



A GUIDE FOR PLANNING YOUR WEDDING
AT
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH
VALLEY PARK, MISSOURI

Welcome...

and Congratulations on your engagement!

You have chosen to begin a new life as husband and wife and we are pleased to welcome you, your families, and friends to Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Our parish staff is looking forward to assisting you in the planning and preparation for this very special day. The beautiful Sacrament of Matrimony is one of God's most precious gifts to His people.

As the two of you become one in Christ, you are entering into a lifetime bond. It is important to realize that with Christ as the center of your lives together, the joys you are about to experience will remain etched permanently in your relationship.

It is our hope that this booklet will provide you with the pre-Marriage guidance you need to assure you of a beautiful experience on your wedding day and will assist you to be better prepared for your new lives together.

Wishing you an abundance of happiness,

The Parish Family of Sacred Heart

Cover photo courtesy of Moser Photography
of the Melissa Walsh/David Robben wedding.

<p>PART I: THE ARCHDIOCESAN MARRIAGE PROGRAM</p>
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The Catholic Church considers the commitment to and the importance of the Sacrament of Matrimony to be a life-long commitment of a man and a woman. Because of the Church's concern for this bond, there are several phases a couple must encounter prior to their exchange of vows.

A period of six months is considered the minimum time for the preparation process. During this time, the couple, along with the Priest/Deacon, will examine their relationship with each other and, together, work on developing that relationship.

The first part of the Archdiocesan Marriage Program involves the couple having several meetings with the Priest/Deacon - all during the six month evaluation and engagement period. Using an instrument called FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding & Study), the Priest/Deacon will help the couple identify the strengths and possible weaknesses in their relationship. The FOCCUS explores basic expectations, communication and problem-solving skills, attitudes on money, children, religion, sexuality, and in-laws, among other things. After the evaluation process is successfully completed, the date for the wedding can be confirmed.

The second part in the Archdiocesan Marriage Program involves participation in a marriage preparation program. During these programs a variety of topics will be covered.

The topics in this portion of the program include:

- The Sacrament and Vocation of Marriage;
- Male and Female Relationships;
- Civil Law and Finances;
- Catholic and Christian Sexuality;
- Intimacy and Communication in Marriage.

A variety of programs are available to the couple:

- Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Classes:
Class is sponsored by the Office of Laity & Family Life. Classes are a total of 10 hours and take place at locations throughout the Archdiocese. Please call 314-792-7182 and speak with the Marriage Preparation Coordinator for information or to register.
- Engaged Encounter Weekends of St. Louis:
This is a weekend experience. It is sponsored by the Catholic Engaged Encounter of St. Louis. Two married couples and a Priest present this course to a group of engaged couples.
- Marriage Preparation Mini-Retreat:
Class meets Saturday from 7:00 to 9:30 pm and again on Sunday from 12:00 to 5:00 pm. Retreat is sponsored by St. Francis Xavier (College) Church. Call Joe Milner at 314-977-7318 to register.
- Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Workshop
Workshop is sponsored by the St. Charles Lwanga Center in North St. Louis City. It is a Friday evening and full day Saturday. For information, upcoming dates or to register, contact Norman Williams at 314-367-7929.
- Parish Program:
This program is a personalized experience between the engaged couple and a married couple who facilitates a customized program which covers the same information as the other available programs. The Priest/Deacon will provide you with a list of approved couples.

Each program is an Archdiocesan approved event endorsed by the Archbishop.

PART 2: PRE-WEDDING REQUIREMENTS

The scope and breadth of your wedding, along with all of its details, is an opportunity to express, as two adults, your relationship, your hopes, and your needs before God and a community of believers who gather with you to celebrate this most important moment in your life.

As you are planning these elements, here are some fundamental items that must be taken into consideration in the overall planning process:

LOCATION OF THE CEREMONY

The ideal location for the Sacrament of Matrimony celebration is the Parish Church of the Catholic party of the couple. If both the bride and groom are Catholic, the proper Parish Church of either person is acceptable, according to your wishes.

