

*Marriage Preparation and
Planning Guide*

St. Gabriel Parish

*Congratulations and best wishes on your engagement
and decision to marry at St. Gabriel Parish!*

The community of St. Gabriel shares your joy at the prospect of your upcoming marriage. We offer you our support and encouragement as you prepare for your marriage. We will do all that we can to help you prepare not only for a beautiful wedding day but also for a successful marriage. A wedding day is a very important day in life. A marriage is a lifetime.

The belief of the Catholic Church is that marriage is a lifelong commitment of love, a union that is most solemn and serious. Because God is the author of marriage, it is of its very nature a holy institution that requires that both individuals enter into it without reservation and in complete freedom.

The Sacrament of Marriage is conferred by the bride and the groom upon each other. The priest or deacon serves as the official witness of the Church in this sacrament. The Sacrament of Marriage is part of the faith journey of the bride and groom. It should be celebrated in the parish community to which one or both parties belong and have a spiritual connection.

The bond of a previous marriage is an impediment to marriage in the Catholic Church, unless the bond has been broken by the death of a spouse, or the marriage has been annulled. Questions about a former marriage should be discussed with the pastor as early as possible in the process of planning.

In order to help you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage, we have put together the following information which we hope will help to make this special time go smoothly and efficiently.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Parish Office (262-628-1141). Know that you are in our prayers during this special time of preparation.

Getting Started

Couples requesting to be married at St. Gabriel should contact the Parish Office at least six months prior to setting the wedding date. There are many elements involved in marriage preparation and it normally takes several months to complete all the elements.

Parish Membership

Marriage is a celebration of the church and a commitment made in faith. Therefore, usually one member of the engaged couple is a registered and an active member of St. Gabriel Parish. Registration for new parishioners at St. Gabriel is available on the 3rd Sunday morning of each month and/or by appointment at the parish office.

Scheduling Weddings

Weddings at St. Gabriel Parish are normally celebrated on Saturday afternoon, no later than 2 p.m. Because of the penitential nature of Lent, weddings are discouraged during the Lenten season.

Marriage Preparation

As a community of faith, St. Gabriel is committed to helping engaged couples prepare for their wedding liturgy as well as married life. To accomplish this goal, several steps are followed:

SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DATE:

- The couple will contact the parish priest or deacon to set up an initial meeting. At this meeting, personal history will be discussed and the date for the wedding may be confirmed.

- Shortly after the initial interview, the engaged couple are paired with a Marriage Mentor Couple from St. Gabriel Parish. The role of the Marriage Mentor Couple is to assist the engaged couple with the FOCCUS (Facilitaion Open Couple Communication Understanding and Study) inventory. Through a series of statements, this tool assists the engaged couple to explore major issues that arise in marriage.
- Using the information gleaned from the FOCCUS inventory, the Marriage Mentor Couple meets several times with the engaged couple to discuss important aspects of married life and to offer encouragement and personal insight.

THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING

- **At least three months** prior to the wedding, couples participate in an *Engaged Enrichment Conference*.
- The couple contacts the priest for a second meeting to complete the required forms and begin planning the wedding liturgy. To assist in the preparation of the wedding liturgy, the couple is given the book *TOGETHER FOR LIFE* by Fr. Joseph M. Champlain. This book is a wonderful resource to assist in the selection of readings, vow formulas, prayers of the faithful.
- The couple then contacts the Director of Music and Liturgy to complete the liturgy planning, plan wedding music and arrange for musicians.

Required Documents

- A Certificate of Baptism issued within the last six months is required for Catholics. To acquire a baptismal certificate, each party writes or calls the church where you were baptized and ask them to send a record of your baptism.
- Civil License from the state of Wisconsin. Both parties must be at least 18 years old. Both parties must present themselves at the Office of the Clerk of Court for Washington County, WI. The license may be applied for anytime prior to the wedding. However, there is a six-day waiting period from the time of application to the issuing of the license.

If one or both of the parties is coming from out of state for the wedding, you can ask for a waiver of the waiting period when you apply for your license. The license is valid for 30 days.

Wedding Fees

Church

There is no set wedding fee to be married at St. Gabriel Church. However, couples may give a free will offering to St. Gabriel Church, according to their means.

Musician(s)

Fees for the service of musicians (organists, vocalists, instrumentalists) are negotiated between the couple and musicians. Fees for all musicians are due on the day of the wedding.

Wedding Liturgy Planning

Choice of Rite

In consultation with the priest who will preside at the wedding, the couple will determine if the marriage will be celebrated within a Mass or within in a Liturgy of the Word. The determining criteria will center around what form of liturgy will enable a particular wedding assembly to celebrate with the bride and groom. Usually, when both parties are Catholic, the wedding may take place in a Mass. The wedding of a Catholic and a person who belongs to another Christian denomination or practices another faith, usually takes place within a Liturgy of the Word.

