



## WEDDING GUIDELINES

**St. Joseph Catholic Church**

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[www.sjohio.org](http://www.sjohio.org)

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### **Introduction**

By choosing to celebrate your love for one another through a sacred ceremony at St. Joseph Church, you have chosen to commit yourselves as husband and wife before God and before the whole community of faith. Through this sacrament of the Church, your love for one another becomes a symbol of God's love for all of us. The members of your family, your friends, and all the people who gather to worship and celebrate with you recognize your love as permanent, faithful, life-giving, and forgiving. It is a true sign of the unending, ever present, creative, and merciful love God has for every one of us.

The following guidelines take into consideration Church laws, civil law, the policies of the Diocese of Cleveland, and the customary practices that this parish has established based on practical experience. It is our desire to help you avoid any confusion that may lead to any disappointments or misunderstandings later. If you have any questions, please contact the priest, deacon, or staff person working with you in preparation for your wedding. May God bless you on your journey!

# Wedding Guidelines

## Marriage as a Sacrament

A sacrament is an encounter with Jesus Christ. Every sacrament brings us into contact with the saving activity of the Lord. In every sacrament, we encounter the dying and rising of Jesus. The ministers of the sacrament of marriage are the bride and groom. When two baptized persons exchange wedding vows, they share the life of Christ that they have received in baptism. The ministers of marriage extend the Lord's presence to each other and become a sign of the Lord's presence to others.

The visible sign of the sacrament of marriage is the exchange of wedding vows. In order to have a true exchange of promises, both the bride and groom must be responsible adults, capable of forming a community of life and love. The couple must honestly and, without reservation, declare to each other their willingness to assume the duties of marriage and parenthood according to the teachings of Christ and the Church.

## Faith Commitment

Since Christ is the center of Christian marriage, the bride and groom should seriously review their relationship with the Lord. They should show signs of a positive commitment to Christ and should regularly participate in the parish celebration of Sunday Eucharist.

## Date for Weddings

The Diocese of Cleveland has established a policy that an engaged couple must contact the parish at least 6 months before the proposed date of the wedding, although nine to twelve months is recommended. No date can be confirmed until the couple has first met the parish priest or deacon. No date is final until all requirements have been met. In the case of a previous marriage, no date may be given until the annulment process is completed, a decree of nullity has been granted, and no restrictions apply.

The purpose of this 6 month policy is:

- ◇ To provide the priest or deacon time to assess with the couple their spiritual, personal and canonical readiness to marry.
- ◇ To allow for adequate marriage instruction and preparation.
- ◇ To allow the couple time to pray deeply and to reflect seriously upon their decision to enter into Christian marriage.

## Times for Weddings

Saturday weddings are scheduled at 1:30 p.m. If that slot is already filled, there is the possibility that a wedding may be scheduled for 11:00 a.m. In addition to Saturday weddings, Friday evening weddings are possible depending on both the availability of the priest/deacon and the church. **Sunday weddings are not permitted. Weddings can be scheduled any time of the year though generally they are not scheduled during Lent.** Please keep in mind that throughout the year, different celebrations taking place in the Church will impact its decoration. These must be considered when setting your date.

### **Parishioners/Non-Parishioners**

You and/or your parents must be registered members of the parish. If you are not a parishioner of the parish a letter of permission must be obtained from the pastor of your home parish. Non-parishioners may schedule a wedding if the circumstances warrant such an exception and the desired date is available. Non-parishioner fee is \$450.00 for the use of the church, plus all other fees.

### **Required Documents**

It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain the following documentation:

- ◇ Sacramental Records: Catholic parties are to obtain a baptismal certificate. These certificates may be obtained from the church of baptism and dated within the last six months. Non-Catholic parties are to obtain a baptismal certificate from the Christian denomination and/or church where they were baptized.
- ◇ Previous Marriages: If a person has been married before it is necessary to provide the following:
  - ◇ Death certificate of former spouse
  - ◇ Declaration of Nullity
- ◇ Civil Marriage License: It is necessary to obtain a civil license. This license is to be obtained within sixty (60) days of the celebration of the wedding. As long as one party lives in Ohio, you can obtain the civil license anywhere, but if no parties lives in Ohio, you must obtain the license in Cuyahoga County to be married at St. Joseph. In Cuyahoga County, a civil Marriage License may be obtained at:

