

*A WEDDING IS A ONE-DAY EVENT . . .
...A MARRIAGE IS A LIFETIME!*

A Guide For Weddings

*St. Timothy Catholic Church
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MARRIAGE PREPARATION

St. Timothy Catholic Church

INTRODUCTION

Marriage Preparation Team

Premarriage Minister
Presider (Priest/Deacon)
Liturgist/Music Director
PREPARE Couples
Wedding Coordinators

Marriage Preparation

We believe that marriage is a lifelong commitment. When a man and woman pledge their love, they share Jesus Christ's love with each other and carry out God's plan that the two shall become one. Marriage is not a brief celebration on a certain day at a specific time. It is the work of a lifetime that requires some special training and preparation.

The Sacrament of Marriage

God is so invested in couple love that this special relationship, through the will of Jesus Christ, has been raised to the dignity of a sacrament in the Church.

More than an exchange of vows, more than the couple's expression of love for each other, the sacrament of marriage is a public sign of God's presence and grace. It is witnessed and celebrated by the Christian community. Relatives, friends, and neighbors gather in worship to support and pray for a couple on their wedding day and beyond.

The wedding liturgy is a public statement of the faith that will guide and shape their union. It is a prayer by the couple that God will be with them in their life together.

For these reasons, the Church has the responsibility to see that the couple is prepared to celebrate the sacrament of marriage and that the liturgy is in harmony with the principles of Christian worship.

Couples must be free to marry in the Catholic Church. Bride and /or groom and/or parent(s) must be registered parishioner(s).

We at St. Timothy parish dedicate ourselves to assisting couples so that they may live a joy-filled and happy life.

GUIDELINES

I. Length of Preparation for Marriage

Normally a couple begins the marriage preparation process at least six months prior to their wedding date. A one-year preparation would be welcomed. Formal preparation is to be completed by the couple thirty days prior to the wedding celebration.

II. The Preparation Process

The preparation process helps the engaged couple ready themselves for sacramental marriage and includes an explanation of the purpose and goals of the policies for marriage at St. Timothy, which includes seven steps:

1. Initial meeting with Premarriage Minister
(Please call the Premarriage Minister at 784-1329 to schedule the meeting after you have read this guide.)
2. Premarriage Inventory (PREPARE)
3. Premarriage retreat
4. Follow-up meeting with Premarriage Minister
5. Wedding Liturgy Workshop
6. Meeting with Wedding Presider
7. Wedding rehearsal

● **Faith Development:** Couples planning to marry at St. Timothy are welcome to celebrate Mass here each weekend during their preparation. In interfaith marriages, couples are encouraged to attend each other's churches.

● **Paperwork/Forms:** Every couple will need to complete a prenuptial **questionnaire** and provide **baptismal certificates**. These certificates can be obtained from the church of baptism. For Catholics, the certificates must be newly issued, less than six months old from the date of the initial meeting. In the case of interfaith marriages, the Catholic party is asked to sign a promise that includes a statement about the education of future children. The Premarriage Minister will explain these forms when you meet.

● **Marriage License:** A Minnesota marriage license can be secured from the license bureau in any Minnesota county. There is a significant discount available if the preparation is documented by St. Timothy. The license should be given to the presider at least one month prior to the rehearsal.

● **Inventory:** Sponsor couples have been trained to administer and to share feedback on a premarital inventory called PREPARE. Scheduling this inventory will be explained at the initial meeting with the Premarriage Minister.

● **Marriage Preparation Retreat:** Christian marriage is different from secular culture's attitude toward marriage, sex, and love. Christian marriage is a sacrament — a sign of God's love. It is God's plan for you — a vocation which will foster your unique growth in Christ. Your premarriage retreat is a very special opportunity to reflect together on your vocation to Christian marriage. Therefore, **we encourage you to make this retreat early in the process of your marriage preparation.** Brochures for various options are available from the Premarriage Minister.

● **Meeting with Premarriage Minister:** A followup meeting with the Premarriage Minister will be scheduled to review your marriage preparation.

