



MARRIAGE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Congratulations on your engagement to be married! The Catholic Church believes it is a great privilege and responsibility to be married in the Sacrament of Matrimony. This “marriage policy” is meant to assist you in preparing well for your marriage.

The priest or deacon assisting you will explain the various steps in your preparation for marriage. This process takes at least **SIX MONTHS** to complete. During this process, the primary emphasis is on marriage, which is a lifetime vocation. Only after you are prepared for marriage is it appropriate to focus on the wedding.

F.O.C.C.U.S

Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study (FOCCUS) is a tool used in the Archdiocese of St. Louis to help a couple discern the strengths and weaknesses of their relationship. The priest or deacon assisting you will administer FOCCUS and share the results with you so you can accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

Marriage Preparation Program

- The Archdiocese of St. Louis requires one of several options of marriage preparation programs. The priest or deacon assisting at your marriage will explain the various options available for marriage preparation and let you choose which one you wish to pursue. The following are the various marriage preparation programs available in the St. Louis area:
- **“Evenings for the Engaged”** is a program available through St. Norbert Parish which consists of five sessions between you and a trained married couple of the parish. You will be notified by the couple assigned to you.
- We have a brochure stating when and where the **“Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Classes”** are held throughout the Archdiocese. Please request the brochure from the priest and call **314-792-7182** to register, between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Monday thru Friday. **You must speak** with the **Marriage Preparation coordinator to register**. Please call early; classes fill quickly (often three months ahead). Registration is strictly on a first-come, first-served basis. Archdiocesan Classes cost \$120 unless otherwise noted in the description. You may pay by MasterCard, Visa or Discover, and by check or money order.

Natural Family Planning

It is also recommended that you familiarize yourself with the various programs of Natural Family Planning (NFP) in keeping with the generous love to which the Catholic Church calls you. Your clergyman will provide you with information on NFP classes available in the St. Louis area.

Pre-Nuptial Investigation

The Archdiocese of St. Louis requires that the assisting priest or deacon fill out the pre-nuptial investigation with the intended bridegroom and bride. The purpose of this investigation is to establish there are no obstacles to the couple marrying in the Catholic Church.

Baptismal Certificate

A recently issued baptismal certificate (one dated within six months of your wedding) should be obtained from the church where you were baptized. This certificate should be given to the clergyman assisting with your wedding, and will not be returned.

Banns

The Roman Catholic Church requires that the wedding be announced publicly (banns) three times prior to the wedding. Catholic parties being married outside of their own parish should notify their own parish concerning the publication of the Marriage Banns at least one month prior to the wedding.

Wedding and Rehearsal Times

The times and dates of the wedding and rehearsal should be coordinated with the priest or deacon assisting with your wedding. The latest wedding time available at St. Norbert is 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. No receiving line is permitted on Saturday weddings beginning after 1:30 p.m. to allow the church to be ready for Saturday confessions by 3:30 p.m.

Servers

St. Norbert will provide altar servers for your wedding ceremony unless the couple has relatives or friends who are willing to serve. Servers other than those from St. Norbert should already be familiar with serving Mass in their own parish. It is customary to give each of the two servers a nominal offering, **usually \$10 to 20**, placed in an envelope for proper decorum.

Parish Offering

It is customary to make an offering to the parish on the occasion of a wedding. The amount of this offering should be commensurate with the total amount you are planning to spend for the wedding. **For most couples, the offering will be between \$200 and \$500. If neither the bride nor groom are members of St. Norbert Parish a minimum of \$500 is required.** No couple will be refused the sacrament because they cannot afford the recommended donation. Merely speak to the priest and he will assist.

Clergy Honorarium

Should you wish to give an honorarium to the clergyman who has assisted in preparing you for marriage, please use a separate envelope clearly indicating the offering is intended for the priest or deacon.

Videotaping

St. Norbert Parish has a video system installed in church with two cameras mounted on the ceiling with direct audio feed. This **new system** was installed in **May 2007** and is state of the art quality. Your wedding will be taped by a parish videographer. The fee for this service is **\$300 which includes the copy of ceremony on a DVD**. Please contact Deacon Bill Twellman to arrange for this service at least two months prior to wedding ceremony.

Amateur video cameras are only permitted to be set up in the Parent's Room, behind the glass. No amateur cameras are allowed in the church proper.

Still Pictures

Still pictures may **unobtrusively** be taken during the ceremony but should not distract from the reverence of the celebration or the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony, but is allowed during the opening procession and after the wedding is over. Please notify your photographer that they will be **limited to 30 minutes** at the conclusion of the wedding. This should be considered when deciding whether to have a "receiving line" at church. Weddings taking place on Saturday after 1:30 p.m. will not be allowed to have a receiving line in order to allow for pictures and church clean-up before confessions begin at 3:30 p.m. Your photographer should be instructed to see the presiding priest or deacon prior to the ceremony.

Flowers and Decorations

Flowers and decorations are appropriate for a wedding, though not essential. If you have decorations, bows on the pews, or aisle candles, please instruct the florist **not to use any adhesive tape on the pews**. There are 11 pews on each side of the center aisle.

Aisle Runner is NOT ALLOWED.

Rose Petals (both real and artificial) are NOT ALLOWED

Rice and Confetti

The throwing of rice, bird seed, confetti, etc. **is not permitted** at St. Norbert church. This is due to safety issues and is required by our insurance carrier.

Meeting Before the Wedding

The groom and groomsmen generally meet in the sacristy 15 minutes prior to the wedding. The bride and bridesmaids may meet in the Grady Room. The expectation is that the wedding party will arrive at church already dressed in their gowns and/or tuxedos. Ladies may make final “finishing touches” with their hair and veil at church. There are restrooms just off the gathering area.. **No food or beverages are permitted ANYWHERE** (parking lot, gathering area, Grady room, or church). Smoking is only permitted outside.

Clean-up

The couple should make arrangements for the church proper, gathering area, and Grady room (Bride’s Room) to be cleared of all debris (programs, tissues, florist boxes, aisle runner, etc.) within a half-hour of the wedding. If the couple prefer, the parish can make arrangements for this clean-up service for an **additional \$50**.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The couple to be married and all the Catholic members of the wedding party are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the wedding. Confessions are heard at St. Norbert on Saturdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. or you may make an appointment with the pastor for another time. The priest assisting with your wedding will also be available for celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation the night of your rehearsal.

Civil Marriage License

A marriage license must be obtained and given to the assisting clergyman **at the time of the rehearsal**. The license may be obtained from the Recorder of Deeds, St. Louis County Government Administration Building, 41 South Central at Forsyth in Clayton, MO 63105 (Phone 615-7180). The license office is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and closed weekends. You may apply any time prior to the ceremony but it takes three (3) full days between application and issuance. The license is good for thirty (30) days after issuance, but it is recommended that the license not be picked up more than two (2) weeks in advance. Both intended spouses must apply for and pick up the license. The fee is \$45 which includes a \$1 notary fee. **Payments must be made in cash**. No checks will be accepted.