

Cantor Directives

Preparation

Quiet and prepare yourself before Mass. Say a prayer. Go over your music. Review the liturgy so nothing surprises you. Ask any questions you have about the songs now, or forever hold your peace! Say hi to the priest and lectors. Be confident, and envision your success!

Opening Song

Approach the podium and greet the assembly with a warm, inviting smile. Announce the song number and title. Back off (but don't stop singing) on the second verse, especially if the song is familiar to the assembly. *Good Morning! Please join in singing our opening hymn, Number 123 in the red hymnal: Title, Number 1 – 2 – 3*

Kyrie or Gloria

Remain standing at the podium after the opening song. Participate in the introductory rite prayer. Don't just wait for it to be your turn again! The Kyrie (Lord have mercy) is sung during the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent. The Gloria is sung during Christmas, Easter, and Ordinary Time. Be attentive; the presider may begin to recite the prayer on accident. If he does, just go with the flow.

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) Acclamation

This will be sung at the 9:30 a.m. Mass, when CLOW is being held. There is no need to announce the song since the refrain is short and easy to repeat. Be sure to announce clearly.

Responsorial Psalm

This is your time to shine, and for the assembly to shine, too! Announce the Psalm number and title. Intone the psalm once, and invite the assembly to respond with a warm look and gesture. Engage eye contact when it is the assembly's turn to sing. Back off if they know the refrain well, but don't stop singing altogether. Sing the verses clearly and with proper inflection.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! During Lent, an alternative refrain is used, often an English paraphrase of the Hebrew "hallelujah." (Give God praise.) Just like the psalm, intone the refrain, and then invite the assembly to join you. Sing the appropriate verse clearly, and invite the assembly to come back in on the refrain.

Intercessions

You will lead the intercessions if they are sung. Use the liturgy sheets as a guide so you know when to sing. Engage eye contact as you sing the invitation: "Let us pray to the Lord," and gesture the assembly to respond. Sing the response with them, but sing subtly when they know their response.

Offertory Song

Announce the song number. Invite the assembly to sing. Back off on the second verse, especially if it is a song the assembly knows well. *As we offer our gifts to the Lord, Join us in singing No. 123: Title, No. 1-2-3*

Eucharistic Acclamations & Lamb of God

Warmly gesture for the assembly to join in singing these prayers. Sometimes the assembly sings throughout, and sometimes the assembly has a responsive part.

- *Sanctus* – warmly gesture for the assembly to join in singing this prayer.
- *Memorial Acclamation* – words change occasionally, double-check that you are singing the correct version (or it will throw your accompanist for a loop!)
- *Great Amen* – Be passionate. Amen means “I believe!” or “So say I!”
- *Agnus Dei* – You sing the tropes, and the assembly responds. The first and last tropes are always “Lamb of God.” You may pick a middle trope (or ask Jessica to pick one) that corresponds with the message of the day. Ex: Lord of Love for a wedding, Bread of Life for funerals and eucharistic themes, Prince of Peace for Christmas, Risen Lord for Easter. Or make up your own... just stick to the rhythmic scheme of the setting.

Communion Song

After the priest takes communion, announce the song, and invite the assembly to sing. Back off if they are singing well. Sing as many verses as are needed. Go receive communion when the time comes, but try to end the song in a logical place! If you have a chance to go to communion at a different Mass (with the choir) that would be easier. *Please join in singing our communion song, No. 123: Title, No. 1-2-3*

Closing Song

Re-energize the community as they are going into the world. Announce the song and invite the assembly to sing. Back off if they are singing. *As we go forth, join in singing our closing song, No. 123: Title, No. 1-2-3*

Tips

- Smile!
- Look up as often as you can. Engage the assembly with eye contact.
- Use large embracing gestures in cases when the assembly is not sure when to sing.
- Use smaller, equally embracing gestures when the assembly knows what to do.
- There is no need to end a song that the assembly is enjoying just because “it’s time.”
- Always announce the song number twice, enunciating each number individually the second time. Those who are hard of hearing will really appreciate this.
- If you sing the wrong words, just keep going. Listen to the assembly to find your place if you get lost.
- If you start singing the wrong verse, don’t force the assembly to go along with you, just correct yourself as soon as you notice the mistake. If the assembly goes along with you on the mistake, just keep going. Who needs to know?
- If you announce the wrong number, try to correct it before you start singing. Just say, “I’m sorry, I meant to say Number 123: Title, that’s No. 1 – 2 – 3.” But never interrupt singing to clarify a number... they’ll figure it out.
- No need to be embarrassed by a mistake. It happens to the best of us!
- Always mean what you sing. Use the song as a personal prayer... it will mean more to you *and* others.