

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church “Wedding Music Guideline”

Written and compiled by Lynne Cibulsky, Music Liturgy Director – June 2021

There are many liturgical opportunities for including music, both instrumental and vocal, in your upcoming wedding ceremony. This includes ceremonies with and without a full Communion Mass. This Guideline is intended to provide you with the basics in choosing when and where you might include music selections, as well as provide a substantial list of ideas for actual song choices. Please keep in mind that this list is certainly not a complete compilation of music titles, and will vary with each musician’s personal repertoire. In pursuing the list of songs, you are strongly advised to make alternate selections and then confirm your musician’s ability to sing/play your choices. It may be necessary to be flexible with the outcome of your music plan. Fortunately, most of the professionals you hire are more than willing to add new music to their repertoire, so don’t hesitate to **ask!**

Note: This guideline does NOT cover musician fees other than to state that occasionally, a musician may need to charge a small fee above their standard fee if music you have chosen needs to be purchased by them. Typically, the cost of sheet music is nominal (around \$5 – \$8), but if the song is available only in a book collection, the cost, of course, would be higher. Please discuss this ahead of time with the person you hire in order to avoid any surprises. They may simply have you purchase the music yourself.

Your music selections can vary in genre or style, including but not limited to: standard hymns, classical, contemporary, folk, gospel and praise. While there are specific exceptions listed below, your music does NOT have to be sacred, but it MUST be appropriate for a church setting. This is especially important when considering lyrics.

There are several ways to go about choosing your music – through personal familiarity and favorites, family and cultural traditions, musician suggestions, and of course, YouTube and “Google” searches. Liturgically, some of the musical “moments” or “events” essentially choose themselves. These will be discussed more thoroughly in the following pages.

Please note that the first 8 items to follow, represent the basic components for music at your wedding. The remaining items attempt to address other moments set aside as part of your ceremony, but will not necessarily be included in all couples’ services. Your wedding coordinator will be helpful in working through the logistics of these and other preferences for your ceremony.

- 1) **PRELUDE MUSIC:** Your musician(s) will typically play 3-4 songs before your ceremony begins – while your guests are milling about or being seated. The music during this time does not have to be sacred, although it should be appropriate for church. Selections can be a combination of Instrumental and vocal (if you have a vocalist/cantor). In general, the bride, and possibly the groom, will not hear any of this music due to the pre-wedding logistics such as getting dressed, taking photos, etc. With this in mind, it isn't the best place to have your favorite song played! If you have a vocalist, it is nice to finish this section of music with a Christian love song or musical prayer. This is a subtle way of reminding your guests that today you are entering into the sacrament of marriage, and essentially signals the start of the ceremony.
- 2) **PROCESSIONAL or ENTRANCE MUSIC:** There are up to three opportunities for processional music selections. These include the Family (i.e. parents, grandparents, godparents, etc.), Bridal Party (bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, ring bearers, etc.) and Bride/Couple (who may or may not be accompanied by a parent or other escort.) You may use the same music for some or all of these processions, but generally, the bride/couple has her/his own music to set this moment apart. It is not uncommon to use the same music for family and bridal party's entrances so that the ceremony flows nicely. Conversely, it is also common to choose a song for the family that may or may not have family history attached to it. Entrance music may be instrumental or vocal, with a nice cadence or rhythm for ease in walking.
- 3) **Glory to GOD:** Singing the Gloria during the Wedding
- 4) **RESPONSORIAL PSLAM:** The responsorial psalm is part of the Liturgy of the Word and follows the first reading. It can be spoken or sung. If spoken, you will need to choose a reader. If sung, you will need to advise your cantor as to which psalm you choose from the reading selections and then she/he will match and appropriate musical version to the psalm number. Rest assured that composers have written these psalms in styles to complement your other music.
- 5) **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** The Gospel Acclamation or "Alleluia" as it is commonly known, is a continuation of the Liturgy of the Word and follows the second reading. It is sung by the cantor just before the Gospel is read by the celebrant/Priest. This music will be chosen by your musician and is quite often the "Celtic Alleluia" due to its festive and celebratory nature.
- 6) **PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS:** This music, during a regular Mass, is when the church collection is taken up and also when the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. Of course, no collection will be taken during your wedding ceremony, but if a full Mass, then the "gifts" will be brought up by someone honored with this task (Optional). Short instrumental music typically accompanies this liturgical moment, and it is advised to allow your instrumentalist to simply choose music that can be ended freely needed. Music for the Preparation for the Gifts and Communion is often interchangeable.

- 7) **COMMUNION:** If you are celebrating a full Mass, music should accompany the reception of communion. There are a couple of components to consider during this time: As the bread and wine are consecrated, there are prayers said by the priest, with follow-up sung or spoken responses by the congregation. These responses include the Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Amen, and Lamb of God. **Please discuss with our wedding coordinator and/or priest to ask the preference as to whether these responses are spoken or sung. Priests vary on this approach.** Once the priest has completed this process, communion will begin, as should music. Vocal or Instrumental music is acceptable, but if vocal, the music should center on **Eucharistic Feast** itself. Marian or Mary devotion music, for example, is not the most appropriate choice here.
- 8) **RECESSIONAL MUSIC:** This music, of course, takes the newly-married couple back down the aisle, celebrating the end of the wedding. It should be joyous and celebratory! It can be vocal or Instrumental and does not have to be sacred.
- 9) **POSTLUDE:** Upon arrangement, your instrumentalist will continue to play a couple of selections while your guests depart and visit with one another. If you want specific songs rather than relying on his/her choice, or instead, want the music to end immediately after your recessional, please make sure your musicians are aware of this.

