

**WEDDING GUIDELINES  
FOR THE CELEBRATION  
OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE  
IN PRINCE OF PEACE CLUSTER**

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*“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.”*

*-- Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1601*

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# Welcome!

## Introduction

*We welcome you to Prince of Peace Cluster. The Church rejoices in the mutual love you have discovered and we commend you for your desire to declare and seal it publicly and permanently in the sacrament of Matrimony. In this way your life and love together will serve those around you as a sign that Jesus Christ is alive and present to the world. This sacred covenant of marriage is a symbol of the union between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:21-32). In Christ, God has made a covenant with us, sealed by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Preparation for marriage is a time of spiritual growth together with God.*

### *The Catholic Faith Community*

Sacraments belong not just to the *individual*, but also to the *whole* Church. Indeed, it is the local community, making visible the Church, which celebrates the sacraments. The community of the Prince of Peace Cluster celebrates the love of God manifested in your loving relationship with each other. We thank you for being that grace of God in our lives.

### *An Active Life of Faith*

Sacraments are celebrated and lived within the context of a committed faith community. *The sacrament of marriage is a declaration that these persons are, and intend to be, a part of a parish community, faithfully celebrating Mass on Sunday; celebrating God's forgiveness regularly in Reconciliation; giving evidence of faith in daily living; contributing time, talent and finances to the work of the parish; and respecting the teachings of the Church, especially in sharing faith with any children born to this union. Couples presenting themselves for marriage in the Catholic Church are expected to be registered, practicing members of a faith community. If the couple is not currently registered or active at the time they begin their preparation, we ask them to do this as soon as possible.*

Your life of faith is not limited to the two of you alone, but extends into the future with any possible children. This obligation to accept children and educate them in the faith implies that Catholic parents be confirmed in the same faith in which they intend to raise their children. It is assumed that Catholics preparing for marriage have already received the sacrament of Confirmation. If you are not confirmed, you might check with Prince of Peace Cluster Ministry regarding our Confirmation program. Again, requesting the sacrament of Marriage while not actively practicing the Catholic faith is contrary to the very nature of the sacrament.

### *Cohabitation/Living Together*

Cohabitation is commonly understood as the situation where a couple has been living together for an extended period of time, and there is recognition by family, friends, and those who know them that they share a household. Some in our society have accepted these arrangements as a "sign of the times," due to the uncertainty of relationships, economic factors, and the desire to establish sexual compatibility.

When a man and woman publicly live together before marriage, they are representing values contrary to the teachings of Christ and His Church. Sexual relations are a sign and symbol of a total gift of one person to another. That total gift is made in the marriage vows in which two people give themselves publicly and irrevocably to each other for life. To engage in sexual relations and cohabitation before making that formal, public, permanent gift and commitment in marriage is to falsify the sacred symbol that sexual intercourse is.

God's laws regarding sexual behavior are not whimsical or arbitrary. God's laws recognize the profound sacredness of our sexuality and are directly opposed to the attitudes and societal norms that compromise this great gift of sexuality. Yet even secular studies reveal the wisdom of living in accord with God's law of fidelity. **Such studies indicate divorce rates in excess of 80% for couples who do cohabit! This, coupled with the current divorce rate of nearly 50%, is a very sobering thought!**

Having chosen to live together, couples have significantly compromised their ability to witness the love of Christ at a time when their love is the center of the Church's attention. In fact, by choosing to live together outside of marriage, they have significantly and publicly removed themselves from full communion with the body of the faithful and are no longer able to receive Holy Communion.

Any couple who has made the decision to live together is strongly urged to prayerfully reconsider their decision, searching their hearts in the light of God's revealed truth made known through the Church. Ask whether God in Christ Jesus is calling them to a deeper and holier form of love. Apart from the permanent commitment, this love necessarily implies abstinence from sexual relations and stepping away from a life situation which makes the honest self-reflection more difficult to realize.

