

Wedding Guidelines

St Benilde Catholic Church



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MARRIAGE POLICY

In these words, the Gospel of St. Mark summarizes the teachings of Jesus concerning marriage. Jesus not only insisted that the original design of His heavenly Father for marriage be preserved, but He sanctified marriage for His followers by giving them the Sacrament of Matrimony. The love of man and woman is made holy in Christian marriage. St. Paul tells us that the love of a Christian husband and wife reflects the love of Christ for the Church. Christian marriage has an added dimension, the sharing of the supernatural life, which is first received in baptism. The Church has consistently taught that marriage is a personal relationship involving a lifelong commitment to a shared life that is both intimate and faithful. A relationship lacking these qualities is not considered a true marriage. But once a true sacramental marriage has been established, only death can sever the marriage bond. It should be noted that annulments granted by the Church do not terminate truly sacramental marriages, but rather declare that marriages presumed to be sacramental were never true and binding due to some impediment that existed from the beginning of the union. In accordance with the aforementioned teaching of the Church and in support of the Policy for Marriage Preparation as Particular Law in the Archdiocese of New Orleans (Effective March 1, 2026), St. Benilde Parish issues the following policy for marriage preparation and enrichment:

MARRIAGE PREP

Preparations should begin at least six to eight months before the wedding date. These six to eight months will give sufficient time for the couple to discern their readiness for marriage with the assistance of the Church. Exceptions to this six to eight month preparation period will be made only in light of serious extenuating circumstances. The formal marriage preparation process must be completed two months prior to the wedding date.

Reserving a date and time for the wedding on the parish's calendar does not automatically assure the couple's readiness for sacramental marriage. Definitive wedding plans should not be made nor contracts entered into until this determination of readiness is made by the priest/deacon, which is usually after the discussion of the pre-marital inventory (FOCCUS).

The marriage preparation program will consist of the following: an initial interview with the priest or deacon (completing the form entitled "The First Steps to the Altar"), the completion of the Pre-Nuptial Inquiry, the administering of a Premarital Inventory (FOCCUS), several meetings with the priest or deacon to discuss the FOCCUS results, attendance at one Archdiocesan approved marriage preparation program (see the Guide to Marriage Preparation Programs sheet included in this handbook for more information), instruction in Natural Family Planning, a planning session for the wedding ceremony, and finally, the wedding rehearsal. The state marriage licenses must be provided to the officiating priest/deacon. Please request a newly issued (within six months of the wedding date) baptismal certificate from your church of baptism for the officiating priest/deacon

Church law stipulates that weddings should normally take place in the parish church of the bride. If the bride is not Catholic, the wedding should take place in the parish of the groom. Marriages will be scheduled in this parish if one spouse has, or formerly had residence in the parish or is registered with us and attends Mass here on a regular basis. Any other marriages of non-parishioners can be scheduled; however, you must also include another deacon or priest who will handle the preparation and perform the ceremony. Brides that are non-parishioners must obtain a letter of permission from their pastor to be married outside their territorial parish.

At least one party must profess the Catholic religion. Profession of faith implies some practice of religion such as prayer, attendance at Mass and reception of the Sacraments.

Since Christian marriage is a sacrament, it is the responsibility of the priest or deacon to ascertain that the parties are properly disposed to receive the sacrament.

Marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic is permitted by the Church with proper dispensation. In order to obtain dispensation, the Catholic party is required to promise that he or she will continue living his or her faith in the Catholic Church and will do all in his or her power to have the

children baptized and reared as Catholics. Special permission to celebrate the wedding ceremony of a mixed religion couple within the context of the Mass must be obtained by the priest or deacon preparing the couple for marriage.

Pre-marital pregnancy is not sufficient reason for marriage. An assessment will be made as to the intention to marry prior to pregnancy and the current circumstances of the couple before a decision is made to perform the ceremony. In any event, a marriage will not be performed without thorough preparation.

