

Musical Instruments in Church

Music has long been an important part of worship services in the United States. The type of music that is played, however, has varied greatly, from churches with large music bands to the Amish who sing without any instruments at all. In this learning module, we explore some of the ways in which Americans integrate musical instruments into their worship services.

Open your web browser and go to the homepage for the Association of Religion Data Archives (www.theARDA.com).

Begin by locating the *National Congregations Study, Cumulative Dataset (1998, 2006-2007, and 2012) - Instructional Dataset* on the ARDA website. For assistance locating data files on the ARDA, click [here](#).

To begin examining the place of music in American religion, locate the variable titled, "INSTMENT" (question #222) in the NCS data file. For assistance navigating data files on the ARDA, click [here](#).

1. What question is being asked?

2. What were the possible answers individuals could give to this question?

3. What percent of churches use musical instruments in their worship services? What percentage of churches do **not** use musical instruments in their services?



4. Are certain religious traditions more likely to use musical instruments? Use the “Analyze Results” feature to complete the following table:

	Roman Catholic	White conservative, evangelical, or fundamentalist	Black Protestant	White liberal or moderate	Non-Christian
Percent of congregations that use musical instruments					

5. Which religious tradition was most likely to use musical instruments in their services? Which tradition was the least likely? Were you surprised by the results? Why or why not?

6. Despite the fact that so many churches in the U.S. use musical instruments, some instruments are used more often than others. Look for other variables asking about specific musical instruments, and see what percentage of churches use them.

Instrument	%
Piano	
Organ	
Drums	
Guitar	
Electric Guitar	

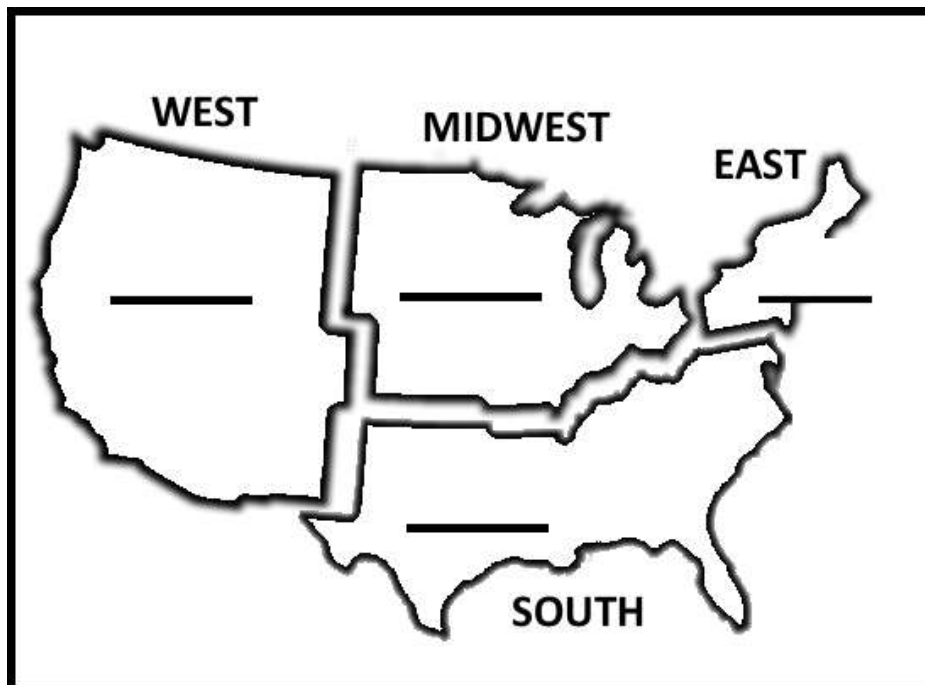
7. Were any of the instruments mentioned above used more often than you expected? Were any of them used less often than you expected?

8. Pick a question about a specific type of instrument, and fill in the boxes with the percent of churches who use that instrument in their worship services:

	Roman Catholic	White conservative, evangelical, or fundamentalist	Black Protestant	White liberal or moderate	Non-Christian
Percent of congregations that use _____					

In addition to varying by religious traditions, the use of different instruments may also vary according to the geographical region the church is located in. To look at regional variation, we will examine churches that do not use any instruments at all.

Locate the variable labeled, "INSTMENT," and fill in the percent of congregations in each region that indicate that they do not use instruments in their worship services:



9. What region had the most churches that do not use instruments in their church services?
Were you surprised by the results? Why or why not?
