



# *Wedding Guidelines*

St. John the Baptist Parish  
444 St. John Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15239



## *Introduction*

Congratulations! Through your exchange of vows in the celebration of Matrimony, one of seven great sacraments of the Catholic Church, the two of you will embark on life's grandest adventure – the sharing of one life together.

We know that you want everything to go perfectly, and so do we. That's why we at St. John the Baptist Parish have compiled this booklet. In it you will find explanations, expectations, suggestions, and helpful hints to make your wedding day as memorable and meaningful as possible. Through the grace of the Sacrament, may you be drawn closer to each other, closer to the Church and ultimately, closer to God.

## *Initial Meeting with the Priest*

When you are ready to begin your wedding plans, contact the priest at St. John the Baptist Parish at least six (6) months before the wedding to schedule an appointment. No wedding date can be confirmed over the phone. If you would like to invite a priest other than the priest at St. John the Baptist to preside at your wedding liturgy, either an initial interview must be conducted by the priest at St. John the Baptist, or the visiting priest must contact a priest at St. John the Baptist.

## *Pre-Cana Instruction*

As a concerned couple preparing for the sacrament and life of Marriage, you are required to attend some type of preparation course for this important part of your life.

There are three options available to you; each has different fee/costs:

1. Parish: St. John the Baptist offers a Saturday workshop in the Spring and Fall. Married couples give presentation on married life in the areas of communication, family, spirituality, sexuality and finances.

2. Diocesan: You may choose to attend a Diocesan Pre-Marriage Reflection Program. These sessions are held on Tuesday and Thursday evening during certain times of the year. Details, fees and registration information is available online at <http://diopitt.org/office-adult-and-family-faith-formation/pre-marriage-classes>.
3. Engaged Encounter: You may choose to attend an Engaged Encounter weekend retreat. It is a quiet weekend, specifically designed to give you the opportunity to talk honestly and intensively about your future together – an opportunity to discover a deeper appreciation of your relationship and God's call to unite in a permanent union, the Sacrament of Matrimony. Details and registration information is available online at <http://diopitt.org/office-adult-and-family-faith-formation/pre-marriage-classes>.



## *Wedding Coordinators*

This is a ministry provided to you on behalf of St. John the Baptist Parish. The coordinators have been trained to help you in the planning for your wedding liturgy.

After you have met with the priest, complete your pre-marriage instruction, (or about six months before the wedding) a coordinator will be assigned to you. The coordinator will call you and introduce herself and provide her phone number to you once she receives the assignment. She will be happy to answer any questions about St. John the Baptist wedding policies.

The Wedding Coordinators conduct the rehearsal and attend the wedding and are available to meet you at the church.



## *Marriage License*

A civil marriage license is required for any marriage in the State of Pennsylvania. You may apply for a license in Allegheny County, PA within 60-days of the wedding. (*Application dates vary by county, so you will want to validate this information for other counties.*) Marriage License Bureau for Allegheny County is located on the First Floor of the City-County Building, 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania ((412) 350-4230). Please bring the license to the priest one week before your wedding.

## *Baptismal Certificate*

If you are not Catholic, yet validly baptized, you will need to provide us with a copy of your baptismal certificate. If you are Catholic, we will need an updated (issued within six-months prior to your wedding) baptismal certificate from the parish of your baptism. The reason that it must be six months prior to the wedding is that the church in which you were baptized also keeps records of all the Sacraments you receive, including marriage. After you are married, a notification will be sent to your church of baptism informing them of your consecrated marriage.

To obtain a copy of your baptismal (and confirmation) certificate, simply phone the church where you were baptized and give them the necessary information. Be sure to tell them you are getting married and need all notations and the parish seal. If you were baptized at St. John the Baptist, no certificate is required.