*Reminder, because of the seriousness of this decision, those living together outside of marriage should not receive Holy Communion.*

### *Spiritual Preparation*

As individuals and as a couple, you need to be spiritually prepared for two to become ONE. It goes without saying, that the best marriage preparation is a couple who prays together! Disciples of Jesus Christ are persons of prayer. We encourage you to grow in your prayer life, not only as individuals, but also together as a couple. Learning to pray together is important in growing in love, forgiveness, and fidelity, and in becoming a sacrament and sign of God's love to others. Call upon the Lord and ask Him to guide your heart in the covenant of love.

One of the most important aspects of preparing for your wedding celebration is choosing the Scripture readings. In choosing the Scripture readings for your wedding, select ones that articulate your understanding of marriage or what you hope your marriage can become. Those who come to your wedding celebration will come to know your hopes and dreams for your marriage through the Scriptures that you have selected. We also suggest that you begin to recite your marriage vows to each other now, in the prayerful preparation for the day on which you pronounce them in public before the Church and your witnesses. The more you become familiar with them, the more you will gain insights into the meaning of those vows for your future married life. By prayerfully reciting them together, you will be prepared to speak them clearly and with heartfelt confidence of the day of your wedding. Sometime before the wedding, we urge the couple to experience reconciliation with God and others in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Additionally, prayer at the beginning of your rehearsal also reminds us that what we do is sacred and of the importance of the step you are about to take.

### *In Summary*

In preparing for a Catholic wedding, you are encouraged to:

- Pray together and alone.
- Be a regular part of a worshipping community.
- Reflect upon the Scriptures for your wedding.
- Receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist regularly.
- Pray at your wedding rehearsal.

## Documentation

Several documents and forms are required for a Catholic marriage to be fully processed. It is easy to look upon paperwork as a simple legal requirement, rather than a part of a symbolic ritual in which a couple manifests their faith, membership in the church, freedom to marry, and openness to God's invitation for children. Records are needed of what takes place in the ritual ceremony of the marriage celebration. The priest preparing you for marriage will help you obtain/complete the following records:

- Baptismal Certificate (for each party)
- Form 1: The Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire
- Form 2: The Affidavit Concerning the Freedom to Marry
- Form 3: Permission and Delegation granted by the pastor
- Form 4: Petition for permission or Dispensation (for interfaith marriages)
- Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter Certificate
- Natural Family Planning Certificate of Completion
- FOCCUS forms
- The *Together for Life* or selection form for the wedding liturgy.
- Civil marriage license – to be brought to the wedding rehearsal.

*Please note: Marriage reservations will not be confirmed before the couple has personally met with the priest and either filled out the paperwork, or received paperwork, completed at their home church. No arrangements are made via email or over the phone. Out-of-town couples are encouraged to contact their local/family parishes. It is presumed that couples presenting themselves for marriage are registered and active in a local parish where they reside. If that is not currently the case, they will be asked to register as part of their marriage preparation arrangements with Prince of Peace Cluster.*

## Quick Reference Checklist

### AT LEAST 10 MONTHS AHEAD OF WEDDING:

- Contact church to book your wedding date and time. This should be done before any other reservations are made.
- Register for marriage preparation programs.

### SIX to TEN MONTHS PRIOR:

- Attend your marriage preparation program.
- Decide which Scripture readings are most fitting for your relationship.
- Decide on music for the wedding ceremony and select musicians. Remember to choose a cantor who is familiar with the Catholic Mass or Service. Contact the music director with a list of the music to be sure it is appropriate for a Catholic Mass or service.
- Discuss ceremony ideas with your priest.

### FOUR to SIX MONTHS:

- Contact the parish where the bride and groom were baptized to request baptismal certificates. Have the certificates sent to the parish where the wedding will be held. Baptismal certificates must be issued within six months of the wedding.
- Choose friends or relatives to give readings. Choose people who are comfortable reading in public.

#### TWO to FOUR MONTHS:

- Finalize ceremony Scripture readings, Responsorial Psalm, and music, including the processional and recessional, and make sure musicians have that information.

#### ONE to TWO MONTHS:

- Register for your marriage license and take the license to the parish where the wedding will be held

#### TWO to FOUR WEEKS:

- Design and order (or make) your wedding program once all the ceremonial details are in place.
- Have the priest approve the program before it is printed. The priest will provide a form for the preparation of your program. Please follow it closely.

