

# St. Matthew Catholic Church



Quinceañera or Sweet 16

Mass Celebration Handbook

Contact: Youth Ministry Office at 210-478-5011

# St. Matthew Church

## QUINCEANERA or SWEET 16 CELEBRATION GUIDELINES

THESE GUIDELINES ARE OFFERED TO ASSIST IN CELEBRATING THE QUINCEAÑERA MASS IN A REVERENT AND RELIGIOUS MANNER WITH PROPER SPIRITUAL PREPARATION.

### 1. **ACTIVE CATHOLIC**

The Quinceañera and her family should be registered and active parishioners, i.e. by attending Mass every Sunday and participating in faith formation, either here at St. Matthew Parish or at another parish of which you are a registered member.

### 2. **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)/FAITH FORMATION**

A. The Quinceañera must be enrolled in Faith Formation or Religious Education classes for at least a year before her Quinceañera celebration. If the Quinceañera attends a private Catholic school, this is counted as receiving religious education classes. The Quinceañera must be actively enrolled and participating in a Faith Formation Program here at St. Matthew or, if not a member of St. Matthew Parish, then a letter of proof of attendance is required from the R. E. Coordinator at their home parish.

B. The Quinceañera must have received the following Sacraments: Baptism, Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Also, the Quinceañera should be preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

C. We highly encourage the Quinceañera and all Catholic participants in her court to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the Celebration. Reconciliation Schedule at St. Matthew is: Wednesdays & Saturdays: 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

### 3. **FEES**

In order to reserve the date, a \$50 non-refundable deposit is required. The remaining balance of the church fee must be paid in full 6 weeks prior to the scheduled event and rehearsal date. NOTE: Payment arrangement can be made upon request. If using a priest from St. Matthew, there is no separate fee for the priest. If one is bringing a priest from outside of our parish, you will be asked to pay an additional \$100 stipend to that visiting priest. The St. Matthew member's fee is \$150. The non-parishioner's fee is \$250.

### 4. **RECEPTION**

St. Matthew's does not allow the rental of parish facilities for Quinceañera or Sweet 16 receptions.

5. **ESSAY**

In preparation of her Quinceañera, the Quinceañera will be asked to:

Write a 1-2 page or 300-word essay explaining why you want a Quinceañera celebration?

The essay should begin first by your discussing the issue of faith in your life. Why is having faith important for you? Who passed on the faith to you? Are you currently active in your faith? What do you do to remain connected to your faith? Do you attend adoration regularly? Do you utilize your sacraments on a regular basis?

Secondly, the essay should more specifically touch on why you wish to have a Quinceañera celebration. How will this special celebration help you continue to grow in their faith? How will you continue to fulfill God's promise and commitment as you enter into adulthood? What is the significance in having this special event in your life?

6. **READINGS**

Plan the Mass with the appropriate readings, such as the First Reading, Responsorial Psalm and Second Reading (Optional), that best suit you for your Quinceañera. Copies of the readings will be provided for you by our Youth Ministry Office. Be sure to make a copy for the readers and give it to them one week before the Quinceañera so they can practice the readings, speaking clearly and loudly.

7. **MUSIC**

With the aid of the Youth Ministry office (a list of musicians is provided in the Appendix of your booklet) the appropriate music may be selected by the Quinceañera. If the musician is not from our list of musicians, the music must be reviewed for approval by the Youth Ministry Office AT LEAST 1-2 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT. You are free to choose appropriate music for the Mass, meaning it must be music that is meant for church worship, not secular. You can choose any song or hymn listed in an official Catholic hymnal, such as Breaking Bread, GIA Hymnal, J.S. Paluch hymnal. St. Matthew does not provide musicians, but names of organists, guitarists, and singer soloists whom you may contact. You can have purely instrumental music or a musician and a singer. Also, please provide a list of the songs that will be used at least one week prior to the Mass.

Music is used at the following times:

Preludes before the Mass begins

Gathering Song

Gloria (*optional*)

Responsorial Psalm: It is preferred that the Responsorial Psalm be sung, but it can be recited.

Gospel Acclamation (*"Alleluia" or "Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ" during Lent*)

Offertory

Mass Acclamations: Holy, Holy; Mystery of Faith, Amen, Lamb of God

The Lord's Prayer (*optional*)

Communion

Presentation of flowers to Our Blessed Mother, Mary (*optional*)

Recessional.

