

*Wedding
Policies and Procedures
Immaculate Conception
Roman Catholic Parish*



Photography by Beach's On Location

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Congratulations and Welcome to Immaculate Conception Parish.

You'll find in these pages all the information you will need to begin your marriage preparation and planning your wedding at Immaculate Conception Parish. We look forward to assisting you in this joyous occasion.

With every prayer and good wish, I am,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Fr. David J. Kelash

Pastor

Marriage is a Sacrament

- A Sacrament is a visible sign, instituted by Christ, to “give grace”, they are “ helps ” for practicing Catholics.
- At least one party in the marriage must be a practicing Catholic and a registered member of Immaculate Conception Parish or a registered member of another parish.
- Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is a religious event as opposed to a social occasion.

Bishop's Program of Preparation

At least nine months advance notice of the desire date of the wedding is mandated by the Bishop of Phoenix.

Components of the program of preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage include but may not be limited to:

- FOCCUS Pre-Marital Inventory- **Gods Plan-for Marriage. The website is as follows www.ourcovenantoflovephx.org You will be directed as to the classes and to the 7 necessary Steps before Marriage.**
- The couple, particularly the Catholic party, attends Weekend Mass regularly. Catholics must go to confession before Marriage.

Necessary Documents

- **Recently -issued Certificate of Baptism with notations (within last 6 months)**
- **Pre-nuptial Inquiry**
- **Affidavit of Free Status (“freedom to marry”)**
- **Arizona Marriage License at rehearsal (traditional or covenant)**
- **If you are coming from another parish your Marriage Prep must be completed at least 2 months or 8 weeks before the wedding date. Documents must be submitted to your registered parish who in turn will then send them to Immaculate Conception Parish. If these documents are not received to our parish office 10 days prior to your wedding date, there will be no wedding.**

Cohabitation Before Marriage

Jesus calls His followers to a life of Gospel values that runs radically counter culturally to the times in which we live. This means keeping His commandments and the teachings of His Church. Couples living together before marriage should be aware that this is contrary to Holy Scripture and not in accord with Catholic teaching and practice. A priest or deacon may provide further clarification. It is asked that for the time of Marriage Prep to the day of the wedding, couples separate, and not engage in an un-holy sexual union.

Immaculate Conception Parish

Immaculate Conception Parish is consecrated for worship of God, consequently, at all times proper reverence and respect must be maintained. No talking, in the church, all noise which will disturb the prayer of others is always to be avoided.

A Deposit of \$150.00 will be charged for use of the Brides Room. The Bride and her bridesmaids will have access to the Brides Room **1 hour prior to the wedding and ½ hour after the ceremony.**
The \$ 150.00 is fully refundable providing the room is left clean of debris and flowers.

No food or drink of any kind may be brought into the Church, Brides Room or Vestibule.
Only water is allowed

Smoking and chewing gum is not permitted.

If there is any impairment from alcohol or drugs on the day of the wedding by any of the wedding party or their guests, **the wedding will be canceled,**

Date and Time of Wedding

The date of the wedding will be set following the review of the FOCCUS Pre-Marital Inventory and Natural Family Planning course completion. Original NFP certificate must be presented to Wedding Coordinator.

Weddings are celebrated on available **Saturdays, at: 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. or 5 p.m.** Mass. **Sundays at the 9:00 a.m. Mass. This will depend on the parish calendar.** (If celebrated during a regularly scheduled Mass fees will be adjusted accordingly).

Due to the scheduling of other services, you will have 30 minutes after the completion of the ceremony for photography inside and outside of the church. **The entire wedding and photography must be completed in 1 ½ hours.**

It is absolutely imperative that all individuals connected with the Rite of Marriage arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the liturgy. This includes the bridal party parents, readers, etc.

Weddings are **not celebrated during Advent, Lent, Holy Week and Easter Week including Sat after Easter.** Due to the penitential character of these seasons in the Catholic Church. Only in extraordinary cases may weddings be scheduled during Advent or Lent. Couples must meet with the Pastor to get a dispensation to marry during these seasons.

