

*Sacrament of
Matrimony
Planning &
Preparation
Guide*



1501 N. Alafaya Trail
Orlando, FL 32828

Table of Contents

A Welcome Note from Us!	3
Preparation Process	4
Required Documents Checklist	5
Scheduling Your Wedding	6
Liturgical Considerations	7
Music Coordination	9
Marriage Information Sheet	10
Wedding Rules for Bride and Groom	11
Parish Registration Sheet	12

A Welcome Note from Us!

Congratulations on your engagement! We rejoice with you as you prepare to enter the Sacrament of Marriage. Your “yes” to one another is also a “yes” to God, who calls you into a lifelong covenant of faith, hope, and love.

In the Catholic Church, Christian marriage is a sacred covenant established by God, through which a man and a woman enter into a lifelong union of intimacy, love, and mutual commitment. This sacrament reflects Christ’s faithful love for His Church and gives spouses the grace to love one another deeply, remain united, and grow in holiness together.

The season of engagement is a special time of preparation and discernment; an opportunity to deepen your relationship, strengthen the foundation of your future marriage, and reflect prayerfully on your shared vocation. Through open dialogue, trust, and intentional preparation, you are invited to grow together in love and faith.

To support you during this joyful season, the following guidelines are offered to help ensure a reverent and prayerful celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage within the life of the Church. These materials are designed to support you not only in preparing for your wedding day but also for a lifetime of love and commitment.

On behalf of St. Joseph Catholic Church, congratulations once again. We look forward to accompanying you as you prepare for marriage and place your trust in God’s loving plan for your lives.

With Joy in Christ,

The St. Joseph Marriage Coordinator

Preparation Process

The steps a couple takes towards marriage will guide them prayerfully towards the sacrament of Matrimony. At St. Joseph Catholic Church, we are committed to guiding you and your proposed spouse and preparing you for this vocation.

Initiating the Process

Couples who wish to be prepared and/or celebrate their marriage at St. Joseph's are required to contact the Formation Team a minimum of six (6) months before their desired wedding date. To send your initial inquiry for the matrimony, please use the following link: [Marriage Inquiry at St. Joseph Catholic Church Orlando – Fill out form](#)

Intake Meeting with a Priest or Deacon

Once we have your initial documents, we will coordinate a time for an intake meeting with a priest or deacon. This meeting is an introduction and a way for our clergy to get to know you and know what steps to take for the preparation process. This step is what truly begins the marriage preparation process.

Compatibility Inventory (Fully Engaged)

The Fully Engaged inventory is a comprehensive assessment tool designed specifically for Catholic couples preparing for marriage. This inventory facilitates meaningful conversations about essential topics, including communication styles, conflict resolution strategies, financial management, family planning, and spiritual life.

Mentoring and Preparation

As you complete the Fully Engaged inventory, you will be paired with a trained mentor couple. Your inventory will be a tool for the mentoring sessions. The number of sessions you will complete will be discussed with the mentor couple. This step is so important as it is an opportunity to learn from couples who have successfully navigated through the challenges of married life provides invaluable real-world insight that complements the Church's theological teaching. This personal connection helps bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Pre-Cana

Pre-Cana is a one-day educational workshop mandated by the Diocese of Orlando for all couples preparing for Catholic marriage. The workshop brings together multiple engaged couples for presentations, discussions, and activities focused on building strong Catholic marriages. You can find the available Pre-Cana dates on the diocesan website or upon request from our Marriage Coordinator.

Final Arrangements for the Wedding

As soon as your mentoring and Pre-Cana are complete, you will receive an email with steps for final arrangements for your wedding, and we can set a definitive wedding date.

Required Documents

Below you will find all the required documents. All must be submitted two (2) months before the wedding date. Additionally, you may use this document as a checklist for yourself to ensure we have all the documents needed.

