



Quinceañeras

Among several Spanish-speaking countries and among many Hispanics in the United States there is the custom of celebrating the passage from childhood to adolescence with a ritual that expresses thanksgiving to God for the gift of life and that asks for a blessing from God for the years ahead.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order for the Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday* 1

Quinceañeras are celebrated at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church for girls in our parish high school Confirmation program to help them to grow in faith and a sense of gratitude to God. This document provides information about scheduling a quinceañera and planning a quinceañera celebration in the church.

Please note: The manner of celebrating quinceañeras in the United States is governed by the *Bendición al cumplir quince años / Order for the Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday*, approved for use by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and subsequently confirmed by the Apostolic See by decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (the Vatican department delegated by the Pope to supervise liturgical and devotional matters).

Scheduling the Quinceañera

Scheduling a quinceañera begins with completing a “Quinceañera Registration” form and submitting it to the Parish Office, along with any required deposit (discussed below). The quinceañera celebration is then scheduled in the church calendar. (The “Quinceañera Registration” form is available both in the Parish Office and on the “Quinceañeras” webpage of the parish website.)

Please note: Priests and deacons are assigned to preside at quinceañera services according to their availability. Requests for a particular priest or deacon to preside at a quinceañera celebration will not be accepted or considered in clergy scheduling decisions.

Recommended: Quinceañera at Regularly-Scheduled Mass (Friday 5:30 pm, Saturday 7 pm or Sunday 1 pm)

We want our young people, including our quinceañeras, to grow in a sense of prudence and moderation in every aspect of their lives, including life’s celebrations. Therefore, we highly recommend modest quinceañera celebrations, reflecting authentic Christian life and stewardship and costing only what is prudent in terms of a family’s financial resources. Since a girl

celebrating her quinceañera will be graduating from high school in just a couple of years, how much will be spent on the quinceañera celebration also should take into consideration how much should be saved for the girl's college education, trade school and/or future wedding.

To encourage this kind of modest quinceañera celebration, simple quinceañera ceremonies can be celebrated at regularly-scheduled Masses Fridays at 5:30 pm, Saturdays at 7 pm and Sundays at 1 pm. There is no required donation for this kind of quinceañera celebration. Each of these time options provides an excellent opportunity for a nice but inexpensive quinceañera party following Mass.

The quinceañera must be registered for the parish high school Confirmation program and be fully participating in all aspects of the program (classes, Life Nights, service activities, liturgies, retreats, etc.). All fees for the Confirmation program must be paid up-to-date.

Although there is no special processional or recessional or reserved seating for the quinceañera in this kind of quinceañera celebration, the quinceañera may wear a special quinceañera dress and be seated toward the front of the church. The quinceañera and her parents should check in with the priest in the sacristy at least 15 minutes before the Mass so that he knows that they are there and can provide any additional instructions at that time. After Communion –

- The quinceañera, her parents and padrinos de honor are invited into the center of the sanctuary.
- The quinceañera is then invited to make “An Act of Thanksgiving and of Personal Commitment to Lead a Christian Life.” The text for this will be provided on a card on the day of the quinceañera but also can be found (for preparation and practice) in “Readings and Prayers for Quinceañeras” on the “Quinceañera” webpage of the parish website. The quinceañera is encouraged to use a hand-held microphone while reading this text.
- The priest then blesses the quinceañera with a special quinceañera blessing.

Specially-Scheduled Quinceañera Celebrations

Specially-scheduled quinceañeras usually are celebrated on Saturday morning or afternoon but can occur whenever there is availability in the church calendar.

The decision about the form of quinceañera service, including whether it will be within Mass or outside Mass, depends on whether the quinceañera has received First Communion or not, as well as other considerations. (See the boxes below for more information about the different forms of specially-scheduled quinceañera services.) ***If the quinceañera has received First Communion***, the quinceañera celebration may be within Mass or outside Mass. ***If the quinceañera has not received First Communion***, a specially-scheduled quinceañera celebration must be outside Mass.

Please note: In the Diocese of Orange, it is expected that parents have their children baptized as infants, receive First Communion in second grade, and be confirmed in tenth grade. So the expectation is that Catholic parents of a ninth- or tenth-grade girl already have had her baptized and receive First Communion and presently have her enrolled in preparation for Confirmation.

