



Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage

Couple Preparation Manual

A guide to everything you should
know in planning your most special day.



Saint Michael
Catholic Community

Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage St. Michael's Catholic Community

Welcome:

Weddings at St. Michael's are celebrated as part of our being a welcoming and caring community. A wedding is a time of rejoicing. It celebrates the union of people who love one another and wish to spend a lifetime together, with the blessing of God and the Church, and in the presence of family and friends who gather in the Holy precinct. The Ceremony must be a public event, which must be witnessed in order for the marriage to be recognized.

This document contains all the information necessary for your marriage preparation and its requirements; please read it carefully, if you have any questions, please contact the Parish Secretary.

First Interview:

*An initial interview with the wedding parties begins the process of documentation, including the setting of the date and time of the wedding celebration. Possible impediments/obstacles like a previous marriage are also discussed. You may email marriages@saintmichael.ca to setup an appointment for an initial interview with **Father Edmund Vargas**.*

- *Date and time for the wedding and wedding rehearsal*
 - *Saturday weddings are typically at noon or 2 p.m. being the latest*
 - *Sunday weddings are not permitted*
- *Consideration of location with the parish*
 - **Day Chapel seats 160 people**
 - *Fee for the Day Chapel is \$200 and includes the rehearsal*
 - *Fee for technical is \$200*
 - **Sanctuary seats 1,200 people**
 - *Fee for the Sanctuary is \$400 and includes the rehearsal*
 - *Fee for technical is \$300.00 and includes the rehearsal*
 - *The honorarium/mileage for a visiting priest, is the responsibility of the bridal party*

****The honorarium/stipend for the priest must be made directly to the celebrant****

Both Parties Must Be Free to Marry:

If one party has been previously married, no date can be set for the wedding unless a Declaration of Nullity has been obtained from the Marriage Tribunal Office. Marriages of young adults (20 years and under) need more advanced notice.

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Marriage Preparation Course:

Is required in the Diocese of Calgary which has designated by Catholic Family Services at (403) 233-2360 to conduct the courses for the parishes or by email:

www.catholiccouplecheckup.ca/get-started. For upcoming marriage preparation weekends contact: Stephen Robinson at Stephen.robinson@cfs-ab.org or (587) 896-2891.

Baptismal Certificates:

You are responsible to gather certificates of baptism with notations no earlier than six months prior to wedding date. Non-Catholics are also required to submit a certificate if they were baptized. Ensure that the full address of the baptismal place, including the postal code, is included on the certificate. If one of the parties is not Catholic, then the original baptismal certificate can be submitted. Let us know promptly if it is impossible to gain your baptismal certificate as other means may be possible.

Music:

Must be sacred and religious, in keeping with Catholic liturgy. You may contact our Music Director Jim Howells at (403) 613-389 for a consultation. Taped music is not allowed. Please be aware that there are copyright rules governing words and music.

Marriage License:

You are responsible to obtain and submit a marriage license from any Registry office and should be purchased within a 3-month window that covers your intended wedding date. A marriage license that is older than 90 days at the time of the wedding is invalid. The license must be submitted to the parish secretary 10 business days prior to the wedding for processing, together with complete names, postal code, addresses & telephone numbers of the two witnesses (usually maid of honor & best man). If the couple has been married civilly, a copy of the civil marriage certificate is required in lieu of the license.

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Flowers and Decorations:

*Are the responsibility of the couple. Only fresh flower arrangements are to be used. You are encouraged to leave some for the weekend services. Aisle runners or extra candles like candelabras are not allowed for safety reasons. An arch is not allowed at the entrance or anywhere in the sanctuary. In using pew bows, use elastic ribbon or string to attach them. Adhesives or staples **are not** allowed. **No CONFETTI, RICE, BIRDSEED, or FLOWER PETALS** are allowed inside or within the church property. Flower girls cannot scatter petals as they come in or out of the church. Bubbles are not appropriate to be used inside the church. It is recommended that decorations be kept simple and tasteful.*

CHILDREN involved in the ceremony should be at least five (5) years old. The so-called Unity Candle ceremony is not included in the wedding ritual.

Photography/Videography:

The designated photographer or videographer is asked to consult with the presider during the rehearsal. We have dimmable lighting in our day chapel and sanctuary; they can be set to your preference. Be aware that any natural light will affect the room lighting. If you have a photographer and/or videographer, you should ensure they are aware of our lighting. Friends and relatives are asked to put cameras away after the entrance procession and can resume taking pictures during the signing of register.

There are a few guidelines and restrictions that the photographer must be aware of before the day of the celebration.

- *Only the designated photographer will be taking photos.*
- *Photographers are not allowed to be on the altar before, during, and after the ceremony.*
- *Photographers should try to remain in one place for the ceremony (they can move for key sections such as the vow and ring exchange; however, the individual must still be mindful of where the Priest and Altar are and not impede either).*
- *No additional lighting in the church is necessary nor allowed.*

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is highly recommended for the Catholic parties as they make marriage a new beginning.

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Punctuality is to be observed. The wedding party has to arrive not earlier than thirty (30) minutes before the start time of the wedding and leave the church parking lot thirty (30) minutes after the ceremony at the latest.

A Thanksgiving Donation is a voluntary offering made for the Church upkeep and maintenance. Standard fees are applicable for music performances, AV equipment usage, and AV technical support. The **honorarium/mileage for a visiting priest, deacon or denominational minister is the responsibility of the wedding party.**

Weddings from other parishes. If neither party belongs to St. Michael's Church, written permission from the parish priest of the bride and/or groom, also indicating his willingness to help complete the wedding requirements, is required. In order to book the wedding, a copy of a completed Form 1A and the Thanksgiving Donation are to be submitted. Other subsequent documents are to be forwarded by email.

Documents (Submitted 45 Days Before the Wedding)

1. Certificate of Catholic Baptism, with the latest notations and issued for marriage purposes within the last six (6) months. A copy of baptismal certificate of baptism of the non-Catholic party.
2. Proof of freedom (Form 2A) & Concerning Baptism (Form 2B).
3. Certificate of Marriage Preparation Course.
4. Wedding Service program (music & readings).
5. Marriage License to be submitted to the parish secretary 10 days before wedding.
6. Thanksgiving Donation to be submitted to the parish secretary.

Guide for Taking Pictures

1. The Altar is the place for the Sacrifice of the Mass.
2. The Ambo is where the Word of God (Scripture) is proclaimed.
3. The Presidential Chair is where the prayers are recited by the Presider.
4. A Table is placed next to the Ambo where the Signing of the Register is done.
5. The Seats of the bride and groom.
6. The Seats of the bridesmaids and groomsmen.
7. The Seats of the parents and/r immediate families or relatives.

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IMPORTANT NOTE TAKING PICTURES.

Guests and relatives are requested to put away their cameras after the Entrance Procession and may resume taking pictures during the Signing of the Register.