

GUIDELINES
for
CELEBRATING MARRIAGE
at
ST. JOHN NEUMANN CHURCH

*St. John Neumann Parish Office
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Sunbury, Ohio 43074*

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Introduction

Your wedding day is one of the most special days of your life. On this day, you make a solemn, life-long promise, a covenant with each other and with God. God's people, the Church's minister and your relatives and friends witness this sacrament. Your wedding, therefore, is special to others too. It affects both the civil and Church communities.

We at St. John Neumann Church want your wedding to be beautiful, memorable, and fully significant. Our wedding preparation program has been designed to assist you in planning and preparing your Wedding Mass or Ceremony in our parish church. These Wedding Guidelines, combined with our pastoral staff, are your first source of information for the planning of your wedding liturgy. Please read it carefully and follow the guidance it tries to provide. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us. Most likely someone from our office staff, the Director of Liturgy and Music, or the parish Wedding Coordinator will be able to assist you. Please note, however, that all relevant documents requested, and paperwork to be filed, are to be handled by the clergy of St. John. Therefore, please remember to address any such paperwork to the clergy.

As you read this, be assured that we are sensitive to the fact that there may be special situations where exceptions to these Wedding Guidelines or the suggested stipends may be needed. Although exceptions are very rare, all requests for exceptions must be discussed with, and approved by, the Pastor of St. John Neumann Church.

We reserve the right to cancel any scheduled wedding when the Wedding Guidelines are not observed or if it is determined that the proposed activity is in any way contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

May our Lord bless you in your decision for marriage in the Catholic Church. May good St. John guide your path to unity in God's sacrament.

PART ONE: INITIAL PLANNING

WHO MAY BE MARRIED AT ST. JOHN NEUMANN CHURCH?

MEMBERS OF THE PARISH

Church law guarantees active, registered members of the parish the right to marry in their proper parish church.

To be considered an active, regular member at St. John Neumann Church for the purpose of marriage, the bride or groom must have been registered and active parishioners in the parish for at least one year before the scheduling of the marriage. Please see the section marked “STIPENDS” for a definition of “active” and “registered.”

Children of current long-time, registered and active contributors of the parish are considered regular members for the purpose of marriage and may be married in the church without being registered and without a church facility fee.

NON-MEMBERS OF THE PARISH

Non-members can be married at St. John Neumann, provided either the bride and/or groom is Catholic and practicing his/her Catholic faith. A letter from the Catholic party's pastor is required to verify that he/she is registered in another Catholic parish. Non-registered fees apply. Please see the section marked “STIPENDS.” Non-members must be prepared for marriage, the same as members, either by a St. John Neumann clergy and mentor couple or the Catholic party's clergy.

INITIAL PROCESS OF PREPARATION SCHEDULING

RESERVATION OF DATE AND TIME FOR THE WEDDING AND THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

The initial inquiry is handled by the parish office staff (965-1358) or saintjohnneumann@stjohnsunbury.org, who in turn sends a copy of the Wedding Guidelines to interested parties, or you can get from the parish website www.saintjohnsunbury.org. After the couple has read the guidelines and have agreed to them, they can contact the pastor to set up an appointment for their first meeting, either with the pastor or the deacon. The following are options for wedding times at St. John Neumann: 1) Saturday mornings, 3) Saturday afternoons, starting no later than 1:00pm, 4) Saturday evenings, starting no earlier than 6:00pm. Times must be approved by the pastor. The rehearsal time is always the night before the wedding, usually at 6:00pm.

APPOINTMENT WITH PRIESTS AND/OR DEACON

After speaking with the pastor, the couple should make an appointment with the priest or the deacon assigned to the parish at least four to six months before their anticipated wedding date. However, it is advisable to contact the parish clergy as soon as the couple has become engaged. Due to the number of weddings at our parish, it is recommended to contact the priest or deacon to begin preparations as early as possible in order to ensure the scheduling of the desired date and time. Please keep in mind, the couple must first contact the parish office manager and receive and agree upon the parish Wedding Guidelines before an appointment can be made with the priest or deacon. It is only after an initial meeting with the clergy that a date may be placed in our parish calendar.

