

Senior Talent Competition Guidelines

Sponsored by the Church of God – USA Missions
Division of World Evangelization
Cleveland, Tennessee

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

1. To recognize and involve Church of God Seniors who demonstrate talent, skill, and accomplishment in art, music, and writing.
2. To motivate seniors to utilize their talents in worship and in the evangelism ministries of the church, consecrating their talents for the purpose of Christian witness.
3. To provide evaluative data on performances which may serve as a guide for continued development of skills and talents for the glory of God.
4. To promote personal proficiency and growth in spiritual development, academic improvement, performance of Christian music, and proficiency in art and writing.
5. To provide opportunities for seniors to interact socially in Christian fellowship.
6. To develop a sense of accomplishment, ministry, and communication for Christ through their talents.

TWO LEVELS OF COMPETITION

1. State-Level

The state director of USA Missions will direct the program on the state-level. The director shall coordinate the state-level competition prior to the national-level competition and can initiate that competition for any categories deemed necessary. However, if a category is offered beyond the scope of what is listed in these guidelines for national-level, there will be no national-level competition for that category.

2. National-Level

The Church of God – USA Missions will coordinate and supervise the national-level competition, which is conducted at the annual Smoky Mountain Jubilee.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

1. A regular attendee of the Church of God.
2. Represent only the Church of God participant regularly attends.
3. Age 50 and above on the day national-level competition begins.
4. Registered for both senior talent and the entire Smoky Mountain Jubilee.
5. State-level winners are to be officially entered in national-level competition by their state director.
6. If the state-level winner is unable to participate at the national-level, the runner-up shall be eligible to compete at the approval of the state director.
7. Can only enter a specific category once but can enter other categories in same division or other divisions. *(Example: Someone enters two poetry writings will only be allowed to submit one before competing at state-level. On the other hand, if someone enters one poetry and one short story this would be acceptable, because it is two different categories.)* This requirement is for all divisions.

STANDARDS OF ADJUDICATION

What standard of performance may an adjudicator reasonably expect of a participant or group of participants? The following comments are—of necessity—highly generalized. It is not our purpose to set up arbitrary standards of performance, which must be achieved by all participants in order to receive certain ratings. Rather, each performance must be adjudicated individually and in the final analysis each adjudicator must decide what rating each performance deserves.

Brief descriptions of the type of performance, which might be awarded the respective ratings in competition, are given below. These descriptions are offered, not as an attempt to pre-adjudicate any performance, but merely in hope that they will provide background to assist the participant in understanding the adjudication process.

Superior – 4.5 through 5.0

This rating represents the finest conceivable performance, worthy of distinction of being recognized as among the very best. While the adjudicator might find some minor points to criticize and make some helpful suggestions for further improvements, remarks would generally be complimentary for outstanding work.

Excellent – 3.5 through 4.4

This rating reflects an unusually worthy performance, but not one worthy of the highest rating due to minor defects. Yet, it is a performance of distinctive quality. The participant or group of participants with an excellent rating usually shows the result of sound fundamental training, but the performance lacks the polish and finesse to qualify for a superior rating. It is relatively easy for an adjudicator to comment on such a performance because the weaknesses stand out clearly against a generally first-rate background and suggestions are usually focused on something specific and helpful.

Very Good – 2.5 through 3.4

This rating is awarded for a very good performance, but one that is not outstanding. The performance shows accomplishments and marked promise but is lacking in one or more essential qualities. The rating indicates much room for improvement in several of the fundamental items listed on the adjudicator's scoring sheet. There would probably not be adequate space as well as time to record each separate error as it occurred. The participant would have some basically fine qualities, and there should be ample opportunities for the adjudicator to make suggestions for sound improvement in those fundamental factors in which the performance revealed weaknesses.

Good – 1.5 through 2.4

This rating describes a performance that shows some obvious weaknesses. These may simply reflect a lack of preparation time. This rating represents a performance, which is generally weak and uncertain. There are numerous errors and the performance reveals basic weaknesses in most of the fundamental factors listed on the scoring sheet. The adjudicator will probably not devote much space to pointing out specific errors in the performance. Comments, however, will likely be encouraging and contain helpful suggestions for improvement.

Satisfactory – 1.0 through 1.4

This rating indicates a performance, which reveals much room for improvement. It indicates a performance in which participants reveal almost a complete lack of preparedness and understanding. In some cases, this may be due to participants attempting to perform in a category, which is far too advanced for their ability. In others it may be due to an accumulation of careless and bad performance habits, which only tend to become accentuated and more noticeable as the individual or group matures. The adjudicator will point out any commendable features and the basic weaknesses in the performance and will make suggestions for improvement. These comments should encourage the participants to work toward improvement so that they may qualify for a higher rating in the future.