Probate Court  
 1 Lakeside Avenue West  
 Room 129 (1st Floor)  
 Cleveland, Ohio 44113  
 Phone number: (216) 443-8920  
<http://probate.cuyahogacounty.us/marriage.aspx>  
 Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**You must pre-register for your marriage license using the above website.** You may also be able to go to a satellite office. Both parties must be present to apply for the license with proof of age and social security number and a fee of \$60. The Court charges a \$2.95 convenience fee to use a credit or debit card. The license must be brought to rehearsal. The marriage cannot take place without a civil marriage license.

- ◇ Validation: If this is a validation then a certificate of current marriage is required.

### **Preparation Process for Marriage**

Marriage preparation must be taken seriously by a couple who wish to marry. The Church's preparation for marriage is not just for a single day (the wedding day) but also for a lifetime of love and commitment. It is hoped that the couple recognizes the importance of their preparation for Christian marriage. A number of meetings are required for the preparation process:

Introduction: During the introduction, a couple will be interviewed by a priest or deacon and set a preliminary wedding date and fill out the necessary paperwork for marriage in the church. The priest or deacon establishes the couple's freedom to marry and explains the process and the theology of marriage.

- ◇ Evaluative Tool: An evaluative tool (such as Prepare & Enrich) is administered to assess the couple's readiness for marriage and to help encourage communication on topics related to marriage.
- ◇ Meeting with Priest or Deacon: The couple will ordinarily meet with the parish priest or deacon for one or more sessions to review the results of the evaluative tool, give instruction on the basic theology of the sacrament of marriage and answer any questions a couple might have regarding their marriage.
- ◇ Couples Ministry: Each couple may also be asked to meet with a Marriage Ministry Couple from the parish who has been trained in marriage preparation. The name of the Ministry Couple will be given to the wedding couple to set up appointments. They will review the evaluative tool with the wedding couple and offer discussion and advice regarding marriage preparation.
- ◇ Pre-Marital Program: Each couple is required to participate in one of the following pre-marital programs.
  - ◇ Pre-Cana Day: These one day sessions are held at many parishes in the diocese, including St. Joseph. You may attend at any parish. St. Joseph offers a Pre-Cana Day in February of each year. Cost is \$60.00. Contact the parish secretary for registration.
  - ◇ Engaged Encounter Weekend: These weekends are held in the Diocese or surrounding dioceses on a regular basis. Contact the Marriage and Family Office at 216-696-6525 x 2910, for information.
  - ◇ Cana II: Cana II is a marriage preparation program which is designed for relationships in which one or both parties have been previously married. Specific areas of concern such as parenting issues and previous marriages are addressed. Contact the Marriage and Family Office (216-696-6525 x 2910).
- ◇ Liturgy Planning: Each couple will be asked to meet with the parish priest or deacon to prepare the wedding liturgy. Resources for planning the wedding liturgy are included in this booklet.
- ◇ Music Planning: A conversation or email communication with the Parish Assistant Music Director is also a part of the liturgy planning process.

## **Rehearsal**

A rehearsal is usually scheduled for the evening before the wedding. **The exact time must be arranged in advance with the priest/deacon.** Couples will be assigned a Wedding Coordinator & that coordinator will contact the couple in a timely fashion. **Couples must also bring the Marriage License and all fees (church and musicians) to the wedding rehearsal.** All members of the wedding party should be at rehearsal including readers and gift bearers. It is important to be on time, as there might be more than one rehearsal scheduled on any given evening. We find it most helpful to tell your guests to be 15-30 minutes earlier than the scheduled rehearsal time.

### **Arrival at Church on the Day of the Wedding**

The wedding party should plan to arrive at the Church no later than 40 minutes prior to the time of the wedding. A room is available for the bride and her attendants. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS ALCOHOL ALLOWED ON CHURCH PROPERTY.** The groom and best man may meet in the sacristy. The groomsmen and bridesmaids may assist in the seating of the wedding guests. The bride and groom may greet guests.