MARRIAGE MENTORS

The Marriage Mentor program at St. John Neumann is mandatory. After the engaged couple meets with the clergy, is approved for marriage at St. John's and has initialized any necessary paperwork, they will be given a pre-marital inventory called FOCCUS. FOCCUS is a tool created to help engaged couples prepare for married life in very practical and spiritual ways, and in accordance with the principles and traditions of our Catholic Christian faith. Once this inventory has been scored, the engaged couple will be assigned to a married couple in our Marriage Mentor Preparation Ministry. The married mentor couple will meet with the engaged couple. As facilitators of the FOCCUS instrument, the married mentor couple will be responsible for guiding the engaged couple through a consideration of the major categories of coupled living. St. John Neumann Parish attempts to give its engaged couples the very best marriage preparation possible.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING INTRODUCTORY SESSION

Because St. John Neumann Parish tries to give the best marriage prep possible to all of its engaged couples, each engaged couple is required to attend a 1 ½ to 2 hour session to introduce them to the basics of Natural Family Planning (NFP). While there are now several scientifically developed and medically based NFP methods available today, St. John Neumann Parish teaches the Creighton Model. Once learned, it is just as effective as artificial contraception, but with none of the harmful side-effects. Plus, couples who use NFP for their marriage and family planning have less than a 5% divorce rate. NFP helps enhance and strengthen multiple expressions of intimacy and communication in the marital life. Thus, the reason for the Diocese of Columbus and U.S. Bishops now requiring some sort of introductory session on NFP. St. John Neumann offers the introductory session about every three months at the parish. If after attending this session, you want to learn how to use the Creighton Model, you can sign up for private follow-up sessions. Follow-up sessions are optional at this time but should be started at least six months prior to the wedding date to properly learn the method. *Pre-registration is required for the introductory session.* Contact Christina Weber (740-936-8886) or Joy Dorsten (313-590-3500) for more information and to register.

PRE-CANA

Since St. John Neumann has a comprehensive marriage preparation here at the parish, which includes the marriage mentoring and introduction to NFP, the Diocesan Pre-Cana *or* Engaged Encounter Program is not required. If, however, you want to attend either the Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter programs, please contact the Diocesan Family Life office to sign-up for one of these programs, (614) 241-2560.

DOCUMENTS

MARRIAGE INFORMATION FORM AND CONTRACTS

Attached to the St. John Wedding Guidelines are four (4) forms. The *Contract for the Bride and Groom* must be signed and returned to the priest or deacon at the first meeting with him before a date can be placed in the parish calendar. The *St. John Neumann Marriage Check-List* should be brought to each meeting with the clergy in order to track the paperwork process. One copy of the *Policies for Wedding Photographers and Videographers* and the *Policies for Florists* must be given by the couple to these service providers for their consideration and signatures. A signed copy should be returned to the clergy. Please secure the signatures of your florist and photographer/videographer as soon as possible.

BAPTISMAL RECORD

A certified copy of your baptismal certificate is required. This means that you must contact the parish of your baptism and ask them to send you a copy of your baptismal certificate, with the parish seal impressed it. This record must be no more than six months old. The procurement of this certificate by the non-Catholic party is encouraged but not necessary.

MARRIAGE MENTORING & NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

Your assigned marriage mentor will notify the parish priest or deacon of the completion of your mentoring. The NFP instructor will notify the parish priest or deacon of the completion of your introductory session to NFP. If you choose to attend a Pre-Cana Weekend or an Engaged Encounter Weekend, they will give you a diploma of completion, which you will need to give to your parish priest or deacon.

MIXED MARRIAGE PERMISSION

If this will be a marriage between a Catholic and non-Catholic please let us know at the time of your initial meeting with a member of the clergy. The priest or deacon must complete a form to perform your wedding.

DELEGATION

If the Catholic party is not a registered member of St. John Parish, he/she will need to call the pastor of his/her current parish and request "delegation" from him. St. John clergy will need written permission from your pastor to marry you. Please have your pastor send his delegation to the officiating priest or

deacon of St. John.

SECOND MARRIAGES

If this is a second marriage, we will need the Civil Decree of Divorce and the original copy of your Church Annulment. If the previous marriage has not been annulled, stop everything and contact the priest of the parish. We will need to have your previous marriage annulled before you can proceed with a second marriage. No date can be placed in our parish calendar until an annulment has been granted.

CALENDARS

Please bring your calendars to the initial meeting with a priest or deacon.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

The civil license for marriage is to be presented to the officiating clergy at the time of rehearsal. No wedding rehearsal will take place without the license in hand. No license may be issued in less than five days from date of application, unless the Probate Judge, for good cause, waives the time limitation. The marriage license is normally good for 60 days. If the marriage is not performed within that time, a new license must be secured. You are strongly urged to apply for your license at least a week before your wedding (not the same week you are to be married) because of the Ohio five-day waiting period and other technicalities or complications.

