

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

*109 West Monroe Street
Goshen, Indiana 46815
574.533.3385*



Guidelines for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

Instruction Before Marriage

Dear friends in Christ: As you know you are about to enter into a union which is most sacred and most serious, a union which was established by God himself. By it, he gave to man a share in the greatest work of creation, the work of the continuation of the human race. And in this way he sanctified human love and enabled man and woman to help each other live as children of God, by sharing a common life under his fatherly care.

Because God himself is thus its author, marriage is of its very nature a holy institution, requiring of those who enter into it a complete and unreserved giving of self. But Christ our Lord added to the holiness of marriage an even deeper meaning and a higher beauty. He referred to the love of marriage to describe his own love for his Church, that is, for the people of God whom he redeemed by his own blood. And so he gave to Christians a new vision of what married life ought to be, a life of self-sacrificing love like his own. It is for this reason that his apostle, St. Paul, clearly states that marriage is now and for all time to be considered a great mystery, intimately bound up with the supernatural union of Christ and the Church, which union is also to be its pattern.

This union then is most serious, because it will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly influence your whole future. That future, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and its failures, its pleasures and its pains, its joys and its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. You know that these elements are mingled in every life and are to be expected in your own. And so, not knowing what is before you, you take each other for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death.

Truly, then, these words are most serious. It is a beautiful tribute to your undoubted faith in each other, that, recognizing their full import, you are nevertheless so willing and ready to pronounce them. And because these words involve such solemn obligations, it is most fitting that you rest the security of your wedded life upon the great principle of self-sacrifice. And so you begin your married life by the voluntary and complete surrender of your individual lives in the interest of that deeper and wider life which you are to have in common. Henceforth you belong entirely to each other; you will be one in mind, one in heart, and one in affections. And whatever sacrifices you may hereafter be required to make to preserve this common life, always make them generously.

Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy and perfect love can make it a joy. We are willing to give in proportion as we love. And when the love is perfect, the sacrifice is complete. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, and the Son so loved us that he gave himself for our salvation. "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends".

No greater blessing can come to your married life than pure conjugal love, loyal and true to the end. May then, this love with which you join your hands and hearts today never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on. And if true love and the unselfish spirit of perfect sacrifice guide your every action, you can expect the greatest measure of earthly happiness that may be allotted to man in this vale of tears. The rest is in the hands of God. Nor will God be wanting to your needs; he will pledge you the life-long support of his grace in the holy sacrament you are now going to receive.

(taken from a homily on marriage)

BEFORE THE WEDDING

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend requires that couples intending to marry make arrangements with their parish priest at least six months prior to the proposed date of marriage. Your wedding reservation is not finalized until you have the permission of the priest to proceed, usually after your second meeting with him.

Lent and Advent are penitential seasons in the church. Weddings are permitted during Advent and Lent, but not encouraged. If a wedding does take place during these holy seasons, the special nature of the seasons should be respected by exercising restraint in the decoration, etc. Please keep these seasons in mind when selecting a wedding date.

CHURCH WEDDING COORDINATORS

A wedding coordinator will be assigned by the church to help you with the details of your ceremony. Outside coordinators are permitted to help with your wedding as it pertains to non-ceremony activities. Once a wedding date has been confirmed with the church office and your priest or deacon, expect a call from your assigned wedding coordinator **1-2 months** before your wedding date. You should talk to a coordinator before making any final arrangements with your florist, photographer, and/or videographer. Your coordinator will go over some “do’s and don’ts” regarding placement and size of arrangements and rules for photos.

REHEARSAL

To schedule your rehearsal time, please contact the priest. Please do this as soon as you have confirmed your wedding date. Normally, the rehearsal takes place the night before your wedding date. Your coordinator will discuss essential items necessary for you to bring and leave at the church the night of the rehearsal.

THE CEREMONY

The marriage of two practicing Catholics normally takes place within the context of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If one of the parties is non-Catholic or if one or more of the Catholic parties are not regularly attending Mass on Sundays, the wedding will be a ceremony without a Mass.

CHURCH DOCUMENTS NEEDED

Both bride and groom need to supply these as soon as possible:

1. A baptismal certificate of recent issue. For Catholics, the baptismal certificate must be dated no more than six months prior to the date of marriage.
2. For inter-faith marriages, the permission of the diocesan bishop is required prior to the celebration of marriage. Your celebrant will discuss this with you.
3. If either party has been previously married, proof of either an annulment of the previous bond or death of spouse is required.
4. Two witnesses (usually parents) are required to complete affidavits of freedom to marry for each person. These forms are in your wedding folder or may be picked up at the parish office. *The affidavit must be signed in the presence of a priest or a member of the parish office staff.*

CIVIL DOCUMENTS NEEDED

You will need to obtain a marriage license. Information concerning civil requirements may be obtained by calling the Elkhart County Courthouse at 574.535.6431. The license may be obtained up to 60 days before the wedding. Please deliver the certificates to the church office no later than two weeks prior to the wedding date.

