



COLLOQUIUM XXIV

BREAKOUT SESSION

PLANNING A SACRED MUSIC  
WORKSHOP

JANET GORBITZ



- Setup for workshop in Church or Music Room
- Meals/Snacks (preparation, cleanup, making coffee, providing home-baked goods)
- Advertising the event
- Fundraising, if needed
- Book sales

### Final Notes

Local workshops usually fill up in the two weeks prior to the event. Last minute decisions to attend are par for the course.

Success on the day of your workshop has everything to do with careful and decisive planning ahead of time. It should all appear effortless and fun.

Make sure your local parish community is prepared for and feels itself a part of the event taking place – the closing Mass will be their Mass, too.

Lastly, remember that the success of your workshop, and of the sacred music movement in general, is more dependent on this than you may realize. These local workshops provide encouragement and education to many who would otherwise be unaware of the beauty of chant. Many people who later attend Colloquia and develop local chant choirs began their study of Sacred Music at a **local weekend workshop**.

*If you have an excellent venue for chant workshops and are interested in hosting a CMAA-sponsored event (such as Chant Intensive), please let us know. We are always looking for new locales and a welcoming parish.*

Contact us at: [programs@musicasacra.com](mailto:programs@musicasacra.com)

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## So you want to host a workshop...

### Goals of the Workshop

Taking into account the level of knowledge and skill of your choir and the interest of people in your local area, what do you hope to achieve at the workshop? Here are a few of the various types of workshops you may want:

- 2-3 Hour Workshop on Missal Chants
- Weekend (2-day) workshop on English Ordinaries and Propers
- Weekend (2-day) workshop on Latin and English Ordinaries and Propers
- Weekend (2-day) workshop on Latin Ordinaries and Propers
- Weekend (2-day) workshop on Latin Ordinaries and Propers with some Polyphonic repertory
- Weekend (2-day) workshop on teaching / directing Children's Choirs

If you are considering a 2-day workshop, consider starting the workshop on a Thursday evening or early on Friday and then doing the vigil Mass on Saturday instead of the coveted Sunday morning Mass. Most singers and music directors will have trouble staying over because they need to return to their own parishes for their own Sunday Masses.

You need to build in plenty of time for chant – learning from the ground up. This is the primary reason people will be coming.

Start singing right away – people need to be involved – especially the skeptics.

Most people coming will be novices when it comes to chant and polyphony. You need to meet them at their level. Even if you end up with a group of skilled musicians and music directors, chant will likely be brand new to them. And although most will be enthusiastic, you'll have a few who aren't yet convinced. Things need to be kept light and fun and not overly academic or you'll lose your audience.

Determine your target number of participants based on what you can accommodate and your estimated level of interest in your region.

Estimate the number of cookies, granola bars, fresh fruit, soft drinks, etc. that you will need for all your coffee breaks. Often the shopping for paper products and all these snack supplies, including bottled water can be delegated to a volunteer.

If you plan to have home-baked goods or snacks, a volunteer can likely organize this and communicate with the cooks about when and where to bring their goodies. Quite often the parish hall will have serving trays, table cloths, coffee pots, etc. available for you to use.

Assign someone to keep the coffee pot going in time for breakouts and to tidy up when needed.

### Book Sales

If you would like to offer a book sales table, contact CMAA about ordering books in bulk. For books, such as the Parish Book of Chant (2d edition), Words with Wings books, or any other CMAA publication, we are happy to support workshops and give bulk rates for either book sales or books you give to attendees as part of their tuition. Contact us at [programs@musicasacra.com](mailto:programs@musicasacra.com) for rates and information.

### Volunteer Help and Personnel

Centralize practical efforts (two or three people is enough), and don't count on additional volunteers to make decisions or do more than act as gophers on d-day. If you need additional personnel on the day of the workshop, considering **hiring** a local or two at a nominal fee. This money will be well spent. These individuals will be on call to assist you in anything that might come up, particularly on workshops with large numbers of attendees.

