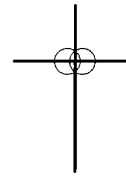


NOTES

Guidelines for Marriage Preparation and Weddings at Holy Family Catholic Church Copperas Cove



Your wedding should be a happy and meaningful celebration. We hope these guidelines will help you prepare for a life-long commitment of love. A wedding day is merely the beginning of a Christian sacrament of marriage - an occasion we hope to make easier by these instructions. Share these guidelines with your future spouse, and together begin your life journey.

Here are a few requirements for a Catholic marriage: You or your future spouse must belong to and participate at a Catholic parish. An active faith is the foundation for a sacramental marriage.

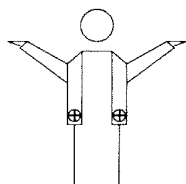
If Catholic, you must provide a Baptismal Certificate issued no more than 6 months before the wedding, to verify your freedom to marry. When requesting a Baptismal Certificate, please ask that notations be included.

If non-Catholic, you must demonstrate that no previous marriages have existed. A form provided by the Church must be completed and signed by a witness--preferably a parent or close relative. Additional arrangements with a priest or deacon will be necessary if either party has been previously married.

If either of you is non-Catholic, a permission for mixed marriage or dispensation for disparity of worship is necessary. This will be explained by the priest or deacon. He will also be glad to answer questions on Catholic teachings and practices.

Finally, obtain a civil marriage license from the county office and present it to the parish secretary or to the priest or deacon no later than one day prior to the wedding. When the license is issued it is valid for 30 days, but may not be used until 3 days after it is issued.

To have adequate time for wedding preparations you should contact the Church office at least six months before your intended wedding date. To arrange for your wedding preparations, please telephone the Holy Family Church office at 254-547-3735 between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM on weekdays. At this time you may also make arrangements to meet with a priest or deacon.

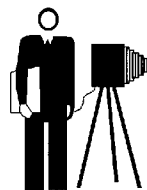


Meetings with a priest or deacon

The priest or deacon will be pleased to help in your marriage preparation. Any questions you have concerning these marriage guidelines can be answered when you meet. Bring a calendar to your first meeting since the arrangements for future meetings may be made on this occasion. A pre-nuptial questionnaire for gathering your names, addresses, birthdates, religions, and sacramental backgrounds will also be completed at one of these sessions. The priest or deacon will describe the preparation program and other recommendations for your marriage preparation.

You are probably in a hurry to get started, so let's look at the marriage preparation program. Completing the program early is strongly encouraged. This way, the busy preparation for a wedding ceremony will not interfere with the pleasure of your spiritual growth together.

Couples are normally asked to attend an Engaged Encounter Program sponsored by the Diocese of Austin. This program meets on one weekend a month at various places throughout the diocese. It consists of discussions of many topics pertaining to married life and time for couples to reflect and talk about these relevant issues. You may call the church office to find out where and when the Program meets. Other options are available if necessary. Please speak with the priest or deacon.



Photographer Guidelines

Your photographers and videographers are welcome if they respect the sacramental nature of the wedding ceremony. To clarify the specific rules, arrange a meeting between the presiding priest or deacon and the photographer at the rehearsal or before the wedding.

Photographers may not enter the sanctuary at any time, and flashbulbs or other bright lights are prohibited during the ceremony. Most modern equipment is operable in low-light conditions. Again, we encourage you to discuss options with the Presidier.

Posed photographs may be taken before or after the wedding ceremony if time permits. Since posing interferes with wedding adjournment, only the bride and groom may be photographed during the recessional. If pictures of wedding attendants are desired, they should be taken during the processional.

Post-wedding photography should normally not exceed 30 minutes. Promptness brightens your guests by shortening their wait before the reception.

4) Choose your wedding songs, evaluating these three criteria:

Musical Decision: Is the music technically, artistically, and expressively good?

Pastoral Decision: Does the music help the assembly to pray?

Liturgical Decision: Does the music fit the importance of the marriage rite? Is the music "God-centered", not just "God-mentioning"?



Florist Guidelines

Additional flowers are not permitted in the Church during the Advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter seasons. Church decorations for these seasons are especially arranged for the proper spirit of the Catholic community--hence, no rearrangements are permitted.

During liturgical seasons when additional flowers are permitted, please keep the following in mind: tape and tacks are not permitted for attaching bows and flowers to the Church pews--tape leaves a sticky residue or remains behind, and tacks damage the wood itself. Bows can be attached with ribbon.

Flowers may be positioned in front of the tabernacle, but must not obstruct the view of the tabernacle. Flowers must not be located on the altar on which Mass is celebrated. Also, flowers must not be positioned in the sanctuary in any way that would obstruct the Presider or members of the wedding party

Altar candles are lighted for wedding ceremonies, but additional candles or candelabra are not allowed in the Church.

