



Wedding Guidelines

Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage

St. James Parish, Menomonee Falls

*A welcoming, Catholic, faith community
seeking to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

“Married Christians signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love that exists between Christ and his Church; they thus help each other to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and rearing children; and they have their own special place and gift among the people of God.”

“Christian couples, therefore, are to strive to nourish and develop their marriage by undivided affection, which wells up from the fountain of divine love: in a merging of the human and the divine, they remain faithful in body and in mind, in good times as in bad.”

The Rite of Marriage
United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops



When a man and woman commit themselves to one another through the sacrament of Marriage in the catholic Church, they are making a covenant through Jesus Christ that they will love, cherish and nurture each other all of their days. Because of its primary importance to the Christian community, marriage is celebrated as sacrament.

When a couple marries in the Church, they become sacrament to one another and sacrament to all those they encounter. They are grace for and to each other; they become grace for othersa grace that is activated by their love of God and their desire to be the best faith-filled people they can be.

Marriage is a life-long commitment, meant to nurture the couple, those children who become part of their family and the faith community itself. It takes a lot of effort to have a good, Christ-centered marriage. That effort is supported by private prayer, and public participation in Sunday Eucharist.

Marriage has a very high value in the Catholic Church. We want to do all we can to support you as a couple as you prepare for this sacrament at St. James.



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“Stuff” to remember: Documents needed!

The Marriage License! The specific time period to apply for your marriage license is 30 days prior to wedding date. And, then, **remember to pick it up and bring it to the rehearsal.** We cannot perform the marriage ceremony without it! *After the wedding St. James takes care of mailing it in.*

Your Baptismal Certificates. Please clarify with your presider.

The Engaged Enrichment & FOCCUS Certificate (see page 6)

And “good to know”:

- ** **No runners** are used for the safety of the participants. (We have very clean slate floors.)
- ** The plants and flowers in church are **NOT** to be moved.
- ** ***Other flowers*** may be added for the wedding.
- ** **Pew bows, flowers and ribbons** may be attached to the pews but with wire, plastic, or rubberized u-clamps, which are attainable from florists. **No tape** is permitted to be used on the woodwork!
- ** The **photographer and videographer** need to stay out of the altar area and not interfere with the sight lines of the musicians.
- ** It is recommended that the photographer/videographer attend the rehearsal.
- ** **Overnight Parking**—Members of the wedding party or guests may park their cars overnight in the church parking lot, however, permission must be granted from the parish office and designated spots will be assigned. Cars parked overnight without appropriate permission may be ticketed and/or towed at the owner’s expense.
- ** St. James does not want the lack of money to prevent you from celebrating your wedding liturgy. Please feel free to talk with the wedding presider if you are concerned about finances.

Please call us if you have any questions.

We want this special time to be prayerful and meaningful for you!



Congratulations!

You have taken the first step in the celebration of your marriage by making a required appointment with the Parish Director, Deacon Sandy Sites.

Interfaith marriages are welcomed and those entering into these relationships should clearly understand the duties and obligations of each other’s faith traditions.

It is important that you **read this booklet** in preparation for your meeting with Deacon Sandy.

Be assured of the prayers and support of the St. James Community as you journey in this exciting time of your lives.

Please see page 10 for fees.

Welcome!

We are delighted that you are considering celebrating your marriage here at St. James, Menomonee Falls. This booklet is a resource to outline the process for preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church, the details that need attention here and practicalities that will be helpful.

Some basics:

- . At least one of the engaged persons must be Catholic.
In the best of all worlds, the Catholic(s) will also have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

At least one of the engaged persons is expected to be an active, registered member of a Catholic Church **before setting the date of the marriage**. The membership of your parent(s) is not sufficient. For more details, please call Deacon Sandy at 253-2212.

.Marriage is a sacrament in the Catholic Church and this presumes that those who are seeking the Church's blessing are living out their baptismal commitment by participating regularly in the Eucharist and contributing to the strengthening of the faith community.

The preparation process for marriage in the Catholic Church is the same throughout the state of Wisconsin by agreement among the Bishops of the five dioceses in the State. **We prefer a minimum of SIX MONTHS FOR PREPARATION TIME in order to fulfill the required guidelines set by the Bishops.** These include:

- participation in an engaged enrichment session, Engaged Encounter or Retreat
- participation in a process called FOCCUS which is a pre-marital inventory
- planning of the liturgy for the marriage.

More details....

Your ushers are responsible for one major task. That is the seating of people as soon as they come into the gathering space. This movement helps the flow of the celebration.

Tidying up all of the "stuff" you have brought into the space so the church is ready for the next wedding or the Saturday evening Mass is your responsibility. All of the "throw a-ways" **must be neatly bagged and put next to a wastebasket.**

The throwing of rice, birdseed, flower petals or other items, **inside or outside is not permitted.** All of these items are hazardous to others who use our worshipping space.

Drinking of alcoholic beverages on church property or within the church itself is also forbidden.

We welcome you to come to prepare in plenty of time for the wedding itself. Just arrange that time at the rehearsal!

Wedding Fees:

St. James has an all inclusive fee of \$350 which is to be made payable to St. James.

