

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH PARISH WEDDING GUIDELINES

Congratulations on your decision to marry in the Catholic faith community of Holy Trinity! God's loving providence has brought you together. May God bless you throughout your married life.

The following guidelines have been prepared for the celebration of your marriage at Holy Trinity Church. The purpose of these guidelines is to anticipate any questions you may have, explain the necessary steps involved, and cover several practical concerns. The hope is that each wedding celebration will be an attractive and prayerful occasion. The regulations and liturgical directives of the Church, particularly those of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati will be observed.

Scheduling

To celebrate marriage at Holy Trinity Church, one party or the family of the bride or groom must be registered and active parish members. You have already contacted the Parish Office, however, only after your initial meeting with the pastor/deacon can the date selected be considered actually set.

It is the responsibility of the priest/deacon who will perform the wedding ceremony to ascertain your freedom and readiness to marry as well as to guide you during the preparation process. Should there be any special or unusual circumstances you might be required to meet with Catholic Social Services (e.g., pregnancy, couples under the age of 20, outside pressures to marry). You will find a "timeline" for the preparation process in this booklet and an explanation of the individual steps in this process.

Due to our regular weekend Mass schedule, no wedding is usually scheduled any later than 12:30 PM on Saturday afternoon and only at 6:30 PM Saturday evening. Because the season of Lent is a penitential time, a wedding celebration is considered inappropriate. If, for some reason this is the only time you can schedule your wedding, it is necessary to discuss this with the priest/deacon and receive permission. Advent, although not so penitential in character as Lent, is a time of preparation for Christmas. Weddings are not usually scheduled during this season. Although most weddings take place on Saturday, there is no prohibition against celebrating a wedding on a Friday.

Normally, one of the parish priests or deacons will witness your wedding. However, if you have a special relationship with another priest or deacon, he is welcome to preside at the celebration. In order to do so, you must ask permission of the pastor. It must be understood that this person will be responsible for all marriage preparation with you.

A Few Words about Marriage

Although a large portion of this booklet is devoted to the wedding ceremony, marriage in the Catholic Church means far more than just a ceremony. First of all, we understand marriage to be a sacrament, one of the special signs through which God becomes present in our lives. When two Christian people marry, their commitment and love for each other becomes a visible sign of God's love for us. The bride and groom are the actual ministers of the sacrament; the priest or deacon is there simply to receive the vows in the name of the Church. It is because of the sacred character of marriage that such care and attention is given not just to the wedding ceremony but to the preparation for married life. Marriage is a lifetime commitment.

The Preparation Process

At the initial meeting with the priest/deacon, you will be given a packet of materials. Included in this is a brochure explaining the FOCCUS instrument. People often - and incorrectly - refer to this as a “marriage test.” As the brochure explains, it is simply an instrument, a tool, to help you better understand each other and to aid the person helping to prepare you for marriage.

The results of your FOCCUS will be shared and discussed with you during several meetings with the priest, deacon or training couple. Following those meetings the priest or deacon will discuss the questionnaire with you.

It is required that every engaged couple attend some formal preparation program. Information about these programs will be found in the information packet. The two programs sponsored by the Archdiocese are “Pre Cana” and “Engaged Encounter.”

To help you plan the wedding ceremony, you have received a booklet containing suggested Scripture readings and various prayers used in the ceremony. A member of our parish Wedding Ministry will meet with you and offer assistance in planning your ceremony. You will find some notes and ministry suggestions for the ceremony contained in this booklet, as well.

Facilities

The facilities at Holy Trinity Church are somewhat limited but are available for your convenience. There is no “bride’s room” as such. However, Trinity Hall (room directly beneath the church) serves well in this capacity. Please be aware that there are no bathing facilities in Trinity Hall. This facility is not available for use prior to 4:00 PM for an evening wedding. **It must be reserved through the Parish Office.** This should be done as soon as the date for the wedding is set. You will be given a key for Trinity Hall at the rehearsal. This must be returned at the time of the wedding. Since Trinity Hall is used by many groups and organizations on a regular basis, it should be left in good order.