If a couple attempts marriage contrary to the laws of the Church before a judge or non- Catholic minister, validation of the marriage is permitted only after proper preparation.

FEE SCHEDULE

The following fees apply for weddings:

For a parishioner (supporting) \$300.00

For a parishioner (non-supporting) \$450.00

For a non-parishioner \$600.00

Validation of Marriage \$200.00

A deposit of half the total fee must be paid at the time the church is booked. The balance is due at least two months prior to the wedding. Cancellations occurring within two months of the wedding date will result in a forfeiture of the deposit.

Please make all checks payable to St. Benilde Church.

Qualification for parishioner status (for church fees) is determined according to the following policy:

Those registered parishioners with a regular record of parish support of \$520.00 in annual contributions to the parish (through the envelope system or by identifiable contributions) for at least one year prior to the initial wedding application will be assessed a fee of \$300.00.

Those parishioners registered for at least six months prior to the initial wedding application with no record of parish support or who have not reached the \$520.00 threshold will be assessed a fee of \$450.00.

Non-parishioners at the time of application will be assessed a fee of \$600.00

Minister Fees

Altar Servers Stipends: \$25.00 each (paid directly to them)

(If desired, the couple must arrange for Altar Servers)

Musicians (cantors, vocalists, trumpeters, string players, harpists, or organists etc.) will have varying individual fees, contact them directly for more information.

Priest or Deacon Suggested Stipend: \$150.00-\$200.00 (Stipend for clergy is neither fixed nor required.

Wedding Coordinator (paid prior to wedding) \$150.00

RESERVATION OF THE CHURCH

1. Start times for weddings are as follows: Fridays between 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Saturday between 11:00 a.m. and 12 Noon, and between 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Please contact the Parish Office to inquire about available dates.
2. To initiate the reservation process, the couple must first complete the Marriage Application and Marriage Contract (included in this handbook) as well as the form The First Steps to the Altar (obtained from the officiating cleric) and return all three forms to the Parish Office along with the necessary deposit. Once these have been received and approved by the Pastor, the date will be confirmed and a letter of acceptance will be sent out to the couple. (Please note that you must have the officiating priest/deacon complete the form “The Steps to the Altar” in order to make a reservation).
3. Wedding rehearsals will be held either the Thursday or Friday before the wedding. Start times for rehearsals are as follows: Thursdays between 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and Fridays between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Rehearsals will run approximately one hour.
4. The Wedding Party Information Sheet and the Reading Selection Sheet must be returned to the Parish Office no later than two weeks before the wedding rehearsal.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

“HOUSE OF GOD”: It is imperative that an atmosphere of prayer be maintained before and following the wedding celebration. Boisterous conduct is out of place; so are food/drink and the use of any tobacco products. Please keep all doors closed before, during and after the ceremony.

BRIDE’S and BRIDESMAIDS’ DRESSES: Discretion must be used when choosing dresses for a wedding at St. Benilde Catholic Church. Bare shoulders and strapless dresses are not appropriate in Church. Décolletage that reveals an inappropriate amount of cleavage is not acceptable in Church. If you have any questions about your dress, please speak with your wedding coordinator.

ALCOHOL: At no time is alcohol ever allowed anywhere on Church property. Alcohol consumption should be monitored the day of the wedding. No one is permitted to participate in the bridal party if the priest or deacon witnessing the vows deems the individual to be “tipsy” or intoxicated.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICIATING PRIEST OR DEACON