Specially-Scheduled Quinceañera Within Mass

Available only if the quinceañera has received First Communion

Required Donation: \$1,100.00

The presider is a priest.

Includes –

- Processional
- Liturgy of the Word: The quinceañera may choose one or two readers – one reader for the First Reading (Jeremiah 1:4-10) and one reader for the General Intercessions. The text for these will be provided in a binder placed on the ambo on the day of the quinceañera but also can be found (for preparation and practice) in “Readings and Prayers for Quinceañeras” on the “Quinceañera” webpage of the parish website.
- Liturgy of the Eucharist: The quinceañera may choose two persons to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine at the Presentation of Gifts. A few other persons may accompany the two bringing forward the gifts (if, for example, a particular family/group will bring forward the gifts). The two persons carrying the bread and wine should be old enough and mature enough to carry these items easily.
- After Communion, the quinceañera, her parents and *padrinos de honor* are invited into the center of the sanctuary for the special quinceañera rituals:
 - The quinceañera is invited to make “An Act of Thanksgiving and of Personal Commitment to Lead a Christian Life.”
 - Optional: The quinceañera may take a flower or a bouquet of flowers to the image of the Blessed Mother (accompanied by music ministry).
 - Optional: The priest may invite the padrinos to bring religious articles to be given to the quinceañera, such as a medal, a Bible, a rosary, and other religious objects (which have been ***previously blessed before*** the quinceañera Mass). Then the padrinos give the blessed objects to the quinceañera.
 - The priest then blesses the quinceañera with a special quinceañera blessing.
- Recessional

Specially-Scheduled Quinceañera Outside Mass

Required Donation: \$1,100.00

The presider is a priest or a deacon.

Includes –

- Processional
- Reading of the Word of God (Jeremiah 1:4-10): The quinceañera may choose one reader to read this Scripture reading. The text for this will be provided in a binder placed on the ambo on the day of the quinceañera but also can be found (for preparation and practice) in “Readings and Prayers for Quinceañeras” on the “Quinceañera” webpage of the parish website.
- After the homily, the quinceañera, her parents and *padrinos de honor* are invited into the center of the sanctuary for the special quinceañera rituals:
 - The quinceañera is invited to make “An Act of Thanksgiving and of Personal Commitment to Lead a Christian Life.”
 - Optional: The quinceañera may take a flower or a bouquet of flowers to the image of the Blessed Mother (accompanied by music ministry).
 - Optional: The priest or deacon may invite the padrinos to bring religious articles to be given to the quinceañera, such as a medal, a Bible, a rosary, and other religious objects (which have been *previously blessed before* the quinceañera service). Then the padrinos give the blessed objects to the quinceañera.
 - The priest or deacon then blesses the quinceañera with a special quinceañera blessing.
- Recessional

Required Donation and Participation in High School Confirmation Program

The required donation for a specially-scheduled quinceañera celebration is \$1,100.00, including music, church coordinator and altar servers. A \$500.00 nonrefundable deposit is due at the time of the scheduling of the quinceañera – the date will not be reserved until the deposit is paid, with the remainder due no later than one month before the quinceañera.

The \$1,100.00 required donation includes all costs and fees for the parish high school Confirmation program – any amount previously paid for the parish high school Confirmation program can be deducted from the quinceañera required donation. The quinceañera must be registered for the parish high school Confirmation program and be fully participating in all aspects of the program (classes, Life Nights, service activities, liturgies, retreats, etc.).

Please note: Music for specially-scheduled quinceañera services is provided by parish musicians appointed for this purpose using a set repertoire of music – ***no*** exceptions. Mariachis or other musicians may perform outside of the church after the quinceañera service. Considering the great expense of such music, though, it is recommended to have these musicians perform at the reception instead, where they may be better enjoyed by everyone.

Please also note: Some retain a professional event coordinator to help plan and orchestrate a quinceañera celebration (e.g., arranging for reception sites, caterers, florists, photographers, limousine companies, etc.). However, in terms of everything having to do with the quinceañera service at the church, the quinceañera’s parents must deal directly with the parish staff (receptionists, church coordinator, etc.). In addition, although professional event coordinators are always welcome in our church to worship and may attend quinceañeras as guests, they are to have absolutely no role anywhere on the parish property either in the planning of a quinceañera or the quinceañera service itself.

