

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

IN

CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

+++

ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC CHURCH

206 N 2ND Street PO Box 39
Breda, Iowa 51436-0039

+++

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

19481 140TH Street PO Box 39
Breda, Iowa 51436-0039

+++

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

610 S Gault Street PO Box 23
Arcadia, Iowa 51430-0023

+++

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CATHOLIC CHURCH

226 W 6th St PO Box 513
Glidden, Iowa 51443-0513

+++

ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

HOLY ANGELS MERGED WORSHIP SITE-ROSELLE

324 W 2nd St PO Box 13
Halbur, Iowa 51444-0013

+++

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH

202 S 5th Ave PO Box 104
Templeton, Iowa 51463-0104

(712) 673-2582

Fax: (712) 673-2239

stbernard@westianet.net

<http://christthekingcatholiccommunity.org>

Prepared by: Fr. Mark J. Stoll

First Printing:	February 1998
Second Printing:	February 2000
Third Printing:	November 2001
Fourth Printing:	May 2002
Fifth Printing:	August 2003
Revised/Sixth Printing:	August 2004
Revised/Seventh Printing:	March 2009
Eighth Printing:	January 2010
Ninth Printing:	February 2011
Tenth Printing:	February 2015
Revised/Eleventh Printing:	February 2017
Twelfth Printing	August 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	4
INTRODUCTION	4
GENERAL GUIDELINES	5
The Liturgy	5
Time	5
Music	5
Marriage programs/Worship Aids	6
Rehearsal	6
Decorations/Flowers	6
Bows	6
Candles	6
Rice, confetti, flower pedals, birdseed	6
Runner	6
Pictures	6
Bridal room	6
Church hall	6
Marian Altar	7
Receiving line	7
Food and beverages	7
Clean up	7
License	7
Fees	7
Church expense	7
Altar/Mass Servers	7
Ushers	7
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	8
Baptismal Certificates	8
Confirmation	8
Interfaith Marriages	8
Second Marriages	8
FOCCUS	8
Walking in Love/Called to the Wedding Feast	8
Natural Family Planning	8
Plan Ahead	8

PREFACE

This booklet has been specially prepared to help you plan your marriage and more specifically your wedding ceremony. We, in parishes in Christ the King Catholic Community hope that this booklet will help to prepare a ceremony that will make your wedding day special. Included here are many helpful suggestions, insights, facts, and guidelines that will assist in planning your ceremony so it is celebrated well and smoothly; and create a wedding ceremony that is holy, happy, and meaningful for you.

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to marry! We are happy for you and we in the parishes of Christ the King Catholic Community would like to assist in making your wedding ceremony a happy and holy event as you enter life together as a married couple.

Jesus made specific comments about the ideal of oneness between husband and wife by stressing the unbreakability (indissolubility, permanence) of the marital bond and sharply challenging the prevailing view of his time about the permissibility of divorce. He dignified marriage by raising it to the level of a sacrament so that it would clearly recall and more easily reflect his own intimate union with his Church. In that fashion, Christ helps spouses to assist one another in attaining holiness within their married life.

Stable, life-long marriages are important for the Church and society. It is through this preparation that the Church wants to help couples enter marriage as well prepared as possible for the challenges and adjustments that are part of marriage. Marriage preparation also helps prepare you to better understand the sacrament into which you are entering, as is done for the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. Through this preparation, the Church wishes to affirm the love, hope, and knowledge that you already have, while challenging and inspiring you toward the lifestyle you have chosen.

Married Christians, by virtue of the Sacrament of Matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church. Thus, married Christians help each other to nurture holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of their children.

Christian couples also nourish and develop their marriage by undivided affection, which wells up from the fountain of divine love; and therefore, they remain faithful in body and in mind, in good times as in bad.

By the exchange of vows, you will give an irrevocable consent, to accept each other in a partnership designed for both the good of the other through your close, special unity; and for the procreation and education of offspring.