1. A marriage between a catholic and non-baptized person must obtain a dispensation from Disparity of Cult and may not be celebrated within the context of Mass.
2. Officiants with faculties within the Archdiocese of New Orleans are expected to guide the engaged couple through the required marriage preparation process
3. Officiants outside the Archdiocese of New Orleans must obtain a Testimonial Letter of Suitability from the respective Ordinary of his diocese or Major Superior of his religious congregation. This testimony must be sent to Archbishop James F. Checcio and a copy to St. Benilde Parish, Metairie, LA.
4. Officiants from another diocese preparing couples outside the Archdiocese of New Orleans must send all the necessary documents to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of New Orleans for review and approval
5. A letter of delegation for marriage will be sent to the Officiant once all the documents are received at the St. Benilde Parish Office. Documents should be submitted to the Parish Office no later than two weeks prior to the date of marriage. Please do not wait to bring the completed marriage file to the Church on the night of the rehearsal.
6. Officiants are expected to be present to direct the rehearsal with the assistance of the wedding coordinator of St. Benilde Parish.
7. Officiants are expected to return the civil marriage license to the appropriate Clerk of Court.
8. Officiants residing in another state must register with the state of Louisiana to perform the civil aspect of the marriage. The procedure for registration is on the website of the Archdiocese of New Orleans under Downloads in the Chancellor file.

THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROCESS

To ensure that engaged couples have adequate time to prepare for the sacrament in a meaningful way, they must contact the Celebrant at least six to eight months in advance of the wedding date, and conclude a formal preparation process no closer than two months prior to the wedding date. *Nine months to one year is ideal.* This preparation time is not just a “waiting period” for the ceremony, but rather an important, formative process in preparation for the lifetime journey on which the couple is about to embark. The guidance is designed to help the engaged couple evaluate their readiness to live married life, gain insights of themselves individually and as a couple, obtain a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Matrimony, understand the mission of a married couple both in the Church and in society and develop a greater appreciation of their faith.

Once the engaged couple has scheduled an appointment with the celebrant, marriage readiness will be assessed, a marriage preparation process will be determined, documents necessary for a Catholic wedding will be reviewed and assistance with planning the Liturgy for the celebration will be forthcoming. A thorough review of this booklet will familiarize the couple with the various guidelines established for weddings at St. Benilde Catholic Church.

Planning Your Family God’s Way: Natural Family Planning

As part of the Marriage Preparation Process, engaged couples are required to receive instruction in Natural Family Planning. NFP is a method for following God’s plan for achieving pregnancy by using the physical means that God has built into human nature. “While reflecting the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage and family life, NFP promotes openness to life, and recognizes the value of the child. By respecting the love-giving and life-giving natures of marriage, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife.”

Sessions are available through the Archdiocese of New Orleans Family Life Apostolate and are also included in the as part of the Marriage Preparation Programs.

DAYS FOR THE ENGAGED

For couples contemplating marriage in the Church, where neither party has been married before. Days for the Engaged is a two-part course for couples preparing for marriage consisting of two Saturday seminars. Part A covers life skills such as communication, conflict resolution, finances, time management, etc. Part B covers the Sacramentality of marriage, sexuality, and Natural Family Planning.

CRITERIA: Engaged couple, neither previously married. Catholic in origin and orientation; however, it is open to couples of all faiths who wish to deepen their relationship. Couples should attend at least five months before their marriage.

For more information and registration contact Family Life Apostolate, 504-861-6243. Couples may also register online: <https://nolacatholicfla.regfox.com/days-for-the-engaged>

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

For couples contemplating marriage in the Church, where neither partner has been married before. A weekend retreat experience for the couple which introduces basic communication skills needed to form and maintain good Christian marriages. It begins on Friday evening and concludes on Sunday afternoon following lunch. All meals are provided. Participants are housed in dormitories.

CRITERIA: Engaged couple. For more information, call Family Life Apostolate, 504-861-6243. For more information on Engaged Encounter, visit the New Orleans Catholic Engaged Encounter web site at www.nocce.org or for their registration form visit <https://nolacatholicfla.regfox.com/engaged-encounter>

IN-HOME MENTOR COUPLE

What is In-Home Marriage Preparation? The preparation of an engaged couple for the Sacrament of Matrimony by a married couple, one-on-one, couple-to-couple, in a home environment.