This fee can be made when you meet initially with Deacon Sandy.

This fee includes the presider & parish musician's fee.

There are separate fees for the musicians for your wedding liturgy. Barbara Schuelke will explain these to you when you meet with her or you may call her at 253-2225 or 414-807-0817 to get more information. That fee is due at that meeting.



And the celebration itself....

The wedding liturgy, like the Sunday liturgy, requires full, conscious, active participation of the faith community. Too often the assembly acts more as spectators watching the event rather than as participants. The music and prayers, approved in advance, hopefully will aid the entire assembly to pray well together.

The wedding liturgy should express what we believe as contemporary Catholics. For example, the old wedding service treated the bride as property to be exchanged between two men – her father and her spouse. Today we believe that a wedding liturgy is the blending of two families and so both the bride and the groom, with their families, should be involved in the entrance procession. The bride and groom could come in procession together or each with his/her parents.

Our Saturday Weddings are usually at 1:00 pm. This allows enough time for hospitality and clean up before the 4:30 Mass. Weddings may be scheduled on Friday as well.

Rehearsals are usually scheduled the day before the wedding. The rehearsal time is at **5:00 PM**. It is imperative that everyone in your wedding party be on time and, if possible, *early*.

RITE OF MARRIAGE DURING MASS OR RITE OF MARRIAGE OUTSIDE OF MASS

Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church.

The core elements of the celebration of the sacrament of marriage are these:

- 1) the statement of the intentions of the couple to enter the marriage freely and to accept children lovingly from God,
- 2) the declaration of the consent (the wedding vows),
- 3) the acceptance of this consent by the priest or deacon, and
- 4) the exchange of rings symbolizing the promises.

We have two ways in which to celebrate the sacrament of marriage: within Mass and outside of Mass. If the majority of people participating in the celebration of your marriage are familiar with the Catholic Mass, usually the bride and groom choose to celebrate their marriage covenant within the Mass. That means that the reception of Holy Communion is a part of the liturgy.

When the majority of people attending the wedding are not familiar with the Catholic Mass, it is usually best to celebrate the marriage outside of Mass. This liturgy is similar to the first half of a typical Sunday Mass, including hymns, prayers, Bible readings, and a homily.

In your first meeting with Deacon Sandy, he will ask you which option is more appropriate for your marriage celebration: the marriage rite within a Mass or the marriage rite outside of Mass. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have during your initial meeting.

Both an ordained deacon or priest of the church are authorized to celebrate the sacrament of marriage. Please discuss this issue together before your initial meeting. If you have a special relationship with a priest or deacon that are not assigned to St. James Parish, you are welcome to consider them for presiding at your wedding. Be sure to get in touch with them to determine their availability before your initial meeting.

Participation in an Engaged Enrichment Session

Three options are available for couples:

1. An Engaged Enrichment Conference offered throughout the Archdiocese on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The format for this program includes keynote speakers along with the opportunity to participate in various workshops related to marriage.
2. An Engaged Enrichment Day which is similar to the Enrichment Conference is offered through the Archdiocese. These days are offered in smaller venues and the format has various keynote speakers and no workshops.
3. Engaged Encounter Weekend Retreat which offers couples a longer and more intense opportunity to engage in couple to couple communication about important issues in their relationship and preparation for marriage.
4. **The Engaged Enrichment Certificate:** When you complete that process, the Archdiocese issues a certificate that should be given to the parish as soon as possible..

Further information and registration will be found at
www.johnpaul2center.org/NazarethProject/EngagedEnrichment

FOCCUS, the pre-marital inventory

As a way to help the couple better understand their relationship, particularly in light of the Church's strong support of marriage, the couple participates in a pre-marital inventory. The couple meets with a married couple from St. James Parish who have been specially trained to assist the engaged couple to use this communication tool. In the near future you will receive a phone call from your Foccus Coordinators, John & Louise Vos. They will give you the name and phone number of your Foccus Couple who will contact you.

Planning of the Liturgy for Marriage

This process has two components. The first is selecting the prayers, Readings, and blessings (options described in the book, Celebrating Marriage), which is given to the couple at the first meeting. **(Please read this book!!)** After you have made the selections, let us know to arrange a planning Meeting.

The second component to the liturgy planning is to select Music. This is done by meeting with Barbara Schuelke, the Director of Liturgy and Music. Call Barb for an appointment (262-253-2225 or 414-807-0817). When you meet with her, you will choose music not only for the liturgy itself but that which is played beforehand and after the liturgy. If you anticipate using other musicians as part of this liturgy, you still work with our pastoral musician in the planning. It is important to remember that the songs in this liturgy will be similar to those sung at a Sunday Mass, songs with a strong scriptural and faith-based text. Your favorite secular songs are best used at the reception.

You will be expected to have an order of worship (program) for your wedding celebration. It will include all of the assembly responses, music you have chosen with our parish musician and the listing of readings you have chosen.

You are expected to put together this program and have it PROOFED AS WELL BY BARB. Then it will be ready for printing.. (Barb will help you with the format.)

Allow enough time for adjustments.