Required Documents from Both the Bride and Groom:

- Marriage Information Sheet
- Wedding Rules for Bride and Groom
- Pre- Cana Certificate
- Marriage License
 - ✓ **Please Note:** If this is a first-time marriage (you are not already civilly married), your newly issued marriage license is only valid for 60 days from the issue date. Take this into consideration when you are planning when to get your marriage license. You will also need time to have the marriage license sent to the court after the wedding.
- Dispensation Form Completed (if the couple is mixed-faith or in an extraordinary case)

Required Documents from the **Bride**

- Two (2) signed and notarized Witness Forms (Form B)
- Original Baptism Certificate with notations of all sacraments completed.

Additional Documents *only if necessary*

- First Holy Communion certificate
- Confirmation Certificate
- Decree of Nullity for all previous marriages
- Death Certificate of previous spouse

Required Documents from the **Groom**

- Two (2) signed and notarized Witness Forms (Form B)
- Original Baptism Certificate with notations of all sacraments completed.

Additional Documents *only if necessary*

- First Holy Communion certificate
- Confirmation Certificate
- Decree of Nullity for all previous marriages
- Death Certificate of previous spouse

If you need any assistance in obtaining these documents, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Marriage Coordinator for assistance.

Scheduling Your Wedding Date

The scheduling of your wedding date must be coordinated with the calendar coordinator and the marriage coordinator. **No wedding date will be set, even tentatively, until the couple has received permission from the Priest/Deacon and verified with the Marriage Coordinator.**

Please **refrain** from printing and sending wedding invitations, securing vendors, or reserving a reception site until the date is confirmed and marked on the church's calendar.

Marriage Celebration Times

- Fridays from 2 PM to 6 PM
- Saturdays from 10 AM to 1 PM
- **NO** Weddings are celebrated on Sundays

Scheduling the Wedding Ceremony Date

After you have completed your intake meeting with a Priest or Deacon, he and the wedding coordinator will assist you in setting a **tentative** wedding date. **This date is NOT final. Please DO NOT begin sending wedding invitations or booking a reception venue until the tentative date becomes confirmed on the calendar.** The Tentative note will be removed upon the completion of your mentoring sessions. As soon as you have completed your mentoring sessions and sent the final arrangements email, we can confirm a wedding date, and from there, you may begin sending invitations and booking reception venues.

Scheduling the Rehearsal Date

The rehearsal date is typically scheduled the day before the Wedding Ceremony. It is the responsibility of the couple to ensure that all people in the wedding party arrive on time for both the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony.

Rehearsals are typically scheduled for weddings with fifty (50) or more attendees or for those with full bridal parties (bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, ring bearer, etc.). Rehearsals are roughly 30-40 minutes long. All attendees are **required** to be at the rehearsal.

Please be sure to bring your marriage license and any other applicable items **during the rehearsal** in preparation for the wedding day.

***Please Note*: The marriage preparation file must be completed 2 months prior to the wedding date.**

Liturgical Considerations

Celebrant

The celebrant of your wedding will be discussed with the Marriage Coordinator. There are circumstances where a particular priest or deacon may not be available to be the celebrant. The Marriage Coordinator will work closely with you to plan who the celebrant will be.

Delegation and Vetting of Good Standing

A celebrant outside of the Diocese of Orlando must request a *Letter of Suitability* from the Chancellor of his Diocese and submit this to:

Diocese of Orlando

Office of the Chancellor of Canonical Affairs

PO Box 1800

Orlando, FL 32802-1800

Please have this completed early in his acceptance to celebrate the wedding, so the Diocese of Orlando may review and approve this request. Please also ensure a copy is sent to St. Joseph Catholic Church, Attn: Faith Formation Team, along with a letter requesting to celebrate the ceremony.

Marriage License

The Celebrant of the wedding ceremony cannot perform the sacrament of Matrimony without a marriage license. It is critical that you bring the marriage license to the rehearsal or 1-3 weeks before your wedding date.

Mass with Holy Communion or Liturgy of the Word Ceremony?

