

Wedding Guidelines

No marriage can take place until at least six (6) months have lapsed since the initial interview with the parish priest.

I. Pre-Cana Program

Pre-Cana programs are offered several times during the year at Holy Family Parish or another nearby parish. Participation is mandatory. The Archdiocesan Family Life Office also offers these programs several times year. A brochure with the locations, dates and times can be obtained from the rectory.

II. Documents

- 1. Baptismal Certificate:** A copy of your baptismal certificate dated within the last six (6) months is required. This may be obtained by writing or visiting the church of your baptism. Your original Baptismal Certificate is not acceptable. If you were baptized at Holy Family, this document is not necessary. Non - Catholic Christians must also present a certificate of Baptism.
- 2. Letter of Freedom:** This should be obtained from your home parish where you should be registered.
- 3. Death Certificate:** This certificate is needed if a previous spouse has died.
- 4. Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire:** This must be filled out at least (6) six weeks prior to the wedding. Your responses are taken under oath by one of the priests of Holy Family. All certificates must be presented at this time.
- 5. Marriage License:** This should be presented to the priest on the night of the rehearsal. Marriage licenses take at least three (3) days to obtain. Your license must be obtained in the State of Pennsylvania.

III. Inter - Faith Marriage

- 1. Promise to Raise Children Catholic:** The Catholic party is required to sign a document reaffirming his/her faith in the church, and promise to do all in his/her power to share that faith with their children. The non-Catholic party is not required to make this promise, but must be informed of this serious obligation of the Catholic party.
- 2. Proof of Freedom to Marry:** Two witnesses, who can attest that you are free to marry, must sign a document testifying that you are not presently, nor have ever been married. Parents are preferred.

IV. Liturgy

- 1. Music:** Please choose music that is appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy. Popular music and show music are not permitted. It should be reserved for the wedding reception. Only hymns found in approved Catholic hymnals may be sung. Mrs. Cecelia Beatty, the Choir Director and Organist will assist you in the planning of these particular details of the

liturgical celebration. You may contact Mrs. Beatty at 610-299-2267. Her fee is \$250.00 and is to be paid directly to her. If you would like a soloist, Mrs. Beatty will obtain one for you. The soloists fees vary, and they also should be paid directly to her/him. If a guest organist is requested, permission must be obtained from the rectory. The regular organist must receive her fee, even if another organist is granted permission to play. All music however, must be approved by Mrs. Beatty.

2. Readings: Only selections from Sacred Scripture are permitted to read at Holy Mass. The priest will provide you with a list of the scripture readings that are proper to the Nuptial Mass. Please indicate to the priest on the night of rehearsal, your Scriptural selections.

3. Lector: The Lector is someone who reads the Scripture passages you have chosen for your wedding. He/she may be the Best Man, maid of honor or some relative or friend. Please be sure they are capable of performing this function before you ask them. Someone familiar with public speaking and the use of microphones will help immensely in assuring that the Scripture passages are heard. Only Catholics may serve as lectors. The Scriptures must be read from the Lectionary, and not from wedding booklets or pamphlets.

4. Offertory Procession: This is the procession in which the bread and wine for the Holy Eucharist are presented to the priest at the altar. Again, only Catholics may participate in the Offertory Procession. Ordinarily there are only two bearers.

5. Holy Communion: Holy Communion may be received by the bride and groom under both species. Please urge your family and friends to receive Communion at your wedding. However, remind them that they must be properly prepared, viz., Sacramental Confession, and observance of the Eucharistic Fast. The best time to go to confession is at the regularly scheduled times in your church. If you are unable to go to confession on Saturday, you may go to Confession after rehearsal. Only Catholics are permitted to receive the Holy Communion. We believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community, signifying a oneness in faith, life, and worship of the community. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness that does not exist. If you are planning on having a wedding booklet, this should be printed on the inside cover. Anyone who is not receiving Holy Communion must remain in their pew, and not approach the altar.

6. Bouquet for the Blessed Mother's Altar: Please indicate to the priest at the rehearsal if you will place a bouquet on our Lady's Altar.

7. Altar Servers: Two altar servers assist at every wedding. A third server will be appointed, if the bride needs help with her train. If you would like a third altar server, or if you would like a particular altar server(s) to serve your wedding, please inform the priest in writing at least six (6) weeks before the wedding.

8. Flowers: Flowers add to the beauty of the wedding. Flowers donated to the church on the day of the wedding cannot be removed. Only fresh flowers are permitted.

9. Decorations: Bows and other decorations that are in harmony with the Liturgy are permitted in the church. However, if they are attached to the pews, they must be

fastened with string. **Wire and tape are not permitted.**

10. Runners: Runners are no longer permitted at Holy Family. The purpose of the runner was to prevent the bride's gown from being soiled when the church's had dirt floors.

V. Additional Information

1. Hours of Weddings: Weddings are celebrated on Saturday at 10:00 A.M. and 1:30 P.M.

2. Rehearsal: Rehearsals are held on Thursday evenings. Please be on time for the rehearsal. Only members of the wedding party are permitted to attend the rehearsal. Please do not cause an embarrassing situation by inviting non - members of the wedding party to the church for rehearsal. Since the wedding rehearsal takes place in church, please dress (even in warm weather) and act properly - no gum chewing.

3. Wedding Booklets: Wedding Booklets are permitted. However, copyright laws must be observed. The duplication of copyrighted material (music and/or text) without the permission of the proper publishers is both illegal and immoral. Each publisher stipulates his own procedures and regulations for allowing copyrighted materials to be used. These regulations must be observed with accuracy in order to make your wedding booklet legal. Neither Holy Family Parish nor the Archdiocese of Philadelphia will assume responsibility, financial or otherwise, for any individual(s) or group(s) that is found to be in violation of any copyrighted law(s). If you wish to receive help in properly obtaining permission to use copyrighted material, you may contact the Archdiocesan Office for Worship at 222 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. This request must be put in writing. Before your booklet may be printed, they must be approved by one of the priests of Holy Family. Failure to comply with this regulation means that you will not be permitted to distribute your booklet to the guests at your wedding.

4. Pictures or Videos: Pictures and/or videotaping are permitted during weddings. Please tell your photographer to be as inconspicuous as possible. Floodlights and flash photography are not permitted during the liturgy. Photographers and their equipment are never permitted in the sanctuary. They should not be in the center aisle during the procession in or out of the church. The church is a place of worship, not a photographer's studio. Taking pictures after the ceremony is not permitted due to the schedule of services. Please inform your photographer of these regulations. They will be enforced.

5. Rice: Rice, confetti and birdseed are not permitted. This is a pagan custom that has nothing to do with a liturgical celebration. This is also a matter of safety as well as physical maintenance.

6. Offerings and Fees:

- a. The offering for the Church is \$400.00 (a refund of \$150.00 will be returned if the wedding begins precisely on time). The offering, along with the license should be presented to the priest on the evening of the rehearsal.
- b. It is customary to give something to the altar servers. They are giving up their

- time to make your celebration reverent and joyous. Anything you wish to give them should be presented to them on the day of the wedding.
- c. The organist and singers have their own fees, which are noted elsewhere in these guidelines. They should be paid directly.

7. Church Grounds: No beer or alcoholic beverages are permitted on church grounds. Please mention this to those who decorate your cars.

8. Church Registration: Please register in your parish as a new family, as soon as you return from your honeymoon.