

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Sacrament of Matrimony

Wedding & Marriage Preparation Guidelines



7522 Everhart Road * Corpus Christi, Texas 78413
361. 991. 4400 * 361.991.4401 (fax) * www.sjbcctx.org
Email: churchoffice@sjbcctx.org



CONTENTS

Welcome & Letter from the Pastor	Page 1
Church Information	Page 2
Planning Checklist	Page 3
Required Documents	Page 4
Required Marriage Preparation Programs	Page 5
General Wedding Reminders	Page 6
Music	Page 6
Traditional Gifts (Arras, Bible & Rosary, Lazo)	Page 7
“Padrinos” (Sponsors)	Page 7
Guidelines for the Church	Page 7
Guidelines for the Florist & Decorators	Page 8
Guidelines for Photographers & Videographers	Page 9
Wedding Planner Worksheets	Page 10
Marriage Preparation Meeting Planner	Page 14
Wedding Planning Checklist	Page 15



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Wedding & Marriage Planning Guide

WELCOME & LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Engaged Couple,

On behalf of the parishioners at St. John the Baptist, I want to extend to you our congratulations to you on your engagement and upcoming wedding. We are happy to share this beautiful day as you celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony with our parish family. Many efforts have been made to ensure that this wonderful time in your life will be one of great joy and celebration.

At St. John the Baptist Catholic Church we offer a comprehensive program to properly prepare you for not only the wedding ceremony, but for years of a happy Catholic marriage. The program meets the requirements of marriage preparation set by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Corpus Christi. As you begin this exciting process, we ask you to contemplate daily the importance of this Holy Sacrament. How does your love reflect Christ's love for his Church? Whether you are getting married here at St. John the Baptist or elsewhere, we are pleased to assist you in your preparation, and we look forward to helping you explore the joy of God's love for you which will help you enhance your love for each other.

We ask that you give us a picture of both of you as soon as possible so that we can include the photograph in your wedding file. In order to assist you in planning your wedding ceremony, we have included some helpful information for the planning process, a list of guidelines for planning your wedding Mass, and other recommendations that help maintain the sanctity of the ceremony. You can find additional information on our website at www.sjbcctx.org. Please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of my staff if we can be of further assistance.

In the Lord Jesus,

Fr. Rodolfo D. Vásquez
Pastor



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Wedding & Marriage Planning Guide

CHURCH INFORMATION

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Diocese of Corpus Christi

7522 Everhart Road
Corpus Christi, Texas 78413
(361) 991-4400
Fax (361) 991-4401

Website Address: www.sjbcctx.org

CONTACTS & EMAILS

Fr. Rodolfo D. Vásquez	Pastor	frvasquez@sjbcctx.org
Deacon Loni Lugo	Parish Deacon	llugo@aol.com
Deacon Julio Dimas	Parish Deacon	jdimas@sjbcctx.org
Mary Cano	Administrative Asst. / Accounting	mcano@sjbcctx.org
Rachel Dimas	CMSE Coordinator/Office	rdimas@sjbcctx.org
Amy Anderson	Secretary	aanderson@sjbcctx.org
Dr. Shane Anderson	Director of Music	pianoboe@gmail.com
Vanessa Perez	Cantor	veeniepoo@aol.com
Alex Griss	Altar Server Coordinator	agriss1433@sbcglobal.net



PLANNING CHECKLIST

Contact must be made with the Church a minimum of six months prior to the desired wedding date, but the Church encourages couples to make preparations as soon as possible. Timelines listed here are the minimum suggestions to ensure stress-free planning, but many activities can be done ahead of schedule.

Please do not book dates with other agencies or wedding agents (reservations, booking a reception hall, etc...) until the date is firmly set at St. John the Baptist, or the Church where the wedding will take place.

SIX to TWELVES MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING...

