

MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

THE CHURCH OF SAINTS PETER & PAUL

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The celebration of Christian marriage in the presence of the Church's Priest and community is a manifestation of God's own love for us and the love of a man and woman have for each other. "Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us." St. Paul proclaims. For this reason, the priest and the community come together to witness the promises of unity, fidelity and unconditional love made by those who marry. Rooted in the pattern of Christ, Christian marriage is nourished by God's grace and presence, encouraged and directed by God's Word and is celebrated in Sacrament and Scripture.

The Church of Saints Peter & Paul welcomes the opportunity to help you in the careful planning of your marriage liturgy. The following guidelines are meant to assist you in making this a very happy day in your lives. If we can be of further assistance, we shall be happy to oblige. Please contact Father Brian Fier at the parish office for more information.

I. Setting the Date

When you are ready to reserve a particular date, we ask that the couple contact Father Brian to set up an initial meeting. At this meeting the couple will be able to reserve their date with the parish and Fr. Brian. Ideally, this should be done at least 6 months before the desired date. The couple will be asked to pay the reservation fee at this time.

Regardless of whether another minister handles the pre-marriage counseling or presides at the wedding, we still ask that the couple arrange for this initial meeting with Fr. Brian.

Weddings are normally celebrated on Saturdays between 11:00 am and 2:00 PM. If another time or day is desired, this should be discussed with Fr. Brian.

II. PREPARATION

If the preparation is to be done through Saints Peter and Paul, then we ask you to begin this process at least 6 months before the scheduled celebration. This includes:

1. An Archdiocesan sponsored pre-marriage retreat; and,
2. Between 6 and 8 counseling sessions with Fr. Brian. These sessions will primarily focus on a discussion of the Prepare Inventory which the couple will take at their first meeting. [This instrument was developed at the University of Minnesota, and serves as a way for the couple to explore the basic issues surrounding their past, present, and future relationship.] The counseling sessions normally occur within a 3 to 4 month time period.

III. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. A recently issued copy of your baptismal certificate from your parish of baptism.
2. A marriage license valid in the State of Minnesota. This can be picked up at any county courthouse. We suggest you obtain this document at least one month before the wedding. The license must be given to Fr. Brian no later than the rehearsal night.
3. A “Freedom to Marry” testimonial will be required from a family member (preferably your parents).
4. A certificate of completion for an Archdiocesan sponsored pre-marriage retreat.
5. If at least one of you is not a registered parishioner here at Sts. Peter and Paul, then we ask you to provide a letter from the parish in which you are registered.
6. If the pre-marriage counseling is done through another parish, then upon completion of this counseling we ask for a letter from the counselor stating that you understand and are ready to accept the responsibilities of Christian/Catholic marriage.
7. If a visiting priest will preside at the wedding, then we ask that he contact Fr. Brian to receive the proper delegation and instruction.

IV. THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Recognizing that this is a religious service, everything should be done to make this a truly spiritual experience. You will be given a “Together For Life” booklet to help you plan your service. Note that there are many options available for your selection. These include various readings from Sacred Scripture, various prayers and petitions, various liturgical roles for experienced family or friends, etc.

1. Nuptial Mass or Scripture Service

A Nuptial Mass is normally offered only when both parties are Catholic. Unfortunately, Catholics and other Christian denominations do not share a common belief in the Holy Eucharist; thus, we are unable to share Holy Communion. Since a wedding should be a celebration of unity rather than disunity, we recommend that when only one party is Catholic, then a Scripture Service be celebrated.

2. Music

Music is considered an aid to worship and should not be chosen merely with a view of entertaining the guests. Thus, we encourage the selection of hymns that allow the congregation to join in the singing. During the ceremony the text of any hymn must be religious in content.

Consider just a few examples of both traditional and contemporary hymns:

Traditional

Any version of the “Lord’s Prayer”
Any version of the “Ave Maria”
“Panis Angelicus” (Latin or English)
“Song of Ruth” --- Gounod
“Song of Joy” ---Beethoven
“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” --- Bach
Any psalm by Diess, Gelineau, Sommerville
“Wedding Song” --- Stokey
“Let There Be Peace on Earth” --- Miller
“Sabbath Prayer” --- Fiddler on the Roof
“Let Us Break Bread Together”
“Morning Has Broken”

Contemporary

“On Eagle’s Wings” --- Joncas

Any non-religious or secular music should be performed either before or after the service (or at the reception). Consider these examples:

“One Hand, One Heart” --- West Side Story
“Sunrise, Sunset” --- Fiddler on the Roof
“We’ve Only Just Begun”
“The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face”
“Color My World”
Love theme from “Romeo and Juliet”
Theme from “Love Story”

Couples are asked to clear all music selections through the **parish music coordinator --- Greg Elsen (phone # 763-479-8218)**. This should be done well in advance of the printing of your wedding program. Note that Greg will be happy to help you find your desired soloists and accompanists. We recommend that you contact Greg and/or any musicians at least 4 months before the wedding. Even if you choose musicians from outside the parish, your music must still be approved by Greg Elsen.

In addition, Fr. Brian has materials available to help you select your music and plan your worship aid. Feel welcome to inquire about borrowing these materials.

3. Photographers/Videographers

We ask that no flash pictures be taken during the wedding ceremony. Make sure you inform your amateur photographer friends. However, a flash photo of the processional and recessional may be taken. During the service the photographer may take timed exposures from the rear of the church. Video cameras may be used in the designated areas. Please ask photographers and videographers to check in with the priest before the ceremony. All pictures should be taken prior to the ceremony, and must be finished 30 minutes before the starting time. Please instruct the photographer accordingly.