#### ONE to TWO WEEKS:

- If you have not done so, bring your marriage license to the church office.
- Pay wedding fees to the church office.
- Assign family member(s) or friends(s) to walk through the church and dressing areas after the wedding to be sure no wedding items are forgotten, and to pick up any trash left behind by the guests or the wedding party.
- Create and hand out a schedule or checklist for the wedding day that lets all attendants, relatives, and designated drivers know when they need to be where, and what they need to do.

#### THE DAY BEFORE:

- Have the rehearsal for the ceremony. Give gifts to your attendants and family members to thank them for their support.
- Give a list of payment envelopes to whoever is responsible for paying vendors.

## **Marriage Preparation Programs**

### *Pre-Cana*

The Pre-Cana program enables couples to get to know themselves and their loved one better. Pre-Cana/pre-marriage seminars normally are scheduled for a Friday evening (usually 5:00-10:00 p.m.) and Saturday (usually 9:00 a.m.-3:00p.m.). These day-and-a-half conferences are sponsored at several locations throughout the archdiocese. Presentations are designed around examining issues such as marriage sacramentality, family of origin, finances, communication, sexuality, intimacy, wedding planning, and others. Sessions are presented by a combination of married couples and clergy.

### *Engaged Encounter*

Engaged Encounter is a weekend retreat experience that emphasizes both couple dialogue and couple spirituality. This balance is presented to the engaged couple through the live experiences of married couples. The engaged couple learns through observation, listening, and written dialogue, a powerful form of learning. Information concerning dates, locations, registrations cards, and further details are available from the priest facilitating your marriage preparation. Both Pre-Marriage and Engaged Encounter cover the same basic information but in different formats. Couples need to participate in either Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter.

## *Natural Family Planning*

Natural Family Planning (NFP) refers to the practice of achieving or avoiding pregnancy according to an informed awareness of a woman's fertility. NFP provides a safe, healthy, low cost, highly effective method of planning your family. It is convenient, and it is immediately reversible for achieving or avoiding pregnancy.

NFP promotes better marriages. In practicing NFP, couples find that they communicate more fully and creatively with each other. In addition, sexual self-control can help build marital relationships. Therefore, most couples report that NFP has a positive effect on their marriages. They find that periodic abstinence helps to keep their sexual relationships fresh, improves their communication and gives them a deeper respect for each other.

The practice of NFP helps to develop the same strength of character that is necessary for marital fidelity and lifelong marriage. NFP couples have an extremely low divorce rate. This makes sense because couples who respect the natural moral law, God's order of creation, can expect to enjoy its benefits.

For more information, contact the rectory.

## *FOCCUS*

All couples preparing for marriage at Prince of Peace Cluster take the FOCCUS inventory and are assisted by the priest to use the results to better understand themselves as individuals and as a couple. FOCCUS stands for Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study. This is one of the most helpful tools for marriage preparation today. The results from the inventory are grouped into categories or topics as follows:

1. **Lifestyle Expectations**—this section encourages the couple to surface and examine expectations they have about their roles as husband and wife.
2. **Friends and Interests**—this section leads couples to some understanding of these issues before marriage.
3. **Personality Match**—this section looks at some basic likenesses and differences in the two personality types. It explores how each person perceives and accepts the others' style.
4. **Personal Issues**—this section is intended to help couples discuss specific personal problem areas that they have already identified.
5. **Communication**—this section examines how well the person knows his/her own skills and style of communication. It explores how well one partner is able to share with the other.
6. **Problem Solving**—this section deals with the essential skills necessary to work out with any problem issues.
7. **Religion and Values**—this section examines the extent to which the couple shares a common faith and what day-to-day living of this faith means to them.
8. **Parenting Issues**—the couple will focus on the fears, hopes, and expectations each has for himself/herself and for the other in parenting.
9. **Extended Family Issues**—this section facilitates a couple's understanding and study of how to use their families as a positive bond and support to their relationship.
10. **Sexuality Issues**—this section helps the couple examine the strengths and weaknesses they bring to a marital sexual relationship without either inhibitions about such discussion itself or a magical attitude of "it will take care of itself".
11. **Financial Issues**—this section seeks to facilitate not only good communication and problem-solving skills, but also the examination and sharing of the values that a couple has concerning money.