- Please read the **St. John the Baptist Wedding and Marriage Planning Guide**. If you are completing marriage preparation with us and marrying at another parish, read only the section on Required Marriage Preparation Program.
- Call the church office to schedule an appointment with the Priest or Deacon.
 - ✓ Complete the **Pre-nuptial Questionnaire** with the Priest or Deacon.
 - ✓ If the wedding is to be celebrated at St. John the Baptist, you and the celebrant will set a date for the sacrament and for the rehearsal. Weddings are **not** scheduled during the Season of Lent.
 - ✓ Determine if the wedding will take place within or outside the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Receive a **Together for Life** book and review planning pages at back of the book. The **Wedding Planning Worksheets** will need to be completed and returned to the celebrant and the Director of Music at least two (2) weeks prior to the wedding.
 - ✓ Pay **\$100 deposit** toward the total fee for the wedding. This fee is non-refundable.
- If your wedding will be celebrated at St. John the Baptist:
 - ✓ Review St. John the Baptist **General Wedding Reminders** and **Guidelines for the Church**.
 - ✓ Schedule to meet with the Director of Music and the Cantor to contract for wedding music.

THREE or FOUR MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING AT ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

- Ensure that the Church has received all the required documents and other requested paperwork.
- Complete all required marriage preparation programs at St. John the Baptist and as required by the Diocese of Corpus Christi and submit all required documentation of completion to the office.
- Meet with the Priest or Deacon to finalize marriage preparation planning and to ensure that all documentation has been completed.
- Review **Guidelines for Florists and Decorators** and **Guidelines for Photographers and Videographers** and provide copies to the appropriate contractors.

ONE MONTH BEFORE YOUR WEDDING AT ST. JOHN'S

- Ensure that all fees have been paid. Contact the Priest or Deacon, or Parish Accountant with any questions you may have concerning payment of fees.
- Schedule a final meeting with the Priest or Deacon who will celebrate your Wedding Mass. Turn in your **finalized liturgy planner** to the Priest or Deacon and the Director of Music.
- Obtain the **marriage license** from the County Courthouse (Nueces County)
 - The license is only good for thirty (30) days, but the ceremony cannot take place until 3 days after the license has been issued (exception is made in case of emergency or military exemption).
 - Provide the marriage license to the person conducting the wedding rehearsal.



REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Completed and signed **Prenuptial Questionnaire**, which is completed during the initial meeting with the Priest or Deacon. This establishes that both parties are free to marry according to Church law.
- Updated copies of **Baptismal Certificate**
 - Catholics need to request an updated copy of their baptismal certificate from the parish, church, or chapel where they were baptized. The original copy is insufficient, because the sacramental notations are not up-to-date. Simply inform the parish that you are seeking an updated certificate for the purposes of Marriage.
 - In the event that no baptismal certificate is available or able to be obtained, the Priest or Deacon can help you obtain an **Affidavit of Baptism**. Baptized *non-Catholic Christians* are requested to bring any information or documentation they may have regarding the date or place of their Baptism (“christening”).
- Signed copies of **Affidavit of Free Status to Marry**
 - Each party is to have two (2) witness to testify that they there is no reason why you should not be married. They are to come to the parish office and sign a document in the presence of parish staff, testifying to your free status to marry.
- If one of the parties is not Catholic, then a **dispensation** for mixed religion or disparity of worship is necessary.
- Converts need a copy of **Profession of Faith Certificate** (or equivalent).
- **Marriage License**
 - Contact the Nueces County Courthouse for documentation required as soon as possible so that there are no last minute delays.
 - Marriage License is good for thirty (30) days, but the ceremony cannot take place until 72 hours after the license has been issued.

REQUIRED MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

There are a few requirements that constitute the Marriage Preparation Program.

1. Meeting with Pastor/Deacon

The couple is expected to meet with the priest or deacon conducting the marriage preparation for no less than 5 times, normally 6-8 meetings during the preparation time. It is important for the couple to schedule meetings and attend. ***Failure to meet with the priest or the deacon can result in the cancelation of the wedding because it is a strong indicator that the couple lack readiness for marriage.***

2. Natural Family Planning Course

The Catholic Church affirms that the practice of artificial contraception is illicit and immoral, especially for the married Catholic couple. Artificial contraception includes surgical procedures such as elective sterilizations. In order to satisfy legitimate needs to regulate pregnancy, the Church approves of Natural Family Planning. Couples are asked to attend a training session. Information will be given by the person conducting Marriage Preparation.

