

St. John the Evangelist Church

Wedding Policy



**GETTING MARRIED AT
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CHURCH:**

Our concern is that your wedding ceremony be holy and meaningful for you and your guests. We therefore present the following requirements to protect the sacredness of Marriage and of St. John the Evangelist Church, and what is expected of you by the Diocese of Lafayette, St. John the Evangelist Church, and the State of Louisiana.

Diocesan Requirements

The main concern of the church is that you understand the depth and significance of the commitment you intend to make. This commitment is based on your deep love for each other, which is a love rooted in God Himself. The question the Church asks is: "Are you ready to make this kind of God-centered commitment?"

The following process of the Diocese of Lafayette exists in order to allow you the time and assistance necessary to answer that question.

1. You must meet with the celebrant of your marriage *at least six (6) months prior* to the desired wedding date. It is appropriate for the celebrant to be the priest of the bride's church parish.
2. If one or two of the parties wanting to be married is seeking an annulment, a wedding date cannot be set until the annulment has been granted.
3. When you meet with the priest who will be celebrating your wedding he will register you for one of the Diocesan marriage preparation courses. At that time you will need to submit payment for this course.
4. Upon completion of the marriage preparation course you should make a second appointment with the celebrant at least one month prior to the wedding date. At this meeting you should bring with you *recently issued* copies of your baptismal certificates. Certificates must be dated within one year of the date of the wedding. **Original certificates and photostatic copies are not acceptable.** To obtain a recent copy of the certificates Certificates call or write the church where you were baptized and request that a copy be sent to you. Be sure to tell them that it is to be used for marriage purposes so that they include all sacramental notations. Also bring to the appointment the original of the marriage preparation certificate you will be issued once the course is completed. Scripture readings that you have selected can be submitted to the celebrant at this time. *Note:* If you are not a Roman Catholic you will need a baptismal certificate stating when and where you were baptized. You will also need an affidavit, signed by your parents or a close relative, stating that you have never before been married.
5. In light of special circumstances, such as a pregnancy or if one of you is under the age of eighteen (18), or for other reasons as well, then both of you will be asked to go for further evaluation to help determine your readiness for this sacrament and commitment.

St. John the Evangelist Church Policies

Weddings between Catholics and Non-Catholics

There will be no celebration of the Eucharist (a Mass) for a wedding between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. The reason for this is primarily because the Catholic Church does not practice

inter-communion, that is, Catholics are not allowed to receive communion in a non-Catholic church and non-Catholics may not receive communion at a Catholic Mass. Therefore, to avoid any awkwardness or embarrassment brought about by some receiving and some not receiving communion a Mass is not celebrated.

In weddings without a Mass, the ceremony is similar to a wedding within a Mass. Such a ceremony would include the opening prayer, readings from Sacred Scripture, a homily, the exchange of vows and rings, nuptial blessing and final blessing.

No Mass is allowed in a wedding between a Catholic and a non-baptized person.

The Nuptial Mass/Wedding Ceremony: Setting the Date and Time A Nuptial (Wedding) Mass is one way for two Roman Catholics to liturgically celebrate the fullness of their married unity and love. A Wedding Ceremony without Mass is equally appropriate. *Couples who co-habitate or who do not regularly participate in the life of the parish will not have a Mass celebrated.*

Catholic weddings are both the couple's day and the Church's day. The wedding ceremony certainly should be personal and unique because the couple approaching marriage is unique. In planning your wedding ceremony, great care should be taken to blend the uniqueness of your love for each other and the richness of the Catholic liturgy. This can be accomplished if the priest or deacon, the musicians, and the couple work closely together.

As liturgy, the wedding ceremony should embody and proclaim Christian faith and call the Christian assembly to worship. In order to aid in this process, **no more than five (5) bridesmaids and five (5) groomsmen will be allowed.** This rule will be strictly enforced. If more than the allowed attendants are present, you will be asked to eliminate the additional attendants. Marriage is, most importantly, a sacrament, and an extensive line of attendants detracts from the sacredness of this moment. You may still have one junior bridesmaid (under the age of 13 years) and a flower girl and/or ring bearer who is not below five (5) years of age.

