

GUARDIAN ANGELS CATHOLIC COMMUNITY MARRIAGE PREPARATION

MARRIAGE PREPARATION TEAM

Church, 738-2223

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MARRIAGE PREPARATION

We believe that marriage is a lifelong commitment. When a man and woman pledge their love, they share Jesus Christ's love with each other and carry out God's plan that the two shall become one. Marriage is not a brief celebration on a certain day at a specific time. It is the work of a lifetime, requiring special training and preparation.

To begin your preparations or to request further information, contact Deacon Terry Beer at 651-789-3173.

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

God is so invested in couple love that this special relationship has, through the will of Jesus Christ, been raised to the dignity of a sacrament in the church.

More than an exchange of vows, more than a couple's expression of love for each other, the sacrament of marriage is a public sign of God's presence and grace. It is witnessed and celebrated by the Christian Community. Relatives, friends, and neighbors gather in worship to support and pray for a couple on their wedding day and beyond.

The wedding liturgy is a public statement of the faith that will guide and shape their union. It is a prayer by the couple that God will be with them in their life together.

For these reasons, the church has the responsibility to see that the couple is prepared to celebrate the sacrament of marriage and that the liturgy is in harmony with the principles of Christian worship.

The preparation, planning and celebration of your marriage at Guardian Angels Parish is a collaborative effort by the ministry staff and parishioners.

Therefore, we, Guardian Angels Parish, have been so inspired by the beauty of the love of man and woman in marriage that in response to God and our church, we dedicate ourselves to assisting all couples to live a joy-filled and happy life.

WEDDING GUIDELINES

1. LENGTH OF PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Normally, a couple begins the marriage preparation process at least six to nine months prior to their wedding date, with formal preparation completed thirty days prior to the wedding celebration.

2. THE PROCESS

The discernment process helps the engaged couple prepare for sacramental marriage and includes the following:

- A. Explanation of the purpose and goals of marriage policies at Guardian Angels.
- B. Faith Development: Catholics planning to marry at Guardian Angels are expected to be registered, participating members of the parish.

In the case of inter-faith marriages, couples are encouraged to attend each other's churches and to learn about each other's faith experience.

- C. Completion of required Archdiocesan forms and requirements.
- D. Administration, evaluation and feedback of a premarital inventory called PREPARE.
- E. Completion of a liturgy workshop at Guardian Angels. (Scheduled three times a year.)

- F. Plan liturgy with liturgist and music director.
- G. Attend approved pre-marriage retreat or seminar as early as possible in the preparation process.

3. **ROLE OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY**

Since all couples who intend to marry are adults, they are expected to be registered, supporting members of Guardian Angels Parish. If currently included in parent's registration, couples are asked to submit a new registration form, either individually or as a couple.

Couples are invited to have their engagement blessed at one of our Weekend Liturgies, so that the entire community can support the couple in their preparation. Contact the Director of Liturgy, Michael Strande, to arrange such a blessing at one of the Masses.

4. **ROLE OF PREPARE COUPLES**

We encourage and promote a process through which married couples mentor engaged couples as a part of the marriage ministry. Committed couples from Guardian Angels have been specifically trained to guide engaged couples through our pre-marriage program. They administer the PREPARE relationship inventory, results of which will be the basis for discussions during three or four subsequent meetings. These meetings are held in the home of the PREPARE couple. Couple assignments are made as early as possible in the preparation process.

5. **PREPARE**

PREPARE is an inventory that assesses key

areas of a relationship. A computerized report summarizing strength and growth areas is the basis of discussions facilitated by trained PREPARE couples. Meetings take place in the home of PREPARE couple. Not a test, PREPARE is intended to invite discussion and increased awareness about the role each partner plays in a relationship.

6. **REMARRIAGE**

The preparation for remarriage should follow the time lines of preceding policy and include the following:

- A. Procuring an annulment if there has been a civil divorce.
- B. Counseling or other requirements specified on the declaration of annulment.
- C. Addressing grief issues and closure of first marriage, whether widowed or divorced.
- D. Consideration of step-parenting and blended family issues where appropriate.
- E. 2nd Marriage Seminar replaces requirement for other pre-marriage workshop/retreat experiences.

