

*Please sign and return this page via  
mail or fax to the St. Gabriel's Parish  
Office.*

**We have read and agree to abide by St. Gabriel's Marriage Preparation and Wedding Liturgy Guidelines and policies, ensuring that our wedding liturgy glorifies God and serves as a proclamation of His divine love. These guidelines also maintain that the church facilities are preserved in good shape for the ongoing life of the St. Gabriel's Community.**

*Signed:*

**Bride:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

St. Gabriel Catholic Church  
4737 N. Cleveland Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64117  
FAX: (816) 453-6254

## *St. Gabriel's Catholic Church*



## *Marriage Preparation And Wedding Guidelines*

## *A Note from the Pastor*

As pastor of St. Gabriel's Catholic Church, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your recent engagement to be married. It is a most joyous and exciting time for you and indeed for the entire church. We at St. Gabriel's are delighted to be a part of this very special time in your lives. In choosing to have your wedding in the church, you are choosing to make your covenant with each other before God and in the context of a Christian worship service. These guidelines outline not only the details of the wedding day, but more importantly, the details for the preparation for your lifetime marriage.

As you examine and study these guidelines, please be aware that the preparation is designed to give you the tools for a successful married life and a life focused on God in everything you do. Know that the parishioners and I will keep you in our prayers as you prepare for this most important life commitment and celebration of the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

God Bless You,

Fr. Joseph Sharbel, Pastor

## *Notes and Questions for Follow-Up*

## *Decorating Guidelines, continued*

9. Nothing may be dropped, scattered or thrown inside or outside the Church before, during or after the wedding ceremony. Nothing may be dropped or scattered in the aisle (including sparkles, flower petals, or artificial flowers). No confetti, rice, bird seed, balloons, bubbles or any other material may be thrown, scattered, dropped, freed, or blown inside or outside the church.
10. All decorations are to be removed immediately following the ceremony (or photos following the ceremony).
11. You must leave St. Gabriel's in the condition in which you find it. You will be responsible for any damage and necessary repairs that result from sidestepping these guidelines.

*Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*Love never fails.*

1 Corinthians  
Chapter 13

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## *Marriage Preparation Process*

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **I have just gotten engaged. What should I do to begin the process to get married?**

Marriage at St. Gabriel's is generally reserved for St. Gabriel's parishioners and their children. You must meet the following criteria to be considered a parishioner of St. Gabriel's:

- Be registered in the parish
- Attend Mass regularly
- Be actively involved in ministry
- Support the parish financially for at least one year

After you become engaged, your first call should be to the pastor, who will schedule a time for you and your fiancé to speak about marriage. At the initial meeting with the pastor, issues such as previous marriages, age requirements and a general outline of the preparation process will be discussed.

#### **What if I am not a parishioner of St. Gabriel's?**

Marriage is permitted for non-parishioners of St. Gabriel's providing the following conditions are met. You must meet all of these requirements before you can reserve a date for your wedding.

1. The marriage must be able to be celebrated in the Catholic Church. Previous marriages, age restrictions, the religion of both parties, and so on must be discussed to the pastor's satisfaction before a date is booked.
2. You can provide a letter of permission from your current pastor allowing you to be married at St. Gabriel's and stating his intention to provide you with adequate marriage preparation.
3. You have identified a priest celebrant for the wedding. Should you not be able to find a priest, the pastor of St. Gabriel's may be able to celebrate your wedding at his discretion.
4. You pay a non-refundable fee for the use of St. Gabriel's Church and agree to the applicable charges outlined in this document. (See fee schedule which follows.)

## *Decorating Guidelines*

St. Gabriel's is decorated throughout the year to correspond with the changing liturgical seasons. We offer the following overview of liturgical seasons and their corresponding colors to help you and your florist coordinate your color scheme:

- **Advent** (the 4 weeks before Christmas): purple, violet, dark blue
- **Christmas** through Epiphany (6 January): white, gold, red, green
- **Easter** (the 6 weeks after Easter Sunday): white, gold, pastels
- **Ordinary Time** (the remainder of the church year): green

We also offer the following guidelines for your wedding decorations. The wedding couple must ensure that all persons involved with their wedding decorations know and understand these decorating guidelines.

