

ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS WEDDING POLICIES

- A. The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is committed to the policy that all couples preparing for marriage in the Church will receive sufficient preparation prior to their marriage.**
- B. All couples desiring to marry in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will notify the priest as soon as they become engaged or at least six months before the desired wedding date.**
- C. Parish level programs will be the primary form of marriage preparation, and these will involve the priest and a trained married couple.**
- D. A pre-marriage inventory will be used as the primary instrument for the purpose of dialogue and discernment.**
- E. Together the couple and the priest will plan the wedding celebration according to liturgical guidelines provided by the Archdiocesan Office of Worship.**

LITTLE FLOWER WEDDING POLICIES

- A. The Pastor of Little Flower will officiate at all the weddings of parishioners at Little Flower. Under certain circumstances the pastor may delegate another priest to officiate at a wedding.**
- B. Weddings of non-parishioners may be celebrated at Little Flower under the following terms:**
 - 1. The pastor of the Catholic party or his delegate will officiate at the wedding.**
 - 2. The marriage preparation will be conducted through the parish of the Catholic party.**
- C. Weddings may only be scheduled after consulting with the Pastor of Little Flower. Please note that the preferred time for weddings will be 1:00 p.m. All weddings must take place before 2:00 p.m.**
- D. Weddings may not be scheduled on the first Saturday of June which is Ordination Day in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis or on festival weekend at Little Flower.**

- E. Catholics not affiliated with Little Flower may celebrate their wedding at Little Flower if their immediate family belongs to the parish or if they were raised or educated in Little Flower. They must meet all canonical requirements, have written permission from the pastor of the Catholic party, and provide evidence of having completed the marriage preparation program in their parish.**
- F. To qualify as a member of Little Flower for marriage purposes, either the bride or the groom must be registered and active in the parish when the wedding is scheduled or has moved into the parish from another parish where they were registered and active.**
- G. Non-parishioners who marry at Little Flower are responsible for insuring that the priest who has prepared them for marriage forwards all the necessary paperwork to Little Flower so that their marriage will be recorded in our parish records.**
- H. Pre-marriage forms that request data for the marriage license and for Church records must be filled out in the presence of the priest or his delegate. These forms seek information to ascertain the freedom of both parties to marry in the Catholic Church and information which is required for the records of both the parish and the county.**
- I. The couple will participate in the Sponsor-Couple Program and is encouraged to attend a Tobit Weekend Retreat at Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis.**
- J. The priest officiating the wedding will review with the couple the ceremony they have planned and then will conduct a scheduled rehearsal. The rehearsal time will be determined by the demands of the church's schedule and the convenience of the couple and the priest. The couple is asked to bring the marriage license and certificate to the rehearsal.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. Adequate facilities are available for any size wedding. The church has a seating capacity of 450. Please be aware that there may be other demands on the parish facilities in addition to your wedding. Therefore, use of the facilities will be limited to a three-hour time slot.**

- B. It is NOT permissible to throw rice, seeds, confetti, potpourri, or anything else that requires clean-up. We do not have a maintenance person who works on the weekends to clean up prior to other liturgical services. Any flower petals used during the wedding procession are to be swept up prior to the wedding party leaving the church.**
- C. Remember that your wedding is taking place within a sacred space. Therefore, eating, drinking, smoking, running, shouting, whistling, and the use of alcoholic beverages will not be tolerated.**

INACTIVE CATHOLICS

The Catholic Church rejoices that couples choose to be married in a Catholic ceremony because such a choice implies the same type of belonging and commitment that is necessary in marriage. It is not unusual that some couples are a little uneasy about approaching the priest concerning marriage when they have not been actively practicing their faith.

What the priest will do is expect the engaged parties to attend Mass and ask the Lord to be a part of their months of preparation. If a couple can make such a commitment during marriage preparation, it will certainly invite God's blessing on their marriage. Should they not be able to make or keep such a commitment, it will call into question whether or not they have between them the ability to live up to all the lofty ideals that a Church wedding implies.

THE ISSUE OF COHABITATION

Cohabitation refers to a couple who has been living together for an extended period of time in which there is a commitment to each other and a recognition that together they form, in a certain sense, a family.

Since cohabitation simulates marriage, it is not considered appropriate behavior for Catholics. The reason for this is that when a couple moves in together without exchanging formal nuptial vows and live externally as husband and wife, they weaken both the sanctity and the stability of marriage and family. They give public witness to values contrary to Christian values.

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is one of the last stages of preparation for a wedding. At the rehearsal the priest will guide the couple and the wedding party through the ceremony. The priest is the officiant in charge of the wedding rehearsal in consultation with the engaged couple. Although the rehearsal is part of marriage preparation, it is an informal gathering. Couples should relax and enjoy it.

