

SONG PREPARATION & DELIVERABLES (SOP)

Department: Creative | Worship

Purpose: Establish a consistent process for preparing songs for worship services, rehearsals, recordings, and related ministry events.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this SOP is to ensure every song added to the worship library is fully prepared, accurately arranged, correctly mapped, and equipped with the necessary resources for the Worship Leader, Vocal Team, Band, Production Team, and other musicians.

Every song should be delivered in a **consistent, organized, and rehearsal-ready format**.

1. SONG INTAKE & INITIAL SETUP

Before production begins, confirm the following:

Song Information

- **Song Title**
- **Original Artist / Recording MP3**
- **Designated Worship Leader**
- **Correct Arrangement and Mapping**
- **Correct Key**
- **Tempo**
- **Song Version / Recording**
- **Service or Event**

Initial Quality Check

The team should listen to the selected recording and confirm:

- The correct recording/version has been selected.
- The arrangement being used matches the intended worship arrangement.
- The key is correct for the Worship Leader.
- The song structure is understood.
- Any special musical or vocal elements are identified.
- Any changes from the original recording are documented.

2. SONG DELIVERABLES

Each song should have the following deliverables completed as applicable.

A. PRACTICE TRACK

1. Original Recording

Provide the original recording with:

- Correct song version
- Correct arrangement
- Correct mapping
- Clearly identified song sections

2. Click & Guide

Create a practice track containing:

- Click
- Guide
- Correct tempo
- Correct song structure
- Correct mapping

The Click & Guide should follow the exact arrangement being rehearsed and performed.

3. VOCAL TRACKS

A. VOCAL PRACTICE TRACK

Create a vocal practice track containing:

- All vocal parts
- Vocal parts placed over the original recording
- Correct mapping
- Correct arrangement
- Correct key

The purpose of this track is to allow vocalists to hear how their parts fit within the complete song.

B. VOCAL SECTIONAL TRACKS

Create sectional tracks when needed:

- **Soprano**
- **Alto**
- **Tenor**
- ***Bass (When needed)***

Each sectional track should clearly demonstrate the part the vocalist is expected to sing.

4. STEMS

When stems are required, prepare and organize the following groupings:

- Keys (Stereo)
- Guitars (Stereo)
- Percussion (Stereo)
- Vocals (Stereo)
- Strings (Stereo)
- Horns (Stereo)
- Click (Mono)
- Guide (Mono)

Stem Requirements

All stems should:

- Begin at the same start point.
 - Match the approved arrangement.
 - Match the approved tempo.
 - Be correctly labeled.
 - Be properly aligned.
 - Checked for missing or incorrect audio.
 - Exported at the required format and quality. (MP3)
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5. CHARTS & MUSIC RESOURCES

A. CHORD CHART

Create the official chord chart in **Planning Center (PCO)**.

The chord chart should include:

- Correct key
- Correct chords
- Correct song structure
- Accurate section names
- Correct arrangement
- Appropriate repeats
- Ending / tag information when applicable

The PCO chart becomes the primary reference for musicians.

B. RHYTHM CHART

Create a rhythm chart when the arrangement requires specific rhythmic information.

The chart should communicate:

- Measures
- Bar lines
- Chord changes
- Breaks
- Rests
- Rhythmic hits
- Important musical accents

The purpose of the rhythm chart is to ensure the band performs the arrangement consistently.

C. VOCAL MAPPING

Document the complete vocal arrangement.

Identify:

- Who sings the melody
- Solo sections
- Unison sections (Perfect / Octaves)

- Two-part harmony
- Three-part harmony
- Vocal entrances
- Vocal drops
- Vocal builds

Example:

Verse 1: Lead – Solo

Chorus: All – Unison

Verse 2: Lead + Alto – Harmony

Chorus: Full Vocals – 3 Part Harmony

Bridge: Soprano / Alto / Tenor – 3 Part

Final Chorus: Full Vocals – 3 Part Harmony / Invert Parts

The vocal map should be clear enough that the Vocal Team knows **who sings what and when**.

6. LYRICS

Verify that the lyrics:

- Match the approved recording.
- Are complete.
- Are in the correct order.
- Match the arrangement.
- Include repeated sections correctly.
- Include tags, bridges, spontaneous sections, or alternate lyrics when applicable.

Lyrics should be reviewed before the song is considered complete.

