

# WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE



**Ss. Robert & William Catholic Parish**

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## CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT

On behalf of the Staff and Parishioners of Ss. Robert & William Catholic Parish, we extend our prayerful support for both of you as you begin your life together. Marriage is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church and is a special encounter between Christ and the bride and groom. The covenant between the bride and groom mirrors the sacred covenant between God and us. Therefore, a couple deserves thorough preparation before entering into this holy union that is both sacramental and a lifelong commitment to one another. The staff of Ss. Robert & William commits itself to quality marriage preparation for each and every couple that approaches the Church to receive the sacrament of marriage. Enclosed in this booklet is various information that will help you plan for your upcoming marriage.

## SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

By the time you begin planning the details of your wedding, you will have talked with the priest or deacon who is presiding at your wedding, and through him, reserved a date and time on the official church calendar.

Once that date is scheduled, you can count on the support of the Church staff and volunteers in preparing for your wedding. These staff and volunteers have worked with the priests in planning numerous weddings over the past years; their names and phone numbers are listed on the front page of this booklet. The information and suggestions in this booklet have been carefully prepared by the staff and volunteers of Ss. Robert & William Parish. While other churches may have different customs and books on wedding etiquette or may suggest other ways of doing things, we expect this booklet to guide the planning for all weddings at Ss. Robert & William Parish. **Any potential variation from this booklet's suggestions should be carefully discussed with the priest and staff long before the wedding date.**

## COMPONENTS OF CATHOLIC MARRIAGE PREPARATION

There are several important components of marriage preparation that you both need to commit to that will assure that you both are ready for marriage. In general, preparation should begin at least 6 months prior to intended wedding date:

**Active Faith Life:** Sunday Mass participation, registration in a parish, and reception of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confession on a regular basis constitute an active faith life for the baptized Catholic.

**Prayer:** Daily prayer with and for each other throughout the entire preparation process and into marriage. By praying together, you bind your union in Christ more deeply.

**Prepare & Enrich:** Prepare & Enrich is a digital assessment of the strengths and growth areas of your relationship that measures various areas of married life (i.e., religion, communication, sexuality, etc.). There are no right or wrong answers; the survey compares and contrasts the answers of each person and thus allows for observations for future growth. The priest preparing you for marriage will email you a link to take this online assessment.

**Meeting with the Priest:** The majority of the marriage preparation will be done with the priest who is witnessing the marriage. Each priest sets his own appointments and determines the number of meetings to best meet the needs of both of you.

**Pre-Cana:** The Pre-Cana Day is a retreat/workshop experience for engaged couples. SRW hosts one in mid-March. The priest preparing you will give you more information.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

It is the responsibility of the couple to provide the following documentation before the wedding date:

**Baptism Records:** Catholic parties are to obtain a baptismal certificate. These certificates may be obtained from the church in which baptism was celebrated. The documents are to be dated within the last six months of giving them to the priest. Others who are baptized should try to obtain a baptismal certificate from their Christian denomination and/or church.

**Previous Marriages:** If a person has been married before it is necessary to provide the following: Death Certificate of Former Spouse (if a widow or widower) or Declaration of Nullity (record of annulment).

**Civil Marriage License:** It is necessary to obtain a civil license within sixty (60) days of the wedding date. It is obtained at the probate court of the county in which the couple resides.

**Please submit the license to the priest, no later than the Rehearsal. The Rehearsal cannot take place without the License. The priest will submit the marriage license back to the county.**

## THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

The priests and musicians have much experience in planning wedding celebrations and will help you to focus on these values as you plan for your ceremony.

When you meet with the priest or deacon, you will discuss whether to have a full wedding Mass or a wedding Service. A Wedding Mass is very similar to a regular Sunday Mass. A Wedding Service follows the same order, omitting only the Eucharistic Prayer and the Rite of Communion. If the wedding is between two Catholics a Wedding Mass is most appropriate. If the wedding is between a Catholic and non-Catholic who is baptized in a Christian denomination it is possible to have a Mass, but consideration should be given to the comfort level of the non-Catholic guests and the reality that non-Catholics cannot receive Holy Communion. A wedding between a Catholic and someone who has never been baptized in any denomination cannot take place at a Mass and will be done as a Wedding Service.

## READINGS

The Lectionary, the book of readings for Mass, contains several sets of readings that you may choose from for your wedding celebration. The presider will read the Gospel reading. The First and Second Readings and the Universal Prayer are often read by family or friends of the couple. The music director will help you choose the Psalm from among the musical settings they are familiar with. Generally, the readings help focus the music and other prayers for the Mass or service.

