

Sacrament of Marriage

Guidelines for Marriage Preparation



St. Francis de Sales Church
20A Desales Avenue ✠ Lebanon, Ohio 45036 ✠ (513) 932-2601

Parish Staff

513-932-2601

Fr. Craig Best, Pastor

fr.craig@stfrancisdesales-lebanon.org

Fr. Bob Farrell, Parochial Vicar

rfarrell@stphilipmorrow.org

Jay Rettig, Deacon

jrettig@stfrancisdesales-lebanon.org

Director of Music

Doug Stegeman

dstegeman@stphilipmorrow.org

Wedding Coordinators

Lynn Colley

ohiocolley6@gmail.com

Debbie Frederick

debphil@me.com

Julie McDaniel

mcdans@roadrunner.com

20 Desales Avenue ☙ Lebanon, OH ☙ 45036

parishoffice@stfrancisdesales-lebanon.org

Congratulations on your Forthcoming Wedding!

May God bless you abundantly during your engagement
and throughout your married life.

Like you, we want your wedding to be both a beautiful and a sacred event—one that
reflects the love of God for his people and your love for each other.

Your marriage is a sign (sacrament) of God's love for his people. For just as God
entered into a deep and personal relationship with his people, so too, the two of you
are about to enter into a deep and personal relationship with each other through
the Sacrament of Matrimony.

This booklet will help you to prepare for your marriage and for your wedding
ceremony. May the Lord Jesus, who was a guest at the wedding feast in Cana,
bless you and fill your hearts with love.

It goes without saying that the Sacrament of Marriage should be celebrated in the church
where at least one of the parties is a member and participates in the faith life of the
community. As such, only registered members (or their children) of the parish may marry at
St. Francis de Sales. One needs to be registered in the parish for at least six months before
setting a wedding date at the church.

Marriage Preparation Process

To assist you in your preparation for marriage, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has established a process to help couples grow in their understanding of marriage.

Pre-Marriage Programs:

Because of the importance of marriage to the Church and to society, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati requires that couples participate in some formal pre-marriage instruction. Currently Pre-Marriage Programs takes the following forms:

- 1. Engaged Encounter Weekend**

- 2. Pre-Cana Workshop**

Either of the above programs is acceptable. Make your reservations well in advance in order to be assured of the time that best suits you.

FOCCUS Instrument

The FOCCUS Instrument is an aid to help you to know better your strengths and weaknesses as a couple. Also, it will help to raise any assumptions either of you may have about marriage and family life. At your first meeting with the pastor, you will receive the name, address, and telephone number of a parish couple who will assist you through the FOCCUS process. It is best if you complete the FOCCUS before going on to the next step.

Purpose of the FOCCUS

- to look at your particular relationship in the light of issues and factors that are usually involved in all marriages;
- to give you as a couple both a broad and specific checklist of the issues, concerns, and topics that impact marriage;

- to help you get a sense of your readiness for marriage.

Special Circumstances

The following special circumstances may necessitate additional steps in preparation for marriage:

19 Or Younger

- Special care and concern is given to young people because of the difficulty early marriages are experiencing today. Therefore, if either party is 19 years old or younger, the priest may also consult with the parents or guardians. Consideration for marriage in the Church will be given after such consultation.

Pregnancy

- Pregnancy alone will not be considered the determining factor in proceeding with or delaying marriage. It is very important in the assessment process to explore in depth the motivation for marriage.

Second Marriages

- Persons marrying after the death of a spouse or following an annulment are urged to address a variety of unique challenges and situations that couples entering a first marriage do not face. Unrealistic expectations need to be uncovered and openly discussed. The interaction of children coming together in a new marriage often poses special considerations.

Mixed Marriage

- When one of the parties is not Roman Catholic, the Rite for Celebrating Marriage outside the Mass is used.

Required Documents

Baptismal Certificate

If you are a Catholic, baptized in a parish other than St. Francis de Sales, we must have a NEW copy of your baptismal record. A new copy is one that is not dated earlier than six months before your wedding date. You may obtain a new copy of your baptismal record by contacting the church where you were baptized. They will be happy to send you one.

If you were baptized in a Church other than the Catholic Church, please obtain a certificate of

your baptism. The original will suffice. It will be returned to you.

Civil Marriage License

To obtain a Marriage License you may go to the Warren County Probate/Juvenile Court Building, 570 Justice Drive, Lebanon, Ohio 45036. They are open for applications from 8:00 AM to 3:45 PM Monday through Friday, except holidays. Sorry no weekend hours and no appointments are accepted. If you have any questions, please call 513-695-1180. Middletown/Franklin call 513-261-1180; Dayton call 937-425-1180; Cincinnati call 513-925-1180. The license is good for sixty (60) days.

The Liturgical Celebration

Who May perform the Ceremony

In the Catholic tradition, the bride and groom minister the sacrament of matrimony to each other; a priest or deacon and at least two witnesses are also required to be present.

Ordinarily, the pastor will preside at weddings celebrated in the parish. However, any priest or deacon in good standing is welcome at St. Francis de Sales with the pastor's approval. In the case of marriage between a Catholic and non-Catholic, an ordained minister from another church may assist in the ceremony.

The Setting of the Celebration

- A wedding between two Catholics is normally held in the context of the Nuptial Mass. However, special circumstances (for example - one or both parties do not regularly participate in Sunday Eucharist) may suggest celebrating the wedding in the context of the Wedding Ceremony. You may discuss this with the one who will preside over your wedding.
- A wedding between a Catholic and a non-Catholic is celebrated in the context of the Wedding Ceremony.

Servers

If your marriage is celebrated during Mass, two servers will be needed. You are welcome to bring your own servers. If you do not know any, the parish will supply two servers.

