

A romantic silhouette of a bride and groom holding hands against a dramatic sunset sky. The groom is on the left, wearing a suit, and the bride is on the right, wearing a wedding dress. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow that illuminates the clouds and the couple's forms.

Marriage Preparation and Guidelines

Sacred Heart Catholic Church • 550 Smith Road, Fremont, Ohio • 419-332-7339

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage!

Your wedding is a special, joyous event as you make a covenant with each other and with God, witnessed by God's people, your relatives and friends. The solemn vows, exchange of rings, blessings and prayers are, above all, an encounter with Jesus, our Lord, in the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony.

Today, more than during the immediate past, we, the Church, and especially married couples, parents, priests, deacons, and teachers have an important responsibility to help our people to enter into a marriage that gives promise of being grace-filled, happy and successful.

We, therefore, deem it a privilege, a pleasure and a serious responsibility to assist you in preparing to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. The following pages answer many concerns of engaged couples. We have prepared this booklet to help guide you through the process. By answering common questions about getting married at our parish, this booklet sets forth guidelines that we trust you will follow.

We are here to help you!

Fr. Krzysztof Kardzis, Pastor

frchris@sacredheart-fremont.org 419-332-7339 ext. 101

Tracey Boulware, Director of Music and Liturgy

tboulware@sacredheart-fremont.org 419-332-7339 ext. 105

Jessica Wasserman, Parish Secretary

office@sacredheart-fremont.org 419-32-7339 ext. 103

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

AN INVITATION

While you are preparing for marriage, you have a special claim on God's blessings. Often a renewed sense of God's love and his closeness develops as you make your preparation a spiritual one. Pray, both individually and together. We invite you to celebrate the Mass together on weekends. Other parish events and services can help you to be close to Christ, the Church and each other.

ARRANGEMENTS

Although initial information may be obtained by telephone, no marriage date is assured or set until you, as a couple, have made arrangements with the parish priest or deacon whom you wish to perform the ceremony.

The diocesan guidelines require that a thorough time of preparation be given so that the two parties fully realize the commitment that they are making to one another. Therefore, arrangements for your marriage must be made at least six (6) months in advance, to give you and the presider ample time for your pre-marriage preparations and to assure that the Church will be available.

It is traditional to enter this new state of life as close to the Lord as possible. The reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is highly recommended as part of your preparation for Matrimony. Try to include this sacrament sometime before the wedding, with a priest of your choice.

It is expected that the engaged couple will meet at least four (4) times with the priest/deacon who will be witnessing their vows. Also, participation in an ENGAGED COUPLES CONFERENCE (presented by married couples and a staff member) is expected. This total process of preparation for your marriage is seen as a time of opportunity for learning and growing in your love for one another and in your faith. In order to register for the ENGAGED COUPLES CONFERENCE, call the parish for the contact person.

The MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROCESS is basically a three-fold blend of assessment, instruction, and planning. The priest/deacon/pastoral associate will be concerned about discussing such things as:

- ◇ the freedom and readiness for marriage of both parties
- ◇ the level of maturity
- ◇ the knowledge of responsibility in marriage
- ◇ compatibility in personality and temperament
- ◇ the understanding of, and the ability to make, a permanent commitment
- ◇ the level of faith and the value of religion in your life as an individual and as a couple
- ◇ the possible areas of religious differences (especially in an interfaith marriage)
- ◇ the understanding of marriage as a sacrament

FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding & Study) is an instrument used in Marriage Preparation. Through a series of statements that each partner answers, couples are able to see, and discuss, areas of agreement and disagreement.

ABOUT THE WEDDING CEREMONY

PARISH CUSTOMS AND RULES

We hope all your family and friends will take an active part during the celebration of your wedding. When both parties are Catholic, the ceremony is normally the Nuptial Mass. Catholics traditionally receive Eucharist at the wedding Mass. If it is an interfaith service, the sensitivities of the non-Catholic party are the deciding factor regarding whether or not to have a Mass. Normally the Eucharist is not celebrated at an interfaith wedding for two reasons:

1. The presence of many people not of our Faith will make the celebration difficult.
2. The spouse, not of the Catholic faith, cannot receive Eucharist.

The marriage generally takes place in the parish of the bride; an interfaith marriage may be celebrated in a non-Catholic church with full approval of the Diocese, though the parish priest or the minister may be invited to share in the ceremony here.

In the Toledo Diocese, weddings are not permitted to be celebrated outdoors, or in a high school, college, hospital chapel, or any other non-religious setting.

The best-man and maid/matron-of-honor need not be Catholic, but your witnesses should believe and live according to Christian teachings regarding marriage.

If either of you was married before, this must be mentioned to the priest immediately to see if a Church wedding is possible. Make no preparation or arrangements until this has been handled.

Any special request for other clergy to celebrate at Sacred Heart should be made early, after first checking if they are available. Visiting priests and clergy are always welcome; however, they are required to do all paper work and follow all procedures required by the Diocese of Toledo.

