



The SACRAMENT *of* MATRIMONY

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

MARRIAGE PREPARATION & WEDDING GUIDELINES

July 2025

The Vocation of Marriage

Congratulations on your engagement!

It is good that you have chosen to have your wedding in the Catholic Church. Marriage is a Sacrament, and it finds its origin in creation. It was part of God's plan from the beginning that man and woman should no longer be two but one flesh and what God joins together no one must separate.

There are three vocations in the Catholic Church: the religious life (priests, deacons, sisters, and brothers), marriage and the single life. All vocations are a call from God. For a person to know his or her vocation, he or she must be open to following the will of God, which requires prayer, formation, and commitment.

Marriage is serious and sacred. Marriage preparation is designed to help an engaged couple prepare for the sacrament. It is more than just planning a wedding; it is centered on a couple's relationship and their faith in God. For a person to receive the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony he or she must choose it freely, intend it for life, and be open to the gift of life.

An engaged couple begins their marriage preparation at least six months prior to the date of the proposed wedding. At least one must be a registered and active member of St. John the Baptist Church.

If a couple lives out-of-state and wants to be married at St. John the Baptist (with the pastor's approval), they must be registered in a parish where they live and complete the marriage preparation requirements of that (arch)diocese. A date for their wedding will not be finalized until after they have met with the pastor (or the parish representative) of that parish and have begun the marriage preparation process.

These guidelines will assist you in preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony. The program we offer will help deepen your relationship with one another and with Christ and his Church, and, if you will be married at St. John the Baptist, they will also help you in planning your wedding.

Be assured of our prayers and support during your engagement. We look forward to getting to know you better and celebrating your marriage for many years to come.

Very Rev. Monsignor William L. Novak, V.G.

Pastor

Marriage Preparation Steps

STEP 1: Meet with the Clergy

Before an engaged couple can schedule a date for their wedding, they must schedule a meeting with a member of the clergy (priest or deacon). *Please contact MARRIAGE PREP COORDINATOR in the parish office to schedule this appointment.* At this meeting he will introduce the engaged couple to the marriage preparation process and explain the purpose of marriage preparation in the Catholic Church. If the couple is ready, he will help them select a date for the wedding and he will go over the wedding guidelines if they are planning to be married at St. John's.

STEP 2: Take FOCCUS

The engaged couple will receive information from the Marriage Prep Coordinator about FOCCUS, an online compatibility inventory. FOCCUS is not a test. Couples cannot pass or fail.

STEP 3: Meet with Mentor Couple

Engaged couples will be assigned a mentor couple. They will meet up to three times to review and discuss the results of FOCCUS. Meetings generally take place in the mentor couple's home. FOCCUS results are confidential and are shared only with the clergy and mentor couple.

STEP 4: Attend Discovery Marriage Prep Retreat

The Discovery Marriage Prep Retreat begins on a Friday evening and continues until Saturday afternoon. The retreat is led by mentor couples, and includes five main topics: Family of Origin, Communication, Finances, Intimacy and Marriage as Sacrament. Meals are provided.

STEP 5: Meet with Mentor Couple

Engaged couples will schedule a follow-up meeting with their mentor couple to discuss what they learned from the Discovery Retreat.

STEP 6: Meet with *WEDDING COORDINATOR*

Engaged couples will schedule a meeting with the parish wedding coordinator to discuss the details of the wedding ceremony, for example, selection of scripture readings and music, seating arrangements, order of procession, arrival, and departure times, etc. Both the bride and the groom must attend this meeting.

STEP 7: Meet with clergy to complete the Pre-Nuptial Investigation (PNI)

At this final meeting, the clergy will complete the PNI with the couple and give them the Disclosure of Marriage Preparation to receive a discount on the marriage license. He will also review the wedding ceremony.

Wedding Ceremony Guidelines

The Rite of Marriage

Your wedding at St. John will be dignified and sacred. All members of the wedding party, family and guests must contribute to the sacredness of the ceremony by their appropriate behavior. All weddings at St. John the Baptist Church follow the ritual guidelines of the Roman Catholic Church—no exceptions.