Guidelines for the Ceremony

These Guidelines and Directives will help you to have a beautiful and grace-filled wedding. We have taken them from the experience of married couples and from the laws and directives of the Church and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for the celebration of the sacraments, taking into consideration the physical nature of our worship space.

Fee for the Parish

There is a fee of **\$600.00** for parishioners. Please make the check payable to St. Francis de Sales Church. This is **NOT** a gift to the priest who is presiding at your wedding celebration. Musician fees are listed below.

Notes from the Music Director

Music is a very important part of the celebration of any sacrament. Music unites the voices of all present in praise and thanks to God. This is also true about your wedding celebration. Our Music Director, Mr. Doug Stegeman, will assist you in choosing music that will glorify God and enhance your celebration.

The Music Director will meet with the engaged couple to make music selections for the wedding liturgy and has final approval of all soloists and/or musicians, including those outside the parish. The parish is blessed with exceptional cantors who are available to sing solos, responsorial psalm, Gospel acclamation, and generally lead the assembly in song. In addition, options can be presented for instrumentation as desired (flute, violin, oboe, etc.). The total fee for the Director of Music and cantor/soloist(s) is **\$300.00**. An additional fee may be charged for the instrumentalist. All details will be discussed at the initial meeting with the wedding couple. Payment should be mailed to the attention of the Director of Music at the parish office and received no later than two weeks prior to the wedding date. Please make checks payable to St. Francis de Sales. You may contact Doug by email at dstegeman@stphilipmorrow.org

Flowers and Decorations

Flowers and other decorations are a great way to say that something special is happening. They enhance the worship area, contribute to the beauty of your celebration, and, most importantly, give praise to God.

Flowers

All wedding flowers, bouquets and bridesmaids' flowers should be real since they will be used in praise of God. Flower arrangements brought to church should be left in church after the wedding celebration.

Thank you for NOT dropping flowers or flower petals in the church. They can stain the carpet and tend to move under the pews and can be hazardous for people walking on them.

Please note: seasonal flower arrangements and decorations that the parish may have in place (e.g., Advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter) have priority over things brought in for weddings. This also includes the color of the altar cloth.

Pew Decorations:

To ensure that your guests may move easily in and out of the pews and to avoid damage to the solid cherry pews themselves, we ask that you attach bows to the pews using ribbon. No pins, wire, hooks or tape may be used.

To ensure that the focal point remains on the celebration of marriage, it is important that the altar area remain free of anything that would impede the ritual movement and action. Therefore, you are asked to observe these restrictions:

- No candle stands may be attached to pews.
- No rented candelabras or arches may be used.
- Nothing may be placed in the aisles at the pew ends.

For safety reasons, rice, birdseed, confetti, sparklers, flower petals and balloons are not allowed in Church or on the St. Francis de Sales campus. An aisle runner is not necessary and may become a safety concern.

Unity Candle

If you wish to use a unity candle, you may bring your own. If bringing your own unity candle, please note you will also need to bring the side candles and holders for all the candles.

Rice, Confetti, Birdseed, etc.

Please do not have rice, confetti, birdseed, or anything else thrown at you after the wedding. There are safety issues involved. Bubbles and balloons are not appropriate. Thank you.

Photography and Videotaping

You are welcome to have a photographer take pictures during your wedding, as long as no distractions are caused during the liturgy. The photographer must remain outside the sanctuary area. Because the wedding ceremony is a sacred time, **no flash bulbs may be used**. (Flash pictures are permitted ONLY during the entrance and exit processions.) We ask that no other cameras be used during the ceremony. We also ask that you make every possible effort to notify your relatives and friends who will be attending.

Videotaping equipment may be setup at certain vantage points. Such cameras may not be placed in or behind the sanctuary area or in or on pews. If used, these cameras must remain in one place throughout the service. No additional lighting may be brought into the church.

Your photographer and/or videographer is asked to see the priest presiding at your wedding and/or the wedding coordinator before the wedding celebration. This will ensure that parish policy is clear and will avoid misunderstanding.

The liturgical environment is not to be altered in order to accommodate photos. No liturgical furnishings, e.g. candles, chairs, etc., are to be moved. The Church is a house of worship at all times, and is to be respected as such during the photos.

Facilities for the Bridal Party

A room for the bride and her attendants is available in the school building. The Parish room can be booked through the Parish Office. This space is not air conditioned. The Ladies Restroom is across the hall. Please do not leave valuables in this room during the ceremony.

Alcoholic Beverages

Smoking, eating, and drinking are inappropriate for church. It should go without saying that absolutely no alcoholic beverages of any kind are to be brought to church grounds or buildings before or after the wedding or the wedding rehearsal.

“Clean Up” after the Celebration

You may want to assign someone to collect any unused or forgotten programs and any forgotten personal items belonging to your guests. It seems that there is always a camera bag or a purse etc. that is left behind.

The Time of the Wedding

Couples who wish to be married at St. Francis de Sales should contact the parish office no less than 6 months and ordinarily no more than 12 months before the proposed wedding date.

Weddings are usually celebrated at St. Francis de Sales on Saturdays between the hours of 11:00am – 2:30pm. or on Fridays between 6:00 - 7:00pm. Rehearsals are scheduled at the availability of St. Francis de Sales and last approximately 1 hour. Preferred times are 6:00 or 6:30pm for rehearsals.

The wedding coordinator assigned to your wedding will walk you through the particulars around the rehearsal. It is imperative that rehearsals begin on time with all members of the wedding party and liturgical ministers (i.e. lectors) present.

The marriage license should be brought to the rehearsal and given to the presider or wedding coordinator for its proper completion and filing.

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We hope that these guidelines will answer many of your questions. We sincerely thank you for your cooperation and assure you that we are ready to assist you in any way possible to make your wedding a beautiful and prayerful experience!