

# OLP Chorister School Overview

OLP Choristers School is a successful Parish Music Children's Program that continues to grow and bless the Presentation Parish Community.

OLP Choristers is a vital part of the growing Music Ministry of Presentation Parish. As the children grow they are transitioned from Elementary School to Middle School to High School and finally to Parish Choir. OLP Choristers receive singing and musical instruction they are able to carry with them for the rest of their lives.

**What is Choristers:** The term "Choristers" is a long standing choral tradition in the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. Choristers simply put are a children's choir. Choristers is made up of children who have the gift of singing and are trained to excel in the musical art of song for the purpose of worship.

**Purpose:** To train young singers to use their natural and spiritual gifts as Cantors and Choir for the purpose of aiding the assembly in their worship of God.

**Training:** Having the gift to sing is the starting point for any singer. Singers will learn musical and vocal skills necessary to serve as a Cantor and Chorister;

## **Musical Skills:**

- ◆ Teaching the fundamentals of singing – breath control, vocal exercises, diction (enunciation and pronunciation), phonating vocal sounds, ear training (aural learning), and projecting sound
- ◆ Teaching the basics of reading music – note & rest values, dynamic markings, tempo markings, music markings
- ◆ Teaching Cantor skills – introducing hymns, leading Responsive Psalms and Mass Acclamations
- ◆ Teaching the importance of singing in the liturgy
- ◆ Sensitivity will be given to the changing voice – especially for boys as they mature

## **Liturgical Background:**

- ◆ Understanding the reasons for the various Liturgical Seasons of the Church
- ◆ Hymnology – learning the purpose and reasons for the songs, carols and hymns sung in church

**Cantors:** Cantors are selected from the singers who demonstrate the necessary skill set needed in leading the Assembly. First time Cantors are paired with a skilled Cantor.

**Apprentice:** Singers in the third grade will be learning all of the basic skills to be a Cantor in their first semester; however, a singer does not have to serve as a Cantor. The basic skill set is rehearsed at every practice. For this skill set practice does make perfect.

**Age Range:** Choristers is open to children with the ability to sing in the Third through Eighth grades. There are four sections of Choristers, three Parish School and one Public School. The sections are as follows: Elementary School – grades 3-4; Middle School – grades 5-8; and Schola Canticum – comprised of auditioned singers.

In January, Second Graders are invited to participate in Choristers. During this first semester, they are considered Apprentices and are introduced to the skills needed to be a Cantor.

**Meeting:** All OLP Chorister rehearsals begin in the Cooper Room and are scheduled as follows:

- ◆ Elementary Grades: Tuesday afternoons 3:15 PM – 4:30 PM
- ◆ Middle School Grades: Monday & Wednesday mornings 7:15 AM – 8:00 AM
- ◆ Schola Canticum: Thursday afternoons 3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

**Attendance:** OLP Choristers follows the policies established by the OLP School Board and Diocese of KC-St. Joseph regarding extra-curricular activities. (See OLP School Participation Policy)

Parents need to understand Choristers is as important as any other extra-curricular activity. Choristers use a team building model. One person missing affects the whole group. Excessive absences or lack of participation can lead to dismissal from Choristers (See Dismissal Policy).

Singers must attend rehearsals to be eligible to Cantor. Missed rehearsals will mean missed opportunities to Cantor.

Schola Canticum by nature is an advanced choral group comprised of singers who have a strong interest in the gift of song; already possess musical skills and abilities; and is a member of either Elementary or Middle School Choristers. Because vocal talent develops at various times in children, this group is made up of children ranging in age from 8 to 14.

**Mass:** Choristers sing for Mass on a regular basis. All Choristers will sing for weekend Masses once a month as scheduled by their section.

- ◆ Choristers will sing for All School Masses on Wednesday mornings.
- ◆ Choristers are permitted to serve as Lectors, Petitioners or Gifts Bearers.
- ◆ Arrangements to sing at other parishes can be made by the Music Director for those Choristers whose home parish is not Presentation.
- ◆ Participation in the weekend Masses is a requirement and part of the attendance policy. Lack of participation for the weekend Mass can lead to dismissal from the OLP Choristers Program.

**Other Performances:** Schola Canticum from time to time will be singing outside of the regular Masses at Presentation. These are wonderful opportunities for the student to gain greater experience singing in different environments and to varied audiences. Parents will be notified well in advance of these opportunities for appropriate planning.

**For additional information:** David Armstrong, Director of Liturgy and Music  
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