Rehearsal

Rehearsals for quinceañeras usually occur sometime the week before the quinceañera celebration. Parish staff will contact the quinceañera’s parents to schedule the rehearsal. It is essential that as many participants in the quinceañera service as possible attend the rehearsal – the more quinceañera participants who attend the rehearsal, the smoother and better the quinceañera service will be.

Importance of Beginning at the Scheduled Starting Time

Because our church calendar is often packed with back-to-back services, it is imperative that the quinceañera and her attendants be at the church 30 minutes before the scheduled starting time and be ready to begin precisely at the scheduled starting time. If any essential participants in the quinceañera service are late and the starting time has to be delayed, the presiding priest or deacon may, in his sole discretion, delete different parts of the quinceañera service (so as to complete the service on time) or (if essential participants are substantially late) cancel the service altogether (with no refund).



Processional

The processional in a specially-scheduled quinceañera celebration (the opening procession from the vestibule up the center aisle) includes the following, in this order:

1. *Damas, chambelanes* and/or *padrinos* (up to eight couples or processing individually)
2. *Padrinos de honor* (or if the *padrinos de honor* accompany the quinceañera in the procession, the parents of the quinceañera may process here)
3. Altar server(s)
4. The quinceañera accompanied by ***one or two*** adults (her parents or *padrinos de honor* or any combination thereof (as long as it is ***one or two*** adults))
5. The priest.

The quinceañera, her parents and padrinos de honor are seated in the front pew on the east side of the nave (the main body of the church), while the damas, chambelanes and/or padrinos are seated in the front pew(s) on the west side of the nave.

“An Act of Thanksgiving and of Personal Commitment to Lead a Christian Life” by the Quinceañera

During the special quinceañera rituals, the quinceañera is invited to make “An Act of Thanksgiving and of Personal Commitment to Lead a Christian Life.” The text for this will be provided on a card on the day of the quinceañera. This text also can be found (for preparation and practice) in “Readings and Prayers for Quinceañeras” on the “Quinceañera” webpage of the parish website. The quinceañera is encouraged to use a hand-held microphone while reading this text.

Recessional

Following the final blessing and dismissal in a specially-scheduled quinceañera, the following process out of the church down the center aisle, in this order:

1. The quinceañera, accompanied either by her *chambelán de honor* or by her one or two accompanying adults
2. Parents and/or *padrinos de honor*
3. *Damas, chambelanes* and/or *padrinos* (up to eight couples or processing individually)

Dress Code for Quinceañera Celebrations

Cocktail dresses, party dresses and other dresses that are revealing and immodest are always inappropriate for adolescent girls (and often for adult women, as well!). Keeping in mind that a quinceañera essentially is a birthday celebration for a fifteen-year-old girl, such dresses certainly are inappropriate for anyone participating in a quinceañera celebration, including the quinceañera herself, her *dama(s)*, her mother, and her madrina(s). In particular, dresses for those participating in a quinceañera celebration –

- May not be above the knee.
- May not be strapless or backless.
- May not be transparent.
- Must have a modest neckline (no cleavage).

Excessive make-up also is inappropriate.

Anyone whose dress does not comply with the above dress code may have to leave the church, in the sole discretion of the pastor, the presiding priest or deacon or the church coordinator.

Photography and Videography

Our church is sacred space, consecrated for celebration of the sacraments, worship and prayer. It is not a “venue” for “events.” Photographers and videographers hired for quinceañera celebrations in the church are required to conduct themselves accordingly, in a reverential and respectful manner. Following are the requirements for photographers and videographers at a quinceañera celebration:

- The quinceañera and her attendants are required to be at the church 30 minutes before the scheduled starting time and ready to begin precisely at the scheduled starting time. This must be taken into account when scheduling any photographs to be taken prior to the quinceañera service (whether at home, at the church or elsewhere). Pre-ceremony, posed photographs, if any, should be kept to a minimum so that the quinceañera and her attendants can focus on being punctual.
- Photographers and videographers should arrive at the church at least 30 minutes before the quinceañera service and report immediately to the church coordinator for direction and supervision.
- Photographers and videographers are **ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED** from entering into the sanctuary area (the raised area bordered by marble steps around the altar) during the quinceañera service. Photographers and videographers also are **ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED** from going up into the choir loft at the back of the church at any time. Rule of thumb: If you have to step up to go somewhere, you are **NOT** supposed to be there!