12. **Readiness Issues**—this section raises the final question of how free and realistic the couple’s decision to marry is, how aware and open they are to what this entails, and how they are approaching their wedding.
13. **Marriage Covenant**—this section is devoted to helping the couple develop their understanding of marriage as covenant.
14. **Family of Origin**—this section helps the couple look at the messages each partner learned while growing up so that they can respond to building their new family.
15. **Dual Careers**—to provide opportunity to discuss good decision-making that will facilitate marriage in a dual-career family.
16. **Interfaith Marriages**—this section will identify potential challenges that are pertinent to a marriage that combines two faith traditions.
17. **Remarried Couples**—to help couples examine “where they are” with the effects of a previous marriage.
18. **Cohabiting Couples**—to help the couple evaluate their relationship in light of their live-in situation.

### *Special Needs*

Some couples have special needs, which may require more paperwork and preparation time than usual. Some of the possibilities include:

1. **Interfaith Couples.** When one of the persons is of a faith tradition other than Catholic, some additional instruction in orientation into the Catholic concepts of faith and marriage is helpful. It is permissible and, in fact, encouraged to include the minister/pastor of another faith tradition, when possible, as a participant in the wedding ceremony of an interfaith couple. For the Catholic party, special permission (dispensation) is required.
2. **Non-Christian/Non-Baptized.** When one of the persons is non-Christian or non-baptized, some additional preparation may be required. Again special permission (dispensation) is required.
3. **Previous Marriage.** When one partner has been married before, divorced, and has not applied for an annulment, there is a waiting period from the time the divorce is finalized to the time that an annulment can be initiated. Even if the individual has been married in another faith tradition, an annulment may still be necessary. An annulment work takes approximately a year to complete. If one of the individuals has been married before and has not applied for an annulment, it is not possible to set a date for the wedding until the annulment has been finalized. This should be the couple’s first concern before attending to their wedding plans.

## **Wedding Ceremony Preparation**

### *Who*

Prince of Peace Cluster will respect the wedding requests of the bride and groom and family members provided they fulfill the required marriage preparation requirements. Couples who are members of parishes outside the Prince of Peace Cluster need the permission of their pastor for a wedding to be celebrated at Prince of Peace Cluster.

### *Where*

Weddings may take place at any of the following member parishes within Prince of Peace Cluster.

- Sacred Heart Church, La Porte City
- St. Mary of Mt. Carmel, Waterloo

- St. Paul's Church, Traer

### *When*

Providing all other requirements are met, all requests will be handled according to the availability of the celebrant and the calendar of Prince of Peace Cluster. Please keep the following in mind:

1. It is Archdiocese of Dubuque policy not to allow weddings to take place on Saturdays after 2:00 p.m. Therefore, weddings will be celebrated in the Prince of Peace Cluster on Friday evenings, Saturday mornings, and Saturday afternoons no later than 2:00 p.m.
2. Wedding rehearsals for Saturday weddings are normally scheduled for the previous Friday evening (5:00, 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00, or 7:30). A rehearsal for a Friday evening wedding may be scheduled on the preceding Thursday evening or Friday noon.

## **Liturgical Arrangements**

### *The Ceremony*

The marriage celebration is at the same time personal and a celebration of the entire Church. Together, the couple and the presiding priest carefully plan a prayerful and meaningful liturgical celebration for the wedding. The *Together for Life* or the *Celebrating Marriage* booklets do an excellent job of informing you about necessary liturgical options and arrangements of the wedding ceremony. *Please refrain from making most liturgical decisions until you meet with the priest, who can serve as a resource to make your day spiritually memorable.*

The reception of Holy Communion is an action signifying oneness in faith and worship. Reception of Holy Communion by Christians not fully united is not permitted by the Catholic Church. While not apologizing for our Catholic faith, it seems more appropriate not to celebrate Eucharist when half of the worshippers cannot receive Communion. Because of this, most interfaith couples choose to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage without the Eucharist.