### **Wedding Coordinators**

The parish uses wedding coordinators to help assist the clergy in the liturgical preparation of the wedding. They will run the rehearsal, arrive before you on the wedding day to set up, organize the bridal party and the seating of guests, and clean up after the wedding. The coordinators can be contacted for any questions regarding the rehearsal and wedding day. After you conclude the selection of readings, intercessions and particulars of the wedding including the names of the wedding party, readers, and gift bearers, you should provide a copy of this information to your Wedding Coordinator. Any of the coordinators can be found on the contact page in this packet.

## **Environment**

### **Aisle Runner not permitted.**

The center aisle of St. Joseph Church is carpeted. Aisle runners on carpeting present a **significant hazard** for the bridal party, as well as, the assembly.

### **Flowers**

Flowers may be placed in the sanctuary but should never obstruct or detract from the primary symbols of the altar, couple and presider. Flowers are never to be placed on the altar itself, on sanctuary furniture, nor should any seasonal decorations be rearranged. **In particular, the Church does not celebrate Christmas until December 24th; thus, one should assume no Christmas decorations will be present in the church until that date.**

### **Dropping of Flower Petals**

The dropping of flower petals by a flower girl is permitted provided they are artificial and picked up after the ceremony. Instead of dropping these, we suggest the flower girl carry a small basket or arrangement of flowers.

### **Bows**

Bows or small flower arrangement may be placed on the pews with clips or string but should not be taped to the pew. They should be removed after the wedding. Candles at the ends of pews are not permitted.

### **The Throwing of Rice, Birdseed, Flower Petals, or Anything Else is Not Permitted**

The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, etc., inside or outside the church is not permitted. The throwing of these items can create a hazardous situation for walkers and a maintenance problem as well. Balloons may be released although environmentalists discourage this practice. Bells or bubbles are a pleasant alternative.

## **The Wedding Liturgy**

The wedding liturgy is a public prayer of the Church that celebrates God's covenant of love. With this in mind, liturgy planning should strive for the full, active and conscious participation of the faithful in this prayer of the Church. Bearing in mind secular and cultural influences, a couple should use the experience of Sunday Eucharist as the model for preparation of their wedding liturgy.

### **Ecumenical Considerations**

Whenever a wedding involves a couple, where one is Catholic and one is of another denomination, the church's preference is for the wedding to be celebrated without Eucharist (Holy Communion). Since it is impossible for the Eucharistic hospitality to be extended to the entire assembly, the wedding ceremony without Eucharist does not offend or exclude the family of the non-Catholic spouse.

### **Ministers of Other Religions and Visiting Priests and/or Deacons**

If you wish to have a member of the clergy present or participate in the marriage ceremony, please discuss this with the priest/deacon who is preparing you for marriage. In addition, should you wish to bring in a guest priest/deacon, he must contact one of the parish priests or deacons for any arrangements that might be needed. It is the responsibility of the priest/deacon marrying you to perform the paperwork and marriage preparation.

### **Hospitality**

The goal of the gathering rite is to gather the people into a praying community open and ready to hear the Word of God. A key element in creating that openness is hospitality. People should be welcomed warmly as they arrive. We suggest this role be extended to include the entire bridal party, the parent(s) of the bride and groom and even the bride and groom themselves since they are the reason the guests are there. It is not necessary to separate guests into the "bride's side" or the "groom's side" of the church.

### **Musical Considerations**

Before making any musical plans, we advise that you connect with our Music Department, specifically the Assistant Music Director. The most current contact information can be found on page 9. They have set up a very useful website for helping couples choose music and will be happy to guide you through the process. Please note that, since the liturgy and the church building itself are sacred, secular music is not permitted at the wedding. This includes both the service itself and the prelude music beforehand. This is not to say that secular music is in any way bad, just that only music written specifically for worship of God is appropriate in church and thus secular music should be reserved for the wedding reception. Please also note that the two popular wedding marches by Wagner (here comes the bride) and Mendelssohn are also discouraged by many Catholic dioceses. This is because they are secular works, not sacred. The Wagner march comes from a scandalous scene in an opera and the Mendelssohn from a strange scene in a musical comedy. All final musical decisions must be approved by the staff musician.