7. ORCHESTRATION

When orchestration is required, document and prepare the appropriate parts.

STRINGS

As applicable:

- Violin

- Viola
- Cello
- Double Bass

HORNS

As applicable:

- Trumpet
- Alto Saxophone
- Tenor Saxophone
- Trombone

Orchestration should correspond to the approved arrangement and clearly identify entrances, parts, dynamics, and special musical moments when necessary.

8. TIME SEQUENCE

A Time Sequence should be created **when needed**, particularly for songs containing multiple musical elements or specific performance cues.

The Time Sequence should identify:

- When instruments or talent enter
- Instrumental sections
- Special effects
- Dynamic changes
- Transitions
- Other important performance moments

TIME SEQUENCE LOCATION

The Time Sequence should be placed in the **song description** so that the Worship Leader, musicians, vocalists, and production team can easily access it.

Example:

0:00 – Intro / Low fog
0:28 – Solo / Center Stage
0:52 – Dancer Enters
1:08 – Drum line Enters
1:34 – Instrumental Break / Black Out

1:48 – Choir Sings / White Out

2:15 – Final Chorus / All In

9. ARRANGEMENT APPROVAL

Before finalizing the song, verify that the **correct arrangement** has been used.

Confirm:

- Intro
- Verses
- Choruses
- Bridge
- Instrumental sections
- Breaks
- Tags
- Ending
- Repeats
- Spontaneous sections, if applicable

Any changes from the original recording should be intentionally made and documented.

10. KEY APPROVAL

The song must be prepared in the **correct key**.

The key should be confirmed with the Worship Leader before final production of:

- Practice tracks
- Vocal tracks
- Stems
- Charts
- Orchestration
- Tutorials

If the key changes after resources have been created, affected deliverables should be updated.

11. WORSHIP LEADER

Every song should have an assigned **Worship Leader**.

The Worship Leader needs to feel comfortable with:

- Key
 - Tempo
 - Style Arrangement
 - Vocal arrangement
 - Performance expectations
 - Talking points / Leading the room
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12. TUTORIALS

Create tutorials **when needed**.

Tutorials may be used when a musical part, instrument, vocal section, or arrangement element requires additional explanation.

Tutorials should explain:

- How the part is played
- When the part enters
- How the part should be performed
- Important rhythmic elements
- Tone or stylistic considerations
- Musical dynamics
- Any unusual arrangement elements

The purpose of the tutorial is to eliminate uncertainty before rehearsal.

13. FINAL QUALITY CONTROL

Before a song is marked **READY**, the person responsible for song preparation should complete the following checklist.

SONG SETUP

- ☐ Correct song/version
- ☐ Correct arrangement
- ☐ Correct key
- ☐ Worship Leader assigned
- ☐ Tempo confirmed
- ☐ Song mapped correctly

PRACTICE MATERIALS

- ☐ Original Recording (MP3)
- ☐ Practice Track
- ☐ Vocal Tracks (Sop / Alto / Tenor / All Vocals)

AUDIO

- ☐ Keys Stems
- ☐ Guitar Stems
- ☐ Percussion Stems
- ☐ Vocal Stems
- ☐ Strings Stems (when needed)
- ☐ Horns Stems (when needed)
- ☐ Click Stem
- ☐ Guide Stem

CHARTS

- ☐ PCO Chord Chart
- ☐ Rhythm Chart (when needed)
- ☐ Vocal Mapping
- ☐ Lyrics
- ☐ Orchestration (when needed)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ☐ Time Sequence (when needed)
- ☐ Song Description updated
- ☐ Tutorials (when needed)

14. FINAL SONG STATUS

A song should not be considered **READY** until all required deliverables have been completed and checked.

Use the following status system:

 IN PROGRESS

Song is being prepared and deliverables are incomplete.

 REVIEW

Initial deliverables are complete and awaiting review/approval.

 READY

All required deliverables have been completed, reviewed, and are ready for rehearsal/service use.

 REVISION

Changes are required to the arrangement, key, charts, audio, vocals, or other resources.

15. STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

The goal of this SOP is not simply to create files—it is to create **clarity**.

When a song is marked **READY**, every person involved should be able to answer:

What are we playing?

What key are we playing it in?

What arrangement are we using?

Who is singing?

What part am I playing?

When do I come in?

What happens during each section?

Where do I find the resources I need?

A completed song package should remove as much uncertainty as possible **before rehearsal begins**.