After the wedding ceremony, the floral arrangements may be taken to the wedding reception, or left in the Church for Sunday services. Packaging materials and rented decorations should be removed from the Church immediately after the wedding ceremony.

For further information, please contact the presiding priest or deacon.

Rehearsals

The priest or deacon will normally attend your rehearsal. Usually the rehearsal is scheduled at 5:00 P.M. the evening before the day of the wedding. Please be courteous by appearing on time. As bride and groom, it is your responsibility to have participants arrive 15 minutes early for the rehearsal. The rehearsal normally will be scheduled for one hour. To avoid confusion at the wedding we encourage all members of the wedding party to attend the rehearsal.

Church Decorations

The church is normally decorated proper to the current Church Season. You may usually add flowers if you like (see [Florist Guidelines](#) later in this booklet), but you may not remove any existing Church decorations. This is especially true during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. At these times the Church decoration is in keeping with the liturgical spirit of the seasons, therefore no changes to the decorations are allowed during these seasons. ***Please remember this when choosing the date and colors for your wedding.***



The Wedding Ceremony

Weddings are normally scheduled on Saturdays at 2:00 P.M. or 7:00 P.M. Other times or days may be worked out with the priest or deacon if necessary.

Please share the [Florist Guidelines](#) in this booklet with the person arranging the flowers for your wedding. This prevents any last-minute confusion over the positioning of flowers.

Also share the [Photographer Guidelines](#) with your photographer and videographer. This prevents confusion over the proper places for photographs and photographers.

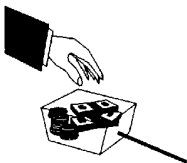
You'll notice that photographers are not permitted in the sanctuary at any time.

Any special customs or traditions you would like in your wedding should be discussed with the priest or deacon prior to the rehearsal.

Dropping flower petals (real or artificial), throwing rice or birdseed, and floor runners are not permitted for safety reasons. Slipping on these materials could cause a serious fall and injury to relatives, friends, or to yourselves.

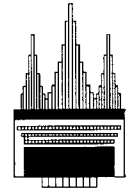
Ring bearers and flower girls are a welcome and beautiful addition to many weddings. However, to avoid embarrassment and disruptions of the ceremony, ring bearers and flower girls must be at least 5 years old. Please give the presider sufficient time to arrange for altar servers, if you decide to have them-- altar servers are normally paid \$20.00 each.

Give a member of your bridal party responsibility for removing flowers, bows, and wrappers or any other debris from the Church following the wedding ceremony. Please make sure you take all your own belongings from the Church-- the Church can not be responsible for lost items.



Payment to the Church

It is customary to make a donation to the Church to help cover expenses the Church incurs for weddings (paperwork, air conditioning, etc.) The usual donation for an active, tithing parishioner is \$250.00, but you may use your own discretion in this matter. If you are not an active, tithing parishioner, there is a fee of \$450.00 for the use of the church facility. If you are having your marriage convalidated (blessed) and will not be using the main church, there is a \$50.00 fee. It is also customary to give a stipend to the presiding priest or deacon, but, again, you may use your own discretion in this matter.



Music for Your Wedding

There are many possibilities for wedding music at Holy Family.. Your musical arrangements can be easy if you follow these suggested steps:

- 1) Decide on a combination of musicians and instruments and contact the musicians you would like to play at your wedding. If you have no preference the Church may be able to suggest musicians.
- 2) Please note that any contribution you may make to the Church does not include stipends for musicians. You may get a fee quotation from the musicians themselves. Most couples find it convenient to pay musician fees at the rehearsal--this eliminates an extra detail before the wedding day.
- 3) Decide what parts of your wedding ceremony will be accompanied by music. The following selections may be discussed with your musicians and with the priest or deacon:

Prelude ¹	20 minutes during the seating of guests.
Processional ¹	Instrumental or assembly song as bridal party is seated.
Psalm Response ¹	Congregational response; may be sung by a cantor or recited by a reader.
Gospel Acclamation ³	An "Alleluia" acclamation by the assembly before the gospel.
Unity Candle ³	90-second vocal or instrumental solo after marriage vows.
Preparation of Gifts ⁴	Instrumental or vocal solo during the prayers over gifts.
Eucharistic Prayer ²	Holy, Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen.
Communion ⁴	Instrumental solo or assembly song during communion.
Recessional ¹	Instrumental solo, ensemble, or assembly song during exit.

¹ Included in every marriage.

² Included in every marriage Mass; singing is optional.

³ Optional in every marriage.

⁴ Included in every marriage Mass.