

RESOURCE B
ASSESSING MUSIC MINISTRY
*Considerations for assessing and making initial improvement
with Music Ministry*

General

Is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively worthy of the liturgy ?

Does the music at Mass *support* the liturgy well and help the congregation participate fully, consciously and actively in the Mass?

Does it seem that those in music ministry are prayerful? Does that draw people into prayer?

Is the sound balanced?

Does the music ever feel like a distraction or something simply ‘endured’ ?

Other considerations

A well formed music ministry should have the following in place:

1. Prayerful and skilled musicians

Are those involved in the music ministry skilled musicians and with potential to grow?

Is there the need to recruit more skilled musicians?

If the musical skill level or sound is poor, might it be deterring good musicians from coming forward?

Do the musicians serve the worshipping community by enabling their liturgical singing, or does the music at Mass feel like a performance?

Does the music ministry team seem to be in ‘relationship’ with one another? / worshipping ‘communally’?

Is the music ministry aware of all the parts of the Mass?

Is the music ministry able to lead the congregation to full participation in singing the Mass parts?

Is there an attitude of excellence, out of the desire to serve the liturgy well and help the people of God pray...
is there an ongoing desire and commitment to improve musically?

Is there a cultivated culture of mutual aid, respect and encouragement rather than a criticism amongst musicians?

Is there communication amongst all parish musicians at a parish and a sense of community amongst all who share this common ministry?

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2. Prayer and discernment, has a primary role in how the music ministry plans, prepares and ministers

Do the music ministers who select music consult with the pastor (for homily themes, consultation, pulse on parishioner needs, etc)?

Do those selecting music intentionally pray with the readings of the Mass?

Does the music ministry team have scheduled times of prayer together?

Is there regular and ongoing discernment about roles within the ministry, music selection, response from the congregation, etc.

Is there a formal process in place to select music for the liturgy?

Are musicians aware of the resources available to help them plan liturgical music?

Do music ministers take into account ability and learning pace when introducing a new song?
(repeating new songs to allow learning and participation)

3. An understanding of the liturgy and the role of sacred music in the liturgy

Has there been any formal formation or process of formation for all those involved in music ministry to learn about the Liturgy?

Has there been proper formation to learn about the role of music in the liturgy?

Has there been proper formation to learn how things like dynamics in the music and certain instrumentality can help support the movements of the liturgy?

4. Music Minister should understand how to apply the following three judgments when preparing music for the Sunday Celebration:

- a. The Liturgical Judgment: how the music accords with the liturgical season and this particular liturgy (with special attention given to the Scripture readings).
- b. The Musical Judgment: is the music of good quality? Musical form and quality are not to be confused. The Church recognizes and accepts many different forms of music.
- c. The Pastoral Judgment: will the music selected enable this particular congregation to give expression to its faith and foster a union of hearts and minds? Does the music selected recognize the abilities and diversity of the congregation?

Do music ministers understand how to apply these three judgments when preparing music for Sunday Celebration?

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4. Adequate time for preparation and rehearsal

Are there standards and expectations in regards to preparation and rehearsal?

Is there an outside objective person there to help guide the rehearsal at times, offering feedback to aid in improvement?

Does the music ministry team take time to simply ‘pray and sing’ as a means of communal prayer and to aid in learning to sing with ‘one heart and one mind’.