

Holy Family Catholic Church Wedding Guidelines

The celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony is a gift of God's grace which is rooted in the assembly of the Church. ; it is not a private family function, nor is it a social affair or a personal expression of your love for one another. As a Sacrament, it is an action of the entire Church in whose presence you commit yourselves to one another. From beginning to end the wedding liturgy is an act of worship, of praise and thanks – and with every effort to involve everyone in attendance as much as possible. It is much more than performance or spectacle with passive observers.

In light of this, we have developed a set of guidelines and procedures for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony at Holy Family. This is to ensure that the sacrament, which you have asked to celebrate with us, be not only an unforgettable moment in your lives but also of the best theological and liturgical quality.

- I. Sacramental Marriage
 - a. The sacramental nature of marriage is a shared journey through life in which two people support each other in faith, hope, and love.
 - b. Together, husband and wife minister to each other in their support and encouragement on the Christian journey and minister to the rest of the Church and the world in their witness to the living out of that love.

- II. Timeline
 - a. Ideally, contact with the parish to facilitate reservation of wedding date and preparation will take place no less than nine months prior to the wedding;
 - b. Upon contact with the parish, bride and groom will be sent:
 - i. Premarital checklist
 - ii. Holy Family Catholic Church Wedding Guidelines
 - iii. Timeline;
 - c. Available dates/times for weddings
 - i. Only one wedding will be scheduled on Saturdays, beginning by 10:30a and the Church being cleared and ready for weekly confessions at 3:00p.
 - ii. Weddings may be scheduled other days of the week; please discuss time availability with the parish pastor/deacon.
 - d. A date may be tentatively scheduled with the first contact and confirmed when certain initial criteria are met. If a second party expresses interest in that date, three weeks will be allowed to complete the confirmation requirements.
 - e. A wedding date will be considered confirmed when:
 - i. A face-to-face meeting has occurred with either the pastor or deacon:
 1. This is necessary regardless of whether marriage will be officiated by Holy Family presiders or an outside officiant;

2. At this meeting the prenuptial questionnaire will be completed with the pastor or deacon;
 3. A copy of "Together for Life" is given with a brief introduction.
 4. A copy of "In Perfect Union: Living the Sacrament of Marriage," published by the Bishops of Wisconsin (2013) is given.
- ii. A plan for completion of marriage preparation is submitted, including timeframe for completion.
 - iii. Should an annulment of a previous marriage be required for either or both parties, the annulment must be obtained, including final documentation, before the wedding date can be confirmed.¹
 - iv. A facility fee is paid to Holy Family Catholic Church. For current, active and practicing members, the amount is \$200; an amount of \$325 is set for non-registered or occasional parish members. In the event of cancellation, this amount will be refunded up to 90 days prior to the reserved wedding date.
 - v. A sacristan setup and cleanup stipend of \$100 is required; \$50 of this fee will be refunded if the sacristan determines the Bride's room, groomsmen's room and other public areas have been cleaned of all wedding materials and left in good condition.

III. Marriage Preparation

- a. Marriage preparation is a process designed to help assess readiness for sacramental marriage. Additionally, the couple will
 - i. Strengthen love for one another and grow in faith
 - ii. Deepen understanding of marriage as a sacrament, covenant, and blessing
- b. What does marriage preparation entail?
 - i. Completing the FOCCUS Inventory
 - ii. Meeting with pastor or deacon to review the FOCCUS inventory results
 1. Every effort is to be made to schedule appointments during the week; the heavy weekend schedule makes weekend appointments difficult.
 2. At least 3-4 sessions are intended as part of the process.
 3. If marriage preparation is to be completed elsewhere, documentation of the proposed plan must be signed by the participating minister (priest or deacon of another parish) and approved by the Holy Family Pastor.
 - a.) This process must be completed at least two months prior to the wedding date, unless special arrangements have been discussed and approved ahead of time.

¹ A tentative wedding date cannot be held should another couple meet all the requirements without contingency.

- b.) A certificate or letter of completion bearing the inscribed seal of the administering parish and the signature(s) of the program provider.
- iii. Reading and discussing "In Perfect Union," the document on marriage published by the Bishops of the State of Wisconsin, has been completed.
- iv. In addition to the above preparation process, completing a formal Marriage Preparation Program (diocesan or regional), an Engaged Encounter, or similar experience.

IV. Liturgical Guidelines

a. The Liturgical Celebration

- i. Marriage between two practicing Catholics is frequently celebrated within Mass, especially if the families of one or both parties are Catholic.
- ii. The Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass may be more appropriate if one of the parties is not Catholic, but celebrating the Rite of Marriage within Mass is by no means excluded.

b. Presiding pastor/deacon options

- i. The ordinary officiant of the Sacrament of Marriage is the Pastor of one or both of the parties; otherwise he may delegate another priest or deacon, including one preferred by the couple. Permission must be given by the Pastor ahead of time.
- ii. If the requested officiant is not a member of the Diocese, he must arrange to have a letter sent from his home Diocese to the Bishop of the Diocese of Superior in order to receive faculties to officiate at the ceremony. This permission is as important as the marriage license and no exception can be made. It is recommended that at least 6-8 weeks be allowed for this permission process and clearance.
- iii. The visiting priest or deacon must check with the pastor ahead of time, observe the guidelines & procedures established by the parish, and review with the pastor any special request ahead of the day of rehearsal.
- iv. A stipend to the priest or deacon is customary.

c. Readings and Music selections

- i. As you plan your wedding ceremony, remember that the music, readings, symbols, actions and gestures are all part of a sacred ritual and prayer.
- ii. Both the pastor and deacon are available to help you select readings
- iii. The Readings and Prayers of the Faithful may be read by Readers chosen by the couple. Designated Readers should be chosen who either are designated as Readers in their home parish or who are both familiar and comfortable with reading at the liturgy.
- iv. The Liturgical Director will provide suggestions for music selections as well as available musicians