In six meetings, the married couple will mentor the engaged couple in the skills and attitudes necessary to transition successfully to married life. This preparation provides the engaged couple with a solid foundation for marriage.

This option is scheduled through Fr. Matthew.

REMARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

For couples seeking remarriage in the Church, where at least one or both of the parties have been previously married to someone else. Please note that the term "previously married" applies even if the first marriage was outside the Church. Couples whose annulments are pending may attend this program; however, attendance does not give rise to a right to marry in the Church in such instances.

Presented by married couples who are themselves in second marriage situations. Topics which relate to the unique characteristics of a second marriage are covered: the former spouse, stepfamily structure, step-parenting, family background, handling conflict, sexual love, money management, alimony and/or child support and its impact on a second marriage, and sacramental love.

The program takes place in several formats: over three evenings, on two weekend afternoons, or Friday night and Sunday afternoon.

CRITERIA: Couples where one or both parties have been previously married to someone else. The previous marriage(s) may have been terminated by death, or divorce and Church Annulment.

For more information and registration, contact Family Life Apostolate, 504-861-6243.

SPECIAL MARRIAGE PREPARATION

For couples seeking validation of their civil marriages, couples with relationships of at least two years, or couples living together with children. This program makes use of the RE-FOCCUS Marriage Enrichment tool to help couples explore their likes and differences in a constructive way. Topics include Marriage as a Process, Intimacy, Compatibility, Communication, Commitment, Forgiveness, and Sacramental Marriage. The program is facilitated by a married couple. There is private dialogue between the couple and some small group sharing.

The program is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. - to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday.

CRITERIA: Couples who are presently married civilly, (not within the Church) or those in a long-term relationship.

For more information and registration, contact Family Life Apostolate, 504-861-6243.

ENVIRONMENT

Flowers are symbolic of our joy in Christ and express our thankfulness for the beautiful gifts of nature God has given to us. Many couples choose flowers for the church because they enhance the spirit of celebration and hospitality. Our parish has developed guidelines to assist you in creating the most beautiful and appropriate liturgical environment for your wedding.

1. Flower arrangements may be placed in the following areas: 2 arrangements on the high altar, one on each side of the tabernacle and one in front of the statue of our Blessed Mother and one in front of the statue of St. Joseph. Flowers may also be placed on columns on each side of the high altar.
2. Decoration(s) should not impede the approach to the altar. In most liturgical spaces, decorations can be appropriate and enhancing. Placement of all floral arrangements in the sanctuary is to be approved by your wedding coordinator.
3. Flowers may be placed outside of the Church or in the vestibule of the Church. No wreaths or other decorations will be allowed on the front doors because of the possibility of damage to the doors.
4. Flowers and bows can be used to decorate the ends of the pews as long as they are tied to the pews. No tape or tacks are allowed to affix them to the pews.
5. To avoid any potential safety hazards, flower girls are to refrain from tossing petals in the entrance and recessional procession.
6. If your wedding is celebrated during the Advent, Christmas, Lenten or Easter Seasons you are asked to consider the nature of these special times in our Catholic tradition. Please respect the community's environment during these times since the church encourages special décor for various seasons of our liturgical calendar. You are welcomed and encouraged to use any of our décor. For example, in the Advent Season, our Advent wreath is part of our environment. The Lenten Season calls for a barren environment. If you are choosing your wedding date during the Lenten Season, flowers/greenery may be used, but we ask that all décor be kept to a minimum because of the nature of the season. Since our plants are removed from the church during the Lenten Season they are not available for weddings. Your wedding liturgy coordinator will be able to assist you with your wedding liturgical environment.
7. We welcome any floral arrangement(s) you may wish to leave in the church as a gift to our community after the celebration of your wedding. Your flowers would continue to enhance our parish worship space. We also respect your plans to bring these arrangements to your reception, if you prefer. Please let the Wedding Coordinator know your desire at least one month in advance.