EXPLANATION OF ADJUDICATION

Scoring the Participant

Each participant is evaluated according to certain specific factors listed on the score sheet that we have included on each description.

Tallying the Score

After the adjudication has been completed, the score sheets are used to prepare an adjudicator's summary. On this summary, the score sheets from all the adjudicators for a particular participant are averaged together to determine the single rating for the participant. The tally person will convert the rating of each participant into a category.

The reason for this mathematical adjustment is obvious. Without a tempered chart, there probably would be no superior ratings; and most participants would rate proportionately lower.

For example, without the tempering effect, in order to gain a superior rating, a participant would have to score five points on each factor throughout the performance in the opinion of each adjudicator. This would be unlikely to say the least. With the tempered chart, there will be a few superior ratings, and all other participants will score in equal proportion.

Determining the Final Rating

The final decision on the rating to be earned by the participant is made by the panel of adjudicators. The prepared adjudicator's summary of each participant's performance, with the corresponding score sheets attached, is then returned to the adjudicators for a final analysis.

Since some relativism is involved in the scoring process, it is the privilege of the adjudicators to view the outcome and then alter any original scoring, if retrospection deems it necessary and feasible. The factor of relativism may cause one or more of the adjudicators unknowingly to become extreme in either direction. In fact, it is impossible to establish a proper median (i.e., an equal number of scores above and below the middle point of all the scores) until all participants have participated for the adjudicators. Hence, the provision for final deliberation assures the most accurate decision possible from the panel of adjudicators as a whole.

Determining the Final Winner

The participant with the highest score in any given category, after the adjudicators have completed their deliberation, is the winner of that particular category. In the case of numerical ties, the adjudicators will determine, through deliberation, which of the participants involved in the tie is to be the winner. The decision of the adjudicators is final and no explanation to anyone is needed to justify the decision.

Adjudicator's Evaluation to the Participant

There is space on each score sheet for the adjudicator to write comments and suggestions to the participant or group of participants as a current evaluation of their performance and as a guide for their development in the future.

Within a few weeks after state-level and national-level of competition is completed, a copy of the written comments and evaluations from each adjudicator will be mailed to the participants. Through this procedure, the adjudicators have an opportunity to communicate any observations they wish to make concerning strengths, weaknesses, and areas that need attention. Potentially, this adds a learning experience to the senior talent program.

CREATIVE ART DIVISION

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. State-level winners of the art division must submit same piece they won with at state-level and are not allowed to change to a different piece at the national-level.
2. All art division pieces must be the original work and idea of the participant submitting piece, and must not have been entered in previous state-level and national-level competition.
3. All general items categorized as a floral arrangement are not acceptable in the art division.

TEN CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPATION

1. CROCHET/KNITTING WEAVING CATEGORY

A. Description

Art of creating fabric by use of needles or loom.

2. DRY MEDIA CATEGORY

A. Description

Any two dimensional work, including but not limited to drawing, done with dry media such as pencil, pastel, conte crayon, charcoal, crayon, etc. or combination done on paper or other flat surfaces.

3. EMBROIDERY/NEEDLEPOINT/CROSS-STITCH/APPLIQUE CATEGORY

A. Description

Art of adding decoration, embellishment, etc. to fabric for a finished design.

4. HANDCRAFT CATEGORY

A. Description

Any handmade item with artistic emphasis that does not fit into any other category. Ceramics must be labeled "handmade or from a mould." Awards will be made at the discretion of the adjudicator.

5. OIL/ACRYLIC PAINTING CATEGORY

A. Description

Any oil based or synthetic based (such as acrylic or alkyd) painting done on a two-dimensional surface such as canvas or hardboard.

6. PHOTOGRAPHY CATEGORY

A. Description

Any image created by the use of camera, whether film or digital. Image must be printed on paper no smaller than 8x10 inches.

7. QUILTING CATEGORY

A. Description

Stitching through layers of fabric and quilting so as to create a design, such as quilts, wall hangings, table runners, clothing, etc.

8. SCULPTURE/CARVING CATEGORY

A. Description

Two or three-dimensional sculptural work created by carving or modeling. May be figurative or non-figurative. Excludes ceramic vessels with carved surfaces.

