

Spirit of Life Catholic Church Wedding Preparation Guidelines



*Spirit of Life Catholic Church
801 1st Street SE
Mandan, ND 58554
663-1660*

Updated September 1, 2016

Dear Engaged Couple-

Congratulations on your engagement! To enter into the Sacrament of Marriage is to begin together a life of commitment and faithfulness that mirrors beautifully the love that Our Father has for each one of us. As God loves you and me unconditionally, without measure and without end, so you are called to love each other in marriage. I pray that as you move through the process of preparing for the Sacrament you will find yourselves growing in your understanding of what God is asking you to give to each other. More importantly, I hope you will come to know more deeply the great love God has for you and the desire He has to see you married joyfully- committed to Him and to each other for a lifetime.

Keep in mind, then, that your wedding is not first something you are doing, but something Jesus is doing for you in the Sacrament of Marriage. True, the two of you are promising to live a committed, faithful, fruitful love, but it is God that binds you together. It is by His action that two become one. As you prepare for your wedding day, keep in mind that it is a day that is not first about you, but about the work God is doing in and through you.

Having said that, your wedding day is, of course, a celebration of your love for each other! The work of marriage preparation is designed to give you some of the theological insight and practical tools you will need to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage with your hearts and eyes wide open. I encourage you to take this time very seriously. Take to heart all that you hear. Recognize that those who will be assisting you in this preparation have walked the beautiful and challenging road of commitment, and want to help you do the same with joy.

Your wedding is just the first day of a lifetime commitment. I pray that your time of marriage preparation will not only prepare you for your wedding day, but a lifetime together, sharing with each other generously the love God has for you both.

In Christ,



Msgr. Chad Gion
Pastor, Church of Spirit of Life

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a life commitment between a man and a woman. Therefore, it needs careful and thorough preparation so that the couple can fully understand the meaning of the commitment.

Marriage is a Sacrament, which means that the relationship of husband and wife should reflect the presence of Christ and his love for us. To live this Sacrament, a couple needs to grow in their faith as individuals and as a couple.

Ideally, a wedding is a celebration of the marriage of a man and woman that come to the church from two separate places on their wedding day, stand before God and his people, make a commitment to each other and to God to be faithful to their vows, and then leave the church as one.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS

A couple desiring to get married should contact the parish office (663-1660) **at least six months**, but **no more than 12 months** prior to the wedding date.

The church should be reserved **before** a commitment is made to a photographer and reception hall. The church may not be available on the desired date without reserving it in advance.

Couples need to participate in a Pre-Marriage Seminar weekend and attend Natural Family Planning (NFP) training. Information about this topics as well as dates and how to register can be found on the Diocese of Bismarck's website. The specifics of these events will be shared with the couple in the first meeting with the pastor (or deacon)

Couples will also need to take the FOCCUS questionnaire, which assists the couple in understanding themselves as individuals and as a couple. The results will be shared with the presider of the wedding or it will be given to a sponsoring couple who will assist the engaged couple in evaluating the results of this tool.

Additional preparation may be required depending on the particular circumstances of the couple.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

- 1) Pre-nuptial FOCCUS questionnaire.
- 2) A Baptismal Certificate which should be requested from the parish of baptism at least six months prior to the wedding date. (A non-Catholic person should provide a photocopy of a baptismal record.)
- 3) Completion certificates from the Pre-Marriage Seminar weekend and NFP training.
- 4) A MARRIAGE LICENSE which is procured from the Clerk of Court at the local court house. The couple needs to go together and present a document of personal identification (driver's license or social security card). The license can be purchased up to 60 days before the wedding. Fee for the license is determined by the state.
- 5) Appropriate documentation of any annulled (previous) marriages.
- 6) Two copies of your program should be brought into the office at Spirit of Life **at least two weeks prior to your wedding**. One will be stored in your file and the other will be given to the music director for approval. Once your program is approved you can have them printed. **Do not print your programs before they are approved by the Liturgical Music Director (663-1660) at the church.**

THE CELEBRATION OF THE WEDDING

The celebration of the wedding is a very sacred and spiritual moment. The planning of the wedding should reflect a sacred character. On the day of the wedding, if the celebrant notices any indication of a member of the wedding party being under the influence of alcohol, he will ask that person to leave.

CEREMONY PLANNING: The ceremony will be planned with the celebrant (the priest or deacon) of your wedding. We strongly encourage you to celebrate the full mass at your wedding. You can begin by choosing scripture readings from the *Together for Life* book. It will be important for you to choose an **Old Testament reading**, a **Responsorial Psalm**, a **New Testament reading**, and a **Gospel reading**.

