

06.17.03 The Top 25 Hymns to Use With Contemporary Worship by Don Chapman, WorshipMax.com

Here are my picks for the best 25 hymns to blend with praise and worship.

I grew up in a Baptist church and attended a Christian school where I think I heard and played almost every hymn that's ever been written! However, as I've morphed out of the traditional and into the wild rock musician I am today (joke), I've found that some hymns don't translate very well from the old evangelistic style into the contemporary. But some are timeless, and will probably withstand any style that will be invented in the future.

I've chosen these hymns based on two factors:

- 1. Popularity** - I've surveyed hundreds of music directors for the past few years on my websites.
- 2. Contemporization** - Hymns that are easily adapted to a praise band, contemporary format.

Related resources at MoreWorshipIdeas.com:

[08/26/02 Using Hymns in Praise & Worship](#)

[06/17/03 Choosing Hymns for Praise & Worship](#)

I also use this list to form the basis of my HymnCharts.com website. Most of these hymns are available online with the rest soon to follow.

1. All Hail the Power

This is one of my favorite HymnCharts arrangements! When I tried it out in church, both a 60+ woman in the congregation and a 25 year old guitarist in my band loved it. That's when I decided to start HymnCharts.com! Play it in E major. Sounds great after "Come, Now is the Time to Worship," "Every Day," or any upbeat song in E major.

2. Crown Him With Many Crowns

Majestic and upbeat. Use it at the end of a fast praise set, have a short prayer time, then go into "We Fall Down."

3. Holy Holy Holy

This versatile hymn can finish your praise set. Start out slowly and prayerfully, then grow to a majestic finish. Good if you want to lift your congregation out of a longer, intimate worship set.

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4. How Great Thou Art

I love the Integrity iWorship B DVD version. Unfortunately, it's NOT on the iWorship CD, and the sheet music is nearly impossible to find. PraiseCharts.com informs me they're working on one.

5. Amazing Grace

In my Internet hymn surveys, this hymn tops all the denomination favorite charts. It's #1 and should be sung at least once every few months. I've heard it done in every style imaginable, so be creative!

6. Great is Thy Faithfulness

You can't get too contemporary with this one, but everyone loves it so much it has to be a part of your repertoire.

7. Be Thou My Vision

A unique, ancient, almost folky hymn that sounds great with acoustic guitar and mandolin.

8. I Surrender All

This hymn is a praise song in disguise. Don't just use it for your invitation time!

9. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

This hymn can sound surprisingly fresh and upbeat. Works well with other 3/4 songs like "He Is Exalted."

10. My Jesus I Love Thee

The hymn version of "I Love You, Lord." Great for intimate worship.

11. Just As I Am

Another terrific hymn that is too often only regulated to invitation duty. After singing it at the end of your praise set, have a short prayer time and follow it with "I Give You My Heart."

12. Fairest Lord Jesus

A classical sounding keyboard hymn that still works well in a contemporary setting. Start a praise set with "You Shine" and end the set with "Fairest Lord Jesus" ("Jesus shines brighter...") If you want your praise set to end big, follow "Fairest" with "Forever."

13. It Is Well with My Soul

This touching hymn brings a peaceful conclusion to a praise set.

14. When I Survey

Great for communion and Easter. Try using WorshipTogether.com's version called "The Wonderful Cross" for an added twist - they've added a new chorus.

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15. Jesus Paid it All

Another nice communion song.

16. Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

This one can rock. Unfortunately we only use it once a year, on Easter Sunday!

17. Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

This is one of my favorite HymnCharts arrangements. I'll never forget when I presented it to the praise team. They turned their noses up at it until they heard the groove. Now they ask for it! Use it, in a lower key of E major, after "Come, Now is the Time to Worship" or before "You're Worthy of My Praise."

Read more about how I use "Joyful, Joyful:"

<http://www.heartstogod.com/WorshipMax/archives/01-14-03.htm>

18. Come, Christians, Join to Sing

This hymn is a nice surprise. You don't hear it often, but it really works with an upbeat praise band. It's a great call to worship. Follow it with "Forever," "Let the Redeemed" or "In Spirit and Truth."

19. What A Friend We Have In Jesus

Follow it with "Jesus, Draw Me Close." Use it in a praise set with "You Shine" ("In this world we will have trouble, but You have overcome the world.")

20. A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Another hymn that translates well into an upbeat arrangement. My HymnCharts version works as a benediction, with an extended "Amen."

21. All Creatures of Our God and King

Written almost 400 years ago, this hymn can still sound new. Add a jungle loop or congas and see what develops!

22. 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Another folky hymn that sounds great with acoustic guitar and mandolin. After the hymn, have a prayer time, then sing the chorus again and change the words from horizontal (about God) to vertical (to God):

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust YOU, how I've proved YOU o're and o're,
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus, Oh for grace to trust YOU more.

23. Like a River Glorious

This works well in a praise set with the Parachute Band song "Complete." Singable melody that fits the words.

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24. Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

A good mid-tempo call to worship. Avoid the verse that talks about raising Ebenezers (whatever they are!) - thankfully rewritten in modern hymnals!

25. Softly and Tenderly

This hymn is still your best choice for an invitation song.

>Tempo Guide:

uptempo:

All Hail the Power
Crown Him With Many Crowns
Christ the Lord Is Risen Today
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
Come, Christians, Join to Sing
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
All Creatures of Our God and King

midtempo:

Holy Holy Holy
How Great Thou Art
Great is Thy Faithfulness
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus
Like a River Glorious
Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

ballad:

Amazing Grace
Be Thou My Vision
I Surrender All
My Jesus I Love Thee
Just As I Am
Fairest Lord Jesus
It Is Well with My Soul
When I Survey
Jesus Paid it All
What A Friend We Have In Jesus
Softly and Tenderly