



DIOCESAN STUDENT CHORAL FESTIVAL GUIDELINES AND ORGANIZATION

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Diocesan Choral Festivals are popular events held in many of the 194 American Catholic dioceses. Traditional and well loved as they are, many lack practical and Catholic guidelines appropriate for our schools and parishes. Festivals are encouraged for many reasons: to educate students in various styles of sacred repertoire (there are many), to build Catholic identity and school spirit by bringing together choirs from throughout the arch/diocese, to celebrate occasions or liturgical seasons, to help prepare students for the singing of more advanced repertoire in other festivals and, most importantly, to evangelize the students through music.

Festivals are joyous occasions, yet many are only casually assembled. Teaching opportunities are lost in performances of inappropriate pop music and silly introductions. Presentational skills are overlooked in disorganized instances of rushing the stage and unprofessional behavior.

Opportunities for singers to perform with live instruments are compromised by the use of commercial, simplistic recordings. The guidelines below offer topics of consideration to assist in raising musical and organizational standards in both Department of Education and Worship Office sponsored gatherings in your diocese.

Scheduling a Festival

Consult the Diocesan Calendar

Avoid conflicts including testing weeks and scheduled events, religious holidays and 3 day weekends when many families tend to be out-of-town. Seek advice from the School Superintendent and Pastoral Staff.

Check Dates of Other Scheduled Festivals.

Plan early

Musicians and administrators need time to plan the logistics for the day. Announce the date by April or May of the previous school year.

Save the Date

Insert a photo of singers

DIOCESAN STUDENT CHORAL FESTIVAL

Venue Name
Address

Date • Time

Clinician Name

Join Us & Register Today!

DIOCESAN STUDENT CHORAL FESTIVAL REGISTRATION APPLICATION

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:
DATE**

**Mail form and fees to:
Specific Registration Address**

Total Number of Participants (Conductor, Singers & Chaperones) _____ (1 Chaperone per 10 singers respectfully requested)

#Singers _____ #Soprano: _____ #Alto: _____ #Tenor: _____ #Basses: _____

Choir Name (as it should appear in program): _____

Choir Director (as it should appear in program): _____

Parish/School: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Questions?

Contact information

Save the Date

Get the event on the diocesan calendar and send a Save-the-Date flyer to all principals or pastors and conductors of potentially participating choirs. Please note: **contact information for all school conductors in all dioceses is available at no cost from the Pueri Cantores office at info@pcchoirs.org. Worship offices may be contacted for lists of parish conductors. Additionally, Chapter Directors of National Pastoral Musicians have comprehensive parish conductor lists and are listed at www.npm.org.**

Location

Select a centrally located venue that is accessible to participants. The venue needs to include a large gathering space to accommodate anticipated numbers of students and chaperones (at least one for each ten singers), ample parking space for cars and buses, and an organ or high quality piano since all choir accompaniments should be played live (as opposed to recorded). These physical requirements are *minimal* and are not, in any way, extraordinary.

Planning the Festival Content

To be of educational or liturgical benefit, a festival should have a clinician to work with individual choirs and the combined choirs when they sing as one large ensemble. The clinician can be a local respected conductor from a school or parish—someone who is patient, positive and prepared. Choirs do not need to be “adjudicated” but a very few helpful comments with brief repetition of certain parts of a song, can bolster the choir director’s instruction and credibility and give the singers an elevated tonal concept of what they might expect from themselves. Even five or ten minutes of individual work can help a choir’s performance. Recording a festival for posting on Facebook can reinforce musical suggestions offered by the clinician.

The pattern for most festivals follows:

- **Opening Prayer**
- **Welcome**
- **Vocal Warm up (5-10 minutes)**
- **Singing of Opening Hymn by All Choirs (in parts as possible)**
- **Explanation of Individual Choir Coaching**

- **Performances by Individual Choirs (1 sacred piece required, 1 secular, maximum total time per choir 8 minutes, followed by 5-7 minutes coaching with clinician conducting each choir.)**
- **Singing of Closing Sacred Piece by All Choirs (in parts as possible).** Allow 10 minute rehearsal, then final performance. If the festival involves younger choirs, a high school choir may be invited to join in singing the final piece and singing a recessional as the choristers are quietly exiting the venue.

