

St. Priscilla Catholic Church

Guidelines for Weddings

PLANNING

DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

The couple must contact the office at least *six months* prior to the tentative time of the wedding. The couple will be referred to Father Jim so he can first determine if they are candidates to be married in the Catholic Church. We encourage couples to register in the parish and be active members since it is the community of believers who will share in your marriage experience with you.

Who may be married at St. Priscilla?

- Anyone who is registered in the parish. If you were registered as a child in the parish, please register now as an adult with your own household.
- Anyone who lives within the parish geographical boundaries.
- Anyone who has family registered with the parish but who lives elsewhere, as long as their Home Pastor gives permission for the marriage to be witnessed here.

Fr. Jim or Deacon Bob will ensure that all appropriate documents and dispensations are obtained prior to the wedding.

INITIAL PREPERATION

If the couple may be married in the Church, these initial steps must be completed first:

- Schedule an appointed with Fr. Jim to complete the **A-form** to determine if you are free to marry in the Catholic Church. The A-form must be signed before the wedding date will be set.
- **Pre-Marriage Inventory (PMI)** must be taken, and Fr. Jim or Deacon Bob will review the results with the couple.
- Arrange to complete a marriage preparation program.
- Schedule a meeting with Deacon Bob to discuss the theology of marriage. You may reach him at (734) 425-0625.
- In general, Fr. Jim will witness the wedding within Mass. Deacon Bob will witness the wedding outside of Mass.

SCHEDULING A DATE & TIME:

Weddings are scheduled with respect to the couple's wishes and the availability of the church building and parish ministers. Weddings are not scheduled during Advent and Lent.

- The couple must first meet with Fr. Jim.
- The A-Form must be completed before the date is set.
- The church must be available.
- The date must be set *before* making a commitment to caterers and reception halls.

Weddings will be scheduled a minimum of two hours apart. Possible times are:

- Friday evenings between 3:00 and 6:00 PM
- Saturdays at 10:00 AM, 1:00 PM, and 6:30 PM
- Saturday during the 4:30 Mass by special arrangement with Fr. Jim

PLANNING MUSIC

Contact the **Music Director**, Jeanne Marie Laframboise, at least three months before the wedding. You may reach her at (248) 476-4700 x 441, or see her after Mass.

- The Music Director will meet with the couple to choose appropriate music that follows guidelines for liturgical celebrations of the Church.
- All weddings are required to have a staff organist and cantor. Additional musicians are permissible, and the Music Director will help coordinate their participation in the liturgy.

PLANNING THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

Please contact Lee Curtis, the **Wedding Coordinator**, at (248) 477-3424. The couple must arrange a **date** for the rehearsal at least three months before that wedding. The rehearsal does not need to be the day before the wedding. Please schedule the time prior to making arrangements for the rehearsal dinner.

The Wedding Coordinator will handle the wedding rehearsal. The Priest and Music Director will not attend the rehearsal.

Please complete decisions regarding prayers, readings, and music well before the rehearsal. Make arrangements ahead of time regarding who will do the readings and prayers so that readers have time to prepare.

FINAL DETAILS

Contact the church office regarding final details:

- The current **fee** for a wedding at St. Priscilla is \$250.00, which includes a donation for the church and the organist. This is due in the office one month before the wedding.
- Take your **marriage license** to the church at least one week before the wedding so that it can be completed (*do not* wait to bring it to the rehearsal). The couple is advised to obtain the license from a county of residence for either party in the State of Michigan. If there is no license present for the officiate, a legal wedding cannot be performed.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

FLOWERS

- Fresh flowers may be used to decorate the sanctuary. Small bouquets may be placed in front of the altar and/or in front of the ambo. Flowers may not extend above the height of the altar or be placed directly on the altar.
- Fresh flowers may be used behind the altar area against the back wall.
- Flower petals of any type may not be strewn in the aisle or the church.
- The church appreciates being able to use the wedding flowers for the weekend liturgies if the family chooses to donate them.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Only professional photographers may take photos during the wedding.
- The photographs taken during the ceremony should be non-flash photos.
- Photographers may not roam throughout the sanctuary of the church during the celebration of the wedding ceremony.
- The photos session following the ceremony will be limited to 30 minutes.
- Additional lighting may not be brought into the church.
- The Wedding Coordinator will provide further guidelines before the ceremony. Please contact her with any questions.