At least one of the party seeking to receive the Sacrament of Marriage at Sacred Heart Catholic Church **must be a registered and participating member of the parish for at least one (1) year before arranging any details or beginning the preparation process.** If either or both are not registered, one or both of the parties' parents must be registered and participating parishioners for at least one (1) year, and permission must be granted by the Pastor of Sacred Heart.

If there is no parish registration by either the couple or their parents, an exemption must be granted by the Pastor. Priority will be given to (1) registered parishioners; (2) parents who are registered parishioners with approval; (3) non-registered persons with approval.

BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE

If you were baptized at a parish other than Sacred Heart, you must provide a copy of your Baptismal Certificate obtained from the Parish of your Baptism, and dated within the last six months. These are easily attainable by contacting the Catholic Church in which you were baptized and requesting a copy. If you were baptized at Sacred Heart, your certificate is on file.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

A Marriage License valid in the State of Missouri must be purchased at least one (1) week prior to the rehearsal and given to the Priest/Deacon or Wedding Coordinator on the day of your rehearsal. The State of Missouri requires a three day wait after the application for license has been made. Note: licenses are valid for thirty (30) days after issuance.

WEDDING DATE AND TIME

Weddings at Sacred Heart Church are scheduled at the following times:

Friday Evenings	6:30 or 7:00 pm
Saturday Mornings	10:30 am
Saturday Afternoons	1:30 pm

Weddings are not normally scheduled during the Liturgical Seasons of Advent and Lent unless, under unusual circumstances, approval has been granted by the Pastor.

REHEARSAL DATE AND TIME

A rehearsal is required and should be scheduled with Sacred Heart's wedding coordinator as soon as your wedding date is confirmed. The presiding Priest/Deacon does not need to be present at the rehearsal. The rehearsals are normally one or two days prior to the actual wedding ceremony. The date and time will be given with consideration for other church activities scheduled for the worship space.

All members of the wedding party:

- Bride and Groom;
- Maid of Honor and Best Man;
- Bridesmaids and Groomsmen;
- Flower Girls and Ring Bearers;
- Grandparents of both Bride and Groom;
- Parents of both Bride and Groom;
- Readers of the Word (Lectors);
- Ushers;
- Gift Bearers (if the wedding is a Mass)

should be in attendance at the wedding rehearsal. In addition to these members, any others who may perform a service in the ceremony should also attend.

The bride and groom should also bring any of the items that will be used at the ceremony, including:

- Unity Candle and Tapers;
- Wedding Programs;
- Marriage License;
- Copies of the selected Readings, etc.

At all times, during both the rehearsal and actual wedding ceremony, reverence and decorum require appropriate attire. Those in attendance are to be punctual and aware of the sanctity of the Church.

<p>PART 3: THE LITURGY OF THE WEDDING</p>

Your prayer on the day of your wedding will be turned toward your hopes for the future. It is exactly that vision of the future that will make the Wedding Liturgy something joyful, memorable and authentic.

The Director of Liturgical Music for Sacred Heart Church is Mr. Nathan Jackson. He will coordinate all wedding music and service preparations. As he plans the Liturgy with you, he will follow the official wedding music and liturgical guidelines of the Office of Worship for the Archdiocese of St. Louis. To set up your consultation with Mr. Jackson, please contact him at 636-225-5268.

Please review the "Music Guidelines for Your Wedding" information before the consultation.

MUSIC

The music for the Wedding Liturgy generally falls into three categories:

- ORGAN OR INSTRUMENTAL SOLOS:
This is music designed to accompany the seating of the congregation, as well as the entrance procession, exit recessional, and interludes during the service.
- LITURGICAL SONGS:
This includes the music of the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel Acclamation. If the ceremony is the Celebration of the Eucharist (Mass), additional liturgical songs will include the "Holy, Holy, Holy," the "Memorial Acclamation," the "Great Amen," and the "Lamb of God."

