

General Guidelines for Weddings at Sacred Heart Catholic Church



Jesus At The Wedding Feast In Cana

“On behalf of the Parish Community of Sacred Heart Church, we congratulate you and your families on your engagement. May God’s love guide and strengthen your relationship now and always.”

*Sacred Heart Catholic Church
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General Guidelines

Who Can Be Married At Sacred Heart Church?

- Couples in which at least one person is an active member of Sacred Heart Church for the past one year.
- Couples in which at least one person is the son or daughter of an active member.
- Couples in which at least one person is living in Riverton or Palmyra.
- Couples in which both individuals are free to marry in the Catholic Church

The Date and Time of the Celebration:

- Couples should contact the Church office one year in advance of the date on which they would like to celebrate their wedding.
- Weddings may be scheduled on any day or evening with the exception of Sundays and certain Holy Days and Holidays. On Saturdays, weddings in the church may be scheduled at the following time only: 2:00PM.
- Please pay special attention to Liturgical seasons when planning a wedding date. During Advent and Lent the Church is decorated with purple and this cannot be changed for the wedding.

The Officiating Priest or Deacon:

- If your wedding includes the Celebration of Mass (Nuptial Mass), it will be presided over by a Priest. If you are not having a Nuptial Mass then a Deacon will preside over your Marriage Ceremony.
- If you have a request for a particular Priest or Deacon to officiate at your wedding, please contact him as soon as possible.

- Sometimes there is a request for a visiting Priest or Deacon to preside at your wedding. This is possible, provided he can present the proper credentials. He will also be expected to observe all applicable Church laws as well as any policy regarding the celebration of Marriage at Sacred Heart.

Marriage Preparation:

All couples are obliged to participate in both formational and instructional sessions for their marriage preparation.

Formational Sessions – These sessions are designed to enable the Priest, Deacon or Host Couple in the following:

- To develop a helpful relationship with each couple as they prepare for their marriage and to encourage a Christian understanding of marriage.
- To offer the couple an opportunity to complete a communication study.
- To complete the pre-nuptial inquiry paperwork.
- To help plan the wedding liturgy.
- To collect all the necessary documents.

Pre-Cana – The couple has the must attend either a Pre-Cana Conference or an Engaged Encounter Weekend. Cana is the town in which Jesus went to a wedding celebration and subsequently changed the water into wine. He seeks to transform your own relationship in just as wonderful a way. Likewise, the Pre-Cana Program is designed to assist engaged couples in the enrichment of their relationship. It is offered by various Parishes and is presented by several host couples. Each Pre-Cana is unique to the Parish that is offering it. You may attend a Pre-Cana anywhere that one is being offered, even out of state.

• The most current dates for Pre-Cana and the Engaged Encounter Weekends can be found on the Internet at the following web sites:

- (Diocese of Trenton) www.dioceseoftrenton.org
- (Diocese of Camden) www.camdendiocese.org
- (Archdiocese of Philadelphia) www.archphila.org

Documentation - The following documents are necessary and are needed before the wedding day:

- A new copy of your Baptismal Certificate with all the updated notations (First Communion and Confirmation) on the back. This can be obtained from the Church of your Baptism.
- A photocopied Certificate of Baptism is required for Baptized Christians of other denominations.
- A certificate of completion of the instructional session (Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter).
- If there has been a previous marriage, a death certificate of the former spouse is needed. If divorced, a decree of nullity from the Catholic Church is needed.
- A marriage license. It may be issued no sooner than 72 hours after the application has been made and it is only valid for 30 days. The license should be brought to the wedding rehearsal and given to the Priest or Deacon who will be officiating. Blood tests are no longer required in the State of New Jersey to obtain a Marriage License.

Church Donation:

- A donation of \$300 or more is suggested to all couples. This does not include any musician's fees or any gift you may want to give to the Priest or Deacon

Music for the Wedding:

- Please contact our Music Director, Mark McKeever, at 856.786.5680 to schedule a meeting to plan the music for your Wedding. This consultation should be arranged before the final planning stages of your Wedding preparation.
- You may wish to have the involvement of guest musicians. Please speak to the Music Director about this.
- Please keep in mind that your Wedding is a religious celebration. Therefore all music is to be properly Christian in nature. The final decision on the appropriateness of music will reside with the Music Director.

Photography and Videography:

- The photographer and/or videographer should consult with the celebrant prior to the Wedding to receive any special instructions.
- The photographer and/or videographer should never go up the steps of the Sanctuary during the ceremony.
- The photographer may take pictures following the celebration provided that special care should be taken to see that proper reverence is maintained in the Church.
- If the wedding party is returning to Church after the Wedding for pictures, the photographer needs to know in advance that the Church must be empty by 4:00pm on Saturdays.

Decorations:

- Slip hazards are not permitted. Unfortunately, for reasons of safety, we are not permitted by our insurance company to allow any slippery objects to be used. Examples of slippery objects are aisle runners, flower petals, rice, etc. We are told that the legal liability for an accident or injury may extend to the couple as well. So please abide by this safety measure for your sake as well as ours.
- If the church is previously decorated for a special event or liturgical season, the decorations and flowers may not be able to be changed. Please speak to the person preparing you to determine if your Wedding will be influenced.
- Bows or flowers may be attached to the pews by string, ribbons or clips. No tape or tacks may be used under any circumstances.

Flowers:

- Arrangements for flowers should be made directly with the florist of your choice.
- Soil-bearing flowers or plants are not allowed as there have been muddy spills in the past.
- Most people choose to have two arrangements on either side of the Tabernacle since they are the most visible throughout the Wedding

Ceremony. The flowers should be left in the Church as your gift to the Church

Rehearsal:

- The date and time of rehearsal should be arranged at one of the meetings with the Priest or Deacon. Usually rehearsals are scheduled the evening before the wedding day however an earlier date is often possible.
- The rehearsal is usually held the night before the Wedding Day. Members of the wedding party are expected to be present and on time. The rehearsal will take about one hour provided that it starts on time.
- Children under 7 participating in the wedding party must be accompanied by an adult who is not in the wedding party.

Additional Information:

- There is a helpful guide entitled *Sacred Heart Planning Guide for Weddings*. It will be given to you by the Priest or Deacon after your Marriage Preparation is completed. This guide will enable you to choose the readings and other practical information for your Wedding Celebration.
- You will also receive a sample copy of a Wedding program if you would like to have one.

“Once again, we congratulate you on your engagement and we pray that your relationship will be a living sign of the love of Christ, this day and always.”