7. **PAPERWORK**

For a Catholic to be sacramentally married, it is necessary to make arrangements with a priest or deacon. If a marriage is to take place in the church of another faith, the Catholic pastor must be consulted in order to obtain necessary dispensations.

Marriages are scheduled during a visit with the couple and a priest or deacon during which the official church forms are completed. Baptismal certification needs to be provided by both parties.

For Catholics, this certification must be RECENT, obtained from the church where baptism occurred. In the case of inter-faith marriages, the Catholic party is asked to sign a promise that includes a statement about the baptism and the religious education of future children. The priest or deacon will explain these forms when you meet.

8. **PROCESS FOR DELAY IN MARRIAGE**

If serious difficulties become evident during the course of marriage preparation, a couple may decide--or the ministry staff may recommend--postponement of the marriage. Professional counseling may be a pre-requisite for rescheduling the wedding. The decision to delay is made only after serious deliberation and consultation with appropriate clergy and staff.

9. **LITURGY PLANNING**

Guardian Angels offers a Wedding Workshop three times a year to instruct couples about the wedding liturgy and to assist them in planning. Consult the check-off list or call the Parish Center for the dates of the workshop.

Guardian Angels will abide by Archdiocesan guidelines on the wedding liturgy. The keynote is simplicity. This will be fully explained at the Liturgy Workshop.

Because of the complexities of ritual, a parish cantor will be provided. Another soloist may perform a special song or songs if desired. It is

encouraged that a parish pianist or organist be employed. If non-parish musicians are engaged, they should be well qualified and familiar with Catholic liturgy. Their employment is subject to the approval of the director of music.

Music selections must be approved by the director of music. Please contact the Guardian Angels liturgy staff **BEFORE** you make any music or liturgy plans.

10. **PARISH ACTIVITY**

An integral part of Christian marriage is your continual gift of self. As you focus on your life together, it is important for you to consider your relationship to the broader community. We encourage each couple to discuss this during their marriage preparation, so that you can select a parish community event, program, or activity, in which the two of you can participate.

11. **FEES**

We request a fee of \$600 from couples marrying at Guardian Angels. \$200 of this amount should be submitted soon after the wedding is scheduled. The remaining \$400 can be placed in an envelope along with the marriage license and brought to your rehearsal. Both checks should be made payable to Guardian Angels Church.

This fee covers the following services provided by the church: Staff assistance, PREPARE fees and expenses, server(s), maintenance, printed materials, wedding coordinator, parish cantor, and our parish pianist/organist. Couples can contract individually with their own pianist/organist and our fee would be reduced to \$450. Any fees required

by a visiting musician and /or presider who is invited by the bride and groom must be paid by the couple.

For couples who will be prepared by our parish, but who will be married elsewhere, the total fee will be \$100. For couples who are prepared elsewhere, but will use our sanctuary for the wedding ceremony, the fee will be \$500.

12. **WEDDING LITURGY**

THE PLACE - Guardian Angels has two spaces where weddings may be held:

- A. The main church which accommodates up to 1,150 people.
- B. The historic church which can accommodate a maximum of 100 people.

THE TIME - The time and date for a wedding can only be scheduled during a meeting of both the bride and groom with a priest or deacon.

Weddings are scheduled on Friday evenings, usually from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Because of the penitential nature of the season, it is recommended that no weddings be celebrated during Lent.

The season of Advent is observed and respected according to the guidelines of the church. The tone of Advent is one of expectant waiting and preparation for the birth of Christ and the Second Coming. Our church is decorated with dark blues and silver and the Advent wreath is present in the

sanctuary. There may be no Christmas decorations, nor will Christmas music be played or sung. Please consult the liturgist about what is appropriate.

Each couple is welcome to use the worship space for three (3) hours, beginning one and one-half (1 1/2) hours before the wedding is scheduled. Please abide by this schedule. The bride's room (and groom's room if desired) will be available three (3) hours before the wedding.

THE FORM - Weddings can be celebrated in the context of a Word Service or Eucharist.

