



MARRIAGE GUIDELINES
FOR
SAINT PETER CATHOLIC
CHURCH

LINDSAY, TEXAS

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MARRIAGE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

(This Checklist MUST be completed and all paperwork must be turned into the Parish Office 2 months prior to Wedding Date)

- _____ Read and Signed Marriage Guidelines
- _____ Fully Engaged Test
- _____ Meetings with Pastor
- _____ Meetings with Sponsor Couple
- _____ Obtained Official Copies of Baptismal Certificates
- _____ Pre-Cana Class
- _____ Natural Family Planning Class
- _____ Witness Affidavits of Free Status 2 for Bride and 2 for Groom
- _____ Obtained Marriage License



GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS AT ST. PETER'S

A. Marriage Preparation

To gain an adequate understanding of the vows they will make solemnly before God at their wedding, couples are required in the Catholic Church to undergo serious marriage preparation lasting at least 9 months. If you are receiving your preparation for marriage in a parish other than St. Peter's, this information will be given to you there. When you have completed your preparation, please ensure that the full packet containing all relevant information is submitted to our office for the records. According to Nihil Obstat all marriage prep and paperwork has to be turned into to the Parish Office **2 months** prior to your wedding date!

Marriage preparation at St. Peter's requires the following components:

Meetings with Father - Marriage preparation at St. Peter's begins when the engaged couple meets with the priest for the first time. Because the Sacrament of Marriage is the sanctification of a relationship between a man and a woman, it is essential for the priest to become well acquainted with the couple so as to best prepare them for that union. This is accomplished by a series of meetings, scheduled at certain points in the months leading up to the wedding. Although office hours are preferred, meetings may also be arranged in the evenings and on weekends to accommodate busy schedules.

Fully Engaged Test and Sponsor Couple Program - The Fully Engaged program begins with a compatibility test to help couples discern their relationship even further. It highlights the strong and weak points of a relationship, and aids couples in avoiding surprises about each other's mindsets and habits down the road. This test is offered to couples by a parishioner, Donna Hess, who may be contacted at (940) 727-9373. After the scores have been returned to the Parish Office, the priest will meet with the couple to evaluate the results. **At this time, the priest will assign a Sponsor Couple to you** and give each of you a book that corresponds to what you will discuss in sessions with your Sponsor Couple. You will need to contact the Sponsor Couple to begin the series of meetings and discussions outlined in the program.

Official Baptismal Records - These must be complete with all notations (i.e. showing where and when subsequent Sacraments were received) and sealed by the Parish of Baptism. All Baptism certificates must be issued within the last 6 months, your original baptismal certificate will not be sufficient, you will need to contact your Parish of Baptism and have them send us an updated one. **If one of you is not a Catholic, but has been baptized**, please provide some documentation for your Baptism (since most non-Catholic churches do not keep records of Baptisms, a signed statement from a family member who witnessed your Baptism will be sufficient). This is to be turned into the Church as soon as possible, please do not wait till the last minute to gather these documents.

Witness Affidavit of Free Status - Two of these forms must be filled out for both the Bride and the Groom by family members who have known them for at least 10 years. The Affidavit is a statement, by someone who knows you well, that you are not currently married to anyone else, and that you plan to follow the teachings of the Church regarding the Sacrament of Marriage.

Pre-Cana Class and Introduction to Natural Family Planning - Both classes are offered through the Diocese of Fort Worth; for more information about where and when these classes are offered, please visit fwdioc.org, hover on the “Ministries” category and select “Marriage & Family Life” from the drop-down menu, then finally on “Engaged/Getting Married”. These classes are offered online or in a class setting. You will receive a certificate for completion of each class; please bring these to one of your meetings with the priest so that they may be added to your marriage packet. Please do not wait till the last minute to take a look at these scheduled classes. NFP can take upwards of 6 months to complete so get started on it now.

Marriage License - Obtaining the civil marriage license from the County is your responsibility. The parish requires that you bring the license to the Parish Office two months before the wedding ceremony. Check with the County to determine the requirements and fees. Civil marriage licenses are valid for 90 days, The ceremony cannot proceed without a valid civil marriage license.

Successful completion of the marriage preparation program at St. Peter’s includes a certificate for a reduction in the cost of the civil marriage license.



WEDDING CEREMONY CHECKLIST

- _____ Read and Signed Wedding Guidelines
- _____ Ceremony Planning Meeting with Father (2 months before wedding)
- _____ Meeting with Organist to Choose Music
- _____ Paid Music Director's Fee and Cantor Fee
- _____ Submit Wedding Program for Review
- _____ Contact LuElla Fuhrmann (Parish Wedding Coordinator)
- _____ Arranged stipends for Altar Servers, Father and Wedding Coordinator



BREAKDOWN OF FEES AND COSTS

Use of the Church is free to all parishioners and their children. If neither the bride nor the groom are contributing parishioners or children of parishioners, they are required to pay a non-refundable fee.

