

# Marriage Preparation Program at St. Robert's

## Satisfy Pre-Marital Requirements

- The Diocese of Kansas City – Saint Joseph requires a minimum of nine months preparation for marriage, one year for validation of a civil marriage.
- Meet with Pastor (Fr. John Bolderson) or Pastoral Associate (Dcn. Ed Wills)
- Complete the Marriage Registration Form
- Take Prepare-Enrich Assessment Program online and schedule a time to go over results.
  1. Provide name and email address for registration.
  2. You will be emailed a log in code.
  3. Go to [www.prepare-enrich.com](http://www.prepare-enrich.com).
  4. Select Couple Login from the Couples menu.
  5. Enter your log in code and click submit.
  6. You will be charged a small fee (\$35 last I checked) by prepare-enrich. This is not a parish fee.
  7. The assessment takes about 30-45 minutes to complete.
- Get copies of baptismal certificates if not baptized at St. Roberts.
- Bring baptism certificates to assessment meeting.
- Attend Thrive Weekend or Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend or work with a Parish Lead Couple.
- Receive any necessary dispensations including prior marriage annulment, if needed.
- Final meeting with Pastor or Pastoral Associate (Dcn. Ed Wills).
- Schedule individual Sacrament of Reconciliation with Fr. John.

## Plan Your Wedding

If you are getting married at St. Robert's contact our Director of Worship, Mike Kern, to discuss liturgy and music. His email address is [Michael@robertbellarmine.org](mailto:Michael@robertbellarmine.org).

**Part 1: MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

The time between your engagement and wedding is one of the most precious times in your life. Far from being merely a time of waiting, it offers an opportunity to lay the building blocks of a rich, life-long relationship of love. To help keep your perspective, remember that any adult desiring to join our Faith through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist is in preparation for nine months. A teen preparing for Confirmation likewise must go through nine months of preparation. Marriage is also a sacrament and the preparation for it takes time. Sacramental Marriage is a lifetime commitment which requires faith. We believe it is essential to prepare extensively in order to sincerely make such a solemn commitment.

To help you with this, we require that both of you actively prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. You are expected to use the following steps as part of this preparation.

Initial interview to obtain basic information about you and your faith life, to explain the preparation program, and answer your initial questions. We will set the date for the service at this meeting.

**PREPARE/ENRICH** -- a personal and relationship inventory to increase awareness of relationship issues in order to stimulate communication. This instrument measures how well you are communicating in eleven important areas and helps us to tailor the program to your benefit. The cost is \$35. Please pay when you take it. This fee is direct to Life Innovations Inc.

**Three Options**

The diocese gives you three options for marriage preparation.

THRIVE	Engaged Encounter plus God’s Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage plus Natural Family Planning Instruction	Marriage Prep Lead Couple plus God’s Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage plus Natural Family Planning Instruction
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**PLAN THE CEREMONY**

Meet with Mike Kern to discuss wedding ceremony possibilities and liturgical music.

## **Part 2: THE RITE OF MARRIAGE**

The celebration of the Rite of Marriage is of its very nature a communal event. This celebration is deeply symbolic for both the couple and the entire Roman Catholic Church with its body of tradition. This event is symbolic of the intimate love of Christ for his Church, of the mutually loving relationship of one person for another, and of the joy which results among the people of the worshipping community.

There are two levels of this communal celebration: the personal and the social. At the personal level, two individuals promise their fidelity to each other in a permanent union. At the social level, marriage speaks to the continuation of the human race and the welfare of family and society.

The Rite of Marriage is at once a solemn exchange of vows and an act of worship as the man and woman celebrate this rite before the assembled Church community.

Because Christian marriages are celebrated in the midst of a community of believers, it is important that everyone present participate actively in prayer and song. Christian sacraments are celebrated by the congregation, not observed by spectators. Actions, prayers, songs -- all aspects of the Rite of Marriage and the Eucharistic celebration -- have as a basic foundation the principle of community participation.

