



Wedding Guidelines

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding! We are pleased that you wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church. These steps will guide you in the preparation for the sacrament.

STEP 1 – SET THE WEDDING DATE

Contact the parish office to set a wedding date in the church prior to any other arrangements, e.g. booking a wedding reception venue, **at least six months before the wedding date.**

Please note that if an annulment or dispensation is required, no wedding date can be set until the process is complete:

- If a former marriage has been declared null, please bring a copy of the decree to the first interview with the priest or deacon.
- If one of you is not Catholic, please talk to the Catholic priest about this before advancing with the planning of the wedding, as certain conditions must be fulfilled to marry in a Catholic setting. They are explained below in Step 3.

Weddings are not prohibited during Advent and Lent; however, you must consider the special, penitential nature of these liturgical seasons regarding decor and colors.

Weddings may take place on Saturdays before 2:00 P.M. We cannot do it after 2:00 P.M. because we have confessions and Mass beginning at 4:00 P.M. on Saturday evening. We usually do not schedule weddings on Sundays or major feasts, as several Masses are already taking place on those days.

Please note that you must ensure that a priest or deacon is available to preside at the wedding liturgy before you consider any reservation of the church final. This is important to do before proceeding with any further planning and reservations.

STEP 2 – MEET WITH THE WEDDING COORDINATOR OR A PRIEST AT ST. MICHAEL

Once you have set the date, schedule a meeting with the wedding coordinator, Danielle Cooper, at St. Michael to begin your marriage preparation. If you live outside Oregon, you could meet with your local priest, or with the priest who will be presiding at your marriage. In this first meeting, you'll complete the initial paperwork.

If a priest/deacon officiating at your wedding is not from the Archdiocese of Portland, please inform the St. Michael office **at least three months in advance** of your wedding date to allow sufficient time to receive the proper clearance.

STEP 3 – COMPLETE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR SACRAMENT

These are the documents you are required to present before your wedding:

- A. **Certificates of Baptism:** We need to have an official copy, not the original, of your baptismal certificate issued by the parish in which you were baptized and dated no more than six months from the time of the wedding. Non-Catholic Christians are also requested to submit an official record of baptism, though it may be a photocopy of documentation issued at the time of the baptism.
- B. **Freedom to Marry Forms:** Our pastor or the presiding priest (or a priest or deacon in your area) will interview the bride and groom individually to complete a “Freedom to Marry” form for each. On this form, both the bride and groom need to attest their willingness and freedom to marry.
- C. **Witness Testimony Forms:** A priest or deacon will interview two witnesses each for the bride and the groom to complete the “Witness Testimony” forms. Witnesses should be relatives or close friends that know you well enough to answer about your freedom to marry.
- D. **Oregon State Requirements:** An Oregon Marriage License is to be purchased by couples within 60 days of the wedding date and at least 3 days before the wedding for the required 3-day waiting period. The license will be turned in to St. Michael Church for recording, then forwarded to the Oregon county in which you purchased the license.
- E. **Certificate of Marriage Preparation Classes:** As a couple you are required to participate in Marriage Preparation classes at St. Michael or another endorsed institution (see list at the end of this document) and have the facilitator forward to St. Michael Church a certificate stating your completion of the class.
- F. **Permission from Your Parish of Domicile:** If you live outside the St. Michael parish area, we ask that you request permission to marry outside your proper parish from the pastor of the parish where you live.

Finally, you might also need to present the following documents:

1. If you had a previous marriage (civil or in the Church), please provide the proper documentation that shows you are free to enter a new marriage: divorce decree, or death certificate, or ecclesiastical decree of nullity (annulment).
2. If one of you is not Catholic, you need special permission (a dispensation) to enter into marriage in the Catholic Church. In such cases, the Catholic party must intend to keep his or her faith as a member of the Catholic Church. He/she also must promise as far as possible to baptize and raise all children born of the marriage in the Catholic faith. The non-Catholic party is not required to sign or make any promises but must be aware of the Catholic party’s intention and promise.

STEP 4: RESERVE THE CHURCH

Once it is determined that: (1) the church is available on your proposed date and time, (2) you have read and agree to the St. Michael Church Wedding Guidelines, and (3) a priest is available and has agreed to preside, you may submit the Wedding Confirmation Form with a deposit. This step must be taken at least 3 months before the date of the wedding.

Facility use **fee for a wedding at St. Michael Church is \$450**. This fee includes the reservation of the church and wedding coordinator. Please note that music for the wedding and other wedding services are not hired by the parish; you will need to make those arrangements.

