

St. Michael's Wedding Preparation Guide

Scheduling

To schedule a wedding at St. Michael, the couple must first meet with the pastor who will then set a date with the couple. That date must be at least six (6) months after the initial meeting with the pastor. If your wedding will take place during Advent or Lent, please keep in mind that your wedding celebration will be more subdued because of those seasons. This means music and flowers might have to be adjusted. Because of this, it is not recommended that a wedding take place during Advent or Lent. Weddings cannot be scheduled on Holy Days of Obligation. Most weddings take place on a Saturday, but more are taking place on Friday. Either is fine. In fact, any day of the week is a possibility. Weddings on a Friday can take place any time after 10am. Saturday weddings can be scheduled anytime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Because of the Saturday evening Mass, all pictures, flowers, and wedding party activities must be completed by 4 p.m. Remember, all arrangements are worked out with the priest at the time of the first meeting. We cannot guarantee your date until that meeting has occurred.

Preparation

Because the Catholic Church holds marriage as a sacrament, we believe preparation is essential. Before the wedding can take place, the couple must complete the preparation for the sacrament. The preparation occurs over at least a six month period prior to the wedding day. If the preparation is not completed before the service, the wedding will be delayed. If the marriage is to take place here at St. Michael, then this must be coordinated with the pastor. The same is true for parishioners who are getting married at another church, be that another Catholic Church, Protestant Church, or another religion's house of worship.

Preparation normally includes the following...

4-5 meetings with the pastor, priest, or deacon who is witnessing the wedding.

1-3 meetings with a sponsor couple and a premarital inventory.

The Ceremony

The priest will discuss the ritual with the couple during meetings leading up to the wedding day. It is best to discuss the actual ritual with the priest before making a final decision on certain aspects of the wedding. Some things are not always possible in a Catholic wedding.

Before the wedding there is a rehearsal that normally happens the night before the wedding. There is to be no alcoholic beverages brought to or consumed before or during the wedding or the rehearsal. Decorations must be cleared with the wedding coordinator before the wedding. Aisle runners cannot be used. Setup and tear down of decorations as well as general cleanup after the ceremony are the responsibility of the couple. Arrangements should be made in order for this to occur. It is recommend that pictures take place before the wedding. Couples can use the entire campus for pictures.

The couple should work with the St. Michael Music Director to plan the music for the service. If you have other musicians who are involved, please speak to the Music Director so that there is no confusion and music choices are appropriate.

The couple should bring the marriage license to the church on the day of the wedding.

Photographers and videographers may be used but they must try to stay as inconspicuous as possible. They may never enter the sanctuary to film or photograph. Flash photography during the service is discouraged.

The couple may have family and friends serve in the different ministries during the service. Obviously, it helps if the people are familiar with Catholic traditions so that they can perform the ministries correctly. This should be something that you discuss with the priest or deacon who is witnessing the service.

After the service, bells or bubbles may be used in honor of the couple, but please no rice, bird seed or confetti. Again, it is the responsibility of the couple to make sure the church and its surrounding areas are clean and ready to be used for our normal Masses.

Our Parish Life Center is available for rent. If you are interested in using it, please call the parish office for more information at 317-462-4240.

Behavior During the Ceremony

St. Michael welcomes all visitors and enjoys extending hospitality to wedding parties. We ask that all visitors be respectful of our church and furnishings. The following rules are to be observed:

No alcoholic beverages are permitted on the Church premises at any time during the rehearsal and wedding. Any such items found will be removed and could result in the wedding being delayed.

Food is not allowed in the church. Bottled water is the only allowed drink. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to assure that their wedding party has an opportunity for an adequate meal before coming to the church on the day of the wedding.

St. Michael has limited space for the wedding party to dress. It is suggested members of the wedding party arrive dressed in wedding attire. Dress for all persons in the wedding party should be appropriately modest and suitable for a sacramental liturgy. Men in the wedding party will be assigned the Server Sacristy to dress if needed. Ladies of the wedding party will be assigned the Cry Room for dressing.

St. Michael is not responsible for any personal belongings left in the church.

Unless the reception is held at St. Michael, no parking is allowed after the wedding and pictures have concluded. If the reception is at St. Michael, no cars should be left over night.

Aisle runners are not permitted at St. Michael.

The Wedding Coordinator will arrange for the required sanctuary furnishings (i.e., chairs and kneelers) and appropriate placement. (See decorations and flowers.)

No animals are permitted in the church, other than those trained to assist the disabled.

Decorations and Florists

Floral arrangements must not restrict movement in the sanctuary nor obstruct the view of the assembly. Guests must always be able to see the altar table, ambo (lectern), the Wedding Couple and Officiant.