9. WET MEDIA PAINTING CATEGORY

A. Description

Any water based media such as transparent watercolor, opaque watercolor, water-based tempera or any combination of these done on a two-dimensional surface. Includes acrylic thinned down to the consistency of watercolor done on paper.

10. WOODWORK CATEGORY

A. Description

Wood pieces formed by the use of mechanical aids such as saws, sanders, etc. This includes furniture, musical instruments, tools, toys, etc., whether functional or decorative.

FACTORS USED (WHERE APPLICABLE) ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE PERFORMANCE

1. *Effectiveness of Composition* – harmony, visual balance, rhythm, proportion, repetition, contrast, line, shape, color, texture
2. *Creativity* – imagination, individuality
3. *Craftsmanship and Technique* – technical proficiency, attention to detail, neatness of work, appropriateness of material/medium

MUSIC DIVISION

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation is limited to the performance of Christian music. All styles of Christian music carry the same weight with the adjudicators. It is the quality of the performance that is judged. Christian music allows the competition to be more distinctive; it is directed toward the fulfillment of the objectives of the senior talent program.
2. In the state-level and national-level, participants in each category of vocals or instrumentals (solos, ensembles, choirs) will perform one selection.
3. Sound tracks may be used in any category but must be on a CD, no cassette tapes will be accepted. Also, the CD needs be a single track and no multiple tracks. *WARNING: If the adjudicators determine background vocals or duplication of the solo instrument on the tape distracts or interferes with the performance, points may be subtracted from the score.*
4. A participant will be disqualified at state-level and national-level if they fail to appear at the designated time and place for their performance.
5. Vocal participants may hold a microphone while singing in competition. *WARNING: Proper microphone technique is very important when a vocal participant selects to hold the microphone in competition.*
6. Maximum performance time for solos and ensembles is five minutes. Maximum performance time for choirs is ten minutes.
7. Performance must be "live." Pre-programmed sequencing is allowed but if the adjudicators determine the sequencing distracts or interferes with the performance; points may be subtracted from the score. Only the "live" performance will be adjudicated.
8. The same participants in a specific category at state-level must be the same participants at the national-level, no replacements.
9. Choir conductors/leaders are not required to be age 50 but must be a registered paid delegate of Smoky Mountain Jubilee.
10. All performances are recorded both audio and video. By registering for senior talent, you are agreeing to have your performance recorded and duplicated for sale with all rights retained by the Church of God.

SIX CATEGORIES WITH A TOTAL OF 15 AREAS OF PARTICIPATION

1. VOCAL SOLO CATEGORY

A. Classification

- 1) Vocal Solo-Male
- 2) Vocal Solo-Female

B. Description

The vocal solo category includes two areas of participation. The first area, vocal solo-male, is defined as one singer – male, accompanied or unaccompanied. The second area, vocal solo-female, is defined as one singer – female, accompanied or unaccompanied.

Piano, organ or both usually accompany the soloist; but any instrument or combination of instruments may be used as accompaniment. The accompaniment is not adjudicated. Only the vocal performance is evaluated in the vocal solo category. Nevertheless, a good strong accompaniment will enhance the solo performance. Evaluation of the soloist begins with entry on stage and ends with exit.

Voices are classified according to range, sex and somewhat according to quality. From high to low the basic classifications are soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Soprano and alto designate respectively high and low female voices. Tenor and bass designate high and low ranged male voices. The most ordinary range for a female voice is that of a mezzo (or half) and lies between a true soprano and alto. The parallel male voice between that of tenor and bass is known as baritone. These constitute the six basic voice classifications to be used in classifying soloists in the vocal solo category.

FACTORS USED ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE PERFORMANCE

1. *Tone* – quality, beauty, control
2. *Intonation* – pitch level, accuracy level
3. *Diction* – naturalness, purity of vowels, clarity of consonants
4. *Technique* – breathing, posture, rhythm, accuracy of notes
5. *Interpretation* – phrasing, style, tempo, expression
6. *Musical Effect* – fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
7. *Level of Difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
8. *Other Factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

2. VOCAL ENSEMBLE CATEGORY

A. Classification

- 1) Vocal Ensemble

B. Description

The vocal ensemble category is defined as 2 to 12 singers, including duets, trios, quartets, quintets, etc.; accompanied or unaccompanied with one or more singers to each vocal part. Vocal ensembles may be all male, all female, or mixed. The vocal ensembles may perform with or without a conductor. As in the vocal solo category, only the singers will be evaluated; however, a strong accompaniment is most beneficial. This category requires that more than one part be sung. This does not exclude unison or reduced-parts sections, but the main emphasis of the musical arrangement is upon harmonic blend. For example, a duet might utilize two parts; whereas, a group of ten voices will probably want to utilize four or more parts.