1. All music selections must be approved by the Liturgical Director
2. Musicians are not paid by the parish; fee and payment arrangements are made directly with them.
- v. Pre-recorded music may not be used, and secular music is also not permitted during the ceremony.
- vi. The sound system may be operated ONLY by a member of the parish staff.
- vii. Worship Aid/Program
- viii. The bride and groom are the ministers of the Sacrament; the officiant and everyone gathered are witnesses and with the bride and groom together celebrate the Sacrament.
- ix. Everyone should be included in the music as much as possible as well as any of the responses and ritual actions.
- x. A worship aid or program facilitates the full and active participation of the invited assembly.
- xi. Holy Family does not offer printing services for worship aids; however, all printed material must be reviewed and approved by the pastor and Liturgical Director prior to printing.

V. Rehearsal Guidelines

- a. The primary purpose of the rehearsal is to practice all aspects of the wedding liturgy.
- b. It is also a time for everyone to get familiar with their particular roles, the layout of the Church and facilities, and in general, to be prepared to assume their roles with confidence.
- c. Respect for the Church should be shown by appropriate dress and behavior at both the rehearsal and the wedding itself.
- d. NO alcohol is permitted at the rehearsal or wedding
- e. Any one actively participating in the ceremony MUST attend rehearsal
 - i. Parents
 - ii. Musicians
 - iii. Bridal party (children accompanied by attending adult)
 - iv. Lectors
 - v. Ushers
- f. Payment to musicians is expected to be paid in full prior to the start of the rehearsal and must be paid prior to the start of the wedding.

VI. Environmental Specifications

- a. Weddings are not celebrated in the outdoor cathedral.
- b. Aisle runners are discouraged.
- c. Pew Bows may be hung over the pews
 - i. The use of tacks, tape, adhesive, etc. is NOT permitted
 - ii. Candelabras, arbors and pew candles are not permitted.

- d. Flowers
 - i. Petals (real or artificial) strewn on the floor are not permitted;
 - ii. Only live plants are allowed;
 - iii. Bud vases or other decorations may be attached to pews by elastic bands, soft plastic clips or ribbons; pins, glue, nails, duct tape, etc. are NOT permitted.
 - iv. Flowers may be placed in front of the ambo and to either side of the altar on the top step.
 - v. No other decorations are permitted on the altar.
- e. There is no throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. on church grounds (bubbles – outside – are permissible).
- f. The receiving line will be held at the reception in order to allow sufficient time for photographs immediately following the Ceremony (and before afternoon services beginning at 3:00p).
- g. Light snacks and beverages are permitted in the Bride's room and parish hall
 - i. No alcohol is allowed
 - ii. All refreshments must be removed following the liturgy
- h. *Prie dieus* (kneelers) are never to be removed from the Adoration Chapel for use during the ceremony. If the couple chooses to kneel for any part of the service, the steps of the Sanctuary may be used.
- i. Clean up
 - i. The couple is responsible for the clean up after the service, including flower delivery containers (they may be placed only in the small dumpster in the kitchen); removal of programs and tissue boxes from the pews, decorations, any materials brought into the church; pew bows, unity candle, programs & worship aids; leftover refreshments and containers; any debris in the parking lot; etc.
 - ii. The couple is strongly encouraged to ensure one or several people have agreed in advance of the wedding day to carry out these duties, thereby avoiding loss of the security deposit as outlined below.
 - iii. If cleanup is not effectively completed by the time all guests have left, the remaining \$50 of the \$100 deposit will be forfeited (what was paid at the time of confirmation).
 - iv. The bride and groom are responsible for damage to church property by any guests of their party.
- j. Photography/Videography
 - i. Discrete flash photography will be permitted during the entrance, at the end of the service, and during the formal photography sessions before and/or after the ceremony
 - ii. Flash photography is prohibited during the service.

- iii. Video taping may be permitted but must be set up with the Officiant's approval beforehand to determine the best and least intrusive vantage point. If prior approval is not obtained, and the setup is determined to be distracting, it will be interrupted.

VII. The Marriage License

- a. Requirements vary across county and state lines. Holy Family Church is located in the **town** of Woodruff, of **Oneida County**, State of Wisconsin. It is the responsibility of the couple to check well in advance of the wedding date what is required in their County and State of residence and with attention to the site of the wedding (Town of Woodruff, Oneida County, state of Wisconsin).
- b. It is illegal for the Officiant to proceed without the properly issued marriage license; without it, *the wedding cannot legally proceed* without serious legal consequences for the officiant and despite whatever inconveniences might result. The bride and groom must check well in advance all requirements for securing the marriage license, especially when another county or state is involved (e.g. residence).**
- c. The witnesses and officiant sign the license immediately following the wedding.
- d. The license is entrusted to the parish Office Administrator (visiting Officiant take note) who makes a final review before filing it in the proper office.
- e. An unofficial copy of the license may be sent to the newly married couple by the Administrator.
- f. An official copy of the license can be requested at the time the license is issued.

We are excited that you desire to begin your new life together with us at Holy Family! Our prayers and support will be with you as you prepare to become husband and wife. If you have any questions about the guidelines provided in this document, please do not hesitate to contact the pastor.

Lastly, don't be overwhelmed by the externals! Do only what you feel you can comfortably handle. Remember that the beauty of the day and the mood that is created ultimately comes through you and how you choose to express your happiness. Be honest, be simple, and be hospitable.

May God bless you in your married love and your new journey together!

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