

Christ the King Wedding Policies

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Marriage of the Virgin by Michelino Molinari da Besozzo

A wedding is for a day,

but a marriage is for a lifetime.

General Wedding Policies at Christ the King Church

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
Initial Requirements.....	3
Getting Started.....	3
Sacraments of Initiation.....	4
Wedding Dates & Times.....	4
PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY.....	4
Types of Weddings.....	4
Liturgical Ministries & Participants	5
Suggested Offerings	5
Parish Center Rental	6
CHURCH ETIQUETTE.....	6
Attire	6
Punctuality & Demeanor.....	6
Dressing Areas.....	6
Décor	7
Photography & Videography Considerations.....	7
Liturgical Music	7
Clean Up.....	7
Conclusion.....	7

General Wedding Policies at Christ the King Church

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your engagement! God has called you to Matrimony, and we want to help you have a holy and happy marriage. Please carefully read through this list of policies; all couples are expected to uphold them.

Initial Requirements

A couple should be married in the home church of either the bride or the groom. Because we are a large parish and receive many requests for wedding ceremonies in our church, Christ the King Parish follows these norms:

Members of Christ the King Parish: A person who wishes to marry at Christ the King Church needs to be a registered, contributing, and active member of the parish, or a dependent child of a currently registered member. Registering in the parish for the sake of requesting a marriage in Christ the King Church does not fulfill this requirement.—Registering occurs at our monthly Orientation Session. —

Non-members of Christ the King Parish: The pastor of Christ the King Church alone may give permission for non-members of the parish to celebrate their Matrimony in Christ the King Church on a case by case basis. Even in such exceptional cases the wedding must still be celebrated in complete accord with **all** of our parish's wedding policies contained herein. For such a wedding to occur in Christ the King a letter from the pastor of a fiancé must be received before any dates are discussed or any approval is given. In this letter the pastor of the fiancé's church needs 1. to confirm the fiancé's status as a registered **and** active parishioner in his parish and 2. give permission for the wedding of the fiancé to occur in Christ the King Church.

Getting Started

9 Months Lead Time: Archdiocesan policy requires at least a nine-month time period between the first contact with the Priest or Deacon and the date of the wedding.

Meet with a Priest: During the initial meeting with the Priest or Deacon he will get to know you, explain the required steps of marriage preparation in the Archdiocese of Omaha and at Christ the King Church, and schedule your wedding date and time, if possible. Only the Priest or Deacon preparing the couple can reserve a date and time for the wedding. After and only after this meeting with the Christ the King Priest or Deacon has occurred, the couple is encouraged to visit the Marriage Prep section of the Archdiocese of Omaha website to read the Archdiocesan requirements and to follow the directions to register online for supplemental experiences and the FOCCUS inventory: www.archomaha.org.

Marriage Preparation Includes and Requires:

- 5-8 one-hour meetings with the Priest, Deacon, or parish FOCCUS Facilitator: includes the initial meeting, FOCCUS inventory discussions, and liturgy planning
- Attendance at one of the special Christ the King Matrimony Seminars offered the 2nd Tuesday of every January, April, July, and October from 7-9 p.m. in the Parish Center.
- Attendance at either the Catholic Engaged Encounter weekend **or** the Marriage a Journey program
- Full completion of Natural Family Planning training
- Reception of all necessary documentation:
 - Completed Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire
 - Completed Freedom to Marry Form for Each of the Fiancés

General Wedding Policies at Christ the King Church

- An Official, New Copy of the Sacramental Record for Each Fiancé: This document is issued from the place of Baptism and must be dated within six months of the wedding day
- Certificate of Completion of Natural Family Planning (NFP) Classes
- Certificate of Completion of Either the Catholic Engaged Encounter (CEE) **OR** Marriage a Journey (MAJ)
- Special Documents: If applicable, copies of any annulment decrees, civil marriage licenses, mixed marriage permissions and dispensations, etc.

Sacraments of Initiation

A person who has received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and first Holy Communion is a fully-initiated Catholic. If you or your fiancé are missing any of the sacraments aforementioned, please tell the Priest or Deacon preparing you at your initial meeting. Non-Catholic fiancés, who are interested in the Catholic religion or in becoming Catholic, are invited to attend our classes for adults known as RCIA; if interested, please contact the Rectory at (402) 391-3606, x200.

Wedding Dates & Times

The usual times for weddings at Christ the King Church are Saturdays at 2 p.m. One may also choose a Friday evening for the wedding. The couple needs to work with the clergy celebrant in setting a time for the church (and/or Parish Center) to be unlocked; generally these areas are unlocked three hours before the ceremony.

PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY

At your last meeting with the Christ the King Priest or Deacon, he will help you plan and review your plans for your wedding and schedule a rehearsal usually held on the night before the wedding, beginning sometime between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Types of Weddings

Marriages among Catholic Parties: The sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ is a further sacrament that reveals the unity of Matrimony. As such, the sacrament of Matrimony is typically held within a Catholic Mass when both spouses are baptized Catholics.

Marriages among a Catholic and a non-Catholic Christian (Mixed Marriages): A wedding of a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic is normally not to be celebrated within Mass because the inability to receive Eucharist together heightens the couple's cultic differences and that of gathered family and guests. However, permission can be received to celebrate a mixed marriage within the Eucharistic liturgy if the celebrant deems it prudent and warranted.

Interfaith Marriages: A wedding between a Catholic and a non-baptized person is not celebrated within a Mass.

Convalidations: The convalidation of an attempted marriage is necessary whenever an existing impediment was not dispensed prior to the ceremony, or consent was defective, or canonical form was not observed, e.g., a marriage was celebrated outside the Catholic Church's rite. In the convalidation ceremony the Priest or Deacon presiding obtains a new act of marital consent from the couple that will validate their union and make it a sacrament.

Prior Marriages: Fiancés who have previously been married to another person should share this information with the Priest or Deacon preparing them as soon as possible. The Priest or Deacon is happy to assist you in every way to petition

General Wedding Policies at Christ the King Church

for the annulment of a previous union; no dates or times for a wedding can be set in such a situation until a decree of nullity is obtained.

Liturgical Ministries & Participants

- **Clergy:** All weddings at Christ the King Church are celebrated and witnessed by one of the parish Priests or Deacons currently serving Christ the King Parish. A Priest, who is a relative (brother, uncle, etc.) of the bride or groom, is welcome to celebrate the Mass and witness the marriage. A Deacon relative may also be the officiant of the Rite of Matrimony in the occasion of a wedding without Mass or if the rite itself occurs within Mass. Priests, who are close friends of the bride or groom, are welcome to concelebrate with the Christ the King Priest. Relatives or friends who are Deacons are also welcome to assist at the Mass.
- **Attendants:** It is necessary that there be two witnesses at any marriage. Customarily, these two persons serve as the best man and the maid (or matron) of honor for a valid marriage. It is recommended that you keep the number of additional attendants to a minimum, i.e., six couples or less. Having more than six couples can take away from the elegant simplicity of the wedding and may place more emphasis on the procession and number of people than on the bride and groom.
- **Ring Bearers & Flower Girls:** Small children oftentimes are not good choices as attendants. Only children over the age of five may be permitted to be attendants in the ceremony, even as flower girls or ring bearers.
- **Readers:** Catholic family and friends who read in their Catholic churches or who are competent in the skill of reading may proclaim the readings at your wedding. Non-Catholic persons may only be a reader in a wedding ceremony that is celebrated apart from Mass. It is your responsibility to give the readers copies of the final readings.
- **Gift Bearers:** Additional family and friends may participate as gift bearers at the preparation of the altar. Normally two or three persons are sufficient for this.
- **Cantor & Organist:** All couples are required to use an organist and a cantor from Christ the King Parish for any wedding with music at Christ the King Church. The use of any additional musicians and/or singers must first receive approval from the parish's Director of Sacred Music.

Suggested Offerings

Regular Wedding: The suggested offering for a wedding for registered, active, and contributing members of Christ the King Parish is **\$650**. This includes:

- Priest or Deacon: \$200
- Parish: \$150
- Christ the King Organist: \$200
- Christ the King Cantor: \$100

Simple Wedding: Couples who wish to celebrate only a simple wedding without formal music or decorations (such as in the case of a convalidation) are asked to consider giving **\$350**.

Non-Parishioners: Non-members of Christ the King, because they do not participate in the worship here at the parish or support it through their talents and treasure, are asked to give **\$900** as their offering for the wedding. Please see a further explanation on page three of these policies.

General Wedding Policies at Christ the King Church

Preparation Only: Couples that are being prepared for matrimony by a clergy member of Christ the King Parish but who are getting married elsewhere are asked to consider giving an offering of **\$200**.

