

WEDDING GUIDE



THE CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF SAINT LOUIS

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Saint Louis, Missouri

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CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF SAINT LOUIS

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

Dear Friends,

Married couples are among God's most cherished gifts to the Church. We believe this because we believe what Saint John says in one of his letters - "where love is, there is God."

To witness the love of a man and woman in the sacrament of marriage is to glimpse God. That is why marriage fills us with wonder and gratitude. For this reason too, we as Catholics take preparation for the sacrament of marriage very seriously.

As you consider the possibility of celebrating your marriage in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis, these guidelines will detail for you some of the specifics surrounding the planning of a wedding here. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact us at 314.373.8208.

Faithfully in Christ,
The Pastoral Staff
Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis

CONFIRMING THE CATHEDRAL BASILICA FOR YOUR WEDDING

STEP 1

Contact the Cathedral to Reserve a Date

Before any other arrangements can be made, please call Mary Ann Fox, Event Coordinator, at 314-373-8208 to reserve a tentative date for your wedding. You may schedule your wedding on Friday evening, Saturday morning, or until 1:30 pm Saturday afternoon. If you wish a weekday wedding, you may arrange for this with the Cathedral Staff, pending availability of the Church. On days when more than one wedding is scheduled, there will be an interval of one and one half hours between them. Once a tentative date has been reserved, you will receive preliminary paperwork, including a contract.

Note well: No reserved dates will be finalized until the contract, stipend, and other preliminary paperwork have been received by the Cathedral.

STEP 2

Contact Your Priest to Begin Marriage Preparation

If you are a registered active member of the Cathedral parish, contact a member of the Cathedral clergy to secure them as your wedding officiant and to begin your marriage preparation. Your officiating priest/deacon will outline the requirements of marriage preparation for the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, as well as specific details for weddings at the Cathedral.

If you are NOT a registered active member of the Cathedral parish, contact the priest/deacon who will be officiating at your wedding. This may be a priest/deacon either from your own parish or with whom you are acquainted. This priest/deacon will need to agree to the following:

- Accept responsibility for your marriage preparation;
- Performing the pre-nuptial investigation, completing and submitting all the necessary paperwork to the Cathedral ONE MONTH PRIOR to the wedding ceremony;
- Be present for the wedding rehearsal;
- Officiate the wedding ceremony.

Regardless of whether he is from the Cathedral or from another parish, your priest or deacon will guide you through the marriage preparation process in accordance with policy established by the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, which will include but is not necessarily limited to:

- Completion of a pre-nuptial investigation, to include copies of sacramental records/certificates;
- Preliminary assessment of readiness for marriage (FOCCUS Survey);
- Participation in an Archdiocesan approved marriage preparation (pre-Cana) program; and
- Participation of an Archdiocesan approved Natural Family Planning program.

Note: If the priest or deacon officiating your wedding and/or performing your marriage preparation serves outside of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, please notify the Cathedral Event Coordinator as soon as possible.

STEP 3

Stipends and Fees

Wedding stipends listed below are suggested as the minimum offering required, and is not intended to limit your generosity. This suggested minimum offering includes not only the use of the Cathedral for your wedding ceremony, but also includes a Cathedral organist, a professionally trained cantor, and a Cathedral wedding coordinator. To hire additional staff, such as extra musicians or choirs, please contact the Cathedral Event Coordinator as soon as possible.

- For parishioners who have been registered and actively supporting the parish for a **minimum** of six (6) months, a wedding stipend of \$2,000 is required with the signed contract.
- For parishioners who have been registered for **less than 6 months** at the time the wedding date is booked, a wedding stipend of \$3,000 is required with the signed contract.
- For all others, a wedding stipend of \$3,000 is required with the signed contract.

STEP 4

Planning Your Ceremony

Your wedding celebration must follow the directives of the Catholic Church; however, you will have some options within those directives from which you can personalize your wedding celebration. In approaching the planning sessions, please be mindful of the following:

The Liturgy – If both bride and groom are practicing Catholics, you are encouraged to celebrate your wedding within the context of the Eucharist.

If either the bride or the groom is baptized but not Catholic, it may be more appropriate to celebrate the wedding ceremony within a service of Scripture readings and prayers which would enable all of your guests to fully participate.

If either the bride or the groom has never been baptized in any Church, the wedding ceremony outside of the Eucharist is the only option.

The Music – Your wedding stipend includes a Cathedral organist and cantor. All music for your wedding will be arranged at a meeting with your assigned Cathedral organist. Only music integral to the wedding liturgy and appropriate to the sacredness of the celebration is permitted.

Please contact the music department at 314-373-8228 to set up a meeting 2-3 months prior to your wedding in order to discuss musical selections. Please contact the music department as soon as possible if you wish to employ additional Cathedral musicians or choirs, or if you are considering hiring visiting (non-Cathedral) vocalists and instrumentalists.

The Rehearsal and the Ceremony – Your wedding stipend includes a Cathedral Wedding Coordinator, who will coordinate all aspects of the time you and your wedding party spend in the Cathedral, from the rehearsal all the way through your wedding ceremony and photographs. Approximately 1 month prior to your wedding, your Cathedral Wedding Coordinator will schedule a meeting with you to review details of the rehearsal and ceremony, discuss options, and answer any questions you might have. If you have questions that require immediate attention, please contact Mary Ann Fox, the Cathedral Event Coordinator, at 314-373-8208.

