

The following is the outline of a Catholic wedding ceremony with suggestions for music:

Prelude

As the guests gather, it is appropriate to provide instrumental and/or vocal music. This music should help to create the proper atmosphere for the sacred celebration that is about to take place.

Processional

The procession includes the participants in the wedding liturgy. One or two pieces of instrumental music usually accompany the procession. The music should evoke the spirit and joy of the celebration.

Gathering Hymn (optional)

The gathering hymn helps to unite the congregation in prayer. General hymns of praise or thanksgiving are very appropriate at this time as are hymns that express the love that is expressed in marriage. It is best to choose a hymn or song that will be familiar to all.

Responsorial Psalm

The Responsorial Psalm between the first and second readings is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word. This sung psalm takes a responsorial form, with an antiphon or refrain sung by all assembled and the verses sung by the cantor (vocalist). The text must be taken from the book of Psalms in the bible.

Alleluia

The alleluia will be sung before the Gospel, with an appropriate verse.

Rite of Marriage

The exchange of vows and rings follows the reading of the Gospel and the homily. The lighting of the unity candle following the vows is optional. A brief vocal solo may follow as a response to the marriage vows.

Preparation of the Gifts (with Mass only)

Music may accompany the procession and presentation of the gifts of bread and wine to the altar. Instrumental music usually works best during the transition while the altar and gifts are prepared.

Eucharistic Acclamations (with Mass only)

The three Eucharistic Acclamations: the Holy; the Acclamation; and the Amen should be sung by the congregation in familiar musical settings. The cantor (vocalist) will lead the assembly in these responses.

Lord's Prayer

The "Our Father" (Lord's Prayer) is always recited by the entire congregation together. It may not be sung as a vocal solo.

Communion Procession (with Mass only)

As the couple and congregation receive communion, music can help to create a sense of unity and prayer. This music can be a congregational song, a vocal solo, or instrumental music.

Recessional

This is music that is played as the couple and wedding party process out of church. It is most commonly an organ or piano solo.

Postlude

Following the recessional, the organist or pianist will continue to play appropriate instrumental music as wedding guests leave the Church.