

Marriage Preparation Guidelines

**Church of Immaculate Conception
109 Angel Avenue NW
Watertown, MN 55388**

**Father Joseph Fink
952-955-1458**

Planning Your Marriage

Marriage Is a Covenant

We look forward to helping you plan your wedding so that it will be a joyful, sacramental celebration.

Through your marriage vows, you will enter a new relationship - a relationship which we term covenant. It is marked by the qualities of love, fidelity and permanency, and it is a relationship in which you will share all aspects of human existence. As a Sacrament, it reflects the love and union that Jesus has with his people, the Church and both of you.

Weddings normally take place in the Bride's parish and arrangements will usually be made in that parish. Weddings can be scheduled on Friday evenings from 4:00 - 7:00pm and on Saturdays until 2:00pm. The church must be cleared by 3:30pm for Saturday confessions. All weddings are celebrated in the church - no outside or park weddings.

The wedding ceremony is usually celebrated within the context of the Eucharistic Liturgy when both parties are Catholic. In interfaith marriages, the Eucharist may be celebrated, but this is something you can discuss with the priest. A rehearsal will be held prior to each wedding. You can schedule this with the Parish Office by calling 952-955-1458.

Marriage Preparation

The Sacrament of Matrimony exists for people who are physically, emotionally and spiritually mature. In our society, unfortunately, many marriages fail because the parties lack maturity and neglect adequate preparation for this irrevocable step. Because we wish to stress the importance of readiness for marriage, preparation is required. Normally this preparation period will include these steps:

1. Arrangement must be made at least **nine months** in advance.
2. Individual preparation and instruction with the priest.
3. Participation in a marriage course. Many institutions in the Twin Cities area provide such opportunities. We especially recommend the courses at Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, St. John's Church in Excelsior or St. Luke's Church in St. Paul.
4. You will be required to take a written Pre-marriage Inventory. This series of questions are thought-provoking and will compare your concepts of marriage with those of your future spouse. There will be a discussion of the PMI results with the Marriage Preparation couple assigned to you.
5. You will be assigned a Marriage Preparation couple with whom you will need to meet as often as they feel necessary. They will call you to schedule your sessions.

Documents

The following paperwork and documentation is required:

1. There is a questionnaire that the parties will fill out with the priest.
2. We need assurance that neither has been previously married.
3. A Baptismal Certificate of each party is required.
4. A Marriage License from the state is required. The Best Man and the Maid of Honor sign the license immediately after the ceremony. **You must bring Marriage License to the rehearsal.**
5. In an interfaith marriage, the Catholic party must promise to share the Catholic faith with the children.

The Liturgy of Marriage

Because your wedding is a sacramental celebration of your love for each other, you will want to pray together often, receive the sacraments frequently and spend some time preparing for this celebration.

The Church's Sunday Celebration of the Eucharist is the norm for its celebration of the Rite of Marriage. This means that the celebration should emphasize the following:

1. The choice of appropriate readings and prayers: The priest will also be available to offer you assistance.
2. The choice of appropriate music: Music is extremely important as it makes for a more complete celebration. In choosing your music you should allow for participation. This requires not only a soloist but also a **song leader**. Your choice of music must be approved **at least two months** before the ceremony. This will be especially true if you plan to use musicians from outside the parish. **It is imperative that you meet with Bill Windsperger, Director of Music, 955-1065 at least two months prior to the wedding.**
3. The choice of appropriate rituals: While tradition may play an important part in planning various aspects of the wedding celebration, you should consider the meaning behind various rituals before incorporating them in the marriage ceremony. We suggest you take some time to talk to the priest about your ceremony **before** the rehearsal.
4. The use of ministries: The normal ministries of Sunday are appropriate: Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Ushers, etc. It is important that you choose the liturgical ministers according to **competence**, rather than honor or relationship. It is best to get someone from Immaculate Conception Church as Lectors and Communion Ministers as they are familiar with the church and microphone system.
5. The choice of appropriate wedding program: Your wedding program ties the ceremony and the music together. (See sample attached) The wedding program should be completed at least the day before the rehearsal, preferably even before that. A copy **must be given to the priest and the musicians** as soon as possible.
6. The choice of appropriate decorations: Becky Burns, Wedding Coordinator, will help answer questions about decorations and other questions you may have about the rehearsal and setting up the wedding itself. She will contact you about a month before the wedding or you may call her with questions anytime at 952-240-4498.

The following items (and the set-up charge) are available for use:

* **Ten Aisleabras - \$30.00.** These can be set up only by the Wedding Coordinator. If you want bows and/or flowers on them they must be at the church on Friday morning ready to go. You need to provide your own 10" tapers. Ask someone in your wedding party to light the candles right before the beginning of the service.