The sacrament, then, is not only the mutual and irreversible commitment, but also the living out of that commitment for life. In other words, Christ becomes present, through grace, in a newer and deeper way at the moment of the exchange of vows and whenever the husband and wife carry out those mutual marital promises. The Sacrament of Marriage thus pre-supposes and demands faith.

Thus, through your engagement and pre-marriage preparation, we hope you make an in-depth consideration of the lifestyle you wish to enter and also receive important spiritual growth as a couple.

Please take time to consider the following guidelines. They are given to assist you in planning your wedding liturgy and will help things go smoothly for you, your guests, and the in the parishes of Christ the King Catholic Community.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Since you will be using the parish's church building, we ask you to respect its space and environment as a house of worship and place of prayer and thus follow the guidelines below in planning your wedding ceremony.

The Liturgy is to be celebrated according to THE ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY, 2ND EDITION as established by the Roman Catholic Church (unless proper dispensation is received). The celebration of the Marriage Liturgy in the Catholic Church is to reflect good Catholic liturgy. Adaptations are not permitted that detract from the approved ritual. Good models are the celebration of Sunday Eucharist, Baptisms during the Eucharist, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. This is the most important event of the day. For couples who are both Roman Catholic, a celebration of the Eucharistic Mass is encouraged and recommended. For couples who are of mixed faith, a Liturgy of the Word ceremony is encouraged and recommended. Whichever liturgy is chosen and agreed upon by the couple and officiant, the liturgy is to be characterized by the principles of simplicity and appropriateness. This means that good liturgical prayer focuses attention on those things that are truly primary and most important with a minimum of clutter or distraction. The entrance procession should demonstrate a mingling of two families and is to model normal processions used at Sunday Eucharist, Baptisms during the Eucharist, Confirmation, and Holy Orders and shall include the entire wedding party, parents, servers, and the officiant. Only the bride and groom will be in the sanctuary area. Others may occupy the front pews and gather around the couple during exchange of vows and rings. Most prayers, especially the Lord's Prayer, are the community's prayer. At all times, proper decorum and respect is to be shown in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Time: The latest a wedding with a Mass can begin on Saturday is at 2:00 p.m. or without a Mass at 2:30 p.m. on a Saturday. A Friday evening and a Sunday wedding is also an option. There are some days, including Holy Days and the Triduum that weddings are not permitted. Please check with the pastor regarding these days. Considerations are to be made for the liturgical season of the Church year so that the celebration (including decorations) takes into consideration the spirit of the season (i.e. Lent weddings call for very simple and more solemn atmosphere). **WEDDINGS AT SUNDAY EUCHARIST** are possible just like we celebrate Baptisms, Confirmations, and First Eucharist at Sunday Eucharist. In fact, it may be preferable to celebrate weddings at the Sunday Eucharist due to the declining number of priests and to allow more people to attend. Weddings at Sunday Eucharist would be easier to plan and would add not much more time to the Sunday celebration. These celebrations are becoming more common, even in our own Diocese. Such celebrations have been celebrated at the Cathedral. Many of the Hispanic, Laotian, and Vietnamese weddings are taking place during the Sunday Eucharist. Weddings at Sunday Eucharist permit more people to celebrate and to be reminded of the significance of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Music selections is to be discussed with your musicians and the officiant. Please contact them as soon as possible to discuss appropriate music, its placement at your wedding, and arrangement for your instrumentalist(s) and/or vocalist(s). Your musicians should be prepared and available to play the organ/piano to enhance and lead your family and friends in strong participation as well as lend a prayerful atmosphere at your wedding liturgy. The music you chose should be artistically sound (avoiding poorly written, cheap, trite, super-sentimental, etc. songs). The music should enhance the liturgy. (Note: this is where most popular music fails.) Music should draw people into a deeper expression of faith and prayers and not away from the sacred liturgy. Therefore, music selected for the sacrament of marriage **MUST BE SACRED IN NATURE AND PURPOSE**. We encourage that hymns be chosen that can be sung by the whole assembly as part of your ceremony.