THE CLERGY

The officiant of your marriage ceremony is a priest or deacon of St. John Parish, or, with permission of the pastor, a priest or deacon whom you request who is a relative or personal friend of the bride or groom. In the latter case, the visiting celebrant should contact the pastor beforehand.

The celebrant of your marriage will guide you in the planning of the ceremony. He will discuss with you the roles of all the participants in your wedding, including: the readers, the ushers, the gift bearers, etc. If there is anything special which you would like included in your wedding ceremony, please discuss it with the celebrant when you meet with him.

PRE-MARITAL MEETINGS

“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.” (CCC 1601) Because of the importance of your approaching wedding with your beloved, it is necessary to offer you invaluable resources to help you in your preparation for this life-long vocation of love.

The first step is two initial meetings with the parish priest. The first is more informal in nature and the second is a more formal, interview meeting. At the second meeting, he will give you information about the Diocesan marriage conference that you must attend. After your second meeting you will receive an email with instructions about taking the FOCCUS assessment. The priest will meet with you to go over the FOCCUS assessment.

We also require that you complete a Natural Family Planning course. The priest will discuss with you the different options for this course.

You will be assigned a mentor couple whom you will meet with at least two times.

Once you have attended all of the above mentioned meetings, the priest will meet once privately with the groom and once privately with the bride. After those meetings, the priest will meet with you as a couple to make the final preparatory steps needed to complete the pre-marital program.



OTHER INFORMATION

1. Wedding ceremonies are scheduled to provide you access to the church for 2 hours. For a 12:00 p.m. ceremony, you will have the church from 11:20-1:20 pm. For a 2:00 p.m. ceremony, you will have the church from 1:20-3:20 pm. This means that all decorating, ceremonies, pictures and clean up should take place within the 2 hours. We insist that you do not run over the scheduled time. If the ceremony begins late or is prolonged, it may be necessary to eliminate or shorten the time for pictures after the ceremony. Weddings may be available at other times on an extraordinary basis with the approval of the pastor.
2. Members of the wedding party should plan to arrive at the church at least 30 minutes before the ceremony begins and should be dressed appropriately (i.e. modestly). Please do not wear 'flip-flops' for your wedding. In order to avoid last minute glitches, we suggest that the wedding party dress at home. If you choose to get dressed at the church, please let your wedding coordinator know ahead of time. Our church does not have a proper bride's room, but you may use the cry room at the back of church.
3. Receiving lines and dismissing of guests after the ceremony are not allowed at St. John Parish. The reception is the appropriate time to receive your guests.
4. Please do not throw rice, bird seed, confetti nor balloons. These could be saved for the reception. This includes the throwing of rose/flower petals down the aisle by flower girls. Instead, flower girls may carry baskets of flowers or bouquets.
5. Please, no alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, or food (including chewing gum) are allowed on the church property. Smoking is not permitted in the church building. Also, please remember the 1 hour fast before reception of the Holy Eucharist.
6. The unity candle is not a part of the Rite of Marriage in the Catholic Church. If you desire to include it in your wedding, it is more appropriate to use this custom during your reception
7. Please review the guidelines for florists, photographers, and videographers in your packet. Failure to adhere to these guidelines could lead to your photographer or videographer being asked to leave the church or, in the case of florists, the loss of your church maintenance deposit.

WEDDING MUSIC GUIDELINES

1. Mr. James Richardson is the Director of Sacred Music and Organist for Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Church. Please contact him no later than 3 months before your wedding date to coordinate planning music for your wedding. It is preferred that only the prospective bride and groom attend the planning session.

Contact Info: (419) 206-8497 or music@stjohncatholic.com

2. A reasonable attempt will be made by the DoSM to accommodate the desires of the engaged couple as closely as possible however not all requests can be accommodated. (Please see paragraphs 3 & 9 for important info.)
3. Since your wedding will take place in the church, the music will need to reflect the standard tenants of Catholic musical theology: namely, prayerfulness, praise, and the sacredness of nature. Please note the following:
 - Popular / secular music is never permitted.
 - The Director of Sacred Music and/or Pastor reserve the right to refuse any music deemed inappropriate for the liturgy.
4. It is important that no other instrumentalist(s), cantor, or vocal soloist be formally engaged for your wedding before your planning session takes place. Optional singers and instrumentalists must be discussed and vetted with the DoSM prior to engaging their services.
5. We require our resident parish organist to play for all weddings at St. John's. A qualified substitute will be arranged if the organist is unavailable due to another commitment.
6. The organ will be the primary instrument used during most weddings.
7. For weddings within a Mass, couples may opt to have Mr. Richardson cantor or choose to engage a different cantor to lead the congregation in singing.