Application for License must be made under oath by BOTH parties to the Probate Court of the county in which either resides:

**Delaware County Marriage Licensing Department
88 N. Sandusky St., Delaware, OH 43015, First Floor
Hours from Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. till 4:30 P.M.
Telephone: 368-1884**

**Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Marriage Licensing Department,
373 S. High Street, Columbus, OH 43062, 23rd Floor
Hours from 8:00 A.M. till 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday,
Telephone: 462-3898**

FILING OF PAPERWORK

All paperwork requested by St. John Neumann Parish should be given/sent directly to the clergy or parish office manager for filing.

PART 2: PLANNING THE LITURGY OF MARRIAGE & MUSIC

MUSIC AND LITURGICAL PLANNING

A Church wedding is not only a very personal event but also a Sacrament of the Church. As such, the religious nature of the ceremony must be carefully preserved. However meaningful some music may be to the couple personally, the principle that governs the sacredness and acceptability of wedding music is the religious aspect.

Only liturgically appropriate music may be used at weddings. All music, sacred or of a classical nature is to be approved by the Director of Liturgy and Music.

Popular and secular music, such as Broadway, film music, and top 40 songs are not appropriate liturgical music for use in the Church during the wedding mass or ceremony. This policy also refers to vocal or instrumental music performed during the Prelude. The Wagner and Mendelssohn wedding marches associated with secular operas have not been used traditionally in the Catholic Church and are therefore not permitted.

The Director of Liturgy and Music must first approve all friends, relatives or acquaintances of the bride or groom wishing to offer their vocal or instrumental assistance for a wedding at St. John.

Available times to contact the Director of Liturgy and Music, Andy Wallace, to schedule a meeting are in the mornings, 740-965-3462 or amwallaceco@embarqmail.com, Mondays through Fridays. The couple should schedule a meeting with the Director of Liturgy and Music no later than two months before their wedding date.

OFFICIATING CLERGY

PARISH CELEBRANTS

The priest or deacon who officiates at the wedding mass or ceremony is responsible for the marriage preparation. The process of preparation is designed to assist the couple to assess their own readiness for marriage and provide instructions for the planning and living out of a marriage commitment.

VISITING CLERGY

Visiting clergy who are licensed by the State of Ohio are always welcome to preside at weddings here but must assume responsibility for all necessary paper work and pre-marital interviews and counseling. Delegation by the Pastor of St. John will be necessary. Please contact the Secretary of the State of Ohio for information pertaining to the civil license necessary for an out of state priest or deacon to marry you:

Secretary of State
30 E. Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43266
(614-466-4980)

ADDITIONAL MINISTERS

LAY PARTICIPANTS

Friends and relatives of the couple may participate in the liturgy in various roles: An approved Lector can read the First Reading and Responsial Psalm. Another Lector can read the Second Reading and pray the General Intercessions (Prayers of the Faithful). If a wedding mass, the couple can also choose two persons to bring the bread and wine to the altar at the offertory time. The couple should choose at least two ushers, preferably ones that are separate from the bridal party. Finally, the couple should select at least a best man and matron of honor as their legal witnesses. All persons must be of a mature age (at least in their teenage years).

OTHER LITURGICAL DETAILS

RECEIVING LINE

Receiving lines are to be held at the reception hall only, not at the church. Please relay this information to your invited guest. Also, the couple dismissing the guests, row by row, is not permitted because of the time factor. The Sacrament of Reconciliation begins at 4:00 P.M. Therefore, the wedding party must vacate the sanctuary and clean up the dressing room by 3:00 P.M, at which time parishioners arrive for individual reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. **NO EXCEPTIONS PLEASE.**

THE UNITY CANDLE

The Unity Candle ritual is not a recognized part of the Catholic wedding liturgy according to the liturgical documents of the Church. The common symbolism of the unity candle is that the side candles represent the family, the center candle the couple. Candles used in a Catholic liturgy only represent Christ, so to use the unity candles creates conflict of symbols and meaning. The appropriate place for the use of a unity candle is at the reception. Nevertheless, if a couple greatly desires to use a unity candle at the wedding, exceptions can be made. The couple is responsible for the purchase of the unity candle and the two candles of the parents. Also, please inform your preparing clergy & the Director of Liturgy & Music that you would like to use the unity candle at your wedding, so they may prepare the ritual and provide music for it.