The priest will be happy to work with you in planning your wedding ceremony. You will have the opportunity to select your own passages of Sacred Scripture, wedding vows, ring blessings, and prayers. The booklet *Together for Life* is a planning resource that will be made available to you.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

1. Baptismal Certificates – an authentic copy of the Baptism of Christians is required. In the case of Roman Catholics, this must be a recently issued copy (not more than 6 months old). A copy can easily be obtained from the Church of Baptism by a phone call or letter.
2. A Marriage License from the State. The priest/deacon/pastoral associate must have this before the rehearsal.
3. In the case of a previous marriage by either party, other documents will be necessary. The priest will explain this to you at your initial conference with him.



CIVIL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARRIAGE IN OHIO

Application for a marriage license must be made in the county where either the man or the woman resides and is valid in any county in Ohio for 60 days after it is issued. The minimum age for boys is 18 years and for girls is 16 years. If the girl is under 18 years, she must have both parents and/or legal guardians present and have proof of pre-marriage counseling before she can obtain a State of Ohio Marriage License. There is no waiting period, except in cases where the age or residence is in question. In this case there is a 5 – 30 day wait while the information is being verified. Blood tests are no longer required. This may change.

TIME OF WEDDINGS

Weddings are ordinarily celebrated on Friday afternoons or evenings and during the day on Saturday. However, they may be celebrated on any day or night. If the Saturday date is chosen, they must take place either at 10:00 AM., NOON or 1:00 PM. No weddings are permitted at Sacred Heart Church after 1:00 PM on a Saturday as the Sacrament of Penance begins at 3:00 PM with Mass following at 4:00 PM.

Rehearsals usually take place the previous day or evening. Like the wedding ceremony itself, the rehearsal begins promptly on time and cooperation of all parties involved is expected.

THE USE OF THE CHURCH

We are happy to have you use our church for your wedding. The courtesy, cooperation, and thoughtfulness of all is both desired and expected. The following are guidelines for using our church.

1. Ordinarily the time allotted for the use of the Church is two hours: namely 1 hour before the scheduled time of your wedding and 1-1/2 hours from the time your wedding is scheduled. See below:

WEDDING	CHURCH AVAILABLE	DEPART
10:00am	9:00am	11:30am
12:00pm	11:00am	1:30pm
1:00pm	12:00pm	2:30pm

2. The hour before is used for decorating, seating of guests and other necessary preparations.

3. Dressing rooms: The bride and her attendants may use the Meeting Room, which has a full-length mirror. The groom and groomsmen, if not already coming attired, may use the Music Room to prepare.
4. Your wedding should begin on time. Normally a wedding celebrated with a Nuptial Mass will last 45-60 minutes. Weddings celebrated without a Nuptial Mass will last about 30-40 minutes. Both times depend on many variables such as music, which you may include in your wedding.
5. The remaining time may be used as you wish – receive guests, photographs, etc. However, please be conscious that you depart at the appropriate time either. There may be another wedding party wishing to begin preparing for their wedding or other Church services which are scheduled, such as 3:00 PM Confessions or 4:00 PM Mass on Saturday afternoons.
6. Choose wisely what happens after the ceremony. Experience has shown that if you have your reception line at Church, there is rarely enough time for photographs. You will be asked to leave when your time is up. To avoid any difficulties, or unpleasantness, please be considerate of these time-lines.
7. Church furnishings in the Sanctuary (the raised area around the altar) may not be moved. If other small church furnishings, such as chairs, are moved by anyone at the wedding, it is their responsibility to move them back at the end of the ceremony.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, etc., is not allowed.
- There is to be no smoking anywhere inside Sacred Heart Church. Guests are to extinguish all cigarettes, cigars, or pipes prior to entering the church building.
- The sacred nature of the worship space and the celebration itself suggest that there be no drinking of alcoholic beverages on church property. Anyone found to be intoxicated before or after the wedding will be asked to leave.
- Guests and your wedding party are not to chew gum inside the church and certainly not during the ceremony. Ushers should ask guests to dispose of gum prior to entering the church.

DECORATIONS

We ask couples to keep their flowers and decorations tasteful and simple to keep the focus on the sacrament. When planning for flowers and decorations, please keep in mind the nature of the liturgical season in which your wedding ceremony will be held. For instance, during the weeks after Christmas and Easter the church may already be decorated for the season and you may not want to do much more.

During other seasons you may choose to decorate with floral arrangements in front of the ambo (the stand from which the scriptures are proclaimed) There is no room for flowers in front of or to the sides of the altar. It would be appreciated if flowers were left in the church after the wedding.

Your florist is welcome to visit our church prior to your wedding if they are not familiar with its layout and color scheme. Please have them contact the office to schedule a date and time for this. Flowers may be delivered on your wedding day no earlier than 9:00am.

You may put decorations on the pews by using non-abrasive items provided by your florist. Tape is never acceptable and will damage our pews. Hurricane lamps and other types of candles are not permitted in the aisles for the sake of safety and the ease of movement during the ceremony. If an aisle runner or pew ribbons are used, it is the responsibility of someone in the wedding party to properly dispose of them immediately after the wedding. If any church furnishings are moved by anyone (members of the wedding party, florists, or photographers), they must be replaced before you leave.

