmness loosen up and allow more air out from the bellows; sing at a medium volume and feel the firmness in the control center, tighten there and allow less air from the bellows to sing a softer volume. Continue singing louder and softer using the control center to control the air.