Two areas that can be decorated are the Sanctuary and the assembly area (including the entrance). In the Sanctuary, **use only real flowers**. Do not put any decorations on the altar, piano or organ. Avoid putting anything around the altar that prevents the priest, servers, lectors, etc. from walking around. Decorating the assembly area and the entrance conveys a feeling of hospitality and celebration. Floral decorations and aisle clothes need to be arranged with a florist of your choice. **Note: The main aisle is 64 feet long.**

Unity Candles- ICC provides a stand for the Unity Candles, but you must purchase them. Bring to rehearsal and the Wedding Coordinator will help you to insert them and place the stand in the proper place on the altar.

Fees

1. Church costs - lights, heat/AC, couple instructions, etc. - \$250.00
2. Priest - PMI, preparation and instruction, practice and wedding. - \$100.00
3. Musicians - musicians must be consulted regarding their fee and the manner of payment. You need to make your own arrangements and contact Bill Windsperger 955-1065 as well.
4. Finances - Please note: all charges must be paid no later than the night of rehearsal. Charges may be paid at the Parish Office or given to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal. **No finances on the day of the wedding.**

If you wish to use the social hall in the basement for your reception, there is a small additional fee. **No liquor is allowed.** The insurance of the parish does not cover incidents for which you are liable. You will want to make sure you are covered. A homeowner's policy may cover the event; otherwise, you may wish to purchase a policy. Our insurance company does not offer single event coverage for that purpose.

Photographer, Florist and Proper Behavior

Because of the sacredness of the marriage ceremony, **no flash pictures** may be taken during the liturgy except during the procession and the recession. Time exposure or video tapes can be taken during the ceremony if done discreetly. **Video operator must check with the priest as to a favorable, but non-obtrusive, position to be used during the wedding itself at least one hour before the wedding begins.**

Each member of the wedding party should enter into the prayers and responses being offered. See to it that **each person in the wedding party** has a program and music books at their chairs. The members of the wedding party are not to visit with each other during the ceremony.

No chewing gum!

Be certain that the Best Man is responsible for the **Marriage License and the rings. Please bring these to the wedding practice** along with the **unity candles (3)**, to assist in our practice.

All readers (Lectors) **must** attend the practice and be prepared to do their reading then.

Absolutely no alcohol consumption before the practice, or the wedding itself. No alcohol is allowed anywhere on the church grounds. Please don't eat or drink in the church proper. You may do this in the basement **only**.

Please all be present and **on time** for the wedding practice and the wedding.

Nothing can be thrown on church property. This includes rice, confetti, bird seed and other similar substances. No real flower petals may be thrown on the aisle floor.

You will receive a copy of this document for both of you to read and a reminder sheet for the wedding party. Please ask that **each person in the wedding party** read this.

Have an enjoyable time. But keep in mind that Marriage is a Sacrament of the Church and should be performed in a dignified and serious manner.

God Bless You!

Wedding Party Information

The following information will help make the rehearsal and wedding go smoothly for the Bride and Groom.

Bride and Groom

Please come to practice prepared to complete the necessary finances on that evening. (Give to Wedding Coordinator)

Best Man

Please make sure that you have the wedding rings and the Marriage License. These both need to be brought to the rehearsal. The Marriage License can be left with the priest. You will need to sign the Marriage License immediately after the ceremony.

Maid of Honor

You will need to hold the Bride's flowers during the Exchange of Vows and Exchange of Rings. Also, if the Bride's dress has a train, please straighten this as needed. You will need to sign the Marriage License immediately after the ceremony.

Personal Attendant

You will need to attend to the needs of the Bride before the wedding. Please make sure that the Unity Candles get to the church for the rehearsal.

Ushers

Please make sure that the members of the wedding party, all musicians, lectors and the priest get a copy of the wedding program.

Lectors, Communion Distributors and Servers

Please be prepared to do your readings and other duties at the rehearsal.

All members of the wedding party

PLEASE BE ON TIME FOR THE REHEARSAL AND THE WEDDING!!

*Each member of the wedding party should enter into the prayers and responses being offered. The members of the wedding party are **not to visit with each other** during the ceremony.

NO GUM CHEWING!

***Absolutely no alcohol consumption before the rehearsal, the wedding or anywhere on the church grounds.** Please don't eat or drink in the church proper, you may do this in the basement.

*Nothing can be thrown on church property. This includes rice, confetti, bird seed, and other similar substances. No flower petals may be thrown on the aisle floor.

Have an enjoyable time, but keep in mind that Marriage is a Sacrament of the Church and should be performed in a dignified and serious manner.

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