



Preparing for Your Wedding

Christ King & St. Bernard Parishes

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Welcome & Congratulations!!

We are honored to be able to accompany you on one of the most exciting and important journeys of your life!

It is natural to have questions about your wedding and about the marriage preparation process. This booklet is designed to provide helpful information about weddings at Christ King and St. Bernard Parishes.

Planning your wedding will occupy much of your attention in the coming months, but more important is your preparation for living out the covenant of marriage you celebrate on that day! We urge you and your families to pray together regularly throughout this important time of planning and preparation.

We are eager to support you as you begin your life together. We pray that your marriage preparation and wedding experience will be rewarding!

God bless you—

The Clergy and Staff of Christ King & St. Bernard Parishes

Frequently-Asked Questions

Why marry “in the Church?”: In the Roman Catholic Church, marriage is a Sacrament. A Sacrament is a holy sign and instrument of grace. By marrying in the Catholic Church, you are inviting Jesus Christ to share in your lives. Marriage then becomes a sacred relationship, with God as its author, Jesus as its model, and the Church itself as the guardian of your marriage.

Because it is a reflection of Christ and his church, marrying “in church” refers not only to the building where the ceremony takes place. The marriage ceremony is a personal but not a private event. It is a celebration for the entire community with specific rituals and traditions.

Why must we participate in “Marriage Preparation?” The Church takes seriously the request to witness a couple’s marriage. Therefore, the Church requires preparation before marriage.

Christ King and St. Bernard Parishes follow the *Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage* endorsed by the Bishops of Wisconsin. The process includes discussion with the priest and others on topics including maturity, preparedness, communication, and faith commitment. This process—outlined later in this booklet and explained by the priest at your initial meeting—is not designed to create obstacles that need to be conquered, but to help you form a healthy and lasting union through careful, sincere preparation.

Why are we asked to register as members of a parish? Marrying within the Church presumes one’s involvement in the Church or one’s desire to become involved once again. We are excited to welcome individuals who have fallen away from an active practice of the faith. At Christ King and Saint Bernard, we welcome, without judgment, all who are sincere. All we ask is a desire to start a journey of adult, intentional discipleship. A basic expectation of all adult Catholics is to join a Catholic parish and to attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation.

Please know that we are companions on your journey. If you are sincere in your desire to fall in love with Jesus Christ, the priest preparing you and our entire staff is eager to help! Our earnest desire is that your marriage will serve as a powerful witness of the love of God expressed through your active participation in your parish.

How much “lead time” do we need to prepare? In this day and age, schedules are hectic and the availability of the priest is limited. At least six months (*ideally one year*) advance notice is recommended for a wedding.

Timeline Checklist

Following your meeting with the priest to initiate wedding plans, you'll need to:

- ❑ Go to www.johnpaul2center.org and register to attend a Marriage Preparation Day OR Conference.
- ❑ Together read and discuss *In Perfect Union*. Fill out and return acknowledgment statement. (*inside back cover*)
- ❑ Meet with a FOCCUS Couple. The assigned couple will call you, usually 6-8 months before your wedding. (*You will fill out the FOCCUS intake form during your first meeting with the priest.*)
- ❑ Six months before the wedding: Catholics must request a newly issued baptismal certificate, with sacramental notations, from the church of baptism. Non-Catholics may submit a photocopy of their original certificate.
- ❑ Contact Director of Liturgical Music (*414-258-2604, ex 27*) as soon as possible to make an appointment for planning.
- ❑ Make your liturgy selections from the provided *Together For Life* book. Then make an appointment with Father to discuss these selections and to make final preparation for your ceremony.
- ❑ Before your program is printed, submit it to the Director of Liturgy to proof-read: pernicem@christkingparish.org.
- ❑ No more than 30 days, but no less than five days before your wedding, apply for your marriage license. Bring this to the wedding rehearsal.
- ❑ Fees for the church/priest and musicians should be received at the parish office approximately two weeks before your wedding.
- ❑ (*for Catholics*) Before your wedding day, consider receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You can find opportunities listed in the bulletin.

Planning Your Liturgy

- ◆ the Celebrant of the Ceremony
- ◆ Planning the Marriage Rite
- ◆ the Wedding Party, Involving Family and Friends in the Ceremony

The decision to enter into marriage demands adult maturity. All preparation, plans, and music choices will be discussed only with you, rather than parents, friends, and wedding coordinators.

Church law provides that it is the right and responsibility of the pastor to officiate at all weddings. The pastor is willing to delegate this responsibility to the parish's associate pastor or to a family member or friend who is a priest. If the couple requests, a priest-friend may also deliver the wedding homily.

At your initial meeting with the Parish priest, you were given a liturgy planning guide: *Together For Life*. The guide will include options for Scripture and prayers of the Marriage Rite.