Additionally, the **fee for the marriage preparation is \$150** (marriage course sessions, paperwork, and prepare and enrich inventory). Please note that the Natural Family Planning classes are required but not included in the marriage preparation fee.

St. Michael Church will provide the use of the space for the wedding, and the processing and filing of all necessary documents.

St. Michael the Archangel Church comfortably seats 225 people

Due to all the activities held at St Michael, we do not allow wedding rehearsal dinners or wedding receptions in the parish hall.

In addition, a wedding coordinator will be assigned to assist you in planning the details of the liturgy, facilitate the rehearsal, and guide you with any needs associated with the use of our facilities. The fee for the wedding coordinator services is included in the facility use fee.

If a wedding is canceled, a written notice must be mailed to the parish office: St. Michael Church, 424 SW Mill Street, Portland, OR 97201; or emailed to the parish office manager: officemanager@stmichaelportland.org.

STEP 5 – COMPLETE YOUR MARRIAGE PREP

All couples being married in the Church should receive marriage preparation. This is intended to help establish a strong support base for your marriage.

The marriage prep includes three basic elements:

1. **Marriage Prep Classes:** Marriage classes at St Michael consist of six sessions that take place in Feb/March/April.
2. **Take a Natural Family Planning Class:** Each couple is required to participate in classes in order to understand natural family planning. Please present the certificate of completion to Danielle Cooper .

3. **Prepare & Enrich Inventory:** A trained Sponsor Couple will help you complete a marriage inventory that will help you work on your strengths and challenges.
4. **Be Devoted book by Bob Schuchts**

At the end of this document, you will find some additional resources for marriage prep and NFP.

STEP 6: PLAN THE WEDDING LITURGY

A wedding coordinator will be assigned to you. She will contact you to arrange a meeting to go through the steps and details of the ceremony.

To help you plan your wedding, you will receive *Together for Life*, by Joseph Champlin. Usually, the wedding coordinator will give you this booklet after your first meeting.

The Sacrament of Marriage between two Catholics should be celebrated within the Nuptial Mass and must be celebrated in the church proper. Marriages between a Catholic and a non-Catholic Christian (or a non-baptized person) are normally celebrated with the Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass.

Please refer to page 10 in *Together for Life* for ceremony outlines.

As you prepare your wedding, consider the ceremony as an opportunity to witness to your faith. Pray in advance for the fruits of the ceremony!

To plan your liturgical ceremony, you will need to consider the following:

1. **Readers:** Up to three family members or friends may serve as readers of the Old Testament and New Testament readings and the Prayers of the Faithful. You can edit or write the prayers of the faithful. You may find the readings in *Together for Life*. Discern the readings in a prayerful mode and use this process as a remote prep for your wedding day. The reading of Scripture during a celebration of Holy Mass in the Catholic Church is to be done by Catholics. They must (also) possess the skills necessary for an effective proclamation of the Word, be fully initiated members of the Catholic Church, and live lives according to Christian lifestyle
2. **Altar Servers:** Speak with the pastor about *altar servers*. They will not be provided by St. Michael parish unless requested.
3. **Gift Bearers:** If you do a nuptial mass, it is recommended that you select two people to bring up the gifts.
4. **Music:** Music must be in keeping with parish liturgical norms. Movie sound tracks, show tunes, and pop songs are not fitting with the wedding liturgy. Only live music is allowed. The coordinator can suggest musicians, vocalists, and music selections and will review your music selections before the wedding. Musicians must submit selections to be played 15 days before the ceremony to the wedding coordinator. As noted in Step 4, prearrangements should be made with your musicians for payment.

5. **Wedding Program:** You may want to provide an outline of the celebration so your guests follow the wedding ceremony better. If you will have non-Catholics attend a wedding Mass, we recommend that you include some words about the proper dispositions to receive holy communion in your program.
6. **Flowers:** Except during Advent and Lent, we have flowers for Sunday Mass, so you don't necessarily need additional flower arrangements. In case you want an upgrade in flowers, or to request specific colors, your wedding coordinator will work with you and the flower team. If you really want to do your own additional flowers, the following guidelines must be followed: decor must respect the church tone and the liturgical season. No decor may be placed on the altar cloth of the high altar or on the lower altar. Use of tape, tacks, staples, nails, putty and other means of attachment is not allowed anywhere in the church.
7. **Photography and Videotaping:** Photographers and videographers must consult with the wedding coordinator prior to the wedding. Their work should be done discreetly and unobtrusively. Pre-wedding photos should be completed at least 30 minutes prior to the wedding. Flash photography is limited to the processional and recessional. At no time during the ceremony should the photographer come down the length of the center aisle or enter the Sanctuary. Taking pictures or filming during the time of the consecration and Eucharistic prayer (basically, when everyone is kneeling) is to be discouraged. It is the marriage couple's responsibility to inform the photographer and videographer of these policies.
8. **Dress Code:** In respect for the sacredness of the church, we ask your wedding party to dress modestly and, if needed, use wraps or shawls.