3. Marriage Preparation Seminars & Weekends

To prepare for marriage, couples are asked to choose between two marriage preparation seminars. Descriptions and dates for the seminars will be available when meeting with the celebrant.

- a. *Pre-Cana* is a one-day marriage preparation seminar for the engaged. It is a day designed to inform couples of the spiritual and practical aspects of Catholic marriage
- b. *Engaged Encounter* is a weekend for engaged couples preparing for marriage and couples married

For more information on these marriage preparation programs visit the Family Life page of the website of the Diocese of Corpus Christi at www.diocesec.org



GENERAL WEDDING REMINDERS

- No date for a wedding can be set until the couple has completed the initial interview with the priest or deacon. Weddings are **not** scheduled during the Season of Lent. *****Weddings are scheduled only on Saturdays (at any hour from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm or at 7:00 pm).**
- If you are completing marriage preparation outside of our parish, please bring proof of preparation with a letter from the priest or deacon conducting marriage preparation.
- Rehearsals are usually scheduled for the day before the wedding is to take place. A rehearsal familiarizes all participants with the Mass and ceremony. We ask that all are prompt and ready to begin the rehearsal at the scheduled time.
- We hope that couples getting married at St. John the Baptist are to be parishioners of St. John's so we ask you to register with our parish.
- When both the bride and the groom are Catholic, we highly encourage the celebration of the Mass with the Rite of Marriage; however it is still optional and this decision will be made with the priest.
 - When one of the families is not Catholic, it is encouraged to consider a Liturgy of the Word with the Rite of Marriage.
 - **As Catholics we believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of our unity. Those outside the Catholic Church or Catholics living in a manner against the moral teachings of the Church, or those not yet fully united, are therefore not invited to receive Holy Communion.**
- **Liturgical Ministers** – family members and friends often want to participate as liturgical ministers. We highly encourage family and friends to serve as Readers, Altar Servers, Ushers, or Cantors and Musicians for Mass. However, anyone taking a role in the Mass **must** be a practicing Catholic living in accord with the teachings of the Church. Non-Catholics or anyone married outside the Church or practicing cohabitation (living together) may not serve as liturgical ministers.
 - *Readers* – readings are found on our website at www.stjohnthebaptistcc.org/weddingreadings
 - *Music or Cantors* – normally only those who are pre-approved by the Pastor may sing or play at Mass. Exceptions are made with the permission of the Pastor.
 - *Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist* are not normally necessary for a wedding Mass.
 - *Altar Servers* can be assigned by contacting the Parish Altar Server Coordinator, it is appropriate to stipend altar servers (see the Pastor for more information).
- All arrangements, appointments, decisions, and questions for the wedding are made between the couple themselves and the celebrant. **Parents, relatives, and friends are not to make any arrangements in place of the couple. All preparation and arrangements are considered a private matter and parish staff will not answer questions concerning the couple or marriage preparations.**

MUSIC

At St. John the Baptist, we only allow pre-approved musicians for the wedding ceremony. The parish's Director of Liturgical Music and Parish Cantor are the first choices of the Pastor; they are to be contracted by the couple. Musicians from other Catholic parishes may be hired in the event that our parish's musicians are unavailable for the ceremony.

- Selections of instrumental and vocal music for preludes, processions and recessions should be chosen with the assistance of the Director of Liturgical Music. Music used for the celebration of the Mass is strictly directed by the Catholic Church in her liturgical documents concerning Sacred Music.
- If you have hired outside musicians with the Pastor's approval, the list of Music must be approved by the Pastor.



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Wedding & Marriage Planning Guide

- No recorded music is allowed at Mass.
- Musicians are hired and remunerated directly by the couple to be married. Each musician sets his or her own fees. All payments are to be made to all musicians before the day of the wedding.
- Contemporary Music or Secular (non-Church) music will not be allowed.