## **MUSIC**

The music for a wedding Mass or service is carefully chosen to meet the needs of the liturgy itself. For instance, the processional and recessional music is usually stately and joyful, the Psalm and communion songs are easy enough for the assembly to quickly join in, and any music for meditation has words that are worthy of the dignity and sacredness of the rite. The wedding ceremony at a Catholic Church is not a time to run through a list of “golden-oldie” love songs, or to borrow customs and expressions that come from other faith traditions.

The parish music director will meet with you to plan the music choices and arrange for the musicians for your ceremony. You should contact the director two to three months before the ceremony to schedule this appointment. The music director will arrange for an experienced organist and cantor from our parish to perform at your wedding; you may wish to consider having an instrumental soloist or other singers as well. Even if you plan to have musicians from outside our parish, you should contact the parish music director who will be glad to contact the other musicians and arrange rehearsal times for them, and welcome them to our church.

## **PARTICIPANTS IN YOUR CEREMONY**

The parish encourages you to involve your family and friends in your wedding ceremony. They may serve as lectors, reading the First and Second Readings or the petitions for the Prayers of the Faithful, altar servers, or as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. It is most appropriate for the Bride & Groom to bring up the gifts of bread and wine at the Presentation of Gifts. The presider will want to discuss these roles in detail with you *before* you choose the people to fill them. While we sincerely encourage the involvement of your friends and relatives, we also must insist that all readers and musicians be capable of these important roles. You should be sure these people have time to rehearse in our church, with our instruments and microphones, *before* the actual day of the ceremony.

If you include children as ring bearers or flower bearers, please consider the age and temperament of the child. You may want to arrange to have an adult, with whom the child is comfortable, to assist the child to be in the correct place at the correct time.

## **CUSTOMS**

There are sometimes friends and family members who put pressure on a bridal couple to observe particular ethnic or religious customs at weddings. The parish encourages the bride and groom to consider these ideas carefully, weighing the meaning and symbolism behind the custom. We encourage you to choose only those customs which are personally meaningful to you; which you can say are truly expressions of your own faith. You should be sure to discuss these customs with the priest and other participants well before the wedding.

One custom is an optional visit to our Holy Family Mosaic near the baptismal font. If desired, the couple may go to offer a prayer to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph after the exchange of rings since they have become the newest holy family in the Church!

## THE PROCESSIONAL AND THE RECEIVING LINE

We encourage you to think carefully about the timing and traffic flow of your plans for the Processional, the Recessional, and the receiving line. Often, both the bride's parents as well as the parents of the groom are included in the processional. Or they may be escorted to their seats just a moment before the Processional itself starts.

Because of the heavy use and tight scheduling in our building, the parish does not allow receiving lines at the church. We remind you of the origin of the term 'reception,' which, of course, refers to the event *following* a wedding ceremony where guests are received and entertained.

## ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY

### FLOWERS

Fresh floral arrangements are welcomed as a lovely accent for your wedding ceremony. During seasons of the church year when the church is fully decorated, especially the Christmas and Easter seasons, you may not need to add other flowers.

**In any case, you should not plan to re-arrange any of the church's existing floral arrangements or other furniture for your ceremony.**

Fresh flowers from your ceremony would be gratefully accepted and appreciated to decorate the church after your wedding; however, this is not expected. Please inform the Parish Sacristan if you do plan to leave flowers.

### OTHER DECORATIONS

If you plan to use an aisle runner, the length of the church's main aisle is 88 feet. We recommend using a 100 foot long runner to comfortably reach out to the Vestibule.

Please do not use any kind of tape or other adhesives, and take care not to mar the finish of the furnishings when planning decorations.

The parish discourages, but does not prohibit, the use of the Unity Candle. In a Catholic ceremony, the rings are blessed and exchanged as symbols of unity in Christ; the Eucharistic Prayer includes petitions for the unity of all people in Christ; and the Eucharist itself is an actual sign of the unity of the Catholic Church. Since the wedding liturgy already has so many rich symbols of unity, the addition of the Unity Candle is unnecessary. If used, the unity candle is lit directly after the vows.

The parish does not allow the throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals or any other substances, primarily because of safety and building maintenance concerns. We discourage the use of helium balloons out of concern for the environment.

## WEDDING REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are usually held the afternoon or evening prior to the wedding day. Prompt attendance by all participants in the wedding ceremony is required, unless previous arrangements have been made with the priest or deacon. You will have scheduled the date and time with the priest or deacon months before. Be sure to schedule with him *before* committing your party to dinner reservations.

***It is highly inappropriate for any of the wedding party to be under the influence of alcohol during the wedding rehearsal or ceremony; if a reminder of this is appropriate for anyone in your party, we encourage you to make one.***

## THE WEDDING DAY

For weddings that begin at 11:00 a.m.

Plan to enter the building no sooner than 10:30 a.m.  
and be sure your party has left the building by 12:30 p.m.