Ministries Involved in the Wedding Ceremony

Service is the foremost way in which we demonstrate our commitment to live as members of the Body of Christ. Another word for such service is ministry. Every Church ceremony involves many different persons acting in several capacities or ministries. Weddings offer a special opportunity to involve family members and friends in these ministries.

The following outline details each ministry, including those considered professional (involving standard fees).

Music

Mrs. Alice Barnes is our parish Music Director. She and her husband, Steve, are available to provide

music for weddings. Please contact her as soon as possible. Arrangements should be made with her directly. She will assist you in choosing appropriate music for your wedding ceremony.

Other guest musicians or cantors are welcome with the prior approval of Mrs. Barnes. It is best to talk with her before contacting any other musicians. Guest musicians should be competent and experienced in public performance in a liturgical setting.

Should you wish to engage the services of other musicians, Mrs. Barnes must still be contacted. All music for your wedding must be approved by her. In this kind of situation there is a consultation/service fee involved, since Mrs. Barnes must review the music selected, meet with the musicians, and set up needed equipment.

Archdiocesan guidelines for music at weddings notes that show tunes and popular music are inappropriate at a church wedding. Since your wedding is celebrated in the context of prayer, the music selected should reflect the sacred nature of Christian marriage. Show tunes and popular songs are inappropriate for the ceremony, even as prelude music. The Wedding Reception is the appropriate place for these songs.

It should be remembered that the wedding ceremony, whether celebrated during Mass or not, is always a liturgical ceremony. Thus, it is a communal celebration. Every effort should be made to include the congregation in the ceremony. Any use of a soloist should be confined to prelude music.

Hospitality - the Wedding Ministry

Several Holy Trinity parishioners are involved in this ministry. They will assist you in planning the ceremony, help direct things at the rehearsal, and be present for the wedding itself. These persons are well-skilled in all aspects of wedding celebrations and will be available to answer any questions and calm any fears. Please be aware that these persons provide their services as a ministry, there is no fee attached to the work they do.

Readers

Proclaiming the Sacred Scriptures as well as reading the intercessions is an important aspect of the wedding ceremony. Only those who have done this before or those who are comfortable speaking in public should be considered. Members of the Wedding Ministry can fulfill this ministry for your wedding, if necessary.

Eucharistic Ministers

If your wedding is going to be celebrated within Mass, communion will be given under the 2 forms, Body and Blood of Christ. Again, if there is no one among family members or friends who is a Eucharistic Minister, the Wedding Ministry members can fulfill this ministry.

Servers/Altar Ministers

Normally two servers will be assigned to assist at a Wedding Mass. The servers can be family members or friends who are familiar with this ministry. If you wish the parish to provide servers, please notify the member of the Wedding Ministry (usually Miss Grote) who will plan the ceremony with you. It is customary to offer a gratuity to the servers of \$10.00 each.

Planning the Wedding Ceremony

Marriage is a social event. Christian Marriage is also a faith event. Each element of the wedding liturgy - the Scripture readings, music, the exchange of vows, and the giving and receiving of rings - is a simple and profound expression of faith in God and each other. In planning the ceremony, you should be aware that there are two possible formats - marriage during Mass and marriage outside of Mass. In either format, the wedding ritual remains essentially the same. The basic distinction is the absence of the Eucharistic Prayer and distribution of the Eucharist. The priest or deacon who will preside at the wedding will discuss this with you. You will find an outline of both forms of the wedding liturgy in this booklet.

A member of the Parish Wedding Ministry, usually Miss Grote, will meet with you to assist in planning the ceremony in addition to your meeting with the Music Director. You will find the appropriate telephone contact numbers at the end of this booklet.

Within recent years the “unity candle ceremony” has become very popular in the United States. Its origin remains cloudy but its popularity is quite evident. This is a good example of how “traditions” surrounding certain events develop. While not officially a part of the Catholic marriage ceremony, this does have some level of symbolism and meaning and is permitted at wedding ceremonies in Holy Trinity Church.

