

GUIDELINES
FOR THE CELEBRATION
OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

STS. MARY AND JOHN PARISH

Wedding Preparation

Introduction

A wedding is the focus of many social customs, cultures, and expectations, but for the Catholic Christian it is, first and foremost, the celebration of a Sacrament. It is a celebration of mutuality and ministry, a commitment of love in the context of both family and community. The focus of this celebration is far more than a one-day ceremony; it envisions a commitment by the couple to remain rooted in a Christian community and to grow spiritually within that community. Marriage preparation is meant to assist the pair to live a sacramental life together as a couple and as members of their extended family, the church.

Preparation

We spend many years in school to prepare for life in society and for a lifetime of work. Life together as husband and wife also requires serious preparation. In keeping with the diocesan policy, couples desiring to be married in the community of the church are to notify the office at Sts. Mary and John Parish as soon as they have the intention to marry (formal engagement) and at least six (6) months prior to the anticipated time of their wedding. All couples marrying in the Diocese of Evansville are asked to take an active part in an assessment process and formal preparation programs for marriage.

At Sts Mary and John Parish, the marriage preparation involves a preparation process that consists of 5 steps of preparation.

1. At the first meeting the couple will complete the Pre-nuptial Investigation which is required by the Diocese of Evansville. (a questionnaire to establish freedom to marry) and FOCCUS (facilitating Open Couple- Communication, Understanding, and Study). FOCCUS is an inventory that assist couples in identifying areas of needed discussion before the wedding.
2. At the second meeting, the couple will share a dialogue with the FOCCUS facilitator concerning their conversations in specific areas of the FOCCUS instrument. This instrument is meant to stimulate discussion and dialog between the couple. This may involve a couple of sessions. At this point they could have returned the affidavits from witnesses that they are free to marry. These affidavits should be returned prior to continuing the next phase of formation.
3. Couples may attend an Engaged Encounter day or weekend such as the Unveiled Marriage Prep Retreat. (you will be given schedule) Some parishes also have a sponsor couple program you may participate in. Or if marriage prep workshops are offered at the parish, the couple then will begin Marriage Preparation workshops. These workshops will consist of 4 – 5 meetings in which they will discuss important areas of basic communication concerning family history, finances, goal setting, spirituality, effective communication. regardless of which the couple chooses, they must submit a certificate of completion. A Natural Family Planning (NFP) class (one hour) is also mandatory per the diocese, must submit a certificate of completion.

4. Their must also be effective communication with the Sts. Mary and John parish music director in order to ensure all aspects of the music are appropriate for a truly prayerful liturgy. This music meeting should take place before any decision are made about the music for the wedding.
5. The Liturgical Celebration is of utmost importance. In the Liturgy for the Rite of Marriage, the bride and groom are the primary symbols and their most important action is the exchange of consent, (The Vows) everything else is subordinate to this action. To this end we require all couples to attend a Wedding Liturgy workshop, which are held at least four times a year. The couple will also need to meet with the presider and discuss and decide on the readings for the wedding liturgy. The Wedding Liturgy Planner form should be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the wedding. Recommended readings and music are available from the Wedding Coordinator or your presider

Documents

The couple will need to provide their baptism certificates. These must be originals (not photocopies), issued by the church of baptism within the last six (6) months. This also applies to non-Catholic Christians. Some non-Catholic Christian churches do not keep permanent baptismal records. In this case, the baptismal certificates can be obtained by writing or calling the church of baptism and requesting that they send a copy to **Sts. Mary and John Parish, 613 Cherry St., Evansville, IN 47713**. For those baptized at St. Mary, St. John, Holy Trinity or Assumption Churches, the certificate will be provided.