1. Your florist and decorators must make arrangements to see the Church before planning decorations. Appointments may be made Monday through Friday at the parish office.
2. To avoid conflicts with other ceremonies, ask your florist to confer with the church secretary about when the church will be available to decorate for your wedding. Decorating the church may not disrupt other scheduled church events.
3. You may not use aisle runners of any kind.
4. If you wish to change the existing church decorations in any way (move or remove plants, pots, vases, hangings, floral arrangements, etc.) you must make prior arrangements with the secretary / pastor.
5. Do not move or rearrange the Sanctuary furniture. Please ensure that your photographers, videographers, or others associated with your wedding is aware that furniture is not to be moved.
6. All candles must be dripless, as our ventilation system often creates significant drafts in the Sanctuary. Any candelabras you use must catch and contain dripping wax. Your florists and other decorators should assist in protecting the floors under candles, and clean wax from surfaces after the ceremony.
7. Please do not place floral arrangements or items of any kind on the altar. Flowers may be placed in front of the altar or in other locations in the sanctuary.
8. Floral arrangements or bows for the pew ends must be secured in a way that does not damage or change the finish of the wood. Please work with your florist or decorator to avoid all use of pins, nails, glue, staples, florist's clay and the like. The wedding coordinator can advise you on successful approaches to this decorating option.

# Selecting Musicians For Your Wedding Liturgy

Couples are required to hire an organist / pianist to accompany the sung portions of the wedding liturgy. The Director of Music at St. Gabriel's is available to play for your wedding. If he is unavailable, he will engage a substitute. Couples may choose an accompanist outside St. Gabriel's with the permission of the Director of Music. Accompanists and cantors outside St. Gabriel's must meet the following criteria:

- Ample experience playing at Catholic liturgies
- A working knowledge of the Catholic liturgy
- Meet the approval of the director of music
- Technical proficiency on the organ

St. Gabriel's is blessed with talented cantors capable of leading song at your wedding. Couples will select a cantor from St. Gabriel's to lead the assembly in the sung portions of the wedding liturgy. The Director of Music will provide couples with a list of potential cantors. It is the couple's responsibility to contact and secure a cantor from the provided list.

If the couple wishes to have a friend or relative sing one or more sacred solo pieces during the wedding liturgy, they must set up a time for the soloist and the accompanist to rehearse prior to the wedding date. Please keep in mind the following considerations.

- The couple must secure a St. Gabriel's cantor to lead the congregational singing
- Soloists with a pop- or lounge-style of singing are not suitable choices for wedding liturgies
- All solo selections must be approved by the Director of Music
- Couples must provide special music to the soloist and the Director of music at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

If a couple does not select the director of music as accompanist for their wedding or consult with the Director of Music to plan the music for their wedding ceremony, they must submit their music selections to the Director of Music for approval via e-mail or fax.

The Director of Music will provide couples with a list of instrumentalists. Couples may bring in instrumentalists from outside St. Gabriel's with approval from the Director of Music. Couples should get approval before asking or hiring instrumentalists outside St. Gabriel's for their wedding liturgy.

## Couples Who Will Marry/Prepare Elsewhere

Step in the Process	Prepare There/ Marry Here	Prepare Here/ Marry There
Get a copy of St. Gabriel's parish marriage guidelines	Yes	Yes
Wedding and rehearsal dates secured	Here	There
Work with counselor	Their process	Here
Engaged Encounter/ Thrive process	Their process	Here
Saturday Session "God's Plan"	If applicable	Here
Marriage license	Clay County, MO 30 days prior	County/State of wedding; follow their guidelines
New baptismal certificate	Yes, 6 months prior	Yes, 6 months prior
Testimony to pastor	There	Here
Liturgy approved	Here	There
Music approved	Here	There
Other wedding day guidelines	Ours	Theirs

### I have been married previously. May I still be married in the Catholic Church?

If you have been married previously, you must meet with the pastor to determine whether or not you may be married in the Catholic Church.

### Now that we have decided to be married in the Catholic Church, what is the process of preparing for marriage?

The preparation program at St. Gabriel's is designed to aid you in this most important step in your life. The process from the initial meeting with the pastor to the celebration of the wedding takes about nine months. Please keep this in mind when selecting a date for the wedding.

# Selecting Music for Your Wedding Liturgy

**Meeting with the Pastor.** During this time you will be introduced to the Marriage Preparation program. He will tell you about the documents needed, the timeline for completing details, the counseling sessions, the lead couple program, and final preparation for your wedding liturgy. At the session you will choose the dates and times for your wedding rehearsal and wedding liturgy.

As part of your marriage preparation in our diocese, you are required to work with a licensed counselor. Working with the counselor is an important way to open dialogue with your fiancé and discover areas that may need work before you make your marriage commitment. You will meet the licensed counselor after making an appointment. The charges associated with the counseling are listed in the fee schedule later in this booklet.

