

Wedding Guide for Saint Patrick Church

When the Church calls marriage a “sacrament”, she recognizes that the exclusive, permanent and fruitful love of husband and wife are a reflection of the love Christ bears for the Church. The wedding ceremony initiates that union of conjugal love, and draws its importance from the sacredness of the shared life that is called marriage.

I. Church Decoration

Wedding decorations should reflect the solemnity of the service and take into account the liturgical season and paraments that are currently in use in the Church.

1. The floral decorations are to be live flowers.
2. All pew markers must be attached to the pew securely, but not with tape or other items that may damage the pew, walls, or floor.
3. Aisle runners and archways are not permitted.
4. If candelabras are used, they must have enclosures to protect the flame and drip-plates to collect excess wax. These items may be placed on either side of the sanctuary where they will not cause obstructions to movement.
5. No torches may be used at the end of the pews.
6. It is the responsibility of the florist and the wedding party to remove all floral and other decorations from the church after the wedding.
7. The use of rice, flower petals, confetti, etc., is not allowed in Church or on the Church grounds.
8. No food or drink of any kind is allowed in or around the Church and its grounds.

II. Music

The couple is responsible for hiring musicians. Only sacred music is allowed at the ceremony, and needs to be cleared by the pastor. This should be done as soon as possible, to avoid last minute changes.

III. Bridal Attendants

1. The number of bridal attendants should conform to local customs, namely between four and seven. However, only the best man and maid of honor are permitted to enter the sanctuary.
2. The bridal attendants’ attire should be modest and convey the respect that is due in church.

IV. Lectors and Gift Bearers

1. The bride and groom may ask one or two persons to serve as lectors for their wedding. These persons are to be practicing Catholics familiar with reading in church.
2. The bride and groom may ask two or more persons to serve as gift bearers for their wedding. These persons are to be practicing Catholics.

V. Unity Candle

The unity candle is not part of the Catholic marriage rite. It may be used at the reception.

VI. Photography/Videography

1. There may be only one official still photographer with a hand-held camera at the wedding ceremony.
2. There may be only one videographer with a self-contained, battery operated shoulder camera or camera tripod at the wedding ceremony.

3. The photographer and videographer may stand in the nave as well as in side sacristy near the sanctuary, entering and exiting from outside the church.
4. Out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament, group photography both before or after the wedding must be discreet, quiet, reverent, and brief.
5. Photography during the consecration (Liturgy of the Eucharist) is not allowed.
6. Flash photography of musicians is not allowed.
7. Photographers and videographers are to be properly dressed when working in the church.
8. Photographers should check with the celebrant before the wedding for any additional instructions. The photographer and videographer must adhere to these guidelines.

VII. Scheduling of Weddings

1. Friday evening weddings are scheduled between 6 and 7 p.m. Saturday weddings may be scheduled during the day between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday evening weddings may be scheduled between 6 and 7 p.m. The wedding will begin on time.
2. Rehearsals are scheduled Monday-Thursday evenings between 6 and 7 p.m. Rehearsals will begin on time.
3. Weddings will not be scheduled from December 17th through December 25th of any given year.
4. Weddings will not be scheduled during the Fifth and Sixth weeks of Lent.
5. Weddings will not be scheduled on the following holy days of obligation or feast days: Ash Wednesday, the Assumption, the Ascension, All Saints, All Souls, Immaculate Conception, St. Patrick.

VIII. When the Rite of Marriage will be celebrated without a nuptial Mass

1. Marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic will be celebrated using the simple rite of marriage. A nuptial Mass will not be celebrated.
2. St. Patrick Parish does not offer the option of a nuptial Mass if the couple is living together before marriage. Cohabiting couples are offered the rite of marriage outside of Mass, which consists of the Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Marriage.
3. If one or both parties to be married do not frequent Church on a regular basis, the ceremony will consist of the Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Marriage.

IX. Visiting Clergy

Couples wishing to have a visiting clergy member officiate must discuss this with the pastor prior to inviting and making arrangements with the visiting priest. Couples and visiting clergy are bound by these policies.

X. Church use by non-parishioners

When out-of-parish individuals use the church for their wedding, they will normally provide for a presider of their choosing, who will be responsible for all marriage preparation. All pre-nuptial paperwork is to be completed and delivered to St. Patrick at least two weeks before the wedding.

XI. Fee Schedule

- For non-members of St. Patrick Parish: \$500
- Sacristan (mandatory): \$100

These fees are payable upon reserving the Church. The member status of the groom, bride, or parents of either must already be established by a census record or residence within the parish when the first inquiry is made about setting the date for the wedding.

No parishioner will be denied use of the Church for the sacrament of marriage or any other sacrament due to financial constraints.

XII. Marriage license

A marriage license must be obtained from the parish Clerk of Court no more than 30 days and no fewer than 3 days before the wedding. The marriage license is valid for 30 days from the date of issuance. Both parties will need birth certificates and social security numbers. For further information, including fees, contact a clerk of court office in the State of Louisiana. Without a license, a wedding cannot take place.

XIII. Marriage preparation requirements

1. A couple desiring to be married is expected to contact the celebrant at least six (6) months prior to the proposed date of their wedding.
2. Both parties, if Christian, need certificates of Baptism. Catholics need baptismal certificates issued by the Church of Baptism within the past six months.
3. The bride and groom must fill out a pre-nuptial questionnaire with their celebrant on their personal status and marital convictions.
4. The wedding may be delayed for any one of the following reasons: 1) non-practice of the Catholic faith by either party with no evidence of an intention of practicing the faith; 2) lack of readiness or maturity for marriage; 3) lack of appreciation for the spiritual and sacramental aspects of the marriage; 4) refusal to cooperate with the marriage preparation guidelines.
5. Every couple desiring to be married at St. Patrick must attend one of the marriage preparation programs approved by the Diocese of Lafayette. These are programs that stress communication and the sharing of values and vision to promote a fruitful and successful marriage.

This guide is not exhaustive. Other questions may be presented to the pastor, and they will be resolved using a common sense approach.

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