

The Use of Religious Music as an Effective and Valuable Connection between School and Parish

Why Music?

Music is a **UNIVERSAL** language.

It **CONNECTS** people in a way nothing else can, but it has to be **ACCESSIBLE** and **INCLUSIVE**.

Universal	: used or understood by all.
Connects	: to “bring together” or “establish a link.”
Accessible	: to be able to be reached OR in the case of a person, to be friendly/easy to approach/talk to.
Inclusive	: Not EXCLUSIVE (to exclude, would mean to deny or prevent access to something).

To put this in the context of religious music or “hymns:

“If Religious Music not only adds to the beauty of the Mass, but allows the prayers of the Mass, and the Mass itself to speak more fully, then this should be enough to inspire us to make the effort.” Fr.M.McClaren

How can religious music be used as a link, a common ground between the school and the parish?

1. What is the difference between Religious Music (hymns) and Liturgical Music:

Religious music comes from human hearts yearning for God; liturgical music comes from Christ’s heart, the heart of the Church, longing for us.

2. Is religious music necessary and why?

Religious music (outside the sphere of the liturgy *and* as an enrichment for the Mass) is absolutely necessary for pre-evangelization and evangelization. For some people, it is how they pray.

3. What is its purpose?

Religious music is meant to enhance and set the tone for the liturgy, in a similar way that an overture would set the mood for an opera or ballet. However, a hymn or worship song, does not do this simply by *how it sounds* but more importantly by:

- how it is sung (*stylistic features of the accompaniment, who sings/leads it, length etc*).
- the relevance of the accompanying text.

4. So, what exactly are we trying to achieve here? What “Hope in the Future” does the role of Religious Music have?

- A **UNIVERSAL** understanding of the spiritual function of musical accompaniment to the liturgical content of the mass.
- The establishment of a core of hymns, songs and perhaps later, liturgical music, that will be used in **BOTH** school and church.
- The involvement and inclusion of every member of each faithful community in the musical worship aspects of the Roman Rite.

5. What benefits will this have to the school and the parish?

- The children will gain a practical understanding of the order and meaning of the Roman Rite **THROUGH** music.
- The parish will start to build as an intergenerational community through a shared love of religious music and the vibrancy and life that young people bring.

6. How do we promote this link:

- Encourage parish musicians to **support worship** in school and vice versa. Use the “Hope in the Future Anthem.”
- Start by organising specific **shared worship** occasions at the main Sunday Mass (parish saints day, mothers day/fathers day, feast days). Build from there until it becomes “normal” for the youth to attend mass on a Sunday out of a genuine enthusiasm for their faith rather than just an obligation.
- Consider establishing a communal parish/school choir or worship group
- Plan a joint Carol Service

7. With all of this in mind then, when choosing religious music to accompany the mass, what qualities should be sought after within the text or melody of a hymn which would indicate it's an inducement to prayer, devotion, and reflection?

Here are some examples of hymns which could be introduced both at school and at church as a common musical ground and their purposes:

Opening Hymn Purpose : A “gathering” song to open the liturgical celebration and foster unity.

All Are Welcome, Marty Haugen

Gather, Gather, Mike Stanley

Our God is Here, Chris Muglia

Offertory Hymn Purpose : We are preparing our whole being to receive the body and blood of Christ

Come, Lord Jesus, Come, Kevin Mayhew

Open Our Eyes To See, Angela Reith

Take My Life and Let It Be, text by Frances Havergal, music by Mozart

Communion Hymn Purpose : Here we remember and revere Christ for what He did for us and celebrate what we have received as a result of His sacrifice.

Will You Come and Follow Me, Scottish trad. Melody, arr. David Peacock, text by John L. Bell and Graham Maule

In Christ Alone, Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend

We Have a Hope in Jesus, Breda Coman

Recessional Hymn Purpose : Enable people to leave joyfully, singing to reinforce the Good News.

I Will Be With You, Gerard Markland

Be Thou My Vision, Trad.

Go out to the World, Richard Cootes