



**MennoMedia**

An agency of Mennonite Church USA  
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# Copyright Questions and Answers

*Important reminders for congregations, schools, and other groups*

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**PLEASE COPY AND DISTRIBUTE  
TO PASTORS, MUSICIANS, TEACHERS, AND WORSHIP TEAM**

**PLEASE POST  
NEXT TO YOUR COPIER**

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**Q: Does everyone have to request permission before photocopying or reusing publications—including pastors, Sunday school teachers, choir directors, ensembles and soloists, schools, and individual church members?**

**A: Yes.** Copyright law states that individuals or groups wishing to reproduce, distribute, display, perform, or adapt a copyrighted work in any way must first obtain permission from the copyright owner. **Churches, schools, and other nonprofit organizations are not exempt.** By law, a copyright owner has exclusive rights to the work they created. Just as you would not take merchandise from a store without paying for it, you shouldn't expect the intellectual property of others to be free.

**Q: Does our church need to ask permission to photocopy or reuse items from Sunday school curriculum such as *Shine: Living in God's Light* or *Adult Bible Study*, periodicals like *Leader* or *Purpose* magazine, or any congregational resources that we have purchased?**

**A: Yes.** All these materials are copyrighted. You must either purchase extra copies or ask permission each time you wish to copy or reuse any portions of them.

**Q: Does our church or group need to ask permission to photocopy or reuse items from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, *Sing the Journey*, and *Sing the Story*?**

**A: Yes.** All these materials are copyrighted and the publisher paid the copyright holder for permission to print them only in the songbooks. Generally you must either purchase extra copies or ask permission each time you wish to copy, record, or reuse any portions of these song books. We are happy to help you, so please feel free to ask.

(On page 862 of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* you'll find permission for one-time use, as in a bulletin, special program, or lesson resource, provided that: (1) the item bears only a Brethren Press, Church of the Brethren General Board, Faith and Life Press, Mennonite Publishing House, Herald Press, or Hymnal Project copyright notice, or is in the public domain; (2) the copyright notice as shown on the page is included in the reproduction; and (3) *Hymnal: A Worship Book* is acknowledged as the source. You must ask permission if you wish to copy more than one item.)

**Q: What about hymns or songs—or other materials—that are not copyrighted by MennoMedia?**

**A: Check the copyright notice and contact the correct party.** In the case of hymns or songs, refer to the "Index of Copyright Holders" located in the back of each hymnal or songbook. Before you use, record, or videotape a work in any form, you must obtain permission from the correct copyright owner of the materials—whether it is copyrighted by MennoMedia or by another publisher or author. Even if you have a license to a music service such as CCLI, please be aware that it may not cover the material you wish to copy or reuse.

**Q: Does it really make a difference if we copy items, especially when it's something like a student book and we've already purchased at least one copy?**

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A: Yes, it does. As publishers, we pay writers and artists and musicians to create the materials we offer. We calculate the total cost of development and printing, estimate the number of congregations that will buy it, and set a fair price based on actual costs and number of copies printed. When congregations buy only part of the materials and copy, we lose money and have fewer resources for publishing new products and curriculum.

There's also a practical side for congregations, since photocopying can cost as much or more than buying the product outright. Remember that every copy costs the church money in toner, paper, and maintenance.

**Q: We regularly record parts or all of our worship services so we can share them with our own members, post them on our church website, or even on YouTube. That's okay, right?**

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A: Think carefully about what you're recording. It's fine for congregations to record their sermons, for instance, but you may want to be cautious about recording a sharing time that could reveal personal information. Please be aware that it's illegal for you to record copyrighted music without obtaining proper permission. Note that many musical works posted on YouTube are done so illegally.

**Q. What about projecting music, lyrics, or other materials on a screen during worship?**

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A. To do this legally, you still need permission from the copyright holder.

**Q: How may we receive permission to make copies or reuse materials?**

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A: To request permission for works copyrighted by any of MennoMedia's imprints—Third Way Media, Faith & Life Resources, or Herald Press—or for help with any permissions questions, **please contact Meghan Florian, 540-574-4874; MeghanF@MennoMedia.org.**

**Q: What information is needed to receive permission?**

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A: When seeking permission, please note the following:

- the **exact material** you wish to use, including the title of the article, book, or song; the author; and the page(s) that will be used
- **how you plan to use the materials** (photocopies, overhead display, etc.)
- the **number of copies** to be made
- the **distribution method** (Will copies be sold or given away free?)
- the **projected price**, if anything is to be sold

*Thanks for helping us by obeying copyright law!*