In addition to choice of rite, there are several places within the liturgy which the couple have options to choose from. These include:

- The first reading (Old Testament)
- The second reading (New Testament)
- Gospel reading
- Vows
- Prayers of the Faithful

Selecting these elements is a great way for the bride and groom to prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. We encourage the couple to spend time reading and praying over the scripture selections, discussing the form of vows they want to exchange, and discuss together the prayers they would like to offer in the Prayers of the Faithful.

Liturgical ministers:

The couple will need liturgical ministers for the following tasks:

Lectors (for both a Wedding Mass and a Wedding Liturgy outside of the Mass)

-First reading

-Second reading

-Prayers of the Faithful

The Gospel Reading is proclaimed by the Priest or Deacon. **Please remember to provide a copy of your selected readings to your lector (s) in advance so they may practice.**

Gift bearers (Mass only). Choose 2-3 people to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine during the preparation of the gifts.

Eucharistic Ministers (Mass only.)

The bride and groom assist the priest in the distribution of Communion. For a Mass where there is a large crowd, additional ministers for Communion may be needed.

Appendix 1 contains sample wedding programs, displaying the appropriate elements and format for Catholic wedding programs.

Planning Wedding Music

Music is an integral part of every Catholic liturgy. It is a form of prayer that allows the community to more fully participate in the liturgy. Music for any wedding, whether it is a Mass or Rite of Marriage within a Liturgy of the Word, should enhance participation and serve the actions and movements of the liturgy.

All wedding music arrangements are to be coordinated through the parish Director of Music and Liturgy at St. Gabriel, no later than two months prior to the wedding. Outside musicians (organists, instrumentalists, cantors) may be used for weddings at St. Gabriel, with the approval of the Director of Music. In addition to assisting the couple with the selection of appropriate wedding music, the Director of Music can also assist couples with the formatting of the wedding program.

Music resources and song suggestions

The hymnal used for liturgical celebrations is *BREAKING BREAD* (Oregon Catholic Press). This hymnal contains many song selections familiar to most wedding guests.

Prelude Music:

This music, prior to the beginning of the liturgy, can be instrumental, vocal, or both. All types of Christian music are appropriate here: classical, semi-classical and contemporary. In a Catholic wedding liturgy, vocal solos are most appropriate as part the Prelude Music.

Processional and Recessional Music

Couples may choose either a congregational hymn or instrumental for both of these parts of the wedding liturgy. **It is preferable that one musical selection be used for the entirety of the Processional of the Bride and Groom and the Wedding Party.**

Responsorial Psalm:

This is a psalm text that is sung immediately following the First Reading. The cantor sings the verses while the congregation is invited to sing the refrain.

Gospel Acclamation:

This is sung following the Second Reading, as the priest stands to read the Gospel.

Preparation of the Gifts:

During the Preparation of the Gifts, music may be instrumental or a vocal solo. Whether instrumental or vocal, the music during the Preparation should end once the bread and wine are offered.

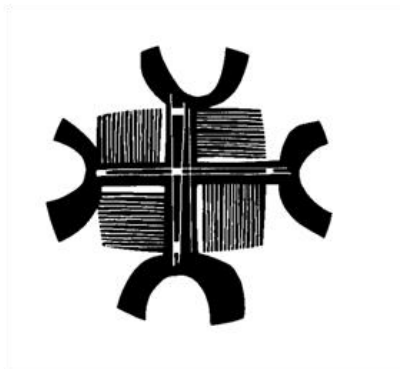
Eucharistic Acclamation:

The Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Amen and Lamb of God are sung if a wedding Mass is celebrated.

Communion Song:

During the Wedding Mass, the communion song needs to be congregational singing, as it is our sign of unity. Songs with an easily sung refrain work best for Communion.

Appendix 2 contains a listing of music suggestions for the Wedding Liturgy



Wedding Rehearsal

The time of the wedding rehearsal is scheduled between the couple and the priest presiding at the liturgy. Normally, wedding rehearsals take place on Friday evenings. All decisions pertaining to the wedding liturgy must be made prior to the rehearsal. These decisions include music, participation of parents, liturgical ministers, procession etc. *The couple should bring the marriage license to the wedding rehearsal.*

Respect for Church Property

In a spirit of respect and good stewardship, food or drink are not allowed in the church proper, meeting rooms or the Gathering Space. *Note: Use of alcoholic beverages on church premises (including the parking lot) before, during and after the wedding and/or wedding rehearsal is forbidden.*

It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to assign someone to return the church to its proper order following the liturgy, by checking the pews for any items left by guests, the removal of the Unity Candle as well as disposal of any flower boxes or programs.

Environment

Because of its prayerful and artistic design, St. Gabriel Church is a beautiful worship space for liturgical celebrations. Decorations that have been put in the church as part of the parish's observance of a liturgical feast or season may not be removed during weddings. We ask that engaged couples respect and observe the following guidelines regarding church environment:

Pew bows may be used in the church. Plastic clips or ribbons should be used to fasten pew decorations. No tape of any kind is allowed.