In addition to these, other appropriate possibilities include an opening hymn, a Communion hymn, and a meditation hymn.

- SUPPLEMENTARY SONGS:
Optional music may be played (as a prelude) or sung before the Service, during the lighting of the Unity Candle, at the Preparation of the Gifts, or to honor Mary. These songs should reflect a prayerful spirit and a Biblical and Christian view of love. There are many songs in a variety of styles that can enhance the prayerful spirit of your Wedding Liturgy.

MUSICIANS AND SINGERS

It is the policy of Sacred Heart to restrict the use of the organ to the parish organists. Exceptions to this policy are rare and are left to the discretion of our Director of Liturgical Music, Mr. Jackson. In addition to the organ, a piano is available.

If you are planning a full Mass with Holy Communion, a cantor is required. Only experienced Sacred Heart cantors should serve in this capacity at weddings. This helps to ensure continuity with the Parish's regular worship life, especially in terms of high quality liturgical music. It also serves to guarantee that the service will go smoothly because presider, cantor, and organist are accustomed to working with each other, and with the specific acoustical demands of the church. Friends or family may serve as soloist during the Mass, with the liturgical roles reserved for the cantor.

Fees to the musicians and singers are separate and not part of the church fee. Payment should be made to each specific musician and singer involved and mailed two weeks in advance to the parish Wedding Coordinator.

READINGS & PRAYERS

You will be provided with a small booklet entitled, "Together for Life." This booklet has a vast selection of readings, prayers and responses appropriate for your wedding ceremony. We encourage you to use it to make your reading and prayer selections.

GATHERING RITE & ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The traditional practice of separating the bride and groom prior to the ceremony is not considered as necessary by the Church, however, neither is it discouraged. The presence of the bride and groom greeting guests at the Church door, for example, is a recognized practice.

The wedding party will gather in the rear the Church for the entrance procession. The specific format should be discussed with the Priest/Deacon and/or the Wedding Coordinator. This will be practiced carefully at your rehearsal.

WEDDING PARTY

Four kneelers will be provided for the bride and groom, the maid of honor, and the best man in the Sanctuary. They will remain in the Sanctuary during the entire service.

After all members of the bridal party reach the Sanctuary from the entrance procession, and following the opening prayer, other members of the wedding party will retire to the first row of pews. During the Exchange of Vows, the wedding party will be invited back into the Sanctuary.

THE UNITY CANDLE

The lighting of the Unity Candle is a beautiful acknowledgment of the joining of two lives. Two tapers are used to light the candle - each representing the bride's and groom's baptisms in Jesus Christ. As the single candle is lighted by the new bride and groom, the symbolism of Mathew's Gospel (16:9) comes alive as, "...they are no longer two but one."

There are several options for preparing for the Unity Candle ceremony:

Following the seating of the Grandparents:

- Mothers of both the bride and groom are escorted by an usher to the Paschal (Easter) Candle at the Baptistry. They take the tapers they are holding and light them from the Paschal Candle. They are then escorted to the Unity Candle stand where each place the lighted tapers, one on either side, of the Unity Candle. They are then escorted to their pews.
- Following the same procedure as the mothers, the groom's parents together light the tapers and take them to the Sanctuary, place the candles on the stand, and are seated. Then, the bride's parents do the same, except, after the placing of the candles, the mother is seated and the father returns to the rear of the Church to escort his daughter down the aisle.
- An assigned individual or individuals take lights from the Paschal Candle and go forward to light the two tapers already in place.

Further, a wonderful option that might be considered is to use each the bride's and the groom's Baptismal Candles as the tapers for this ceremony. Truly, this is symbolic of the continual uniting of the Baptismal promise to the Marriage vow and the carrying of the Light of Christ received from the Paschal (Easter) Candle to the Unity Candle.