After meeting and consulting with the priest/deacon and coordinating with the Marriage Coordinator, the couple will determine if they will be celebrating their marriage with a Nuptial Mass (with communion) or a Liturgy of the Word (without communion). The determining criteria will center on the religious background of the bride and groom, and which form of liturgy will best accommodate the assembled guests to celebrate their sacrament.

Readings

In your final arrangements email, you will be provided a link to select your mass readings. You will select one Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel reading. Non-Scriptural readings are never permitted to replace the scriptural readings.

Liturgical Considerations Continued...

Presentation of Flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary

This is a ritual that has been retained by many Catholic Cultures. You may choose to include this in your ceremony. If you wish to do this, please let the Marriage Coordinator and the Music Director know, and it will be planned accordingly.

Other Cultural Wedding Traditions

Traditions such as the *lazo*, *arras*, etc., are beautiful traditions that are rooted in various cultures. We are open to having these traditions celebrated during the wedding ceremony. Please be sure to coordinate with the Marriage Coordinator and have these celebrations approved by the Pastor before planning for it to take place during the wedding ceremony.

Wedding Attire

Please use discretion in selecting your wedding attire. Remember that your wedding is the celebration of a sacrament and the acceptance of God's vocation for you and your spouse. Dress for the occasion! Please also remind your wedding guests that modesty is the best policy, as this celebration is taking place in a sacred space.

Dressing Room for Bride and Groom

You will arrive one hour before the wedding. Upon arrival, we will provide the bride and groom with separate rooms to put the finishing touches on their look before they walk down the aisle.

Get to the Church On Time

Please arrive one hour before the wedding ceremony. This includes the wedding party. This rule also applies to the rehearsal.

Music Coordination

Music for the wedding will be planned between the couple and the Music Director. You will be put into contact with the Music Director in your final arrangements email that will be sent upon the completion of your marriage mentoring.

Keep in mind that Matrimony is a sacramental celebration. Therefore, popular songs and secular music are not allowed to be performed or played during the liturgy. For your wedding liturgy, you'll need to ensure the music you wish to be played is sacred.

Music selections must be approved by the Music Director and the celebrant of your wedding. You will be provided guidance by the Music Director for the selection of your music.

There is a music stipend of \$200 for the organist and \$100 for the cantor. If cost is a concern, please let the Music Director know, and they will assist you.

Music Staff

The Music Director is the principal organist and pianist at all weddings, along with a designated Cantor. If you wish to invite your own organist and/or cantor, please coordinate with the Music Director, as all guest organists and cantors must be approved by the Music Director.

MARRIAGE INFORMATION SHEET

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

St. Joseph Catholic Church. Orlando FL, 32828

DATE: _____

MEMBER#: _____

We prefer 1 Year Preparation. Please allow six months minimum to complete the marriage or convalidation preparation process.

BRIDE: _____ AGE: _____ RELIGION: _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

CHURCH NOW ATTENDING: _____

Have you completed the sacrament of BAPTISM: Yes No 1ST COMMUNION: Yes No CONFIRMATION: Yes No

GROOM: _____ AGE: _____ RELIGION: _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

CHURCH NOW ATTENDING: _____

Have you completed the sacrament of BAPTISM: Yes No 1ST COMMUNION: Yes No CONFIRMATION: Yes No

WILL YOU BE ATTENDING THIS PARISH AFTER THE WEDDING? _____

HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN EACH OTHER? _____

IF CONVALIDATION, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN MARRIED? _____

DATE AND PLACE OF CIVIL MARRIAGE: _____

HAVE EITHER OF YOU BEEN MARRIED BEFORE?

