

# BEST-PRACTICE GUIDE

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## Content

The antiphon texts are taken from the third typical edition of the Roman Missal, and are in the ICEL 2010 translation, used by permission. Occasionally there is an additional text from the *Graduale Romanum*; if this has no ICEL translation, the translation from the Society of Saint Gregory's *Processional* has been used. The psalm verses are in the Grail 1963 translation approved for liturgical use in the British Isles and elsewhere and used by permission. They have been chosen in accordance with the recommendations provided by the *Graduale Romanum* or by the *Antiphonary* published by ICEL in 2012.

## **Liturgical Use**

*Entrance Songs* are ‘to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers’ (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no 47). They should start when the procession enters the church, and be brought to a conclusion when the priest is ready to make the Sign of the Cross and greet the people.

*Communion Songs* are ‘to express the communicants’ union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy of heart, and to highlight more clearly the “communitarian” nature of the procession to receive Communion’ (*id.*, no 86). They should start while the priest is receiving the Sacrament and be continued for as long as it is being administered to the faithful. If there is to be a hymn after Communion, the Communion Song should be ended in a timely manner (*ibid.*).

## **Choice of Texts**

For festivals, and for Sundays in the major liturgical seasons, the texts provided for each day are to be preferred. They are the texts to be found in missals and missalette sheets. However, your attention is drawn to the Praenotanda of the *Graduale Romanum*, in which ‘the faculty is granted to select from the chants pertaining to the Proper of Time, in place of the proper text of the day... another text from the same season... so that pastoral necessities may be more widely satisfied.’ Thus repetition of an antiphon on successive Sundays is permitted, and may even be recommended, to assist congregational participation. In addition, the *Graduale Simplex* permits some common Communion antiphons to be used at any time: these will be available in a separate document.

## **How to Sing English Chant**

English as a spoken language is very different from Latin. In the customary pronunciation of Latin, syllables are uttered evenly: like modern Spanish, it is a syllable-timed language. On the other hand, English, with its many vowels of different lengths, is stress-timed.

The natural rhythm and accentuation of English must be maintained when singing English chant. The chant is an enhancement and expression of the English words to which it is set, and of their natural rhythm. The text is always king.

Following Gregorian tradition, ‘liquescents’ are used where a multi-note syllable is followed by a consonant cluster. This is rendered in the modern notation and accompaniment editions by a smaller note: this does not indicate a rhythmically shorter note.

### **Accompaniment?**

It is preferable to sing chant unaccompanied. During part of the Sacred Triduum instrumental accompaniment is not permitted.

Because of the nature of English as a stress-timed language, it is preferable that the singing be led vocally by the cantor or choir, rather than by the accompanying instrument; ideally, this should provide an accompaniment to the voices, rather than lead them. When there is a good vocal lead, an organist should play only the lower three parts in the score and refrain from doubling the melody line.

In addition, please note that, although the accompaniments use the quaver as the basic unit, this is only to enable them to be notated conventionally. Unless it occurs in a multi-note cadence, the final note of a textual phrase should be as long as the natural utterance of its syllable requires.

## How to Sing Antiphon Settings

The traditional method of singing antiphons is for a cantor to sing the first phrase, up to the asterisk, then for a choir to sing the remainder of the antiphon – or the cantor may sing the entire antiphon. The antiphon can then be repeated by all.

After the antiphon, the cantor(s) may then sing one or more psalm verses, after each of which the antiphon is repeated. The final psalm verse is traditionally the doxology ‘Glory be to the Father’, which is ‘pointed’ thus:

**Glory be to the Father, and | to the Son,  
and to the | Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and | ever shall be  
world without | end. Amen.**

The antiphon is repeated finally after this doxology.

For some major feasts, the music provided is an adaptation of the more complex original Latin chants. This may render them too difficult for use by some choirs and assemblies. Alternative simpler forms have been provided. It will be up to the discretion of those responsible for selecting the music to respect the need of the congregation to enjoy the active participation in the liturgy that is their right.

In some antiphons, the first phrase of the antiphon may stand alone as a shorter antiphon in its own right. This is indicated by a double bar line with a † or # sign below it in the text.

In some other instances, a shorter version of the full Missal text has been set to music as an antiphon. In these cases, the remainder of the Missal text forms the beginning of the psalm verse text, shown in **bold type** and designated with a ° sign.

## How to Sing Psalm Verses

Psalm verses will normally be sung by one or more cantors. The psalm tones provided are of a single format, with a cadence falling two syllables before the final accent in each line. The cadence starts at the syllable following the | line. Special care should be taken to maintain the natural rhythm of the English phrasing over the cadence.

Other psalm tones may be chosen in place of the ones provided. They should be of the same mode as the antiphon; this is indicated by the digit above the initial capital of the antiphon or alongside the psalm-tone.

## Psalm Numeration

To simplify references, the Greek/Vulgate numbering traditionally used in the Roman rite has been used throughout. The Hebrew numbering is one ahead of the Vulgate for most of the psalms. Here is the precise correspondence:

<i>Greek &amp; Vulgate Numbering</i>	<i>Hebrew Numbering</i>
1-8	1-8
9	9 & 10
10-112	11-113
113	114 & 115
114	116:1-9
115	116:10-19
116-145	117-146
146	147:1-11
147	147:12-20
148-150	148-150