\$2,000 - (If applicable) Fee for Non-Parishioners to use St. Peter's Church

The following fees apply to all weddings at St. Peter's, and are exclusive of the Church Fee:

\$200 - Music Director's Fee (This must be paid even if you are hiring an outside musician)

\$75 - Standard Fee for St. Peter's Cantors

\$10 - Suggested Stipend for each Altar Server at your Wedding

\$100 - Suggested Stipend for Parish Wedding Coordinator

If your reception will be held in Centennial Hall:

The Rental Fee for Centennial Hall is priced in two different categories. The category that applies to you will determine what your rental costs will be.

\$1,600 - Non-Parishioner Rate

\$800 - Regular Rate for Parishioners and their Children

The following fees apply to all receptions in Centennial Hall:

\$95 - Insurance Fee for Special Events Coverage

\$300 - Damage Deposit (This is Due at the time you set a Wedding Date)
(if there is no damage or excessive clean-up in the Hall, this will be returned.)

B. The Wedding Ceremony

1. Liturgy & Music

A wedding is not merely a personal act, but an act performed within the body of the Church and according to her rites. The liturgy is ordered toward worship of God; a marriage is no different.

Two months before your wedding, you will meet with Alli to discuss the details of your wedding liturgy. To prepare for this meeting, please become familiar with the guidelines and policies below.

When: Weddings at St. Peter's are celebrated on Saturdays, beginning no earlier than 10:00 AM and no later than 3:00 PM. A wedding may also be held at 7:30 PM, in which case it would fulfill the Sunday Obligation, provided that the readings and prayers are for Sunday and not a Nuptial Mass. Certain seasons of the Church's liturgical year are not suitable for a wedding ceremony. Weddings are not celebrated on Saturdays which are also Holy Days of Obligation, on November 2 (All Souls Day) when it falls on a Saturday, nor during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Where: 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. This prohibition also includes the Grotto at St. Peter's. If a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic, a dispensation is possible so that the ceremony may take place in the non-Catholic party's own church.

Mass or no Mass? Wedding Masses are celebrated when both parties are practicing Catholics. All weddings between a Catholic and a non-Catholic are celebrated outside of Mass, according to Diocesan policy.

Readings and Responsorial Psalm - If you are celebrating your wedding with a Nuptial Mass, you may select the Scripture readings and Responsorial Psalm from a list of approved texts which Father will give you. If the Mass is meant to count as a Sunday obligation, however, the readings are determined by the Lectionary for that Sunday.

Visiting Priests and Deacons - The parish priest normally performs all weddings at St. Peter's. If you wish to invite a Catholic priest or deacon from another parish, please make this known to Father as soon as possible in the planning process, particularly if he is not clergy from the Diocese of Fort Worth. You will then be asked to obtain specific documentation required by the Diocese and parish, and that person's role in the marriage can be discussed. If you wish to invite a non-Catholic clergyman to participate in the wedding liturgy, please again make this known to Father 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.**

Participation of Family and Friends in the Wedding Liturgy - Couples may invite family members or friends to serve as Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Lectors read the texts of Scripture and the Prayers of Intercession at the Wedding ceremony. Those whom you select should be good public speakers, and must be Catholics in full communion with the Church. They should attend the rehearsal in order to practice the proclamation in the specific acoustical environment of St. Peter's Church unless they are regular, trained Lectors from St. Peter's. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may also be friends or family members of the couple, but should normally be chosen from those who are already trained in this practice at St. Peter's.

Wedding Customs - A number of customs and practices have become common during the celebration of marriage. Some, such as the placement of the Bride's bouquet at the Marian Altar, are beautiful and appropriate devotions which are encouraged. Others, such as the Unity Candle and the mixing of sands, spices, etc., are recent innovations that were created to fill the lack of ritual in non-Catholic weddings. These latter do not have a place in the Catholic marriage ceremony, which is full of other symbols that more fittingly express our beliefs concerning Christian marriage.

Rehearsals - Rehearsals are normally on the Friday evening before the ceremony at 6:00 PM or another time arranged with the Parish Wedding Coordinator. On the First Friday of the Month, rehearsals must begin later (6:30 PM or afterwards) to accommodate the First Friday Mass at 5:30 PM.

Parish Wedding Coordinator - Weddings at St. Peter's are overseen by our Coordinator, LuElla Fuhrmann. Ms. Fuhrmann assists the bridal party in the Saint Anne Suite, arranges the procession into the church, and ensures that the wedding ceremony goes smoothly in all respects. You may contact her at (940) 665-5274 or (940)727-9274. Please compensate her for her services with a stipend of at least \$100.

Music - Because the celebration of a wedding is a public liturgical action of the Church, 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, Broadway tunes, and other music that may have meaning for an engaged couple but may not be appropriate for a Catholic service of worship. For this reason, Father must approve all musical selections in advance of the ceremony.

Meeting with the Music Director - It is advisable to meet with our Music Director and Organist, Lori Janeski, at least two months before your wedding. She will assist you in selecting appropriate pieces for the ceremony, and arranging for a vocalist. Ordinarily, our organist plays for all weddings at St. Peter's, but outside organists and musicians may be hired, provided the music program is approved by Father. Whether or not you decide to engage in our organists services, the \$200 Music Director's Fee is always required.

