

St. Patrick Church

Guidelines for Marriage Preparation

Revised April 2010

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What Is Marriage?

First of all, marriage is a *sacrament*, which is an outward, visible sign of an inward, invisible reality — in this case, the reality of two separate people joining their lives into one, giving themselves to each other in love. A sacrament is also a visible manifestation of God’s grace and love in our lives. All sacraments are public celebrations within the local faith community, or parish.

Marriage is also a civil, legal contract. This is just as true in a “church” wedding as it is when you are married by the justice of the peace. But by deciding to be married in a church, you have chosen to also recognize the religious and spiritual aspects of this celebration.

As you plan your wedding day, let it reflect your love. Make plans about attendants, the wedding dress, your reception, flowers, pictures, etc. This booklet will be your guide in attending to all the details. But remember, as important as this day is to you, the actual wedding is about an hour (or less) of your life. Don’t let it overwhelm you, or become an enormous production. What’s important is how you live out your love to each other and the Lord every day of your life.

What We Provide

- Wisconsin Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Preparation.
- A complete pre-marital inventory called *FOCCUS*.
- Encouragement, counseling, and suggestions for making your wedding a success.
- The workbook *Together For Life* by Fr. Joseph M. Champlain, a comprehensive workbook for planning the details of the actual wedding ceremony.

What You Supply

- Your completed pre-marital inventory (*FOCCUS*) results.
- Baptismal Certificates for both spouses
- Marriage Form I, to be completed by couple & priest.
- Marriage Form IA, proof of freedom to marry; if necessary, Parent's Consent for minors.
- If necessary, Interfaith Marriage Promise
- If necessary, Required Dispensations or Permissions (e.g., for Mixed Religions)
- Proof of your Marriage Preparation Instructions

Your Timeline

- According to the Roman Catholic Church's Statewide Common Policy for Marriages, a minimum of six (6) months' preparation is required from your first contact with the priest until your marriage day. Due to the large number of weddings at St. Patrick Church, please make contact with the priest as soon as you make your intent to marry, even if it is a year or more in advance.
- Before you make any other definite wedding plans, make sure that the time and date you desire for your wedding is available. This is a *very* busy parish, and events are put on the calendar on a first-come, first-served basis. **A fee of \$250 00 for use of the church is due when reserving the church. The fee is refundable if the date is cancelled.**
- Weddings can be celebrated on any day of the week except Sunday (Diocese of Superior regulation), and generally are *not* celebrated during the liturgical season of Lent (late Winter to early Spring).

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Your Timeline (con't)

- Weddings are most commonly scheduled for 2:00 PM on Saturday afternoons. Please check with the priest first if another time or day is needed.

The Rite of Marriage

- *You should be aware that the bride and groom are the actual ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage to each other;* the priest is the official representative and witness of the Church and Civic Government at weddings in St. Patrick Church.
- In an interfaith marriage (Catholic and non-Catholic Christian), the non-Catholic may have a valid reason for his/her minister to take part in the ceremony. Church law allows for such sharing.
- In an inter-faith marriage (Catholic and non-Christian), the couple may, for valid reasons, desire the wedding to take place in the non-Christian spouse's church/synagogue/mosque. In this case, the non-Christian minister is the official witness to the marriage vows. The priest may take part in the ceremony, in a manner to be decided by the non-Christian minister, and within regulations permitted by the Catholic Church.
- If both spouses are Catholic, the ceremony is expected to take place within a Nuptial Mass.
- Outdoor marriages are not permitted, as per Diocese of Superior policy.

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The Rite of Marriage (con't)

- As part of the marriage preparation, before the rehearsal, the priest will consider with you a variety of possibilities within the ceremony. Contact the parish wedding coordinator for help in planning your ceremony.
 1. Wedding Procession Format
 2. Choice of Readings
 3. Expression of Vows
 4. Exchange of Rings
 5. Unity Candle (*optional*)
 6. Offertory Procession
 7. Involvement of family, relatives, and friends in the ceremony as: Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, gift bearers, ushers, clean-up, etc.
 8. Reception Line – when and where
 9. Signing the Marriage Certificate
- All details are to be worked out with the priest and parish wedding coordinator *at least* 2 weeks in advance, but preferably several months ahead.