PRESENTATION OF FLOWERS
TO THE BLESSED MOTHER

A long standing tradition in the Catholic Church is devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. It was she who interceded to her Son on behalf of the newly married couple at their wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1-2).

If the bride and groom choose to express this special devotion to the Blessed Mother, there are several options. Option 1 is the preferred method:

Option 1:

- Following Holy Communion, if the ceremony is a Mass, or following the Lord's Prayer if the ceremony is not a Mass, the bride and groom take flowers to the Shrine while the "Ave Maria" is sung. They place the flowers at the shrine and remain for a moment in silent prayer.

Option 2:

- Prior to the arrival of guests, the bride and groom, the mothers of the bride and groom, the bride and her mother, or the bride and her mother and mother-in-law, present flowers to the Shrine of the Blessed Mother. This is a private ceremony.

Option 3:

- Have the "Ave Maria" sung as one of your songs before the wedding. Flowers are placed at the Shrine before the service begins. Include a note in your program.

Option 4:

- After Communion, the "Ave Maria" is sung. Flowers have already been placed at the shrine and a note in your program explains this. You remain at the kneelers.

We strongly encourage you to consider one of the previous options intended to devote your married life to the Blessed Mother. Whichever option you choose, below are several samples of wording that could be used in your program to describe the ceremony:

Sample 1:

"We have chosen Mary as the patroness of our marriage because she was the first disciple of Jesus who carried Jesus in her body and in her heart. She brought hope to a broken world. As the mother of all disciples, we invite Mary to pray with us and to inspire us to carry the presence of Jesus as we live our Sacrament of Marriage."

Sample 2:

"For centuries, couples have asked for Mary's prayers since it was she who interceded to her Son on behalf of a newly married couple at their wedding feast" (John 2:1-2).

The Priest/Deacon will assist you in preparing for whichever option you consider using and make appropriate mention of it during the ceremony.

FLOWERS TO THE MOTHERS

If the bride and groom choose to give flowers to their mothers, there are two times it is appropriate. Option 1 is the preferred method:

Option 1:

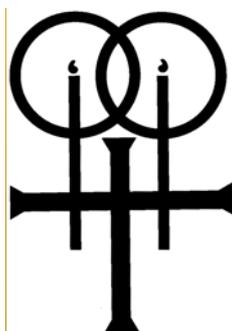
Flowers are given to the mothers at the Sign of Peace. If the ceremony is a Mass, this is done after the Lord's Prayer/Nuptial Blessing during the Sign of Peace ceremony and before the Lamb of God is sung. (During the presentation, only instrumental music is played.)

If the ceremony is a Liturgy of the Word, the flowers are given after the Lord's Prayer/Nuptial Blessing during the Sign of Peace. (Again, only instrumental music is played.)

Option 2:

Flowers are given to the mothers after the final blessing as the couple begins the recessional from the Altar.

Whichever option you choose, discuss it with the Priest/Deacon.



<p>PART 4: CHURCH DECORATIONS & ACCESSORIES</p>

Sacred Heart Catholic Church is a beautiful environment in which to celebrate your Marriage. However, we do understand there are some unique articles of décor that may make the already lovely space even more special for your day.

With that in mind, the Church has established these guidelines for what can and cannot be done in and on the Church property. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

FLOWERS

Floral arrangements should be done with live flowers, not artificial. The significance of this is that of "life." You are encouraged to utilize live floral arrangements if you plan to have them in the Sanctuary.

There are suitable spaces in the Sanctuary for floral arrangements. Arrangements should be placed in the Church lobby by your florist. The Wedding Coordinator will position them at the appropriate places in the Sanctuary.

Traditionally, floral arrangements in the Sanctuary remain after the wedding. They are considered a gift to the church. They, too, will be a reminder to those attending later Masses that a new union of man and woman was begun in the church and the community will remember to keep the couple in their prayers.

CANDLES

If you are using a Unity Candle as part of the ceremony, you should provide your own candles. We will provide a suitable holder and stand for the candles. These candles will be returned to you after the ceremony. Candelabras or candles down the aisles are not permitted.

