

Preparation for Marriage
at
St. John Vianney
Catholic Church



*In the union of husband and wife
You give a sign of Christ's loving gift of grace,
so that the Sacrament we celebrate might draw us back more deeply into the
wondrous design of Your love.*

—The Rite of Marriage

CONGRATULATIONS!

We at St. John Vianney Catholic Church are very happy for you as you begin preparations for your wedding day. We hope this booklet will answer many of your questions and concerns.

**Christian marriage is a sacred commitment
that calls a man and a woman to each other
in a most profound and permanent way.**

**Christian marriage calls a couple to become
a visible sign of Christ's unconditional and faithful love.**

**It demands a living faith on the part of the couple
and the awareness that they are entering into a covenant
not only with each other,
but also with God.**



INTRODUCTION

Preparation for marriage is not just preparation for the wedding day when family and friends gather to witness and celebrate the commitment the bride and groom make to each other; it is preparation for the day-to-day relationship you will live throughout your married life whereby your lives, through the Sacrament you receive, will become a witness to others of Christ's love for His Church.

A Catholic wedding usually takes place in the parish of the bride, or if she is not a Catholic, in the parish of the groom. This is determined by the active participation of the couple in the Catholic Faith and by the residence of the bride located within the parish boundary.

A couple residing outside the boundaries of this parish must obtain a letter from the pastor of the parish in which she or he resides, giving permission for the service to be performed at our Parish.

The Parish clergy will be most happy to help in every way. A minimum of six months is required for processing the various Church requirements and the preparation for the celebration of the sacrament of marriage.



ABOUT SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

Initial Appointment: Prenuptial Interview (Form A)

During this meeting with one of the parish priests or deacons, we will complete Form A to acknowledge your intentions to marry and determine any special needs you, as a couple, may have.

This meeting must be held at least **six months prior** to the wedding date. Call Alice Siepak, pastor's secretary, at 727.360.1147, ext. 227, or email asiepak@sjvcc.org for additional information.



Setting the Wedding and Rehearsal Dates

If the prenuptial interview reveals that you are free to marry and the priest or deacon says to do so, please call Alice Siepak at 727.360.1147, ext. 227, or email asiepak@sjvcc.org to set the date and time of your rehearsal and marriage ceremony. When setting the date for your wedding, take into consideration the special nature of liturgical seasons. Because of the many activities occupying the priests on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, weddings will not be scheduled on these days. The parish may close other dates, based on local activity.

At this time, your \$300 deposit will be due to secure your date, payable to St. John Vianney Parish.

Pre-Marital Inventory (PMI)

This is a look into areas of mutual interest and concern to the individuals entering the Sacrament of Marriage. It is not a test, but rather an inventory that helps you learn more about each other and strengthen your relationship. Helen Parr, Marriage Preparation Enrichment Coordinator (bobhelen.parr@gmail.com or 319.361.1189) will contact you after your initial meeting to get the PMI started.



Baptism Certificates



Each party must provide a recent baptismal certificate with notations (one that has been issued within six months of the date of marriage). This involves contacting the church in which you were baptized. Our parish can assist you, if necessary.

Freedom to Marry (Form B)

Complete and return the *Freedom to Marry* forms (Form B). Both the groom and bride-to-be must return two B Forms each (four total). These are sworn, notarized statements, usually by parents or another family member, that you have never been married before and have no impediments to marriage in the Catholic Church.



Visiting Priests

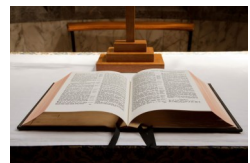
On occasion, a couple may wish to have a priest or deacon from another parish officiate at the wedding ceremony. Should this be the case, the couple should notify the parish clergy during the first meeting. The visiting clergy must receive permission to perform the service from the Pastor of St. John Vianney well in advance of the wedding date. (Visiting clergy are expected to observe all the liturgical and practical norms set out in this booklet and by the Diocese of St. Petersburg.)

Participation by Non-Catholic Clergy

In interfaith marriages, the non-Catholic party may wish his or her minister to take part in the wedding ceremony. The Church, recognizing the importance of this day in the life of the couple, is happy to extend an invitation to the minister of the non-Catholic party to be a participant. If the couple desires the presence of a non-Catholic minister, it should be discussed at their first meeting. Since there are special norms for conducting the wedding service under these circumstances, the particulars of the ceremony will be arranged jointly by the two clergy.

Readers and Servers

Members of the bridal party or family members may act as readers during the wedding service. It is the couple's duty to provide the reader with the scripture text that will be used. We recommend that they attend the rehearsal to familiarize themselves with the microphone, the book and the layout of the sanctuary. A reader should have experience in public speaking and a strong and clear voice.