**The Counseling Sessions.** Once the initial questionnaire is scored and the others have been received, you will be contracted by the counselor who will schedule a time to meet with you to go over your results. At this meeting, your strengths as a couple will be discussed as well as your areas for growth. The sessions fees are listed in the fee schedule and are the responsibility of the engaged couple.

## **The Thrive Weekend and Engaged Encounter Weekend.**

Upon completion of your counseling sessions, you will have the option of enrolling in an Engaged Encounter weekend or a Thrive weekend.

- The Thrive weekend is sponsored periodically through the Diocese. Coming together with other engaged couples, lead couples, counselors, and spirituality instructors take the couples through a series of exercises focusing on issues of married life, such as communication skills, natural family planning, sexuality and family life, and the spirituality of marriage. Couples arrive on Friday evenings, going home each night. The weekend concludes on Sunday afternoon. For more information please see [www.diocesekcsj.org/thrive](http://www.diocesekcsj.org/thrive). Cost for this program is \$200/couple

The church offers the following guidance (in *Music in Catholic Worship*) when selecting music for your wedding liturgy:

Particular decisions about choice and placement of wedding music should grow out of three judgments:

1. **Liturgical Judgment:** Is the music's text, form, placement, and style congruent with the nature of liturgy?
2. **Musical Judgment:** Is the music technically, aesthetically, and expressively good, irrespective of musical idiom or style?
3. **Pastoral Judgment:** Will the music help people to pray?

From the above guidelines, it follows that:

- Music during your wedding liturgy should magnify God's glory and express a biblical understanding of love, the sacrament of marriage, and the love of God that is fundamental to all Christian covenants.
- Secular music is inappropriate and may not be used before, during, or after your wedding liturgy. Secular music should be reserved for non-liturgical parts of your wedding celebration (such as the reception or rehearsal dinner).
- The liturgical music you select should foster the participation of those assembled to celebrate and pray with you. Select music that is familiar, not overly complex, and affirms the importance of the sacred union of marriage.
- Sacred solo music and classical instrumental music may also be used to underscore certain ritual actions within the wedding liturgy, including, but not limited to, the following times:
  - As a prelude when people are gathering
  - As a processional piece
  - During the preparation of the gifts
  - During a presentation to the Blessed Mother
  - As a meditation after Holy Communion
  - As a recessional piece
- If you choose to light a unity candle during your wedding liturgy, you may select a short instrumental or sacred vocal piece to accompany this action. If a vocal piece is chosen, limit it to one verse.
- Recorded music is not allowed at any time before, during or after the wedding liturgy.
- All music selections must be approved by the director of music
- The pastor has final approval on any musical selections used at your wedding .

Before consulting with the Director of Music regarding music selections for your wedding, please visit our Parish Music Web-site where you can find and listen to suggested songs. There you can also find a form that will assist you in planning process. Click on the "Weddings" tab to navigate to the wedding music page. <http://stgabesmusic.wix.com/saint-gabriel-music>

## FEE SCHEDULE

### Marriage Preparation

Item	Fee	Required
FOCCUS questionnaire, paid to counselor	\$75.00	Yes
Counseling Sessions ( 2– 3), paid to counselor	Sliding scale fee - donation	Yes
Thrive weekend	\$200.00	Yes, or Engaged Encounter Weekend
Engaged Encounter weekend	\$225.00	Yes, or Lead Couple in-home preparation
Saturday session, “God’s Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage”	\$50	Yes
New baptismal certificate from parish of baptism	None	Yes
Clay County marriage license	\$51	If married in Clay County

### Wedding Liturgy and Music Preparation

Item	Fee	Required?
Non-parishioner fee covering use of church and clean up	\$700	Yes, to secure date
Parishioner fee covering the use of church facilities and clean up	\$200	Yes, to secure date
Gift to priest	Discretionary	No
Wedding coordinator	\$200	Yes
Consultation for wedding liturgy from Director of Music	None	Yes
Director of music’s fee for playing wedding liturgy	Negotiated	No
St. Gabriel’s cantor for wedding liturgy	\$100	Yes
Two 7 branch candelabras (payable to Altar Society)	\$25	No

- The Engaged Encounter Weekend. This program is an alternative for couples who find a regular commitment over 3– 4 weeks difficult to achieve. This program is available to couples through Savior of the World Center in Kansas City, Kansas. It is usually scheduled monthly throughout the year. Couples stay overnight Friday through Sunday and receive comparable information to that presented with the Lead Couples. The cost for this program is listed in the fee schedule.