If a different cantor is preferred, Mr. Richardson will assist you in hiring an approved cantor. (Please see #12 below for associated fees.) It is required that either a dedicated cantor or Mr. Richardson lead the congregation in singing during wedding Masses.

8. Instrumentalists (brass, strings, woodwinds, harp, etc.) from inside or outside the parish may be engaged to add to the festiveness of your wedding Mass or ceremony at the discretion of the DoSM. The organist will direct the instrumentalists during the wedding.
9. If the couple desires for a friend or family member to cantor or play an instrument, an audition with the DoSM may be required if formal musical training cannot be verified in advance. Musical participation by the aforementioned friends/family members is not guaranteed until formal approval is granted.
10. Recorded music in any form is not permitted as part of the wedding Mass or ceremony including prelude/postlude.
11. All soloist music should be purchased and sent to the organist and soloist(s) no later than **3 weeks prior** to the wedding. All the musicians are responsible for bringing their own copies of music. Copyright laws forbid us to make copies of music. Mr. Richardson can help source appropriate scores however it will be the responsibility of the couple to purchase scores and deliver them to the church in a timely fashion. Failure to do so may result in the DoSM substituting a different musical work at his discretion.
12. Fees for the organist, cantor and guest musicians are as follows:
 - Organist Fee (Option A): \$150.00 — Organ Only
This fee includes the wedding music planning session, the wedding Mass or ceremony, and a warm-up with instrumentalists, soloist, or cantor on the wedding day. *If the ceremony is a Mass then a separate cantor will be required.
 - Organist Fee (Option B): \$175.00 — Play Organ & Cantor
This fee includes everything from Option A but also includes Church Cantor: \$75 (per cantor)
This fee includes a warm-up session with the organist and the Mass/
ceremony. This fee will go to the cantor(s) directly and will be in

Mr. Richardson cantoring from the organ bench.

- Church Cantor: \$75 (per cantor)
This fee includes a warm-up session with the organist and the Mass/ceremony. This fee will go to the cantor(s) directly and will be in addition to the minimal organist's fee (Option A).
- Outside Musicians: fees vary based on the musician.
The couple will negotiate fees and payments to outside musicians directly.
- Please note: an additional \$25.00/hr is required for each hour of rehearsal with guest instrumentalist(s), cantor(s), or soloist(s) or in meeting with the couple.
- ***Musician Fees must be paid in advance of the wedding ceremony.*** It is preferred that checks are sent to the parish office the week preceding the wedding. Checks will not be cashed until services are rendered.
- Please send any checks to:

**James Richardson
% St. John the Evangelist Church
109 W. Monroe St.
Goshen, IN 46526**
- Organist's fee check should be made payable to: James Richardson. Cantor checks should be made payable to that individual once they are determined. Other musicians contracted individually by the couple should be paid directly and not via St. John's.

WEDDING FEES

1. **Parish Program:** \$100.00

This includes materials and the cost of using the church. The check should be given to the parish office one month before the wedding and made out to St. John Catholic Church. Write “wedding” in the memo line. There is an envelop in your wedding folder.

2. **Church Maintenance Deposit:** \$100.00

We ask that a \$100.00 refundable maintenance deposit be given to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal. The deposit will be retained for reasons that include: alcohol consumption on the church premises, the use of flower petals or glitter within the church, or for neglecting the facilities. The deposit check will either be returned or destroyed should we encounter none of these issues.

3. **Altar servers:** \$20.00 each

Unless you supply your own servers, each altar server should receive a gift of \$20.00, paid in cash and given to the wedding coordinator for distribution. There will be 2 servers at the Mass or ceremony. This fee does not apply if you provide your own servers. Any servers must have experience, preferably at St. John.

4. **Wedding Coordinator:** \$75.00

- Additional \$25 for weddings with more than 6 attendants on each side.
- Services include: consultation with the bride and groom, organization of the rehearsal, assistance in coordination of the set-up and clean-up of the church on your wedding day, assistance with information (printed materials, etc.) and being available to answer any questions regarding the ceremony, the florist, the photographer, the videographer, and the musicians. A church wedding coordinator *is mandatory*. Any need beyond the ordinary could increase this fee.

5. **Organist and Musicians:** see previous page.

6. **Clergy:** It is customary to give a stipend to the priest or deacon who celebrates your wedding. This donation is at your discretion and can be given to him at the rehearsal or before or after the wedding. It is not included in any of the above fees.

St. John the Evangelist Church Lay-out

