

*A wedding is a one-day event...
a marriage is a lifetime!*



A Guide for Weddings

*St. Timothy Catholic Church
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MARRIAGE PREPARATION

St. Timothy Catholic Church

INTRODUCTION

Marriage Preparation Team

Pre-marriage Minister
Presider (Priest/Deacon)
Liturgist/Music Director
PREPARE Couples
Wedding Coordinators

Marriage Preparation

Welcome! We believe that marriage is a lifelong commitment. When a man and woman pledge their love, they share Jesus Christ's love with each other and carry out God's plan that the two shall become one. Marriage is not just a brief celebration on a certain day at a specific time. It is to be your chosen ministry of a lifetime that will require some special training and preparation.

The Sacrament of Marriage

God has always been invested in you; soon, as a couple, this special relationship, through the will of Jesus Christ, will be raised to the dignity of a sacrament in the Catholic Church.

More than an exchange of vows, more than the couple's expression of love for each other, the sacrament of marriage is a public sign of God's presence and grace. It is witnessed and celebrated by the Christian community. Your relatives, friends, and neighbors will gather in worship to support and pray for you both on your wedding day and beyond.

The wedding liturgy is a public statement of the faith that will guide and shape your union. It is a shared prayer by you both that God will be with you, guiding you, in your new life together.

For these reasons, the Church has the responsibility to see that couples are well prepared to celebrate the sacrament of marriage and that the liturgy is in harmony with the principles of Christian worship.

Couples must be *free* to marry in the Catholic Church. The bride and /or groom must be registered members / parishioners at the Church of St Timothy.

We at St. Timothy parish dedicate ourselves to assisting couples so that they may live a joy-filled and happy life.

GUIDELINES

I. Length of Preparation for Marriage

Normally a couple begins their marriage preparation process at least six months prior to their wedding date. A one-year preparation is preferred. Formal preparation steps are to be completed by the couple at least thirty days prior to the wedding celebration date.

II. The Preparation Process

The preparation process helps the engaged couple ready themselves for sacramental marriage and includes an explanation of the purpose and goals of the policies for marriage at St. Timothy, which includes seven steps:

1. initial meeting with pre-marriage minister
(Please call the pre-marriage minister at 763.784.1329 to schedule the meeting after you have read this guide.)
2. pre-marriage Inventory (PREPARE)
3. pre-marriage retreat
4. follow-up meeting with pre-marriage minister
5. wedding liturgy workshop
6. meeting with Wedding Presider
7. wedding rehearsal

- **Faith Development:** Couples planning to marry at St. Timothy are welcome to join in our community celebrations of Mass each weekend during their preparation. Within inter-faith marriages, couples are encouraged to learn about each other's faith tradition, and discover how it will enhance the marriage.
- **Paperwork/Forms:** Every couple will need to complete a prenuptial questionnaire and provide baptismal certificates. These baptismal certificates are obtained from your church of baptism. For Catholics, the certificates must be re-issued, no less than six months prior to the date of the wedding. In the case of interfaith marriages, the Catholic party is asked to sign a promise that includes a statement about the education of your future children. The premarriage minister will explain these forms when you meet.
- **Marriage License:** A Minnesota marriage license must be secured from a county license bureau - any Minnesota county. There is a MN discount available to you when the preparation process is documented by St. Timothy. The MN license should be given to the presider at least one month prior to the rehearsal.
- **Inventory:** Sponsor couples have been trained to administer and to share feedback on a premarital inventory, called PREPARE, over 3 or 4 meetings. Scheduling this inventory will be explained at the initial meeting with the premarriage minister.

- **Marriage Preparation Retreat:** Christian marriage is different from secular culture's attitude toward marriage, sex, and love. As Christian marriage is a sacrament — a sign of God's love, It is God's plan for you — a vocation which will foster your unique growth in Christ. Your pre-marriage retreat is a very special opportunity to reflect together on your vocation to Christian marriage. Therefore, we encourage you to make this retreat early in the process of your marriage preparation. Brochures for various options are available from the pre-marriage minister.

- **Meeting with premarriage minister:** A followup meeting with the premarriage minister will be scheduled to review your marriage preparation.

- **Wedding liturgy workshop:** See page 7.