#### **Now that we have completed the preparation process, what remains?**

In the Catholic Church there is a testimony that each party for marriage must give to the priest of the parish. It is a testimony, under oath, that states your freedom to be married in the Catholic Church; your understanding of the duties and responsibilities of marriage, and your understanding of the Catholic Church’s teaching on children in marriage. This testimony must be completed before the marriage takes place.

If your marriage is between a Catholic and a non-Catholic or unbaptized person, additional time will be required for permission from the diocese.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is recommended for every Catholic prior to marriage. Because the beginning of a life together is a turning point, it is fitting that this new beginning be celebrated with a heart fully free from sin.

The priest who is celebrating your wedding will want to discuss the details of the ceremony with you. (Additional information about this is available elsewhere in these guidelines.) Remember that this is a special time when you focus on the manner in which you want to enter the liturgy of the Church and give thanks to God at the beginning of your married life.

### **What documents will I need to be married in the Catholic Church?**

You need two documents for our wedding.

1. **Baptismal Certificate.** Each Catholic needs a new copy of your baptismal certificate, issued no more than six months prior to the date of your wedding. Older copies or the original cannot be accepted. You may obtain this by contacting the parish in which you were baptized. For a baptized non-Catholic, a certificate (even a copy) of Christian baptism is needed for our file.
2. **Marriage license from the state of Missouri.** You will need to obtain a marriage license from the state of Missouri. This may be obtained from the county courthouse. Details are described in this booklet. You are strongly encouraged to bring the license to the parish office immediately after obtaining it from the courthouse.

### **Photography (continued)**

- For 1:00 weddings, photographs from 11:30 to 12:30 and then from 2:00 to 3:00.

### **Facilities and Fees**

To reserve the church for a wedding, the appropriate fee covering the use of the church and clean up (\$200 for parishioner / \$700 for non-parishioner) must be paid in the parish office to secure your date. Reserving the church for a wedding includes use of a dressing room for the bride and bridesmaids (off the sacristy), and for the groom and groomsmen (conference room). There is no charge for these rooms, but they must be cleaned up after they are used. Other rooms are available for use for meals and receptions. Contact the parish office for fees.

A parish wedding coordinator will be assigned to you. She will guide you through the wedding rehearsal and the actual wedding. The parish wedding coordinator's fee is \$200 and must be paid before the rehearsal. Fees for musicians and gifts to parish priest should be given to the wedding coordinator, in prepared envelopes, at the rehearsal.

# Wedding Liturgy Preparation

## Readings and Prayers of the Faithful

Both the Mass and the Nuptial Service include readings from sacred scripture. The readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the prayers of the faithful should be read by a lay person. It is an honor to offer this to a special family member or dear friend. The readers should be prepared to practice their readings at the rehearsal. The readings must be from the bible. See *Together for Life* for examples.

The couple is encouraged to write their own intercessory prayers (prayers of the faithful). They should be brought to the rehearsal. There are examples in the *Together for Life* book.

## Vows

The exchange of consent in the wedding vows is a liturgical celebration and certain formulas are required by the church. Couples may not write their own vows and must choose from one of the options in *Together for Life*. The couple should face each other or face the assembly when exchanging vows.

## Communion

When the Nuptial Mass is celebrated, communion is usually given under the form of bread and wine. At this time, all who are full members of the Catholic faith are permitted to receive Holy Communion.

## Program

A printed program including music with page numbers, prayers, and responses will encourage the participation of those present. Please do not have your programs printed before all the liturgical and musical details are reviewed and approved by the pastor or director of music.

## Photographer and Videographer

Wedding pictures provide treasured keepsakes of a most special occasion. They will be viewed for many years and will help to rekindle these cherished moments. The wedding ceremony is a worship service and all photographers and videographers are asked to respect the ceremony and the place. During the ceremony itself, the photographer and videographer are asked to remain outside the sanctuary and are asked to remain as unobtrusive as possible. It is strongly encouraged that the majority of posed pictures be taken before the ceremony. This activity should cease 30 minutes before the start of the wedding. Photos taken after the ceremony must be completed one hour before the beginning of the next parish service. Videotaping must be done from a stationary camera only.