If you intend to incorporate the “candle ceremony” into your wedding ceremony, the liturgy planner will discuss this with you. At a point early in the ceremony, the parents of the bride and groom are invited to come forward to light a candle representative of the gift of life they have given to their child. Following the exchange of vows, the bride and groom take the light from these two candles to light one separate candle, representative of their new life together. **It would be most appropriate for the bride and groom to use the candles given to them at baptism.**

Decorating

Seasonal liturgical decor already in place cannot be removed for wedding liturgies. Be aware of the Church’s liturgical seasons when selecting the date for your wedding. Remember that the church is its own unique worship environment; as such it does not require extravagant decoration.

Candles in the aisles are not permitted.

If an aisle runner is desired, it is obtained through the florist. The length of the center aisle is approximately one hundred (100) feet, if measured from the Montgomery Avenue doors to the bottom step in front of the altar.

No decorations are ever placed directly on the altar or ambo (pulpit).

Any decorations placed on the ends of the pews may not be secured with any kind of tape as this removes the finish from the pews. The parish has special hangars for such decorations. These cannot

be placed until the conclusion of an earlier liturgy.

Flowers certainly enhance the festive atmosphere of a wedding. These are your responsibility. Flowers should never be distracting or placed in such a way as to become an obstacle to the ceremony. **Remember that simplicity is always best.** We would like you to leave your flower arrangements in the church. By doing so, your celebration will enhance the worship of the entire community over the weekend.

All decorations other than flowers should be removed from the church as soon as possible after the wedding. Holy Trinity Parish cannot be responsible for any lost property.

Please remind your florist to contact the Parish Office to make arrangements for any floral deliveries.

Photography/Videotaping

Selecting a photographer or videographer is an important concern for every couple planning a wedding. It is important that the person(s) you choose be familiar with some simple regulations. First of all, a prayerful atmosphere must be maintained at all times. Anything that intrudes upon this or interrupts the ceremony is inappropriate. The photographer should be positioned in a way that does not call attention to him/her. The use of flash equipment during the ceremony is not permitted.

Posing for photographs after the ceremony is the usual method in which photographers are able to capture those “right moments.” **Please advise the photographer that there is a time limit of one hour after the ceremony for picture-taking.** A separate paper has been provided to you to give to the photographer, detailing regulations for photography at Holy Trinity Church. Please remind this person to consult with the presider before the wedding.

The same restrictions for still photographers apply to videographers. In addition, no cables or wires can be used that would pose a safety hazard. No taping of wires is permitted. The videographer should be positioned so as to be unobtrusive. The best position is in the choir loft, but this cannot interfere with the musicians.

Equipment can only be brought into church and set up after a prior liturgy is concluded. Equipment must be removed after the wedding.

Documents

A recent baptismal certificate is necessary for any Catholic marrying in the Church. The parish will secure this document but you must be able to tell the Parish Office where and when you were baptized. Both parties must be free to marry. If either of you was previously married, proof of your freedom to marry must be presented. This should have been discussed with the priest at the initial meeting.

A valid Ohio marriage license must be obtained. The license is valid for sixty (60) days.

The Rehearsal

Normally, rehearsals are conducted by a member of the parish Wedding Committee or the clergyman performing the ceremony. Rehearsals are generally scheduled for 6:00 or 6:30 PM on Friday evening

(or the evening preceding the wedding). Promptness is a courtesy as well as a sign of respect. Please remember that the members of the Wedding Committee are volunteers and view their role as a ministry. **The rehearsal will be scheduled for a one hour time period.** The rehearsal time and date should be scheduled through the Parish Office.