Note: Persons handling registrations need to be privy to all of the details and be excellent communicators. Everyone will be writing or calling with questions, or a special situation or need. Those fielding the calls or taking registrations need to be thinking of only one thing – public relations.

Volunteer suggestions:

- Registration (see note above)
- Hosting your guest director (transportation, meals)
- Setup / Breakdown in Parish Hall

Printing of music packets and worship aids can easily be done by use of a digital pdf file taken to a printer or sent to an online printer, such as 48hrbooks.com. Often, online printers, even including shipping costs, will be less expensive than your local Kinko's and give you a nicer product. When preparing music packets, be sure you have copyright attributions in the file wherever needed and permission for any copyrighted works.

If you have the staff (and time) available to print them at the church competently, that can save you a lot. However, you don't want an amateurish looking document, so be sure you'll be happy with the finished product.

### *Name Tags*

Don't forget to pre print nametags for all your registrants. It helps a great deal to have these ready to go for most people before they arrive. Leaving a few blank ones for last-minute registrants will allow you to add as needed without having to handwrite each one (with varying legibility). If you have used an online registration form, you can easily extract name and home city information for easy batch printing of these nametags.

### *Catering and Snacks*

Typically, your parish office personnel will have ideas for you about hiring a caterer for your event. If you live in the town where your diocesan offices are located, they are also a very good resource for ideas about reasonable (and good) caterers.

If possible, try out the food before you commit to any caterer, whether by eating at the restaurant in question, or by asking them to provide you a sample.

You'll want to have quotes by headcount from caterers and let them know well in advance of the event (at least a month or so). They will sometimes require a down payment, so be prepared.

Most caterers will want final decisions on your menu choice two weeks before the event, with final headcounts no later than 72 hours before the first meal.

### *When Should you Start Planning?*

Begin the planning for the workshop at least three months in advance to save yourself stress...

Crucial Planning Steps:

- Permission and support of your pastor /diocese
- Determine if any funding is available to assist
- Calendar check for facilities availability on your desired dates
- Reservations on the parish calendar

### *Finding an Instructor or Guest Conductor*

If your workshop is primarily to help your parish choir and/or others in the area to learn to sing the Missal Chants more effectively, you may only need a 2-3 hour workshop. Perhaps you can do this workshop yourself, or have someone living in your diocese who would come and do this for you for a very nominal fee.

If you are looking for a longer duration workshop and hoping to end with a Mass, determine the level of your core participants' ability and choose accordingly. For those parishes who are strictly Ordinary Form of the Mass in English, you may want to focus on some of the new English propers settings (see SEP, Ainslie propers online, PBP, et al.). You will also want to select a director who has an affinity for this music and familiarity with it.

For those workshops where Latin will be a large part of it, you'll want a very skilled instructor with much experience in directing chant from the Gregorian Missal and/or Liber Usualis. (Note: If you plan to have an extraordinary form Mass, you will need strong support from parish altar servers and an experienced EF celebrant. ) Most parishes tend to use the ordinary form for their workshop Mass.

If you are hoping to work on developing a children's chorister program or want to offer training to teachers in the diocese, consider a Words with Wings workshop, or a specialized workshop specifically for that purpose. Dates during summertime or over Christmas breaks (when school is not in session) are good target times for this type of workshop.

If you are unsure whom to approach about your workshop, contact the programs office of CMAA for suggestions and contact information.

Once you have determined a potential director/instructor, contact him/her and make schedule plans. Make sure you agree upon the basic goals of the workshop, general repertory decisions, travel and hotel arrangements and honoraria. Get biographical information (including a photo) about him/her for advertising the event.

Make plans for follow up communication regarding approval of the final repertory, mailing address for sending an advance copy of the music packet, airfare reimbursement and anything else you'll be sending. Sometimes musicians are difficult to reach, especially during busy liturgical seasons. Make sure you have a way to make contact when timely responses are needed.

Ask about any specific items the director will want to have during the workshop (music stand, white board, etc.) Prepare to have the honoraria prepared with a letter of thanks to give the instructor upon his/her arrival.

