

Wedding Guide for Saint Patrick Church

A. Church capacity

The maximum capacity of St Patrick's Church is 200 people, when seated shoulder-to-shoulder. Only musicians and photographers are allowed access to the choir loft.

B. 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. Floral decorations may be live or artificial.
2. All pew markers must be attached to the pew securely, but not with tape or other items that could damage the pew, walls, or floor.
3. Aisle runners and archways are not permitted.
4. No torches or candles may be used at the end of the pews.
5. Nothing may be placed on the floor of the aisles.
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 and to ensure the tidiness of the space upon removal.
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.

C. 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. St Patrick's has organists and vocalists who may be available for the wedding. They establish their own fees and schedules.

D. Wedding attendants

1. The number of wedding attendants should conform to local customs. However, only the best man and maid of honor (official witnesses) are permitted to enter the sanctuary.
2. The wedding attendants' attire should be modest and convey the respect that is due in church.

E. 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.

F. Unity candle

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

G. Photography/videography

1. There may be only one official photographer at the wedding ceremony.
2. There may be only one videographer at the wedding ceremony.
3. The photographer and videographer may stand in the nave as well as in the 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.

H. Scheduling 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 typically scheduled Monday-Friday evenings between 6 and 7 p.m. Rehearsals will begin on time.
3. Weddings will not be scheduled from December 21st through December 26th 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 (August 15), the Ascension, All Saints (November 1), All Souls (November 2), Immaculate Conception (December 8), and St Patrick's Day (March 17).

I. Access to the premises

1. The access period allows time for decoration, floral delivery, and set up.
2. For Saturday evening weddings, the premises may be accessed no earlier than 5:30 p.m.
3. For all other weddings, the premises may be accessed one hour before the start time.
4. Within one hour after the end of the wedding ceremony, the wedding party and all guests must have left the premises. This one-hour period allows for photography, removal of decorations, and tidying the spaces used.
5. St. Patrick's is not responsible for any items left behind on its premises.

J. 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.

K. 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.

L. Church use by non-parishioners

When non-parishioners 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's at least two weeks before the wedding.

M. Fee schedule

To schedule a wedding at St Patrick Church, the fee is \$1,000. For parishioners, whether territorial or registered, and for the children of registered parishioners, the fee is reduced to \$200.

The church cannot be reserved until these fees are paid in full. The registered parishioner status of the groom, bride, or parents of either must already be established by a census record within the parish at least six months prior to the first inquiry about setting a 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.

N. Wedding sacristan

The wedding sacristan is an employee or volunteer of St Patrick Church who ensures access to and use of the church (opening and closing, lights, heating/cooling), sets up the sanctuary for the rehearsal and wedding ceremony, and shows the wedding party which spaces are available for their use. The wedding sacristan ensures that the celebrant (priest or deacon) has everything he needs for the wedding liturgy and that the church is properly set up for the wedding ceremony. It is the wedding sacristan's responsibility to ensure that the wedding guidelines herein established are followed. The wedding party and all guests are to treat the wedding sacristan with respect and kindness.

The wedding sacristan is not a wedding coordinator and is not responsible for any aspect of the wedding ceremony itself. The wedding sacristan will not decorate, prompt processions, or safeguard personal items.

O. Marriage license

A marriage license must be obtained from a parish clerk of court no more than thirty (30) days and no fewer than twenty-four (24) hours before the wedding. The marriage license is valid for thirty (30) days from the date of issuance. For further information, including fees, contact a clerk of court office in the State of Louisiana. Without a license, a wedding cannot take place.

P. 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 concerning 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's 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 commonsense approach.

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