

Questions and Answers
Concerning Morning Band (for Grades 5-8)
at West Catholic High School

- 1.) **When will the band students meet?** Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:15 to 8 am will be reserved for all beginners. Non-Beginners will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:15 to 8 am. (students who have played for one year or more).
- 2.) **When do they start?** Non beginning band students will start meeting the week of Tuesday September 12. Beginners will meet at West Catholic for the first time on Wednesday Sept. 20 (Please come on your grade level days.)
- 3.) **How does transportation to West Catholic work?** Parents can drop their students off at West Catholic from 7 am to 7:15 am and a bus will leave West at 8:05 am and bring them to their parish school. However, if you, as their parents, are more comfortable driving them both ways, you are certainly able to do that. Please just park for pick up on the West side of the school building near the football stadium.
- 4.) **What if I cannot make the trek to West 2 to 4 times a week?** I encourage parents to try carpooling. Over the years, many parents have gotten together and established a carpool. Some parents have also found that dropping their students off at 7:15 am is actually more convenient for their work schedule.
- 5.) **How much does it cost?** The cost is \$230 per student for the year for all students. This helps cover buses, music, music equipment, instruction (stands, percussion equipment, repairs etc). **This payment will be collected thru an online registration process. The registration link will be shared with you soon.** If you have a beginner, there is also the cost of obtaining an instrument and instructional book to consider.
- 6.) **What if my family is going through a hardship and we just cannot afford band even though we see the merit in it for our child?** I do not want cost to be the determining factor in denying your son/daughter this wonderful opportunity. You may contact me or your school principal in confidence, and we will do all we can to provide the help needed.
- 7.) **How will beginning students be able to choose an instrument?** Students need to be fitted for instruments where they will have the chance to have the most success. **WE HAVE SCHEDULED AN OPEN HOUSE TYPE EVENING FOR BAND STUDENTS AND PARENTS FROM 5PM TO 8 PM ON TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 12 where students can come, TO THE MAK** (follow the signs) at different times to West Catholic and try instruments with professionals in a safe manner. Because you do not want to spend all night there, please have them start thinking about what instrument they would want to start on now. Considering at least two different possibilities is recommended. Have your child check them out via youtube. We have kids start on Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone and Percussion (Bells/Drums). Drums is not drum set but it is part of percussion (mallet instruments, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, timpani's, triangle etc.). Bells is where we start. All of the instruments can lead to secondary instruments that we have at the school like tenor sax, piccolo, bass clarinet, or tuba for examples.

- 8.) **How do I go about getting an instrument?** There are three ways in which to do so. You can rent one on a rent to own plan offered thru West Michigan Band Instruments or other music stores. **THEY WILL BE AT WEST FOR THE OPEN HOUSE FITTING ON SEPTEMBER 12 FROM 5 PM TO 8 PM.** You can buy a new or used one outright from West Michigan Band Instruments or others. Or you may find a used one elsewhere at a good price. If you do find a used one, I recommend that you get it checked out first and thoroughly cleaned by a professional or a reputable music store. You will want to make sure that you are aware of any possible repairs that are needed. Also, beware of Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, or internet instruments; often times these are not worth the materials it took to build them. Reputable names are: Yamaha, Bach, Selmer, Bundy, Gmeinhardt, King, Vito, Conn, Antigua and others. If you are unsure, call West Michigan Band Instruments and ask them if they carry the brand in question. They will carry all the major band manufacturers and would be able to tell you if someone is trying to sell you a dud.
- 9.) **What books do they need?** If they are just beginning, they will need **a black paperback book for their instrument; it is titled, "Essential Elements"**. The books cost around \$12 and WM Band Instruments should have them in stock. If not, they can order them and they will be delivered to us in a short time.
- 10.) **Do I have to do business with West Michigan Band Instruments?** Certainly not. You can go to any music store you choose. I do not in any way work for them. I simply recommend them because they have done a good job in dealing with our Catholic Schools over the years. West Michigan Band Instruments is located on the NW corner of Plainfield and 4 mile.
- 11.) **Do the band students have concerts?** Yes, we do at least two a year combining with other schools including West Catholic. **One is currently scheduled on Thursday January 11th at 7 pm and the other is on scheduled for Sunday May 19th at 2:30 pm.** These dates could change if there are any parish conflicts we can avoid. Please enter these dates into your phone calendars now.
- 12.) **Are there any after school rehearsals?** No
- 13.) **How many schools are involved in combination?** Four. They are in no particular order: Holy Spirit, Saint Anthony's, Assumption and Holy Trinity. They, along with West Catholic, Saint Patrick's and All Saints Academy, are the schools currently involved in our West Catholic band program. It should be noted that All Saints and St. Patrick's are involved with both West Catholic and Catholic Central.
- 14.) **As a band student, will my child have other opportunities?** Yes. There is a Middle School Jazz band in which students can audition. We have several students playing in Mass at their own parishes. We have some students participating in the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Solo and Ensemble Festival. We have a summer band program. We have taken bands on the road. We have even had students writing their own pieces. As opportunities arise, we try to offer them to our students.

- 15.) **What if my child wants to try band but is not sure whether they would like it?** West Michigan Instruments, as well as others, often offer a four-month or so trial period for returns. That should get your child through the first concert. By then, you and your child should know. However, **the cost to participate will still be due by Nov. 2nd**. I recommend that you encourage your child to stay with it for the year; it gets better with time and often kids will not see that at first. Gratification is not instant but definitely comes with time and some effort put in by them.
- 16.) **What if my child is an athlete?** So was I and so is nearly 95% of our High School Band students. They all came up through the ranks learning that reasonable conflicts can be resolved. Many of my high school students end up being leaders on their teams. Band naturally shapes and fosters future leaders. Most parents want students to be well rounded as they one day leave Grade School; this is one more chance to help make that happen.
- 17.) **Why is band important?** First, music is one of the most splendid gifts God has ever given us; to participate in that gift is an honor. Second, students will gain both personal intrinsic growth and a stronger ability to interact with others. Third, there is overwhelming and undisputed evidence to support improvement in core academics through participation in band. High school students observed around the country participating in organized music programs finished an average of forty points higher on the Math portion of the SAT test and 30 points higher on the English. Music is also recognized as helping to make easy the learning of another language IE Spanish, French, Latin or Chinese. It even helps to produce better readers and writers. I strongly encourage your own research.
- 18.) **If I have any questions whom do I call or email?** Call or email me, Darren LaPrise 616-558-2008 or Michael Michewicz at West Catholic—616-450-9390 or email darrenlaprise@grwestcatholic.org, michaelmichewicz@grwestcatholic.org. One may also try their school office; our fantastic school secretaries are up to speed on most of your questions.