In choosing the scripture passages for your celebration, know that the entire Bible is a resource for you. The selections given in the planning guide are only a starting point.

In addition to choosing bridesmaids and groomsmen, consider inviting one or two friends or family members to proclaim the First and Second Readings and offer the Prayer of the Faithful.

You will be asked if you would like to celebrate a Nuptial Mass or a Marriage Service. A Marriage Service differs from a Mass in that it does not include the Liturgy of the Eucharist or the Communion Rite.

If you will be celebrating a Nuptial Mass, two friends may be invited to present the gifts of bread and wine. In addition, two friends may be invited to offer the cup at communion time. (*Ordinarily these friends should already be communion ministers in their own parishes.*)

If you wish to include children in the wedding party (*flower girl or ring bearer*) please be sure they are mature enough to assume their responsibilities. Ordinarily we recommend that children be at least four years old.

Appropriate Dress

- ◆ for the Wedding Party
- ◆ for Mass Participants

There is no hard-and fast rule regarding attire for the bride and her bridesmaids. However, keep in mind that current bridal fashions do not always take into account the sacred nature of the Sacrament. Remember that marriage is a Sacrament of the Church and that we wish to convey dignity throughout your wedding liturgy. Strapless and extremely low-cut gowns often divert attention from the solemnity of the occasion.

Be aware that our church floor slopes downward from the back of the church toward the altar. This may be something that you will want to consider when choosing footwear for yourself and your bridesmaids.

Please note that tuxedos for the gentleman in the wedding party are not required. A dignified suit works very well as an alternative.

All participants in the ceremony, (*readers, gift bearers, even the photographers,*) should be dressed appropriately for the occasion. Again, the attention should be on the dignity of the ceremony, not on the inappropriate attire of one of the participants. It is your responsibility to convey this information to all involved.

Music

- ◆ Cantors Soloists, Instrumentalists
- ◆ Musical Aspects of the Liturgy
- ◆ Choosing your Musical Selections

Marriage is a holy and solemn sacrament. Therefore the entirety of the marriage ceremony must serve to support the faith and spirit of the community. The Director of Liturgical Music will guide you in the selection of the music.

You should schedule a meeting with the Director of Liturgical Music FOUR months before your wedding: 414-258-2604 ex. 27 or lievenb@christkingparish.org.

During the wedding service or Mass, all songs are to be either psalms (*from the Book of Psalms*) canticles, hymns or prayers.

The Director of Liturgical Music will serve as principle musician for your ceremony. Guest instrumentalists (*trumpets, flutes, strings, etc.*) may also be employed. Please contact the Director of Liturgical Music for more information

You will need a cantor for your wedding ceremony. Typically the Director of Liturgical Music serves as the cantor, but if you like, for an additional fee, you can employ a separate cantor.

Some couples have a family friend or relative who is a trained singer and who would like to take a special part in the wedding liturgy. This talented individual doesn't need to be ignored: you may arrange to have this person sing a solo as a part of your wedding ceremony.

It is the role of the Director of Liturgical Music to see that all music conforms to the musical, liturgical and pastoral principles set forth in *Sing to the Lord*, a document of the U.S. Bishops, and the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*.

Musical portions of the wedding liturgy within the Mass may include:

Prelude (*parents and grandparents are seated at this time*)
Processional (*one or two pieces for the bridal party*)
Responsorial Psalm
Gospel Acclamation
Preparation of Gifts
Eucharistic Acclamations
Communion Procession
Recessional

Some special musical guidelines:

- ◆ All music for the ceremony must be sacred in nature.
- ◆ Instrumental and vocal music must remind us of our relationship with God and the great gift of love shared and witnessed by you as a couple.
- ◆ Recorded music or accompaniment is not permissible.

Environment & Decorations

- ◆ General Guidelines
- ◆ Aisle Runner
- ◆ Flowers

As with music, decorations must be appropriate for a Catholic Mass and not place too great a demand on time and space.

Although it is unnecessary and might prove to be a trip-hazard, you are allowed to use an aisle runner at Christ King. If you choose to use one, the length of the aisle is 135 feet.

Flowers add color and a festive atmosphere to the wedding celebration but should not overwhelm the space. On the other hand, Christ King and St. Bernard are very large buildings, and an arrangement that would be appropriately sized for your dining room table would be dwarfed in church.

Flowers must not be placed on the altar, or obstruct the presider's movement around the sanctuary.

Flowers and/or bows may be attached to ends of pews , but tape may not be used to do so. Ask us for suggestions of how to accomplish this!

It is the sole responsibility of the florist and/or wedding party to remove the runner and any flowers or decorations brought onto the premises.

It is understood that all decorations already in place as part of the worship environment will remain in place.