The hours of a marriage allowed are any time during the day on weekdays (other than the time for daily Masses) and weekday evenings until 7:00 p.m. On Saturdays weddings are scheduled at 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. or 12:00 Noon. There are no Saturday evening weddings and no weddings on Sunday. There will be only one wedding scheduled on any given weekend.

No wedding may be scheduled on the afternoon of the eve of a major feast or holy day of obligation. In addition, no wedding can be scheduled on All Souls Day, Ash Wednesday, during the season of Lent or during Holy Week. If Christmas and New Year's Day fall on a Friday, Saturday or Monday weddings may not be scheduled on the Wednesday or Thursday prior to these feasts so that appropriate decorating for the feasts may take place.

Rehearsals are usually scheduled one or two days before the wedding, at 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. (earlier times may be negotiated) depending on the church schedule. **One half hour** is allotted for the rehearsal and must begin promptly at the scheduled time. If any member of the wedding

party is not on time, the rehearsal will begin without him or her. The rehearsal will not be delayed for later arrivals. ***Only the wedding party is to attend the rehearsal.*** Other guests of the rehearsal supper should go directly to that location.

Liturgical Norms

Liturgical norms must be followed as set down in the ritual for weddings and in the General Instructions for the Mass.

If any member of the wedding party comes to the rehearsal or the wedding under the influence of alcohol or drugs or is inappropriately dressed **then the wedding may be postponed or canceled.** Inebriation and the disorderly conduct which proceeds from it can ruin your wedding. St. John the Evangelist Church has a sacristan/coordinator who is authorized to enforce these rules and, if necessary, call the Jeanerette City Police Department. **Please consider this to be a serious warning.** The bride and groom will be held responsible for the conduct and behavior of the wedding party and other guests inside the church and on the church grounds. Please make your wedding day a happy one and avoid any type of embarrassment to you and your family.

St. John the Evangelist Church has no dressing room facilities. The Parish Hall cannot be used. All members of the wedding party are to arrive **fully dressed** for the wedding. Arriving in robes, petticoats, or other forms of undress on the grounds of the church is **strictly forbidden** and is considered indecent exposure in a church. Such behavior will be grounds for postponement or cancelation of the ceremony.

Inappropriate behavior by any member of the wedding party, such as “mooning” streaking, or disturbing the peace, is strictly forbidden and will also be grounds for postponement or cancelation of the ceremony.

Liturgical Ministers

It is recommended that you choose experienced lectors and Eucharistic ministers for the ceremony. They must be in attendance at the wedding rehearsal so that the celebrant can instruct them on their part in the ceremony. Altar servers will not be provided by the parish for the ceremony. You are welcome to invite experienced servers from within your family or circle of friends to serve if you so desire.

Non-Parishioners

Those who are not registered and active members of St. John the Evangelist Church will be charged for the usage of the church (see FEES section below) and will need to find an outside priest in good standing to perform the service. **NOTE:** A member of St. John the Evangelist Church means that you are a minor (under 18 years of age) living with your parents who are registered, active and supporting members of the parish; **OR** you are 18 years of age, a full time student at a university and living with your parents who are registered, active and supporting members of the parish; **OR** you are 18 years of age or older and have been a registered, active and supporting member of the parish for at least two years prior to the wedding.

Celebrant

In keeping with the Canon Law of the church and the provisions of the Metropolitan Province

of New Orleans if the celebrant of the wedding ceremony is other than the pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church, he must obtain written delegation from the pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church. This delegation will gladly be given to any priest in good standing. It is the responsibility of the celebrant to complete the pre-nuptial investigation form along with all other necessary documents for the wedding to be recorded at St. John the Evangelist Church.