A Vanderburgh County marriage license is also needed. This can be obtained at: County Clerk's Office, 216 Courts Building, Evansville, IN 47708, Phone: 812-435-5160. Both parties need to apply in person for the license. Birth certificate or passport and current picture ID with valid address are required of both parties. If either party has been married previously, they will need to provide the date that the marriage ended. Both parties must know parent's addresses and the state where parents were born. If parents are divorced you must know the month, date and year of the parent's divorce. The current license fee is \$18.00 (cash only). If couples are from out of state, the fee is \$60.00. Go to courts.in.gov/marriage to print applications to fill out before; (application1 is groom, application2 is bride). The license is valid for sixty (60) days. One person needs to apply for the marriage license in the county of legal residence. Certified copies of the marriage may be obtained after marriage license has been recorded.

Wedding Ceremony Scheduling

Weddings are typically celebrated in the context of a Nuptial Mass. Because Mass is celebrated every Saturday at 4:00 p.m. weddings may be scheduled anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. (*latest* afternoon time) and again at 6:30 p.m. (*earliest* evening time) or later. Weddings are not permitted during Holy Week. In keeping with the spirit of Lent the church discourages weddings during this 40-day period. If a marriage does take place during Lent couples should be conscious of the special nature of this liturgical season avoiding lavish display.

Interfaith Weddings

If the bride and groom are of different faiths, the sacrament will be celebrated outside of the context of the Mass with the Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Matrimony.

Visiting Priest or Deacon

A priest or deacon, who is a relative or friend of either party, is always welcome to preside at the marriage. In keeping with the diocesan policy “the priest or deacon, who by right or by delegation is to witness the marriage, has the responsibility of helping the couple to assess their readiness and to prepare for the sacrament of marriage.” If the priest or deacon who is to witness the marriage is coming from a distance, he should arrange with the pastor to assume proper assessment and preparation for marriage. All visiting ministers are to abide by the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Evansville and Sts. Mary and John Parish.

Who May Marry at Sts. Mary and John Parish

Generally registered members of Sts. Mary and John Parish are married at St. Mary Church. However, exceptions are made for the following reasons:

- 1). The Catholic party is practicing the faith regularly;
- 2). The Catholic party is registered in another Catholic Parish as an adult;
- 3). The Catholic party presents a letter from their pastor stating enrollment and practice of faith;
- 4). There is a hardship to be married in another Catholic Church (both parties in school, out-of-town, parents live in Evansville, etc.)
- 5.) The couple abides by all other policies at Sts. Mary and John Parish.

Wedding Ceremony

The actual ceremony is the culmination of months of planning and preparation for many people. It is typically a highly charged emotional day and tensions can run high. A caution for all those involved: Realize now that the effort has been expended to make everything as perfect as can be, relax and enjoy this day. All involved should also realize the ceremony is a time of *prayer*. This is an opportunity for the family and friends to pray **with** and **for** the bride and groom. Every person in attendance at the wedding has a responsibility to be an **active witness** to the commitment the bride and groom make to one another and to society. We invite all those present to actively take part in the ceremony.

Music

All who are present, for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony, have a part in the liturgy. The music selected should enable all in attendance to participate in sung prayer.

Wedding music should be not only an expression of sentiment, but also an appropriate aid to religious expression, with the lyrics expressing what is unique and distinct about Christian love. Certain pieces of music which are traditionally used at weddings, e.g. “pop” songs heard on the radio are not to be used in the church ceremony but rather at the reception where the cultural and social prospects of marriage are celebrated. This music does not reflect the Christian nature of the gathering or the meaning of the sacrament.

General guidelines for music for the Diocese of Evansville are available upon request. The Music Director at Sts. Mary and John Parish is glad to assist in the selection of music appropriate for the wedding. They will also assist in arranging for an organist/pianist, other musicians, or cantor/vocalist if desired. In choosing an organist/pianist and cantor, it is necessary that they be familiar with the Catholic Mass. Both a cantor and an organist/pianist are necessary at a wedding where the Pastor presides and are recommended for all weddings in this parish.

Decorations

Flowers or greenery are not necessary at the wedding. The Church is very attractive as it is. Decorations are welcome but are not to interfere with the service. All local florists are familiar with our space. Decorations are subject to the approval of the pastor or his delegate. Seasonal decorations, flowers, etc. may not be altered or removed for any reason without first consulting Pastor or his delegate.