## Sacrament

In the Catholic Church we believe that the marriage covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. The couple is called to be a sign and to demonstrate to the world how much God loves His people. The couple is called not only to love one another but to make that love present to the community. The exchange of marriage vows between a man and a woman is also for the sake of the entire community. The people assembled are there to witness and to accept the promises on behalf of the entire community.

## Liturgy

In the Catholic Church we observe the sacraments through liturgical celebrations. It is only natural that people who are in love see their love as a gift from God and want to celebrate it through signs and symbols. The celebration of Christian marriage is an opportunity for the whole family of faith to experience the presence of the Lord through the power of these symbols. Through them the vision of marriage that is ours as Catholics is expressed in the sacredness of committed love. As the assembly gathers and responds in prayerful participation, we acknowledge the Lord's presence among us. In the love of a husband and wife, we come to see the reflection of God's love for us, the people of God. These signs and symbols are invitations to us to respond in faith to the Lord of our lives. It is for this reason that careful planning should take place in preparing the liturgy. Those attending the celebration are never considered to be merely guests to be entertained. The liturgical assembly is called to a role of *active participation* in prayer and song. Your planning should take this into account.

## Time, Place, Officials

To avoid conflict with other parish liturgical activities, weddings usually are scheduled at St. Gabriel's on Saturday at 1:00pm. Other times are arranged with the pastor. Weddings may also be celebrated on a weekday, during the day or in the evening as the schedule permits. St. Gabriel's does not celebrate weddings on Sunday. Please check in the parish office for availability of dates.

Church law prohibits the celebration of a wedding Mass on the following days:

- Ash Wednesday
- During Holy Week
- During the Octave of Easter (the week following Easter)
- Solemnities
- All Souls Day

The seasons of Lent and Advent have a character of preparation and expectation for Easter and Christmas, respectively. Weddings are discouraged during these seasons.

Marriage is a sacred and solemn occasion and should take place in a sacred place. The marriage between two Catholics takes place in the parish church of either the bride or the groom. The marriage between a Catholic and a person who is not a Catholic usually takes place in the parish church of the Catholic person.

The pastor of the parish is the normal witness of marriages in the parish. If you have a relative or a close family friend who is a priest, it is possible to get permission for him to witness the marriage. Please contact the pastor for permission.

The maid of honor and the best man are not required to be Catholics. The readers, while not required to be Catholic, should be capable of proclaiming the scripture clearly, with clarity and understanding. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must be Catholic and must be ministers in their home parish.

### **Rehearsal**

The rehearsal usually takes place the evening before the wedding and should last no longer than one hour. A smooth, well-ordered rehearsal will result in a less stressful wedding ceremony. The parish wedding coordinator is in charge of the rehearsal and will see that all necessary preparations are made. An outside wedding consultant may be present at the rehearsal but does not preside or participate in any way.

All members of the wedding party, including flower girls and ring bearers, are required to attend the rehearsal. Those who do the readings and prayer of the faithful, and those who carry the gifts should also be present.

### **Alcohol Policy**

At your wedding, you will participate in a solemn sacrament and will enter into your legal marriage. Your attendants will likewise be asked to sacramentally and legally witness this most important event. It is both necessary and appropriate that you and all members of your wedding be unimpaired. Therefore, the use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted at any time before or after the wedding ceremony, while on church property. Likewise, your rehearsal is a time of prayer and preparation, taking place in a sacred space. The use of alcohol is prohibited before, during and after the rehearsal, while on church property. Abuse of this policy could result in cancellation of the wedding and is at the sole discretion of the celebrant. The bride and groom are responsible to see that all members of the wedding party comply with this policy. Please encourage your family and friends to wait until after the ceremony/rehearsal to begin any celebrations.

### **Ceremony**

When both of the engaged are Catholic, it is appropriate that the Sacrament of Matrimony be celebrated within the Mass. We strive to be welcoming and hospitable to those who are not of our faith. If one of the engaged is not Catholic, the ceremony usually takes place outside of Mass.

It is proper to pray for members of other faith communities in the prayers, and a favorite religious hymn might be included. An interfaith wedding can be an opportunity to grow in our understanding of those who belong to other faith communities. Ethnic traditions may also be considered. Both the wedding Mass and the wedding ceremony are solemn liturgical celebrations and as such, there are many options from which to choose. These options are explained in detail in your booklet *Together for Life*.

### **Greeting and Seating of People**

The people attending your wedding are coming from different backgrounds and different worshipping experiences. It is important they be made to feel welcome when they enter the church. There should be no distinction between friends of the bride and friends of the groom; they should all be seated together.