The church is not simply a building where Christian marriage takes place. Rather, the Church is the community of believers in which a couple initiates a new relationship. As the man and woman promise their fidelity to each other, they challenge the entire Church to renew its commitment to the Lord Jesus. As they begin their married life together, they ask the community to support them by prayer and example.

A well-prepared and well-celebrated marriage liturgy balances these two aspects: a public event in the Church community and the personal commitment of the couple. Good weddings become good liturgy when a couple expand their focus and concerns beyond "doing their thing" and invite all who are present to share as fully as possible in their special celebration.

## THE FOUR PARTS OF A CATHOLIC WEDDING

**1. The Entrance Rite:** The bride and groom are escorted to the sanctuary with beauty and honor in a formal procession. A gathering song is then appropriate, followed by an opening prayer.

**2. The Word of God:** We sit and listen to God's Word in the Scripture readings you help choose. The congregation respond in prayer and song.

**3. The Marriage Ceremony:** Before the gathered assembly you express your intentions and your consent, and exchange rings.

**4a. Within Mass:** Having made your marriage a sign of love in the community, you join the assembly in our greatest sign of love and unity, the Eucharist.

OR

**4b. Without Mass:** At the discretion of the couple the wedding ceremony can be celebrated without mass (Eucharist.) This is sometimes done if one member of the couple is not Catholic. However, since acceptance of each other's faith is going to be a profound part of their married life, many couples of disparate religions still choose to celebrate their marriage within the Catholic mass. In that case the non-Catholic party will receive a blessing from the priest or deacon instead of receiving communion.

## Part 3: PLANNING THE WEDDING

**Decoration:** Simplicity is the key to beauty.

The sanctuary is decorated appropriately for the liturgical season. Any decorations that are moved or removed for the wedding need to be returned immediately after the ceremony.

If you want a unity candle or other candelabra (to be rented by you), please use dripless candles. Of course, clean appropriately following the ceremony.

If you want flowers, a single arrangement on one side or one on both sides of the sanctuary works well. Flowers placed in front of the altar cannot obstruct the view of the altar or movement around the altar.

Flower person and ring bearer are optional. Flower petals must be cleaned up following the ceremony.

There is a room near the parish center where the bride and her attendants may dress. The bride may dress in room 123. The groom may use room 104. PLEASE ASSIGN SOMEONE TO CLEAN UP AFTERWARDS.

Pictures may be taken before, during, or after the ceremony. If the photographer is taking pictures during the ceremony, they must be discreet at all times. The photographer should stay out of the area surrounding the altar and refrain from all flash usage. Remember, a wedding is a solemn and sacred event in which a sacrament is being conferred. If pictures are being taken after the wedding, they must be mindful of the regular mass and confession schedule. Please discourage family amateur photographers during the ceremony since it disturbs moments of prayer and can ruin the official photographer's shots.

### **Scheduling:**

The best times for weddings at St. Robert's are:

- Friday evening
- Saturday morning or early afternoon, no later than 1 pm.
- Saturday evening after completion of mass, around 6:00 PM
- Remember: the church is used for confessions from 3:00 to 3:30 PM every Saturday, and for Mass from 4:00 to 5:30 PM every Saturday.
- Rehearsals are usually scheduled on the previous evening at 6:00 PM.

### **Music:**

The music program must be approved by the parish Director of Worship, who can also assist you in planning the music.

### **The Celebration:**

Solemn Entrance Father meets the wedding party in the Vestibule.

As the processional begins:

Father leads.

Attendant couples follow, several rows apart

Groom (with his parents)

Flower/ring persons

Bride (with her parents)

Other Options:

Bride and Groom walk in together

Parents seated by ushers

Groom walks in with Father

Reader, with book, in procession

The liturgy continues with greeting, welcome, and opening prayer.

All are seated to listen to God's Word. You choose the readings from the suggestions in the marriage booklet. You may have as many as three readings including the Gospel.