AISLE RUNNERS

Aisle runners are not permitted under any circumstances.

BOWS & PEW DECOR

Bows and related décor may be placed on the pews, however, they must be attached with a cloth-type tie-on ribbon or rubber band. Any of the following types of adhesive are NOT permitted on any church furniture:

- Cellophane or any type of adhesive tape;
- Nails;
- Tacks;
- Staples

Any damage to either pews or furniture is the responsibility of the wedding party.

GUEST BOOK

If you choose to use a guest book, we recommend having it available *after* the ceremony for those not attending the reception to sign. A holder in the lobby is available for this purpose

PROGRAMS & BOOKLETS

Your guests will appreciate having a program or booklet of your Wedding Liturgy. It will serve as both a memento of your ceremony and an excellent way to invite participation in the Liturgy. Mr. Nathan Jackson has several samples for your consideration. The final program or booklet **MUST** be approved by Mr. Jackson prior to printing.

CHURCH FURNITURE

Please do not move or remove any furnishings or furniture from the Church. Any movement of furniture will be handled by the Wedding Coordinator. If there are any questions or concerns, discuss them with the Wedding Coordinator.

AFTER THE CEREMONY

It is the responsibility of the representatives of the bridal party to remove all bows, boxes, plastic bags, remaining programs, etc., from the Church proper and all the dressing areas. When the wedding party leaves the Church, it should be left in the same orderly manner in which it was found. Receptacles are located on the lower level of the Church for disposal. Large items should be placed in the dumpster behind the church. Any items remaining after the ceremony will be discarded. The Wedding Coordinator will return the Unity Candle, guest book, and any other items used in the ceremony that were placed in or near the Sanctuary area.

The throwing of, or releasing of, rice, bubbles, flower petals, confetti, doves, balloons, candy or any other items inside or outside of the Church is prohibited.

FOOD & FOOD ITEMS

Any type of food or related food items, including appetizers, sandwiches, drinks, snacks, etc., are not permitted inside the Church either before or after the ceremony. Food is permitted only in the downstairs dressing room(s).

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Alcoholic beverages in and/or around the Church premises are strictly forbidden and their use before the rehearsal or ceremony is most inappropriate. Further, consumption of alcoholic beverages before the ceremony could invalidate the ceremony itself.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted in any part of the Church or Church Hall or related buildings at any time.

DRESSING ROOMS

The bride and her bridesmaids may use a room located on the lower level of the Church to dress before the ceremony. The Wedding Coordinator will show you the location. Large rest rooms are located near this room. If another function is being held in this room, an alternate will be made available. Groomsmen should come to the ceremony dressed. Their room, also known as the Cry Room, is located in the rear of the main Church near the rest room. There are no elaborate facilities for dressing upstairs. Again, a reminder, that these rooms must be cleaned of any debris after the ceremony is over.

PART 5: PHOTOGRAPHY

While we understand you will want beautiful photographic memories of your wedding day, you must also realize that, first and foremost, your Wedding Ceremony is a Service of Prayer. The Church is NOT a photography studio. The atmosphere of sacredness is to be respected by all, including the professional photographer and professional videographer.

The guidelines for the taking of photos of your event are outlined below. Please share these with your photographer or videographer. The Wedding Coordinator will meet with your photographer and videographer prior to the ceremony to review these guidelines and advise them of the order of the wedding ceremony, updating them on any adjustments that may have been made at the rehearsal.

PRIOR TO THE CEREMONY

The Church will be opened and available 1-1/2 hours prior to the ceremony. The only exception to this is if another Church function precedes the wedding. In any event, at least 1 hour prior to the service, the Church will be available.

Pictures in the Sanctuary area, in and around the Altar, prior to the ceremony are prohibited. Photos may be taken outside the Church on the plaza, in the rear of the Church, and in the dressing rooms. Photographers may use the balcony for photos. The balcony offers a beautiful view of the ceremony.