Candles

1. For safety purposes, candles are only allowed in the sanctuary. Candles are not allowed in the center aisle, or any other location in the church including the window ledges.
2. The Unity Candle is not part of the Catholic Wedding Rite, the use of a Unity Candle is strictly prohibited at St. Benilde Parish. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Aisle Runners

Aisle runners can be very unsafe; this is true even if a cloth aisle runner is used. Because of this safety factor, aisle runners are not permitted.

Use of Rice, Bird Seed or Confetti

To avoid a safety hazard, the throwing of rice, birdseed or confetti is not allowed.

Kneelers

Kneelers will be placed on the lower floor – touching the first step that enters into the Sanctuary. Kneelers will be provided for the bride, groom, best man and maid of honor. The Altar of Sacrifice is never to be moved in order to place kneelers on the Sanctuary floor.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING

It is understandable that you may desire to record your wedding celebration in order to preserve the memories for many years to come. However, to ensure the sacredness of the liturgy for all gathered, we ask that you, your photographer, and your videographer observe our parish guidelines. Therefore, it is your responsibility that both the photographer and the videographer clearly understand and agree to adhere to these guidelines. There are no exceptions to these guidelines.

1. Photographers and videographers may place themselves in any area of the nave of the church; they are never to be in the sanctuary.
2. Photographers and videographers are expected to keep movement around the church to a minimum during the liturgy so that the prayer of those gathered is not disturbed.
3. Because flash photography can be distracting to the couple, priest, and those gathered, there is to be “limited” flash photography after the entrance procession; flash may be used again only during the recessional.
4. No additional microphones may be attached to any sanctuary furniture.
5. Pictures taken of the arrival of the bride and wedding party should not delay the beginning of the ceremony.
6. The church will be available to you for the taking of photographs or videos, both before and after the celebration, but with respect for the schedule of other weddings or parish Masses. Pictures following the ceremony should not exceed 15 minutes.

WEDDING MUSIC

Planning Your Music

As soon as your wedding is booked with the Church, please contact a local Cantor/Vocalist and Organist to arrange for music at your wedding.

Members of the music community (vocalist, trumpeters, string players, harpists, cantors or organists, etc.) will have varying individual fees. Contact them directly for more information.

Considerations

Music can add much joy and sacredness to the celebration of your wedding. Please remember that music's primary purpose in the liturgy is to help people pray and worship. The music that you choose for your wedding **MUST** be of sacred character, fitting for the occasion and such that enables assembled family and friends to pray with you and for you. As you plan your music, ask yourself this question as you choose each selection, "will this song help us, and all gathered with us, to lift our hearts in prayer?"

Common questions

Q. How will I pick my music?

A. The Wedding Coordinator will assist you in making appropriate selections.

Q. Can I play a CD of my favorite song?

A. Only live music is appropriate.

Q. Should I have my soloist sing the Our Father?

A. The Lord's Prayer is a prayer that all Christians hold in common, united as one family in Christ. It may be sung **ONLY** if those gathered are familiar with the musical arrangement. Otherwise, this prayer is to be recited.

Q. I'm having my wedding during the Christmas Season, can I have carols sung?

A. Yes. The liturgical calendar, with its feasts and seasons, shapes all our liturgies, including weddings. With this in mind, a wedding during the Christmas season can incorporate carols just as a wedding during the Easter season might pull music from the Church's Easter repertoire.

Q. What about flowers to Mary?

A. Many couples choose to take flowers to Mary after signing the marriage documents as a sign of their devotion to our Blessed Mother. This devotion is part of the rich tradition of our Catholic Faith. *Ave Maria* is commonly sung during this time, but by no means is that the only appropriate song.

Q. Should I include music in my wedding program?

A. It is suggested that the music for your wedding liturgy be printed or acknowledged in your wedding program

WEDDING MUSIC PLANNER

Name of Bride: _____

contact # _____

Additional contact info (mother of bride, groom etc.)