## *Visiting Priests*

In light of the pastoral nature of these forms, if a visiting priest is presiding, please understand that it will be his privilege to take care of the necessary paperwork, unless he lives out of town, or some other reason makes it impossible. Priests outside of the Diocese of Pittsburgh need special permission from the Diocese well in advance to perform a wedding.

## Flowers and Decorations

Make arrangements for flowers directly with the florist of your choice. Please give them a copy of the *Wedding Florists* instructions (available from the Wedding Coordinator) so that they will be familiar with our parish policies. A few notes...



- If you decide to have a crash (long white runner on which the bride walks) the length of the center aisle is 125 feet.
  - The flowers are left in the church as a sign of thanksgiving for the marriage.
  - Silk or other artificial flower arrangements are not permitted in the sanctuary.
- Additional candelabras may not be used in the sanctuary or elsewhere in the church. The church provides aisle candles. Ask your wedding coordinator about these.

## Photographs

Most couples hire a professional photographer to capture their memories forever. Directions for your photographer are available from the wedding coordinator. The presence of photographers and video equipment is not permitted in the sanctuary before or during the wedding - the altar area/green carpet.

Flash is permitted, but no additional lighting equipment is allowed.

Video cameras may be set in a stationary position well in advance of the liturgy. The areas of the Choir seats near the organ or the handicapped access pews may be used for this purpose – provided no person's view is obstructed and aisles provide access.

Photos of the bride and groom are permitted in the sacristy and bride's room prior to the service.

No photography/video sessions are permitted in the sanctuary areas before or during the wedding. Following the wedding, approximately 30-minutes is allotted for photographs to be taken. The grounds outside the church are recommended for photographs.



Posing group photos of the wedding party at the reception is suggested.

If you are planning a wedding for 2:00 p.m., the wedding party and the guests will need to leave the church property by 3:30 p.m. To save time, we strongly suggest that you not have a receiving line or balloon

release at the church.

## *Altar Servers*

Altar servers will be provided by the parish. If you request specific altar servers, please notify your wedding coordinator. You must have at least one (1) of our parish altar servers, but guest servers from another parish can help.

## *Music*

A Catholic wedding, whether it takes place during the celebration of the Eucharist or in a simple ceremony, should be characterized by dignity, reverence, and joy. It is not only the solemn exchange of vows by the engaged couple, but is also an act of worship in which the bride and groom, along with their family and friends come together to offer thanks and praise and to ask God's blessing in their life together as husband and wife.

Music for use in a wedding liturgy is governed by the same norms as any liturgical celebration – that is, it must be:

*Musically* appropriate (Is the music technically, aesthetically, and expressively good, irrespective of musical style or idiom?)



*Liturgically* appropriate (Is the music's text, form, placement and style congruent with the nature of the liturgy?)

*Pastorally* appropriate (Will it help the assembly pray?)

Songs must highlight the Christian dimension of love

and be appropriate to the liturgy. Accordingly, such secular music as *Make You Feel My Love*; *Let it Be Me*; *My Love for You is Real* and *Here Comes the Bride* are not allowed. Our Music Director will guide you.

In order to ensure that your wedding music be joyous, appropriate and memorable, the following additional guidelines are provided for all weddings at St. John the Baptist:

- An organist is available to you. Contact the parish office for the name and phone number. It is your responsibility to contact the organist and make arrangements with her/him.
- A music planning session is offered to all couples on an individual basis. You must contact the organist to setup your appointment time and date.
- Guest musicians (singers/instrumentalists) are welcome, although they must be of a professional caliber and they should contact the organist and discuss their ability and plans
- Pre-recorded music (including accompaniment tapes or compact discs) are not permitted.



*Rehearsal*

One hour is the customary length of the rehearsal. It will begin promptly at the scheduled time.

The following need to be present at the rehearsal:

- bride and groom
- bride's attendants (bridesmaids)
- groom's men (ushers)
- flower girl and ring bearer (if any)
- readers and other taking part in the liturgy
- parents of the bride and groom

All those involved in the rehearsal are to assemble inside the church and are asked to be respectful.

