

# Boys Choir of Harlem: Singing for America

Anthony Ajaero goes to school so he can become a lawyer someday. But he also goes to school to sing. Recently, Anthony and his choir mates have been helping many people overcome feelings of **grief**<sup>1</sup> and loss.

At the Choir Academy of Harlem, in New York City, students learn about math, grammar, history, and music. The school has separate choirs for boys and girls. Recently, the choirs have been performing at many memorial services across the country.

Their concerts have comforted many families of the victims of the terrorist attacks on September 11.

*Weekly Reader* recently spoke with Anthony Ajaero, 14, a soprano-alto choir member. Anthony is in the ninth grade.

**Weekly Reader:** What is a **typical**<sup>2</sup> school day like for you?

**Anthony:** I leave my house around 7:00 in the morning. My first class starts around 8:00. I take classes in biology, global studies, and piano. I have choir and dance rehearsal from 2:30 until 6:30. I get home around 7:30 or 8:00 at night.

**WR:** How long have you been singing with the choir?

**Anthony:** I've been with the choir for two years. I play the trumpet and piano. But I prefer singing. Your voice is an instrument that you can play anywhere.

**WR:** What has it been like to perform with the choir at memorial services for September 11 victims?

**Anthony:** It is quite an experience. We've done a lot of shows to support the families of the victims. I feel connected to the families.

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<sup>1</sup> **grief:** deep sadness

<sup>2</sup> **typical:** usual; ordinary

Singing at these services has taught me to value the little things you get in life. I think the choir has helped the families heal.

**WR:** What is it like to be a choir member?

**Anthony:** The choir performs all over the country and the world. We just sang in Japan. I get to see the world through singing in the choir. I work hard at singing. I put a lot of time and effort into the choir. Not many kids get to do what I do.

**WR:** What is your favorite song to perform?

**Anthony:** I like singing "We Shall Overcome." It is a song that brings people together. [I] can connect with people while we're singing. It's really touching to see and hear people come together.

Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Boys Choir of Harlem” Questions**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Anthony seems like
  - a. a hard worker.
  - b. a good musician.
  - c. a nice person.
  - d. all of the above.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. To be able to go the Choir Academy of Harlem, Anthony has to
  - a. be very wealthy.
  - b. be athletic.
  - c. be disciplined.
  - d. like biology.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. This passage is
  - a. a list.
  - b. a poem.
  - c. an interview.
  - d. fiction.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which of the following shows that Anthony is caring?
  - a. He sings in a choir.
  - b. He has traveled to Japan.
  - c. He works very hard.
  - d. He enjoys performing for the families of victims.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Why did the author write this passage? Explain.

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## Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Boys Choir of Harlem” Answer Sheet**

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a. a hard worker.  
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- C 4. Which of the following shows that Anthony is caring?  
a. He sings in a choir.  
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c. He works very hard.  
**d. He enjoys performing for the families of victims.**
- AP 5. Why did the author write this passage? Explain.

Answers will vary. The author wrote this to inform the reader about the Choir Academy of Harlem and to introduce Anthony and his life to the reader.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary:  
grammar, soprano, alto, value, touching, victims, terrorist*