

# PARISH WEDDING GUIDELINES

To Help You Celebrate  
the Sacrament of Marriage



**St. John the Evangelist Parish**  
Greenfield, WI

# CONGRATULATIONS!

We are happy that you have chosen to celebrate your wedding at St. John the Evangelist Parish! When you choose to celebrate your wedding within a Catholic Community, you are saying publicly that marriage is an act of faith and trust in one another and God's future for you. In other words, it is a covenant. The Catholic Church believes that the act of making this covenant (a wedding) is an act of worship. Therefore, there are certain requirements that need to be observed in your marriage and wedding preparations.



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## PREPARATION TIME LINE

### 1) INITIAL MEETING WITH THE PRIEST

*[at least 6 months before your wedding date]*

- a) To determine eligibility to be married in the Church \*(At least one of the parties seeking to marry must be Roman Catholic. Both or at least one of the parties must be a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish. If neither party is a parish member, a letter of permission from the pastor of your current parish must be obtained. The pastor of SJE must give permission for any marriage of non-parish members)
  - i) Both people must be free to marry. That means that neither party has been validly married previously. If neither of you have been married before, it is essential to talk to the priest about the status of your previous marriage. A church annulment of the previous marriage may be necessary.
- b) To inform you of your rights and responsibilities concerning marriage in the church.
- c) To set the date & time of marriage and assign a priest to preside.
- d) To begin the process of record keeping in the parish.
- e) To inform you about the parish's policies governing your ceremony.

### 2) FOCCUS PROCESS

*[3 to 6 months before your wedding]*

- a) FOCCUS couple contacts engaged couple for appointments.
- b) At completion of the process, FOCCUS couple sends a report to the priest presiding at the wedding.

### 3) ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR THE ENGAGED

*[Anytime before your wedding]*

- a) Engaged couple attend one of the Archdiocesan programs for the engaged.

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## PREPARATION TIME LINE (Continued)

### 4) SELECT WEDDING MUSIC

*[about 2 to 3 months prior]*

- a) engaged couple contacts the Director of Liturgy and Music (hereafter referred to as DLM) via phone at 414-321-1965 or via e-mail at [kschulteis@stjohns-grfd.org](mailto:kschulteis@stjohns-grfd.org) to make an appointment to review and select wedding music.

### 5) FINAL PLANNING SESSION

*[about 2 months before your wedding]*

- a) Engaged couple contacts priest via phone at 414-321-1965 or via e-mail for an appointment to finalize the wedding ceremony.
- b) Engaged couple meets with DLM to choose music.

### 6) WEDDING REHEARSAL

*[the evening before your ceremony]*

- a) See page 6 for details

### 7) Before entering the Sacrament of Marriage it is common practice to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

## LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

### 1) A Catholic wedding can be celebrated during a **Wedding Service** or a **Wedding Mass**. The Wedding Service is *preferred*, especially if:

- a) Your guests are from several different denominations.
- b) The two of you are from different denominations.
- c) You do not attend weekly Eucharist.
- d) You have been living together for a long time.

Please consult with your presiding priest about this.

### 2) The following points are meant to help you to prepare a wedding that is a dignified, simple, and reverent act of Christian Worship.

- a) **Date**: There are some dates on which it is very difficult to

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## LITURGICAL GUIDELINES (Continued)

schedule a wedding in our parish church, such as the Saturday before Palm Sunday and Easter, during the annual Parish Festival, etc. Please have optional dates in mind when scheduling your wedding.

- b) Liturgical Ministers: You need the following:
    - i) if one of you is not Catholic, you may invite your pastor or rabbi to participate.
  - c) For a Mass,
    - i) two gift bearers to bring the bread and wine to the altar;
    - ii) two confirmed and practicing Catholics to be Extraordinary Ministers (to distribute the consecrated wine).
  - d) For a Service or Mass,
    - i) one to three readers who are comfortable with public speaking;  
*\*A suggestion for persons to ask to do this: older family members and friends (e.g., grandparents)*
    - ii) two witnesses (usually the best man and the maid/matron of honor);
    - iii) two ushers. Men or women may be ushers. Your attendants may be ushers.
- 3) **POSTURES**: *Standing, sitting and kneeling* are the postures for the whole assembly, including the bride and groom. If you, the bride and groom, wish otherwise, please consult with the priest before making a decision to do so.
- 4) **DECORATIONS**: Our church is decorated during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. During the rest of the year, green plants are usually present. If you choose to purchase additional plants or flowers, please consult with your presiding priest about their placement.