PROGRAMS: Having a wedding program is an important way to keep your guests involved in the ceremony. A program should include the parts of the ceremony, what readings and songs you have chosen, and who has played a special role in your ceremony. Example programs are included later in this packet to help you through this process. **Please bring two copies of your program into the office at Spirit of Life at least two weeks prior to your wedding.** One will be stored in your file and the other will be given to the music director for approval. Once your program is approved you can have them printed. **Do not print your programs before they are approved by the Liturgical Music Director (663-1660) at the church.**

MUSIC: All music within the wedding ceremony must be appropriate for a Catholic wedding ceremony. Due to the sacred nature of the wedding liturgy, secular music, including Country music and songs heard on the radio, will not be permitted during the liturgy itself. All music for the wedding must be pre-approved and fall under the scope of music the church is licensed to sing or play. Contact the Liturgical Music Director for suggestions. When thinking about your wedding music ask yourself three things:

- 1) **Is it prayerful?** Your wedding music should help you and your guests to create a prayerful environment.
- 2) **Is it accessible?** Will your guests be able to sing along? Many of the songs used in the wedding ceremony are congregational. This means your guests should be able to participate. Their participation is a great way for them to share their love and support for you on your special day.
- 3) **Is it beautiful?** This is somewhat subjective. It is important, however, to remember that the beauty of the song may depend less on the song selection itself and more on the skill of the musicians chosen. Work with your musicians to find songs you are both comfortable with.

It is preferred that couples select the parish music ministers to play and sing for their wedding. A list of musicians is provided within this packet. You are responsible for finding musicians for your ceremony. Each musician charges their own rate. This can be discussed with the individual musician and payment will be given directly to them. If you need additional help with planning the music for your wedding please contact the Music Director at 663-1660. **If you select musicians who are not on the list provided please have them contact the music director at least one week prior to the wedding.**

DRESS: All wedding dresses, including bridesmaid dresses, should be modest in nature and appropriate for the sacred occasion. If you are concerned about your dress please talk with the celebrant. You might also consider wearing a shawl if you have a dress that exposes your shoulders.

WEDDING PARTY: The number of couples in the wedding party should be limited so as not to detract from the Bride and Groom and the real purpose for the celebration. Suggestions: **One to three couples is preferred and there should be no more than five couples in the wedding party.** If children are in the wedding party, they should be old enough to understand what their role in the ceremony will be. No pets please.

CHURCH ENVIRONMENT/DECORATIONS: Some decorations are allowed in the church. Typically couples choose to have a gift table in the gathering space and memorial flowers are very common.

CANDLES/CANDELABRAS: If candelabras are used, the candles **MUST** be metal tube candles; regular dripless candles are not acceptable. The church has candelabras which can be used but candles are not included.

AISLE RUNNERS/DISPERSAL OF FLOWER PETALS: The use of aisle runners or the dispersion of real flower petals is prohibited. If silk flower petals are strewn, they must be retrieved following the ceremony.

PICTURES: Couples should ask their photographers to limit their picture taking to as short a time as possible. A drawn out photo session tires the wedding party and limits their ability to fully celebrate the wedding itself.

During the photo session, food and drink should not be brought inside the church proper and the gathering space, it is to be kept in designated areas only. The church should be respected as a sacred space. Chairs may **NOT** be moved within the church proper at any time.

During the ceremony photographers should remain around the outer perimeter of the church. They should only be at the head of the church during the procession. Please ask them to refrain from using a flash during the ceremony.

DRESSING ROOMS: The “Rock and Rest” room and Library are available for use as dressing rooms. A key can be checked out from the office. Please check out the key by 4:30 pm the night before the wedding. The office is open Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. The key can be checked out from the front desk and then returned to the front desk when you are finished. Please do this during regular business hours.

FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY: Ushers and anyone so designated should assist in picking up left over programs, help remove candelabras, flowers and flower petals, ensuring the “Rock and Rest” room and Library (if used) are picked up, and any food and drinks that may have been brought in are properly disposed, etc.

LIST OF FEES AND STIPENDS

CHURCH: PARISHIONERS fee is \$100 for the use of the church. NON-PARISHIONERS fee is \$225.

CELEBRANT: Stipend for the celebrant of the wedding is at the discretion of the couple. Suggested fee: \$100.

ALTAR SERVERS: Suggested stipend for each altar server provided by Spirit of Life is \$10.

MUSICIANS: The stipend for the music ministry, including parish keyboardist, is determined by the musicians themselves. The stipend should be given to the musicians before the date of the wedding. This is a contract entered into between you and your musicians. Please be respectful of them and make sure they receive payment in a timely manner.

POWERPOINT/PROGRAM INSERT: Each couple may choose to either have a program insert or a **CHURCH MADE** Power-Point to aid congregational singing throughout the ceremony. There are three options for this:

- 1) Insert the words for all congregational songs into the ceremony program (preparation of gifts, communion, etc...). It is very helpful for your congregation to have the words in front of them.
- 2) Have the church prepare a program insert that will contain all congregational songs.
Fee is: \$30.
- 3) Have the church prepare PowerPoint slides that contains the words to all congregational songs.
PowerPoint slides must be created by the church. Fee: \$30.