ARRAS, BIBLE, ROSARY, LAZO

These are the traditional gifts often found in Mexican or Mexican American weddings. These symbols which represent the unity and love of the couple may be, but are not required to be incorporated within the wedding ceremony. Keep in mind that those who would present these to the couple should also be present for the rehearsal.

The “unity candle” is derived from secular non-Catholic traditions for wedding ceremonies. This is not allowed at St. John the Baptist. However, other cultural or traditional gifts found in Catholic weddings (based on a person’s heritage) would be welcomed for the ceremony, assuming that they are legitimate and appropriate.

PADRINOS (SPONSORS)

Traditionally, especially in Hispanic weddings, the bride asks for “*padrinos*” (sponsors) for various gifts, including, the arras (coins), lazo, Bible & Rosary, cushions, and other desired traditional gifts. These “*padrinos*” must be practicing Catholics, since they represent the Church community supporting and assisting the newly married couple. Non-Catholics cannot serve as “*padrinos*”, neither can those living outside of Sacramental Marriage. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CHURCH

Because the church is a sacred place of worship and a place where the Lord Jesus himself is sacramentally present in the Tabernacle making the Church the House of God, we ask that you please follow these basic principles and help to inform your wedding party of the same protocol:

- Enter and remain in the church in a quiet manner, befitting a house of prayer and a house of the Kingdom of God.
- Bride's and bridesmaid's dresses should be tasteful and not revealing. Modesty is a respectful behavior inside the Church not only for the bride and bridesmaids but for all guests attending the Wedding.
- While in the church, unnecessary conversation should be avoided.
- Food, drink, alcoholic beverages and chewing gum are inappropriate in church. Infants may be nursed or given a bottle, but solid foods are not allowed in the church.
- All cell phones and pagers are to be turned off. No one should use MP3 players or other personal handheld games, this practice leads to distractions during the celebration of the Mass.
- Guests arriving late to the wedding ceremony often are a distraction to the beauty of the ritual of marriage, often interrupting the very exchange of vows. *Please ask your guests to be respectful of your most special day and the sacred nature of the Mass by arriving early or on time.*

*The Church will be open to the wedding party the day of the wedding, one hour before the wedding takes place.

Fees:

Fee for the Wedding Ceremony is **\$300**. A **\$100.00** deposit is required to set the wedding date.



GUIDELINES FOR FLORISTS AND DECORATORS

Flower arrangements can add to the overall joyous atmosphere in the church and the beauty of the Mass on your wedding day. However, in order to respect the requirements of the Church for the liturgical environment, guidelines have been created in order to assist you and your florist.

- Up to 5 large floral arrangements may be used to decorate the sanctuary around the altar. Flowers may be placed in other areas of the church if so desired, please ask the pastor for clarification.
- During the liturgical seasons of Christmas and Easter, the decorations and the colors (primarily white) used by the church are to be considered permanent. No church decorations, furnishings or décor may be moved or removed due to the nature of these important liturgical seasons.
- At other times of the liturgical year, any color flowers are acceptable; however artificial plants or flowers are inappropriate for use in the church.
- At other times of the liturgical year, flowers may be placed in the sanctuary of the church. Any arrangement placed in the sanctuary must not obstruct the view of the Tabernacle or placed on top of the altar (table).
- The altar candles will be lit for your wedding.
- Additional candles are not allowed for the wedding.
- Tape, tacks, and staples are not allowed when attaching decorations to the pews. Pew (chair) decorations are easily attached by ribbons or plastic hooks.
- After the wedding, we certainly would appreciate you leaving us your floral arrangements as a contribution to the church for the weekend Masses. Please inform the office if you wish to do.
- If you florist has any questions regarding whether certain arrangements are permissible, please have them contact the parish office.

Please provide a copy of this sheet to your florist and/or decorator for his or her reference.



GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

While photographs and video recordings of a wedding can provide a wonderful record of the beauty this memorable event, they can also serve as distraction if the photographer or videographer does not observe proper church etiquette. We ask that photographers and videographers take care not to interfere with the sacred nature of the ceremony.