The rehearsal will take approximately thirty minutes. Please ask the wedding party to be prompt and on time. It is necessary for the bride and groom, the wedding party, the parents, additional ushers, and any other participants to be present. Readers and servers should also be included in the rehearsal plans. At the conclusion of the rehearsal, the couple and members of their wedding party may ask to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This sacrament is a good way for couples who have not received the sacrament for some time to begin their married life.

LITURGY AND MUSIC

The wedding liturgy must be planned within the guidelines provided by the Archdiocesan Office of Worship. While couples are encouraged to choose music compatible with their personal tastes, the dignity of the liturgy is primary. Therefore, all couples must contact the Music Director, at Little Flower, who will assist in the musical aspects of the wedding ceremony.

If the bride and groom are both Catholic, the wedding ceremony should be celebrated within the context of Mass. If one of the parties is non-Catholic, the special rite for a marriage outside Mass is preferred.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Decorations shall be in good taste and shall in no way hide, obscure, or camouflage the appointments of the altar or ambo (lectern). It is the responsibility of the wedding party to place all special arrangements (aisle runner, banners, floral decorations, unity candle, etc.) in place before the ceremony begins and remove them afterwards. Little Flower will not be responsible for any items left after the ceremony.

Seasonal decorations (i.e. Christmas, Easter) may neither be removed nor rearranged. The Arts and Environment Committee will have spent hours on these arrangements and they may not be disturbed.

Couples may have any kind of flowers, greenery, or ribbon on the pews provided they do not use tape, gummy tack, or permanent hooks of any kind.

Flowers are to be provided by the couple who may arrange to leave them for use in the sanctuary for the weekend Masses. This can be especially meaningful as they attest to the fact that the Sacrament of Marriage was celebrated in our parish on that day.

Sanctuary and altar furnishings are not to be moved. A kneeler is available for the couple to use. Because the terrazzo floor is slippery, the use of aisle runners is strongly discouraged. However, if used, an aisle runner must be at least 50 feet to be adequate. There are thirteen rows of pews on each side of the main aisle.

All decorations must be removed immediately after the wedding and the church returned to its normal appearance. Items left behind will be discarded. Couples should designate someone to oversee the clean-up of the worship space.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO RECORDING

Your wedding is an event you will want to cherish and share throughout the years. However, pictures and video taping do not supersede the exchange of vows; the church is not a photography studio. Therefore, pictures in the church should be kept to a minimum, and the bulk of pictures should be done outside the actual ceremony. Either before, after, or at the reception would be the best time for pictures and video taping.

Professional photographers should contact the priest prior to the ceremony. There shall be no flash pictures taken during the ceremony. Pictures of the bride, groom, and the wedding party ARE permitted during the wedding march or recessional. Ask the priest at the rehearsal about the location of video cameras.

RENTAL OF THE PARISH HALL

The parish hall may be rented for wedding receptions. Please contact the Parish Center for more information. Please remember to call early as availability may be limited.

SOME THOUGHTS ON YOUR WEDDING

All true marriages are good and holy. However, the marriage of two baptized Christians is also a sacrament. Like all sacraments, it is a response to God's gracious presence in human life. In the wedding we are witnesses to what God has already created, that is, the gift of your relationship. You come to marriage in response to God's call: you come to worship, and this worship involves celebration and commitment.

At your wedding, we will celebrate the gift of your relationship, the bond that unites you. The New Testament calls that bond Jesus Christ—the presence of God in human life. We celebrate that God is at work today, helping us to overcome all barriers. And we celebrate that you have chosen to respond to the Christ-bond of your relationship.

In the marriage ceremony we come as witnesses with you and together we acknowledge the work and gift of God that is present in your love for one another. We also come to be with you as you offer signs of the nature of the relationship God has created. The wedding ceremony is, in fact, the giving of a series of signs (prayers, vows, holding hands, giving gifts/rings, the kiss etc.). The rest of your lives together will be full of opportunities to continue giving signs that declare the loving nature of your relationship.

This is where commitment comes in. When the Church speaks of the Christ-bond, it has something specific in mind. It is the bond of self-giving love. That's why the Cross is an appropriate symbol for your wedding. It reminds us that the nature of the bond we celebrate is self-giving, Christ-like love. Romance is great—looks great, feels great—but God will transform the love you know by calling you to a deeper love that will call forth ever more love as the years go by. The bond of self-giving love is nurtured by care and compassion for one another.

But there is more You are witnesses to the fact that we all belong to God's family. Your commitment in marriage to live as a part of God's family for the rest of your lives is a reminder to all of us that God has made all of us brothers and sisters in Christ. It does not take us long to realize how different our world would be if we all lived in that kind of relationship every day.

So welcome! We share with you your celebration, your commitment.