

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING MUSIC

A Guide for the Couple

This planning guide is offered to you, the couple preparing your wedding liturgy. After you review this, you should plan your marriage ceremony with the pastor and musician. The purpose of this guide is to help you to channel your happiness into a celebration of divine and human love which reflects God's love for us. Remember, the liturgy expresses both the mystery of Christ and your love, faith and happiness.



THE WEDDING MUSIC

The music at your wedding draws you, your families and guests to prayer. Music expresses your love for God and each other. Many options are offered to make your wedding liturgy uniquely yours. You can help those who witness your wedding share your joy and experience the meaning of a Christian marriage.

So, where do you start? First, ask your pastor and parish musician for advice. Some of their suggestions you will also find here. They can help you adapt these guidelines to your wedding. Whether your wedding is within a Mass or not, the same suggestions apply. Choose music that calls people to prayer and expresses Christian faith. The meaning should be obvious, not implied or vague.

- If you like contemporary music, decide whether the songs are prayerful and enhance the Christian understanding of love within the liturgy. The style is not as important as the content.
- Your music should emphasize and enhance the ceremony, not interrupt or "showcase" for example, a musician.
- Consider the participation of yourselves and your guests and the amount of musical leadership needed. Some congregations have cantors or music leaders, and depend on their help.
- Choose music that the people know so they can comfortably join the singing. Even if some of your guests are not Catholic, they can feel included by using music common to different denominations.
- Sacred music may be provided in many styles and, for example, accompanied by organ, piano, guitar, synthesizer, other instruments or a combination. Just be sure the placement of instrumentalists and

singers does not overshadow you or the presider. Microphones and amplifiers should be used with care. Remember, the role of the musicians is to lead the assembly to participate and not to entertain.

■ To help you prepare your wedding liturgy, a music planning sheet will be found on the last page of this guide.

■ Choose musicians through the parish music director from among the usual parish musicians or one that is approved by both the pastor and the parish music director.

■ Musicians usually have established fees for their services. You should ask about the fee and time of payment.



MUSIC WITHIN THE WEDDING LITURGY

This section describes the parts of the liturgy and the role of music within the liturgy.

PROCESSION: The priests and ministers (with the cross, candles, and Lectionary) greet you at the door of the church, then lead you to your place at the altar. The parents should process with you and the attendants. The procession unites you, your parents, attendants, celebrant, and the whole assembly into a festive worshipping community. This is a symbolic action, quite different than years ago. In the past, the procession was intended to hand over a woman from one man to another, much like property.

■ The music for the processional can be instrumental only or sung. It may be followed by a gathering song. The music is usually march-like and festive.

LITURGY OF THE WORD (including exchange of vows): The readings from the Rite of Marriage or the scripture readings of the day are proclaimed.

■ The responsorial psalm expresses our response and acceptance of the Word of God. The responsorial psalm may be sung, and it should reflect the theme of the readings. Many responsorial psalms are suggested for weddings.

■ The gospel acclamation should be sung if it is used.

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS: This is a procession with the bread and wine by the parents or family members.

■ While gifts of bread and wine are prepared a song may be sung or a simple musical interlude may be played. The song should reflect the preparation of the gifts from within the community.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER: The Eucharistic prayer is experienced as the central moment of our worship and should be focused and free of distractions.

- Participation of the assembly during the Eucharistic prayer is best expressed in sung familiar acclamations: the Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation and the Great Amen.

COMMUNION RITE: The Catholic assembly shows its oneness by partaking of the body and blood of Christ.

- The Lord's Prayer is usually recited, rather than sung, at weddings since it is common to most denominations and allows non-Catholics to participate. The Lamb of God is a litany which may be sung or recited. During the reception of communion, the assembly should participate in a familiar hymn to express our union with Christ. Vocal or instrumental music may also be chosen as an invitation to silent prayer and reflection.

RECESSIONAL: Festive music expresses the joy following the Blessing and Dismissal.

- Although the recessional is usually instrumental, a hymn may also be sung. A hymn or song should be joyful and familiar to the congregation.

MUSIC FOR MARRIAGE RITE OUTSIDE OF MASS

The same suggestions apply, but omit the Preparation of Gifts, Eucharistic Prayer and Communion Rite. After the Liturgy of the Word (including the exchange of vows), you pray the General Intercessions, receive Nuptial Blessing and pray the Lord's Prayer. The final Blessing and Dismissal end the liturgy, followed by the Recessional.



CONCLUSION

Enjoy choosing your wedding music which expresses your faith and love. There are endless possibilities for music, so consult your parish musician, liturgist or pastor. They may have a list of musical selections appropriate for weddings, some of which you may not know. Listen to them. You might discover something you like. Whatever you choose, let it reflect your joy and celebrate your love and faith.

WEDDING MUSIC and LITURGY PREPARATIONS

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Number of Attendants: _____ Number of Children: _____

Prelude (s) _____

Processional _____

Gathering Song _____

First Reading _____

Responsorial Psalm _____

Second Reading _____

Gospel Acclamation _____

Gospel Reading _____

Music for Presentation of Gifts _____

Holy, Holy, Holy _____

Memorial Acclamation _____

Great Amen _____

Lord's Prayer _____

Lamb of God _____

Communion Song _____

Closing Song _____

Recessional _____

Postlude(s) _____

Bride's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Groom's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Music Director: _____ Phone: _____

Instrumentalist: _____ Phone: _____

Cantor/soloist: _____ Phone: _____