- **Meeting with wedding presider:** A meeting with the presiding priest or deacon is held to talk over concerns or questions, and to discuss your wedding liturgy plans. It is your responsibility to call the presiding priest or deacon and schedule this meeting. Call at least two months before your wedding to schedule this appointment. Please bring with you:

1. Couple retreat certificate
2. Wedding planning sheet from the liturgy workshop
3. Minnesota marriage license
4. Fee balance (*See next paragraph*)

● **Cost:** You are always encouraged to make donations to help defray direct costs of materials, staff time, and church use for your wedding. Your fee for preparation and wedding is \$550; \$200 should be to be submitted at your initial meeting with the premarriage minister. The remainder/balance (*checks made payable to “Church of St. Timothy”*) is to be given to the presider at the followup meeting. Parish musician fees (*checks made payable to the musicians themselves*) are to be turned in to the parish office no later than two weeks before the wedding.

● **Process for Delay in Marriage:** We reserve the right to delay your wedding ceremony if the need for additional counseling or preparation is indicated.

● **Re-marriage:** The preparation for re-marriage should follow the timelines of the preceding policy and include the following:

- Procuring an annulment from the Church when there has been a civil divorce.
- Addressing grief issues and closure of first marriage.
- Counseling as specified on the declaration of annulment.
- Dealing with step-parenting and blended family issues, if applicable.

III. The Wedding

Wedding liturgy workshop: The Church is strengthened by the sacramental bond you share. We rejoice in and celebrate the sacredness and beauty of your commitment to one another. In the planning for your wedding, St. Timothy's Church follows the guidelines on the wedding liturgy as outlined in the Archdiocese's document *When Christians Marry*. One emphasis in this document is simplicity.

The purpose of the Wedding liturgy workshop is to help you plan a meaningful celebration of the sacrament of Christian marriage. You will discuss the options available within the liturgy for prayers, rituals, Scripture readings, music, and décor — all of which can help make your wedding a prayerful occasion for you and all those present.

Plan to attend the workshop at least four to six months prior to your wedding — and before making liturgy plans. Call the parish office at 763.784.1329 to register. If, for any reason, you are unable to make this scheduled meeting, please call the parish office prior to the meeting.

Types of Services: The rites of the Catholic Church provide two options in celebrating Christian Marriage Ceremony — within Mass or without Mass.

When two Catholics marry, a nuptial Mass is included in the ceremony. When either the bride or groom is not Catholic, a wedding ceremony (without Mass) will be celebrated.

Musicians: The liturgist will assist the couple in arranging for a parish cantor (vocalist) and accompanist (pianist and/or organist). Other instrumentalists or other soloists may perform a special song or songs, if desired, subject to approval by the liturgist. Fees for the musicians will also be discussed at the workshop.

Music: Music selection must be appropriate for worship and should encourage the active participation of the community in singing. For instance, the Lord's Prayer is spoken as an act of community worship. Other musical considerations: "Here Comes the Bride" is not used because of its commercial use and because of the secular nature of the opera it comes from. Additionally, vocal solos, if used, should have texts with a definite Christian emphasis.

Décor: Depending on the particular liturgical season, the church will have appropriate flowers, banners, and other decorations to highlight the season. These decorations remain in place for all sacramental celebrations, including weddings.

Lectors: You will be asked to choose one, two, or three people who can effectively proclaim the Word of God. It is necessary that they be prepared with their readings for rehearsal night. They will be asked to practice with the microphone at the rehearsal.

Ushers: Persons selected as ushers should be capable of welcoming people and caring for their needs before, during, and after the service. A part of their responsibility will be to remove items personal to the bridal party after the ceremony, e.g. programs, unity candle, etc.

Wedding Rehearsal: The Wedding Coordinator will conduct your rehearsal and coordinate the wedding ceremony.

Saturday wedding rehearsals are on Friday at 6:00 p.m.

Friday wedding rehearsals are on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

Conflicts require special scheduling.

Please be on time and allow 60 - 90 minutes for your rehearsal.