● **Wedding Liturgy Workshop:** See page 5.

● **Meeting with Wedding Presider:** A meeting with the presiding priest or deacon is held to talk over concerns or questions, and to discuss your wedding liturgy plans. **It is your responsibility to call the presiding priest or deacon and schedule this meeting.** Call at least **two months** before your wedding to schedule this appointment. Please bring with you:

1. Retreat Certificate
2. Wedding Planning Sheet from Liturgy Workshop
3. Marriage License
4. Donation Balance (See next paragraph)

● **Cost:** The parish welcomes a donation to help cover the cost of materials, staff time, and church use. You may consider tithing the cost of the wedding or donating \$400. \$200 is to be submitted at the initial meeting with the Premarriage Minister. The remainder (checks made payable to "Church of St. Timothy") is to be given to the presider at the followup meeting. Parish musician fees (checks made payable to the musicians themselves) are to be turned in to the Parish Office no later than two weeks before the wedding.

● **Process for Delay in Marriage:** A wedding may be delayed and counseling required if circumstances of the couple show it to be necessary.

● **Remarriage:** The preparation for remarriage should follow the timelines of the preceding policy and include the following:

- Procuring an annulment from the Church when there has been a civil divorce.
- Addressing grief issues and closure of first marriage.
- Counseling as specified on the declaration of annulment.
- Dealing with step-parenting and blended family issues, if applicable.

III. The Wedding

• **Wedding Liturgy Workshop:** The Church is strengthened by the sacramental bond you share. We rejoice in and celebrate the sacredness and beauty of your commitment to one another. In the planning for your wedding, St. Timothy's Church follows the guidelines on the wedding liturgy as outlined in the Archdiocese's document *When Christians Marry*. One emphasis in this document is simplicity.

The purpose of the Wedding Liturgy Workshop is to help you plan a meaningful celebration of the sacrament of Christian marriage. You will discuss the options available within the liturgy for prayers, rituals, Scripture readings, music, and décor — all of which can help make your wedding a prayerful occasion for you and all those present.

Plan to attend the Workshop at least 4-6 months prior to your wedding — BEFORE making liturgy plans. Call the Parish Office (763-784-1329) to pre-register. If, for any reason, you are unable to make this scheduled meeting, please call the Parish Office prior to the meeting.

Types of Services: The rites of the Catholic Church provide two options in celebrating Christian marriage — within the Mass or separate from Mass. When two Catholics marry, a nuptial Mass is expected. When either the bride or groom is not Catholic, a Scripture service will be used.

Musicians: The liturgist will assist the couple in arranging for a parish cantor (vocalist) and accompanist (pianist and/or organist). Other instrumentalists or other soloists may perform a special song or songs, if desired, subject to approval by the liturgist. Fees for the musicians will also be discussed at the Workshop.

Music: Music selection must be appropriate for worship and should encourage the active participation of the community in singing. For instance, the Lord's Prayer is spoken as an act of community worship. Other musical considerations: "Here Comes the Bride" is not used because of its commercial use and because of the secular nature of the opera it comes from. Additionally, vocal solos, if used, should have texts with a definite Christian emphasis.

Décor: Depending on the particular liturgical season, the church will have appropriate flowers, banners, and other decorations to highlight the season. These decorations remain in place for all sacramental celebrations, including weddings.

Lectors: You will be asked to choose one, two, or three people who can effectively proclaim the Word of God. It is necessary that they be prepared with their readings for rehearsal night. They will be asked to practice with the microphone at the rehearsal.

Ushers: Persons selected as ushers should be capable of welcoming people and caring for their needs before, during, and after the service. A part of their responsibility will be to remove items personal to the bridal party after the ceremony, e.g. programs, unity candle, etc.