Date and Time: _____

Celebrant: _____

Musicians: _____

Organist: _____

Cantor: _____

Additional Musicians: _____

Preludes: _____

Seating of Mothers:

of grandmothers/mothers processing _____

Bridal Party:

of couples in the party: _____

Ringbearer/flower girl: _____

Bridal Processional:

Entrance Chant (optional): _____

Responsorial Psalm: _____

Gospel Acclamation: _____

Canticle/Hymn after Exchange of Rings (optional): _____

Preparation of Gifts: _____

Eucharistic Acclamations:

Holy Holy _____

Memorial Acclamation _____

Amen _____

Lamb of God _____

Communion: _____

Flowers to Mary (optional) _____

Recessional: _____

Postlude: _____

WEDDING MINISTERS

The Assembly

At the wedding liturgy, family and friends gather to celebrate and witness your wedding. Unless they are encouraged to participate, they will be an audience instead of participants. The focus of your wedding liturgy preparation is to encourage full and active participation of all.

The Couple

1. The two of you are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic wedding liturgy. You give yourselves to one another in marriage.
2. The priest or deacon serves as the Church's official witness.
3. Since much focus will be on the two of you, if you enter into the prayers and singing, your invited friends and family will be more inclined to participate.
4. It is not recommended that you take on another ministry during the liturgy, such as that of lector or Eucharistic minister. These ministries are best served by others in the assembly.

The Presider

1. A priest will preside or officiate at most wedding liturgies. When the wedding is celebrated without a Mass, a deacon may officiate.
2. Priests or deacons from outside St. Benilde Parish may preside at weddings with delegation from the pastor.
3. If you are marrying a non-Catholic and would like a non-Catholic minister to participate, please share your desire with the priest/deacon before extending the invitations. The presider will advise you in this matter. If planned in advance, it can be a beautiful and significant sign of the ecumenical dimension of your marriage.

The Witnesses

1. Every member of the assembly at your wedding is important because each one is a witness to your marriage.
2. At the same time, three particular witnesses have a designated role in the liturgy. The church's official witness is the priest or deacon. The best man and the maid/matron of honor are also witnesses. They need not be Catholic to fulfill this role.

The Ushers

1. More and more, this ministry is being referred to as the hospitality ministry, because this title gives a better understanding of the role of these ministers. The main responsibilities of the ushers are to greet those arriving at the church and to assist them in finding a seat.
2. Please encourage your ushers to seat your guests near others and to introduce them to each other. Inviting those gathering to sit toward the front is another sign of hospitality.

3. If you have a wedding program , an usher may be asked to hand it to those gathering, or this can be another role for a friend or family member.
4. Another gracious sign of hospitality as your family and friends arrive is to have greeters outside of church doors saying, “Welcome to St. Benilde Church.” At some weddings, the parents of the groom and/or bride choose to greet those gathering for the celebration in the vestibule. This is another option for you.
5. If you have a handicapped friend/family member attending, please let the wedding liturgy coordinator know so that special instructions may be given to an usher at your rehearsal.
6. To avoid seating delays, it is recommended that you have at least one usher for every fifty (50) guests. Since some family and friends will arrive early for a wedding, it is also recommended that your ushers arrive at the church at least 45 minutes before the ceremony begins.

The Musicians

1. The number and kind of musicians needed for your wedding will depend on the specific music that you plan with our parish music director.
2. The music at your wedding is one way to encourage or stifle the active participation of your guests. The norm in the Catholic liturgy is that the entire assembly should sing the majority of music. It is important to have a cantor, the leader of song, who can significantly enhance the assembly’s participation. The beauty of the assembly’s participation in your celebration will be well worth the relatively small expense of hiring a song leader.
3. Please see the music section of this booklet for information about planning your music.

