

Church of the Holy Family **Sacrament of Marriage Guidelines**

Congratulations on Your Engagement

You are engaged to be married and, desiring the blessing of God on your union, have approached the Church to witness and seal your vows to each other. Marriage is a divine vocation involving an enduring sacred relationship lived in the community of the Church and the wider human family. For Catholics, marriage is a sacrament of Christ's love expressed in a couple's living out their marriage vows day to day in the grace of the Lord. Even when a valid marriage is not a sacrament, a Christian and an unbaptized spouse commit themselves to each other in radical openness to the design of God the Creator.

The priests and staff of Holy Family Parish are ready and willing to assist you as you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage in our parish church. We promise to pray for you in a special way during this time and rejoice that God has called you together.

How many meetings are we expected to attend?

You will meet with a priest or a deacon three to four times. The first of these meetings gives you a chance to meet the priest or deacon who will witness your marriage, to discuss your desire to be married in the Church and provides an opportunity for the exchange of information. Between your first and second meeting, you are expected to complete a FOCCUS pre-marital inventory. At your second meeting the priest or deacon will review your FOCCUS results and introduce you to the theology of marriage. Your fee is also due at the second meeting, please see information for fees below. Your third meeting will review your Marriage Prep Program experience and complete all necessary paperwork. Your final meeting serves to review the liturgical, canonical and civil requirements for the wedding and provides time for answering any remaining questions. Please note that if you or the priest or deacon feels that additional meetings are needed, they will be scheduled.

What paperwork is required?

For Catholic Persons:

A newly issued Certificate of Baptism (dated not more than six months prior to the wedding date) from the Church in which you were baptized. If you were baptized here at Holy Family and are being married here at Holy Family, no certificate is required.

For Non-Catholic Persons:

If a non-Catholic person is a baptized Christian, a photocopy of his or her Certificate of Baptism is required. In addition, two affidavits of freedom to marry are required (the priest\deacon will explain this during your initial meeting with you and provide the necessary documentation). If the non-Catholic person is at the same time un-baptized, affidavits of non-baptism and affidavits of freedom to marry are required.

All Couples:

Parental permission is required if either party has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

A civil marriage or re-marriage license (obtained from your city or township clerk or the clerk of Washington Township). This must be received by the Priest\Deacon at the rehearsal.

Parish Guidelines and Policies

1. Catholics are expected to be married within a Nuptial Mass, especially when both parties are themselves Catholic. The Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage Outside of Mass may be appropriate, especially when a Catholic is marrying someone from another faith tradition.
2. The Sacrament of Marriage may be celebrated on any day of the week except Sunday. The celebration of the Lord's Day is reserved for parish celebrations.
3. There are dates during the calendar year on which the Sacrament of Marriage may NOT be celebrated at Holy Family: **All Sundays, January 1, Holy Thursday & Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Ascension Thursday, August 15, November 1 & November 2, December 8, December 24 & December 25.**
4. The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage during Advent and Lent must take into account the liturgical prescriptions for these seasons. Please speak to the priest\deacon if your wedding will be during these two Liturgical season. The time of celebration is strictly limited to the following: On Saturdays, weddings may be celebrated at 11 AM or 2 PM. On weekdays, including Fridays, weddings may be celebrated at any time up to 5:30 PM if the parish calendar permits.
5. A priest from another parish or diocese is welcome to preside at your wedding Mass or ceremony. The priest himself must write a letter to the pastor of Holy Family stating his intention to preside at your wedding. In addition, he must provide a currently dated letter of suitability from his local bishop or major superior stating that he is priest in good standing with faculties (and these letters must be sent to the Diocese of Camden and to Holy Family). Once these letters have been received, your wedding date and time will be confirmed. It is customary that the priest who officiates is to complete the preparation and paperwork necessary for the wedding – if the priest

resides outside of New Jersey, he may wish to contact one of the parish priests for assistance since the Dioceses of New Jersey follow a common policy for marriage preparation.