### **Welcome**

Weddings are not "spectator" sports. The assembly should be welcomed, invited and encouraged to participate in the wedding liturgy. This welcome may be offered by the couple themselves, the presiding minister, family members or cantor.

## **Programs**

Wedding programs or worship aids are not required but may be helpful in encouraging the assembly to participate in the prayers and hymns. An outline of the wedding liturgy within or outside Mass follows:

### **Marriage within Mass**

Prelude(s)

#### **Entrance Rite**

Entrance Procession

Entrance Chant

Greeting

Gloria

Opening Prayer

#### **Liturgy of the Word**

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel

Homily

#### **Sacrament of Marriage**

Exchange of Consent and Vows

Blessing of Rings

Prayers of the Faithful

#### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Preparation of the Gifts

Holy, Holy, Holy

Eucharistic Prayer

Our Father

Nuptial Blessing

Exchange of Peace

Lamb of God

Communion

Visit to Marian Shrine (optional)

#### **Concluding Rite**

Prayer after Communion

Final Blessing

Recessional

### **Marriage outside of Mass**

Prelude(s)

#### **Entrance Rite**

Entrance Procession

Greeting

Opening Prayer

#### **Liturgy of the Word**

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel

Homily

#### **Sacrament of Marriage**

Exchange of Consent and Vows

Blessing of Rings

Prayers of the Faithful

Our Father

Nuptial Blessing

Exchange of Peace (optional)

#### **Concluding Rite**

Visit to Marian Shrine (optional)

Final Blessing

Recessional

## **Additional Information**

### **Eucharistic Minister(s)**

If there are family members or friends who have been trained and commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers, they may assist the priest in distributing communion to the assembly. Please discuss this with the priest preparing you for marriage.

### **Photographers/Videographers**

We ask that photographers and videographers be given the guideline sheets in this packet.

## **St. Joseph Fees**

### **1. Donation to the Church**

A church fee of \$50 is requested for all weddings. Non-parishioners are requested to offer an additional \$450, or a total of \$500.

### **2. Gratuity to the Presider (Priest or Deacon)**

The Presider is normally offered a gratuity. The suggested gratuity is \$200.

### **3. Musicians**

The parish will provide a music minister, typically our Assistant Music Director, Marty Hoehler. He receives \$250 in return for providing both keyboard accompaniment (organ and/or piano) and necessary vocals. Should you wish to hire additional soloists or musicians, the fees will be at the discretion of those musicians themselves and will not affect the assistant music director's fee. The assistant music director can assist in finding cantors from the parish as well as instrumentalists. If you wish to replace the musician that we provide with a keyboardist of your choosing, our Assistant Music Director will be paid \$100 and will act as a liaison to your musicians.

### **4. Wedding Coordinators**

The wedding coordinators receive a gratuity for their services to you and the parish. If the coordinators are present for both the wedding and rehearsal, the suggested amount is \$100; if they are only present for the wedding, the suggested amount is \$50.

### **5. Servers**

Generally, two servers are present for every wedding. The suggest amount is \$20 for each one of the servers. If outside servers are to be used, the Parish Office must be notified at least one month before the wedding.

### **6. Live-streaming**

We have the ability to live-stream your wedding. If you chose this option, we suggest a \$100 gratuity for the operator. You will be provided with a YouTube link.

**All fees should be brought to the rehearsal with the marriage license. If financial difficulty is a concern; please speak to the clergy preparing you for marriage.**



## **St. Joseph Contact Information**

### **CLERGY**

**Fr. Andrew J. Gonzalez**, *Administrator*

440-238-5555 ext. 103

[agonzalez@sjohio.org](mailto:agonzalez@sjohio.org)

**Fr. Gregory J. Olszewski**, *Parochial Vicar*

440-238-5555 ext. 104

[golszewski@sjohio.org](mailto:golszewski@sjohio.org)

**Fr. Arnold C. Tiplaca**, *Parochial Vicar*

440-238-5555 ext. 105

[atiplaca@sjohio.org](mailto:atiplaca@sjohio.org)

