

Marriage Guidelines



Our Lady
of Grace

CATHOLIC PARISH

Marriage Guidelines

We presume....

- That you are a people of faith who are celebrating your marriage in the Roman Catholic Church as a prayerful expression of your belief and commitment.
- That you understand that a wedding is not a private event with invited guests, but a public expression of your faith in which the Church gathers around you to witness Christ's faithfulness.
- That you are going to church on a regular basis, and that Catholic parties are fully initiated, you have celebrated Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- That you expect the *Rite of Marriage* to be followed and that any adaptations will be made because the Rite specifically articulates the possibility of modification.
- That you are preparing not only for your wedding day, but for your lifetime of marriage.
- That couples are open to becoming active in a parish faith community so that they can discuss their faith, as well as having a means of spiritually strengthening their marital commitment.
- That given the high rate of divorce among couples who live together before marriage, couples who are cohabiting will earnestly attempt to separate during the marriage preparation period.
- That you will discuss any questions or concerns you have about these guidelines during your preparation process.

Period of Preparation

1. Couples should contact the Parish Office at the Church where they are planning to marry at least six months prior to the planned wedding date. For Weddings where Mass is celebrated one of our Priests will preside. Weddings outside of Mass one of our Deacons are available to witness the marriage. Visiting presiders are welcome, provided that they follow the Parish Guidelines for Marriage, are Ministers in good standing, possess an Ohio Marriage License, and complete all necessary procedures and paperwork, submitted at the rehearsal.
2. It is **your** responsibility to call the Parish Office to schedule the use of the church, and the church hall if you are planning to use that facility.
3. You are expected to attend one of the pre-marriage programs sponsored by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Information brochure with dates, locations as well as registration information is available at the Parish Office or from your marriage preparation Minister.
4. You will need to meet with a pre-marriage couple in the parish who is trained to discuss topics related to interpersonal and communication issues. The tool used for these discussions is entitled, FOCCUS, which will be administered to you before you meet with the couple. The Parish Office will designate a couple with whom you will meet. The number of sessions varies from couple to couple. Contact the Parish Office if you do not hear from the FOCCUS couple within 3 weeks after our first meeting.
5. If Catholic parties were not baptized at either Our Lady of Mercy or Corpus Christi Churches, you must obtain a baptismal record with notations from the parish of baptism dated within 6 months of the marriage date. The parish of baptism can mail the record to Our Lady of Grace Parish, Attn: Fr. Benoit Mukamba. Non Catholic Christians should provide a copy of their Baptismal Certificate or proof of Baptism as well.
6. During the preparation, do not hesitate to contact your marriage Minister if you have any questions.
7. If one of the Priests is going to preside at your wedding you will need to call the Parish Office to schedule an appointment to meet with him about one week prior to the wedding rehearsal.

Period of Planning

1. As soon as you have completed your sessions with the FOCCUS couple it is **your** responsibility to contact your marriage Minister so that liturgical preparations can begin.
2. Your wedding date will be confirmed once the preparation is complete. It is then **your** responsibility to contact the Parish Music Director. In rare cases other musicians may be employed, in these cases all music must be planned with and approved by the Parish Music Director.
3. Any visiting organists, musicians, or instrumentalists who will not be playing with the Parish Music Director must make an appointment to meet with the Parish Music Director prior to the wedding.
4. All music during the liturgy must be liturgical music. Music for your wedding will need to come from the resources used by the parish. Additional music approved by the Music Director can be included in a worship aid / wedding program, however this should add to the flow and focus of the liturgy. A worship aid is not simply a list of the wedding party, but ought to enable the assembly to fully participate in the liturgy. The Parish Wedding Coordinator should be able to assist you with this.
5. It is **your** responsibility to ask people to read the Scripture readings. These should be people who are accustomed to reading the Scriptures in Liturgical settings. Readers should be present for the rehearsal. There are generally two readers for the Scriptures. The General Intercessions may also be read by a person of your choice, typically one of the readers.
6. For weddings in Mass you may also choose one or two altar attendants, but they are not a necessity.
7. If Mass is celebrated; you may wish to ask people to bring up the bread and wine for the Preparation of Gifts. It is also entirely appropriate for the Bride and Groom to bring the gifts to the altar (*Rite of Marriage, paragraph 30*).
8. A Mass is only celebrated when there are two Catholics exchanging vows. A Wedding Mass is not permitted when a Catholic and a Non Catholic exchange vows.
9. **Archdiocesan guidelines strongly discourage Saturday evening weddings in the context of Mass, so as to avoid any confusion with the Sunday celebration. In the cases when a Saturday evening Wedding Mass is celebrated, the Sunday readings are to be used. We ordinarily celebrate the Rite of Marriage on Friday evenings at 7:00 p.m. or earlier, also on Saturdays no later than 1:30 p.m.**
10. When Mass is celebrated; **you** will need to ask at least two experienced Eucharistic Ministers to assist with Communion distribution.
11. It is **your** responsibility to arrange to have the church cleaned up after the ceremony; aisle runner taken to the dumpster, programs taken out of the pews, debris cleaned up. Worship space returned to the condition it was prior to your wedding.
12. Because **Parishioners** contribute to the parish through their time, talent, and treasure, there is no suggested offering or fee for the use of the church and facilities. Offering for the Parish are gladly accepted. Either the Groom or Bride must be registered in the Parish for one year prior to the wedding date in order to have parishioner status. Non-parishioners are asked to make a \$350.00 donation to the Parish if they have a designated Priest to serve as the Church's Witness. If one of our Priests or Deacons witnesses the wedding of a non-registered party, a donation of \$500.00 is requested.

Rehearsal

1. The rehearsal time and date will be set in advance of the wedding. This is not necessarily the night before the wedding, but sometime reasonably close to the wedding day.
2. **You must bring your marriage license to the rehearsal.** If it is not brought to the rehearsal the wedding will be postponed.
3. Please inform your wedding party that the rehearsal will begin promptly at the set time. The rehearsal will begin with prayer, by reading the Gospel you have chosen for your wedding. We will then spend some time reflecting as a group on the question, "What do you wish for this couple?"

4. If a person is not there at the starting time, a stand-in will be used. We will go through the ceremony one time at the rehearsal. Only those who will be involved in the wedding or stand-in's are encouraged to be at the rehearsal. Others are encouraged to meet up with the wedding party at a later time.
5. *There is to be no drinking of alcoholic beverages either before or during the practice, or the wedding. **The practice and/or the wedding may be cancelled if the couple or members of the wedding party choose to drink alcoholic beverages, or show serious signs of intoxication.** Please note that this rule is strictly followed.* The time for this merriment is after the wedding.
6. A Parish Wedding Coordinator may be involved in the rehearsal and the wedding liturgy.

The Wedding Liturgy

1. The Entrance Rite

The entrance rite includes *the prelude, the procession, and greeting / opening prayer*. This rite serves as a gathering of the faithful and should be in proportion to the rest of the celebration.

Prelude

Because the prelude sets the tone for, and is intimately linked with the liturgical celebration, consideration needs to be given to the following: musical selections, atmosphere, and seating of the guests.

Music: The same consideration should be given to the selection of the music for the prelude as is given to the music throughout the liturgy.

Atmosphere: While the atmosphere as guests arrive is one of celebration, care should be taken to create an environment which reflects the reality that our prayer has begun.

Seating of Guests: The immediate seating of the guests contributes to the prayerful environment desired for the liturgy.

Procession

The entrance procession of a wedding is an extended form of the entrance of the priest, deacon, and other ministers at Sunday liturgies. A liturgical procession should reflect a unity among all who participate in it. Any extended space between individuals, or the processing of individuals *one at a time* speaks contrary to this unity. Although a liturgical procession is preferred, local custom does allow for the wedding party to be escorted to their places, followed by the bride being escorted to the sanctuary of the church.

“If there is a procession to the altar, the ministers go first, followed by the priest, and then the bride and bridegroom. According to local custom, they may be escorted by at least their parents and two witnesses. Meanwhile, the entrance song is sung.” (*Rite of Marriage*, paragraph 20)

If the procession is accompanied by instrumental music, a gathering hymn should follow, to encourage participation of the assembly and to reflect the communal dimension of the celebration.

2. The Liturgy of the Word

Scripture Readings

Scripture readings are to be read from approved translations. There is an Old Testament reading, a sung Responsorial Psalm, a New Testament reading, followed by a sung Gospel Acclamation and proclamation of the Gospel by the presider.

The Vows – Exchange of Consent

The wedding party is invited into the sanctuary area at this time by the presider. The vows are to be exchanged according to the options given in the Rite of Christian Marriage.

Ideally, the Bride and Groom should have the vows memorized, so that recitation sounds natural. In any event, since the *Bride and Groom are the ministers of the sacrament*, they need to be *clearly audible and visible* so that their ministerial role is evident.

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is always prayed by the entire assembly, including times when a musical setting is used.

The Sign of Peace

The sign of peace is a symbolic gesture of unity, not a greeting of friendship. It is made by the faithful to those immediately around them. All those present, including the Bride and Groom, should give a simple sign of peace to those nearby. The flow of the liturgy should not be interrupted by extensive movement, duration, or music.

Communion Rite

Communion will be distributed under both species (Body and Blood) to Catholic members of the assembly, beginning with the couple.

Music at Communion should reflect praise, unity, or the liturgical season. The song, or its refrain, should be sung by the entire assembly.

3. Final Blessing and Dismissal

The rite ends with a blessing.

The recessional hymn or instrumental selection acts as our triumphal sending forth of the entire assembly. Any additional customs (*i.e., introducing the couple, inviting applause*) are inappropriate and deny the significance of the recessional. *These customs are reserved for the reception.*

What about.....

Unity Candles

The practice of lighting a Unity Candle to symbolize the uniting of two individuals or families is liturgically inappropriate for the following reasons;

1. Within the liturgy, lit candles represent Christ, not an individual or family.
2. The union of the couple is ritualized during the exchange of vows, Nuptial Blessing, and, within the Nuptial Mass, by sharing the Eucharist.

It is suggested that the practice of lighting the Unity Candle be done at the wedding reception.

Private Devotion

Private devotions which interrupt the liturgy, such as flowers presented to the Blessed Mother, are not appropriate as part of a communal celebration. This may be done appropriately as a private expression by the couple at another time (i.e. during marriage preparation, or at the rehearsal). For a couple who has an established devotion this subject can be discussed with your marriage preparation minister.

Appropriate Dress

The dress of the Bride and Groom, as well as the wedding party, should always be appropriate for liturgical celebrations.

Receiving Line

As we gather for liturgical celebrations, we do not assume the role of host, for it is the Lord who gathers and dismisses us. Social customs such as receiving lines are inappropriate at this time and should be reserved for the wedding reception.

As You Leave

Our witness continues as we leave the church. Therefore, practices such as the use of rice, birdseed, confetti, balloons, bubbles, butterflies, etc., are not consistent with the sacred nature of Christian marriage. Again the use of these items should be reserved for the wedding reception.

Photographers

Guidelines are available for your photographer/videographer. The taking of pictures and videos should not detract from the sacred nature of the liturgy. A simple guideline is to remember that they are recording an event that is taking place, not staging the event to record.

Flowers

Keeping with the integrity of the liturgy, only live flowers and plants should be used in the church. You are encouraged to leave flowers from your wedding in the church to enhance the beauty of the liturgical celebrations throughout the weekend. Please notify the Parish Office 2 weeks prior to your wedding regarding your plans for the flowers.

CONTACT PERSONS AND OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

Marriage Preparation:

Pastor:

Fr. Benoit Mukamba

Phone: 937-274-2107 ext. 104

Email: benoit92@OurLadyOfGraceDayton.org

Deacon:

Skip Royer

Email: sroyer@OurLadyOfGraceDayton.org

Marriage Coordinator Minister

Natinka Siwecki

Email: nsiwecki@OurLadyofGraceDayton.org

Phone: 937-274-2107 ext. 115

Music Director:

Anthony Davis

Phone: 937-274-2107 ext. 110

Email: adavis@OurLadyOfGraceDayton.org

Parish Office

220 W. Siebenthaler Ave

Dayton, OH 45405

Parish Office Phone: 937-274-2107

Corpus Christi Church

527 Forest Ave.

Dayton, Ohio 45405

Our Lady of Mercy Church

533 Odlin Ave.

Dayton, Ohio 45405



Couples' Text for the Rite of Marriage

N. and N., have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage? *We Have.*

Will you love and honor each other as husband and wife for the rest of your lives? *We Will*

Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church? *We Will*

Bridegroom: *I, N., take you, N., to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.*

Bride: *I, N., take you, N., to be my husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.*

The Groom and then the Bride, say to one another:

N., take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A marriage is established by the marriage covenant, the irrevocable consent that the spouses freely give to and receive from each other. This unique union of a man and a woman and the good of the children impose total fidelity on each of them and the unbreakable unity of their bond. To make the indissoluble marriage covenant a clearer sign of this full meaning and a surer help in its fulfillment, Christ the Lord raised it to the dignity of a sacrament, modeled on his own nuptial bond with the Church.

(from the Introduction to the "Rite of Marriage")

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