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How do I use this guide?

This guide is a list of basic FAQs on copyright dos and don'ts. Copyright is a difficult area to navigate, so for more detailed information, we advise that you seek professional help.

Quick note...

Many parishes have licences, such as Word of Life that allow them to project lyrics on to the screen and to use music for Mass.

Copyright FAQs

All the technicalities around Copyright literally take a legal degree to comprehend but there are a few simple legalities we should all know and learn that will help you steer clear of any major issues. The bulk of this information is taken from the Australian Copyright Council (www.copyright.org.au) who have a wide range of free fact sheets on all aspects of copyright. If you have any questions, we recommend you investigate their website for answers.

It doesn't have a copyright symbol on it, so we can use it...

Not true! Just because there is no symbol it does not mean that a work is not covered by copyright and therefore, it cannot be copied.

It's just a photo, it doesn't count...

Buzzer sound, wrong again! Copyright law lists material as:

- literary works such as journal articles, novels, screenplays, poems, song lyrics, reports, computer program;
- artistic works such as paintings, drawings, cartoons, sculpture, craft work, architectural plans, buildings, photographs, maps and plans;
- dramatic works such as choreography, screenplays, plays and mime pieces;
- musical works: that is, the music itself, separately from any lyrics or recording;
- cinematograph films: the visual images and sounds in a film, video or DVD are protected separately from any copyright in works recorded on the film or video, such as scripts and music;
- sound recordings: the particular recording itself is protected by copyright, in addition to, for example, the music or story that is recorded;
- broadcasts: TV and radio broadcasters have a copyright in their broadcasts, which is separate from the copyright in the films, music and other material which they broadcast; and
- published editions: publishers have copyright in their typographical arrangements, which is separate from the copyright in works reproduced in the edition (such as poems or illustrations or music).

We'll just make some photocopies of the sheet music for our musicians...

Sheet music should always be purchased for each musician; it is the only way that the original musicians get paid for their music. Some publishers, who specialise in religious music, sell sets at a discounted price for this exact reason. To find out more about all aspects of music copyright and the church, check out this resource from APRA: www.apra-amcos.com.au/downloads/file/Music%20Consumers/Music-Copyright-Guide-for-Churches.pdf

It's old material, we can use it...

Well maybe not true as "old" is not a legal timeframe... copyright in Australia generally lasts 70 years after the death of the creator. There is often no copyright on works where the creator died prior to 1955 or photographs taken before 1955 regardless of the life of the creator. Copyright can only apply to published works. And these rules don't apply to government copyright which is usually around a plus 50 year mark from publishing date. There is a full and comprehensive list available from the Australian Copyright Council to help you out.

It's on the net, it's free...

I totally wish this were true! But of course it's not... copyright extends over the net too. There are free things on the net, true searching via "Creative Commons" (<http://creativecommons.org.au/>) or even look for free stock image sites. A good one is: <http://www.sxc.hu/> but it still has licensing rights so read it up before downloading.