St. Michael
Catholic Church

WEDDING GUIDELINES

Updated October 2026

Congratulations on your upcoming Wedding. St Michael Catholic Church is very pleased to assist you at this important time in your lives as you prepare to become united in Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

At our parish we take special care to see that you are well prepared for this important spiritual event, and that the wedding liturgy is reverent, solemn, and prayerful, first and foremost an act of worship offered to Almighty God. In that spirit, St. Michael Catholic Church offers the following guidelines. **Please read these guidelines thoroughly to avoid disappointment over certain parish requirements that may not meet your expectations.**

Getting Started

Preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony is a nine-month to twelve-month process. The process will be longer if either bride, groom or both have been previously married. The process may be shorter if the groom and bride are married civilly with no previous marriages and wish to marry in the Church.

Please **do not reserve any party venue or make other wedding arrangements** before speaking with the church's representative, as we cannot always accommodate all requests for specific dates or times.

Weddings are scheduled on **Saturdays at 2:00pm only.** Weddings are not scheduled on and during the period between Third Sunday of Advent through January 1, or on and during the period between Ash Wednesday through Divine Mercy Sunday (the Sunday after Easter). There are also other Liturgical Events which preclude scheduling a wedding on certain days. Deacon Tom Doran will assist you with this. A tentative wedding date can be set after the initial meeting with Dcn Tom Doran.

Rehearsals usually take place Friday, the day before the wedding at 6:00pm. After the wedding date is finalized, please contact our Wedding Coordinator, Sarah Messecar shmessecar@icloud.com to schedule your rehearsal. Please also bring the original copy of the Wedding License as well as all fees for Music Director (Organist), cantor and wedding coordinator, and stipends for Altar servers and clergy.
Note, St. Michael Catholic Church offers the Great Hall for receptions. See our church website for facility rental fees. https://www.smcchurch.org/facility-rental

Fees

If your wedding ceremony will take place at St. Michael, the following fees are charged:

Use of Church Facility: $300 for registered parishioners; $350 for non-parishioners. The date is not confirmed until this fee is paid, and wedding agreement form is submitted. Once the wedding agreement form is submitted, Sarah Messecar will send the online payment link.

Additional Fees: The following may be paid at the time of the rehearsal:

Musician:	$250
Cantor:	$150
Wedding Coordinator:	$150-$500
Altar Servers:	$20 each – cash only

Clergy: An honorarium is customary; amount at discretion of bridal couple.

The Wedding Ceremony

MUSIC- As the Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a Sacrament, Catholic weddings are not as liturgically and musically flexible as those in some other churches. Because of this, only music that is truly sacred is permitted at weddings. This requirement precludes many selections about romantic love or other music associated with marriage and love in the secular sense, but which may not be appropriate for a Catholic service of worship.

In addition, St. Michael Catholic Church has a distinctive, traditional vision for Sacred Music that may not include some popular and widely-used choices. All musical selections will be made from a pre-approved list made available through the St. Michael parish website. Please meet with St. Michael Wedding Coordinator at least three months before your wedding to assist in making these selections. If the music is not finalized by one month prior to the wedding date, the Music Staff will make the selections.

St. Michael Catholic Church staff organists play at all weddings, and a St. Michael cantor will be assigned to sing for all weddings, to ensure continuity with the church's regular Sunday worship. A cantor is required for all Wedding Liturgies and Masses. Furthermore, only St. Michael musicians will provide music for the prelude as well as the liturgy.
No outside amplification of any kind is allowed for instrumentalists.
Additional instrumentalists will incur a separate fee and must be approved by the Director.

These policies, the selection form, and audio examples of the musical options are also available online at:

PARISH WEDDING COORDINATOR - Weddings at St. Michael Catholic Church are overseen by our wedding coordinator, Sarah Messecar who ensures the smooth running of the wedding ceremony. Sarah Messecar assists the bridal party at the church, arranges the processions, and helps with all practical needs including the choice of readings, Readers, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Please plan to meet with her at least three months before your wedding. You may contact her at 817-312-7613, or by email: shmessecar@icloud.com

LOCATION - According to Diocesan Policy and long-standing Catholic practice, weddings must take place in a Church building. Weddings are not celebrated in homes, outdoors or elsewhere.

OFFICIANTS - St. Michael priests and deacons normally perform all weddings at St. Michael Catholic Church. If you wish to invite a Catholic Priest or deacon from another parish, please make this known to the Deacon Tom Doran, as soon as possible in the planning process, particularly if he is not clergy of the Diocese of Fort Worth. He will then be asked to submit specific documentation required by the Diocese to the Diocese of Fort Worth. If you wish to invite a non-Catholic clergyman to participate in the wedding liturgy, please make this known as soon as possible in the planning process. Non-Catholic clergy are permitted to participate in a Catholic wedding by their presence in the sanctuary, but they cannot preside or receive your vows.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS (Readers and Extraordinary Minsters of Holy Communion) - Couples may invite family members or friends to serve as Readers. Those whom you select should be good public speakers and must be Catholics in full communion with the Church. They should attend the rehearsal to practice the proclamation in the specific acoustical environment of St. Michael Catholic Church unless they are regular, trained Readers from our parish. If requested, we can provide Readers for you.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are not normally needed.