For reasons of safety and maintenance, we do not allow rice, birdseed, sparklers, poppers, real flower petals and the use of aisle runners. These represent safety hazards or maintenance problems and cannot be used on church grounds. Bubbles may be used outside the Church when the couple is leaving the church.



MUSIC

All of the music, whether it comes before, during or after the wedding ceremony, should serve to direct the people's attention to the sacredness of the event and the presence of Christ in the holy union of marriage.

The following quote is taken directly from the Pastoral Policy Handbook from the Toledo Diocese:

“The liturgy is a series of signs expressed by living human beings. The music used in the marriage should also be live. Recordings are not to be used to replace the assembly, the choir, or the organist or other instrumentalists or singers.”



The choice of your music must be coordinated with our parish Director of Music and Liturgy, Tracey Boulware (419-332-7339, ext. 105/tboulware@sacredheart-fremont.org). Arrangements must be made with her at least **two (2) months in advance**. Guidelines for music selection must be observed and will be presented at the time of the wedding music consultation.

Music may be provided by one of our parish musicians and/or vocalists if needed, for an additional fee. Any outside musicians and/or vocalists must be approved by our Director of Music and Liturgy. She will work with you to ensure that the music used at your wedding is within the guidelines for the liturgical season.

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS
Hymnal: Journeysongs 3rd edition

PROCESSIONAL (instrumental)

God, Who Created Hearts to Love #542
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring #638
Air from Water Music (Handel)
Arioso from Cantata #156 (Bach)
Canon In D (Pachelbel)

GATHERING (if a full Mass)

Hear Us Now, Our God and Father #539
O Father, All Creating #544
God is Love #715
Christians, Let Us Love One Another #717
Center of My Life #665
For the Beauty of the Earth #609
Gather Us Together #765

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps. 34 Taste and See #796
Ps. 103 The Lord is Kind and Merciful #86
Ps. 128 O Blessed Are Those #105

PREPARATION (if a full Mass)

Prayer of St. Francis #702
The King of Love My Shepherd Is #690
The Servant Song #816
When Love is Found #543

COMMUNION (if a full Mass)

I Have Loved You #623
May God Bless You #538
Only a Shadow #676
Taste and See #796
The Servant Song #816

MARION DEVOTION (optional)

Ave Maria (Schubert)
Ave Maria #483
Hail Mary, Gentle Woman #481

RECESSIONAL

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling #709
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You #575
Trumpet Tune (Purcell)
Trumpet Voluntary (Clarke)



LITURGY GUIDE/PROGRAM and SCREENS

Preparing a liturgy guide (program) – We do recommend that you have a liturgy guide or program booklet to help your family and friends actively participate in your wedding ceremony. However, this service is not provided by our parish. You must make arrangements with someone to have these designed and printed. To assist you, we have outlines available. If you would like one please contact the office. You must have the Director of Music and Liturgy review it before taking it to the printer. You will want your program to be liturgically correct and to reflect what is occurring during your ceremony.

It is illegal to print the words of the ceremony or of the hymns to be used. Sacred Heart does possess a music license that may allow this, depending on what you would like in the program. If you would like to use lyrics in the program, please talk to the Director of Music and Liturgy **BEFORE** designing the program.

If you wish to utilize the screens in church during the wedding, the church office will create the slides to be used for the wedding. This can be in lieu of a worship aid or in addition to a worship aid. It is your responsibility to have someone available to work the slideshow during the wedding.

CANDLES

Two liturgical candles in the sanctuary are the only candles to be present. This means you may not have any candles of any other type (for example, a Unity Candle) in the sanctuary or main body of the church. The use of “Unity Sand” and other symbols not already a part of the liturgy are not permitted.

FEES ****All fees must be paid prior to the wedding rehearsal.****

Church: \$125

Payable to Sacred Heart Church

If, for some reason, this causes a hardship, please consult with your presider.

Accompanist: varies

Payable to the accompanist directly

Vocalist (if needed): \$75-100

Payable to Mrs. Tracey Boulware

Bench Fee.....\$50

If the Director of Music and Liturgy is not one of the ceremony musicians, there is a \$50 Bench Fee, payable to Mrs. Tracey Boulware

A PRAYER DURING PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE



Father, as we prepare for this wedding, we ask that You would be our most honored guest. When Jesus attended His friends' wedding in Cana, He demonstrated both His power and His attention to detail by supplying what was lacking. Father, please see to it that any details we might be neglecting or any unforeseen challenges or issues be covered by your mighty power and great care. We rejoice in this celebration to come. We pray for loving interactions between each of us, even when we feel the stresses that undoubtedly come with an event like this. More than anything, we ask for the Holy Spirit's presence! Marriage was Your idea, Lord, and a beautiful wedding is a wonderful way to begin a brilliant marriage. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