St. John Vianney servers are usually assigned for wedding Masses. Under extraordinary circumstances, the couple may request a server who is not a parish server.

Meet with Mentor Couples (4)

You will be paired with a different mentor couple for each of the topics, all of which must be attended. Each meeting will cover a different topic and take place in a different mentor couple's home. The topics covered include:

1. Building Your Marriage on a Sound Foundation

This session will help you get in touch with the original excitement and love that brought you and your fiancé to the decision of marriage. You will be invited to reflect, individually and together, on your own expectations concerning marriage and the Church's expectations and hopes for you. You will also be invited to consider the foundations of a healthy and lasting life-long union.

2. The Two Will Become One

In this session you will reflect on the task of separating from your own family and accepting the responsibility to join together to create a new home. Although we may not customarily think of marriage as a group of tasks to be performed, a successful marriage involves achieving certain goals and accomplishing certain tasks. The first step is to realize that marriage creates a new psychological and spiritual reality. At the beginning of this venture it is important for you to identify those specific areas of your personal life that will help you accomplish this task and those that possibly will hinder its completion.

3. Establishing Emotional and Sexual Intimacy

In this session you will explore the meaning of intimacy and sexuality and clarify your own understandings about what it means to be in an intimate relationship. As part of this exploration you will reflect on various aspects of love and what you can do to maintain and grow in the physical and emotional intimacy that you share. You will also reflect on the church's understanding of sexuality.

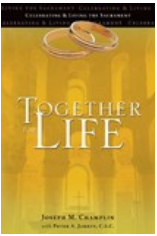
4. Dealing with Conflict

In this session you will explore your own style of conflict resolution and your preference for dealing with conflict when it occurs. You will also have an opportunity to learn about ways of handling conflict that can seriously harm a marriage. Finally you will learn a method of resolving conflict that relies on communicating effectively as the first response to any conflict.

Fertility Awareness Program

We encourage couples to learn about the Creighton Model Fertility Care System. This is a new and unique model of advanced procreative education. Additional information will be provided by the priest or deacon.

Plan the Liturgy



As the wedding date approaches, you will meet with the priest or deacon to begin the *Together for Life* liturgy planning guide and discuss the Rite of Marriage. You will have the option of celebrating the Rite within or outside the Mass. The Church allows the couple to select the prayers and readings to be used at their wedding ceremony. You may make your selection from the *Together for Life* pamphlet provided. Selections from books other than the Bible, as well as forms of the vows not approved by the church, may not be used in a Catholic wedding ceremony.



Contact the Church Organist About Wedding Music



Music for weddings at St. John Vianney forms an integral part of the rite. Live music is meant to lift up the spiritual significance of covenant and commitment and encourage the prayerful participation of family and friends in the liturgy. All arrangements for your wedding music, including the use of musicians from outside the parish, must be planned through Crystal Dunn, Liturgical Musician, at 727.360.1147 ext. 105.

Requests for music of social or theatrical nature in the liturgy are not normally honored. If certain songs relate to the events of the courtship of the couple, the couple should strive to have this desired music at parties, the rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception rather than for the church ceremony.

Our Liturgical Musician is available for consultation concerning the program of wedding music available for the ceremony. We are sure you will be pleased with the various selections which may be used for this important event. The use of taped or pre-recorded music is not allowed.

Meet with the Parish Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator

To assist you with the rehearsal and wedding, the Parish has a Wedding Coordinator who will work with you to help you follow our parish guidelines and answer questions you might have for the day itself. **Although some couples may employ a professional wedding coordinator, the parish wedding coordinator oversees and directs all the activity in the church during the rehearsal and ceremony.** Call the office, 727.360.1147, ext. 204, to review rehearsal and wedding ceremony plans. It is important that all those directly involved in the wedding (the bride, groom, parents, attendants, ushers, readers, etc.) be on time for the rehearsal and the wedding itself.

Decorations

If you have any questions about our church's procedure, please consult with the wedding coordinator before the ceremony.

Guidelines for Floral Arrangements

To ensure that the marriage ceremony will be a prayerful and dignified experience, we ask the following in regard to flowers and decorations within the Church:

- Flowers are to be furnished by the couple.
- All floral arrangements must be tasteful and dignified and be complementary with the color of the Liturgical Season.
- In compliance with liturgical norms, the use of flowers is not allowed during the Seasons of Advent or Lent.
- No floral arrangements or any other item may be placed on the Altar.
- Pew bows must be attached with elastic or ribbon; no tape or tacks may be used. Candles cannot be attached to the pews.
- The furniture within the Church is placed in strict conformity to liturgical standards. Under no circumstance may any piece of furniture or liturgical arrangement (chairs, candles, tables, etc.) be moved or rearranged.
- No items may be placed within the Sanctuary, including: additional candles, candelabras, candle stands, arches, etc.
- No flower petals, rice, bird seed, bubbles or any other material may be thrown inside or outside the Church. Please advise your family and friends about this parish policy.
- Aisle runners are prohibited.