You will receive additional information from the priest facilitating the preparation of your marriage. Among some notable options are:

- Scripture Readings
- Sanctuary Arrangements/Environment
- Unity Candle
- Procession Options
- Worship Aid
- Flowers to the Blessed Mother

### *Wedding Music*

The music director or priest will be helpful in making decisions about appropriate music for your wedding ceremony. The music you select should be *liturgical*, that is, music that belongs to *Christian worship*. In all ages, there have been great secular love songs that were beautiful and meaningful to couples but were not necessarily appropriate for use in a God-centered worship service. Secular music is never appropriate before, during, or at the end of a marriage celebration in a church. Music chosen should also correspond with the parts of the wedding ceremony and the Scripture readings, since it is the Christian community celebrating in worship. In planning your music, there are certain ideas that should be present in the songs you choose:

- God's love for us
- Our love for God and for those people around us
- Christ being always present in every marriage

Sunday worship is the model for your wedding celebration. Catholic weddings are patterned in the way in which our community celebrates Sunday worship. A wedding is not a theatrical event; it is part of Prince of Peace Cluster's life.

All music needs to be discussed with the designated music director or priest at Prince of Peace Cluster. Additional information is available on a special form containing guidelines and suggestions for wedding music. Generally speaking, it is better to use instrumental music or congregational singing for the processional and recessional rather than the use of a solo. Consider those who will be present at your wedding. As good hosts, select music that would invite their full participation. Refer to the forms given at your prenuptial meeting (I, II, III) for ideas as to where and when music is appropriate and desired. Find out what music is well known and sung where you will be married. Every effort should be made to invite everyone who comes to your wedding to into active participating in the ceremony, and singing is one of the best ways! Be sensitive to the guests.

If there are people from other faith traditions than Catholic invited, choose music that can include them, e.g., it is better to recite the Lord's Prayer than to sing a tune which only a few guests will know. Everyone should normally sing the Gospel Acclamation, the Holy, Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen.

Above all, your musicians must be able to lead the assembly in its sung participation.

#### *Marriage during Mass*

Form I contains the program for liturgical music during a wedding. We strongly suggest singing Mass parts.

#### *Marriage Outside of Mass*

Form II contains the program for liturgical music outside Mass. There are usually two or three hymns in this form.

#### *Marriage between a Catholic and an Unbaptized Person*

Form III contains the program for a marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized person.

#### *Suggested Songs*

The following songs are popular and appropriate for weddings:

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ❖ Abba Father                    | ❖ All My Days                      |
| ❖ Beginning Today                | ❖ Canon in D                       |
| ❖ Come My Way, My Truth, My Life | ❖ El Shaddai                       |
| ❖ God, a Man and a Woman         | ❖ Hail Mary, Gentle Woman          |
| ❖ Joyful, Joyful                 | ❖ Love Divine, All Loves Excelling |
| ❖ On Eagle's Wings               | ❖ One Bread, One Body              |
| ❖ Trumpet Voluntary              | ❖ Ubi Caritas                      |
| ❖ You are Near                   | ❖ Where There is Love              |

This is only a sample list. There are many other song options available. The celebrant must approve all songs. Please keep in mind the sacred nature of the ceremony. Secular music is inappropriate.

Perhaps you have siblings or other relatives whom you would like to include in your ceremony as servers, readers, or gift bearers. Please check with the priest as to age and ability before asking them to be a part of the ceremony.

## Ministers of the Celebration

### *Priest Celebrant*

The priest celebrant's role is to officiate at and witness to the wedding. Because of the communal dimension of the sacrament, the usual celebrant for weddings at Prince of Peace Cluster is the pastor. However, exceptions can be made depending upon circumstances. In an interfaith marriage ceremony, the minister is welcome to participate in a special manner in the celebration. All celebrants are required to observe archdiocesan and parish policy regarding the celebration of the sacraments.

### *Bride and Groom*

The bride and groom's role is to give the sacrament or natural union to each other. They meet each other at the beginning and remain together throughout the ceremony. They march out together at the end of the ceremony.