It is preferable that the bride and groom and the wedding party celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the weeks before rehearsal. Reconciliation is available at St. John the Baptist after 9:00 a.m. Mass each Saturday, at the rehearsal if the priest is available, or by appointment.

*Please note:* No alcohol and/or drugs should be used the day of the wedding and should not be brought onto the property at either the time of rehearsal or wedding liturgy. Use of these may give cause for no wedding or an invalid marriage. The priest will not perform a wedding when signs of alcohol or drug use is present.

## *Other Ceremonies*

The Wedding Liturgy of the Church is already rich in symbolism and ceremony. The Unity candle, extended Sign of Peace and presentation of flowers to the Holy Family are all ceremonies that have been unofficially added to the Church's liturgy. If a Unity candle is desired, the Bride and groom provide it.



## *Readers*

You will have the opportunity to choose from a number of Scripture readings during your planning session with the Wedding Coordinators. You may wish to ask one or two people to serve as proclaimers of the Word. They should be persons who believe in the Word of God, have the desire to perform this ministry for your wedding service and to have the gifts necessary to proclaim the Word of God with reverence and competence. Please give your readers copies of the readings well in advance. Readers will attend the rehearsal to practice the readings in the church and become familiar with our customs, sound system and environment.

## *Offerings*

The offerings are as follows totaling \$375:

Church	\$100
Organist	\$150
Cantor	\$ 75
Coordinator(s)	\$ 30
Server (2 @\$10)	\$ 20
Isle Candles	\$ 45 (optional)

Please write a check for the full amount and bring it to the church office one week prior to the wedding (with your marriage license); or have each fee in a separate envelope and give them directly to the Wedding Coordinators at the rehearsal. These fees are all that is required. Costs of additional musicians and soloists would be extra. Please ask the Music Director for further details.

## *Special Note*

Due to our weekend Mass schedule, and for the safety of those attending, the throwing of rice, bird seed, confetti, etc. is not permitted. Bio-degradable helium balloons may be released.

## *Parking*

Please inform your guests that parking is available in the large parking lot. The circles at either entrance of the church building are for handicapped parking, drop-off, and emergency vehicles only. The Church is handicapped accessible, with a ramp at the rear and through the Annex hallway in the front.

## *Directions from Monroeville*

Take PA 48/Orange Belt follow north through first traffic light to a stop sign at the Jobe Funeral Home. After passing Jobe Funeral Home (not at it) bear right onto Center Road, for a few miles, passing Boyce Park entrances. After a long winding hill, turn right at the stop sign onto Saltsburg Road (Rt. 380). Take the next left (leaving the Orange Belt) at the “y” onto Unity Trestle Road. St. John the Baptist ins located 1.3 miles on the left.

## *Directions from Rt. 28 or Freeport Road*

Follow the Yellow Belt- which is Freeport Rd. turn left onto Hulton bridge continuing to follow the yellow Belt. Turn slight right onto Hulton Rd. and go about 2.1 miles. Turn slight right onto Milltown Rd. which will become Leechburg Rd. Turn right onto Unity Trestle Rd. and follow pass small shopping center. Turn right into St. John the Baptist property.

# *Wedding Preparations Check List*

**Six months** before your wedding date:

- Meet with the Priest twice
- Complete your pre-marriage instruction
- Obtain your Baptismal Certificate
- Arrange for flowers, photographer, etc.

**One month** before your wedding date:

- Obtain your marriage license
- Meet with your Wedding Coordinator/Organist:
  - Select Wedding Songs
  - Select Readings
  - Schedule rehearsal time (if not done already)
  - Discuss wedding requests; i.e., other ceremony(ies), specific altar server(s)

**One week before** your wedding date:

- Provide parish office with your marriage license
- Provide parish office with separate offering envelopes for the Church, organist, altar servers, cantor and new isle candles.

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