6. A wedding rehearsal is mandatory for all celebrations. This will be scheduled during your initial meeting.
7. Rehearsals are subject to scheduled events on the parish calendar. In most cases rehearsals are scheduled at or before 6:00 PM from September to June, but may be scheduled later during the summer months when no evening Masses are celebrated.
8. The parish religious education center and hall are not available for receptions.
9. Photography and videography are welcomed during the ceremony. We ask that you instruct those hired for these tasks to speak with the priest\deacon prior to the ceremony. Photographers and videographers are not permitted in the sanctuary of the church. In addition, a spirit of reverence must be maintained during and after the ceremony due to sacred nature of the church building.
10. While bridal parties are permitted to have pictures in the church following the ceremony, please be aware that other events may be scheduled and that the church is needed at 3:45 PM for the Sacrament of Penance.
11. As a courtesy to the parish, wedding parties must arrive promptly for the rehearsal and the wedding; Masses and other parish activities are often scheduled.
12. The bridal party and guests are expected to dress appropriately and modestly. What might be considered acceptable at the reception may not be appropriate in church. Traditionally women's shoulders, including the bride and her attendants, should be covered and skirt lengths should fall below the knee. Men should wear jackets and ties, but may not wear sleeveless shirts or shorts. Footwear should also be appropriate – beach sandals and flip-flops are not permitted.
13. Reverence for God's House and for the parish community is a priority at all times. Food and drink are not permitted in the church for any reason.
14. Bridal runners in church are not permitted, as they often become a hazard during the Communion procession. The scattering of flower petals or any other substance in the church is not permitted.
15. Nothing is to be affixed to the church pews with tape or other adhesives; flowers or bows may be held in place with rubber bands.
16. Candlelight ceremonies are not permitted as candles in the assembly pose a hazard and melting wax is difficult to remove from the pews, seat coverings and flooring.
17. The Unity Candle is not part of the Roman Catholic Rite of Marriage. This ceremony may be more appropriate at your reception. Please discuss this with the priest presiding at your wedding.

18. The throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, etc... is NOT PERMITTED do to slip and fall hazard it poses. In addition, balloon launches are not permitted due to their detrimental effect on the environment.
19. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE NEVER PERMITTED IN THE CHURCH OR ON THE CHURCH GROUNDS. THIS INCLUDES THE LIMOUSINE. THERE ARE TO BE NO TOASTS PRIOR TO YOUR DEPARTURE FROM THE CHURCH PROPERTY. The Washington Township Police Department will be contacted if alcohol is served on the church grounds. This is a serious concern as driving under the influence is a crime – New Jersey has strict enforcement of .08 legal limit.
- 20. The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted prior to the ceremony. If a member of the bridal party or a guest at the wedding is intoxicated they will be asked to leave the church. If necessary, the police will be asked to remove them.**

The Issue of "Living Together."

In their document, Faithful to Each Other Forever, the United States Bishops have stated, "Premarital sexual intercourse and cohabitation (living together) without marriage are not identical issues or questions. One can exist without the other. Couples may engage in sexual intercourse without living together; other couples, particularly those sharing homes for financial reasons, may live together without having sexual intercourse. Premarital sexual intercourse violates an objective moral code that the Church officially teaches and is not, in our judgment, a recommended or wise way to prepare for marriage. Cohabitation, on the other hand, especially for those couples bound by affection or even contemplating marriage, establishes a situation in which avoidance of premarital sex becomes exceptionally difficult. Moreover, when a couple moves in together without exchanging formal nuptial vows and live externally as husband and wife, they create an occasion of scandal for others by weakening the sanctity of marriage itself. In addition...empirical data raise doubts about cohabitation as a healthy preparation for marital life. For these and other reasons we reject cohabitation that simulates marriage as appropriate behavior for Roman Catholics."

In light of the above statement of the United States Bishops, recent studies and personal counseling experiences, the priests of Holy Family Parish recommend that during the time of preparation couples live apart and refrain from sexual intercourse. Experience shows that couples who refrain from sexual intercourse prior to marriage do not regret doing so and are more focused on the sacred aspect of marriage.

The Banns of Marriage

Couples marrying at Holy Family will have the announcement of their wedding published for three consecutive weekends in the parish bulletin. If you are a parishioner of Holy Family and are marrying in another Catholic parish, you may request that the banns be published in our bulletin. Please contact the parish office to arrange for this announcement.

A Priest At Your Reception

Due to the busy schedule of services at Holy Family on weekends, our priests cannot promise to attend your reception. If you wish to invite the priest to attend, it is proper to send him a printed invitation with a reply card.

Church Fees and Stipends

In thanksgiving for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, the couple presents the parish with a stipend in support of the ongoing mission of the Church (many parishes request a stipend equal to the cost of the wedding cake that will be served at the reception): Please note the following stipend fees.

January 1 2017 thru December 31, 2018 Weddings

Parishioners*: \$700

Non-Parishioners: \$1000

Marriage Preparation at Holy Family, however, you marry at another Parish: \$350

Convalidation (Blessing of a Marriage) \$150*

*Registered in parish for at least one year, regularly practicing the Faith and supporting the parish through the use of envelopes. Please note that Catholics are expected to register on their eighteenth birthday if they enter the workforce or upon their graduation from college.