Flowers

Flowers to decorate the church may be very expensive and are not necessary. Each couple may choose their own florist. If there is another wedding on the same day, the couples may wish to contact each other to share the expense of church flowers.

Aisle Runner

Our floors are marble and there is no safe way to keep the runners from sliding on the floor. Due to liability reasons and the fact that we do not want anyone to trip... No aisle runners may be used.

Ferns and Greenery

The couple can use the ferns and greenery and other seasonal decorations that are in the sanctuary at the time of their wedding. Please check to see what is available.

Unity Candle

This is optional. It is not to be placed on the altar. It has a special table to be placed in front of the altar, or at the ambo, or in the sanctuary. We can provide the table and cloth for the unity candle if requested prior to the ceremony. Please do not move candles until the wax solidifies to avoid spills or drips on the floor.

Photographs

Photographers are welcome to take flash pictures during the processional and recessional of the ceremony. At no time during the liturgy should the photographer enter the Nave or Sanctuary of the church. The couple will ask the photographer to check with the presider for instructions before the liturgy begins.

If another wedding is to follow, the pictures taken after the ceremony must be completed one (1) hour before the next wedding or liturgy is scheduled to begin. St. Mary has a 4:00 p.m. Mass each Saturday, therefore, this time schedule is necessary to make sure that all events begin at the proper time.

Video Cameras

Filming of the wedding is permitted. Placement of video cameras is subject to the approval of the pastor. Cameras are usually placed in the side balconies and/or on the side of the church. Videographers are not to be in the sanctuary or move around during the prayer.

Bride's Room

St. Mary Church has a room near Rager Hall that may be used by the bride and her attendants where they can dress and prepare for the ceremony. This room must be cleaned up after the ceremony and left the way it was found. A clean-up fee of \$50 will be charged if the room is not left in proper order.

RICE, BALLONS, PETALS, BUBBLES, BELLS

The custom of throwing rice (birdseed, etc.) at the church door is not allowed out of respect for the church as a place of worship, and because insurance regulations prohibit it.

Balloons are not to be used at the church because they are an environmental hazard to birds and can become tangled in electrical wires and trees.

No Silk petals or Fresh petals are permitted to be strewn down the aisle. Bubbles, etc. are not to be used inside or outside the church.

Ringling of the bells after the ceremony is complete should be arranged several weeks prior to the actual ceremony. Please speak with the church office to make this arrangement.

Leaving the Church

At the end of the recessional, couples proceed to Rager Hall, which is located on the west side of the church, with immediate family and friends to celebrate with the married couple and wedding party. Once the church is empty of guests, you need to return to church to complete any additional photo opportunities.

Programs

The use of programs is optional. If you choose to prepare a program the following information will be of help to you. Copies from previous wedding programs are available for your review. The correct name of the parish is Sts. Mary and John Parish, St. Mary Church. Please make the choice and size of type legible (the most common complaint heard about wedding programs is that they are not legible). If you plan to use the pastor's name and title in the program, please check for proper spelling of name and the title to be used. If you are listing the roles of those in the ceremony, after his name please use the term Presider not Officiant and not Celebrant (all those present are celebrants). Other priests or ministers can be listed under the term, Assisting Clergy/minister. Other terms: lector (not reader), cantor (not vocalist), soloist if used during 1. prelude, 2. seating of parents, 3. unity candle).

Presider's attendance at the reception

Due to weekend Masses at Sts. Mary and John, the presider cannot guarantee attendance at the reception when this is requested. If you wish the presider or any of the members of the staff to attend, they should receive a printed invitation with a reply card. If you wish a member of the parish staff to say grace, this should be personally arranged in advance. If the Deacon is the presider, his wife would also normally be invited to attend with him.

Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is a time of joy, a meeting of families and friends, at the beginning of the celebration of marriage. All decisions concerning the liturgy and the whole of the ceremony are to be completed before the rehearsal night. Every effort should be made to ensure that the members of the wedding party arrive on time, so as not to conflict with any other scheduled rehearsals. The **marriage license** and any other necessary documents are to be brought to the rehearsal, if they have not already been given to the presider. The wedding rehearsal usually lasts thirty (30) to forty-five (45) minutes. The ministers of music are not usually at the rehearsal; they meet with the presider and couple at a mutually agreed upon time beforehand.

