

# A SAMPLE PLANNING SHEET

Sunday/Feast Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Cantor: \_\_\_\_\_

Choir: \_\_\_\_\_

Organist/  
Accompanists: \_\_\_\_\_

First reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

Second reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_



**Entrance Song** \_\_\_\_\_

**Holy, Holy** \_\_\_\_\_

Kyrie \_\_\_\_\_

**Memorial Acclamation** \_\_\_\_\_

Gloria \_\_\_\_\_

**Great Amen** \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsorial Psalm** \_\_\_\_\_

Lord's Prayer \_\_\_\_\_

**Gospel Acclamation** \_\_\_\_\_

Lamb of God \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer of the Faithful \_\_\_\_\_

**Communion Song** \_\_\_\_\_

Preparation of the Gifts \_\_\_\_\_

Song of Praise \_\_\_\_\_

**Recessional Song** \_\_\_\_\_

## KILDARE & LEIGHLIN FAITH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

CATHEDRAL PARISH CENTRE,  
COLLEGE STREET, CARLOW.

Telephone: 059 9164084  
E-mail: [fds@kandle.ie](mailto:fds@kandle.ie) Web: [www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie)

### Issued February 2008

This Guide is not intended as a comprehensive presentation of Church teaching. For the definitive version of church teaching, people should still turn to the official texts, such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Further resources are available on our diocesan website.

**Diocesan website** [www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie)

A TIME FOR SINGING

# A Guide for Music Ministers

KILDARE & LEIGHLIN FAITH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



## Why do we have music at Mass?

Music has always played a key part in people's worship. Whether sung or instrumental, its task is to serve and support the prayer of the people as they give thanks and praise to their God.

When we sing as a congregation during the Mass we are drawn together. We are united both in the action of singing and in the belief that our song expresses. Our songs express the faith of the Church. They help to nourish and strengthen this faith.

Within the celebration of Mass, music can heighten the liturgical texts so that they speak more richly and fully. Well chosen music can be one of the most effective ways of communicating the tone of a particular Church season or the occasion being celebrated.

The joy and enthusiasm which music adds to a community's worship of God cannot be gained in any other way. So St. Augustine was right when he said: "One who sings well prays twice."

## A PRAYER FOR MUSIC MINISTERS

*Creator God, you bless us with  
the gift of music*

*And call us to use this gift to bring  
Your people closer to You in prayer.*

*May our music bring comfort to the weary,  
hope to those in despair and joy to those  
who seek You.*

*Through our ministry may we help  
to unite the congregation  
into one voice of praise and  
thanksgiving to You. Amen.*

## Diocesan Choir

The diocesan choir, under the directorship of Fr. Liam Lawton, ministers at a number of diocesan liturgies, including the Chrism Mass and at the bi-annual pilgrimage to Knock. This choir always welcomes new members. So to find out more, or indeed to sign up, why not contact the Faith Development Services at [fds@kandle.ie](mailto:fds@kandle.ie) or at 059 9164084.

## What does a Music Minister do?

The task of music ministers is, quite simply, to serve the prayer of the people. Music plays a vital part in facilitating, encouraging, enhancing and deepening the people's prayer. This is why we can refer to music as a ministry (service) in the Mass.

A **choir** does not replace the congregation but it can enrich the assembly's singing with artistic beauty and complexity. There may be times when a choir will sing without the congregation joining in but it needs to always make sure not to deny the people sung texts that rightfully belong to them.

In order to do its job well, the choir needs to know when singing is called for within the liturgy and what pieces belong to the whole assembly. It also needs to use appropriate texts that support what the liturgy is about at that particular time in the Mass or within the Church year. Clearly a familiarity with the Mass, with the Sunday readings and with the different emphases of the liturgical year will help a choir enormously in making decisions about what to sing and when to sing.

Very often a choir will use a **cantor** who will help animate and encourage the people's song. It is often through the support and affirmation among choir members themselves that a good cantor emerges naturally from the group itself.

**Instrumentalists** support the people's song. They can also powerfully assist contemplation and express praise and a variety of human emotions before God.