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## LITURGICAL GUIDELINES (Continued)

*\*Pew bows may be used. Great care must be taken when attaching them to the pews. If you mar the finish of the pews, we will bill you for repairs.*

- 5) CUSTOMS: There are many ethnic and devotional customs that are not part of the wedding ritual. These are all OPTIONAL. Please consult with the presiding priest before you choose whether to use them.
  - a) **Lighting a wedding candle:** You provide all the components for this ceremony, including the two side candles and their candlesticks.
  - b) **Presentation of flowers to your parents** at the sign of peace.
  - c) **Presentation of flowers and prayer at Mary's shrine.**
  - d) **Aisle runner:** This is dangerous on our church's floor as the runner easily slips. We do not recommend using one. If you do choose to have one, the runner needs to be 75 feet long.
  
- 6) WEDDING REHEARSAL
  - a) The following people need to attend the wedding rehearsal:
    - i) the bride and groom;
    - ii) their parents and/or step-parents;
    - iii) the best man and maid/matron of honor;
    - iv) the ushers, groomsmen & bridesmaids;
    - v) flower girls and/or ring bearers;
    - vi) the readers;
    - vii) the gift bearers;
    - viii) the communion ministers

*\*Wedding consultants are not allowed to direct any liturgical functions.*
  - b) Please bring the following items with you to the rehearsal:
    - i) wedding booklets;
    - ii) if you have one, your wedding candle.

# MUSIC GUIDELINES

## 1) CHOICE OF MUSICIANS

- a) St. John the Evangelist Parish has employed a DLM who is both trained in and competent at liturgical music. ALL WEDDINGS must use our DLM for organ and piano accompaniment.
- b) You should contact the DLM after you have your first meeting with your presider.
  - i) the DLM is to be consulted before any decisions about music are made.
  - ii) a consultation session will be arranged at a mutually convenient time. At this meeting you will be presented with the musical choices available to you.
  - iii) it is the responsibility of the DLM to guide you in music selection in order to ensure that the wedding liturgy is conducted with prayerfulness as required by Archdiocesan directives.

C) In certain exceptional cases, an added musician may participate in your wedding. He or she must be qualified and experience in LITURGICAL music. The DLM must review any guest musicians via an acceptable recorded format no later than six (6) to eight (8) weeks before your wedding. This person may participate during one of the following:

- i) the prelude (while guests arrive); or
- ii) another appropriate time during the ceremony per discretion of the DLM.

## 2) CHOICE OF MUSIC

- a) Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. Therefore, music selection must be appropriate for a Catholic liturgical service.
  - i) purely romantic or popular music is not acceptable within the wedding liturgy;
  - ii) a song's being "heard at another wedding" does not justify its use at St. John the Evangelist.

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## MUSIC GUIDELINES (Continued)

- b) There are many songs available in both traditional and contemporary styles from which to choose. Determination of what is within or beyond the parameters of acceptability are made by the DLM.
  - c) After music choices have been made, and your order of liturgy has been finalized with the priest, please submit a draft of your order of worship to the priest before you have it published.
- 3) **MUSICIANS' FEES**
- a) Musicians' fees are based on standards issued by their professional organizations and Archdiocesan directives. They are listed in "Fees" on page 13.
  - b) The fees cover the following services:
    - i) the initial consultation, at which you will select your wedding music;
    - ii) one rehearsal between the musicians participating in your wedding (organist and vocalist/instrumentalist);
    - iii) individual preparation time for each musician;
    - iv) the performance at the wedding liturgy;
    - v) ANY situation other than the above will require additional fee. Examples are:
      - (a) an additional consultation session
      - (b) any additional rehearsals