4. Church Environment

Please do not change the church environment in any way. You may want to check with the parish's Liturgy Committee well in advance of your wedding to find out the colors/decorations that will be present on your special day. You may add floral decorations to the existing set up; however, do not change the location of plants, candles, tables, etc. Discuss all ideas with the pastor before the wedding day.

The use of candelabras or other candles should be cleared with the priest.

Rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals and soap bubbles are not to be used anywhere on church property.

Church measurements:

The main aisle has 15 pews on the north side and 17 pews on the south side; plus, it has a length of 70 feet.

The seating capacity is 300.

Food and drink are not allowed in the church. You may use the Parish Center's Dining Hall for your refreshments. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the parish campus. All parish buildings are "smoke free"; thus, if members of the wedding party desire to smoke, then please ask the priest to set up the smoking receptacle outside the Parish Center's main door.

5. Various Liturgical Roles

Children in the bridal party should be of an age to take directions. We recommend that you have them walk in pairs. Also, there should be an adult with them at the back of the church at the start of the liturgy who can "pull them out" of the processional in case they cannot or will not walk down the aisle; plus, there should be an adult seated in front of the church to whom the child can walk to and be seated with during the ceremony.

Ushers should be instructed to begin seating the guests immediately on arrival so that the wedding can begin on time. They should be aware of the location of bathrooms, light switches, and phone. After the wedding they should help clean up the church.

Readers should have some experience as a church lector. Please give them the readings and petitions you have selected well in advance so that they can practice them. On the day of the wedding have them check in with the priest in order to see the official text that they will be reading from.

Eucharistic Ministers should be currently serving in this ministry at their home parish. On the day of the wedding they should check in with the priest for final instructions.

Gift Bearers --- If you are having a Mass, then you may have from 1 to 3 gift bearers. Note they should be of an age to be able to safely handle the Offertory Gifts. On the day of the wedding they should check in with the priest for final instructions.

Altar Servers --- You may have from 1 to 2 servers. They should be currently serving in this ministry in their home parish. Please inform the priest if you do not have someone to handle this duty, for then he will arrange for two of the parish altar servers to assist him. On the day of the wedding they should check in with the priest 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony.

V. The Bride's Room

On the day of the wedding the Parish Center's Library will be available for the bride and her attendants. The parish cannot assume responsibility for dresses delivered to the church. These should be delivered and accepted at your home. Also, do not leave valuables unattended in the Parish Center at any time.

There is no suitable place at the parish for the groom and his attendants to dress; thus, they should come to the church dressed in their formal attire.

VI. Rehearsal

All members of the wedding party including the ushers and the readers should be present at the time scheduled for the wedding rehearsal. The bride and groom are asked to come 15 minutes before the scheduled time in order to meet with the priest.

Normally, the rehearsal is scheduled the night before the wedding; and yet, this may have to be changed due to another wedding or parish event. Please consult with the priest to verify the date and time.

Summary of Fees

It is customary to make an offering to the parish on the occasion of a wedding, in token gratitude for God's blessings and to help cover the parish's expenses. This offering does not go to the priest but to the parish. How much should you offer? Sacred Scripture tells us to tithe 10%; that is, to return 10% of our blessings to the Lord. However, for most couples to offer a sacrificial gift equivalent to 10% of the overall cost of the wedding would be a difficult burden; thus, the table below gives a more realistic guide. Note, those who do not feel they can afford these fees should discuss their situation with the pastor.

	<u>Parishioner</u>	<u>Non-parishioner</u>
1) Reservation Fee (due at the initial meeting with the pastor)	\$50	\$50
2) Church Fee (due at the last counseling session)	\$500	\$800
3) Parish Musician Fee (this is for each musician and is due at the ceremony)	\$150	\$150

- 4) Archdiocesan sponsored pre-marriage retreat Cost varies with each program
- 5) Minnesota State marriage license Cost varies with each county
(Did you know that the State of Minnesota now offers a discount on the cost of the marriage license if you have your pastor sign a form indicating that you are undergoing pre-marriage counseling? Make sure to pick up this form from your county government center.)

Notes: [A] To be considered a parishioner, you must have been registered and active in the parish at least six months prior to the first meeting with the pastor. You should not assume that you are a parishioner because your parents are registered here. In approaching the church to celebrate the sacrament of marriage you are declaring yourself to be an adult; and, as an adult you should be registered and active in a parish. Any questions, feel free to talk with the pastor.

[B] These fees are applicable regardless of who conducts the pre-marriage counseling, who presides at the liturgy, or where the liturgy takes place. Once again, if there are any questions then please feel welcome to talk with the pastor.

[C] None of these fees are given to the priest who presides at your wedding; thus, any personal gratuities would have to be given to the priest over and above the church fee.

[D] Remember these fees are listed here to inform you as to the basic expenses the church has for your wedding (counseling sessions, maintenance, etc.). Any offering you can give beyond these minimum figures would be appreciated. Or to put it another way, how much of your blessings will you return to the Lord, especially in light of God's call for us to tithe 10%?

VIII. After the Wedding

Both the Best Man and the Maid of Honor must come back to the church sacristy immediately after the ceremony in order to sign the marriage license. The license will then be given to them to safeguard until the bride and groom are ready to receive it.

Please have someone to clean up after the ceremony. Anything you wish to save (e.g., flowers, unity candle, etc.) should be gathered immediately. Everything else should be thrown away in the dumpster behind the church (worship aids, aisle runner, etc.). Try to leave the church, parish center, and parish grounds as you found them. Thank You!

Be sure to register in a parish as husband and wife soon after your marriage.

Above all, we pray that your sacramental union may be a real occasion of grace for you. Please do not hesitate to call upon your parish for any future needs. May God bless you!