	TO WHOM	RELIGION	MARRIED BY: Minister? / Civil Official?
BRIDE:	1. _____	_____	_____
	2. _____	_____	_____
	3. _____	_____	_____

	TO WHOM	RELIGION	MARRIED BY: Minister? / Civil Official?
GROOM:	1. _____	_____	_____
	2. _____	_____	_____
	3. _____	_____	_____

CHURCH TO BE MARRIED AT: _____ CITY: _____ TENTATIVE DATE: _____

St. Joseph Catholic Church

ORLANDO, FLORIDA USA

WEDDING RULES FOR BRIDE & GROOM

Dear Bride & Groom,

Thank you for choosing St. Joseph Catholic Church for your marriage formation and or wedding. We wish you the strength and the joy of love for a full, rich life together. In order to help ensure a happy and lasting commitment, Church law requires a period of preparation and inquiry for the all-important step you are to take. As an aid to this, and in order to help avoid future disappointment, we ask that you accept and sign the following rules, which are based on Diocesan policy:

- a. Minimum Six-Month Marriage Formation Period to ensure that the engaged couple have adequate time to prepare in a serious way, this contact must be made at least six months in advance, nine months to one year is ideal. This preparation time is not just a "waiting period" for the ceremony, but rather an important, teachable moment in preparation for the lifetime journey on which the couple is about to embark.
- b. You may not set a date for your wedding, even tentatively, until you have been given permission by the priest.
- c. At your first meeting with the priest he will ask you your preferred wedding date. That date, if available, will be penciled in the parish calendar. However, all other formation requirements must be completed for the wedding to take place.
- d. You are not permitted to have wedding invitations printed or sent out, nor to reserve a place for the wedding reception until you have been given permission by the priest.
- e. If any requirements are lacking or if the priest has serious concerns, the priest has the right to ask:
 - a. That you postpone your wedding date
 - b. That you meet with a counselor for an evaluation and/or counseling

We, the undersigned, have been made aware of the above rules based on Diocesan policy, and we agree to honor them.

GROOM _____ Date: _____

BRIDE _____ Date: _____

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

PARISH REGISTRATION FORM

FAMILY LAST NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

APT# _____

WOULD YOU LIKE OFFERTORY ENVELOPES YES NO

DATE: _____

<p>MEMBER INFORMATION: TITLE: <input type="checkbox"/> MR & MRS <input type="checkbox"/> MR</p> <p>HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE MAIDEN NAME: _____</p> <p>FULL NAME: _____</p> <p>DATE OF BIRTH: _____ RELIGION: _____</p> <p>LANGUAGE(S): _____ HOME COUNTRY: _____</p> <p>CELL PHONE: _____ OCCUPATION: _____</p> <p>EMAIL: _____</p> <p>SACRAMENT DATES:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BAPTIZED _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 1st COMMUNION _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CONFIRMATION _____ MARRIAGE DATE _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> MRS <input type="checkbox"/> MS <input type="checkbox"/> MISS OTHER: _____</p> <p>SPOUSE <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE MAIDEN NAME: _____</p> <p>FULL NAME: _____</p> <p>DATE OF BIRTH: _____ RELIGION: _____</p> <p>LANGUAGE(S): _____ HOME COUNTRY: _____</p> <p>CELL PHONE: _____ OCCUPATION: _____</p> <p>EMAIL: _____</p> <p>SACRAMENT DATES:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BAPTIZED _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 1st COMMUNION _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CONFIRMATION _____ MARRIAGE DATE _____</p>
---	--

MARITAL STATUS: SINGLE MARRIED IN CATHOLIC CHURCH CIVIL MARRIAGE ➔ (INTERESTED IN CON-VALIDATION?) YES NO

WIDOWED COHABITATING DIVORCED ➔ ANNULLED YES NO ➔ (INTERESTED IN PETITIONING FOR ANNULMENT?) YES NO

OTHER ADULTS LIVING IN THIS HOUSEHOLD

NAME: _____ MALE FEMALE RELATIONSHIP: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ RELIGION: _____ LANGUAGE(S): _____ HOME COUNTRY: _____

DATES: BAPTIZED _____ 1st COMMUNION _____ CONFIRMATION _____ MARITAL STATUS _____

NAME: _____ MALE FEMALE RELATIONSHIP: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ RELIGION: _____ LANGUAGE(S): _____ HOME COUNTRY: _____

DATES: BAPTIZED _____ 1st COMMUNION _____ CONFIRMATION _____ MARITAL STATUS _____