VIDEO

- Stationary Video equipment may be set up ahead of time and used during the ceremony. Video cameras are not to be moved during the ceremony or to be used in a way that is distracting to those who are participating in the wedding ceremony.
- A video camera may be used at the back of the church near a side aisle, and/or at the front pillar on the side opposite the organ.
- Video cameras will not be allowed in the area near the piano and organ.
- The Wedding Coordinator may be contacted regarding any questions.

LITURGY

Liturgy Planning:

Weddings at St. Priscilla are celebrated according to the worship books of the Roman Catholic Church; the Sacramentary; the Lectionary; and the Rite of Marriage. The Rite of Marriage should be celebrated within the context of Eucharistic Liturgy if both parties are Catholic. If one member of the couple is not Catholic, the Church encourages the use of the Rite of Marriage for outside of the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The liturgy for the wedding must be coordinated and approved by the priest or Deacon who witnesses the marriage.

Preparation:

A bride's room is available for final preparations. You will be most comfortable if you are completely dressed and ready before arriving at the church. Everyone in the wedding party should arrive at the church and be ready at least 30 minutes before the ceremony is to begin. This allows you time to relax, to attend to last minute details, and in fairness to others to begin the wedding on time.

No food or drink may be brought into the church, so please eat before you arrive at the church.

Greeting Guests:

The time immediately before the ceremony sets the tone for the wedding. Simple things can be done to help people feel welcome and to gather them together to celebrate the liturgy, such as greeting people at the main doors of the church when they arrive.

Seating:

- An aisle runner may not be used due to the tendency to tear and/or cause guests to trip and fall.
- Seat people together toward the front of the church. There is no reason to have separate sides for the groom and the bride, as everyone is joining together to support the couple together.
- All of the wedding party members may assist in seating people.

The Procession:

The bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament of marriage. They should enter the assembly from the same door, avoiding any visual suggestion that one is more important than the other.

Separation of men and women in procession is discouraged. It is an artificial separation of people who have been chosen to be partners for the day. It also unnecessarily lengthens the procession and makes it something of a fashion show. All are to walk down as couples in the procession.

The groom and his parents enter immediately before the bride and her parents.

If **children** are to be part of the ceremony, they should be at least 5 years old. Children under 5 years old would need to be well behaved and well supervised.

The Readings:

Choose someone to do the scripture readings and lead the Prayers of the Faithful who is able to read with confidence in a loud and clear voice. No other readings other than scripture are allowed during the liturgy—any other readings may be read at the reception.

The Unity Candle:

The Unity Candle is not a part of the Liturgical Rite for Marriage in the Catholic Church. It is more appropriately used at the reception. If a Unity Candle is used, it will be placed on a small table near the altar, but will never be placed directly on the altar.

Leaving the church:

Couples are asked to leave the church environment in a clean and orderly fashion, just as it was when they arrived for the ceremony.

- People are not permitted to throw rice, flower petals, grains, and any other material that would be difficult to clean from the church, either inside or outside of the building.

- If bows are used on the pews, they must be removed before leaving the church.

Checklist

- ___ Contact the parish office.
- ___ Speak with Fr. Jim.
- ___ Pray for guidance and direction.
- ___ Take the PMI.
- ___ Review PMI results.
- ___ Meet with Deacon Bob.
- ___ Complete a marriage preparation program.
- ___ Meet with the Music Director.
- ___ Meet with the Wedding Coordinator.
- ___ Submit your Baptismal certificates to the office.
- ___ Select your scripture readings.
- ___ Choose your readers and give them the readings and Prayers.
- ___ Submit your marriage license to the office one week before the wedding.
- ___ Register in your new parish home.

Any concerns about these guidelines should be discussed with the Priest or Deacon who will be witnessing your marriage celebration. We thank you for your cooperation and look forward to celebrating your marriage ceremony with you and your family.

May God's grace and blessings be with you now and always!