### *Attendants*

The attendants' role is to witness, to support, and to celebrate with the bride and groom. Remember that a great wedding does not necessarily mean a big wedding with a large number of attendants. There is great beauty in simplicity and moderation! All of your good friends cannot possibly be included in the wedding party. In planning your ceremony, remember that only two witnesses are required. Ordinarily, a good *guideline* for the number of attendants allowed at a wedding is no more than three. Members of the wedding party are always seated with the assembly, while the couple is seated in the sanctuary. Liturgical sensibilities would discourage the use of miniature bride/groom and ring/flower bearers, if you choose to use them, **they should be at least five years old**. Discuss with the priest other options of involving friends and family in the ceremony.

### *Music Minister*

The music minister's role is to lead and engage the assembly in participating fully in your wedding liturgy. You are looking for someone to lead God's people in their song of faith-filled praise and thanksgiving.

When choosing your music minister consider the following:

- You are looking for someone who not only has been blessed with musical talent, but who knows how to help God's people raise their voices in song.
- You are looking for someone who is familiar with Catholic liturgy and the worship of this community. As a norm, the Responsorial Psalm, Alleluia, Holy, and Amen are to be sung if Mass is celebrated, and the Psalm and Alleluia are to be sung in Nuptial ceremony without Mass.
- You are looking for music ministers who will follow archdiocesan and parish policy in regard to music selections.

### *Servers/Readers/Gift Bearers*

The servers' role is to carry water, wine, chalices, the cross, and other items throughout the ceremony. There are ordinarily two servers at a wedding celebration. There should be no more than three servers.

The reader's role is to proclaim God's Word in the Scriptures. Family members and friends often act as readers because of the couple's desire to include them. It is important to remember that your reader should be skilled and qualified. When choosing a reader, please ask these two questions:

1. Can the person read in public? A reader's job is to proclaim the Word of God. Please choose a reader who can read slowly, loudly, and pausing between words to give them impact.
2. Does the reader believe what he/she is reading? It is important to choose readers who believe the word they proclaim.

The reader should be able to rehearse in the church at the microphone before the ceremony. This can happen at rehearsal or while pictures are being taken.

The role of gift bearers is to bring the gifts of bread and wine to the altar of sacrifice. They may bring these gifts to the bride and groom, who may give them to the priest celebrant.

Perhaps you have siblings or other relatives whom you would like to include in your ceremony as servers, readers, or gift bearers. Please check with the priest as to age and ability before asking them to be a part of the ceremony.

#### *Ushers*

The ushers' role is to facilitate the movement of guests to and from their seats, to help guests with special needs, and to assist in preparing and cleaning up the church before and after the ceremony. The ushers are also part of the worshipping community. Ushers should not leave your wedding ceremony to do other duties.

One of the primary roles of the bride and groom is to greet their invited guests. It is appropriate that the wedding couple greet their guests at the entrance of the church rather than usher them out at the end.

#### *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*

The Extraordinary minister's role is to distribute Holy Communion at a wedding Mass. Normally the role of Extraordinary minister is preformed by a minister of Prince of Peace Cluster, but if you wish to provide your own, you may do so. You will need one or two depending on the size of the assembly. Extraordinary ministers must be commissioned ministers from their parish. It should not be the minister's first time distributing the Eucharist.

## **Church Environment**

When planning the environment (decorations) for your wedding, it is well to keep a few good liturgical principles in mind. Consider first the *liturgical season* in which your wedding will take place. If it is during Advent or Lent, you can be relatively sure the church decorations will be in shades of purple. Christmas and Easter are naturally more festive times with more flowers and color. Your wedding environment should work with these seasonal decorations. Seasonal decorations in the churches are not removed for weddings, so please check to see what the environment might be at the time of your wedding. Chances are you will have to add little, if any, additional decorations, other than your own flowers. Church guidelines to keep in mind are as follows:

1. Plan to maintain the simplicity and authenticity of the church. A few well-placed plants are preferable to cut flowers. You may want to check and see what the church may be using closer to the time of your wedding, as well as any seasonal hangings that maybe in use.
2. Floral arrangements are not placed on the altar itself so as to not obstruct the view of the main elements of bread and wine.
3. Taking its roots from pagan superstitions, the white carpet (aisle runner) plays to the prince and princess image seen in the movies. It is an unnecessary expense and adds nothing to the sacramentality of marriage.
4. No tape or any other type of adhesive may be used on the pews in the church; the use of bows is discouraged.
5. Other than candles normally used in the sanctuary area, additional candles are discouraged. Keep in mind that the unity candle is optional and is being used less often at Catholic weddings. Due to the ventilating system in our church, taper candelabra (even when used with plastic) drip heavily and generally are not used at Prince of Peace Cluster. However, candelabras with glass votives work well in our setting. Glass cups and votives should be provided by the wedding party.
6. Tables for gifts/cards may be placed in the lobby.
7. Everything brought into the sanctuary must be removed following the service. The church needs to be left as it was before the wedding.

## Photography

A wedding is a sacred event. Photographing or videotaping the wedding celebration can contribute to the remembering and renewing of this special event and commitment. Since the participation of the couple and the gathered community in the act of worship is primary, the photographing and videotaping are in no way to interfere or detract from the worship experience. Avoid using cameras/camcorders that interfere with a prayerful atmosphere. All video recorders should be in a stationary position in the rear or side of the Church.

A time for taking pictures for your wedding will be scheduled when the wedding date and time are reserved. **An hour is sufficient** for a professional photographer to do a fine job of photographing your wedding party. **Pictures should be completed no later than one hour before the start of your wedding. Pictures will be scheduled either before or after the wedding, but not both.** The superstition of “not seeing the bride before the wedding” is one we do not wish to uphold. The official photographer should contact the celebrant before the wedding for other details.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to see that members of the wedding party conduct themselves properly during pictures. Weddings are, and should be, joyous occasions. But we ask, when in and around the church, that guests conduct themselves accordingly. The presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the church should be respected.

## Church Etiquette

The Church is a place for sacred worship. Please respect this area, noting the following points:

- The Church and any rooms used by the wedding party are non-smoking, non-drinking areas.
- Maintain reverence for the Blessed Sacrament in the Church.
- Conversation and decorum should be respectful and appropriate in this special place.
- No rice, bird seed, confetti or flower petals are permitted. This practice originated in pagan times and was associated with fertility rites. Not only is it inappropriate, but it also present a major maintenance/clean-up problem after the wedding.

- We ask that no food or drink be brought into the church or dressing room areas during rehearsals and the pre-ceremony preparation times. Catholics also need to remember to observe the one-hour Communion fast, so it is much better to have a good breakfast in the morning rather than try to grab something to eat just prior to the ceremony. The church area is a non-smoking, non-alcohol facility.
- Ushers, or others appointed by the couple, should clean up and return the church and dressing room areas to good order *immediately after the wedding*, disposing of boxes, papers, pins, and other discarded material.
- No cell phone use is permitted in the church!

## Rehearsal

The rehearsal is usually held the night before the wedding. It is appropriate to invite the celebrant to the rehearsal dinner, and he will come if time permits.

## Reception

Please let the celebrant know if you wish him to come to the reception. He will be happy to offer a meal prayer if time allows him to attend the reception.

## Liturgical Expenses

Pre-Cana Registration:	\$ 45.00
Engaged Encounter:	230.00
Use of Church Facilities	
Parishioner:	200.00
Non-Parishioner:	300.00
Mass Servers:	5.00 each
<u>Music Minister:</u>	<u>75.00 minimum</u>
Total Expenses	\$560.00 - 660.00

## Conclusion

Thank you for reading these important guidelines. We hope and pray that your wedding is the beginning of a wonderful chapter in your life. Be assured of our continued, prayerful support as you continue your journey together.

If you have any questions, please contact the cluster office at: 319-478-2222

Our office is located at: 1102 Walnut St.  
Traer, IA 50675

God bless you.

Prince of Peace Cluster

Wedding Guidelines  
Spring 2013