



Encouraging Liturgical Participation through Music

Tips & Immediate Opportunities

Developing your Sunday experience will require many strategies and techniques, some of which are discussed in other resources, and there is no single “quick fix.”

However, we have compiled below some immediate opportunities that can help you take the first step.

- ❖ Make sure that the vocal range of your hymns/songs are “singable” for the average parishioner. Most hymnals have taken this into account, but certain contemporary songs are set out of average ranges. If it is too high or too low, the parishioners will not join you.
- ❖ Keep the tempo lively wherever possible. Hymns/songs that drag and have low energy are not inspiring. Be careful to not go too fast and lose the parishioners as well. Think of “Amazing Grace”. Try it super-slow and super-fast. You should immediately feel an inspiring tempo. The tempo may also change based on where it is used in the liturgy. Be mindful.
- ❖ Ensure that the sound level encourages participation. Too loud or soft is not helpful. Get out into the congregation and listen to the levels. Don’t trust what you hear from the music area. Be mindful of using reverb on the sound system if your worship space has a high amount of natural reverb (echo). Reverb can be beautiful, but it can make words difficult to understand.
- ❖ Be intentional on hymn/song selections. Balance new music with hymns/songs that are familiar to the congregation. You may be tired of hearing “One Bread, One Body”, but the parishioners know it and will sing out.
- ❖ Make sure that the music is in tune and offered in a non-distracting way. Too much vibrato, flat singing, in correct or unsure singing become a distraction.
- ❖ Make sure that you are offering the music as an accompaniment to the Mass and not a performance. Parishioners should not be focusing on the beauty of your singing, but the spirit with which you are offering it.
- ❖ Access resources like CCLI.com (Christian Copyright Licensing International) for repertoire. This resource provides chord charts, lead sheets, transpositions, and recordings to hundreds of Contemporary Christian Songs.