The Lectors

1. Much care should be given in choosing the lectors. These lectors should be able to proclaim the Word so that those gathered may clearly understand. It is not a ministry that should be assigned to people just because they are good friends or family members who need a part in your wedding.
2. It is preferable that you have two lectors, one for the first reading and another for the second reading.
3. The text for the readings you have chosen should be given to your lectors as soon as possible so that they can practice. Lectors are encouraged to attend the rehearsal.

The Altar Servers

1. Altar servers are welcomed to assist the priest for Mass but it is the responsibility of the couple to arrange for their service. It is the policy of St. Benilde Catholic Church to have male altar servers. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

General Intercessions

1. These prayers are prayed for the needs of the world, the church, our communities, and a variety of other needs. You may choose someone to read the intercessions, if they are not sung. The person who will read the first or second reading may pray the prayers, or another person may be chosen.
2. You may choose to write or give suggestions for specific intentions to be included in the general intercessions, but these must be pre-approved by the presider. For example, you may choose to pray for deceased relatives or sick friends/family members who are not able to attend. You may include a prayer for your godparents, parents or others who have touched your lives. Needs of the world should also be included: for example, you may pray for the poor, the homeless and the unemployed.

Gift Bearers

1. The gift bearers are two people who come forth from the assembly to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine. This can be a special role for godparents or for other significant people in your lives.
2. Ideally, you want to choose people who are not fulfilling any other ministry in the Mass.
3. Some couples are choosing to have the gifts of bread and wine handed to them, and they hand them to the presider. This option is not permitted at St. Benilde Parish.

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

1. In ordinary circumstances, only Extraordinary Ministers that have been delegated by the Archdiocese of New Orleans and commissioned for St. Benilde Parish may serve as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist.
2. It is important to remember that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1986 developed written guidelines for the reception of Communion. The guidelines are written in the front cover of our missalette. A copy will be given to you when you meet with the wedding liturgy coordinator. St. Benilde Parish adheres strictly to these guidelines.

WEDDING ATTENDANTS

Bridesmaids and Groomsmen

1. It is the Church's requirement that you be married in the presence of a priest or deacon and two witnesses; the state requires a licensed minister and two witnesses.
2. It is understandable that you will want significant family members/friends to be bridesmaids and groomsmen. However, because of standing and seating arrangements, our parish recommends a maximum of six bridesmaids and six groomsmen. Please consider this when choosing your attendants.

Ring Bearers and Flower Girls

Very young children are many times uneasy about walking in front of large numbers of people and do not understand liturgical worship. When you are choosing ring bearers and flower girls, the children's ages should be considered so that their presence will add to and not detract from the joyful celebration. For this reason, children between five and ten years of age are recommended.

WEDDING PROGRAMS

1. A wedding program can greatly enhance the participation of those gathered for the celebration. It is suggested that you include the outline of the liturgy, the text for the music and the directions for sitting and standing. This is especially helpful for those who are not familiar with our Catholic worship.
2. The program will encourage full participation in the liturgy and serve as a beautiful remembrance of your wedding.
3. You are to finalize your choices of prayers and readings with the priest/deacon before they are printed in your program. All music must be finalized with the priest/deacon.