## ETIQUETTE

- 1) Read the Wedding Music Guidelines (page 7) and contact the DLM after you have had the initial meeting with a priest. Violation of these guidelines could lead to a postponement of your wedding.
- 2) **No drinking, drugs, or smoking allowed on church property.** Lack of sobriety or a hang-over on the part of the bride or groom affects the validity of the marriage vows and will result in the wedding's cancellation. Please also do not bring any food or beverages into the church.
- 3) **Rice, birdseed, confetti, bubbles, etc.,** present a safety hazard and are **not allowed** in or out of church.
- 4) **Clean up the church after you use it.** [See "Ushers' Duties" on pages 14-15.]
- 5) **The following actions are inappropriate** because they destroy a prayerful atmosphere.
  - a) Taking of photographs and videotaping by your guests. Please leave this to the professionals.
  - b) Non-participation by your attendants. They are to speak their parts of the wedding, listen to the readings and homily, and receive communion if they are prepared. If it violates their consciences to participate in any of the above actions, they are to sit respectfully and quietly. Please inform them of this.
- 6) **Receiving line:** If another wedding follows yours, you cannot have your receiving line at the church. We will announce to your guests that your receiving line will be at your reception hall.

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## ETIQUETTE (Continued)

- 7) **Your personal property and valuables:** Because of the danger of theft, **DO NOT** leave your valuables unattended. Thieves do enter the church!

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- 1) A Baptismal Certificate, no more than six months old, obtained from the office of the parish where you were baptized. The certificate must bear the seal of the church issuing it, and show the date it was issued. Notations concerning the person's celebration of confirmation and/or previous marriage will be indicated on the certificate. If the party is baptized but not Catholic, any copy of a certificate is fine. If no certificate exists, that an affidavit is to be filled out by someone who witnessed the baptism.
- 2) An Enrichment Program certificate.
- 3) Verification or participation in FOCCUS: Verification that the couple has participated in the FOCCUS inventory or a similar experience must be present.
- 4) A Marriage License. When you receive your marriage license, please drop it off at the parish office with the payment for fees.

#### Where to Apply

Marriage license applications can be completed Monday through Friday, from 8:00am to 4:00pm in the Office of the Milwaukee County Clerk, County Courthouse - Room 105, 901 North Ninth Street, Milwaukee.

Residents of Wisconsin must apply before the county clerk of the county in which either the bride or groom is a resident. The license issued in that county may be used anywhere in the State of Wisconsin.

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## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS (Continued)

When both the bride and groom are non-residents, they must apply in the county in which they are to be married.

### When to Apply

A wedding date must be set prior to application. The marriage license application must be completed at least seven (7) days but not more than thirty (30) days before the wedding date. The license is valid for thirty 30 days upon the issuance date.

### Fee

The marriage license fee is \$105.00 (cash only) payable at the time of filing an application. (Fee subject to change)

### Marriage License Application Requirements

- The bride and groom must apply together in person.
- The bride and groom must show valid photo ID; such as, valid driver's license.
- The bride and groom must bring in certified copies of their birth certificates (hospital certificates or birth registration forms are not acceptable).
- The bride and groom must bring in their Social Security cards. The name on your Social Security card must be your legal name. If you do not have a Social Security card, you must provide a letter from the Social Security Administration stating why you do not have a card.
- The bride or groom must show proof of residency with a current Milwaukee County address. This does not apply to out-of-state residents.

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- If the bride or groom was previously married, a filed copy of the final judgment of divorce, legal annulment, or certified death certificate must be shown at the time of application. In Wisconsin it is unlawful for any person to marry until six (6) months after the death of the granting of a judgment of divorce, regardless of where the divorce was granted.
- You must provide the name, address, and telephone number of the officiant performing the wedding.

**Fr. Michael F. Merkt or Priest/Deacon  
St. John the Evangelist Parish  
8500 W Cold Spring Rd  
Greenfield, WI 53228**

Any document not in English must have attached to it a certified or notarized translation. Both the bride and groom must speak and be able to read English. If not, the applicant(s) must provide a translator. The bride or groom may not translate for each other.

**Failure to meet the requirement as listed above will delay the  
issuance of your license.**

For clarification of any information provided,  
please call 414-278-4067 or visit  
<http://county.milwaukee.gov/GettingMarried22000.htm>

- 5) Completed wedding planning sheet from *Together for Life*.
- 6) Prenuptial Questionnaire: to be completed by you with the priest.

## FEES

The following fees are to be PAID AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE the wedding. Please deliver these to the parish office or the priest presiding at your wedding.

### If you are a parishioner

- \$500 check payable to St. John the Evangelist Parish

#### *Fee includes:*

- \$250 facility usage fee
- \$100 priest stipend
- \$150 organist fee

#### *Additional/Optional Fees:*

- \$75 vocalist fee (if parish cantor is used)
- \$75 instrumentalist fee (for parish instrumentalist)
- \$50 per hour extra rehearsal fee
- \$50 additional consultation fee

### If you are not a parishioner

- \$600 check payable to St. John the Evangelist Parish which will include the above parishioner fees.
- A “non-parishioner” is a Catholic who at the time they contact the parish about their wedding, either does not live within the boundaries of St. John the Evangelist Parish or has not registered to be a parishioner.

## USHERS' DUTIES

### 1) BEFORE THE SERVICE

- a) Attend the rehearsal to learn your duties.
- b) Arrive at church at least 30 minutes before the ceremony.
- c) Arrange the chairs, tables, kneelers, etc. as indicated at the rehearsal.
- d) Place a copy of the wedding booklet on each chair for the wedding party.
- e) Greet guests at the doors, give them a copy of the wedding booklet, and direct them to pews.  
*\*The "bride's side of the church is to the left as you face the altar; "groom's" to the right.*
- f) On hot days when the church air conditioner is operating, please do not prop open the outer doors.
- g) Formally seat select relatives immediately before the processional.
- h) If there is an aisle runner, unroll it down the main aisle as practiced at the rehearsal.

### 2) DURING THE SERVICE

- a) Remain conspicuously present in the main body of the church, but near the doors. Be alert to help late comers and make them feel welcome.
- b) As necessary, direct guests to the restrooms or phones. If someone should get sick, offer appropriate help.
- c) Formally usher guests out of their pews after the recessional of the wedding party.

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## USHERS' DUTIES (Continued)

### 3) AFTER THE SERVICE

- a) Return all chairs, tables, etc., to their places.
- b) Remove Wedding booklets from the pews and discard them.  
All waste is placed in the trash can in the church narthex.
- c) Check the pews and aisles for any waste materials.
- d) If there was an aisle runner in the main aisle, remove the runner.
- e) If flower petals were used, sweep the aisles of debris.
- f) Remove all clothing packaging/hangers, water bottles, waste, etc. left in any areas used by the wedding party.



## GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING

*Two copies of the section are included. We request that you give one copy to the photographer and one to the video recorder if you hire them. Make it clear that they must agree to comply with these guidelines.*

A wedding in a Catholic Church is an act of worship; therefore, it is essential that a prayerful atmosphere be maintained for the congregation's sake.

- 1) Neither the photographer nor the video recorder is allowed to use flash or special lighting except during the processional, recessional, and before and after the actual ceremony.
- 2) The photographer and video recorder must stay outside of the sanctuary. They may utilize the balcony as long as they avoid the musician's area. The photographers should not disturb the congregation during worship.
- 3) Please respect the fact that this is a church. Reverence is to be given the people involved, the altar, pulpit, and baptismal font. If you move furniture, you must return it. You are not allowed to stand on our furniture.
- 4) Weddings are celebrated anytime on Friday as well as Saturday mornings and afternoons. **You will need to vacate the church by 3:45pm on Saturday afternoons in order to accommodate the evening Mass.**



## Parish Membership after your Wedding

We encourage you to join a parish near your new residence after your wedding. The parish office of St. John the Evangelist can help you discover the name, address and phone number of that parish.

We would be delighted if you could remain members of St. John the Evangelist Parish. If you do so, remember that you need to fill out a new parish registration form *because you are now a new family!* Please call the parish office soon after your wedding and let us know your plans for parish membership.

### Phone Numbers

Pastor ..... 414-321-1965 x105  
Director of Liturgy & Music ..... 414-321-1965 x 125  
Parish Fax ..... 414-321-4407



# THANK YOU

...for taking the time to read these pages. If you have any questions about our guidelines, please consult with the pastor/presider or DLM. This will prevent any misunderstandings before they become major problems. The wedding and a new marriage are often busy and stressful times for you and your relatives. The structure of your whole family life is changing because you are making this covenant. We are here for you, not only for help in preparing for marriage, but as people who will listen as you embark on this venture.



July 2012