

Principles for Good Liturgical Music Planning

Assembly has primary role – Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy calls for full, conscious, active participation, this aim is to be considered before all else. Assembly is the primary choir.

Music minister's primary role is to support the assembly's song, sometimes leading or alternating with the assembly. Music ministers sing *with* the assembly, never *for*. Never, in the liturgy, does the choir have a performance role.

Start your planning of each liturgy with reading the scriptures for that liturgy. Music should flow out of the readings and be in harmony with the liturgical season.

Music should fit the ritual moment in the liturgy. Assigned antiphons for the day should be considered.

Purpose of music is to help, encourage, and promote the effort of every person in the assembly to celebrate together prayerfully. Music exists to serve the liturgy.

Community will sing best the songs they know. Repetition will assist the assembly in getting to know new pieces.

Because communities are diverse, musical selections must also be diverse. The blending of musical styles in the same celebration is a good and positive goal.

Music should be singable for community.

Try long-range or seasonal planning. Keep records.

Build a repertoire of psalmody and hymnody.

Outline of the Eucharistic Liturgy and Musical Elements

I. Introductory Rites

- The main purpose of the Introductory Rites is to form a worshipping community, a praying community
- The second purpose is to prepare the people to hear the Word of God by giving them a sense of occasion, a sense of expectancy, and a sense of what to listen for.
- Introductory Rites help us to find our common identity as the Body of Christ
 - Gathering Song
 - We become aware of standing in the presence of God
 - This is the first corporate action of the community
 - Helps us to be attentive to the Word
 - Penitential Rite (Sprinkling Rite also an option)
 - Option A: "I confess. . ." (*Confiteor*) – said together
 - Option B: "Have mercy on us O Lord . . ." dialogue (rarely used)
 - Option C: "Lord have mercy" dialogue – examples are in Missal's appendix, and can also be written - note that the focus is on Jesus and the mercy he brings more than individual sin
 - Kyrie (unless done in Penitential Rite)
 - Gloria
 - An ancient hymn, not used in Advent and Lent

II. Liturgy of the Word

- God speaks to us in the Liturgy of the Word
- We come to understand what God is doing for us and what God is calling us to do
- It is a dialogue between God and God's people
- Responsorial Psalm
 - Connected to the first reading and the Gospel
 - Seasonal psalmody is an option
 - Always a psalm or canticle, never some other kind of song
- Gospel Acclamation
 - Must be sung (Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass #23)
 - During Lent, a text other than Alleluia
- Prayer of the Faithful (Universal Prayer) - may be sung

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Begins with the preparation of the table and ends with the meal
- Not just done by the priest. All have an active role.
- Preparation of the Gifts
 - Seasonal, could be instrumental or choral. This is one place where the assembly is not necessarily called to sing (unlike the entrance and communion procession where singing by all is "commended" Sing to the Lord #115b.)
- Eucharistic Prayer
 - Eucharistic Acclamations – among the most important parts to be sung (Sing to the Lord #115a). Good, strong settings which can be sung by heart are best. These being part of one prayer, these acclamations should be unified musically (Sing to the Lord #178.)
 - Holy, Holy (*Sanctus*)
 - Mystery of Faith (3 acclamations in new missal)
 - Great Amen
- The Communion Rite
 - Lord's Prayer
 - Sign of peace – not a musical moment
 - Lamb of God – litany
 - Communion Song - should have a good refrain so people can process and sing
 - Song of Praise after communion
 - optional, but if done, should be sung by entire assembly, not just choir (General Instruction of the Roman Missal #88, Sing to the Lord #196)

IV. Concluding Rites

- Sending Forth Song – not an official part of the rite (General Instruction of the Roman Missal #90,) but when customary, allowed (Sing to the Lord #199.)