

## **MUSIC FOR CHURCH MEETINGS**

### **Some Guidelines**

“Inspirational music is an essential part of worship. When prayerfully selected, music can invite the Spirit of the Lord, increase devotion to the gospel, and lead to greater spirituality. We remind stake presidencies and bishoprics that they may consider both the hymns and other appropriate music when planning meetings. The hymns of the Church are the basic music for worship services and are standard for congregational singing. However, in addition to the hymns, other appropriate selections may be used for prelude and postlude music, choir music, and special musical selections. May you be blessed in using inspirational music to enhance worship and strengthen members of the Church.” (First Presidency letter, dated 7 November 2002).

“It is our sincere hope that the hymns will continue to be a source of inspiration, guidance, and peace in your life.” (First Presidency greeting card to Church employees, Christmas 2008).

“Music is of enormous importance in our worship services. Those who choose, conduct, present, and accompany the music may influence the spirit of reverence in our meetings more than a speaker does. . . . Music can set an atmosphere of worship which invites that spirit of revelation, of testimony.” (President Boyd K. Packer, October 1991 General Conference).

**“The Spirit does not ratify speech nor confirm music which lacks spiritual substance.”**  
(President Boyd K. Packer, October 1991 General Conference).

### **Appropriate Music in Worship Services**

Music presented in sacrament meetings (or stake conferences, regional conferences, and general conferences) should be different from music in other Church meetings because it is intended to support the worship experience of each Church member. Follow the pattern offered in general conferences - mostly hymns, some children’s songs, and maybe one special sacred selection.

**“Music in our worship services is not for demonstration but for worship.”**  
(Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1994 General Conference).

### **Instruments**

“Pianos, organs, or their electronic equivalents are the standard for use in Church meetings. If other instruments are used, their use should be in keeping with the spirit of the meeting. Instruments with a loud or less worshipful sound, such as most brass and percussion, are not appropriate for sacrament meetings. If a piano, organ, or accompanist is not available, appropriate recordings may be used for accompaniment.” (Elder Russell M. Nelson, Worldwide Leadership Meeting, 21 June 2003; see also Church Handbook of Instructions, page 289).

Using the piano and organ at the same time is not standard for Church meetings. However, these instruments may be played together occasionally, especially for selections written with separate piano and organ scores (see Church Handbook of Instructions, page 294).

The agent bishop for the building and the stake physical facilities representative (usually a high councilor) should make sure that pianos and pipe organs are tuned, maintained, and repaired as needed. Digital instruments need no tuning. (See Church Handbook of Instructions, page 294).

“When there is no reasonable alternative, priesthood leaders may authorize the use of meeting-house pianos and organs for practice, paid private instruction, and recitals involving members of the units that use the meetinghouse. No admittance fee should be charged for recitals.” (Church Handbook of Instructions, page 294).

### **LDS-Pop Music**

“Some religiously oriented music in a popular style is not appropriate for sacrament meetings” (Church Handbook of Instructions, page 289). “Some religiously oriented music in a popular style can be uplifting and motivating for some of our members, but may lack the dignity and propriety suitable for a worship service.” (Bulletin, No. 31, September 1986, page 1).

### **Copying Music**

“If Church leaders and members desire to use materials owned by others, such as printed text, visuals or music, audio or video recordings, photographs or artwork, computer software, and electronic products, they must make certain that the copyright owner has given permission for the use of their material. *It is both illegal and dishonest to use the copyrighted works of others without their permission.*” (Council of the Twelve letter, dated 25 Feb 1995).

### **Music for Funerals, Baptisms, and Wedding Ceremonies**

“**Music for funerals** might include prelude music, an opening hymn, special musical selections, a closing hymn, and postlude music. Simple hymns or other songs with gospel messages are most appropriate for these occasions. Opening and closing hymns are usually sung by the congregation.” (Church Handbook of Instructions, page 290).

“**Music for baptismal services** may include prelude music, an opening hymn, a special musical selection, interlude music or hymn singing while participants dress, a closing hymn, and postlude music. Well-known hymns and Primary songs are most appropriate.” (ibid, page 290).

“**Music for a wedding ceremony** that is held in a home or Church building might include prelude music, hymns, special musical selections, and postlude music. When a wedding ceremony is held in a Church building, a wedding march is not appropriate.” (ibid, page 290).

### **Some Other Guidelines**

Music in Church meetings is usually sung in the language of the congregation.  
Live accompaniment is normally used in sacrament and other ward meetings.

**Music director** (or **music leader** in Primary) is proper terminology - not chorister.

**Hymn** and **hymn number** is proper terminology for the hymnbook - not song and page.