FACTORS USED ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE PERFORMANCE

1. *Tone* – quality, beauty, control
2. *Intonation* – pitch level, accuracy level
3. *Diction* – naturalness, purity of vowels, clarity of consonants
4. *Technique* – breathing, posture, rhythm, precision

5. *Balance* – blend, harmonic parts, dynamics
6. *Interpretation* – phrasing, style, tempo, expression
7. *Musical Effect* – feeling of ensemble, fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
8. *Level of Difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
9. *Other Factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

3. **CHOIR CATEGORY**

A. **Classification**

- 1) Local Church Choir
- 2) Statewide Choir

B. **Descriptions**

Local Church Choir

The local church choir category consists of 13 or more singers with or without a conductor. Choirs may consist of all males, all females, or mixed. Accompaniment is optional. Only the vocal performance of the group will be evaluated and not the accompaniment. A local church is permitted to enter only one choir in the national-level competition.

Statewide Choir

The statewide choir category consists of 13 or more singers with or without a conductor. Choirs may consist of all males, all females, or mixed. The singers can be made up from various choirs within the state or region. Accompaniment is optional. Only the vocal performance of the group will be evaluated and not the accompaniment.

FACTORS USED ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE PERFORMANCE

1. *Tone* – quality, beauty, control
2. *Intonation* – pitch level, accuracy level
3. *Diction* – naturalness, purity of vowels, clarity of consonants
4. *Technique* – breathing, posture, rhythm, precision
5. *Balance* – blend, harmonic parts, dynamics
6. *Interpretation* – phrasing, style, tempo, expression
7. *Musical Effect* – feeling of ensemble, fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
8. *Level of Difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
9. *Other Factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

4. **INSTRUMENTAL SOLO – KEYBOARD CATEGORY**

A. **Classification**

- 1) Piano
- 2) Electronic Keyboard
- 3) Accordion

B. Description

The instrumental solo-keyboard category consists of solo performances in three areas of participation. The three areas include: piano (acoustic piano, harpsichord and celesta), electronic keyboard and accordion. Participants in the electronic keyboard area may choose to perform on multiple electronic keyboards.

FACTORS USED ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE PERFORMANCE

1. *Tone* – quality, beauty, control
2. *Technique* – precision, use of pedals, note accuracy, finger dexterity, rhythm
3. *Interpretation* – phrasing, style, tempo, contrast, mood
4. *Musical Effect* – fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
5. *Level of Difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
6. *Other Factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

5. INSTRUMENTAL SOLO – NON-KEYBOARD CATEGORY

A. Classification

- 1) Brass
- 2) Percussion-Definite Pitch
- 3) Percussion-Indefinite Pitch
- 4) Strings-Bowed
- 5) Strings-Plucked
- 6) Woodwind

B. Description

The instrumental solo-non-keyboard category includes six areas of participation:

- 1) **Brass** – trumpet, coronet, French horn, tuba, sousaphone, baritone, euphonium, trombone, bass trombone, etc.
- 2) **Percussion-Definite Pitch** – timpani, kettledrums, glockenspiel, orchestra bells, tubular bells, chimes, xylophone, marimba, steel drum etc.
- 3) **Percussion-Indefinite Pitch** – drums, acoustic or electric, cymbals, triangle, gong tam-tam, congos, tambourine, woodblocks, temple blocks, castanets, maracas, claves; any combination of indefinite pitch percussion instruments may be played by one player, etc.
- 4) **Strings Bowed** – violin, viola, cello, double bass, etc.
- 5) **Strings Plucked** – acoustic or amplified guitar, banjo, mandolin, harp, lute, autoharp, etc.
- 6) **Woodwind** – flute, harmonica, piccolo, clarinet, saxophone, oboe, English horn, bassoon, contrabassoon, melodica, etc.

This category covers all instruments except those classified as keyboard. It must be stressed firmly that the adjudicators will rate the soloist's performance and not the accompanist's performance. If the accompaniment embodies a group of players, the soloist must clearly be the soloist and not simply part of the accompaniment or ensemble. The participant must perform on only one instrument. There is one exception to this ruling: A participant in the percussion-indefinite pitch area may perform any combination of the indefinite pitch percussion instruments. A participant in the percussion-definite pitch area must perform on only one instrument, with the exception of timpani.