- Photographs can usually be taken before the wedding; contact the office to see if there is anything scheduled in the space prior to your wedding.
- Only the official photographer may use flash, as additional flash photography will distort the images taken by the official photographer.
- Photographers and videographers may **never** enter the sanctuary (elevated area around the altar) at any time.
- There is nothing more distracting than a photographer or videographer who constantly moves throughout the church building. Please keep movements to a minimum to prevent any unnecessary distractions.
- At no time should a photographer or videographer climb on the chairs (pews), benches, or altar for a better angle.
- Because of the time of the scheduled parish confessions and Mass (3:30 pm confessions, 4:30 pm Mass) only ½ hour (30 minutes) are allotted for photographs to be taken following the wedding ceremony.
- If a videographer wants to use the parish sound system or sound equipment to record sound, he must get approval from the Pastor.
- Should either the photographer or videographer need more than one hour to set up for the wedding, they must to inform the parish office prior to the day of the wedding.

Please provide a copy of this sheet to your photographer and/or videographer for his or her reference.



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
 Wedding & Marriage Planning Guide

Wedding Planner Worksheet

*****CHURCH COPY*****

This worksheet is to be filled out and returned to the priest or deacon preparing you for your wedding. A copy should also be given to the Director of Music.

Basic Information

Bride's Name <i>(as desired to be used by the celebrant)</i>		Catholic	Non-Catholic
Groom's Name <i>(as desired to be used by the celebrant)</i>		Catholic	Non-Catholic
Wedding Date		Wedding Time	
Rehearsal Date		Rehearsal Time	
Celebrant of the Mass			
Cleric performing the ceremony <i>(actual exchange of vows)</i>			

Using *Together for Life* by Joseph M. Champlin and Peter A. Jarret, C.S.C. provided for you by the priest or deacon providing the marriage preparation and with the help of the Director of Music.

RITE OF MARRIAGE WITHIN MASS *(if outside of Mass, skip over the grey areas).*

Prelude Music			
Music for the Procession of the Wedding Party			
<i>Best Man</i>		<i>Maid of Honor</i>	
<i>Ringer Bearer</i>		<i>Flower Girl</i>	
<i>Padrinos of Cojines (Cushons)</i>		<i>Padrinos de Arras (Coins)</i>	
<i>Padrinos de Lazo</i>		<i>Padrinos of the Bible & Rosary</i>	
<i>Bride's Parents</i>			
<i>Groom's Parents</i>			
<i>Giving Away the Bride</i>			
First Reading	B - ____	Read by:	
Responsorial Psalm	C - ____	Sung/Read by:	
Second Reading	D - ____	Read by:	
Gospel	F - ____	Read by:	Deacon or the Priest
Homily			



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
 Wedding & Marriage Planning Guide

Introduction	G - ____	Consent of Vows	H - ____	Vows	Memorized	Repeated	Questions
General Intercessions	J - ____	Read by:					
Music for Preparation of Gifts							
Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy)							
Memorial Acclamation							
Lamb of God							
Music for Distribution of Holy Communion							
Music for Flowers to the Blessed Mother (optional ceremony)							
Following the wedding ceremony how would you like to be introduced? (Mr. & Mrs....?)							
Music for Recessional							
Postlude Music							

Wedding Readings are found online at http://stjohnthebaptistcc.org/media/1/wedding_readings.pdf or at our parish website www.sjbccctx.org and under “Sacraments” tab click “Matrimony”, at the right click on “Planning Your Wedding” and then again on “Readings for Mass”. You may send these readings to those who will read at Mass.

Music is best reserved to be chosen with the Director of Music.



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Wedding & Marriage Planning Guide

Wedding Planner Worksheet
*****DIRECTOR OF MUSIC COPY*****

This worksheet is to be filled out and returned to the priest or deacon preparing you for your wedding. A copy should also be given to the Director of Music.