Wedding Coordinator

If you choose to engage a wedding coordinator, please make it clear that the duties they have been hired to perform *do not include* **any** aspects of the actual liturgical wedding ceremony or rehearsal at St. Mary. Your wedding coordinator also needs to know that the pastor or his delegate is the person who conducts the rehearsal. They are welcome to speak to the wedding party after the rehearsal concerning time to arrive, pictures, etc. The bridal couple and Pastor dedicate some of their preparation time to discuss the liturgical aspects of the wedding ceremony and/or Mass.

Altar Servers

Normally altar servers are not assigned to weddings. If there are friends or relatives who wish to serve, the arrangements are made with the presider during the liturgy planning meeting.

Beverages and leaving the campus

There is to be NO ALCHOLIC BEVERAGES ON THE GROUNDS OR CONSUMED ON THE GROUNDS OF STS. MARY AND JOHN PARISH. The consumption of any alcoholic beverages in church prior to, during or following the wedding and rehearsal is strictly prohibited. **At no time may the wedding party leave the campus after the ceremony until all pictures are taken and guests have departed.**

Church rental

The Rental Fee for the church is \$850.00. Which includes the sacristan. A deposit of \$250.00 is due at the time of booking the date to keep it reserved, the remaining balance is due 60 days prior to the wedding date

We consider our wedding fee charge to be a matter of justice for our parishioners and staff who faithfully give of their financial resources in support of this church and its outreach programs. The upkeep on this building is significant. Through the years we have found that many people want to marry here for the beauty of the Gothic structure. We are happy to accommodate those requests but in justice to the parish we require these charges. This helps defray the cost associated with heating/AC, the rehearsal, clean-up, pre-marital counseling, use of greenery (when available) and the myriad of other parish expenses which are on-going and for which registered and active parishioners are responsible. Checks for the use of the church should be made payable to Sts. Mary and John Parish noted for church rental. If a wedding cancels for any reason all monies are refunded in full. Giving a gift to clergy assisting at the wedding is completely up to the bride and groom.

Musician Fee

The parish Music Director and/or church pianist/organist are available to play at weddings. This is not part of their regular work week and therefore not part of their church compensation. Their fee must be paid directly to them by the bride and groom. Since musicians/vocalists are not usually present at the rehearsal, most couples find it easier to pay the musicians when they meet to choose the music. The fee is due no later than the Monday before the wedding date. This means one less detail to be concerned with on the wedding day. A list of names of cantors and instrumentalists is available upon request. The fee structure is set by each musician.

Sts. Mary and John Parish
Wedding Liturgy Planner

Wedding Date & Time: _____

Rehearsal Date & Time: _____

Bride: _____ Groom: _____

Organist: _____ Cantor: _____

Prelude Music: _____

Entrance of Wedding Party: _____

*(Indicate how the wedding party will
process into the church)*

Procession of Parents' Music: _____

Procession of Wedding Party: _____

Procession of Bride: _____

Opening Hymn: _____

First Reading & Lector: _____

Responsorial Psalm: _____

Second Reading & Lector: _____

Gospel Alleluia: _____

Gospel Reading: _____

Married Couple to Write/Read General Intercessions _____

Unity Candle ____yes ____no Song for Candle Lighting _____

Gift Bearers of Bread & Wine: _____

(2-4 people)

Choose the People's Sung Acclamations

(Gospel Acclamation; Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen, and the Lamb of God)

Communion Song: _____

Ministers of Communion: _____

(2-4 people)

Recessional: _____

(Postlude Music optional: _____)

ORDER OF WORSHIP

GATHERING AND ENTRANCE RITE

Prelude Music (20 minutes)
Procession of Parents (Song, 5 minutes before wedding begins)
Procession of Wedding Party
Greeting and Welcome
Opening Song
Opening Prayer

I. LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading by a friend/relative
Responsorial Psalm
Second Reading by friend/relative
Gospel Acclamation
Gospel Reading by the priest/deacon
Homily

II. RITE OF MATRIMONY

Address and Statement of Intentions
Exchange of Vows and Rings
Nuptial Blessing
Prayers of the Faithful
Lighting of the Unity Candle and Song (optional)
Kiss and Greeting of Peace

III. LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts (friends or relatives)
Holy, Holy (sung)
Memorial Acclamation (sung)
Great Amen (sung)
The Lord's Prayer (never sung as a solo)
Lamb of God (sung)
Communion Song (sung)

CONCLUDING RITES

Closing Prayer
Announcements (optional)
Blessing and Dismissal
Recessional

POSSIBLE READINGS FOR WEDDINGS

Old Testament (1st Reading)

Genesis 1:26-28, 31a

Genesis 2:18-24

Genesis 24:48-51; 58-67

Tobit 7:9c-10, 11c-17

Tobit 8:4-9

Song of Songs
2:3-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

Sirach 26:1-4, 16-21

Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

New Testament (2nd Reading)

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

Short version:
Romans 12:1-2, 9-13

Long version:
Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

I Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

I Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

Short version:
Ephesians 5:2a, 25-32

Long version:
Ephesians 5:21, 21-33

Colossians 3:12-17

I Peter 3:1-9

I John 3:18-24

Revelations 19:1, 5-9a

Gospel Reading (3rd Reading)

Matthew 5:1-12a

Matthew 5:13-16

Short version:
Matthew 7:21, 24-25

Long version:
Matthew 7:21, 24-29

Matthew 19:3-6

Matthew 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9

John 2:1-11

John 15:9-12

John 15:12-16

Short version:
John 17:20-23

Long version:
John 17:20-26

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

(examples)

Priest:

*We have listened to the word of God.
Let us now ask God to listen to us,
To bless our words of prayer
Which we offer
For the people of the world.*

*Reader: The response is
"Lord, hear our prayer."*

*For leaders of Church and state
For heads of institutions,
For heads of homes and households....
That they will lead us and guide us
In the search for God and the good life,
In the search for peace and joy,
In the search for love among us—
We pray.....*

*For all married people:
For those who married yesterday,
For the new couple N. and N., married today,
For those who will marry tomorrow....
That they may savor
The joy of being together,
Warm love, and children,
A long life, wine, and friends,
And a new day, every day—
We pray.....*

*For all young single people
Who look forward to a vocation
Full of life and full of love—
We pray.....*

*For the lonely old and the lonely young,
For the hungry rich
And the hungry poor,
For the sick in body, mind, and spirit,
For the weakness in all of us—
Let us pray to the Lord.*

*For our relatives and friends
Who walk with us on life's journey
And for those who have gone before us
To the other side of life.
For the fulfillment of all their
Unfilled desires—
We pray.....*

Priest:

*These are our words of prayer today
For ourselves and all human beings.
Tomorrow there will be others.
Lord God the beloved of humankind
Who has first loved us,
Give our words by your listening
The power of your word
So that all things may be
Accomplished
Sweetly and gently
For the happiness of all.
Through Christ our Lord.*

People: Amen.

Note to engaged couple:

You may add/delete/change these prayers.

*They should be read by a couple or best friends,
alternating.*

Read and prayed after Nuptial Blessing.

GENERAL INTERCESSION
(Sample)

For Wade and Allison, who celebrate God's love in the joining of their vows of marriage today.

For the family and friends of Wade and Allison who have taught them the meaning of love and sharing,

We pray.

For all married couples that they may experience the presence of God in their midst each day,

We pray.

For those who are sick, lonely, discouraged or oppressed that they may be strengthened by God's help and aided by their friends,

We pray.

For those who have died, especially the relatives and friends of Wade and Allison and of all present for this wedding, that they may enjoy perfect happiness and total fulfillment in eternal life,

We pray.

For those who made the journey to join Wade and Allison on this joyous day,

We pray.