Special Decorating guidelines:

- ◆ Please don't throw rice, birdseed or flower petals. These ancient fertility rites are inappropriate, messy and hazardous to those attending Mass later in the day (*especially our elderly*).
- ◆ Decorations may not be placed on or above the level of the altar, or positioned so that they obstruct the view of the congregation.
- ◆ Tape is not allowed on any wooden surface.
- ◆ Please ask questions when in doubt. Like all churches, Christ King and St. Bernard are unique. Something that works in another church may not be appropriate here. We'd much rather make you aware of potential problems in advance than have to address them on the day of the ceremony.
- ◆ Additional candles and candlesticks not currently being used in church may be rented for a nominal fee.
- ◆ The parish staff will make final decisions in regard to all decorations, but we are happy to work with you and try to honor your requests!

Programs & Orders of Worship

The Director of Liturgy can provide you with the order of the service to be included in the program and samples of wedding programs.

For no additional fee, we are able to assemble a tri-fold Order of Worship for your celebration. If you opt to print your own, we recommend that the Director of Liturgy proof read your program before it is printed. You will also want to share the outline of your program with the presider.

Photography

During the wedding liturgy, photographers and videographers should confine their activities to the body of the church. They are not permitted in the sanctuary or sacristy. After the procession, they are not to be anywhere where they might block the view of the assembly.

You are paying a lot of money for a photographer and videographer, feel free to tell them how they should dress! These people should be considered members of the wedding party and should dress accordingly.

Posed pictures on the front steps of the church or before the altar may be taken before the wedding once the previous wedding party has finished, or after the wedding up to 90 minutes after the scheduled starting time of your wedding, unless there is another wedding immediately following your ceremony. A coordinator to keep track of time may be helpful.

Photographers and videographers are welcome to use the balcony, but consult the musicians in advance.

It is your responsibility to communicate these guidelines to the professionals doing your photography.

Times & Places

- ◆ Rehearsal and Ceremony: Who Makes the Decisions
- ◆ Arrival at Church
- ◆ The Bride's Room
- ◆ Clean-Up Responsibilities
- ◆ Receiving Lines

During the course of planning your wedding liturgy, the two of you will be meeting with the priest or presider and the Director of Liturgical Music to make decisions about your celebration.

If a private wedding consultant is employed, please keep in mind that the Church ceremony is not under the direction of the consultant. The celebrant will lead the rehearsal and officiate at the ceremony with the advice of only the bride and groom.

We advise you to arrive at the church one hour prior to the start of your wedding. Please let us know if you plan to arrive sooner. Before the start of the wedding, the bride's room—located opposite the north choir loft stairs—is available to you. It is your responsibility to keep the room clean and remove all personal property and litter. The bride's room and the church must be ready for the next celebration, which may follow immediately.

The groom and groomsmen may use the parish center before the wedding, going to their places ten to fifteen minutes before the ceremony begins.

In order to maintain your wedding timeline, we ask that all is ready for the procession to begin at the scheduled time. This may require last minute or late guests to seat themselves after the procession has taken place.

While not forbidden, it is strongly suggested that a receiving line not take place at church but rather at the reception.

Fees & Obligations

There is never a “charge” for the celebration of the Sacraments. We simply ask you to consider the central importance of the liturgical celebration. Faithful parishioners contribute sacrificially to construct and maintain our beautiful churches, pay utility costs and staff salaries which benefit you during the preparation process and on the day of your wedding. Therefore, we suggest the following donations, which we hope you consider reasonable in light of your other wedding expenses:

Priest:	\$100.00
Musician:	\$200.00
Church:	\$300.00 <i>(includes FOCCUS fee and stipend)</i>

For non-contributing members or non-members, we encourage you to consider an additional donation to help cover costs.

Music Fees:

A guest musician, relative or friend of the bridal couple may participate in appropriate portions of the wedding service, but this must be okayed by the Director of Liturgical Music. Soloists and musicians are not present at the rehearsal.

At a couple's request, a cantor and additional instrumentalists may be hired. These individuals charge their own fees.

Payment with checks made out to all individuals involved should be turned in at the parish office approximately two weeks before the wedding.

Always know that in cases of serious financial need, the fees may be reduced.

Never hesitate to discuss your options with the priest!

Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion. A wedding is a wonderful opportunity to gather as family and friends. We come from different faith backgrounds, differences the Catholic Church respects and hopes to mend through the hard work that is necessary but cannot be overlooked. The Eucharist is an expression both of invisible and visible communion among believers. Receiving the Eucharist presupposes that communion already exists; a communion which it seeks to consolidate and bring to perfection. The following, provided by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (1996), provides a roadmap when it comes to reception of the Eucharist. If you are interested in learning more about the Catholic faith, do not hesitate to chat with the priest during the planning process or after the wedding. We'd love to answer any questions you may have.

For Catholics. As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

For Our Fellow Christians. We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (*Jn 17:21*).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 §4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of Communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 §3).

For Those Not Receiving Holy Communion. All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

For Non-Christians. We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.

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