For weddings that begin at 1:00 p.m.

Plan to enter the building no sooner than 12:30 p.m.  
and be sure your party has left the building by 2:30 p.m.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Be sure to discuss the photography plans with the Wedding Coordinator. Pictures, as well as videos, may be taken during the ceremony. Please direct your photographer to use no extra lighting, including camera flash, nor to move into the sanctuary during the ceremony. **Photographers should always greet and speak briefly with the presider before the ceremony.** There are several options in scheduling pictures: before or after the ceremony, inside or outside, etc. Please plan your time before and after the ceremony carefully to include all the photo opportunities you will want. At no time should the photographer stop the flow of the procession or Liturgy. Posed pictures can be taken after the ceremony.

## FEES

The fee for getting married at the parish is **\$300** (inclusive of priest, organist and cantor). If this amount poses a difficulty for your budget, just mention it to the priest. If you use a visiting priest and/or musicians, please consult parish office for adjusted fee schedule. If you are having a wedding Mass we request an envelope with **\$20** for the Altar Server.

## RECOMMENDED READING

*Spousal Prayer* by Deacon James Keating (\$7)

*Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No, To Take Control of Your Life* by Cloud & Townsend (\$8)

*A Sinner's Guide to Natural Family Planning* by Simcha Fisher (\$9)

*The Temperament God Gave You* by Art & Laraine Bennett (\$11)

*Dad is Fat* by Jim Gaffigan (\$11)

**OLD TESTAMENT READING (Choose One):** The first reading is taken from the Hebrew Scriptures or the "Old Testament." Please choose one of the following readings and indicate your choice on the planning form. (You may choose a reading not listed here, as long as it can be found in the Old Testament.)

B1: Genesis 1:26-28, 31a

*"God created man in his image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*

B2: Genesis 2:18-24

*"It is not good for the man to be alone...When he brought her to the man, the man said: 'this one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.'"*

B3: Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67

*"Sister, may you grow into thousands of myriads; And may your descendants gain possession of the gates of their enemies!"*

B4: Tobit 7:6-14

*"May the Lord of heaven prosper you both. May he grant you mercy and peace."*

B5: Tobit 8:4b-8

*"Sarah got up, and they started to pray...Call down your mercy on me and on her, and allow us to live together to a happy old age."*

B6: Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

*"When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls...an unfailing prize."*

B7: Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

*"Stern as death is love, relentless as the nether-world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire. Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away."*

B8: Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16

*"Like the sun rising in the LORD's heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home."*

B9: Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

*"But this is the covenant which I will make...I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Choose one):** Always sung. The music director will help you with the setting.

C1: Psalm 33:12 & 18,20-21, 22

*"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord...Our soul waits for the LORD, [...] For in him our hearts rejoice."*

C2: Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

*"Taste and see the goodness of the Lord...Glorify the LORD with me, let us together extol his name."*

C3: Psalm 103:1-2, 8 & 13, 17-18a

*"But the kindness of the LORD is from eternity to eternity toward those who fear him."*

C4: Psalm 112:1bc-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7b-8, 9

*"Well for the man who is gracious and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice...An evil report he shall not fear."*

C5: Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

*"Blessed are you who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways! For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; blessed shall you be, and favored."*

C6: Psalm 145:8-9, 10 & 15, 17-18

*"The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works."*

C7: Psalm 148:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-13a, 13c-14a

*"Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights; Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all you his hosts."*



**NEW TESTAMENT READING (Choose One):** The second reading is always taken from the New Testament. Please choose one of the following readings and indicate your selection on the planning form. (You may choose a reading not listed here, as long as it can be found in the New Testament).

D1: Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

*"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,...nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus."*

D2: Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 or (shorter version) 12:1-2, 9-13

*"Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor."*

D3: Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13

*"May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another...that with one accord you may with one voice glorify...God."*

D4: 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

*"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"*

D5: 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

*"Love is patient, love is kind...it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth... Love never fails"*

D6: Ephesians 5:2a, 21-33 or (shorter version) 5:2a, 25-32

*"Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ...This is a great mystery but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church."*

D7: Philippians 4:4-9

*"The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all...[rather] make your requests known to God... Then the God of peace will be with you."*

D8: Colossians 3:12-17

*"Put on, as God's chosen ones...heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with...and forgiving one another."*

D9: Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b

*"Let mutual love continue...Let marriage be honored among all."*

D10: 1 Peter 3:1-9

*"Your adornment should not be an external one: [...] rather the hidden character of the heart, expressed in...a gentle and calm disposition."*

D11: 1 John 3:18-24

*"Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth."*

D12: 1 John 4:7-12

*"Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love...In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son."*

D13: Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

*"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come... Blessed are those who have been called."*

**GOSPEL READING (Choose One):** The Gospel is always proclaimed by the priest or deacon. Please choose one of the following Gospel readings and mark your selection on the planning form. (These are only suggested Gospel readings, please feel free to choose another which might better express the faith of those gathered).

