

# St Joan of Arc Church

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION GUIDE

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*Dear Future Bride and Groom,*

*Congratulations on your upcoming wedding at St Joan of Arc Parish. We are happy that you wish to celebrate the sacrament of marriage with us. We pray with you as you continue your life's journey.*

*In this booklet, you will find the necessary information to help you in your planning. You will meet with the priest at St Joan of Arc who will help you understand the church's requirements for marriage and answer any questions you may have.*

*In the Catholic religious tradition, you are entering the Sacrament of Marriage. It is a sacrament that is celebrated on your wedding day but is lived out in your married life. The planning, expectations and preparation for your wedding are meant to help you celebrate the Sacrament and live as a Christian married couple.*

*We will do our best as a parish and a parish staff to help make your wedding day a day of peace, prayer and joy.*

*The Pastoral Staff*

## **MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

Because engagement is such a formative moment in your married life, the church asks each couple to participate in a marriage preparation program.

There are various options available:

- Discovery weekend: A weekend experience for engaged couples. The program is offered for one or two nights beginning Friday or Saturday. *We highly recommend this program.*
- Pre-Cana: One day of discussion, input, reflection, prayer and sharing. Programs are usually Saturday morning until early evening.

There is a Pre-Cana book that gives dates and times of Pre-Cana offerings. The book may be picked up at the rectory.

By Archdiocesan policy, a minimum of four months is called for between the first appointment with the parish and the actual wedding.

A card will be given to you when you complete your Pre-Cana requirement. Please give the card to the parish priest.

*Please, do not book your reception until after talking to the priest!*

## **NEEDED DOCUMENTS**

### Sacramental Records

The bride and groom are to obtain a recently issued (within six months) copy of your sacramental records from the church of Baptism. To obtain the records, simply phone or write the parish of baptism and request a copy and have it sent to you or to St Joan of Arc. If you were baptized in another Christian tradition, a record of your baptism is needed.

### Affidavits

These documents are concerning your freedom to marry. In some cases, the priest arranging the marriage may request affidavits. Two people who know you well (preferably parents) should go to their own parish (in the case of other Christian faiths, they go to the nearest Catholic parish). The priest or the pastoral staff member will fill out the forms. When completed, return the forms to St Joan of Arc.

### Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire

The pre-nuptial questionnaire is to be completed by the bride and groom and the priest before the wedding. At that time, all necessary documents listed above should be completed.

## **CIVIL REQUIREMENTS**

The couple must have a Cook County Marriage License. Up-to-date information about the requirements can be obtained by contacting either the Marriage License Bureau in downtown Chicago or at the Skokie Civic Center. The phone numbers are: Chicago 312.443.5663 or Skokie 847.470.7233.

## **FEES**

St Joan of Arc does not charge a fee for weddings to contributing members of the parish; however, a contribution to the church of \$300 is recommended for the upkeep of the church, lights, AC/heating, etc.

If you are a non-contributing member of the parish, a fee of \$400 is requested. Please feel free to discuss the above with the priest.

Music fees are determined by the Director of Music.

It is recommended the servers each receive \$10. This should be given to them directly by *before* the wedding.

## **PLANNING THE WEDDING**

A Catholic wedding is a special day in your lives, an event shared by the whole faith community. We encourage you to become personally involved in the planning of your wedding.

If you choose to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage with a Eucharist (Mass), numerous options are available. In some cases a bride and groom may chose to have a ceremony. Please consult with the priest arranging the ceremony.

In some situations, especially in inter-faith marriage, a marriage celebration without the Eucharist might be desired. The celebration of marriage without a Eucharist should be planned carefully to make it a meaningful and prayerful experience for you and your guests. The priest working with you will offer guidelines and suggestions.

### Inter-Faith Marriages

If a Catholic enters into an inter-faith marriage, some options are available. Under certain circumstances, the marriage celebration need not take place in a Catholic church. Depending upon the religion of the other party, a minister or rabbi may be the official witness of the marriage. The priest will help you with the ecumenical guidelines.

A booklet will be given you by the priest with the marriage ceremony. It will contain the Scripture readings commonly used at weddings (you may use other Scripture readings too), the option for vows, suggested prayers of the faithful and other prayers. The worksheet in the booklet should be brought to the rehearsal.

You may add creative touches to your wedding ceremony such as:

- Unity candle after the vows.
- Presenting flowers to parents at the sign of peace.
- Saying a prayer as a newly married couple at Mary's shrine.
- A wedding booklet. If you choose to do a booklet, please let the priest arranging the marriage see a copy before sending it to the printer. That way if anything needs to be adjusted, it can be done before the final printing.

### **PARISH TIMES FOR MARRIAGE CELEBRATIONS**

On Saturdays, the celebration of marriage usually takes place at 1:30 pm or 3:30 pm. Other times may be arranged depending upon the availability of the celebrant.

Weddings should be on time to avoid taking time away from the next celebration. The 1:30 pm wedding should be finished by 3:00 pm and the 3:30 pm should be finished by 5:00 pm. This gives the staff time to prepare for the next celebration.

Rehearsal is usually the day before. Please arrange the time with the celebrant so the church can be reserved.

### **GUEST CLERGY**

Priest or deacon friends or relatives of the bride and groom are most welcome to witness the wedding. Please make arrangements with the parish priest so the two can talk over the details.

Ministers or rabbis of other faith traditions are welcome to participate within the guidelines of the church.