Aisle runners are not recommended because of the church's sloped aisle and its potential for guests to trip and fall, thus causing a safety hazard.

Only **candles** used for liturgy and presently in church may be used. Candles may not be placed on the pews or in the aisles.

The **throwing of rice, confetti or birdseed** either inside or outside the church is forbidden.

Unity Candle: The lighting of a Unity Candle is not an official element of the Rite of Marriage. It is optional. If used, it is the responsibility of the wedding couple to provide the candle and candleholders. The two accompanying candles with which the bride and groom will light the unity candle are to be lighted prior to the wedding liturgy.

Floral arrangements and plants are acceptable for use in the church. Nothing may be placed on the altar or arranged in a manner that inhibits movement around the altar or takes focus away from the important element of the liturgy.

Dressing Rooms

The Bride's Room is located off the Gathering Space, in the entrance to the women's restroom. The groom and groomsmen are encouraged to come to the church already dressed for the wedding liturgy.

Photography and Videography

It is important that photographers and videographers respect the sacred space of the church and the sacred nature of the wedding liturgy and not become a distraction to the priest, the wedding couple, the musicians or the congregation. Therefore, no flash photography is allowed during the wedding liturgy.

Prior to the start of the procession, the videographer should consult with the priest/deacon for the appropriate placement of video cameras. Video cameras should be placed in a stationary position after the processional.

When Saturday weddings are celebrated, wedding photography and other activities must be completed by 3:30 p.m. For this reason, it may be necessary for the couple to postpone greeting guests through a receiving line until the reception.

APPENDIX 1

Program Sample for Mass

Prelude Music

Introductory Rite

Processional Music:

Canon in D

Pachelbel

Greeting

Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Tobit 8: 4b-8

Responsorial Psalm: The Lord is kind and merciful

Haas

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12: 31-13:8a

Gospel Acclamation: Celtic Alleluia

Walker

Gospel: Matthew 5: 13-16

Homily

Rite of Marriage

Statement of Intentions

Exchange of Vows and Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Lighting of Unity Candle (optional)

Nuptial Blessing

Prayers of the Faithful

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts: Here I Am, Lord #322

Schutte

Eucharistic Acclamations

The Lord's Prayer

The Sign of Peace

Communion Hail Mary, Gentle Woman #706

Landry

Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rite

Final Blessing

Presentation of Couple

Recessional:

Ode to Joy

Beethoven

Program Sample for Liturgy of the Word

Prelude Music

Introductory Rite

Processional Music: Canon in D

Pachelbel

Greeting

Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Tobit 8: 4b-8

Responsorial Psalm: The Lord is kind and merciful

Haas

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12: 31-13:8a

Gospel Acclamation: Celtic Alleluia

Walker

Gospel: Matthew 5: 13-16

Homily

Rite of Marriage

Statement of Intentions

Exchange of Vows and Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Lighting of Unity Candle (optional)

Nuptial Blessing

Prayers of the Faithful

The Lord's Prayer

The Sign of Peace

Concluding Rite

Final Blessing

Presentation of Couple

Recessional:

Ode to Joy

Beethoven

Appendix 2

Suggested song selections for Wedding Liturgy

(Songs numbers from *Breaking Bread* hymnal)

Processional and Recessional

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Bach)	Ode to Joy (Beethoven)
Trumpet Voluntary (Clarke)	Trumpet Tune (Purcell)
Canon in D (Pachelbel)	Water Music (Handel)

Responsorial Psalm

Ps. 128 Blest Are Those Who Love You (GIA Publications)
Ps. 145 I Will Praise Your Name (GIA Publications)
Ps 103 Loving and Forgiving #670
Ps. 118 This Day Was Made By the Lord #611
 Sing to the Mountains #554
Ps 80 We Praise You verse 6-7
Ps 136 God's Love is Everlasting #619
Ps 24 I Have Loved You #628
Ps 34 I Will Always Thank the Lord #771

Communion Songs

One Bread, One Body #356	I am the Bread of Life #338
Taste and See #328	The Supper of the Lord #336
Pan de Vida #340	Panis Angelicus #360
Eat This Bread #345	To Be Your Bread #321

Songs Suitable for Congregational Singing (for Gather Songs or Preparation of the Gifts)

When Love is Found #677	Where There Is Love #678
Glory and Praise to Our God #578	God, Who Created Hearts to Love #675
Here I Am, Lord #378	Hail Mary, Gentle Woman #706

*Gracious and loving God,
We give you thanks for the love we share,
And for bringing us together.*

*As we prepare for our wedding,
Help us to grow in mutual respect
And love for one another.*

*Help us to prepare for our wedding
By an increase of generosity to others
And by the prayers we make for a
Long and happy life together.*

*Bless the many people who are helping us
To prepare for our wedding.
May we remain joyful and in good-humor
As the day draws near.*

*Guide us to always live in love with each other.
Teach us to love like Christ
All the days of our life together.
Amen.*