- Photographers and videographers are never to position themselves in such a way (1) that the pathway of any quinceañera participant would be blocked in any way (including during the processional and recessional) or (2) that the view of anyone attending the quinceañera celebration would be blocked in any way. In particular, during the quinceañera service, photographers and videographers are not to go into the area between the front pews of the nave (the main body of the church) and the first step of the sanctuary (except to cross from one side of the church to the other). In addition, photographers and videographers are **NEVER** to stop the flow and forward movement of the processional or recessional to set up or pose a photo or “scene.”
- Photographers and videographers should make themselves as inconspicuous as possible **AT ALL TIMES**. This means minimizing movement during the quinceañera ceremony so as not to distract those in attendance from the prayer and worship.
- Posed, post-ceremony photographs may be taken in the church but must be completed 15 minutes after the completion of the ceremony or 1-1/2 hours after the scheduled starting time of the ceremony, whichever comes first. Posed photographs may be taken anytime outside of the church.
- It is expected that photographers and videographers will adhere to all of the foregoing requirements in a professional manner. Any photographer or videographer failing to do so may have to leave church grounds immediately, in the sole discretion of the pastor, the presiding priest or deacon or the church coordinator. For this reason, the quinceañera’s parents are advised to consider the professionalism of the photographer and/or videographer when retaining these services. The photographer and/or videographer also should be directed to this document on the “Quinceañeras” webpage of the parish website so that he or she is well advised and well informed of these requirements.

Flowers

Most would agree that our church is one of the most beautiful in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, especially the huge stained-glass windows that provide vibrant color and light throughout the church. In addition, the parish’s Environment Committee makes sure that the church is always decorated beautifully and appropriately for the season, including plants, flowers, banners and other decorative elements. Indeed, our church is so large, ornate and well decorated that any additional flowers purchased for a quinceañera celebration are easily lost and might not even be noticed by many guests. For this reason, it is recommended that additional flowers not be purchased for quinceañera celebrations in the church.

However, if special flower arrangements are to be purchased for the quinceañera celebration in the church, following are the requirements:

- Because the setup time for a quinceañera service is only the 30 minutes prior to the service, floral arrangements for the church should be planned and designed so that they easily can be placed by the florist in 15 minutes or less. (This allows another 15 minutes for the florist to deliver and coordinate bouquets, boutonnieres, corsages, etc.)
- The florist should arrive at the church at least 30 minutes before the quinceañera service and report immediately to the church coordinator for direction and supervision.

- Only two flower arrangements may be placed in the sanctuary, on pillars provided by the parish and placed on either side of the altar. Each pillar is 40 inches tall and has a top surface area that is circular with a diameter of 10 inches. (The church coordinator will show the florist exactly where these arrangements may be placed.) Because the ministers must be able to move around the sanctuary without obstacles, each flower arrangement in the sanctuary must be no larger than 40 inches high and 30 inches wide.
- Flower arrangements to be placed upon the pews must be simple, easily placed, and easily removed within 10 minutes after the quinceañera service. Pew decorations must **HANG** from the pew ends – **NO** tape or tacks. There are to be **NO** ribbon swags or aisle runners.
- Because the center aisle must be clear for the processional and recessional, and because of fire safety regulations, no free-standing flower arrangements are to be placed in the aisles.
- **NO** candles may be used in any flower arrangements, and **NO** candelabra may be used.
- The flowers, plants and other decorative elements placed by the parish Environment Committee are **NOT** to be touched or moved in any manner.
- It is expected that florists will adhere to all of the foregoing requirements in a professional manner. A florist failing to do so may have to leave church grounds immediately, in the sole discretion of the pastor, the presiding priest or deacon or the church coordinator. For this reason, the quinceañera’s parents are advised to consider the professionalism of the florist when retaining these services. The florist also should be directed to this document on the “Quinceañeras” webpage of the parish website so that he or she is well advised and well informed of these requirements.
- Sometimes a quinceañera’s family and/or padrinos desire to donate the quinceañera flowers to the church, to be placed somewhere in the church or outside at one of the Marian shrines. This is laudable and appreciated. The church coordinator will receive such donations of flowers and place them appropriately according to the existing decorations in the church and the particular season.

For more information, please contact the Parish Office at (562) 691-0533.