The Music

You have chosen to be married in a church, within a religious ceremony. Your music should reflect this. Proper wedding music adds to, but doesn't detract from, the beauty and solemnity of your marriage.

- Music can be appropriate or inappropriate if:
 1. It is well or poorly performed.
 2. The words successfully convey, or fail to express what your day is all about: God's love for you made present in your commitment to each other.

3. Music must be appropriate. Avoid any problems by checking with the parish wedding coordinator in advance of the rehearsal – ***very important!***
 4. We encourage the use of music that everyone attending your wedding can sing – such as hymns in our hymnals. This is the ideal way to plan your music so that all can be urged to participate.
 5. Instruments add to the ceremony. The trumpet, guitar, flute, etc. can be used at certain points in the service.
 6. Your song leader (cantor) should be comfortable inviting the assembly to join in the singing.
 7. Music selected from movies, TV, musicals, “pop” radio tunes, etc. should *not* be used; these can be played at the reception.
- Instruments and musicians: Your choice of musicians should add to the beauty and solemnity of this day, not detract from it. Our parish wedding coordinator has a complete listing of available organists, pianists, vocalists, and instrumentalists who are experienced in Catholic weddings. Contact the parish wedding coordinator *after* you have chosen your readings.
 - Entrance and recessional music must fall under approved guidelines. The following are not acceptable: Mendelssohn’s Wedding March from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, or “Here Comes the Bride.” The parish wedding coordinator has a list and recordings of popular, acceptable instrumental music for processions and recessionals. Favorite songs that do not have a scriptural basis are not appropriate for a church/religious service.
 - Musicians are people, too! They have most likely put in a great deal of preparation to ensure that the music at your wedding is as beautiful and professional as possible – therefore, make sure they are compensated for their efforts (see Comprehensive Fee Schedule).

Ushers

- Ushers assist wedding guests to their seats before the ceremony.
- After the ceremony, ushers help go through the Church picking up wedding programs, Kleenex, and whatever else is left by guests.
- Ushers or other designated people should dispose of flower boxes, anything left in the Bride's Room and where the groomsmen were dressing, etc. The dumpster is outside the double doors on the lower level, at the west end of the lower parking lot (by the garage doors).

Parish Policies

- Please make it clear to everyone involved in the wedding party that throwing rice or bird seed are **NOT** permitted; bubbles are only used outside the Church building.
- The Church is a smoke-free building. Please respect this at all times. This includes the restrooms and dressing areas.
- An aisle runner may **not** be used due to safety concerns and insurance issues. Please discuss with the wedding coordinator where this custom came from, and why it is no longer appropriate.
- A guest book, box for greeting cards, displays of pictures of the bride and groom are not appropriate to have at the church. Please use these at your reception and do not bring them into the church.
- **Children must be supervised at all times.** Running in the aisles or between the pews distracts everyone from your ceremony. Also, the baptismal font contains blessed Holy Water, and is not a place to play.
- Food and drink are not permitted in the upper level of the Church. Please confine them to the Social Hall in the lower level.
- **NO ALCOHOL** is permitted on the church grounds. This includes drinking in the parking lot area before or after the service. If anyone in the bridal party arrives at the ceremony under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the wedding will be cancelled.

Flowers and Candles

- After the wedding ceremony, you are welcome to leave some or all of your flowers in the Church for the upcoming weekend Masses. This is a nice way to share publicly the joy of your celebration.
- The use of candles on the Church pews are not allowed; use of candles anywhere in the aisles are not permitted by our insurance company.
- An option at weddings is the use of the Unity candle. Our parish wedding coordinator can suggest places to purchase these if you have been unable to find them. Be aware that this is not an official part of the wedding rite.
- Please use only rubber bands to secure bows on the pews. Wire, tape, etc. will mar the finish.
- Flower petals may not be dropped on the floor. This is messy and stains the carpet. Silk petals are a safety hazard as people could slip on them. Have the flower girl carry a bouquet or basket of flowers



Photography

Surely taking pictures on your wedding day will be important to you. Please remember that it is equally important to us to maintain an attitude of respectful behavior in the Church.