Any florist of the couple's choosing may provide floral arrangements and wedding party flowers. Appropriate liturgical areas to be highlighted with floral displays are in front of the ambo (lectern) and directly in front of the altar on the wood floor.

No decorations of any kind may be placed on the altar.

The aisle at St. Michael is not quite as wide as in some churches. Please do not use any other decorations other than pew bows on the aisles of the church. (Pew bows must be hung using materials that will not damage the pews; clips may not work on St. Michael pews.)

Please remove all decorations immediately if they are not intended to remain in the church. If decorations are to be left, please advise the Wedding Coordinator.

Flowers are provided each weekend for the Masses. Please consult the Wedding Coordinator if you would like to utilize the weekend Mass flowers.

Because our isle is carpeted, real flower petals may not be used.

The church is not available for decorating until the time designated for access to the church as per your agreement, unless otherwise arranged with the Wedding Coordinator.

Rehearsal

Wedding Rehearsals are typically scheduled for the day before the wedding. If your wedding is scheduled on a Saturday, customarily your rehearsal will be Friday evening at 6pm.

The Wedding Coordinator will be present for both the rehearsal and wedding liturgy to assist.

Wedding rehearsals begin promptly at the scheduled time. Couples are asked to remind their wedding party/families to arrive at the church 15 minutes prior to the start of a rehearsal. The rehearsal should take an hour. Please plan travel time between the end of the rehearsal and the start of your post-rehearsal dinner.

The rehearsal is conducted by the Officiant, assisted as needed by the Wedding Coordinator.

Appropriate dress is requested at the rehearsal.

The following persons are expected to attend the rehearsal:

- A. Wedding Couple and entire wedding party including flower girls/ring bearers, etc.
- B. Parents of the Wedding Couple
- C. Grandparents of the Wedding Couple (if they are part of the procession/beginning seating)
- D. Lectors proclaiming the readings and petitions
- E. Gift-Bearers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Music is not usually performed at the rehearsal, so it is not necessary to have musicians present unless you want them there.

Other Helpful Information

A wedding taking place at St. Michael needs to conform to our Catholic customs. A Priest or Deacon must witness the marriage. If a priest or a deacon who is not currently serving at this parish is asked to witness the marriage, they must contact the pastor for permission to do so, and they might be required to give the pastor a simple letter showing they are in good standing with the Church.

If the wedding is taking place at another church, St. Michael still needs to be informed so that we can help you as you approach the sacrament.

If either of the parties have had a previous marriage that has not been annulled by the Catholic Church (this is different from civil divorce), they should bring that up in the initial meeting. An annulment might be required before the wedding can take place. It is the policy of our diocese that a date for the wedding cannot be set until an annulment has been granted. This could even be the case if one of the parties is not a Catholic who has been married previously. Our tradition on this

matter might seem strange in today's society, but our Church believes that marriage is a sacrament and so assumes all marriages are valid until they are annulled by the Church. If either party has a previous marriage that has not been annulled, it is highly recommended that they call the parish to setup an appointment with the pastor as soon as possible.

Catholics should understand that if they get married at another house of worship, in a Protestant church, or at a destination wedding without working with their parish and their pastor, then they have broken communion with the Church on the issue of marriage and so are not to receive communion until this is reconciled. This holds as well for couples who choose to get married outside the church because of a previous marriage.

Fees

Anyone who is an active parishioner or who is the son or daughter of an active parishioner is asked to pay the following fees. However, if this would cause a hardship, then the couple should discuss this with the pastor.

Church usage fee- \$100. This covers the materials that will be used in the preparation, as well as simple wear and tear on the building.

Priest/Deacon stole fee- \$100 this is a customary gift to the minister for helping with the marriage preparation. If a different minister is doing the preparation than the wedding, you might consider a gift to both. If a priest or deacon is traveling, the couple should at the very least cover the mileage for his trip. Again, if this would be hardship then do not feel obligated to give a stipend.

Music \$150-\$200 + \$75-\$100 for vocalist. This varies based on the service and its music needs. Please discuss this with the Music Director. The parish normally provides the musicians for the wedding. If you have

other musicians in mind, then this should be discussed with both the pastor and parish Music Director.

Wedding coordinator fee is \$50. This person helps at the rehearsal and the wedding itself with any questions and set up and tear down. They do not make decisions on the wedding ritual itself, but are available to there to help you with logistical aspect of the day. Our wedding coordinator is Judy Ann and her contact number is 317- 894-4531. It's a good idea to touch base with Judy Ann about a month or two before the wedding.