

name:



Musician Handout

A COURSE IN CHURCH AUDIO

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Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, the church band is on the same team as the church audio engineer. Many wars have been waged and many battles have been fought over the struggle between musicians and crew. The goal of this worksheet is to unite the worship team (audio crew included).

SOUND CHECK

There is a big difference between sound check and rehearsal! If you do not need a sound check every week, congratulations. However, don't go more than 4-6 weeks without taking the time to do a full sound check. As musicians come and go, instruments get updated or switched out, and even the weather changes, a full soundcheck every month will keep the band sounding fresh.

Monitor Mixes:

The goal of a monitor mix is to make the musicians as comfortable as possible, and to create the best audio environment so they can perform to their maximum potential. So, what makes "the best" audio environment?

Tips for a quality monitor mix:

*Consider yourself lucky if you don't have to share a mix with another musician.
A quality monitor mix will make it easy to:*

- **Stay on time.** Kick drum. Snare drum. Hi-hats. (If needed)
- **Stay in tune.** Piano, worship leader's guitar, or other main instrument.
- **Hear yourself.** Part of a vocal team? The team should blend as 1 unit.

In Ears:

If your church provides you with in-ears, probably including a small personal mixer, there are 2 additional items to consider for your mix:

- **Pan.** Keep the K, S, H, bass, lead vocal and yourself in the center, pan everything else to the left or right.
- **Ambient mic.** Using a room mic will help remedy that 'closed off' feeling.

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Musician Responsibilities

As a musician, your role is to offer the best possible quality to the engineer.

- Change guitar strings
- Change drums heads
- Use a tuner!
- Practice outside church
- Listen to each other
- Band play as 1 unit
- Use quality gear
- Keep FX to a minimum

During sound check, be respectful of other musicians and the audio engineer. If you need 'jam time', show up early or stay later, but please don't interrupt the other band members during their line check.

Learning how to communicate what you are hearing is not always easy. Learning how to communicate what you *want* to hear is much better.

Try to present a solution, rather than just identifying the problem. "Will you add some highs to the monitor?" is much easier to accommodate than trying to decode what, "My monitor sounds honky" means or how to remedy it.

Drummer: Learn how to tune your drums. Playing deliberately and consistently produces the best sound. Use smaller sticks if volume is an issue.

Bassist: Don't worry about adding low end on your amp. The instrument will produce a lot, and out in the room where the audio wave is developing, there is plenty of low end. Instead, focus on a smooth and even tone with plenty of mids and highs.

Guitarists: Don't hide behind FX pedals and crazy sounds. Solid playing goes MUCH further in the mix. Wah-Wah might get you more attention, but it's not always the kind of attention you want. Less is more!

Keyboards: Don't be upset when the strings/ organ/ etherial pad you're playing isn't blaring in the mix. Your textures are adding a lot, but they play a supporting role, not the lead.

Aux, Other: Saxophones, Violins, Flutes, Mandolins, Congas, Bongos, etc... Your accents add a lot, so focus on playing with a consistent volume.

Singers: Keep the mic close to your mouth. If you move it more than an inch, your vocal disappears. Hit notes instead of sliding into them, and keep your head up and mouth open. Bob Dylan has a copyright on that closed-mouth nasal sound.