

St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill

Marriage Preparation Checklist

Introduction. With the many needs and deadlines approaching for caterers, florists, musicians and other wedding day arrangements, knowing and arranging what has to be done is somewhat overwhelming. We want to help you prepare for this celebration in a way that hopefully reduces some of the tension that often occurs during this period of preparation. What follows is a concise guide, time-line and checklist covering what each of you need to consider in preparing for this sacrament of unity and life-long commitment.

6-12 Months Before the Wedding

Contact the parish staff (priest or deacon) to initiate plans for the wedding. It is important that the couple contact the priest or deacon directly, and not assign this to a family member or wedding coordinator.

Meeting date: _____

Set date/time of celebration and provide stipend (\$500) for reserving the parish church and facilities.

Date Stipend Furnished: _____

Weddings are usually celebrated at 3:00 pm on Saturdays. For other times, please consult with the pastor.

5 Months Before the Wedding

Schedule your participation in **one** of the following specially designed Catholic sacramental preparation programs. For information about the **Archdiocese of Washington Marriage Preparation Program**, call 301.853.5337 or visit www.adw.org and click on "Family" and then "Marriage" from the scroll-down menu. For information about **Catholic Engaged Encounter**, call 1.800.820.2701 or visit www.dcengagedencounter.org. For information about **"Three to Get Married" at Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center**, call 301.365.0612 or visit www.bethesdacfd.org and click on "Marriage Prep & Enrichment."

Date scheduled: _____

Place: _____

Provide a new, original baptismal certificate for both parties. This can be arranged by calling the church where you were baptized and requesting a copy of your baptismal certificate. For non-Catholic Christians, a letter from the church is acceptable.

For couples being married as guests of the parish, obtain and provide us with a letter of permission from the pastor of the Catholic party's home parish.

For marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, arrange with the priest or deacon to obtain the necessary canonical permission or dispensation.

Meet with the priest or deacon for personal preparation by completing and discussing a pre-nuptial questionnaire.

Date scheduled: _____

Obtain from the priest or deacon the marriage preparation booklet.

4 Months Before the Wedding

Contact parish Flower Committee (Aline O'Connell, 202.415.9384) to discuss floral and other decorations for the church. Two reminders:

- Flowers are customarily left in the church to make a visible connection between the marriage and the community.
- Church decorations already in place for weddings during Christmas and Easter seasons must remain as displayed.

Contact the parish Director of Music (David Nastal, dnastal@visi.org) to discuss the musical arrangements for the celebration.

3 Months Before the Wedding

Meet with priest or deacon to discuss the particulars of the liturgy.

Some additional helpful things to know:

- **Photography.** During the wedding ceremony flash pictures and video cameras are permissible as long as they do not disrupt the ceremony. Posed pictures may be taken at the altar after the ceremony for one half hour. Photographer and guests should be notified in advance.
- **Bridal Waiting Area.** There is no space for this purpose at the church. Please plan accordingly.
- **Church Address.** Please be sure to include the church address (Second and C Streets, NE) on your wedding invitation for the convenience of your guests. (Please note that there is another Catholic church--St. Peter's--on the corner of Second and C Streets, SE.)

- **Parking.** Parking is available in the parking lot next to the rectory as well as in the U.S. Senate parking lot across the street from the church, unless the Senate is in session.
 - **Throwing Rice, Birdseed, Flower Petals, etc.** This practice is prohibited both inside and outside the church building because of safety and environmental concerns. The use of a plastic or fabric runner down the center aisle is also prohibited.
- Confirm the rehearsal date/time with the priest or deacon presiding.

1 Month Before the Wedding

Arrange for a civilly required blood test and obtain a marriage license from the District of Columbia Marriage Bureau (202.879.4840) located in Room 4485, 500 Indiana Ave., NW. (Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm).

Confirm all plans with parish staff for music, flowers and the presiding priest or deacon.