

# Understanding the Mass

## Piano and Organ

*Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.*

*Today our topic is the **Piano and Organ**.*

As you look around the church, you may see an **organ** or a **piano** - and in some churches, you may see both!

An **organ** is a very old keyboard instrument that uses pipes to produce sound. The very first organ was powered by water, and was used by the Ancient Greeks more than two hundred years before Jesus was born. Organs have been used in churches since the 7th century, both to accompany people singing and to be played on their own.

A **piano** is a different kind of keyboard instrument that uses strings and wooden hammers to create sound. The piano was invented in Italy in the 18th century, and has been used for religious music from when it was first played.



Several weeks ago, in our exploration of **hymn books**, we reflected that hymns (songs of praise for God) are a wonderful way to unite our thoughts, our prayers and our voices together. When these hymns are sung, they may be accompanied by an organ, a piano, or other instruments that are not kept inside the church - guitars, recorders, accordions, violins and other instruments that musicians will take home with them.

The organ and the piano stay inside the church because they are too heavy and too large to move. Some organs and pianos are very old, and very valuable. Along with accompanying hymns, they may also be used to play instrumental music - music that only has instruments - which has been especially created to worship God. During the Mass, instrumental music is most often played after we receive Holy Communion, to inspire our silent prayer at this time.

1. Is there a piano or an organ in your church? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your favourite musical instrument? \_\_\_\_\_