PREPARING FOR THE LITURGY

Gathering Rite

The Gathering Rite is a time of gathering and preparation that should prepare our hearts and minds to enter into the presence of God. This is the beginning of the formal ceremony where we ask God to be a part of the two lives he is about to join as one. Within the Gathering Rite are the Prelude, Processional, Gloria, and Opening Prayer. Song suggestions for the Prelude and Processional can be found later in this packet.

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the word includes an Old Testament reading, Responsorial Psalm, New Testament reading, the Alleluia, Gospel reading, and presider's homily. This is an important part of the Mass where our minds are nourished with God's word.

The *Together for Life* book is a great resource to help you plan this part of the liturgy. You should choose readings that have meaning to you. Take time together to pray and read through all of your options. You should use the *Together for Life* book to choose an Old Testament reading, the Responsorial Psalm, a New Testament Reading, and a Gospel reading. All of these need to be selected directly from the *Together for Life* book. The Responsorial Psalm is typically sung; however, in a marriage rite outside of Mass, it could be spoken.

Rite of Marriage

The Rite of Marriage is what makes the liturgy a marriage ceremony. This is where the couple will exchange vows as they enter into the covenant of marriage with God. This is also where the couple will exchange rings. Following the exchange of vows and rings will be the General Intercessions. If you have any special requests for the intercessions please talk to the presider.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is a beautiful part of the Mass where we offer bread and wine to God. Our offering becomes Christ's true presence through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The true body and precious blood help us all to become one with God. Following the Lord's Prayer, a Nuptial Blessing is said over the newly wedded couple, followed by the Sign of Peace. Songs should be chosen for the preparation of gifts and for communion. The preparation of gifts song may be a solo or may be congregational. Based on the size of your wedding, you may want to choose one or two communion songs.

Concluding Rite

The Concluding Rite is where God shares His blessing with his people and calls on us to take Jesus out into the world. This is where the couple is presented to the congregation as one with God. A recessional song, usually instrumental, needs to be chosen to conclude the mass. The recessional can also be congregational song.

NOTE: Page 10 of the *Together for Life* book lists the Three Forms of the Rite of Marriage. The Rite of Marriage ceremony celebrated outside of Mass will be slightly modified from the above. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is eliminated, as are the Gloria and Sign of Peace. The Nuptial Blessing takes place after the General Intercessions. Music selections consist of prelude song(s), processional song, responsorial psalm (if sung) and recessional song.

PARTICIPANTS

In order for your wedding to be a success you will need some help from family and friends. For the ceremony you will need 1 or 2 readers, 1 to 3 altar servers, 2-4 gift bearers, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. The number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion will depend on how large your congregation will be. Please consult with the pastor to find out what your ceremony will need. For more specific information on this topic, see the parish website (www.myspiritoflife.com/the-sacraments/marriage).

CELEBRATING MARRIAGE DURING MASS

Below is an example of a program for a marriage ceremony celebrated during Mass that can assist you with putting together your program.

The Marriage Ceremony

Gathering Rite

Prelude
Processional
Opening Prayer

“Angels Watching”
“Canon in D”

Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading
Responsorial Psalm

Tobit 8:4b-8
Psalm 145

“The Lord is compassionate toward all his works.”

New Testament Reading
Alleluia and Gospel Acclamation
Gospel Reading
Homily

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

Matthew 5:1-12a

Rite of Marriage

Exchange of Marriage Vows
Blessing and Exchange of Rings
General Intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of Gifts
Eucharistic Prayer
The Lord’s Prayer
Nuptial Blessing
Sign of Peace
Communion

“One Bread, One Body”

“Let Us Be Bread”
“You Are Mine”

Concluding Rite

Final Prayer and Blessing
Presentation of the Couple
Recessional

“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”

CELEBRATING MARRIAGE OUTSIDE OF MASS

There are some situations where a wedding outside of mass might be appropriate. Below is an example program for a wedding ceremony outside of Mass.

The Marriage Ceremony

Gathering Rite

Prelude
Processional
Opening Prayer

“Angels Watching”
“Canon in D”

Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading
Responsorial Psalm

Tobit 8:4b-8
Psalm 145

“The Lord is compassionate toward all his works.”