Wedding Rehearsals

Rehearsals may be scheduled usually for the night before the wedding according to church availability and begin on time. This is also a simple courtesy to all involved. Tardiness will result in an inadequate rehearsal or cancellation of the rehearsal altogether. Couples are cautioned to instruct the wedding party of proper church behavior and decorum. Normally the wedding coordinator will conduct rehearsals in the Church. **Please refrain from alcohol consumption before the rehearsal. If alcohol or drugs are suspected the wedding will be cancelled.**

All of the people who will be in the wedding such as lectors, groomsmen, bridesmaids, parents, etc. must be at the rehearsal. Lectors must be **confirmed Catholics** according to diocesan policy. If the lectors or any members of the wedding party are not present at the rehearsal they will forfeit their role in the wedding party. .

Flowers and Decorations

Floral arrangements must be simple and tasteful. No existing Church decorations, flowers or furnishings may ever be moved.

Bows for the pews may be used only if they are on a rubber band or plastic "pew clip." The use of adhesive tape or tacks or wires is not permitted.

We **do not** allow a runner down center or sides of the Church. All decorations and or flowers should be picked up immediately after the last song is finished unless gifted to the Parish.

Photography

During the celebration of Marriage, stationary video equipment may be set up at the rear of the Church and off to the side of the sanctuary. **Under no circumstances is any photographer or video technician permitted in the sanctuary.** Flash photography is permitted. You will have 30 minutes following the wedding celebration for photography. Another event may be planned after the allotted time.

Musical Notes

A Wedding Mass is an act of worship of Almighty God and the celebration of a sacrament. Matrimony is a religious event. Music must always be religious in nature as well as in good taste. Purely secular music, such as heard on the radio or in popular settings, which would not be proper for Sunday Mass, is not proper for a wedding. The proper use of music in a wedding is to support what is happening liturgically. CDs, or recorded music (Instrumental or otherwise), videos and or slide shows are at **no time** appropriate in the Church. **Live music only.** Our Music Consultant will assist you in selection of appropriate liturgical music. All arrangements for music must be approved by the pastor. Our wedding singers will lead the singing of the Mass and Hymns if applicable.

Available Music Selections

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| #509 All Creatures of Our Good and King | #533 Christ Be Our Light |
| #901 Eternal Father, Strong to Save | #578 For the Beauty of the Earth |
| #346 Gift of Finest Wheat | #511 Glory and Praise to our God |
| #712 Here I Am, Lord | #482 Holy God, We Praise Thy Name |
| #266 Holy is His Name | #243 Holy, Holy, Holy |
| #518 I Have Loved You | #488 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee |
| #584 Lord of All Hopefulness | #311 Loving and Forgiving |
| #802 Morning Has Broken | #854 Now Send Us Forth |
| #581 Now Thank We All Our God | #306 O Breathe on Me, O Breath of God |
| #628 On Eagle's Wings | #353 One Bread, One Body |
| #384 Pan de Vida | #381 Panis Angelicus |
| #468 The Lord is My Light | #177 The Servant Song |
| #530 We Are the Light of the World | #579 We Gather Together |
| #385 We Remember Your Love | #455 When Love is Found |
| #457 Wherever You Go | #757 Make Me A Channel of Your Peace |

Liturgy Planning

Prayerful planning and selection of scriptural readings, prayers and blessings add a great deal of warmth and meaning to the celebration of marriage. A "Together for Life" Booklet is provided by the Wedding Coordinator. Fill in the "tear-out" pages at the back of the booklet and give to the Priest performing the ceremony 30 days prior to the event. (Remember if you choose example "A" you must pick "A" choices throughout the book).

1. The marriage of two Catholics takes place at a Nuptial Mass, where the couple receives the Body and Blood of Christ.
2. The marriage between a Catholic and Non-Catholic may be limited to the Rite of Marriage (but may still have a Mass in which only the Catholic may receive communion) this Rite includes: Readings from Scripture, Homily, exchange of vows, prayers of the Faithful and Nuptial Blessing.
3. The marriage between a Catholic and a Non-Christian is limited to the Rite of Marriage. (see #2).

Scripture selections should be turned into the wedding coordinator no later than one month (30 days) prior to the wedding date. The Pastor will approve all Readings; otherwise the wedding coordinator will assume that the couple prefers the Church to select readings. The certificate of marriage will be signed at the altar. As noted earlier in this document no **alcohol is to be consumed before the Mass or Rite of Marriage.**

Planning Your Wedding Ceremony

The following individuals should be identified at this time:

- Readers: must have practiced readings. They will sit on far left of the third pew on the north side unless they are part of the wedding party or with the immediate family in the second pew.
- Persons responsible for bringing the gifts forward during the Mass.
- Person designated for transporting the completed and signed marriage license after the ceremony.