### **INVITATIONS**

Because St Joan of Arc is located in Skokie, many couples list the address of the church as *Lyons and Lawndale, Skokie Illinois*. You may also use the rectory address *9248 Lawndale Avenue, Evanston, Illinois*.

### **MUSIC**

A very important part of your wedding liturgy is the music. It sets the mood for the sacrament and the remaining celebration of your wedding. It also allows your wedding guests to participate in your liturgy. Where do you begin? Follow the steps below...

#### Contact Music Director

After meeting with the pastor, please contact Jo Ellen Madden, St. Joan of Arc's Music Director *within a week*. You may email her [jemadden@me.com](mailto:jemadden@me.com) or call her at 847.673.7033. She will help you plan the music for your wedding.

#### Selecting Music

You may already know exactly what you want for your wedding music or need suggestions – either way you'll need to discuss this with Jo Ellen. At St Joan of Arc, the music used during the liturgy – from processional to recessional is to be sacred or

classical. Should there be a desire for a meaningful secular song, it is more appropriate that it be played/sung during the prelude. Jo Ellen will guide you in this area.

### Musicians for Wedding Liturgy

You may hire your own musicians or hire musicians affiliated with St Joan of Arc. Most likely you'll want a vocalist and a person to play the piano/organ. You may also request an instrumentalist such as a violinist, trumpeter and/or flautist. Jo Ellen sings and plays and can hire instrumentalists for you. Should you provide your own musicians, you will need to let her know so that she can make appropriate arrangements.

### Rehearsal

Musicians are not expected to attend the rehearsal. Musicians hired through Jo Ellen are professionals and will be capable of performing for your wedding.

### Fees

Jo Ellen will explain the fee schedule to you – typically, the cost is \$200 for vocalist and \$200 for accompanist. If Jo Ellen provides both, the charge is \$300. Additional musicians can charge anywhere from \$175-\$300. Should rehearsals need to be scheduled, there will be additional fees charged. Payment to the musicians should be dropped off or mailed to Jo Ellen Madden at the rectory *one week prior to the wedding date*.

There is a \$50 fee charged should the music director be involved in the planning and organization of music unless she is hired as a musician at the wedding.

## **WEDDING REHEARSAL**

At the rehearsal please have the following:

- Valid Cook County license
- Unity candle if being used
- Copy of the readings
- Wedding booklet if used
- Work sheet from *Together for Life*

All participants in the wedding are encouraged to attend the practice. The purpose of the rehearsal is to help the wedding day run smoothly. It is the time to practice the procession, the readings, where people will stand, what to do, etc.

The practice usually takes 30-45 minutes and is the day before the wedding. Please make sure you have set the rehearsal date and time with the priest who is witnessing your marriage before making other plans.

## **GENERAL WEDDING INFORMATION**

### Church Layout

The aisle is 58 feet from the sanctuary to the baptism font.

There are 2 rows of chairs in front followed by 12 long pews and then 3 short pews near the baptismal font.

The main floor of the church can seat up to 330 people. The balcony can seat around 75 people.

### Flowers

St Joan of Arc is designed for a variety of colors appropriate to the liturgical season. This happens especially during Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.

During the Christmas and Easter season, the church is usually decorated with flowers. It may not be necessary to add more flowers during this season.

In Advent and Lent, the church is usually decorated in purple with very little adornment fitting the season. If you do order flowers for your wedding during these two seasons, you may wish to take them with you to the reception since they will probably be removed.

During Ordinary time, more flexibility is offered. Usually if flowers are used, they are left in church for the parish to enjoy during the weekend liturgies.

Because the church's seasons are so important in the life of the parish community, church decorations may not be removed or rearranged for any reason. Weddings are part of the parish's life and should reflect the season in which the wedding takes place.

If you would like to know the church decorations at the time of your wedding, please ask the parish priest.

If flowers or other decorations are used at the end of the pews, the attachments should be with ribbon, padded clips or rubber bands. *Florists are not to use tape or wire of any kind.* They are destructive to the finish on the pews and may not be used.

### Candles

Extra candles may be used as needed. They are to be shielded in a glass globe for safety and avoid wax drippings. If they are used in the aisles, they are to be secured to the pew ends with padded clips.

All extra candles must be removed after the ceremony. Please make arrangements with the florist or your wedding coordinator.

### Rice/Birdseed

The throwing of rice or birdseed is prohibited at St Joan of Arc. It is difficult to clean up and it may cause people to slip.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Photographing your wedding is a wonderful keepsake. It gives you the opportunity in years to come to share those pictures with your family, children and friends and reflect back upon your wedding day.

Photographers and videographers are most welcome at St Joan. Please check with the celebrant before the ceremony so he can give let you know the positioning of various people during the ceremony.

Pictures can be taken from the middle aisle of the church or from the side aisles. The photographer should be sensitive to the people in the congregation and not block their view.

Once the ceremony begins, there should be minimum movement from the photographer so as not to distract the congregation who is praying with the wedding couple. Flash may be used during the ceremony.

Photographers may not enter the sanctuary nor should they stand in front of the tabernacle at any time during the wedding ceremony. The sanctuary and the tabernacle area are sacred spaces.

Videotaping may be done during the ceremony. Before the procession, the videographer may move around the church. Once the ceremony has begun, videotaping may be done from the balcony or from the side aisles. No movement may take place and no artificial light may be used during the ceremony.

Picture taking must be finished by 3:00 pm or 5:00 pm so we can prepare for the next mass. Also, people like to arrive at church before mass to pray in silence.