EXTRA MUSIC OPPORTUNITIES: These moments address traditions of faith and family. They vary in placement during the ceremony, usually determined by the style of the coordinator or Priest.

PLEASE NOTE: Cultural customs such as the use of ceremonial coins, ropes and bibles are not addressed here, but can be included in the ceremony. Please discuss this with your wedding coordinator and Priest.

- **MARY DEVOTION:** This special tradition gives the bride (often by herself) or the couple an opportunity to present a small bouquet of flowers to Mary, our Blessed Mother (represented by the statue near the altar.) It is a quiet moment of prayer offering thanks to Mary for watching over and blessing the marriage and family. If music is chosen to accompany this rite, it is an appropriate time for a Marian song or simply a quiet, reflective instrumental piece.
- **REFLECTION / MEMORIAL DEVOTION:** Some couples take a separate moment to light candles in honor of deceased or absent members or friends. If music is chosen, it should be reasonably short, but this is also a good moment to use a song of family tradition. One example which comes to mind is “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling.”

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS: Please understand that there is a vast array of music from which to choose, and this list is by no means complete! The selections listed have been used appropriately and successfully for the liturgical and musical moments intended, but as previously mentioned, your musicians will have their own repertoire and you should discuss your choices with them. Although you may certainly limit your choices to this list, and conversely, need not use it at all, it is truly meant to serve only as a starting point. (Composers have been included where known.) Don't forget to save your favorite or "special" song for your first dance at your rehearsal!

PRELUDE MUSIC

A Simple Prayer	Adagio (Galuppi)	Air (Bach)
Ave Maria (Gounod or Schubert)	Benedictus (Rowley)	Breathe (Barnett / Modlin)
Come and Journey With Me		
Halleluiah (Instrumental ONLY –Cohen)	How Beautiful (Paris)	Kissing You
Love Can Build a Bridge	Moonlight Sonata (Beethoven)	My Heart Belongs To You
Panis Angelicus (Franck)	The Lord's Prayer (Malotte)	The Prayer (Sager/Foster)
To Believe In Love (Whitaker)	Velocity of Love	Wedding Song (Stookey)
Where There is Love	You Raise Me Up (Groban)	Your Song (John/Taupin)

PROCESSIONAL MUSIC *(many are also good for Recessional choices)*

Adagio (Galuppi)	Air (Handel)	Air on the G String (Bach)
Arioso (Bach)	Ave Maria (Gounod or Schubert)	Breathe (Barnett/Modlin)
Canon in D (Pachelbel)	Can't Help Falling in Love (E. Presley)	
Come and Journey With Me (Haas)	Courante (Francisque)	Evergreen
He Will Carry You (Brown)	Hymn To Joy (Beethoven)	
(Theme from) Ice Castles	I Am Your Child (Manilow)	
Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring (Bach)	Kai's Song	Longer (Fogelberg)
O Happy Day (Hawkins)	One Hand, One Heart (Sondheim)	
Simple Gifts (Brackett)	Somewhere from West Side Story (Sondheim)	
Sunrise, Sunset (Harnick/Bock)	The Anniversary Waltz (Dubin)	
The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (G.F. Handel)		
The Hawaiian Wedding Song (Hoffman/Manning/King)		The Rose (Midler)
The Wedding Song (Stookey)	Theme from Nicholas and Alexandra (Bennett)	
Trumpet Tune (Stanley)	Trumpet Voluntary (Clark)	Wedding March (Wagner)
Wedding Processional from The Sound of Music (Hammerstein/Rodgers)		When Love is Found

GLORIA *This is usually chosen by your musicians.*

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *(If sung, a musical version will be matched up with your psalm choice)*

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS AND COMMUNION

All who hunger	Blest Are They	Center of My Lift
Christ, Be Our Light	Come and journey With Me	Faith, Hope and Love
Gift of Finest Wheat	Here at This Table	How Beautiful
Let Us Break Bread Together	No Greater Love	One Bread, One Cup
One Hand, One Heart	Pan De Vida (Hurd)	Prayer of St. Francis
Servant Song	Song of the Body of Christ	Table Song
Taste and See	The Eyes and Hands of Christ	The Servant Song
The Summons	Ubi Caritas	Ven Al Banquete
We Are Many Parts We Are One Body		We Have Been Told
When Love is Found	Where there is Love	Wherever You Go
You Alone	You Are Mine	We Come Today

RECESSIONAL MUSIC

Till There Was You	At Last (Gordon/Warren)	Hornpipe (Handel)
Life In Technicolor (Coldplay)	Linus and Lucy (Schulz)	
Marche From Water Music (Handel)	Military or University "Fight Songs"	
Minuet from Royal Fireworks (Handel)	My Sweet Lord	
Now Thank We All Our God (Nun Danket)		Oh Happy Day
Te Deum (Charpentier)	Processional from Water Music (Handel)	
Sing of the Lord's Goodness (Sands)	The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (Handel)	
Wedding March from Midsummer's Night Dream (Mendelssohn)		

MARIAN DEVOTION

Ave Maria (Ground or Schubert)	Hail Mary, Gentle Woman	Sacred Silence
--------------------------------	-------------------------	----------------

REFLECTION/MEMORIAL DEVOTION

Bridal Prayer (Copeland)	Prayer for Peace	Prayer of St. Francis
Sacred Silence (Booth/Pixlar)	Set Me As A Seal (Maher)	
When Irish Eyes Are Smiling (Ball)	Wherever You Go	You Alone