

What is a cantor?

Excerpts from the USCCB Document *Sing to the Lord*:

The Cantor

37. The cantor is both a singer and a leader of congregational song. Especially when no choir is present, the cantor may sing in alternation or dialogue with the assembly. For example, the cantor may sing the invocations of the Kyrie, intone the Gloria, lead the short acclamations at the end of the Scripture readings, intone and sing the verse of the Gospel Acclamation, sing the invocations of the Prayer of the Faithful, and lead the singing of the Agnus Dei. The cantor may also sing the verses of the psalm or song that accompany the Entrance, Preparation of the Gifts, and Communion. Finally, the cantor may serve as psalmist, leading and proclaiming the verses of the Responsorial Psalm.

38. As a leader of congregational song, the cantor should take part in singing with the entire gathered assembly. In order to promote the singing of the liturgical assembly, the cantor's voice should not be heard above the congregation. As a transitional practice, the voice of the cantor might need to be amplified to stimulate and lead congregational singing when this is still weak. However, as the congregation finds its voice and sings with increasing confidence, the cantor's voice should correspondingly recede. At times, it may be appropriate to use a modest gesture that invites participation and clearly indicates when the congregation is to begin, but gestures should be used sparingly and only when genuinely needed.

39. Cantors should lead the assembly from a place where they can be seen by all without drawing attention from the liturgical action. When, however, a congregation is singing very familiar responses, acclamations, or songs that do not include verses for the cantor alone, the cantor need not be visible.

40. The cantor exercises his or her ministry from a conveniently located stand, but not from the ambo.⁴⁶ The cantor may dress in an alb or choir robe, but always in clean, presentable, and modest clothing. Cassock and surplice, being clerical attire, are not recommended as vesture for the cantor.

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What about at St. Philip's?

At Saint Philip Benizi, the role of the cantor will be just as outlined about. A cantor will always be accompanied by a "lead instrument," namely, organ, piano, or guitar. A cantor may also have the opportunity to sing at weddings and funerals.

One does not have to be a member of any choir in order to be a cantor. They are different parts of music ministry.

A cantor is first and foremost a minister. A cantor performs inasmuch as they offer their best effort and skill and share it. A cantor, however, is not a performer, in the conventional sense of the word.

The audition process

Any person wishing to audition to be a cantor should download the music and prepare it. On the day of the audition, The cantor candidate will sing both prepared pieces of music. After that, he or she will sight-read a short piece, and then sing interval patterns, following the lead of the director.

All cantors will be required to be trained as a cantor.

The person will be contacted at a later date to receive the results of their audition.