The Catholic Church provides two options for the wedding ceremony, the Nuptial Mass, and the Sacrament of Marriage outside of Mass. It is highly recommended that Catholic couples select the Nuptial Mass for their wedding ceremony. You also have the option of *ad orientum* for your Nuptial Mass.

The appropriate place for Catholic wedding is in a church. As a matter of policy, the Church will not give permission for weddings to be held in any place other than a consecrated church or chapel.

Scheduling Your Wedding

Weddings are not recommended during the holy season of Lent. They are not permitted on Sundays or on Holy Days of Obligation. Rehearsals are scheduled the evening before the wedding. Only after you have met with the pastor will the date of your wedding be entered into the parish calendar. Weddings typically take place on Saturdays in the morning or the afternoon. Suggested times are: 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 6:30 pm or 7:00 pm. The earliest you can have a Friday evening wedding is at 6:30 pm. Weddings may be scheduled on other days of the week (except Sundays) with the pastor's permission and the availability.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals typically take place the evening before the wedding. Friday rehearsals begin at 4:00 pm or 6:30 pm. Those who have a part in the wedding, for example, readers, wedding party members, parents, are strongly encouraged to attend the rehearsal.

The Wedding Party

There is no limit to the number of bridesmaids and groomsmen you can have for your wedding. Two witnesses (a Best Man and a Maid/Matron of Honor) are required by Oklahoma Law and the Catholic Church for a marriage to be valid. Witnesses must be 18 or over and cannot be a child(ren) of the bride or groom.

Ushers

Groomsmen will assist ushers (if applicable) in seating guests before the wedding.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

It is preferred that flower girls and ring bearers chosen for your wedding be age appropriate, in other words, they should old enough to walk down the aisle by themselves. Dropping flower petals or any item while walking down the aisle is not allowed.

Sacred Scripture

At the meeting with the wedding coordinator, couples will select readings for the wedding from the options provided by the Church—a reading from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Gospel. You may have up to three readers for your wedding (Old Testament, New Testament, and petitions). All readers must be present at the wedding rehearsal. They need not be Catholic.

The Vows

The Church provides wedding vows that will be used by every couple. You will review them with the pastor at your final meeting.

The Marriage License

Bring the marriage license with you to the wedding rehearsal and give it to the parish wedding coordinator. After the wedding the bride and groom along with the witnesses will sign it in the sacristy. Photographers are allowed to be present at the signing of the marriage license. It is the responsibility of the clergy to send the marriage license to the Court House. If you want copies of the license, please arrange it with the parish wedding coordinator. You can always request a copy of the license through the county courthouse.

Music

All music before and during the ceremony must reflect the reverence and dignity of the occasion, intensify the Christian meaning of the liturgy, and dignify and enhance its sacredness. The following may not be used:

1. Any music that is purely secular in nature and, as such, neglects the sacred union of the couple, not only to one another, but also to Christ.
2. Popular, operatic or Broadway musical favorites which merely recall sentimental and personal associations; such music should be reserved for the wedding reception.
3. No pre-recorded music.

St. John the Baptist Church will make available to you our Director of Music. Guest/professional musicians are welcome to assist at the wedding but only with the approval of the Director of Music. Professional musicians must adhere to these guidelines and are contracted by you. Most require four to six months advance notice for booking. Professional musicians typically do not attend the wedding rehearsal. Outside professional musicians may not be hired in lieu of the parish organist and cantor. Non-professional musicians (such as friends/family) may be asked to

sing (or play) one or two solos. This person shall be given the music in advance, expected to learn it on their own, and be at the rehearsal to practice. The Director of Music shall determine if additional rehearsals are needed to ensure a high-quality rendering. There is a fee of \$50 per additional rehearsal.

The list of music approved for weddings is on pages 10-12.

Prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary

It is customary (but not required) for the bride and groom to ask for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the wedding ceremony as they begin their married life. At the appropriate time, they will go to the statue of Mary and offer her flowers while a Marian hymn is sung.

Worship Aids

Worship aids are provided for your wedding by the parish at no cost to you. The worship aid will include the music you selected, as well as the overall structure of the ceremony so your guests can follow along. In addition, you are welcome to create an insert that includes the names of your wedding party and family members.