Wedding Liturgy:

The Place: Weddings must take place within a consecrated church or chapel building — not outside. Since all couples who intend to marry are adults, they are expected to be registered and supporting members of their parish. For a Catholic to be validly married, it is necessary to see a priest/deacon about the marriage. Even in those cases when the marriage is to be in the church of another faith, your Catholic pastor must be consulted and the necessary dispensations obtained. To neglect to do this would make the marriage invalid in the eyes of the Church and prevent you from receiving the Sacraments of the Church.

The Time/Date: Weddings are scheduled on Friday evenings at 6:00 and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Because of the nature of the season, no weddings will be celebrated during Lent. Please check with the priest/deacon BEFORE you set a date. Each couple normally has the use of the church for three hours, beginning 90 minutes before the wedding is scheduled. Please abide by this schedule. The bride's and groom's rooms will be available for use during this time.

Clergy: Normally, the parish priest or deacon of this parish will preside at your marriages. We will be happy to assist if the family wishes another Catholic clergyman to preside at (witness) the marriage. If one of the parties is not Catholic, we will welcome his/her minister's participation. It is customary to offer a stipend to the clergy officiating at a wedding ceremony. The amount of the stipend is discretionary.

Photography: Since the church is a house of worship and prayer, we ask for reverence and respect in the taking of photographs. Flash photography is allowed only during the processional and recessional, and **NOT** during the ceremony. You may want to make a note of this in your program.

Formal wedding pictures may be taken before and after the ceremony, according to the time schedule. For the 2:30 p.m. wedding, pictures should be completed by 4:00 p.m. in order not to disturb those present for the next celebration. No sanctuary furnishings should be moved without the permission of the liturgist. The altar is not to be used as a resting place for any articles.

Video recording of the wedding ceremony should be done with a fixed camera, using available light only. The person recording must consult ahead of time with the wedding coordinator for direction.

Candles: All candles should be restricted to the altar area. If candles are used, please take precautions to prevent wax from dripping on the floor. The couple may choose a candle-lighting ceremony if they wish. Please discuss this with the liturgist.

Aisle cloth and flowers: For safety and liability reasons, an aisle cloth is not to be used. Pew bows may be secured with rubber bands. Please do not use tape or clips. The liturgist should be consulted about the seasonal decorations in the church. Flowers are often present as part of these parish decorations. Seasonal decorations are to remain in place. We ask that real flowers be used in the sanctuary and not be placed where they might block visibility or interfere with liturgical actions. All decorations must be removed from the church immediately after the wedding unless you intend to leave them for church use. We suggest that couples who are being married in our church on the same weekend consult with each other on the possibility of sharing flowers and splitting the cost.

Alcohol/mood-altering chemicals, smoking, firearms are not allowed anywhere in the church complex or on the church grounds, and will likely result in a need to postpone your ceremony.

Program: Normally, people who attend your wedding will benefit from use of a program. It is a practical aid which facilitates participation. Contact the liturgist about producing this.

Rice, flowers, bird seed, confetti, Silly String: These are **NOT** allowed at Saint Timothy's. Please inform your wedding party.

Cleanup: When you choose to bring food and non-alcoholic beverages, please confine them to the bride's and groom's rooms. You are responsible for the removal of all wedding decorations, cleaning up the bride's and groom's rooms, and removal of such things as flower boxes, film packages, and programs. Please designate someone for this task. Wedding couples will be assessed if additional cleanup is required.

Protect Your Valuables: St. Timothy Church is a building with free access to outsiders during celebrations such as your wedding. For this reason we cannot accept responsibility for personal possessions left unattended in the rooms by members of your wedding party, relatives, and friends. Please arrange for someone to watch your valuables.

We look forward to working with you, preparing for your marriage, and planning your wedding liturgy. If you have questions in any of these areas, we would be happy to talk them over with you.

— St. Timothy Marriage Preparation Team

(Revised May 2018)

Checklist:

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Initial intake Meeting Date: _____ Time: _____

PREPARE Meetings:

#1 date: _____

#2 date: _____

#3 date: _____

#4 date: _____

Pre-marriage Retreat Date: _____

Pre-marriage Retreat location: _____

St Timothy Wedding Fees paid: _____

Liturgy Prep Meeting Date: _____ Time: _____

Baptismal Certificates: *given to St Timothy (6-mos)* _____

Final meeting with Presider Date: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Wedding Day, early arrival Time _____

Special: _____