Guidelines for Photography and Videography

A wedding is a special day for both the bride and the groom and St. John Vianney Parish wishes to do everything to ensure that it is a memorable experience. For this reason, we allow photography in the church under the following conditions:

- No flash photography is permitted during the ceremony. Only available-light photography is allowed. No umbrellas or other extraordinary lighting equipment or backdrops may be brought into the Church during the ceremony.
- Photographers must take care not to impede the bridal procession.
- Photographers are not allowed within the Sanctuary.
- During the ceremony, we ask that all movement be discreet so as not to intrude on or draw attention away from what is being celebrated.
- While pictures are being taken, it is the responsibility of the photographer to help maintain a sense of reverence and an attitude of respect at all times within a church.
- Photographers shall keep their equipment in an area of the Church where it will not be in the way of guests. Unsightly wires, microphones, cords, etc., are not permitted.
- Professionals should be dressed appropriately. No shorts or t-shirts, please.

Please note: Because other ceremonies or Masses often follow our weddings, you will only have 30 minutes for bridal party and family pictures within the church immediately following the ceremony.

Other Guidelines

It is important that the wedding start on time. Beside the risk of running into other scheduled Masses or events, it could preclude you from having time for photographs in the church after the ceremony.

- Please Note: professional wedding planners are not to be involved in any aspect of the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.
- Because of limited space, we recommend that you not exceed a maximum of 12 attendants: six bridesmaids and six groomsmen. Many couples choose to have a ring bearer or flower girl.
- We ask that flower girls not drop petals, either real or silk, during the procession or ceremony.
- There are no dressing facilities available; the bridal party should arrive dressed, as should the groom and groomsmen. It is a good idea to appoint someone from the family to help the gentlemen with pinning their boutonnieres.
- Use of alcohol, drugs or unlawful substances is prohibited at any time in the Church. If either is detected at the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony, the presiding minister will not be able to witness the marriage.

ABOUT ONE MONTH BEFORE THE CEREMONY

Complete Together for Life

Together, as a couple, talk and pray about the readings, songs and roles in your wedding ceremony. When the form is completed, please return it to the priest or deacon.

Supply a Contact Address

Please give a current mailing address to the Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator for us to mail your Marriage Certificate.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the payment is due to the Pastor's Secretary. Please make checks payable to St. John Vianney Parish.

Wedding Fees:

\$300 — Deposit (Due when date is scheduled.)

\$300 — Final Payment (Due one month before wedding.)

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING

Secure Marriage License and Deliver to Church Office

The marriage license must be obtained from any Florida County Courthouse no more than 60 days before the wedding date and presented to the Pastor's Secretary, in the parish office. Couples completing the Marriage Preparation Program qualify for a discount when purchasing a marriage license. The priest or deacon will sign the license once the ceremony has been performed, along with two witnesses (usually the best man and maid of honor). Please call 727.464.4700, Pinellas County Courthouse, for information about obtaining a marriage license.



COUPLE'S CHECKLIST

Six Months Prior to the Wedding

- Initial appointment, Prenuptial Interview. (Form A)
- Set Wedding and Rehearsal Date. (See page 2.)
- Complete *Freedom to Marry* form. (B Form)
- Baptismal certificates Groom ____ Bride ____
- Complete *Pre-Marital Inventory*. (PMI)
- PMI Discussions, by appointment.
- Attend Fertility Awareness Program.
- Attend Mentor Couple Meetings. ____ ____ ____ ____

Two Months Prior to the Wedding

- Contact Church Organist.
- Meet with priest/deacon to plan the Liturgy.

One Month Prior to Wedding

- Complete and submit *Together for Life*.
- Meet with Parish Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator to review rehearsal plans, wedding program and wedding day.
- Review Guidelines with Florist/Photographer/Video.
Florist ____ Photographer ____ Videographer ____
- Make final payment and supply mailing address.

Two Weeks Prior To Wedding

- Secure Marriage License.

*NOTES FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM
WEDDING PARTY*

Maid (Matron) of Honor _____

Bride's Maids _____

Best Man _____

Groom's Men _____

Flower Girl _____

Ring Bearer _____

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Florist _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Theme/Colors/Flowers _____

Photographer/Videographer _____

Address _____

Phone # _____



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