## 8. ATTIRE

The Quinceañera **DOES NOT have to have a LONG FORMAL WHITE DRESS**, however, it is important that her **dress is MODEST**, (shoulders and back must be covered, **while in church**, with a shawl, cape, jacket or wrap/medium to large scarf.) **No LOW CUT or cleavage showing** and if the dress is not formal it may be tea length or it may be cocktail style, hence, just an inch or two above the knee. Ladies, remember you are a reflection of your parents and most importantly, Our Lord. He selected Mary to be the mother of Jesus Christ. She, **Our Blessed Mother, was pure, obedient, and highly respected, reflecting her purity and beauty.** The Quinceañera's family members, sponsors and court, (especially the women or young ladies) should also uphold the modest and respectful dress attire following the same guidelines as mentioned above.

## 9. REHAERSAL

The rehearsal is generally scheduled the day before the event. Everyone participating as a reader or walking in the procession for the Mass should be in attendance for the rehearsal. The rehearsal may not be scheduled if a balance is still remaining and no prior arrangements have been made with the Youth Ministry Office. It is important to **BE PUNCTUAL**. Everyone participating in the Mass must be on time. **NOTE:** At the discretion of the Deacon leading the rehearsal, your rehearsal may be cancelled if you are more than 15 minutes late without prior notification or phone call / communication.

## 10. DAY OF THE QUINCEAÑERA/EVENT

The Bride's Room may be used to dress and prepare for the celebration. Please do not leave any unattended purses, wallets, cell phones, or valuables in the Bride's Room during the Mass. All participants should arrive at least 30 minutes before the Mass begins. At about 5 minutes before the Mass time, the court should be in the Main Foyer where the baptismal font is, ready to process in.

## 11. DECORATIONS

The church does not provide decorations, other than the two main floral arrangements that will be used for the weekend Mass. If fresh or silk floral decorations are to be used on the pews, they must be placed on the pews with a floral hook. **NOTE: Clear TAPE, NAILS, THUMB TACKS or anything sharp that can damage the pews IS NOT PERMITTED.**

## 12. PHOTOGRAPHER

We do allow flash photography. We do not allow the photographer to be in the elevated sanctuary area. If the photographer is moving from one side of the church to the other, we ask that he/she does not walk behind the Quinceañera, but instead go to the back side of the church. We ask that pictures be limited to the main parts of the celebration: during the procession, a couple taken of the different lectors, the Quinceañera during her Prayer of Dedication, those padrinos and madrinan offering gifts to be blessed such as a rosary, prayer book or medallion, those bringing the Offertory gifts of bread and wine, reception of communion for the Quinceañera, when flowers are offered to Mary, the recessional. Please avoid taking too many pictures when no distinct action is taking place during the Mass.

### 13. CELL PHONES

We ask that you and your guests respect the sacredness of the Mass by turning your cell phones off during the celebration of the Quinceañera's Mass.

### 14. PARTICIPATION DURING THE MASS

We expect the Quinceañera, the court and those attending the Mass to join in reciting the responses of the Mass and in the singing of the songs. There should be NO talking during the Mass.

### 15. AFTER THE CELEBRATION

The Quinceañera has about 25 minutes to take pictures. It is recommended that the Quinceañera and her court upon leaving the church enter into the "Cry Room" and wait there for about 5 minutes before heading back to the sanctuary area to begin taking pictures. The priest will be available to take a picture with the Quinceañera. Then pictures may be taken with the court and family. Please note that if your Quinceañera begins at 1 p.m. there may be another one or a wedding at 3 p.m., so you will need to clear the Bride's Room out for the next group. If your Quinceañera begins at 3 p.m., confessions begin at 4:30 p.m. and there will be people lining up for that sacrament; therefore, please keep the volume of talking low. Encourage those not needing to take a picture to either head to the reception or remain in the Main Foyer so as not to distract those preparing to make their confession. Please also clean up any decorations that were brought since we do not have a custodian who cleans the church before the Saturday evening 5:30 p.m. Mass.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

Please notify the YOUTH MINISTRY OFFICE, 210-478-5011 or 210-478-5038, of any updated changes in your personal information, i.e. phone number(s), address, date of event or any cancelations as soon as possible. If we cannot contact you and have made several attempts to communicate with you, we reserve the right to possibly cancel your event.

Youth Ministry Director: Tracy Garcia  
210-478-5011

*The Mass of Thanksgiving is a very special time for the Quinceañera and her family; however, preparation by the Quinceañera is required to make this solemn part of the celebration not only a spiritual celebration, but a beautiful memory to be cherished forever.*

### PLEASE NOTE:

*At the discretion of the Youth Ministry Office, due to time constraints in planning your QUINCEAÑERA event and in taking account the need for the Quinceañera (Honoree) to be active in a faith formation program, we may recommend a service be celebrated on the 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, which would include the same blessings and Mass preparations that take place at a Quinceañera.*