F1: Matthew 5:1-12a

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven...  
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."*

F2: Matthew 5:13-16

*"You are the light of the world...your light must shine before others,  
that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."*

F3: Matthew 7:21, 24-29 or (shorter version) 7:21, 24-25

*"Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them  
will be like a wise man who built his house on rock."*

F4: Matthew 19:3-6

*"So they are no longer two, but one flesh.  
Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate."*

F5: Matthew 22:35-40

*"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart...  
You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

F6: Mark 10:6-9

*"So they are no longer two but one flesh.  
Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."*

F7: John 2:1-11

*"There was a wedding in Cana in Galilee...you have kept the good wine until now.  
Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana."*

F8: John 15:9-12

*"Remain in my love...  
I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete."*

F9: John 15:12-16

*"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.  
You are my friends if you do what I command you..."*

F10: John 17:20-26 or (shorter version) 17:20-23

*"I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one,  
as we are one...that they may be brought to perfection as one."*

## UNIVERSAL PRAYER

**You may use these prayers or contribute your own, but please follow this general format.**

For our Holy Father on earth, the Pope, all the bishops and the clergy everywhere that they may lead us to deeper faith in God and a stronger love for others, we pray to the Lord.

For our president and all leaders of government that they may be effective in achieving peace and eliminating poverty, we pray to Lord.

For married persons that they may continue to give, be able to forgive, and find happiness deepen with the passing of each day, we pray to Lord.

For N. and N., now beginning their life together, that they may have divine assistance at every moment, the constant support of friends, the rich blessing of children, a warm love reaching out to other, and good health until a ripe old age, we pray to the Lord.

For those who are sick, lonely, discouraged, or oppressed that they may be strengthened by God's help and aided by their friends, we pray to the Lord.

For those who have died, especially the relatives and friends of N. and N. and of all present for this wedding, that they may enjoy perfect happiness and total fulfillment in eternal life, we pray to the Lord.

For these personal needs which we mention now in silence (pause), we pray to the Lord

## EXCHANGE OF CONSENT (VOWS)

These are the vows of consent which you will exchange with one another. Please be familiar with them. You can choose to memorize them or repeat them after the priest.

**Groom:**

*I, N., take you, N., to be my wife. I promise to be faithful to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.*

**Bride:**

*I, N., take you, N., to be my husband. I promise to be faithful to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.*

# Wedding Liturgy Planning Form

Bride & Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding (Date / Time): \_\_\_\_\_ Rehearsal (Date / Time): \_\_\_\_\_

Presider: \_\_\_\_\_

Bridesmaids (how many?): \_\_\_\_\_ Groomsmen: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please include Maid of Honor & Best Man in these totals)

Flower Girl/Ring Bearer: \_\_\_\_\_

Seating of Parents: Yes / No If yes: How & Who?

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Entrance Procession: Please List all in opening procession in the order you would like them to come  
(include seating of grandparents/parents if needed):

**Unity Candle:** (Y / N) (after Exchange of Consent: see page 5 for instructions on unity candle)

**Visit to Holy Family Mosaic:** (Y / N) (after Blessing & Exchange of Rings)

**Music** - Discuss music with the parish music director.

**ORDER OF SERVICE** (When wedding is held outside of Mass, selections with asterisk\* are not necessary):

**INTRODUCTORY RITE**

- Greeting
- \*Entrance Chant (Sung): *Let us go to the altar of God*
- \*Gloria (Sung)
- Opening Prayer

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

- Old Testament Reading: \_\_\_\_\_ Read by: \_\_\_\_\_
- Responsorial Psalm (Sung)
- New Testament Reading: \_\_\_\_\_ Read by: \_\_\_\_\_
- Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_ Read by: **PRIEST**
- Homily

**RITE OF MARRIAGE**

- Exchange of Consent (unity candle lit after Consent - see pg 5 for instructions)
- Blessing and Exchange of Rings (Visit to Holy Family Mosaic after Rings - see pg 4 for instructions)
- Acclamation
- Prayers of the Faithful: Composed by: SRW -or- Couple Read by: \_\_\_\_\_

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

- \*Offertory Gift Bearers: *Bride & Groom* - or - *Other*: \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Eucharistic Prayer
- \*Sign of Peace (Flowers? Y / N )
- \*Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
(EMHCs not from Ss. Robert & William are required to bring their EMHC certificate from the diocese)
- \*Prayer after Communion

**CONCLUDING RITE**

- Final Blessing
- Introduction of Bride & Groom: *Mr. & Mrs.* \_\_\_\_\_
- Recessional
- Notes: