

SACRED HEART PARISH
WEDDING PREPARATION GUIDELINES



*Unless the LORD builds the house,
they labor in vain who build it.*

-Psalm 127:1

Checklist for Couple

- _____ Initial Meeting with Clergy

- _____ FOCCUS Completed/Reviewed with Clergy

- _____ Meet with Marriage Coordinator and Select Date

- _____ Select Mentor Couple

- _____ Meet with Mentor Couple Six Times*

- _____ NFP Intro Course and 5 Follow-Up Sessions*

- _____ Submitted Bride and Groom's Baptismal Certificates

- _____ Dinner with Father (5th Meeting w/Mentor Couple)

- _____ Selected Liturgy Options with Father

- _____ Meet with Clergy, Coordinator, and Mentor Couple

- _____ Paid the Fee for using the Church

- _____ Brought Marriage License to Rehearsal

*Can Occur Simultaneously

SACRED HEART WEDDING PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Sacred Heart Parish congratulates you and assures you of our prayers as you prepare to enter into the sacramental life of Holy Marriage. The following guidelines are to help you prepare for your wedding day:

SCHEDULING

The date and time of the wedding Mass/service should be scheduled by the pastor at least six months before the desired date of your wedding. **In order to have the date reserved for the wedding, the couple must first meet with the pastor or associate, then complete a FOCCUS inventory, and finally meet with a marriage coordinator.** After meeting with the marriage coordinator, the couple may select the date.

Weddings can be scheduled 11:00 AM-5:00 PM on Friday and on Saturday 11:00 AM– 2:00 P.M. If photographs are to be taken after a Saturday wedding, the wedding should not start later than 1:00 P.M. **The church needs to be cleared and cleaned before 3:30 PM for confession.** If the couple desires other times than those listed, such as on Sunday, they can be discussed with the pastor.

A rehearsal, no longer than one hour, is typically scheduled with the pastor or associate the night before the wedding.

FEES

Most Catholic parishes have very similar policies for weddings, which include preparation materials, the use of facilities as well as other fees that go into marriage preparation. The fee schedule is as follows:

- 1.) \$525 for couples who are not parishioners or who are parishioners but who do not contribute financially.
- 2.) \$400 for parishioners who have been registered for at least 3 months and contributing (or who have at least one of the parents still registered and contributing.)
- 3.) \$300 for marriage prep only (wedding elsewhere).

Musicians (payable directly to the musicians):

- 1.) \$200 for our expert organists.
 - 2.) \$80-150 for cantor (depending on music selections)
- **If you choose to use your own musicians, they must be experienced at singing or playing at Catholic Masses. If both organist and cantor are provided by the couple, there is a \$50 bench fee (payable to the music director).

PRE-WEDDING DETAILS

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Marriage Preparation is the time leading up to the wedding. It is a sacred time that will prepare the couple to receive the fullness that God wishes to bestow upon the couple. Below are the list of requirements that the couple will complete in the marriage preparation process:

- Meetings with Priest
- FOCCUS Inventory
- Meeting with Marriage Coordinator
- 6 Meetings with Mentor Couple
- NFP Instruction
- Selecting Liturgical Options

If marriage preparation is done outside of the diocese, please provide the contact information of the clergy member who will be overseeing the marriage preparation process.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP)

As part of your marriage preparation, you will receive an introduction course on Natural Family Planning and 5 follow up meetings. Here in Aberdeen, we are blessed to have several Natural Family Planning instructors through Avera St. Luke's Fertility Care Services.

Please contact Marilyn Wachs to schedule your NFP classes:

Home: (605)-226-2232

Cell: (605)-380-5332

Email: msfike@abe.midco.net

FOCCUS INVENTORY

FOCCUS inventory is a tool designed to help you to learn more about yourselves and your unique relationship. A link to take your inventory will be sent to you shortly after your first meeting with the priest.

MARRIAGE COORDINATOR

The marriage prep coordinators are your 'go-to' people for you and your mentor couple for all things marriage prep. This parish assigned couple will meet with you and your mentors after your initial meeting with Father to coach you through our marriage formation process.

MENTOR COUPLE

A trusted sponsor or mentor couple who walk the path of marriage formation alongside you can serve as an invaluable resource as you prepare to receive the sacrament of matrimony. You will be meeting with your mentor couple approximately once a month for 6 months throughout your engagement. Under our marriage formation process we would like you, as the engaged couple, to prayerfully select your own mentor couple who meet the following criteria:

- They should be a couple you both admire and are comfortable with
- They should be actively practicing their Catholic Faith and attending Church regularly
- They should be married in the Church for at least five years
- You should be able to look at their relationship and say 'I want to have a marriage like that.'
- Preferably they are not an immediate relative unless you both are comfortable with and genuinely admire them

If you are new to town or new to Sacred Heart and cannot think of a mentor couple who fit the above criteria, the parish will provide a list of couples you may choose from.