FACTORS USED ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE PERFORMANCE

Brass

1. *Tone* – beauty, control
2. *Intonation* – accuracy of pitch
3. *Technique* – articulation, auxiliary fingering, breathing, embouchure, facility, rhythm
4. *Interpretation* – expression, phrasing, style, tempo
5. *Musical Effect* – fluency, artistry
6. *Level of Difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
7. *Other Factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

Percussion

1. *Tone* – beauty, control
2. *Technique* – rudiments - rhythmic accuracy
3. *Position* – body, hands, instrument
4. *Interpretation* – balance, dynamics, expression, phrasing, tempo
5. *Musical Effect* – fluency, artistry
6. *Level of Difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
7. *Other Factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

Strings

1. *Tone* – beauty, control
2. *Intonation* – accuracy of pitch
3. *Technique* – bowing, facility, fingering, rhythm
4. *Interpretation* – expression, phrasing, style, tempo
5. *Musical Effect* – fluency, artistry
6. *Level of Difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
7. *Other Factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

Woodwind

1. *Tone* – beauty, control
2. *Intonation* – accuracy of pitch
3. *Technique* – articulation, auxiliary
4. *Interpretation* – expression, phrasing, style, tempo
5. *Musical Effect* – fluency, artistry
6. *Level of Difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
7. *Other Factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

6. INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE CATEGORY

A. Classification

- 1) Instrumental Ensemble

B. Description

- 1) The instrumental ensemble category is designated as 2-12 players (hand bells-unlimited number of players) with any combination of instruments with only one area of participation. The participants may perform with or without a conductor. When performing without a conductor, precision is imperative for the group of participants.

FACTORS USED ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE YOUR PERFORMANCE

1. *Tone* – quality, beauty, control
2. *Intonation* – pitch level, accuracy level, tuning
3. *Technique* – fingering, precision, rhythm, breathing or bowing, choice and execution, articulation, embouchure
4. *Balance* – blend, harmonic parts, dynamics
5. *Interpretation* – phrasing, style, tempo, expression
6. *Musical effect* – fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
7. *Level of difficulty* – easy, medium, difficult
8. *Other factors* – stage presence and appearance, choice of music

CREATIVE WRITING DIVISION

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. State-level winners of the writing division must submit same piece they won with at state-level and is not allowed to change to a different piece at the national-level.
2. All writing division pieces must be the original work and idea of the participant submitting piece, and must not have been entered in previous state-level and national-level competition.
3. Format for creative writings: (*no art work on piece allowed*)
 - Creative Writing to be typed, double spaced, using 12 or 14 font (times new roman)
 - Cover page (center of page) – *1st line*-participant's first and last name, *2nd line*-Church of God state office representing, *3rd line*-how many lines? (poetry) or how many words? (short story), *4th line*-title of writing in all caps

TWO CREATIVE WRITING DIVISION CATEGORIES FOR PARTICIPATION

1. POETRY CATEGORY

A. Description

A rhymed or unrhymed verse of not more than 16 lines, which develop a central theme or image.

FACTORS USED ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE YOUR PERFORMANCE

1. *Impact* – overall effectiveness
2. *Originality* – creativity and imagination
3. *Use of Language* – alliteration, assonance, effectiveness of phrasing, care in diction, precision in word selection, intensity of phrase construction
4. *Control* – precision of line construction, effectiveness of rhythm (either classical or natural), ease in flow of lines, evidence of mastery of poetic technique and discipline
5. *Imagery* – ability to create word pictures, appeal to imagination, senses and intellect, symbolism
6. *Theme* – message or meaning of poem
7. *Participation Requirements* – participant information, typewritten, double spaced, correct category, line limitation

2. SHORT STORY CATEGORY

A. Description

A fictional piece of not more than 2000 words, which utilize setting, plot, and characterization to reveal an implied theme.

FACTORS USED ON THE ADJUDICATOR'S SCORE SHEET TO RATE YOUR PERFORMANCE

1. *Impact* – overall effectiveness
2. *Characterization* – believability of characters, insight into human behavior
3. *Setting* – unity, appropriateness to theme, development
4. *Plot* – feasibility, unit of action, appropriateness to theme
5. *Mechanics* – grammatical usage, spelling, punctuation
6. *Theme* – evidence of abstract thought, clarity, subtlety of presentation, significance
7. *Use of Language* – symbolism, alliteration, assonance, effectiveness of sentence structure
8. *Participation Requirements* – participant information, typewritten, double spaced, correct category, word limitation

