

Saint Mary, Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church Wedding Preparation Manual



515 Fourth Street South
Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701
727/896-2191 - FAX 727/895-6279

Congratulations on your recent engagement! We at Saint Mary Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church are very happy for you, as you begin preparations for your wedding day.

With this in mind, we hope that the information enclosed in this packet will answer many of your questions and anticipate some of your concerns.

God Bless!

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Timeline for Marriage Preparation

AT LEAST

6 months before Contact Saint Mary, Our Lady of Grace Church for an appointment with the priest/deacon. After meeting with the priest/deacon, schedule your Engaged Encounter Weekend and Pre-Cana Conference

Reserve your wedding date with a deposit of \$100.

AT LEAST

3 months before Contact the church office for your wedding liturgy planning with the Wedding Coordinator.

4 weeks before Please return all paperwork (wedding planning forms, music forms and Together for Life form) to the Wedding Coordinator.

Final payment of all fees should be made.

3 weeks before Please turn in a rough draft of wedding program of your wedding program for proofing to the Wedding Coordinator.

Make appointment for follow-up interview with priest.

1 week before Present the marriage license to the priest/deacon—this **MUST** be done, at the latest, by the night of the rehearsal.

Rehearsal Night **Please be on time!!** Bring wedding programs, unity candle and all participants in the ceremony.

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Step 1:

Most of the information in this section applies to those who will be doing their entire wedding preparation at Saint Mary Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church. If you are from another parish, you should follow the wedding policies of your church.

We are here to answer any questions you might have. If you have a possible date for your wedding, please call our Wedding Coordinator at (727)698-0734 as soon as possible. She will refer you then to our music website, and to our Music Director.

Ordinarily weddings are celebrated on Saturdays at 11:00a.m. or 1:00p.m. Evening weddings can be scheduled at 6 p.m. They may also be scheduled on Friday evenings at 6 p.m. Weddings can be celebrated on any day except Christmas Day and during the Easter Triduum (which is Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday). Weddings during the Lenten season are not encouraged, but may be scheduled for pastoral reasons only.

When setting a date for your wedding, take into consideration the special nature of liturgical seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent, the 50 days of Easter, Pentecost, etc.) The parish's celebrations of these seasons will affect the decoration of the worship space. When a wedding takes place during such a liturgical season, the liturgical environment is to remain in place, as this is an expression of the parish faith community celebration. Please speak with the Wedding Coordinator regarding what décor in the church is already planned for a particular liturgical season.

Rehearsals for weddings that take place on Saturday will be scheduled on Friday evenings and for Friday weddings, on Thursday evenings. The allotted time for your rehearsal is one (1) hour. We request that you and your party be on-time; otherwise your rehearsal time will be diminished.

A deposit of \$100 is required to reserve your date and time. Checks should be made out to "Saint Mary Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church".

Step 2:

The wedding coordinator or deacon will meet with you in order to begin your formal preparation. She/He will walk you through some required diocesan paperwork including: the **A** – Form, a general questionnaire; the **B** – Form, affidavits that each party is free to marry; and a **copy of each person's baptismal certificates**, issued by the church of baptism within 6 months of beginning your preparation for marriage. The copy must have the raised seal of the church or a notary public.

Step 3:

Following these meetings, you will be informed of some further diocesan requirements:

- **Marriage Preparation Inventory** – Administered by the wedding coordinator or deacon, this survey measures the couple's compatibility and takes approximately one hour to complete. Its results are confidential and will only be discussed by the couple, the priest and/or the deacon.
- **Marriage Preparation Program** – The **Engaged Encounter** is a weekend program from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon. This is a time for the couple to get away from the hustle and bustle of wedding plans and focus on their lifetime commitment to each other. The weekend concentrates on communication between engaged partners. It is much more than just talking however; it is communicating on a feeling level about your plans, goals and fears for your life together. The weekend gives you a place and atmosphere conducive to discussing the really important things in your future in a non-threatening manner. The encounter is directed by three married couples and a chaplain. The talks are on different aspects of married life. Following each talk you are given an opportunity to reflect privately and then discuss the subject with one another. This is a Catholic-sponsored weekend. However, it is more "spiritual" in direction than "doctrinal" so that individuals of all faiths will benefit. We encourage you to make your reservations for this immediately. The priest will give you an informational pamphlet. If you cannot do a weekend-long program, **Pre-Cana** is an option. Information on dates, times and locations of Pre-Cana Conferences will be available from the priest assisting you in your preparation.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING LITURGY

Planning the Ceremony – Inside this packet is a copy of **Together For Life**, a useful guide to wedding planning. It comes in two editions, one for weddings within the celebration of the Eucharist (Nuptial Masses), the other for weddings with a scripture service. **Together for Life** contains the various prayers, scripture readings, vow formulas, and blessings used in the wedding liturgy. Please complete the tear-out sheet with your selections for readings and return to the wedding coordinator the month before your wedding.