INFORMATION NEEDED BY PARISH

1. Mass/Service
 - Best Man & Maid of Honor—include their address
 - Music Selection and Musicians
 - Select Readings
 - Select Nuptial Blessing
 - 2 Readers—Should be Catholic
 - 4 Ushers
 - 3 Altar Servers
 - 2 Gift Bearers (Mass Only)
2. Documentation and Fees
 - Baptismal Certificates (by 2 months before wedding, recently issued)
 - Payment of Parish Fees (by 2 weeks before wedding)
 - State Marriage License (within 2 weeks before wedding)

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

It is recommended that your wedding party go to Confession the evening before your wedding. Discuss this with the priest when you meet with him.

LITURGICAL OPTIONS

WEDDING MASS OR WEDDING CEREMONY

When two practicing Catholics marry, they celebrate the Rite of Marriage with a Mass. When a Catholic and a person of another Christian denomination or faith marry, they celebrate the Rite of Marriage with a Wedding Ceremony that includes a Liturgy of the Word and the Celebration of Matrimony.

CHOOSING LITURGICAL OPTIONS

You will receive a booklet filled with different liturgical options. The first option will be the scriptural readings. Take time to carefully consider what Scripture readings reflect where God is calling your relationship. The readers you choose for your ceremony should have experience at reading at Mass and should be catholic..

The booklet also includes two sets of intercessions for you to choose from which will be prayed by one of your lectors.

This booklet also contains different options for your vows (which are called statement of consent). Vows other than those in the booklet are prohibited.

The booklet also contains three nuptial blessings. These are special blessings for newly wed couples given at the ceremony.

If you would like, the priest preparing you can also select these options for you.

ALTAR SERVERS

Sacred Heart provides altar servers for your wedding. If you choose to provide your own servers, they should be experienced servers and must receive the pastor's approval. If they are not from Sacred Heart Parish, they are to meet the priest at least 30 minutes in advance of the wedding to run through the ceremony. It is requested that they wear dress pants and black shoes.

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

The music chosen at Sacred Heart seeks to exemplify the dignity, reverence and joy of the holy sacraments of Marriage and Holy Communion. Secular music or styles are not appropriate for the wedding. The use of recorded music is not permitted. There will be a suggested music list provided to the couple. Any other song not on the list will have to be approved by either the pastor or the associate.

LITURGICAL ADDITIONS

Liturgical actions that are not within the marriage rite of the Church are in general prohibited (such as use of the Unity Candle). Any adaptation to the liturgy, however minor, must be approved by the pastor. Any non-liturgical unity ceremony is not permitted, according to the rites of the Church. For those who desire them, there are liturgical options for the giving of the Arras, Lazo, and Veil.

WEDDING PROGRAM

Many couples wish to prepare a program for their wedding guests. Programs may vary in detail, but should contain at least the order of the Mass or service, the names of those in the wedding party, and the names of the clergy present. References to any hymns in our hymnal or supplement are valuable, as are citations of the Scriptural selections you choose. A brief personal message from you, the couple, might be included on the back of the program.

OUTSIDE CLERGY

Outside Clergy who wish to partake in the wedding ceremony must contact the pastor prior to the wedding. They must be a Priest or Deacon in good standing with their diocese and be able to provide a letter of suitability. If a guest presider is performing the wedding rites, then they must contact the pastor to discuss the way wedding ceremonies are performed here at Sacred Heart. Any request by the guest presider for ceremony-adaptations, however small, must be approved by the pastor.

RING BEARERS AND FLOWER GIRLS

In order to facilitate a reverent wedding, children in the wedding party should be at least 5 years old. Ring bearers and flower girls may not carry signage (ex. "Here comes the bride") or be brought in on carts (such as wagons). Animals are prohibited from being a part of the wedding ceremony as they violate the sacred dignity of the ceremony.

- Flower petals: Any flower petals thrown must be cleaned up immediately following the wedding.
- Wedding Rings: Please do not put the wedding rings on the pillow carried by the ring bearer. The best man should be responsible for the rings.

WEDDING PARTY

Sacred Heart recommends keeping the wedding party size around 5 bridesmaids and 5 groomsmen due to the liturgical space.

WEDDING DAY DETAILS

WEDDING REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal is an ideal time for your wedding party to meet with the priest and to “walk through” the Mass or service. While not as formal as the wedding itself, modest, tasteful clothing is expected at this event, since the rehearsal will be taking place in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament as well. Wedding rehearsal typically are held the night before the wedding between 4 pm and 7 pm. Rehearsals will begin first in the parish hall and then conclude in the Church itself.

Wedding Consultants and personal attendants should be advised that the rehearsal and wedding ceremony are the responsibility of Sacred Heart.

DRESS CODE

Dress should be modest and respectful of the sacred nature of the Church and the sacraments. The following are some guidelines for the wedding party.

