

## Cornerstone University Chorale Florida Tour Students' Reflections March 2016

"After last year's very successful East Coast tour I was really looking forward to spending time with Chorale again on this tour. This year the members of Chorale seemed even more closely knit together. The family atmosphere in Chorale was seen in our performances too, as many listeners said we sounded in perfect unison."



"Chorale tour taught me how to be intentional in my relationship with the Lord and my relationships with others. On tour we were given time to dig deep into God's word. For me, this quiet time with the Lord wasn't like my often failed attempts to spend time with Him. During this structured time, I actually felt as if I actually grew closer to the Lord. I was more focused, and I actually pursued Him. This intentionality carried into my relationships with my host families and other Chorale members. I found myself being more open to getting to know people and developing deep, meaningful relationships with them. Chorale tours aren't just a time of singing the songs we learn over the course of the year; they go much deeper than that. As a result of this tour, I came out a better version of myself than I was before I boarded the plane to Orlando. I am forever grateful for this opportunity."

"Chorale tour provided me with revelation and a sense of God's grace AFTER the trip. Unlike previous tours, I hadn't prepared myself for God's intervention. I began this tour feeling unworthy, undeserving of God's gifts and grace. I was spiritually unprepared thinking I would just float through the trip without God doing any work in me. I couldn't have been more wrong. I had cried out to God for several months wondering when he was going to prove to me yet again that he hasn't abandoned me. Through the concerts, conversations, prayer times, and quiet times I noticed God opening me to the greatest joy and elation that I've felt in nearly four years. In the few days following tour, I remembered what it was like to experience the unhindered joy of the Lord, and to be completely overwhelmed by his provision, purpose, and plan. Tours like ours provide space and time for clarity—to connect the dots of God's countless blessings in our lives."



"Tour was a time of learning for me. I learned how important and meaningful showing hospitality can be, and I learned how to worship God and minister through performances. I learned that praising God is not a "because I feel like it" action. Rather, it is a constant "because He is worthy of my praise" action. I loved learning more about the other students and watching us all grow from friends into family. Most of all, I enjoyed standing in awe of the fact that even though we are all still learning, God chose to work through us."

“During the midst of a rigorous tour schedule, I was encouraged during prayer and devotional times that were intentionally scheduled for the group. Through these times the Lord reminded me that true contentment and joy are only found in Him. I was beginning to worry about doing things perfectly in my life and, as a result, losing the joy of trusting God in the midst of the unknown. I was reminded that the joy of the Lord should be my strength. He is the only One who gives lasting fulfillment, not the things of this earth. I was blessed by the words of *Be Thou My Vision* that we sang in a worship time one morning: Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art. Thou my best thought, by day or by night; waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.”

“God speaks to us every day, but we are much more open to his voice during times like Chorale tour when we are intentionally spending time with him, singing his praises, and sharing his blessings. Much of our repertoire expressed God’s holiness, magnificence, and omnipotence. Throughout the course of the trip, I was able to appreciate his unchanging qualities so much better because of the words we were singing. God also used my peers and host families to remind me of simple truths that I so easily forget: God is always near. He is in control. He is incredibly merciful. He pursues us. We quoted our theme verses during pre-concert prayer each day. One says, “My heart, O God, is steadfast. I will sing and make music with all my soul” (Ps 108:1). That does not always ring true for me. Many times I am painfully aware of my own wandering, disloyal heart. And yet the beautiful truth is that God does not give up on us. That is what I was reminded of on this tour.”



“I had one particularly meaningful quiet time on the bus on the topic of abandonment. This idea is so hard to grasp because we are called to completely abandon our desires so that we can grow closer to God. Too many times I go to God to get something FROM Him, when I should be going to God to be WITH Him. Being with God instead of just going to Him for something will help grow a more intimate relationship with Him. I’m always thankful for the impact that Chorale has on my life, and this year’s tour was another reminder of how blessed I am.”



“God showed up in many ways during our tour. He was faithful in revealing Himself to me, and He did some much needed breaking and repairing in my life. As followers of Christ, we are called to give ourselves fully to Him. I claimed to do that, but there were areas in my life that I didn’t want to acknowledge out of fear and shame. Through our concerts, quiet time, and host families stays, God showed me that the shame I carried and the parts of me that I didn’t want to let go of were hindering my ability to serve Him. During the tour, God gave me the strength to let go of that shame, to leave it at the cross in order to serve Him more fully. I now know freedom.”