Payment: Christ the King accepts cash or checks. Please make checks payable to Christ the King Church. The full offering or at least half of the offering must be given to the parish at the time a couple procures a date for their wedding. Any remaining payments are due at least one month prior to the wedding. Couples experiencing financial hardship should visit with the Priest or Deacon preparing them.

Parish Center Rental

Parishioners, who are registered, contributing, and actively attending Mass, are eligible to rent our Parish Center for pre-nuptial dinners or wedding receptions. If interested in the Parish Center, please contact our Parish Center Manager at (402) 391-3606, ext. 207.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

Because a wedding is a solemn celebration of Christ's chaste love for His Church, we desire to treat the ceremony with respect and devotion.

Attire

Modesty: The attire chosen for a wedding should reflect Christian values of modesty and decency. All dresses should be appropriate for the ceremony. Revealing dresses are never acceptable; capes or shawls can provide coverage in questionable cases.

White's Symbolism: A white dress or suit are not required for a wedding in the Catholic Church but the color white represents our baptismal dignity and chaste purity of both the bride and groom before Matrimony. For brides and grooms who have chosen to be civilly married or who live together as "husband and wife" before their sacramental Matrimony, a dignified dress or suit of another color would be more appropriate; having said that, we do not mandate the color of clothing.

Punctuality & Demeanor

Couples should arrive at the church no later than one hour before the scheduled ceremony. Out of consideration for those praying, and the sacred setting of the church, those in the church should always conduct themselves with a respectful quietude. Absolutely no alcohol, tobacco products, or gum are allowed in Christ the King buildings.¹ Food and refreshments are only allowed in the Parish Center room and library area.

Dressing Areas

If available, the bride and attendants may use a room three hours prior in the Parish Center to get dressed, wait, or eat a snack. The groomsmen and groom may use the library area in the Parish Center corridor as a staging area or place to rest. Please do not cook in the Parish Center and see that all food and trash is disposed of. The floor and tables should be cleaned. It is very important that every room is left in its original condition, i.e., clean, uncluttered, and in good order. Garbage can be deposited into the dumpster located at the northeast corner of the Parish Center.

¹ The presence and consumption of alcohol is only permitted in the Parish Center **during an approved Wedding reception** – please see the rules and limitations of the service and consumption of alcohol in the Parish Center Rental manual.

General Wedding Policies at Christ the King Church

Décor

You may add flowers or greenery to the ends of the pews and to the sanctuary, especially in front of the altar, Priest's chair, or ambo but please do not move any church decorations already in place. Decorations cannot arrive earlier than three hours before the scheduled wedding.

- Receiving lines, unity candles, aisle runners, arches, and free-standing candelabras with wax candles are never allowed in or at Christ the King Church.
- It is never allowed to disperse flower petals, rice, birdseed, confetti, bubbles, balloons or anything else in the church or on the premises.
- Nothing may be attached to the pews using glue or any adhesive. Pew clips are allowed.

Photography & Videography Considerations

Generally speaking you may take photos no more than two hours before your wedding, and only one hour for photos before the commencement of your wedding is guaranteed. If the wedding begins on time, you may take additional photos for 30 minutes after the wedding, but **the church must be silent and empty by 3:30 p.m.** to allow for other services in the church.

- Flashbulbs and bright lights may be used only before the Mass and afterwards and during the procession and the recession.
- Photographers and videographers are never allowed in the sanctuary and should avoid standing immediately in front of the sanctuary.
- During the ceremony, photographers and videographers can come as close to the couple as the side altars of Mary and Joseph, but not closer. They may also position themselves in the choir balcony but it is far from the sanctuary. Photographers may receive special permission to discretely take photos from the doorway between the sacristy and sanctuary during the exchange of vows and symbols.
- Photographers should not stop or interrupt the procession for still photos.

Please share these rules with your photographer and/or videographer. We expect them to abide by our guidelines and limitations.

Liturgical Music

Please see the music handout included in our wedding packet.

Clean Up

Immediately following the ceremony it is important that friends or attendants remove all boxes, plastic wrap, clothing, flashbulbs, floral paraphernalia, etc. from the church and any rooms used, i.e., Parish Center, library, narthex/vestibule, cry room, and bathroom. There is a dumpster located outside the northeast corner of the Parish Center. We also want to remind you and your guests that we cannot be responsible for anything that may get "lost" in the church.

Conclusion

We are delighted that God has called you together and are happy to help you before and after your marriage to remain committed and loving. May God bless you in your new life together and your new family.

General Wedding Policies at Christ the King Church



CHRIST THE KING
CATHOLIC CHURCH
to be known, loved, and sent