BRIDE AND BRIDESMAIDS

Dresses should be modest. Dresses should not be noticeably short or low cut. A shawl or small jacket should be worn over exposed arms and backs. White is the dress color reserved for the bride. Women may wear hats inside the Church. Brides may wear a veil.

GROOM AND GROOMSMEN

Men should at least wear a long-sleeved shirt and tie to the wedding, although a suit is preferred. Male guests do not wear hats to the wedding. “Costume” style tuxedos or accessories are not appropriate for the sacred nature of the wedding ceremony.

DRESS CODE IN GENERAL

Out of respect for the church, sacraments and couple it is encouraged to cover as much as possible any tattoos or body piercings for the wedding ceremony.

CONDUCT WITHIN THE CHURCH

During the rehearsal, photography session, and the wedding itself, you are asked to keep a low volume of voice within the church. Please help children to be respectful within the church. There is no food or drink allowed in the Church itself.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Your wedding day is a celebration of a great sacrament. Although not necessary for the wedding ceremony, floral decorations of some form are recommended.

**No flowers are to be placed on the altar itself or directly next to the Tabernacle. Bows or flowers at the ends of the pews must not be attached with any kind of tape or any other material that may damage the finish. No decorations are to be hung on any of the walls or windows in the church or foyer. Carpet runners for the aisle may not be used.

DRESSING ROOMS

The bride and attendants may use the Bridal/Nursery Room. The groom and groomsmen may use the parish hall. Upon departure, both rooms should appear as they were found. You may use the hall kitchen if you are bringing in sandwiches, beverages, etc... A member of the wedding party should see to it that all rooms are clean and in order before leaving the church.

POST-WEDDING CELEBRATIONS

The throwing of rice, bird seed, or silly string on parish property is not permitted. Bubbles may be used outside, provided the containers are discarded and any mess they make is cleaned up.

RECEIVING LINE

Some people like to greet their guests individually before they leave the church building. Please note that the greeting of guests is not to be done in the church itself. Receiving Lines can be done outside of the church or at the site of the reception.

GUEST BOOK

So as to avoid delays we recommend that your guests sign the guest book at the reception.

ALCOHOL AND SMOKING POLICY

Smoking and alcohol are not permitted on any of the parish's property. Members of the bridal party are not allowed to consume alcohol prior to the marriage ceremony on the day of the wedding as this violates the dignity and validity of the ceremony.

MOBILE DEVICES

Use of cell phones, tablets, and other mobile devices in the Church building itself is not permitted.

PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

Photographers and videographers are welcomed to capture this sacred moment, but must do so that is in accord with the dignity of the sacrament. Thus:

Cameras and photographers are not permitted in the sanctuary.

Photographers may pose the wedding party and families on the sanctuary stairs in front of the altar, and nowhere else in the sanctuary.

The entire wedding ceremony may be recorded/photographed, but in a way that is tasteful. Thus the photographer should avoid taking up prominent places in the church that distract from the liturgy. Flash photography is permitted only during the processional and recessional.

Photographers and Videographers should dress modestly that reflects the dignity of the moment.

****Note:** The couple is responsible for sharing this information with the photographer.

VALUABLES

It is recommended that one person of the wedding party ensures that all purses and valuables are secured during the ceremony and removed after the ceremony. Sacred Heart Parish is not responsible for the loss of any personal belongings.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

PARISH HALL RENTAL

The parish hall is available to rent for wedding rehearsals, receptions, dances, and other gathering events. The hall holds 325 people. Please contact our Parish Office for more information about renting the social hall.

Hall Rental Rates For Parishioners:

Hall Rental: \$125.00 / \$175.00 with kitchen use

\$50 deposit to be paid immediately, balance to be paid by event

For Non-Parishioners:

Hall Rental: \$200.00 / \$250.00 with kitchen use

\$50 deposit to be paid immediately, balance to be paid by event

SACRED HEART CONTACT INFORMATION

Fr. Andrew Dickinson...frandrewdickinson@sfcatholic.org

Fr. Michael Kapperman...frmichaelkapperman@sfcatholic.org

Office Manager...Janean Block...605-225-7065

Director of Evangelization ... Thomas Eskro... 605-225-7065 Ext 110

AN ENGAGEMENT PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come to you today, engaged to be married. Help us begin to discover the principles and power of covenant love and faithfulness. Today, give us the wisdom and guidance necessary to learn truths that will equip us for our life together. Give us strength and efficiency as we plan the logistics of our wedding; help us remember that far beyond that day we have Christian lives to lead together – help us prepare well for the challenges and rewards of our life-long vocation. Show us how to leverage the stresses of this season. Amidst the joy of engagement, help us stay pure of mind and heart and hold close to all virtue. Lord, we invite you and need you to walk with us through this process. Remind us in times of doubt that you are there. Help us imitate your sacrificial love for your Church. May we grow to reflect the beautiful love of your Holy Family and make you and them more known and loved through our thoughts, words and actions. Amen.



**SACRED HEART
PARISH**

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