FEES

The generous support of the members of our parish makes possible a beautiful and comfortable atmosphere for the sacred moment of marriage. However, it is only just and fair that those who are not members of our church parish or those whose family has not been active in our church life, make an offering towards the maintenance and expenses in any use of the church building. The “church use fee” is \$850.00 for non-parishioners and \$450.00 for non-active parishioners or those who cannot substantiate weekly financial contributions to the parish. At the time wedding is tentatively scheduled, the bride and groom will be required to place a deposit of \$150.00 and sign St. John the Evangelist’s Damage Deposit Statement. This deposit will be refunded after the wedding only if no damage or any kind has occurred. Additionally all couples must pay a gratuity of \$100.00 for the sacristan/coordinator’s services. This is also payable at the time the wedding is scheduled.

Photography and Videography

Pictures and videos are nice remembrances, however, the photographer or videographer can detract from the ceremony itself. Only one official still photographer and videographer are allowed to take pictures or film the ceremony. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** Please let your wedding party, family, and guests know this to avoid embarrassment. Photograph sessions after the wedding inside the

Church may take place as long as it does not interfere or run into the scheduled time for confessions or other sacramental ceremonies.

If you intend to video your wedding you are allowed to have one videographer with a self-contained, battery operated shoulder camera or a tripod on wheels may be used. Other equipment or hookups are not allowed.

The following areas are **strictly off limits** for photography: the sacristy, the nave (the front five pews), and the sanctuary (altar area). Equipment, monitors, cables, wires, taping to the floors or walls, stationary equipment, tables or tripods are not allowed.

Flowers and Other Decorations

Priority will always be given to decorations in place for parish weekend ceremonies. This is particularly true if your wedding falls during one of the major liturgical seasons (Advent, Christmas, Easter) or on the weekend of a major feast (Pentecost, Corpus Christi, etc.) when special decorations are already in the church or when the church has been decorated for a special parish ceremony you will not be allowed to change or adjust these decorations for your wedding. Decorations during the penitential season of Advent must be minimal, that is, nothing extravagant or exceptional. For example, no pew markers or other decorations are allowed.

Other Regulations

- Sanctuary furniture is not to be moved or adjusted.
- The addition of trellises or arches are not allowed.
- An aisle runner is not allowed.
- The use of a Unity Candle is not allowed.
- The proper seating of the wedding party and attendants is in the nave (the front pews) of the church. Attendants are not allowed to sit in the sanctuary.
- To preserve the pews and walls of the church, the use of tape of any kind is not allowed.
- There is to be no throwing of rice, flowers, birdseed, petals, etc. inside or outside the church.
- There is a maximum of five (5) couples allowed to serve as wedding attendants. Children under the age of five (5) are not allowed to serve as ring bearer/flower girls, etc.

Music

Music is very important to any liturgical celebration. Only approved religious and liturgical music may be used before, during and after the wedding. The musical treasury of the church is vast enough to accommodate the most diverse tastes. Secular, “pop” or “movie” music is not appropriate to a sacred celebration and therefore is not allowed. The emphasis must be on liturgical music, that is, music the texts of which are drawn from biblical sources and divine worship. **All musical selections are subject to the approval of the pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church.**

The State of Louisiana

The Civil Government also has some requirements. Please obtain the marriage license from a Civil Parish Courthouse. Only one person need apply for the license; however that person must present copies of birth certificates for both parties (if you are under 18 your parents must sign their consent), a Social Security identification for both parties; if you have been married before, a decree of divorce, and \$25.00 to cover the license fee.

IMPORTANT: The marriage license is valid for only thirty (30) days from the date of validity. There is also a seventy two (72) hour waiting period from the time of issuance before the license becomes valid and you can be married (unless a judge issues a waiver). It is advised that a couple purchase the license the week *before* the date of the wedding ceremony.

These policies are non-negotiable and exceptions are not made. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact the rectory office at 337-276-4576.

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