## Putting Together Your Budget

It is easy to miss things when you are planning... this list will help you consider what items you need to add to your budget during the planning phase:

Expenses:

- Cost for Guest conductor / Instructor, including
  - Honoraria
  - Travel
  - Hotel
  - Meals
- Cost for printing or purchasing:
  - Music Packets
  - Nametags
  - Pencils
- Printing costs for:
  - Flyers
  - Advertisements

If no central advertising method is available in your diocese, contact as many parishes in your diocese as possible with the information (this is more time intensive, so perhaps someone helping you with the planning could be assigned this task).

Build a simple flyer with the basic information about the event and have it ready to handout at various other diocesan events where musicians might gather... multi-parish musical events, concerts, etc.

## Parish Advertising

Your own **parish bulletin** should have mention of the workshop for several weeks leading up to the event. If possible, get a verbal announcement added to your parish's Mass announcements as well. Make sure parishioners understand that they are very welcome to participate in the workshop and the Mass (if any).

## Post-Event Articles

We love to see photos and information about the events after the fact. If you send us an article about your workshop, we'll put the article up about it on the website. It offers encouragement to others around the country when they see your success.

Your diocese will also appreciate a follow up on the event for the diocesan website or publications, particularly if they have offered you financial support.

## Music Handouts and Worship Aids

If you have someone who is reasonably talented with software programs such as Publisher or MS Word or Open Office Writer or even InDesign, it is easy to put together a digital file with all the repertoire for the workshop. If you and your planning team are technically challenged, check with your parish office about who prepares any worship aids or bulletin inserts for the parish. It may be that someone there could help you.

Failing those options, there are many people online who would be willing to put these things together for you for a fee, including CMAA members. Check online to find someone to help you on our MusicaSacra forum.



## Announcing the Event—Advertising

### National Advertising

CMAA offers free posting of your workshops on our site. Contact us with information (preferably in a finished format) and we will be happy to give you visibility on our site.

Provide information about:

- Type of Workshop
- Date and Time of the Event
- Location, including maps to the location
- Photo of the Church
- Hotel group rate information
- Instructor / Director biographical information
- Schedule of Events
- Concert Information (if any)
- Any required texts (not usual—typically all needed materials are provided)
- Repertory (a short description of the music to be sung)
- Registration deadline
- Tuition cost
- Registration online form

Offer the registrants an online registration form (such as Google forms), thereby allowing you to get a listing of all registrations without waiting for mailed forms. Most registrants will want to pay when they check in at the event, but having contact information and the list of expected attendees greatly helps in the planning.

### Diocesan Advertising

Advertise your event well in advance in the **diocesan publications** if you can. This is typically done free of charge and can get much visibility beyond your own parish. Write up a short article to make it easy for them to add to their site/publications.

Ask the diocesan office if there is a means of asking for bulletin announcements diocese-wide through their office. If so, write up a very short announcement with general information that could be easily placed in small spots at the various parish bulletins. You may also find that a diocesan music office may be able to assist with advertisement for your event.

- Catering suggestions
  - Meals (lunches or dinners)
  - Breaks - Coffee, tea (incl. sugar, sweeteners and creamer), water and/or soft drinks and snacks
  - Paper products needed (cups, plates, napkins, plasticware)
  - Water bottles at Registration
  - Reception (if concert provided)
- Books provided as part of tuition
  - Sometimes workshops will include a useful book, such as the Parish Book of Chant, 2d ed., or the Words with Wings Instructor book.

Income:

- Financial Support from Parish or Diocese
- Projected Tuition from attendees
- Fundraising

### Sample Budget (for a mini-workshop)

Details: Duration 3 hours, Expected attendance 35, Tuition: free

#### Expenses:

Instructor Honoraria (\$0 if donated)	\$200
Travel	\$0
Printing (parish copier)	\$0
Coffee/Cookies (if donated, \$0)	\$50
Paper Products	\$10
<b>Subtotal (expenses)</b>	<b>\$260</b>

#### Income:

<b>Fundraiser or Parish</b>	<b>\$260</b>
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Note: Often the cost for this type of workshop can be reduced to nearly nothing if you have an instructor who will volunteer. These mini workshops are quite easy to do, and are very effective in teaching basics, such as Missal Chants in English.