FLOWERS TO MARY

Offering Flowers to Mary is a custom that goes back to when single women belonged to the Sodality of Mary. When a woman married, she had to leave the sodality. The flowers represented the women's appreciation of that particular association with Mary. If there is a special devotion to Mary, and this practice of placing flowers at the feet of Mary is important to the woman (or even the couple), an appropriate place for this reverent act would be at the rehearsal, perhaps at the end. Nevertheless, the practice of offering flowers to Mary has taken on new meaning to new generations of Catholic Christians, where a woman asks for Mary's prayers on her wedding day, so she can be a good wife and mother. Likewise, men often ask St. Joseph to pray for them to be good husbands and fathers. Therefore, if this devotional practice is to take place during the wedding, please inform your preparing clergy & Director of Liturgy & Music that you like to make such a presentation at your wedding, so they may prepare the ritual and provide music for it.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCIATION

Marriage is a beautiful sacrament of the Church and the beginning of a new way of life. It should be received while in the state of grace in one's relationship with Christ. Therefore, Catholics are asked to make a good Confession of their sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to their wedding. Confessions are at 3pm every Saturday at St. John Neumann, or you can call the pastor (or another priest) for a private appointment in order to celebrate Reconciliation. You can also visit with another priest in a different parish to go to Confession.

RICE, FLOWER PETALS, BIRD SEED, BALLOONS

No rice, flower petals, birdseed, or balloons may be used as part of the wedding celebration inside or outside the church. In fact, nothing that requires any sort of clean-up may be used. Blown bubbles or bells may be used outside the church only.

DRESSING ROOM

The room just off of the vesting sacristy will be provided as a dressing area for the Bride and women in the Bridal Party. The Church does not provide a room for the Groom and Groomsmen to dress.

ST. JOHN PARISH WEDDING COORDINATOR

The Parish Wedding Coordinator is a parishioner of St. John Neumann Church. This coordinator has been delegated by the pastor to direct all parish wedding rehearsals and wedding ceremonies, according to the local and world-wide norms of the Catholic Church for the celebration of marriage. The Parish Wedding Coordinator is also available to assist any visiting clergy at the wedding rehearsal and day of the wedding. Likewise, he/she may offer assistance to the bride & bridal party on the day of the wedding. Our Parish Wedding Coordinator will contact the couple prior to their rehearsal, in order to guide their expectations concerning the rehearsal and the day of their wedding.

BRIDAL WEDDING COORDINATOR

Sometimes a couple will choose to employ a wedding coordinator to assist them in some of the finer details of preparation for marriage. St. John Neumann Church welcomes bridal wedding coordinators. However, the liturgical guidelines for the celebration of marriage in the Catholic Church are clearly defined. Likewise, St. John Neumann Church also has very definite guidelines. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the clergy, the Director of Liturgy and Music and the Parish Wedding Coordinator to adhere to these guidelines. Bridal wedding coordinators do not have a role in planning the sacred liturgy and music for the wedding ceremony or Mass. Furthermore, they do not have a

role in the rehearsal for a wedding, other than providing support for the couple.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

FOOD/BEVERAGES

No alcoholic beverages are permitted on the church property before or after the wedding. NO EXCEPTIONS. We request that food and non-alcoholic beverages not be brought into the Church, particularly the bridal dressing room.

FURNITURE IN THE CHURCH

Furniture in the church should be left in place. This especially applies to microphones, the church draperies hung in the sanctuary, candelabras, the individual candlesticks located in the sanctuary and other furnishings and decorations.

THE BRIDAL DRESSING ROOM

All extraneous matter, such as the aisle runner, floral boxes and programs should be removed from the church and dressing room immediately after the wedding ceremony. Items left in the church after 4:00 P.M. will be discarded.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the church.

PART 3: STIPENDS

FACILITY USAGE STIPEND

The facility usage fee is dependent upon the status of the couple. The clergy of St. John determine active-registered parishioner, non active-registered parishioner, or non-registered status.

Active-Registered Parishioner:

- 1. Indicates someone who has been registered in our parish for at least one year before the scheduling of the marriage.**
- 2. Someone whose parishioner profile files indicates attendance at Mass and participation in the life of the parish.**
- 3. Regularly giving to our offertory collection or fulfilling a pledge to our parish building fund.**

*** All of the above criteria must be met to receive Active-Registered Parishioner status.**

**** For Active-Registered Parishioners there is NO facility usage fee, except for a \$100.00 non-refundable deposit, which is due at the time of the couple's first meeting with clergy.**

Non Active-Registered Parishioner:

- 1. Indicates someone who has NOT been registered in our parish for at least one year before the scheduling of the marriage.**
- 2. Someone whose parishioner profile does NOT indicate attendance and participation.**
- 3. Someone who does NOT regularly give to our offertory collection or fulfilled a pledge to the parish building fund.**

*** If even one of the above criteria can be established then you will be considered a Non Active-Registered Parishioner.**

**** For a Non Active-Registered Parishioners there is a \$350.00 facility usage fee, with an additional non-refundable \$100.00 deposit. The deposit is due at the time of the first meeting with the clergy. The facility usage fee is to be paid no less than seven days before the scheduled marriage.**

Non-Registered Catholic:

- 1. For a Catholic who is not registered at St. John Neumann (but registered in another Catholic parish), there will be a \$350.00 facility usage fee, with an additional non-refundable \$100 deposit. The deposit is due at the time of the first meeting with the clergy. The facility usage fee is to be paid no less than seven days before the scheduled marriage.**

PARISH PRIESTS AND DEACON

The suggested gift of \$200.00 for the parish clergy will be due the night of the wedding rehearsal.

PARISH ORGANIST OR SOLOIST

The stipend of \$150 for the parish organist and \$75 for a soloist will be due the night of the wedding rehearsal.

PARISH WEDDING COORDINATOR

The stipend of \$125 for the parish wedding coordinator will be due the night of the wedding rehearsal.

POLICIES FOR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

We welcome photographers and videographers, both professional and amateur, for still pictures and videotapes. However, we ask that the following directives be observed, signed and returned to the preparing clergy as soon as possible. The church itself is not a studio but a sacred place in which a community of believers celebrate common worship. This realization should guide the photographer and videographer in all their decisions before, during and after the celebration of marriage.

1. Wedding photographs may precede the marriage ceremony.
2. Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary or the front aisle between the sanctuary and the first row of pews. They may photograph from the side or rear of the church only. They are also welcome to use the balcony.
3. Formal portraits with studio equipment such as screens, props, etc., are not to be done at the Church but at home, the studio or reception hall.
4. No Church furnishings in the main church or Narthex are to be moved for pictures.
5. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel is off limits for photographs. All photography must be completed no later than 3:00 P.M. after 1:00 P.M. weddings and 8:00 P.M. following a 6:00 P.M. wedding. The only photographs to be taken following the wedding ceremony should be those that include the bride & groom together and their bridal parties and families together with them.
6. Flash photography may be taken during the processional and recessional parts of the ceremony, not during the ceremony itself. The photographer is welcome to step out of a center aisle pew to snap photos during the processional, but must not hold up the procession and should return to the pew in time to allow the procession to continue without pause.
7. Stationery video cameras are permitted in the choir loft of the church. Choir chairs must be returned to original place when moved for video equipment.

Photographer _____ Date _____

Videographer _____ Date _____

Name of Engaged Couple _____

POLICIES FOR FLORISTS

St. John Neumann does not provide janitorial services on the weekends. It is therefore the responsibility of the florist or the wedding party to remove all flowers, bows, potted plants, the aisle runner, or any other decorations brought into the church by the wedding party by 3:00 P.M. following a 1:00 P.M. wedding or by 8:00 P.M. following a 6:00 P.M. wedding

- 1. It is expected that at least one floral bouquet remain in the church for the Saturday and Sunday Masses following the service. The preference is for three floral arrangements to remain. If this is not possible, please contact the parish office (956-1358) at least two week before the scheduled wedding, so that we might secure floral bouquets for our weekend Masses.**
- 2. Florists are not to move altar furnishings or existing sanctuary arrangements to accommodate floral arrangements or to place anything on the altar of sacrifice. Rather, they should work with the parish's wedding coordinator to place floral arrangements.**
- 3. No additional candelabra from the florist are permitted.**
- 4. No floral arches are permitted.**
- 5. The length of the aisle runner from the base of the sanctuary steps to the interior doors is approximately 69 feet long.**
- 6. The Unity Candle, along with the two mother's candles needs to be purchased by the bride. A table for the Unity Candle will be provided by the Church.**
- 7. If the couple decides to make a Presentation to Mary as part of the ceremony they will need a single rose for that presentation. If they are taking a rose to their parents (Mass only) during the sign of the peace, they will need to purchase two roses for both set of parents.**
- 8. Decorating for a 1:00 P.M. wedding may begin at 11:00 A.M. Decorating for a 6:00pm Wedding, may begin after the Saturday evening parish Mass.**

Florist _____ **Date** _____

Name of Engaged Couple _____

CONTRACT FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM

Everyone who is to be married at St. John Neumann Church is asked to sign an agreement for the use of the church. The agreement concurs with the guidelines stated in this booklet, confirmation of the date and time of the wedding. St. John Parish reserves the right to cancel any scheduled wedding when the Marriage Guidelines are not observed or if it is determined that the proposed activity is in any way contrary to the teachings of the Church.

Name of Bride _____

Date _____

Name of Groom _____

Date _____