The Wedding Party and Entrance Procession

The Cathedral Sanctuary can accommodate up to 14 people. The bride, groom, maid/matron of honor, and best man will be seated/kneeling in the sanctuary for the entire ceremony. Attendants (bridesmaids and groomsmen) will be seated in the pews for the ceremony and only be invited into the sanctuary to witness the exchange of vows.

No regulations exist regarding the procession at the start of the celebration, so you have a variety of options to consider when planning the entrance procession, some more traditional than others:

The Wedding Party

- Bridesmaids and maid/matron of honor process down aisle individually, with groomsmen and best man waiting in front of the first pew.
- All attendants, including maid/matron of honor and best man, process down aisle as couples
- Same as above, except that the maid/matron of honor processes by herself and the best man waits at the front of the church to escort her into the sanctuary.

The Groom

- The groom processes down aisle with his parents before the rest of the wedding party.
- The groom does not process and simply stands in front of first pew before the entrance procession begins

The Bride

- The bride processes down aisle with both parents.
- The bride processes down aisle with one parent or designate.

(Note: If parents are not included in the procession of the bride and groom, then they process immediately prior to the wedding party, along with any other family members, such as grandparents.)

The Flower Girl and Ring Bearer

- The flower girl and ring bearer enter the church after the wedding party and immediately before the bride. A responsible adult (a parent or relative) should be designated to assist each child, and determine their willingness to walk in the procession when the time comes.

Flowers to the Blessed Mother

Presenting flowers to the Blessed Mother is a practice meant to express a personal devotion to her and is not a part of the rite of marriage. This is an act which should be a sign of something real. Therefore, if you have a strong devotion to Mary, you may wish to incorporate this devotion as a part of your wedding ceremony. If you do not choose this option, you may decide to show your respect for Mary by including a bouquet for the Blessed Mother's shrine when choosing decoration for the rest of the church. However, this too is optional.

The Sign of Peace

The sign of peace is a part of the ceremony which is usually given by the bride and groom publicly to the members of the wedding party and the parents of both the bride and groom. However, the couple may choose to enhance this action by giving flowers to their parents and/or other relatives. If music is used, it should be soft, instrumental music only to allow the assembly to exchange gestures of peace.

The Photography and Videography

Documenting your wedding ceremony in picture and video is a monumental undertaking, however it is important that the process not distract members of the assembly away from the act of worship. Therefore, we request that you and your professionals work directly with your Cathedral Basilica wedding coordinator, as she will be able to indicate those locations in the church which are most advantageous for video and still photography. This will prevent the professional you hire from roaming through the church and interfering with the ceremony.

Other basic guidelines to note:

- Photographers and videographers are never allowed to enter the sanctuary, balcony, or pulpit.
- Flashes and camera lights are not to be used during the ceremony.
- Videographers are requested to remain stationary during the ceremony. They may move around during the processional and recessional. If the couple is presenting flowers to the Blessed Mother, videographers are free to move in the west ambulatory near the Blessed Mother Chapel.
- With permission, posed photographs may be taken for up to thirty minutes following the ceremony in the All Saints Chapel only. Weather permitting, posed pictures may also be taken outside on the grounds of the Cathedral.

Flowers and Other Décor

- The use of "Unity" candles and/or candelabra in the sanctuary is not permitted.
- Only fresh cut flowers and live plants are permitted in the sanctuary under the direction of the wedding coordinator and wedding sacristan.
- Flowers used to decorate the sanctuary may be taken following the ceremony as long as the florist removes them immediately following the ceremony.
- Pews may not be decorated.
- The use of aisle runners of any kind is not allowed.

Contracted Wedding Consultants/Planners

You may choose to employ a wedding consultant for the planning of your wedding and reception, however know that his/her expertise does not include the church ceremony. Any outside wedding consultant must understand and follow all Cathedral guidelines provided and be willing to work under the direction of the Cathedral wedding coordinator.

Miscellaneous

- No bottled water, gum, food, or drink of any type is allowed in the Cathedral. Bottled water is allowed in the vesting rooms. Couples are responsible for ensuring all personal items and trash is cleared from the vesting rooms immediately following the ceremony.
- Appropriate dress for rehearsal and wedding is required. For the wedding ceremony, strapless gowns will **not** be allowed for the bride or her attendants unless a jacket, shawl, or other covering is worn over the shoulders during the ceremony. If the attire of any member of the wedding party is deemed inappropriate, the Cathedral is within its right to immediately cancel the wedding with no refund of the wedding stipend provided. No exceptions.
- There is no facility in the Cathedral available as a dressing area.
- For insurance reasons, we cannot allow rice, birdseed, flower petals, or any other item to be thrown in or on the grounds of the Cathedral.
- The wedding sacristan and the wedding coordinator, on the behalf of the Cathedral Basilica and the officiating priest/deacon, assumes the responsibility for maintaining the sacred nature of the church, directing the entrance procession, and ensuring that the ceremony begins on time. Wedding parties who do not respect the space or are not prepared to begin on time run the risk of having their wedding cancelled, with no refund of the wedding stipend provided.