DURING THE CEREMONY

At no time are any photographers to interrupt the wedding ceremony. Photos of the entrance procession may be taken, with flash, by the photographer. The photographer should be positioned no closer than the 5th row of pews (from the Altar). He/She may step into the aisle to take the picture then must retreat to the pew so as not to impede the action.

Once the procession starts it does not stop. The photographer does not interfere with a wedding ceremony by creating "stops" for poses. Unexpected occurrences are parts of all weddings. We continue as planned. Those in the wedding party proceed as planned at the rehearsal. Photographers do not make changes. Missed photos may be restaged after the ceremony or taken at the reception.

Flash may be used only during the entrance procession. Once the couple reaches the Altar, flash photography is not allowed until the recessional.

At no time are photographers permitted on the sides of the Altar, behind the Altar, or in the Chapel area of the Altar.

AFTER THE CEREMONY

The photographer may take posed photos after the ceremony in the front of the Altar area using the steps. There is a **15 minute** time limit for after-ceremony photos in the Church. The wedding party and parents should be prompt and the photographer prepared.

VIDEOGRAPHY

Many couples choose to have a video made of their wedding ceremony. The Church is wired for the use of video recording equipment.

Ports for sound are located:

- On the north wall behind the last row of pews;
- In the balcony directly in the center of the railing.

The videographer may take pictures of the procession from the center aisle but must not in any way interfere with the photographer.

After the procession, there are only three places from which videos may be taken:

- North side aisle (by the sound port);
- In the balcony;
- In the back of the Church near the Baptistry. (No sound port is available there.)

Under no circumstances may a stationary video camera or video operator be located behind the Altar, or to the sides of the Altar in the Sanctuary area.

PHOTO & VIDEO RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the engaged couple to provide these guidelines to the photographers and/or videographers. Misuse of the privileges of photographing will result in the photographer and/or videographer being asked to leave the premises and they will be prohibited from taking any photographs at future weddings.

PART 6: FEES

All fees are due and payable at least two (2) weeks prior to the ceremony. All forms of payment should be sent to:

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
ATTN: Wedding Coordinator
17 Ann Avenue
Valley Park, Missouri 63088

CHURCH:

For parishioners, the fee is \$500.00 for either a Mass or Liturgy of the Word. (This fee includes, but is not limited to, materials, secretarial assistance, FOCCUS testing, Wedding Coordinator, church usage fee, cleaning, etc.) For non-parishioners, the fee is \$1,200.00. There is no discount if all the included services are not utilized. This check should be made payable to Sacred Heart Church.

ORGANIST:

\$175.00 for either a Mass or Liturgy of the Word. (This check should be made payable to the organist and sent with other payments to the church.)

CANTOR/SOLOIST:

\$125.00 for either a Mass or Liturgy of the Word. (This check should be made payable to the cantor/soloist and sent with other payments to the church.)

OTHER MUSICIANS:

Fees for instrumentalists vary and are set independently.

SERVERS:

\$10.00 - \$15.00 per server.

2 servers are assigned by the Church. Payment should be in cash (two separate envelopes) or in check form payable to Sacred Heart Church. The wedding party may choose to provide their own qualified servers. However, if they are not from Sacred Heart Church, one additional Sacred Heart server will be necessary.

PRIEST/DEACON:

A gift to the Priest/Deacon witnessing your marriage is not included in the Church fee. It is an appropriate, and certainly appreciated, gesture to offer a gift for his services, however, the amount is at your own discretion. If you are uncertain about an amount you deem appropriate, please discuss it with your Wedding Coordinator. You may include a separate card or note with this gift when you return all your other payments to the Church, or you may extend your appreciation to him personally at the wedding rehearsal or wedding ceremony.

Also, please note that if you would like the Priest/Deacon officiating your ceremony to attend your rehearsal dinner and/or reception, an invitation should be sent to him along with others on your guest list.



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