While there is the need to technically "perform" a piece well, music ministry has more to do with prayer than performance. A helpful question for music ministers to ask is: Did our music help people to enter deeper into the prayer of the liturgy?



## When should we be singing at Mass?

Musically, certain parts of the Mass demand our attention ahead of others.

- The absolute first priorities for singing are the following: The Gospel Acclamation, the Acclamations within the Eucharistic prayer (i.e. the Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation & Great Amen) and the psalm. The *Gloria*, like the psalm, is a hymn so, when used, it really only makes sense to sing it.
- Following these priorities, it is appropriate but not essential (i.e. instrumental music or silence could be used) to sing at the following times: The opening song, during the preparation of the altar, during communion, post communion and after the dismissal.
- If resources allow, other opportunities for sung prayer include the penitential rite, the response to the Prayer of the Faithful and the song during the breaking of bread-the Lamb of God.

**“And in the silence,  
we heard God’s voice...”**

When using hymns, for example at communion time, make sure they support and speak to the liturgical moment rather than draw people's attention elsewhere.

## How do we decide what music to use?

When looking to the suitability of a particular text it is helpful to consider the following:



### THE MUSICAL JUDGEMENT

Here the questions that need to be asked include: Is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively good? Only good music will be effective in the long run. Yet, to quote St. Augustine, "Do not allow yourselves to be offended by the imperfect while you strive for the perfect!"

A caution! Although all liturgical music should be good, not all good music is suitable to the liturgy.

### THE LITURGICAL JUDGEMENT

The nature and shape of the liturgy itself will help to determine what kind of music is called for (hymn, acclamation, call & response, processional...), what parts are to be preferred for singing and who is to sing them.

### THE PASTORAL JUDGEMENT

In this the choir considers the particular situation - the people who are worshipping, their overall repertoire, the available resources. In these concrete circumstances, will the music we are choosing for this celebration enable this community of people to express their faith?

# THE LITURGICAL YEAR

## EASTER TRIDUUM

*Highpoint of year;  
New Life; New Creation; Life Death and Resurrection*

### LENT

*Conversion; Baptism;  
Repentance; renewal;  
Prayer;*

### ORDINARY TIME

*Quiet; Reflection;*

### CHRISTMAS

*God-with-us; God's love  
Glory; Praise; joy;*



### EASTER

*Living our Resurrection  
Witness; Presence of  
Christ and Holy Spirit*

### ORDINARY TIME

*Quiet; Reflection;*

### ADVENT

*Preparation; waiting; prayer;  
Expectancy; salvation*

## A Seasonal Approach to Music Scheduling

The starting points for scheduling music include the following:

- The Season of the Church year and its central messages.
- The Scriptures that are proclaimed within the liturgy.
- The structure of the liturgy itself and its musical priorities.
- The skills and resources of the choir and musicians of the parish.
- The repertoire of the music ministers and the congregation.

It is helpful to think in terms of seasons for scheduling. In this way the unity of a season can be underscored by a seasonal psalm, by perhaps the absence of a recessional hymn in Advent, by a common opening song or a particular Mass setting. While it is always good to introduce new music, be careful not to abandon familiar pieces that have become a key part of your parish's celebration of a particular season.

*In the unfolding of the Church year we meet and deepen our relationship with a person - this person we call Jesus Christ .*

## Check in questions for your seasonal choices:

- Does the music reflect the liturgical season?
- Does it support the message of the readings?
- Does it contribute to developing a solid repertoire for the parish?
- Is it strong enough to bear repetition into the future?
- Can it be easily remembered and sung?
- Has attention been given to instrumental music?
- Has attention been given to the place of silence?

Arising from the role of music in the liturgy, the key questions to ask are:

- Does the music chosen respect the musical priorities of the liturgy?
- Has the place of the congregation and its sung prayer been respected throughout the choice of music?

Remember when making your seasonal choices to give yourselves plenty of time to practice! And finally, when a season is over, note what pieces worked well for use again.