*Sample Budget (for a 2-day workshop with concert, reception and catered dinner)*

Details: Duration 2-day, Expected attendance 70, Tuition: \$75

**Expenses:**

Instructor Honoraria (can vary less or more)	\$1000
Director/Instructor Travel	\$400
Hotel (3 nights—Th-Sun (incl. Bkfst)	\$336
Welcome dinner (restaurant) (could be donated by hosts)	\$35
<b>Printing</b>	
Music Packets (16pp 8.5x11 75copies)	\$272
Nametags	\$40
Pencils	\$15
Flyers (Parish copier using your own colored paper)	\$10
Advertisements (registration Forms for placing in parishes) (parish copier)	\$5
Books (PBC2 @ \$10/copy)	\$700
<b>Meals, Snacks and Reception</b>	
Friday a.m. break*	\$100
Friday lunch (box lunch Catered, \$10/person)	\$700
Friday p.m. break*	\$100
Friday dinner (catered \$15/person)	\$1050
Friday reception (punch Cookies, simple snacks @ \$5/person x 100 guests) (following concert)	\$500
Sat. a.m. break*	\$100
Saturday lunch (catered \$12/person)	\$840
Saturday p.m. break*	\$100
Bottled water (registration)	\$20
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$6323</b>

**Income:**

Tuition (\$75 x 70)	\$5250
Parish Assistance	\$500
Fundraiser	\$573

**Total Income: \$6323**

\* Break costs include coffee, tea, paper products, sugar, creamer and sweeteners, water, sodas, cookies. This can often be easily donated by members of the choir.

3:00—3:30 pm Chant Rehearsal (if needed)  
4:00 pm Closing Mass  
5:30 pm End of Workshop

*Sample 4:*

**Two-Day Workshop with Concert, Lecture and Mass**

**Friday**

8:30 am Registration and Welcome  
9:00 am Chant Instruction  
10:15 am Break  
10:30 am Chant  
12:30 pm Lunch  
1:30 pm Chant  
3:15 pm Break  
3:30 pm Chant  
5:30 pm Dinner  
7:00 pm Concert  
8:00 pm Reception

**Saturday**

8:30 am Chant Rehearsal  
10:15 am Break  
10:30 am Chant  
12:30 pm Lunch  
1:30 pm Rehearsal in the Sanctuary  
2:30 pm Break  
2:45—3:30 pm Lecture  
4:00 pm Closing Mass  
5:30 pm End of Workshop



Sample 2:

### **Two day (7-hour total plus optional extra) Workshop**

#### **Friday**

1:00 pm Registration  
1:30 pm Chant Instruction  
3:00 pm Break  
3:15 pm Chant Instruction  
5:00 pm Dinner on your own

#### **Saturday**

9:00 am Chant Instruction  
10:30 am Break  
10:45 am Chant Instruction  
12:00 pm Lunch on your own

Optional extra:

1:00 pm Chant Instruction  
3:15 pm Break on your own  
5:30 pm Singing at Mass

Sample 3:

### **Two Day Workshop with Mass**

#### **Friday**

8:30 am Registration and Welcome  
9:00 am Chant Instruction  
10:15 am Break  
10:30 am Chant  
12:30 pm Lunch  
1:30 pm Chant  
3:15 pm Break  
3:30 pm Chant  
5:30 pm Dinner on your own

#### **Saturday**

8:30 am Chant Rehearsal  
10:15 am Break  
10:30 am Chant  
12:30 pm Lunch  
1:30 pm Rehearsal  
2:30 pm Break

### **Travel and Hotel Arrangements**

#### **Hotels:**

For weekend workshops, in addition to your Director /Instructor, there may be people traveling from out of town who will need hotel accommodations.