- All professional/posed wedding photography should be completed at least 30 minutes before the ceremony. The wedding party is often in the Church most of the morning, and there are 30,000 watts of halogen lights burning in there... and often the air conditioning is on, as well. Therefore, an appropriate fee for use of the Church would be \$250 (see Comprehensive Fee Schedule).
- Our Blessed Sacrament Chapel (across the Gathering Area from the main Church) is a place of private prayer and daily liturgy. It is **NOT** there for a nice photo opportunity. Please confine photography to the main Church, and outside on the grounds.
- No flash photography is allowed during the wedding ceremony. Your professional photographer is welcome to take non-flash photos during the ceremony, and even to move around **discreetly**. Please inform them that they are not permitted in the Sanctuary area (the raised area where the altar and pulpit are) during the service. Thank you.



Etiquette

As we mentioned in the beginning, we believe that marriage is a Sacrament, and thus is a very holy and sacred day for both of you. Prepare yourselves well to share this special profession of faith with your family and invited guests.

- Due to the seriousness befitting the beauty and solemnity of the day, do things in good taste. Christ's first miracle was at the wedding in Cana – invite Him to bless this day in a special way.
- Be at your best on your wedding day – spiritually, physically, and emotionally. The rehearsal party should be enjoyable, but also reasonable. Excessive alcohol should be avoided that night, as on the wedding day.
- Courtesy requires that you pay attention to as many guests as possible at your reception.

The Sacrament of Penance

Couples about to be married should especially prepare themselves for this new state of life by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) shortly before their marriage. This could be done on the night of the rehearsal, if desired.

Parish Registration

Please register as a married couple in the parish where you will be living. The parish has no way of knowing that you are forming your own household unless you inform them – you will not be automatically registered. Make sure to contact the parish office where you live.

Miscellaneous Details

- A valid **marriage license** is required, and must be given to the priest or brought to the church office 3-5 days before the rehearsal..
- Two adult witnesses (18 years of age or older) are required in addition to the priest or minister officiating. These witnesses do not have to be in the wedding party.
- The bride and her attendants can change clothes and prepare in the Bride's Room, located behind the Cry Room on the west end of the Church (the wedding coordinator can show this to you when you meet). The groom and his attendants usually get ready in the Knights of Columbus room, downstairs on the east end of the Lower Level. When that room is not available, they use the Parish Library outside the Office.
- An engaged couple will often want to include one or more family members in the music of the wedding. While this is permissible (with the approval of the parish wedding coordinator), it is usually better to have them do one or two pieces rather than the entire ceremony, especially when the wedding is in the context of a Mass, and sung Mass parts are required.
- Check with the proper local civil authorities for necessary changes in the following:
 1. Driver's license
 2. Car registration
 3. Personal insurance
 4. Name changes
 5. Property ownership
 6. Social Security
 7. Wills & Trusts
- The parish wedding coordinator can give you ideas & information for the content of your wedding program.



Comprehensive Fee Schedule

Just as you will be dealing with other professionals whose skills and abilities deserve payment (florists, photographers, dressmakers, etc.), so too do the people the church provides to make your day memorable. Note: These are each *separate* checks.

- **Building use** for wedding due when church is reserved.....\$250.
- **Refundable cleaning deposit** due the week before.....\$200.
(we will hold your check, and if all cleaning requirements are met, it will be returned to you.)
- Stipends for musicians due at rehearsal...see soloist/accompanist chart
- Wedding Coordinator due at rehearsal.....\$100.
- Altar Server due at rehearsal.....\$10.
- Priest Celebrant:Stipend at the discretion of the couple.

Final Checklist

all items due on rehearsal night

-Church scheduled for date of wedding
- Marriage License
- Checks for all fees, including musicians
- *(optional)* Unity Candle
- Completed Wedding Program
- Assignments for clean-up

Contacts:

Rev. Dan Dahlberg, Pastor 381-5120 x-106

Parish Wedding Coordinator: Terry Bogenhagen 381-5120 x-104



Notes

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