



*Marriage Preparation  
and  
Planning Guide*

## *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 nine 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 weekend of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 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 1:30 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:

### **NINE MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING**

- 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** (Facilitation 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.

## SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING

- At least six 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.

## THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING

- 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

in the County in which they reside. The license may be applied for any time 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 fee***

Please see additional sheet.

## ***Musician(s) fee***

Please see additional sheet.

## ***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 on 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 if both are Catholic. 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.

### ***Wedding Musicians and Cantors***

**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. Musicians, from outside the parish (organists, instrumentalists, cantors, string ensembles) may be used for weddings at St. Gabriel, **only 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 **GATHER** (GIA 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*



## ***FINAL MEETING WITH FR. TIM***

Plan to meet with Fr. Tim the Thursday before your wedding date. At this meeting we will walk through the wedding ceremony. The couple will bring the marriage license to the meeting and present license to Fr. Tim.

## ***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.

### ***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)*

*Prayers of the Faithful*

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

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

*Eucharistic Acclamations*

*The Lord's Prayer*

*Nuptial Blessing*

*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*

	<b><u>Introductory Rite</u></b>	
Processional Music:	Canon in D	Pachelbel
Greeting		
<b>Opening Prayer</b>		

	<b><u>Liturgy of the Word</u></b>	
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
<b>Gospel:</b>	<b>Matthew 5: 13-16</b>	
Homily		

### **Rite of Marriage**

*Statement of Intentions*  
*Exchange of Vows and Blessing and Exchange of Rings*  
*Lighting of Unity Candle (optional)*

*Prayers of the Faithful*  
*The Lord's Prayer*  
*Nuptial Blessing*  
*The Sign of Peace*

### **Concluding Rite**

Final Blessing		
Presentation of Couple		
Recessional:	Ode to Joy	Beethoven

## **Appendix 2**

### **Suggested song selections for Wedding Liturgy**

#### **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  
Ps. 118 This Day Was Made By the Lord  
Sing to the Mountains  
Ps 80 We Praise You verse 6-7  
Ps 136 God's Love is Everlasting  
Ps 24 I Have Loved You  
Ps 34 I Will Always Thank the Lord

#### **Communion Songs**

One Bread, One Body	I am the Bread of Life
Taste and See	The Supper of the Lord
Pan de Vida	Panis Angelicus
Eat This Bread	To Be Your Bread

#### **Songs Suitable for Congregational Singing**

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

*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.*