Live Stream

For an additional cost of \$150, St. John the Baptist Church can live-stream your wedding.

Arriving at the Church on the Wedding Day

The wedding party may arrive no earlier than two hours before the start of the wedding. Groom and groomsmen should arrive already dressed. The bride and bridesmaid may dress in the Cry Room/Brides Room . Hair and makeup must be completed before arriving. Ice water will be provided.

Personal Belongings

All personal belongings must be removed before the start of the wedding. St. John's is not responsible for any personal belongings that are left unattended.

Decorations

The beauty of weddings essentially exists in the exchange of vows and rings at the altar of the Lord. Decorations should not distract or overpower these sacred symbols. The following restrictions apply to all weddings: aisle cloth, flower petals may not be dropped, and flower girls are not permitted to hand out flowers while walking down the aisle and rice, birdseed, balloons, confetti, bubbles, or sparklers are not permitted on the church premises.

Flowers

Flowers should contribute to the aesthetic beauty of the church, not detract from it. The proper placement of flowers may be discussed with the parish wedding coordinator. Only fresh flowers are permitted in the sanctuary.

No decoration is to be used that will obscure the line of vision in the church, or damage the furnishings of the church. No tacks, nails, or other items that damage wall or furniture should be used. If pew bows or flowers are used, they need to be secured to a plastic clip. The florist is wholly responsible for removing pew markers unless arrangements have been made with the wedding coordinator. The parish or Wedding Coordinator is not responsible for the florist's property left overnight unless special arrangements are made.

Candles

Hurricane lamps and rented candelabras are not permitted. Candles are not allowed on the pews, or in the aisle.

Photographers & Videographers

It is very important when choosing a photographer and videographer for your wedding that you make them aware of the following guidelines. If the photographer or videographer has any questions, please contact the parish wedding coordinator.

1. During the ceremony, flash pictures may be taken when the wedding procession enters the church. Flash photography is not allowed once the bride and groom have entered the sanctuary and until the ceremony is over.
2. Photographers and videographers are not permitted to roam throughout the church during the wedding ceremony. He or she can position at the back of the church during the ceremony.
3. Photos may be taken in the church before and after the wedding ceremony. Photos taken before the wedding will end 45 minutes before the start of the wedding.
4. Video cameras must be placed on a tripod. The tripod can be placed in the back aisle leaving enough room for the wedding party to move down the aisle or on one of the side aisles. The cameraperson may not walk around the church or in the sanctuary during the ceremony. The cameraperson may not lay down in the aisles or stand on the pews.
5. When the ceremony is over the Wedding Coordinator will bring the wedding party around to the sanctuary so the photographer can take additional photos.
6. After the marriage license is signed a photo of the couple with the clergy is taken first.

Altar Servers

St. John the Baptist will provide altar servers for your wedding. There will be three altar servers for a Nuptial Mass and one for a Wedding Outside of Mass.

Visiting Clergy

Normally the clergy assigned to St. John the Baptist will be the main celebrant at all weddings; however, arrangements can be made for a family priest or friend to con-celebrate a wedding ceremony. Please discuss this with your clergy.

Reception Rental

The Great Hall (7,500 square feet with seating capacity approximately 250-300 people) and the Commons (2,000 square feet with seating capacity approximately 80-100 people) are available for rental for receptions and rehearsal dinners. The parish has a dance floor (20'x20') available for rental. Fees and usage policy is available upon request. The Great Hall can only be rented for weddings on Friday or Saturday evenings.