**Deacon Robert Lester**

440-238-5555 ext. 110

[rl Lester@sjohio.org](mailto:rl Lester@sjohio.org)

### **ASSISTANT MUSIC DIRECTOR AND WEDDING ACCOMPANIST**

**Mr. Mary Hoehler**

[mhoehler@sjohio.org](mailto:mhoehler@sjohio.org)

### **WEDDING COORDINATORS**

**Debbie and Doug Januszewski**

440-773-4457

[debhjano3@gmail.com](mailto:debhjano3@gmail.com)

**Vicki and Ed Palisin**

440-666-3591

[vpalisin@hotmail.com](mailto:vpalisin@hotmail.com)

### **PARISH OFFICE MANAGER**

**Judy Rawlins**

440-238-5555 ext. 101

[jrawlins@sjohio.org](mailto:jrawlins@sjohio.org)

## **Check - List**

- **Meeting with Priest or Deacon**
  - Initial Interview
  - Set Tentative Wedding Date
  - Administration of Evaluative Tool
  - Discussion of Evaluation
  - Subsequent Discussions of Evaluation (if needed)
- **Marriage Preparation Program Completed**
  - Pre-Cana or Cana II (for second marriages)
  - Couples Ministry
- **Baptismal Certificate(s) Obtained and Submitted**
  - Must be dated within six months of marriage
- **Rehearsal Date Scheduled**
  - Contact Priest or Deacon
- **Music Planning Coordination with Assistant Music Director**
- **Marriage License Obtained and Brought to Rehearsal**
- **Donation to Church and Other Fees Brought to Rehearsal**
- **Readings and Intercessions Selected**
  - Including Old and New Testaments, Gospel and General Intercessions
- **Readers Selected**

## **PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER GUIDELINES**

We understand that photographs and videos are important to the wedding couple and their family. We ask that the church and ceremony be treated with respect. Capturing these memories should not be done at the expense of altering the solemnity of the ceremony. The ceremony, especially the procession, is not to be interrupted or delayed in any way.

Photograph as much as possible without a flash or light. St. Joseph Church has adequate light levels to record the event. Please do not block the view of the guests if at all possible, especially during the exchange of vows. Time allotted for posed pictures after the ceremony is one half-hour:

- for an 11:00 a.m. wedding pictures must be done by 12:30 p.m.
- for an 1:30 p.m. wedding pictures must be done by 3 p.m.

The guidelines for the photographer and videographer are listed on the last page. Please tear off the page and give it to them.

## **POLICY FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS & VIDEOGRAPHERS**

The following are expectations of the photographer and videographer who are providing their services to this couple being married at St. Joseph Church.

1. You may wish to introduce yourself to the priest or deacon before the ceremony in order to review the order of the service.
2. Remember that you are not to distract or detract from what is going on during the wedding. Well taken photographs are desirable, but they must not be made at the expense of the solemnity of the ceremony.
3. **Expectations**
  - a. Do not enter the sanctuary of the church at any time, that is, from the steps on up toward the altar.
  - b. For the entrance processions, you may be in the main aisle, near the front of the church. This will allow you to capture those walking up the aisle. However, after that, you may not be anywhere from the first pew (on either side of the aisle) to the altar. Your presence there will block those assembled from seeing the ceremony at the altar.
  - c. Do not stop the bridal procession for any reason.
  - d. Please try to avoid the use of flash pictures or video lights.
  - e. Excellent photographic angles can be gotten from the back of the middle aisle (behind the last person), the choir loft and the north entrance into the church.
4. The church is not a photography studio and is not to be used after the wedding for a wide variety of pictures. If the weather is inclement or if the couple would like a photograph by the altar, you may take a few pictures. The Saturday 11:00 a.m. wedding must vacate the church by 12:30 p.m. and the 1:30 p.m. Saturday wedding by 3 p.m. If these few pictures cannot be accomplished within this time frame, it might be necessary for the bridal couple to choose between a receiving line or photographs.
5. Do not leave behind any litter in the church.
6. Please conduct yourself in a professional manner, always remembering that our church is the house of God and a place of worship.

**Observance of these expectations is both appreciated and expected.**