For both the guest director/instructor and your attendees, it is very nice to arrange for group rates at a convenient hotel at no charge to you.

Contact local diocesan personnel (or parish office personnel) to find out where they typically house visitors. They will often be able to give you ideas on likely hotels.

Once you have some possible choices, contact the hotel(s) with information about your plan, and ask for group rates. If you have some idea of the number of registrants, you can typically get them to block out a certain number of rooms for a specified time (try to get them to hold the room block as late as you can to allow your participants who register late to be able to get the good rates).

Sometimes the hotel can provide you with a link to post on the web listing where registrants can make their reservations directly.

Ask for an upgrade for your instructor (if any is available – sometimes hotels have a concierge level where breakfasts are provided, etc.).

#### **Travel:**

Ask the instructor to make flight arrangements soon enough to get reasonable airfares (if needed). Reimburse these costs immediately, if possible.

Make plans to greet/pickup and drop-off the director to and from the airport (if applicable) and host for dinner (when arriving the night before). Make arrangements for transportation to and from hotel during the workshop.

## Repertory

Based on the goals of your workshop, you can likely determine needed materials very quickly. For a 2-3 hour workshop on Missal chants, for example, most of the ordinaries are available for free download from the ICEL website at <http://www.iceleweb.org/musicfolder/openmusic.php>.

For missal chants in square note notation, see <http://musicasacr.com/music/rm2011/>.

For English and Latin propers, see the MusicaSacra website for resources here: <http://musicasacra.com/resource-lists/>.

If you plan to include some polyphonic selections in your repertory, there are many open-source resources available at such sites as cpdl.org and others. Richard Rice's Simple Choral Gradual is available online for free download at the MusicaSacra site as well.

Make sure your guest director agrees with you on all your repertoire selections. He/she may have other suggestions that would be better or more familiar to him/her. The director must be comfortable with the selections and agree that adequate time is available to prepare them all with the schedule of events.

Don't spend too much time brainstorming with large committees about repertory and logistics. This often amounts to a lot of pie-in-the-sky ideas and wasted time. Do your homework, and have two or three people make educated decisions about the needs of your audience. Make up the schedule, stick to it, and things will fall into place.

### Guest Lecture (if any)

One short lecture is probably enough for a one or two-day workshop.

### Evening Concert (if any)

Do you have a showcase parish choir or local group who could provide an evening's entertainment as a part of the workshop? If so, it might be fun to have it on Friday evening. You may need to add light refreshments for a reception to your budget following the concert.

## The Schedule of Events

There is a very fine line between giving your participants the most instruction you can in a short time and wearing them out to the point that they'll never want to look at a chant piece again.

For many, the idea of singing for an entire day, with a few breaks thrown in here and there can be a bit daunting.

Try to break up your schedule so that there is ample time for breaks, fresh coffee brewed and a chance to get to know one another.

Don't overreach on your choice of repertory, realizing that it is often difficult to master new music in only a few short hours of rehearsal time.

With a mind toward balancing the budget, elimination of catered meals can allow you to offer valuable instruction without a high tuition fee.

General points:

- Offer a break every hour or hour and a half of rehearsal time
- Don't plan to make people sing for more than about 7 hrs (max) per day (even if you are tempted to add an evening rehearsal)
- Afternoon lectures can often be snoozers... if you do plan a lecture, be sure your topic is one that will be of interest and relevant to your attendees and that your speaker is lively.
- Realize that many musicians have responsibilities to their home parishes, even on Saturday afternoons. It may be that many of your attendees will need to leave on Saturday either at noon or mid-afternoon to get to Mass back home. Don't plan on having the full contingent at your closing Mass.

The following couple of pages show some sample schedules for weekend workshops, with varying activities and durations.

Sample 1:

### Afternoon Mini-Workshop

1:00 pm Welcome and distribution of materials, Chant Instruction  
2:00—2:15 pm Break, followed by more Chant Instruction  
3:00 pm End of Workshop