Contact Information & Fees

Contact Information

Clergy

Very Rev. Monsignor William L. Novak, V.G., Pastor 405-255-3581
wnovak@stjohn-catholic.org
Rev. Stephen Jones, Parochial Vicar 405-340-0691
Rev. Mariadas Manti, Parochial Vicar 405-340-0691

Deacon Frank Alexander
Deacon David Ashton
Deacon Robert Dunlap
Deacon Randy Hearn
Deacon Zsolt Nagykalldi
Deacon Richard Rosencrans

Marriage Prep Coordinator

Bernadette Dibler 405-340-0691 bdibler@stjohn-catholic.org

Wedding Coordinator

Bree Edmonds 405-625-1654 bree.edmonds.ok@gmail.com

Director of Music

Danny Jack 405-254-3711 djack@stjohn--catholic.org

Reception Coordinator/Events

Melody Ashton mashton@stjohn-catholic.org

Wedding Fees

There is no charge for the use of the church for registered and active members of St. John the Baptist Church, however, there is a fee of \$900 that will cover the cost of those who will be assisting with your wedding, including the wedding coordinator, organist, cantor, altar servers, and clergy. Please contact Melody Ashton for information on rental of Great Hall for receptions.

This fee of \$900 must be paid the week before your wedding. Bring the check to the parish office and make checks payable to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church.

Approved Music for Catholic Weddings

Prelude

The organist will play instrumental music 15-20 minutes prior to the service.

Seating of the Family

Ave Maria by Schubert

Ave Maria by Bach/Gounod

Or a selection from **Procession of the Wedding Party**

Procession of the Wedding Party (Bridesmaids and Groomsmen)

Adagio by Alstott

“*Air*” from *Water Music* by Handel

Aria by Handel

Bist du bei mir by Bach

Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring by Bach

“*Largo*” from *Xerxes* by Handel

March by Mozart

“*Minuet*” from *Berenice* by Handel

Wachet Auf by Bach

Rhosymedre by Vaughan Williams

Sanctify Us By Thy Goodness by Bach

Procession of the Bride

Festive Trumpet Tune (David German)

“*Prelude*” from *Te Deum* (Charpentier)

Rigaudon (Campra)

St. Anthony's Chorale (Haydn)

“*Thaxted*” from *The Planets* (Holst)

The Prince of Denmark's March (Clarke)

Trumpet Tune (Purcell or Stanley or Johnson)

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 33: The earth is full of the goodness

Psalm 34: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord

Psalm 103: The Lord is kind and merciful

Psalm 112: Happy are those who do what the Lord commands

Psalm 128: Blessed are those who fear the Lord

Psalm 145: How good is the Lord to all

Psalm 148: Let all praise the name of the Lord

Offertory Hymns (Nuptial Mass)

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

*Ubi Caritas**

*Where Charity and Love Prevail**

*When Love is Found**

God of Love, Embrace Your People

*God, in the Planning**

*Love Has Brought Us Here Together**

*Can be sung as a communion hymn for a Nuptial Mass.

Communion Hymns (Nuptial Mass)

Adoro te Devote (Chant)

Ave Verum (Chant)

Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord (SONG 46)

Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether

Jesu, Dulcis Memoria (JESU DULCIS MEMORIA/Meinrad 1)

Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All (SWEET SACRAMENT)

O Food of Exiles Lowly (INNSBRUCK/Meinrad 6)

O Lord, I Am Not Worthy (NON DIGNUS)

O Sacrament Most Holy (FULDA MELODY)

Panis Angelicus (LAMBILLOTTE/Samuel Sebastian Wesley)

Soul of My Savior (ANIMA CHRISTI)

Offertory/Communion Solos* (Nuptial Mass)

Ave Maria (Schubert or Bach/Gounod)

Ave Verum (Mozart)

Panis Angelicus (Franck)

The Call (Vaughan Williams)

*May replace an Offertory Hymn or be used after Communion

Flowers to Mary

Ave Maria (Schubert or Bach/Gounod)

Alma Redemptoris Mater (Chant)

Ave Regina Coelorum (Chant)

Regina Caeli (Chant)

Salve Regina (Chant)

Recessional

“Allegro maestoso vivace” from Sonata II (Mendelssohn)

Hornpipe (Handel)

La Marche (Handel)

Nun Danket Alle Gott (Bach or Karg-Elert)

Rondo in G (Blow/arr. Eiler)

“Toccata” from *Symphony No. 5 for Organ* (Widor)

Tuba Tune (C.S. Lang)

Wedding March (Mendelssohn)

Or a selection from **Procession of the Wedding Party**



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

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www.stjohn-catholic.org

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