We will need everyone in the wedding party lined up in the entrance no later than five minutes prior to beginning of Mass or Rite of Marriage (according to preparation sheet which was filled out when consulting with the bride and groom prior to rehearsal).

It is extremely important that we start on time. If we start late, this will use up your picture time and run the risk of not being able to have a Mass and only the Rite of Marriage.

Ordinary Procession in Order:

- **Groom** enters from the sacristy with the best man and waits for the bride at the bottom of the steps of the sanctuary, unless he walks in with his parents.
- **Groom's Parents** (Unless they would like to be seated ahead of time **in the second pew on the right side.**) The groom's parents may escort him in first, in which case he would be dropped off by them after bowing to the altar together, and the groom will then wait up front for the bride at the bottom and to the right of the steps.)
- **Bride's Parents** (Unless bride's father is escorting the bride, then the mother of the bride walks in unescorted or is seated ahead of time. Both parents may escort the bride in if they want to.) **The brides parents sit in the 2nd pew on left side.**
- **Bridesmaids and Groomsmen** (However if the couples want them paired up that is fine. There is six couple limit.)
- **Maid/Matron of Honor** (She walks in alone, or she can walk in with the Best Man.)
- **The Best Man** (Is up front beforehand with the Groom, unless he walks in with the Maid of Honor)
- **Ring Bearer** (Walk in! only)
- **Flower Girl(s)** (Walk in! only) Flower girl(s) **may drop dried flower petals only**
- **Bride** (With Father, or Father and Mother.)
- **Bride and Groom** enters together.

Send Offs

The throwing or releasing of anything, such as rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals, doves, etc, is not permitted. This not only creates difficulty for maintenance and clean-up, but is potentially dangerous. Couples are cautioned to inform those attending the wedding that this is not allowed anywhere on the church grounds, bubbles are a good substitute.

Communication and Protocol

Arrangements and details are discussed exclusively with the couple. Outside wedding consultants, parents, siblings are advised to refrain from interference and refer all matters to the couple preparing for marriage. This will ensure that we have continuity and no misunderstandings.

Unity Candles

Unity candles are not a Liturgical Rite, but rather an invention for selling candles, thus the use of them is discouraged.

Offerings and Stipends

Immaculate Conception Parish does not charge for providing the Sacraments. It is a duty to the faithful to provide the Sacraments to Catholics who are properly disposed to celebrate them.

Courtesy and good stewardship call for an offering to be made to the parish in consideration of time, use of facilities and utilities, wear and tear, etc. Stipends to the priest or deacon and servers are customary. Stipends for the Church Music Directors and associated musicians are professional arrangements and must be resolved directly with music personnel. Some guidelines are as follows:

A \$250.00 Non Refundable Deposit to reserve the Main Church.

For actively participating registered parishioners of Immaculate Conception Parish, the offering and fee is **\$650.00**. Your deposit is part of this fee.

For couples not registered in the parish the offering and deposit is **\$1300.00**. Your deposit is part of this fee.

A \$250.00 Non Refundable Deposit to reserve the Chapel.

For actively participating registered parishioners of Immaculate Conception Parish, the offering and fee is **\$350.00**. Your deposit is part of this fee.

For couples not registered in the parish the offering and deposit is **\$700.00**. Your deposit is part of this fee.

All remaining fees or gifts are due (30 days) prior to your wedding and are non-refundable.

Payment is made to: **Immaculate Conception Parish**. No post dated checks. Standard stipends/gifts are:

Stipend to Priest/Deacon	\$250.00
Stipend to Wedding Coordinator	\$250.00
Sacristan/Server	\$ 20.00
Organist and or Pianist	\$250.00
Singers/minimum of 2/\$75.00 each	\$150.00
Brides Room	\$150.00 (refundable deposit)

(Based on the condition that the room and church are left in the same way it was found).

Envelopes for individual names will be made available by the Wedding Coordinator for each separate fee/gift.