Wedding Program - Please bring a proof of your program for review before printing. If your wedding will be celebrated within a Mass, please include a brief paragraph in your program requesting non-Catholic guests not to present themselves for Holy Communion. Below is an acceptable formula:

During Holy Communion, those practicing Catholics who are properly disposed, in a state of grace, and who have fasted for one hour may come forward to receive Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. All others are invited to come forward for a blessing, or to remain prayerfully in their place.

2. Attendants, Dress Code and Church Facilities

Attendants - The Bride and Groom are permitted up to 7 attendants each, including the bridesmaids and Maid of Honor, the Best Man and groomsmen, ring bearers and flower girls. There are no exceptions to this rule. Children asked to serve as ring bearers or flower girls must be of an age able to walk unassisted and easily down the church aisle, and we recommend that after taking part in the procession, young children then sit with family members for the duration of the ceremony.

Dressing/Waiting Areas - The St. Anne's Suite in the Old Rectory next to the Church may be used as a dressing room for the bride and her bridal party, but it is not a space suitable for hair or makeup preparations. This room will be available beginning 2 hours before the ceremony starting time. There is no food or drink allowed in the St. Anne's Suite. We ask that all articles brought into the Suite be removed and placed in private cars before the ceremony begins, at which time this facility will be closed and locked.

Men in the wedding party should arrive already dressed and may wait in the North Sacristy until just before the ceremony begins.

Dress Code - Your wedding gown, and the gowns of all attendants, must be in conformity with the following policies:

- 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, and sleeveless dresses are not considered appropriate. If you do not wish to wear a gown with sleeves, please obtain a shawl or other shoulder covering for the Bride and bridesmaids that can be worn in church and removed for the reception and wedding pictures, if you wish. The parish owns one white shawl for use by a Bride, but any shawls needed for the attendants are your responsibility.

The wedding ceremony is a sacred celebration which takes place in a consecrated Temple of Divine Worship before Almighty God. Such an occasion requires a corresponding dignity and modesty of dress in all members of the wedding party. **We leave it to your discretion to apply these policies to your choice of apparel, but if you or one of your attendants appears in what is a clear violation of St. Peter's dress code, that person will not be allowed to participate in the wedding ceremony. There are no exceptions made to this policy.** If you are unsure about your dress, you may send a clear picture of it to the Parish Office for review.

Restrooms - Having a beautiful and historic church completed in 1919 also means that there are no restrooms within it. Restroom facilities are located across the parking lot and to the right in Conrad Hall (there is a sign marking the way). Because of this, we ask that children be accompanied to the restroom by a parent.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs - These are prohibited in the Church facilities (except alcohol usage as per the guidelines for Centennial Hall rental). 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.

3. Decorations, Flowers and Photography

Decorations - Because of the beautiful, highly decorated architecture of St. Peter's Church, it is not necessary to have elaborate decorations. Couples may choose to place extra flower arrangements on the side altars if they wish, but this is not required. Any seasonal church decorations already in place at the time of your wedding should be left undisturbed.

Please do not tape, staple, glue, pin or otherwise affix anything to the pews, walls, doors, or other furniture or furnishings in the church. Pew bows, should you wish to use them, may be attached to the pews with rubber bands or string, but not with anything which might damage the finish. Nothing may be placed on the altar itself.

Flowers - Your wedding flowers for the ceremony may include up to four arrangements for the reredos ("high" altar) which will be placed on either side of the Tabernacle. Only real, fresh flowers or live greenery may be used. Once used on the altar, flowers must remain there and cannot be used for the reception or other purposes. There is no space for any additional candelabra or other floral arrangements.

The Church Aisle - Runners are not permitted (or necessary) in the church aisle. Also, St. Peter's follows the diocesan insurance policies which prohibit throwing petals or any other items (confetti, balloons, bubbles, rice, etc.) either inside or outside the church.

Photography and Videography - In order to maintain the reverent character appropriate to the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, we ask that you explain these policies to your photographer and videographer:

- Photos may be taken before the ceremony, beginning one hour beforehand (depending on the time of your wedding, photography time may be limited either before or after the ceremony. Please confirm with Father when you set the time for your wedding).
- Other than photos taken of the starting procession, there should be no movement in the church by the photographer.
- Flash photographs are not to be taken once the ceremony begins.
- The photographer may photograph the starting procession from the front of the church, but after the Bride enters, all photos must be taken from the choir loft or from the back of the church behind the last pew.
- After the wedding, you may take additional pictures in the church but we ask that this be completed within 30 minutes to allow for cleaning of the church before Confessions and evening Mass.

Video cameras may be placed as follows:

- One in the choir loft
- One unmanned, stationary camera on a tripod in the North Side Sacristy doorway focused on the altar area
- One unmanned, stationary camera on a tripod near the St. Joseph altar (north side) just inside the altar rail.





We have read and understand the requirements for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage within the Diocese of Fort Worth at Saint Peter's Catholic Church and agree to respect and abide by the guidelines for weddings as established in the parish.

Bride

Groom

Witness

Date