Convalidations are considered simple ceremonies, usually just a few guests, not the typical fanfare that comes along with a full blown wedding celebration. There is usually also much less preparation involved (depending on couple's circumstances). If you wish to have a full blown wedding, and or your circumstances requires the full preparation then the fee is \$700.00 for registered parishioners.

Each altar server should receive a minimum stipend according to the following:

2016 thru 2018 Weddings

\$20

It is a courtesy to give the Officiant a stipend.

Other expenses must be taken care of between the couple and whomever they hire (e.g.: florist, organist, singer, etc...)

Music for Your Wedding

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their document Music in Catholic Worship (1972, revised in 1983) state that “among the many signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of preeminent importance. As sacred song united to words it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn plan for your wedding liturgy in such a way that it speaks of your life together and your love.”

Your wedding day is yours but not yours exclusively. You have chosen to celebrate this solemn event in the midst of the Church community because at least one of you is a baptized member of the Church and is committed to the practice of the Faith. The liturgy should be a prayerful event for you, for your families and for your guests.

The parish church is a special place where the sacred events in the lives of the Christian people take place. It was here that you formally entered the community through the waters of Baptism, and nourished at the Eucharistic table of the Lord, were sealed with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, are reconciled with God and one another in the Sacrament of Penance, and now make public your life-long commitment. It is also the place where the community gathers to give thanks and praise to Almighty God each Sunday.

You have given much thought to those items that will be used to celebrate the occasion of your wedding (flowers, attire, the reception, honeymoon, etc...). It is with the same degree of attention that you should select the readings, music, and liturgical texts for the Mass or ceremony. The parish priests and the Coordinator of Music will help you to make selections that best reflect your love for each other and the Faith of the Catholic Church.

According to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (#121), the lyrics of songs used in any Catholic liturgy are to be “drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources.” As such, music of a secular nature (e.g., popular show tunes, love songs, and secular ballads) is not deemed appropriate for use in the Sacred Liturgy, there is ample opportunity to play secular music at your reception.

Gathering Rite

The purpose of the gathering rite is to bring all the people together so that they can focus on the prayer that is to follow. Festive instrumental prelude music is appropriate. A gathering hymn sung by all should be considered. It helps to draw everyone together and accompanies the procession of the bridal party. The singing of hymns is an important element in worship and should be encouraged. Music for the procession need not be a march. The music should be joyful and dignified in nature.

Gloria

With the revisions of the Roman Missal in December 2011, the Church asks that the Gloria be sung as part of every wedding Mass.

Liturgy of the Word

The Responsorial Psalm that follows the First Reading must be sung. The Coordinator of Music will assist you in choosing an appropriate setting. The Gospel Acclamation is never a spoken text, it must be sung. Please note that during Lent, the “Alleluia!” is replaced by a more somber acclamation.

Rite of Marriage

The rite itself does not call for music.

Offertory

An instrumental piece, solo or an offertory hymn should be selected while the altar is prepared and the gifts are brought forward.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Since all of the acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer are the assembly's part of this prayer, they must be sung. The Coordinator of Music will assist you in selecting an appropriate setting.

Rite of Communion

During the exchange of peace a short instrumental or solo may be chosen, especially if the newly married couple will greet the wedding party.

The "Lamb of God" must be sung. A hymn during the distribution of Holy Communion should be sung, however a solo could also be appropriate.

Concluding Rites

It is customary for the Bride and Groom to dedicate themselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary on the day of their wedding; if this is done, a solo selection or instrumental piece would be appropriate.

Recessional

A hymn may be sung or an instrumental played. It should be festive and serve to "send off" the newly married couple.

How Do I Arrange For Music?

As early as possible, but not less than ten weeks prior to your wedding, you must contact the parish office. A music minister will be assigned to assist you in making your musical selections and will review any printed programs that you intend to distribute for the ceremony.

You have the option of choosing musicians and singers from the Music Ministry here at Holy Family. The parish office can facilitate contact for you. If you choose to hire musicians and singers from outside of the parish, you must first seek the permission of the pastor and choir director. Any singer or musician you use **MUST HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH CATHOLIC WEDDINGS AND MUSIC.**

What about Stipends and Fees?

Please check with your music provider regarding the various fees for organists, soloists and musicians. Please note that organists, soloists, and musicians are self-employed when it comes to stipends and fees, these fees are not handled through the parish, thank you for your consideration in this matter.