SCRIPTURE CHOICES: Scripture choices for the Wedding can be found on the SMCC website at: https://www.smcchurch.org/nuptialMassreadingsEnglish-Spanish

ATTENDANTS: The space before the altar allows for a maximum of 7 attendants each for bride and groom. Any young children should be old enough to walk unassisted down the aisle without distraction and should sit with their parents for the ceremony.

MARIAN DEVOTION: You may choose to place a bouquet below the statue of the Blessed Virgin if you wish. Please be sure to let the Wedding Coordinator know if you choose this option.

OTHER CHURCH FACILITIES: All members of the Bridal Party should arrive dressed, as we have no suitable space for dressing and other preparations. There is one room available for the bride and her attendants to wait before the ceremony. The groom and his attendants have a room assigned for the to wait. Please inform the Wedding Coordinator if the bride does not wish to be seen by the groom before the ceremony. Church facilities are available one hour before the time of the ceremony and not earlier.

DRESS CODE: The wedding ceremony is a sacred celebration which takes place in a consecrated place of Divine Worship before Almighty God. Such an occasion requires a corresponding dignity and modesty of dress of all members of the wedding party.

Dresses must have sleeves that cover the shoulders (by sleeves is meant a fabric extension of the bodice that at least "caps" the shoulder). Halter tops, straps of any kind, sleeveless dresses, low-cut fronts, and open midsections are not considered appropriate. If you do not wish to wear a gown with sleeves, please obtain a jacket, shawl or other shoulder covering that can be worn in the Church and removed for the reception. Dresses with slits must not extend above the knee. If you are unsure about your dress, you may send a clear picture of it to the wedding coordinator for review.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY: These are prohibited in the Church facilities. If anyone in the wedding party appears to be intoxicated or in possession of alcohol or illegal drugs, they will be asked to leave immediately. If the Bride or Groom appears to be intoxicated, the wedding will be immediately cancelled, since intoxication prevents the valid exchange of wedding vows.

DECORATIONS AND FLOWERS: Your wedding flowers for the ceremony may include up to 2 arrangements which will be placed on the altar steps. Only real, fresh flowers or live greenery may be used. Once used in the church, these flowers must remain in place. There is no space for additional candelabras or other floral arrangements. The flowers for the Marian devotion should be a separate arrangement and must remain there after the ceremony. Flowers already in the Church are not to be moved to accommodate wedding flowers. Please be aware that during the Christmas and Easter seasons there will be many flowers already in the Church. These may not be moved.
Because of the beauty of our Church, no other decorations of any kind are permitted in St. Michael Catholic Church, including bows or other items on the pews or aisle runners. Diocesan policy states that nothing may be thrown, including petals, rice, confetti, bubbles, balloons or similar, either inside or outside the Church.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY: Couples are given 1 hour before the ceremony and thirty minutes afterwards for photos.

During the procession, a photographer may be near the front of the Church to capture the entrance of the Bridal party, after which, photos can only be taken from the rear of the Church. No flashes are allowed once the ceremony has begun. After the ceremony, if you would like the clergy in your pictures, please take those first.

All video cameras must be stationary: one on the church floor at the side of the church behind the baptismal font.

Please explain our policies to your photographer and videographer to ensure the smooth running of the wedding day.

Wedding Guidelines Acceptance Form

We have read and agree to the following:

- All music selections must come from the approved list.
- All readings must be chosen from the list of Scriptures provided by the Church.
- The church usage fee must be paid in full one month before the wedding. date can be guaranteed. Other fees and honoraria are due at the rehearsal.
- Wedding attire must meet the parish guidelines for modesty and appropriateness.
- Church-owned seasonal decorations that are in place on your wedding date cannot be moved or rearranged.

Bride: _____ Date: _____

Groom: _____ Date: _____

Wedding Date: _____

Circle One: **MASS** groom & bride must be Catholic **Liturgy Only**

Circle One: **St. Michael Clergy** **Guest Priest**

Full Name & Diocese of Guest Priest: _____

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Preparation Elsewhere Form

Dear Father or Deacon,

The couple presenting this letter has expressed interest in having their marriage preparation at your parish for a wedding to take place at St Michael Catholic Church, Bedford, TX. Please provide the following information:

Bride Information	Groom Information
Name:	**Name:**
Address:	**Address:**
Phone:	**Phone:**
Email:	**Email:**

Wedding Date: _____

The following is a list of items which should be included in the marriage preparation packet sent to the Tribunal of Diocese of Fort Worth:

- *Completed prenuptial questionnaire.*
- *Certificate of completion of pre-marriage inventory, such as Fully Engaged*
- *Certificate of completion of Marriage Preparation Class or Retreat*
- *Certificate of Natural Family Planning Class*
- *Baptismal certificates for bride and groom. Catholic baptismal certificate should be recently updated with notations. Non-Catholic baptismal information.*
- *Affidavit of free status of the (2 for bride) and (2 for groom).*
- *If applicable, official copies of permissions or dispensations obtained from the local ordinary of a Catholic party.*

Person responsible for completing preparation package:

Name: _____

Parish/Diocese: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____