The Mass Acclamations (Gospel Acclamation; Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen, and the Lamb of God) must be sung by your musicians to lead the entire people in these important responses. Parish cantors may be available in the event your vocalist is unfamiliar with these pieces. You may consider paying them a stipend for time. In choosing music, hymns that are appropriate for our church environment and express the sacredness about the marriage, in other words Christian music, are to be used. Music is to be chosen which also allows the faithful gathered to join in responding and singing. Popular music is best saved and more appropriate for the reception. To assist you in selection of readings, prayers, and music, the officiant has a list of possible selections along with a wedding liturgy planning form which is to be completed eight (8) weeks before your wedding.

Marriage programs/Worship Aids may be printed to help your guests follow the ceremony, respond to the prayers, and to sing. You may use the wedding liturgy planning sheet" to help design your program/worship aid. It is suggested that a rough draft be submitted to the officiant to ensure correctness of liturgical order and the inclusion of people's parts.

Rehearsal will be scheduled at which the entire wedding party including the readers, servers, ushers, and personal photographers are expected to be present. Please be prompt! A copy of the marriage license and the program is to be presented to the officiant at the rehearsal.

Decorations/Flowers may be used to help enhance your wedding. Decorations already present in the church used to decorate for a season are not to be altered in any way. Arrangements of any decorations you might like to add are not to detract or interfere with decorations already in the church or interfere with any normal movement within the worship space. Decorations are not to detract from the ritual, especially the vows that will be shared and the marriage covenant that will be entered with God. It is recommended that real and natural (rather than silk or artificial) plants and flowers be used in moderation. Please consult with the pastor if you have any questions. If flowers are used, they may be left in the church for our weekend liturgies.

Bows may be attached to the pews by using string, rubber bands, or other means. No masking tape, Scotch tape, or pins are allowed. Please inform your florist of this in advance.

Candles already in the sanctuary will also be used for the ceremony. No aisle candles are permitted due to the fire hazard. Excessive use of candles, such as candelabra are discouraged due to the space they can take. If candelabras are to be used, they must have the candles sitting in a glass globe and placed so as not to restrict normal movement. A Unity Candle is optional is not technically a part of a Roman Catholic wedding Mass since Communion is the ultimate sign of unity that is to be used.

Rice, confetti, birdseed, and flower pedals are not permitted to be used inside or outside of the church due to environmental hazards and clean up.

Runner is not a requirement for the wedding and is discouraged due to it being superfluous and dangerous.

Pictures: A limited number of pictures may be taken in the church before the wedding (such as the bride and groom at the altar). All picture taking needs to be completed 30 minutes before the wedding ceremony. This is also common courtesy for guests attending the reception. Pictures may be taken during the wedding if done discreetly so as not to interrupt the ceremony. Videotaping may be done from the side aisle or choir loft only. No cameras are allowed in the sanctuary. Bright floodlights are not permitted. No pictures may be taken after a 2:00/2:30 p.m. Saturday wedding. Family members who will be videotaping or taking pictures may be present for the rehearsal so they are aware of the format of the wedding. It is encouraged that photographers and videotapers consult with the priest before the liturgy.

Bridal room: use of bathrooms and/or the parish hall may be used for last minute preparations. The parish house is not to be used.

Church hall may be used before the wedding for gathering and relaxing and for food and pop at no charge/fee. Please leave the hall as you found it. This space may also be reserved [for a fee] for your reception. Please contact the parish office to reserve.

Marian Altar: The couple may present a flower or flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary after communion. This is optional.

Receiving line: we request this to be done at your reception and not in the church since your reception is the most appropriate place for this. The guest book should also be at the reception site. This avoids unnecessary delays at the church. If such a line is desired, a line can be formed outside in front of

the church or in the church entrance in case of inclement weather. The couple is not to greet and usher guests from the pews after the wedding.

Food and beverages are not permitted in the worship space at any time. There is to be NO consumption of alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal and wedding liturgy. Use of all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on the parish grounds and especially in the church building. Inebriated and tipsy grooms, brides, attendants, parents, others are an insult to the liturgy, a desecration to the church, totally inappropriate, and a reason for postponement of the ceremony.

Clean up is to be done immediately after the ceremony by people you have appointed. They should check the Bridal room, pews, sanctuary, etc. for any debris or litter. The church and hall should be left in the same condition it was before the wedding day. Ushers and attendants are appropriate people to appoint.

License is to be brought to the rehearsal in order that initial signatures can be obtained. It is required by the state and needs to be obtained from the Office of the County Clerk and completed one full day before the celebration of the marriage ceremony.

Fees: No set fees are established for weddings. However, to ensure that persons who contribute special time and talent are compensated justly, we urge the bride and groom, in consideration of their means and the extravagance of the wedding in general, to give some thought to the following suggestions:

Officiant: \$5-75

Altar/Mass Servers: \$5-10

Organist: \$50-75 (or per their schedules)

Cantors/Song leaders: \$30-60 (or per their schedules)

Additional musicians: \$30-60 (or per their schedules)

Church expense: There is no charge for the use of the church building for parishioners. \$300 is charged to non-parishioners [grooms and/or brides who have no connection to the parish through previous sacramental celebrations (i.e. baptism) or parents who were or are currently members]. In addition, the use of the Holy Angels Church in Roselle, part of the parish of St. Augustine Parish in Halbur, the cost is \$300 for all weddings to help cover the cost of operation of this building. Our primary concern is that the building is left clean and respected for its purpose.

Altar/Mass Servers need to be boys or girls who have completed at least the fourth grade and are trained servers. They will need to be in the sacristy 30 minutes before the ceremony begins. They are to be present for rehearsal.

Ushers are to be acquainted with the church building's facilities and are to be present well in advance of the ceremony to seat your guests. They are to help direct your guests out after the ceremony. They are also required to remove programs, facial tissues, etc. from pews, aisles, vestibule, etc. after the ceremony. The couple is not to serve as ushers.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Baptismal Certificates need to be acquired. These will be obtained during pre-nuptial preparation by the priest or deacon working with you before preparation is completed.

Confirmation is highly recommended and encouraged but not required for Catholics entering marriage. The celebration of Confirmation before matrimony demonstrates a commitment to the faith and the completion of a person's initiation into the Catholic Church.

Interfaith Marriages: special considerations need to be made and discussed with the priest. There are options available for celebrating such marriages that allow for a holy, joyous, and meaningful ceremony.

Second Marriages: couples where one or both parties have been previously married will require special considerations. These considerations included: obtaining a death certificate for the former spouse or a Decree of Invalidity, additional counseling and preparation, etc.

FOCUS [Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding Study] is a required assessment tool which includes review with a priest or deacon during the pre-nuptial preparation. The priest/deacon with you during the pre-nuptial preparation will provide you additional information. There is a fee for this.

Walking in Love/Called to the Wedding Feast: every engaged couple is required participate in this program sponsored by the Diocese of Sioux City. The priest/deacon with you during the pre-nuptial preparation will provide you additional information. There is a fee for this.

Natural Family Planning is a natural and totally church-approved way to plan pregnancies or to avoid pregnancies. It is morally accepted by all churches. Couples are required to enroll in an NFP class. The priest/deacon with you during the pre-nuptial preparation will provide you additional information. There may be a fee for this.

Plan ahead: since there will be many other considerations such as hiring caterers, printers, seamstresses, etc. Work with a schedule to avoid disappointments. Plan well. A simple wedding ceremony with a few nice things done well, will be more pleasing and prayerful than a ceremony with lots of nice things which are distracting. Primarily, keep calm and work to develop your personal relationship between each other. Take time to spend quietly together. Spend time to deepen your love and knowledge of each other so that you might live a more meaningful and fulfilling life as husband and wife after your wedding day.

REMEMBER:

**A WEDDING IS A DAY;
A MARRIAGE IS A LIFETIME!**