● **Wedding Rehearsal:** The Wedding Coordinator conducts the rehearsal and coordinates the wedding ceremony. Saturday wedding rehearsals are on Friday at 6:00 PM; Friday wedding rehearsals are on Thursday at 6:00. Conflicts require special scheduling. **Please be on time and allow 60 to 90 minutes for the rehearsal.**

● **Wedding Liturgy:**

The Place: Weddings must take place within a consecrated church or chapel building — never outside. Since all couples who intend to marry are adults, they are expected to be registered and supporting members of their parish. For a Catholic to be validly married, it is necessary to see a priest/deacon about the marriage. Even in those cases when the marriage is to be in the church of another faith, your Catholic pastor must be consulted and the necessary dispensations obtained. To neglect to do this would make the marriage invalid in the eyes of the Church and prevent you from receiving the Sacraments of the Church.

The Time/Date: Weddings are scheduled on Friday evenings at 6:00 PM and Saturdays at 10:30 AM and 2:30 PM. Because of the nature of the season, no weddings will be celebrated during Lent. Please check with the priest/deacon BEFORE you set a date. Each couple has the use of the church for three hours, beginning one and one-half (1 & 1/2) hours before the wedding is scheduled. Please abide by this schedule. The bride's and groom's rooms will be available for use during this time.

Clergy: Normally, the priest/deacon of this parish will preside at all marriages. We will be happy to assist if the family wishes another Catholic clergyman to preside at (witness) the marriage. If one of the parties is not Catholic, we will welcome his/her minister's participation. In some places, it is customary to offer a stipend to the one officiating at the wedding ceremony. The amount of the stipend is discretionary.

Photography: Since the church is a house of worship and prayer, we ask for reverence and respect in the taking of photographs. Flash photography is allowed only during the processional and recessional, and **NOT** during the ceremony. You may want to make a note of this in your program.

Formal wedding pictures may be taken before and after the ceremony, according to the time schedule. For the 2:30 PM wedding, pictures should be completed by 4:00 PM in order not to disturb those present for the next celebration. No sanctuary furnishings should be moved without the permission of the liturgist. The altar is not to be used as a resting place for any articles.

Video recording of the wedding ceremony should be done with a fixed camera, using available light only. The person recording should consult with the Wedding Coordinator.

Candles: All candles should be restricted to the altar area. If candles are used, please take precautions to prevent wax from dripping on the floor. The couple may choose a candle-lighting ceremony if they wish. Please discuss this with the liturgist.

Aisle Cloth and Flowers: For safety and liability reasons, an aisle cloth is not to be used. Pew bows may be secured with rubber bands. Please do not use tape or clips.

The liturgist should be consulted about the seasonal decorations in the church. Flowers are often present as part of these parish decorations. Seasonal decorations are to remain in place. We ask that real flowers be used in the sanctuary and not be placed where they might block visibility or interfere with liturgical actions.

All decorations must be removed from the church immediately after the wedding unless you intend to leave them for church use. We suggest that couples who are being married in our church on the same weekend consult with each other on the possibility of sharing flowers and splitting the cost.

Alcohol/Mood-altering Chemicals/Smoking/Firearms are not allowed anywhere in the church complex or on the church grounds.

Program: Though it is not absolutely necessary, you may find it beneficial to print a program. It is a practical aid that facilitates participation. Contact the liturgist about this.

Rice, Flowers, Bird Seed, Confetti, “Silly String”: These are **NOT** allowed. Please inform your wedding party.

Cleanup: If you bring food and non-alcoholic beverages, please confine them to the bride’s and groom’s rooms. You are responsible for the removal of all wedding decorations, cleaning up the bride’s and groom’s rooms, and removal of such things as flower boxes, film packages, and programs. Please designate someone for this task.

Protect Your Valuables: St. Timothy Church is a building with free access to outsiders during celebrations such as your wedding. For this reason we cannot accept responsibility for personal possessions left unattended in the rooms by members of your wedding party, relatives, and friends. Please arrange for someone to watch your valuables.

We look forward to working with you, preparing for your marriage, and planning your Wedding liturgy. If you have questions in any of these areas, we would be more than happy to talk them over with you.

— St. Timothy Marriage Preparation Team

(Revised December 2012)

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