Music – Live music is required at a Nuptial Mass or wedding service. It is meant to lift up the spiritual significance of covenant and commitment and encourage the prayerful participation of family and friends in the liturgy. Songs with secular lyrics are not permitted. Our wedding music website (www.michellerego.com) will assist you in the song selection process. There is also a link to this website from our parish website (www.stmaryolg.org) In addition, you are encouraged to construct a wedding mass or liturgy program, and our Music Director can assist you in that task once song selections are made.

Scripture Readers– We encourage you to invite family or friends to participate as readers within the liturgy. We recommend that they attend the rehearsal to familiarize themselves with the microphone, the book, and the layout of the sanctuary.

Children in the Wedding Party – We ask that you reflect carefully on the maturity and comfort level of all children (such as flower girls and ring bearers) who are in the wedding party. It is strongly suggested that children under the age of 5 not be considered as bridal party members.

Visiting Priests – Visiting priests or deacons (for a wedding service) are welcome to preside at your wedding. If they work within the Diocese of Saint Petersburg, they must request permission from our pastor; if they do not reside in the diocese, we must also receive permission from the diocesan Chancery. In some situations, the visiting priest or deacon must coordinate your marriage preparation process, as well.

Church Decorations – Our church is unique and beautiful. It needs little in the way of additional decorations. We will help you decide how best to integrate flowers, a unity candle, and other decorations into your wedding. Following custom, we ask that flowers brought in for the wedding liturgy be left in the church.

Photographers – We welcome photographers, as they are an essential part of any wedding. Inside this packet is a guide for you and your photographer, outlining some of our policies on still and video photography.

WEDDING DAY POLICIES

- **Dressing Facilities** – The bride and her attendants 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.
- **Alcoholic Beverages** – Our insurance company does not allow any consumption of alcoholic beverages on our property.
- **Rice, Bird Seed, Flower Petals, or Confetti** – Please ask your guests not to throw any of these items or release balloons, butterflies or doves as they leave church. We also ask that you refrain from using an aisle runner.
- **Timely Arrival** – It is important that the wedding start on time. Besides 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.

CHURCH REQUIREMENTS

DOCUMENTS

- **Baptismal Certificate** – A copy bearing the raised seal of the church or a notary public must be obtained from the church in which you were baptized. This can be accomplished by calling or writing to the parish of record.
- **Prior Marriage Documentation** – If either party has previously been married, the necessary documents must be obtained to determine one's freedom to marry in the Church.
- **Other Documents** – Official church forms, which must be filled out and signed in the presence of the priest or deacon, will be explained and provided by the ordained minister who is directing your marriage preparation.
- **Marriage Preparation Certificate** – A certificate indicating that you have completed a marriage preparation program should be given to the priest or deacon who is preparing you for marriage.

CIVIL REQUIREMENTS

- **Marriage License** – We ask that the marriage license be brought to the rehearsal, as the presider is not legally permitted to witness the ceremony without it in hand.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

With all the demands that preparation for a wedding will make upon the two of you, frequently you may find yourselves lacking time to relax and reflect upon your relationship, the commitment you are entering with each other, and how that committed relationship will impact your lives. This can also be a valuable time of spiritual growth, for when we love another person, it often puts us more closely in touch with the love of God. We urge you to look upon the marriage preparation sessions as time devoted to each other. We hope that the sessions will encourage you to schedule other times for yourselves just to relax and be together. Make time to reflect and pray - both alone and with each other. This will help you enjoy these months of preparation and to bring into focus what sacramental marriage is all about.

We hope the following prayer will be an impetus for your own spontaneous prayer in the months ahead:

Creator God,

We thank you for your many gifts, but especially for the love we share. We ask you to be with us and guide us in these times of preparation and waiting for our wedding day. May the days and hours ahead not all be frenzied, but may we find the time to know our hearts and to consider the promises we shall make. Thank you for my partner _____ . I am grateful for his/her love. Keep him/her in your care during this time of preparation and in all the days ahead. Grant us patience, dear God, with each other, with our families, and with all those we come in contact with. Be with us, and give us your peace, in good times and in bad, now and always. Amen.

We at Saint Mary Our Lady of Grace pray that you will be blessed in the name of the Creator God who made you; the Son, who became human and died for you; and in the Spirit, who encourages and inspires you. Amen.

The Franciscan Friars and Staff

of

Saint Mary Our Lady of Grace

FLORIST'S GUIDE

Bride _____

Groom _____

Date of Wedding _____ Time _____

Church: Saint Mary Our Lady of Grace, 515 4th Street South,
Saint Petersburg, FL 33701. Telephone (727) 896-2191

Priest/Deacon _____

This guide is intended to acquaint you with our parish wedding policies. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns.

- **Placement of Flowers** – An arrangement may be placed on the floor in front of the altar, but not on the altar itself.
- **Aisle Runners** – We do not permit runners in church.
- **Bows on Pews** – Bows or other appropriate pew decorations may be attached using ribbon, Velcro straps, rubber bands, or elastic cords. Please do not use adhesive tape as the finish on the pews may be ruined. Please refrain from using candles in these decorations as they present a safety hazard.