CLERGY

Normally, a priest or deacon of this parish will celebrate all marriages. If you would like to have a family member or friend preside, we will need his name and address along with the assurance that you have confirmed his availability with him. We require this information as early as possible in the preparation process so that we can send appropriate delegation authority.

If one of the parties is not a Catholic, we will welcome his or her minister to assist us at the ceremony.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

A wedding coordinator will be assigned to assist you on your wedding day and at the rehearsal. She will answer questions, set up the liturgy, cue the procession and assist in any other way needed.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Because the church is a house of worship and prayer, we ask that photographers conduct themselves in a manner of reverence and respect.

Flash photography is allowed only during the procession and recessional, not during the ceremony. You may want to make note of this in your program.

Formal wedding pictures may be taken before and after the ceremony. Schedule this in accordance with whether there is a wedding before or after yours.

If your wedding is at 2:00 p.m., all picture taking should be completed by 3:30 p.m. in respect for those who arrive for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. No sanctuary furnishings should be moved without permission of the liturgist.

Flash may not be used for still photos during the ceremony. The photographer should consult with the presider before the wedding.

Video-taping of the wedding ceremony should be done with a tripod or a fixed camera, using available light only. *Please consult with the presider before positioning the video camera.*

CANDLES

All candles should be restricted to the altar area. The couple may choose a candle-lighting ceremony if they so wish. Candles and stands for this ceremony are available from your florist or a

candle company. The church can also provide a table. Please discuss this with the liturgist.

FLOWERS AND AISLE CLOTH

For safety and liability reasons, an aisle cloth may not be used. If pew bows are used, they may be secured to the pews with rubber bands. Do not use tape or clips.

The liturgist should be consulted about the seasonal decorations in the church. Flowers are often present as part of these decorations. Parish seasonal decorations may not be removed.

We suggest that couples who are being married in our church on the same weekend consult with each other on the possibility of sharing flowers and splitting the cost.

All decorations must be removed from the church immediately after the wedding. This includes flowers which are brought in.

RICE, BIRD SEED, FLOWER THROWING

This is not allowed. Please inform your wedding party and guests.

ALCOHOL - MOOD ALTERING CHEMICALS

Absolutely NO alcohol or mood altering chemicals may be consumed on church property. Smoking is not allowed in the building.

CLEAN-UP

Food and non-alcoholic beverages must be

confined to the dressing rooms. You are responsible for the removal of all wedding decorations, cleaning up the dressing rooms, and removal of such things as flower boxes, film packages and programs. Please designate someone for this task. Dressing rooms must be cleaned before the wedding. The church must be cleaned before and after the celebration.

We strive to treat our house of worship with respect. The baptismal font is a holy sign of our Christian life. Please do not set anything on or around it.

PROTECT YOUR VALUABLES

Guardian Angels Church is a building with free access to outsiders during celebrations such as your wedding. For this reason, we cannot accept responsibility for any personal possessions left unattended in the dressing rooms. Do not leave valuables unattended. Remove all items and lock them in the trunks of your cars before the wedding ceremony.

IF YOU NEED A PLACE FOR A RECEPTION

Guardian Angels is proud to offer Peter O'Neill Social Hall as a location for your reception. The hall provides enough space to seat 425 people for dinner, has a large area for dancing, excellent parking facilities, a caterer-friendly kitchen, real china and flatware, and our own ice machine.

We have portable bars equipped with Pepsi products; the parish Men's Club provides bartenders.

Peter O'Neill Hall was voted "Best Place for a Reception" by the readers of the Woodbury-South Maplewood **REVIEW**.

You do not have to be a parishioner nor the relative of a parishioner to reserve this hall. For more information about this facility and related costs, please call Sara Fleetham, Hall Coordinator, 651-789-3179 or Denny Farrell, Parish Administrator at 651-789-3169.

Our parish community looks forward to assisting you in preparing for your marriage and planning your wedding liturgy. If you have questions about any of this information, we would be more than happy to talk them over with you.

The GUARDIAN ANGELS
Marriage Preparation Team,
Faith Community and Staff
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