Two other organizational tips will ensure a more orderly entrance into the venue. Choir names can be laid in/posted on the pews/chairs so conductors will know where to seat their singers. Numbers of singers can be requested from each conductor when he registers for the event. Coats and backpacks may be placed underneath the pews/chairs as choirs are seated. Staff should always stand by entrance doors to the venue to ensure students and chaperones enter quietly. This simple monitoring act can have a significant effect on the respect level in the festival space.

DIOCESAN STUDENT CHORAL FESTIVAL

Venue Name
Address

Date • Time

Clinician Name

<h2>Program</h2>			
Welcome and Opening Prayer			
Vocal Warm up	Clinician Name	Name of Choir 6	<i>Song Titles</i> Composers
Opening Hymn	<i>Title</i> Composer	Name of Choir 7	<i>Song Titles</i> Composers
Name of Choir 1	<i>Song Titles</i> Composers	Name of Choir 8	<i>Song Titles</i> Composers
School Name Music Director Name, <i>Director</i>		School Name Music Director Name, <i>Director</i>	
Name of Choir 2	<i>Song Titles</i> Composers	Closing Anthem/Song	<i>Title</i> Composer
School Name Music Director Name, <i>Director</i>			
Name of Choir 3	<i>Song Titles</i> Composers	<i>Clinician Acknowledgment</i>	
School Name Music Director Name, <i>Director</i>		Clinician Biography	
Name of Choir 4	<i>Song Titles</i> Composers	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel	
School Name Music Director Name, <i>Director</i>			
Name of Choir 5	<i>Song Titles</i> Composers		
School Name Music Director Name, <i>Director</i>			

Festival Theme, Enrollment and Marketing

Festival themes can cover a myriad of special occasions: Fall, Advent, Christmas, Spring, Catholic Schools Week, Saint Cecilia (or other Saint) Day, School or Church Dedication. Once decided, use the contact lists you have secured to announce the event to diocesan choir directors in parishes and/or schools. Also notify all school principals and key diocesan administrators.

- **Post an announcement on the Diocesan website and forward to NPM.**
- **All informational flyers can be emailed and should contain all registration, repertoire and participation information.**
- **Spoken announcements should be made monthly by school and diocesan administrators at occasions and meetings where conductors are present or by email to school and parish administrators.**
- **Social media can be used with photos to stimulate interest among the singers.**

Financial Considerations

A typical Festival Budget includes the following expenses which should be calculated in detail before the marketing begins:

- **Clinician Stipend & Travel**
- **Accompanist (organist/pianist-1 accompanist)**
- **Venue cost (extra maintenance needed throughout the day)**
- **Security/Supervision**
- **Logistical Coordination**
- **Refreshments/Water**
- **Awards/Certificates**

Funding sources include:

- **Fee-based Event**
- **Grants, Gifts or Sponsorships**
- **Underwriting**
- **Combination of the above Funding Sources**

Pueri Cantores Festivals – grades 4-12.

While several fine national organizations sponsor regional and statewide festivals, one in particular, is designed especially for Catholic schools and parishes and is strongly recommended for all Catholic choirs. Pueri Cantores (young singers) is the official student choral organization of the Church and is headquartered in the Vatican. It is active in 43 countries and includes more than 40,000 singers. The American Federation Pueri Cantores (AFPC) is second largest worldwide (www.pcchoirs.org).

Unlike any other Festival, Pueri Cantores engages some of the nation's leading conductors to offer advanced training in liturgical music. Catholic singers focus uniquely on the universal music of the Church and, at each Festival sing all service music for a Vigil Mass. All choirs sing together with high school singers serving as important vocal role models for younger choirs-everyone singing historically balanced music from Gregorian Chant to music of the Present. The students immediately assume a leadership role in the liturgy and, through the music, memorize texts they can carry throughout their lives. Surely, for Catholic choirs, these Festivals remain the most spiritually and musically significant, and held primarily during the Lenten Season, conductors still have time to add a Diocesan Festival-and others-into the activities of every school year.

Available for streaming at

<https://www.pcchoirs.org/videos/2017/afpcncea-webinar-diocesan-choral-festivals-guidelines-and-organization>