PROPER DECORUM: In general, be mindful that the church is a sacred place. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle at the center of the church. Throughout your time in the church, please observe proper reverence.

Please ask your wedding guests to be quiet and respectful while inside the church. No rice, confetti, birdseed, animals, etc., may be used in the church or on the parish grounds. Fake petals are acceptable

Step 7: IMMEDIATE PREPARATION

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is usually scheduled on the afternoon of the day before the wedding. All members of the wedding party including readers are encouraged to attend. It is not necessary for musicians, photographers, or videographers to be present for the rehearsal. We do encourage you to find a photographer that is familiarized with the Catholic liturgy.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

If you are Catholic, in preparation for your wedding it is important that you celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation some weeks prior to your marriage. This can be done at St. Michael Parish or at the parish where you attend (find confession times at stmichaelportland.org/confession-times).

NOVENA BEFORE YOUR MARRIAGE

We encourage you to do the Novena before your marriage. This novena can be found at the St Michael website. Fr Ignacio can provide resources to do a final mini retreat before your wedding.

ACCESS TO THE CHURCH

Beside the time for the wedding ceremony, you will customarily be allowed in the church one hour before the ceremony on your wedding day and 1/2 hour after the ceremony (3 hour block total). Please confirm this with the priest/deacon assisting you, as on some dates other parish activities or liturgies may need to be arranged around the wedding or rehearsal.

Pictures may be taken before or after the ceremony. Nothing should be removed or changed in the sanctuary itself.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Smoking is not allowed on the church property.

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on church property by any of the wedding party or guests. Those participating in the liturgy should not be under the influence of intoxicants at the time of the ceremony. This is not so uncommon a problem and could lead to lamentable episodes that you do not want on the date of your wedding. We encourage you to address the topic with those who will accompany you if you think this may be an issue.

Marriage Prep Resources

1. THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

- ✓ *Into the Deep: An Unlikely Catholic Conversion*, Abigail Favale.
<https://www.amazon.com/Into-Deep-Unlikely-Catholic-Conversion/dp/1532605013>
- ✓ *Men and Women Are From Eden: A Study Guide to John Paul II's Theology of the Body* by Mary Healey (good summary of the TOB of JP II).
<https://www.amazon.com/Men-Women-Are-Eden-Theology/dp/0867167009>
- ✓ *Theology of the Body for Beginners* by Christopher West
<https://www.amazon.com/Theology-Body-Beginners-Christopher-West/dp/1932645349>
- ✓ *Theology of the Body Explained* by Christopher West (In this is more theological book West explains the audiences of JP II)
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0819874256/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_uppi_i11
- ✓ You can also explore the Christopher West youtube channel. It has lots of talks about the TOB:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCleUptk8l6KEuJpVOWCYJ-w>

2. MARRIAGE

- ✓ *Jesus the Bridegroom* by Brant Pitre
- ✓ *Three to Get Married* by Fulton Sheen
- ✓ *The First Society* by Scott Hahn
- ✓ *The 5 Love Languages* by Gary Chapman (human tools through the 5 languages of love to communicate better as a couple)
- ✓ *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: The Classic Guide to Understanding the Opposite Sex* by John Gray

3. NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

- ✓ Holy Family Clinic: Contact them at 503.994.4353 and request a Natural Family Planning training session. Insurance usually covers the cost for the in-person sessions, otherwise they are \$160 with a 30% discount for St. Michael's
- ✓ SymptoPro classes, online or in person: <https://symptopro.org/> o Online option: \$120 for three sessions with an instructor or In-Person Option
- ✓ Couple to Couple League: <https://ccli.org/learn-nfp-from-ccl/> o Self-paced online option: \$135 o Live online class: \$135 Once a month meetings, three times for two hours each o In-person option: \$135 Once a month meetings, three times for two hours each
- ✓ InSight Fertility: www.insightfertility.com All via zoom, Group intro session is \$25 per couple (\$100 for a private intro). After the Intro Session is completed, couples enroll in the program, which includes the cost of the first followup, materials, and setting up for long distance instruction (\$200). Further followups are \$100 each, as needed.
- ✓ Natural Womanhood: <https://naturalwomanhood.org/>
- ✓ *The Sinner's Guide to Natural Family Planning* by Simcha Fisher's (short practical introduction to NFP)