PHOTOGRAPHER'S GUIDE

Bride _____

Groom _____

Date of Wedding _____ Time _____

Church: Saint Mary Our Lady of Grace, 515 4th Street South,
Saint Petersburg, FL 33701. Telephone (727) 896-2191

Priest /Deacon _____

This guide is intended to acquaint you, the photographer, with our parish policies concerning photography and filming at weddings. We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to the following guidelines.

- **General Rules** – The photographer should not be a distraction to the wedding guests and especially to the priest/deacon, bride and groom, and members of the wedding party. At all times, the bride and groom should be the focus of attention, with emphasis on the profound significance of this event in their lives. Photographers must **stay out of the sanctuary area during the wedding liturgy.**
- **Set Up** – Please set up your equipment no sooner than one hour before the ceremony, and not in the sanctuary, which begins with the steps in front of the altar.
- **Use of the Balcony** – The balcony may be used for both still and video photography.

- **Use of flash and extra lighting** – Both still and video photographers can use flash or extra lighting before and after the wedding, and for the processional and recessional only.
- **Still Photography** – Before the wedding ceremony, photographers are free to move about the main body of the church for pictures (but not the sanctuary). After the mothers are seated, the main aisle can only be used for pictures during the processional and recessional. During the wedding ceremony, photographers may use the side aisles, the back of church, or the balcony.
- **Video Photography** – As with still photography, video photographers are free to film throughout the main body (but not the sanctuary) of church until the mothers are seated. They may video in the main aisle for the processional and recessional only. During the wedding ceremony video photographers must pick one place to film from and remain stationary. Stationary video may be taken from the back, the side aisles, or from the balcony. The video photographer may use the side aisle at the front of the church provided that they do not obstruct the view of the wedding guests or get in the way of the ceremony.

If there are any questions please consult with the parish wedding coordinator well in advance of the ceremony at (727) 698-0734.

Thank you for your cooperation.

FEES

In order to schedule your wedding at Saint Mary Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, a one-time, non-refundable **deposit of \$100.00** is requested at the time that your wedding date is set.

The fee for weddings at Saint Mary's is \$2,500.00, which includes the music and wedding coordination, but does not include a priest stipend if he is a visiting priest. If you make arrangements for a visiting priest to perform the ceremony, it is appropriate to recognize him with a monetary gift.

SAINT MARY, OUR LADY OF GRACE WEDDING MUSIC POLICIES

- Fees for the basic music package for a wedding mass or ceremony is included in your parish fees listed above. This includes the keyboardist and cantor.
- **Michelle Rego, Director of Music**, will be the ordinary keyboardist/cantor for weddings at Saint Mary, Our Lady of Grace. She can be reached at MRegoReatini@msn.com.
- Couples are encouraged to visit this website: www.michellerego.com at least three months prior to their wedding date. This website will allow the couple to listen to sound clips meant for every part of a wedding mass or service. There is a worksheet on that site that couples can complete, and email, fax, or send back to the Director of Music, indicating their selections for the mass/ceremony.
- There is no secular music or recorded music permitted at Catholic wedding liturgies.
- The Director of Music will assist couples with their wedding liturgy music selection, and can assist with construction of their wedding liturgy programs for no extra charge.
- Any musicians suggested by the wedding party (e.g. friends, relatives to serve as soloist, cantor, organist, pianist, etc.) must be approved by the Director of Music. If a separate music rehearsal is needed with said musicians, a separate fee of \$50 will be required.
- Brass players (trumpets), guitar/flute/piano and other professional musicians, if desired, can be secured by the Director of Music. Fees vary.

Documents to be obtained and returned to the priest/deacon

Groom

Date turned in

Baptismal Certificate	_____
Affidavit of Free Status	_____
Letter of Permission from St. Mary's Pastor	_____
Letter of Permission from Groom's Pastor	_____
Visiting Priest Testimonial	_____
Permissions and Dispensations	_____
__Mixed Religion	_____
__Disparity of Worship	_____
__Canonical Form	_____
Lack of Form	_____
__Marriage License(s)	_____
__Divorce Decree(s)	_____
Annulment Decree(s)	_____
Death Certificate(s)	_____

Bride

Date turned in

Baptismal Certificate	_____
Affidavit of Free Status	_____
Letter of Permission from St. Mary's Pastor	_____
Letter of Permission from Bride's Pastor	_____
Visiting Priest Testimonial	_____
Permissions and Dispensations	_____
__Mixed Religion	_____
__Disparity of Worship	_____
__Canonical Form	_____
Lack of Form	_____
__Marriage License(s)	_____
__Divorce Decree(s)	_____
Annulment Decree(s)	_____
Death Certificate(s)	_____
Marriage License (no sooner than 30 days prior to marriage)	_____