REHEARSALS

1. As soon as your wedding is scheduled, it is required that the rehearsal day and time be approved to avoid possible conflicts.
2. Please make every effort to ensure that all members of the wedding party (parents, ushers, attendants, lectors, etc.) are present for the rehearsal and on time. The wedding rehearsal is to begin promptly since the church may have other scheduled activities or the priest and/or coordinator may have other appointments. Please allow 45 minutes to one hour for the rehearsal.
3. It is also requested that you remind the wedding party that since the wedding rehearsal is in church, proper reverence must be shown at all times. Thus, proper dress, attitudes, and actions are expected. The drinking of alcoholic beverages prior to the rehearsal and wedding is strongly discouraged, and the drinking of alcoholic beverages in or around St. Benilde Church is strictly forbidden! There will be time for merriment at the rehearsal party and at the reception.
4. The rehearsal allows the members of the wedding party to become familiar with the environment of our church building and with the roles they will assume in the liturgy. The celebrant and/or coordinator will give a brief overview of the liturgy to help all concerned understand the prayerful nature of the celebration. You will do a “walk through” of the ceremony so that everyone will be familiar with it.
5. All readings, prayers, music, etc. must be turned in prior to the rehearsal. The rehearsal itself is not the time for discussion and decision-making.
6. Your marriage license must be submitted to the officiating priest/deacon no later than one week prior to the rehearsal in order for all forms to be typed.
7. Please contact the wedding coordinator listed at least three months prior to your wedding date.
8. Wedding Party Information Sheet and the Reading Selection Sheet must be returned to the Parish Office no later than two weeks before the wedding rehearsal.

WEDDING PARTY INFORMATION

Couple's Name: _____

Wedding Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Mass? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Names of 2 gift bearers: _____

Old Testament Reader _____

New Testament Reader _____

Prayers of the Faithful Reader _____

Will Communion be received under both species? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Extraordinary Minister(s) of Holy Communion: _____

Approximately how many guests will receive Communion? _____

Number of Bridesmaids: _____ **Number of Groomsmen:** _____

Where will the groomsmen stand to meet the bridesmaids?

☐ In front of 1st pew (groomsmen stay in place) ☐ Rear of Church

Number and age of flower girls: ____ **Number and age of ring bearers:** ____

Are you having: ☐ Flowers for mothers/family ☐ Flowers for Blessed Mother

Musicians: _____

Procession escorts

Groom's Grandparents: _____

Groom's Grandparents: _____

Bride's Grandparents: _____

Bride's Grandparents: _____

Stepmothers: (if applicable) _____

Groom's Mother: _____

Bride's Mother: _____

Please list in the order in which they will walk, ending with the maid of honor and best man.

Bridesmaid _____

Bridesmaid _____

Bridesmaid _____

Bridesmaid _____

Bridesmaid _____

Bridesmaid _____

Maid of Honor and Best Man _____

Flower Girl and Ring Bearer _____

READING SELECTIONS

Please provide us with the following information from the *Together for Life* booklet provided during wedding preparation. In each section, list the page and passage identification number.

OLD TESTAMENT READING _____

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (TO BE SUNG) _____

NEW TESTAMENT READING _____

GOSPEL _____

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL _____

(If you choose Prayers of the Faithful other than those from *Together for Life* please provide a separate copy of your selections)

APPLICATION FOR MARRIAGE

REQUESTED DAY/DATE _____ **REQUESTED TIME** _____

Bride's Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ **Religion:** _____

Church of Baptism: _____

Occupation: _____

Father's Name: _____ **Mother's Maiden Name:** _____

Have you ever been married before? _____

How long have you known your fiancé? _____

Why do you wish to be married in the Catholic Church?

Groom's Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ **Religion:** _____

Church of Baptism: _____

Occupation: _____

Father's Name: _____ **Mother's Maiden Name:** _____

Have you ever been married before? _____

Why do you wish to be married in the Catholic Church?

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received:

Pastor's Approval for Processing:

Date Couple First Contacted:

Date Entered in Church Book/Calendar:

Preparation by Officiate:

MARRIAGE CONTRACT

Name of Bride: _____

Name of Groom: _____

Day, Date, and Time of Wedding: _____

Day, Date, and Time of Rehearsal: _____

Officiating Priest/Deacon (Name, Address, & Telephone No.)

COMPLIANCE

I agree to accept all of the policies and conditions outlined in the wedding handbook of St. Benilde Catholic Church.

Signature _____

Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Church Reservation Fee (Deposit):

Final Wedding Fee:

Wedding Coordinator fee: (\$150.00)