Much of the anxiety surrounding rehearsals can be alleviated by planning ahead. All of the particulars of the liturgy should have been discussed and formulated prior to the rehearsal. Determine the partners in the wedding party beforehand. Let each member of the wedding party know who his/her partner will be. Stress to them the importance of arriving at the church **on time**. Since the rehearsal will be scheduled for only one hour, if your wedding party is late in getting assembled, this will eliminate time from the rehearsal.

Please be aware that young children, although playful and energetic, do not always feel comfortable cast in the role of “little adults.” Remember that this is a religious ceremony and the entrance is a liturgical procession. No child younger than five years old should be included in the wedding party. Since dropping flower petals in the aisle is not permitted and, unless the ring bearer really is carrying the rings, such attendants are not really necessary.

Other Concerns

The wedding party should be assembled at the church at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the time of the ceremony. This will allow sufficient time for everyone to be in place and able to enter into the joy of the occasion, instead of attending to last-minute details.

It is not permitted to throw rice, confetti, or bird seed. Flower girls should not strew petals onto the floor. These things require janitorial services which are unavailable on the weekends.

Receiving lines are inappropriate after a wedding. The proper time for this is either prior to the wedding itself or at the reception.

Please remember that the church is a sacred place where the community gathers for worship. It is not a stage for an event. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are permitted in the church or on the grounds (this includes Trinity Hall). **Violation of this rule may result in your marriage being postponed or cancelled at the discretion of the minister.**

Programs are useful aids for worship. The member of the Wedding Ministry who will assist you in planning the ceremony can guide you in putting a program together.

As there are no janitorial services provided during the weekend, kindly appoint some friends or spouses of wedding party members to assist in cleaning up the church after the ceremony.

Outlines for the Wedding Liturgy

The celebration of Marriage within a Mass

Prelude Music
Entrance Procession
Gathering Song
Greeting/Introduction
Lighting of Candles by Parents (optional)
Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word:

Scripture readings, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel, Homily

Marriage Ritual
Exchange of vows and rings
Lighting of Candle by Bride and Groom (optional)

Universal Prayer (Intercessions)

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Presentation of Gifts
Eucharistic Prayer
Lord's Prayer
Nuptial Blessing
Sign of Peace
Distribution of Communion

Concluding Ritual
Prayer
Concluding Blessing
Recessional

The Celebration of Marriage outside of Mass

Prelude Music

Entrance Procession
Gathering Song
Greeting/Introduction
Lighting of Candles by Parents (optional)
Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word:

Scripture readings, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel, Homily

Marriage Ritual
Exchange of vows and rings
Lighting of Candle by Bride and Groom (optional)

Universal Prayer (Intercessions)

Nuptial Blessing

Lord's Prayer

Concluding Blessing

Recessional

Time Line for Preparation (please refer to the separate sheet you have already been given)

1. Contact the Parish Office, tentative schedule of a date

2. Initial meeting with priest/deacon
3. Taking the FOCCUS evaluative tool
- 4./5./6. Additional meetings with FOCCUS couple and priest or deacon
- 7./8. Meeting with Wedding Ministry member to plan ceremony/ Contact with Mrs. Barnes to discuss music
9. Obtain license
10. Rehearsal

Fees and Other Concerns

There is no required fee for weddings. It is customary, however, to offer a donation to the parish. An offering of \$100 for the use of the Church facilities for your wedding would be appropriate.

If the parish provides servers for a Wedding Mass, there is a normal gratuity of \$10 for each server.

For the musicians fee please refer to the information packet from Mrs. Alice Barnes for the correct amount. This fee must be included with the church donation, payable to Holy Trinity Church.

Please contact the Parish Office prior to making arrangements for any deliveries (e.g., florist)

If you are using Trinity Hall, you must reserve this through the Parish Office. You will be given a key at the rehearsal. This must be returned to the wedding coordinator at the wedding.

Telephone Numbers: Mrs. Alice Barnes, Music Director
366-4400 (office); 631-0390 (home) Alice.Steve@fuse.net (email)
Miss Jane Grote, Coordinator of Wedding Ministry
351-4369 (home – after hours) jmgrote@hotmail.com (email)