Procession for the Wedding Party

Groom and Best Man enter from the sacristy

Groom's Parents

Bride's Mother is escorted by a son (usher) or seated 2nd pew on left

Groomsmen/Bridesmaids walk in together or alone

Maid or Honor

Ring Bearer

Flower Girl

Bride & Father of Bride or whoever is giving her hand away in marriage

Please fill in the names as it applies and each person's role.

Groom's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Print Full Name _____

Bride's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Print Full Name _____

This is not to be changed at the wedding rehearsal or day of the wedding! We will be planning for this format, just as you should be planning with your family and friends. By signing this wedding policy you are stating that you agree to follow all of the rules and guidelines listed here and above for Immaculate Conception Parish.

Procession #2 for the Wedding Party

They may also decide to have the Wedding Party go 1st and the Bride and Groom walk up the Isle together, followed by the Priest this being the order as to what takes place at Sun Mass. Theology behind it, the bride and groom who marry each other- come in together as “Sacramental Sign” like presenting the gifts for consecration.

Photography Policy for Weddings at Immaculate Conception Parish

1. Pictures may be taken throughout the wedding; however, you will be given a maximum of thirty minutes for photography after the wedding. Church décor such as trees, candles, crucifixes, etc. are not to be moved.
2. During the procession in and out the photographer may move freely in the main body of the Church.
3. At no time should the photographer be in the sanctuary taking pictures, before, during, or after the wedding. This would include the steps leading up into the sanctuary. This is out of respect for our Lord.
4. The photographer may position himself/herself to the left of the lectern or in the middle of the Church during the exchange of vows not distracting or obstructing the view of the people.

Groom's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Groom Print Full Name _____

Bride's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Bride Print Full Name _____

Photographer's Signature _____

Photographer's Print _____ **Date** _____

This is not to be changed at the wedding rehearsal or day of the wedding! We will be planning for this format just as you should be planning with your family and friends.

Overview of the Rite of Marriage

When approaching the altar everyone should genuflect or if impossible because of dress a profound bow is necessary before going to their designated place.

The groom and best man will enter from the sacristy genuflect at the center aisle and proceed to the designated place. (Unless the groom and best man are processing in).

The groom's parents will enter the second pew on their right (All of the groom's family should be standing on the same side in the pews looking at the procession) remain standing and turn to watch the procession.

The bride's parents will enter the second pew on the left (This would include the option of them both, or the father processing her in together or separately as in the diagrams) remain standing and turn to watch the procession.

The bridesmaids will enter the first pew on the left and the groomsmen will enter the first pew on the right.

The ring bearer/flower girl(s) should sit with their parents if they are younger than seven years old; otherwise, they will walk around the front pew (depending on which side of the family) and enter into the far side of the second pew.

The maid/matron of honor will stand next to where the bride will be at the bottom of the steps (This will allow her to help the bride with her train, help with removing the veil and take her flowers from her etc.), the best man will already be up front with the groom (Unless he walks up with the maid of honor).

When the bride approaches the front aisle her father will (if he has escorted the bride, and possibly the mother) shake hands with the groom and with the maid of honor's assistance remove blusher veil from bride's face. At this time the bride's father will go to his pew (second pew on his left). Once the bride and groom are in place, the bride will hand her flowers to the maid of honor. The Bride and Groom then kneel or sit facing the Altar at the Prie Dieu.

After the opening prayers the readings will take place (One or two readings and the psalm is sung). From this point the priest/deacon will direct the ceremony.

After the homily the priest will ask the bridal couple to stand. At this time the maid/matron of honor and best man step forward to witness the consent, vows and exchange of rings.

The Mass continues with the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Prayer of the Faithful, Consecration, Lord's Prayer, Nuptial Blessing, Sign of Peace and Communion. **After Holy Communion the couple may visit the Blessed Mother with flowers.** Upon their return to the front of the sanctuary steps they will bow and then go up the steps to the altar along with the maid of honor and best man. They, with the priest, will all sign the marriage license at the altar (if the bridal couple is not already civilly married). The couples will return to their places and the maid of honor will hand the bridal bouquet back to the bride. The priest gives the Final Blessing, introduces the married couple and the recessional begins.

For planning for your wedding ceremony please contact:

Immaculate Conception Parish Wedding Coordinator

Veronica Stepanek

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