1st Reading (Old Testament) \_\_\_\_\_

Reader \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm Response, generally sung

If recited, Reader \_\_\_\_\_

(without Mass, only one reading is required)

2nd Reading (New Testament) \_\_\_\_\_

Reader \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel Acclamation (sung) \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel Reading (Priest or Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_

The marriage rite itself takes place after Celebrant's homily.

The couple face each other in the center of the front of the sanctuary.

Attendants are gathered beside them.

The celebrant acts as official witness as the couple confers the sacrament to each other.

The celebrant will have you repeat after him offering your consent (vows) to each other.

Universal Prayer: the couple may write four or five petitions for these prayers—for themselves, married couples, family, guests, peace, causes they care about, etc. Sample petitions are given below. Choose someone to read your petitions or the Cantor can read them.

If there is to be a celebration of the Eucharist, the following occurs:

1. Offertory: two, three or four persons bring the bread and wine to the altar.
2. An offertory song may be sung either by the cantor or congregation.
3. Eucharistic Prayer by Father, at which all sing the Holy, Acclamation and Amen.
4. The Lord's Prayer: within the mass, the Lord's Prayer is always said communally.
5. The Sign of Peace: the bride and groom kiss, receive the greeting of peace from Father, and may then go to both sets of parents. You should go together to each set.
6. Communion is given to you under both kinds. If you wish the whole congregation to receive from the chalice, choose special ministers of Communion. During Communion a hymn is usually sung.
7. The prayer after Communion is prayed.
8. The bride and groom may light a Unity Candle or perform another *approved* ceremony of unity at this point.
9. The final blessing is given, the couple is presented and the party leaves to the recessional music.

If Eucharist is not celebrated, the following occurs:

1. The Our Father is recited by the congregation.
2. A sign of peace is given.
3. The Nuptial blessing is given.
4. The bride and groom may light a Unity Candle or perform another *approved* ceremony of unity at this point.
5. Closing blessing and presentation of the newly married couple
6. Recessional music

After the recessional the wedding party may greet their guests either in the vestibule, at the main entrance or in the parish hall. If there are a large number of guests, the vestibule will likely prove too small.

Rice or other seed is not allowed due to practical and safety concerns. Please make this known to friends and relatives.

Clean-up. We depend on you to pick up and put away boxes, papers, ribbons, candles, etc. The church has already been cleaned for the wedding, and there is no one to come and take care of these items.

### **Alcohol Use**

It is a violation of Church and State law to marry anyone who is intoxicated. No alcohol should be consumed by the couple on the day of the wedding until after the ceremony. The wedding party and guests should be mindful that they are attending a sacred service. Save the partying for the reception. If the reception is being held in the Parish Hall while a mass is being celebrated, guests should be mindful of noise and remain respectful of the mass.

### **Offerings and Costs**

We do not charge for weddings, but most people realize that having a ceremony at the church involves costs for utilities and maintenance expenses, as well as the priest and other ministers who give of their time and talent for the service. Therefore, it is customary to remunerate the church and ministers involved. Often family members offer their services as readers, servers, or cantors. These usually do not expect or desire an honorarium as they are part of the family. When the church provides ministers and musicians, a donation for their services is usually given. The following amounts are offered as guidelines only and should not be considered a “charge” for the service.

Church Facility	\$ 200 - \$300
Priest/Celebrant	\$100 - \$200
Organist/Accompanist	\$ 75 – 100
Cantor	\$ 75 - \$100
Servers	\$10 - \$20



### **Sample Petitions for Universal Prayer**

*The couple should choose four to five petitions for the service.*

That these faithful Christians, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, newly joined in Holy Matrimony, may always enjoy health and well-being, let us pray to the Lord.

That they be granted perfect and fruitful love, peace and strength, and that they bear faithful witness to the name of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

That Christ will bless their covenant as he chose to sanctify marriage at Cana in Galilee, let us pray to the Lord.

That the Christian people may grow in virtue day by day and that all who are burdened by any need may receive the help of grace from above, let us pray to the Lord.

That the grace of the Sacrament will be renewed by the Holy Spirit in all married persons here present, let us pray to the Lord.