New Testament Reading
Alleluia and Gospel Acclamation
Gospel Reading
Homily

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

Matthew 5:1-12a

Rite of Marriage

Exchange of Marriage Vows
Blessing and Exchange of Rings
General Intercessions
Nuptial Blessing

Conclusion

The Lord’s Prayer (this is optional)
Final Blessing
Presentation of the Couple
Recessional

“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”

EXAMPLE PROGRAM WITH CONGREGATIONAL SONGS INSERTED

The Marriage Ceremony

Gathering Rite

Prelude
Processional

“Angels Watching”
“Canon in D”

Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading
Responsorial Psalm

Tobit 8:4b-8
Psalm 145

“The Lord is compassionate toward all his works”

New Testament Reading *1Corinthians 12:31-13:8a*
Alleluia and Gospel Acclamation
Gospel Reading *Matthew 5:1-12a*
Homily

Rite of Marriage

Exchange of Marriage Vows
Blessing and Exchange of Rings
General Intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of Gifts *“One Bread, One Body”*

*Refrain: One bread, one body, one Lord of all,
one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth,
we are one body in this one Lord.*

*Gentile of Jew, servant or free,
woman or man, no more. Refrain*

Many the gifts, many the works,
one in the Lord of all.

Refrain

Grain for the fields, scattered and grown,
gathered to one, for all.

Refrain

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Eucharistic Prayer
The Lord’s Prayer
Nuptial Blessing
Sign of Peace
Communion

“Let Us Be Bread”

*Refrain: Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord,
Broken and shared, life for the world.
Let us be wine, love freely poured.
Let us be one in the Lord.*

*I am the bread of life, broken for all.
Eat now and hunger no more. Refrain*

*You are my friends if you keep my commands,
No longer servants but friends. Refrain*

*See how my people have nothing to eat.
Give them the bread that is you. Refrain*

*As God has loved me so I have loved you.
Go and live on in my love. Refrain*

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Concluding Rite

Final Prayer and Blessing
Presentation of the Couple
Recessional

“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”

LITURGY PLANNER – With Mass

Bride: _____ **Groom:** _____

Bride Phone #: _____ **Groom Phone #** _____

Rehearsal Date/ Time: _____ **Wedding Date/ Time:** _____

Musicians and contact information: _____ #of Attendants: ___ Children: ___

1) _____ **Stipend:** _____

2) _____ **Stipend:** _____

3) _____ **Stipend:** _____

Power-Point: Y / N

Program Insert: Y/N

Prelude Song(s): _____

Processional Song: _____

Glory to God: _____

Collect

Old Testament Reading: _____

Responsorial Psalm: _____

New Testament Reading: _____

Gospel Acclamation/Verse: _____

Gospel Reading: _____

Homily

Exchange of Vows and Rings

General Intercessions

Preparation of Gifts: _____ (Solo or sung by assembly)

Holy, Holy, Holy: _____

Eucharistic Prayer

Memorial Acclamation: _____

Great Amen: _____

Lord's Prayer

Nuptial Blessing and Sign of Peace

Lamb of God: _____

Communion Song(s): *(250 guests or more choose 2 songs, at least one should be congregational)*

Prayer after Communion and Solemn Blessing

Recessional: _____ (Instrumental or Congregational Song)

LITURGY PLANNER – No Mass

Bride: _____ Groom: _____

Bride Phone #: _____ Groom Phone #: _____

Rehearsal Date/ Time: _____ Wedding Date/ Time: _____

Musicians and contact information:

1) _____ Stipend: _____

2) _____ Stipend: _____

3) _____ Stipend: _____

of attendants: ____ Children: ____ (Ring bearer / Flower girl)

Power-Point: Y / N

Program Insert: Y/N

Prelude Song(s): _____

ENTRANCE RITE

Processional Song: _____

Collect

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading: _____

Responsorial Psalm: _____ (Sung or spoken)

New Testament Reading: _____

Alleluia/Verse: _____ (Sung or omitted)

Gospel Reading: _____

Homily

RITE OF MARRIAGE

Exchange of Vows and Rings

General Intercessions

Nuptial Blessing

CONCLUSION

[Lord's Prayer] and Final Blessing

Recessional: _____

RECOMMENDED WEDDING MUSICIANS FOR SPIRIT OF LIFE

(Voice) Niki Bernier 426-3069

(Voice) Cindy Doll 226-6154

(Voice) Geri Pomarleau 701-290-3909

(Voice) Sue Schnell 226-0847

(Voice) Jill Sheldon 701-391-7989

(Voice/Guitar) Jess Friesz and Janelle Thomas 663-1927

(Voice/Guitar) Craig Goettle 701-240-6209

(Voice/Piano) Tom and Jenifer Porter 471-0067

(Piano) Nancy Darling 663-1660

(Piano) Michelle Friedt 701-541-4686

OTHER RESOURCES

- 1) For marriage prep information- <http://www.bismarckdiocese.com/ministries/default.asp?ID=331>
- 2) For natural family planning- <http://www.bismarckdiocese.com/ministries/default.asp?ID=375>
- 3) More on marriage- <http://www.bismarckdiocese.com/ministries/default.asp?ID=332>
- 4) <http://foryourmarriage.org/>
- 5) <http://catholicweddinghelp.com/index.htm>