Basic Information

Bride's Name <i>(as desired to be used by the celebrant)</i>		Catholic	Non-Catholic
Groom's Name <i>(as desired to be used by the celebrant)</i>		Catholic	Non-Catholic
Wedding Date		Wedding Time	
Rehearsal Date		Rehearsal Time	
Celebrant of the Mass			
Cleric performing the ceremony <i>(actual exchange of vows)</i>			

Using *Together for Life* by Joseph M. Champlin and Peter A. Jarret, C.S.C. provided for you by the priest or deacon providing the marriage preparation and with the help of the Director of Music.

RITE OF MARRIAGE WITHIN MASS *(if outside of Mass, skip over the grey areas).*

Prelude Music			
Music for the Procession of the Wedding Party			
<i>Best Man</i>		<i>Maid of Honor</i>	
<i>Ringer Bearer</i>		<i>Flower Girl</i>	
<i>Padrinos of Cojines (Cushons)</i>		<i>Padrinos de Arras (Coins)</i>	
<i>Padrinos de Lazo</i>		<i>Padrinos of the Bible & Rosary</i>	
<i>Bride's Parents</i>			
<i>Groom's Parents</i>			
<i>Giving Away the Bride</i>			
First Reading	B - ____	Read by:	
Responsorial Psalm	C - ____	Sung/Read by:	
Second Reading	D - ____	Read by:	
Gospel	F - ____	Read by:	Deacon or the Priest
Homily			



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
 Wedding & Marriage Planning Guide

Introduction	G - ____	Consent of Vows	H - ____	Vows	Memorized	Repeated	Questions
General Intercessions	J - ____	Read by:					
Music for Preparation of Gifts							
Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy)							
Memorial Acclamation							
Lamb of God							
Music for Distribution of Holy Communion							
Music for Flowers to the Blessed Mother (optional ceremony)							
Following the wedding ceremony how would you like to be introduced? (Mr. & Mrs....?)							
Music for Recessional							
Postlude Music							

Wedding Readings are found online at http://stjohnthebaptistcc.org/media/1/wedding_readings.pdf or at our parish website www.sjbccctx.org and under “Sacraments” tab click “Matrimony”, at the right click on “Planning Your Wedding” and then again on “Readings for Mass”. You may send these readings to those who will read at Mass.

Music is best reserved to be chosen with the Director of Music.



Marriage Preparation Meeting Planner

MEETING	Date
Preliminary Meeting # 1 <i>To Do:</i>	
Session #2 <i>To Do:</i>	
Session #3 <i>To Do:</i>	
Session #4 <i>To Do:</i>	
Session #5 <i>To Do:</i>	
Final Planning Meeting #6 <i>To Do:</i>	
Other Meetings	



Wedding Planning Checklist

- Review **Wedding & Marriage Planning Guide**
- Pay deposit of \$100 for the church
- Schedule date for the wedding _____
- Schedule date for the rehearsal _____
- Bride's Updated Baptismal Certificate
- Groom's Updated Baptismal Certificate
- Bride's Certificate for First Communion & Confirmation (if not noted on Baptismal Certificate)
- Groom's Certificate for First Communion & Confirmation (if not noted on Baptismal Certificate)
- Schedule a meeting with Director for Music
- Send witness to sign the **"Affidavits for Free Status to Marry"** at the church
- Schedule musicians for the Mass
- Schedule & attend **"Pre Cana Seminar"** or **"Engaged Encounter"**
- Schedule & attend **"Natural Family Planning Training"**
- Choose readings & vows from the **Together for Life** Marriage preparation booklet
- Choose readers & altar servers for the Mass
- Review **Guidelines for Florist & Decorations** with those decorating the Church
- Review **Guidelines for Photographers & Videographers** with the photographer & videographer
- Apply for *Marriage License* at the Nueces County Courthouse (no earlier than 1 month prior, no later than 72 hours before)
- Turn in Marriage License to the church prior to the rehearsal
- Turn in copies of the **Wedding Planner Worksheets** to the office and to the Director of Music one week before the wedding.
- Pay remaining balance for the fee for the church (to be paid one month before the wedding)