

ST BENEDICT CATHOLIC CHURCH



Marriage Preparation ——— and ——— Wedding Guide



“...they are no longer two,
but one...”

Mark 10:9

{ Congratulations }
on your }
engagement!

The Church rejoices that you have decided to give yourselves to each other in a loving, lifelong commitment and to enrich the Church and the world through your marriage.

Step-By-Step

The process involves several steps, some of which have costs associated with them. Completion of the steps is required by the Diocese of Phoenix and provides you with necessary preparation for your wedding and marriage. The Diocese requires a nine month preparation period before the wedding can take place.

→ **STEP 1: MEET WITH THE PRIEST**

Contact and meet with your parish priest as soon as you are engaged. During this interview you, as a couple, will be informed of the process and requirements of the Diocese of Phoenix. Also at this time needed information will be gathered.

→ **STEP 2: COMPLETE FOCCUS INVENTORY**

Marriage Preparation Inventory, also known as the FOCCUS, will be completed. This may

be completed during the meeting with the Priest, if time permits. Questions about the FOCCUS inventory? Visit www.foccusinc.com.

→ **STEP 3: REVIEW THE FOCCUS INVENTORY**

You will be contacted to set up a meeting with a couple who will guide you through a review of this communication tool (FOCCUS). Oftentimes, this review will take one evening to allow enough time to cover all the areas, but a second meeting may be necessary.

→ **STEP 4: COMPLETE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

At the conclusion of the meeting a tentative wedding date will be set and the “Agreement for Weddings” will be completed and signed. Please proceed to the Document page to know what other documents are needed to be given to the church prior to the ceremony. Once these documents have been obtained, please drop them by the parish office as this will ensure the process proceeds smoothly. You will receive “Affidavits of Free Status” during step 6.

STEP 5: COMPLETE REQUIRED MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSES

In addition to the above documentation requirements, the Diocese also requires various marriage preparation courses to be taken by the engaged couple. To view the list of courses, proceed to the Required Courses page.

STEP 6: FOLLOW-UP MEETING WITH THE PRIEST

Once you have all the required courses and/or classes and received your certificates verifying your attendance, call the parish to schedule a planning meeting with the Priest. At this time, you will also be given “Affidavits of Free Status” which are to be completed by people who have known you for all or most of your life (i.e. signed in parents, siblings, aunts or uncles.) These affidavits are to be the presence of a priest, deacon or church representative. So, if the party that completes the form is out of state please inform them of the requirement. Have them return the completed paperwork to the bride or groom as soon as possible.

STEP 7: VOWS, READINGS & MORE

- You will be given a liturgy planning book, “Together for Life,” that contains choices for prayers, vows, and readings during the follow-up meeting with the Priest.

STEP 8: MEET WITH THE PARISH MUSIC COORDINATOR

- Music for the wedding will be planned separately with the Parish Music Coordinator.
They will help choose appropriate wedding music and assist in the hiring of musicians for your wedding if this is requested. You may choose to bring in musicians of your own rather than use our musicians, but your music plans must be approved.

→ **Step 9: Meet with the Parish Wedding Coordinator**

The final step in the marriage preparation process is to meet with the Parish Wedding Coordinator. You must call the parish to set up an appointment to review your wedding plan. The coordinator will go over all details of your wedding plan with you at this time and answer any questions you may have about the wedding ceremony. The Wedding Coordinator will conduct the rehearsal and will be responsible for opening the church one hour before your wedding. They will also be present before, during and after the wedding to make sure everything goes smoothly.

→ **Step 10: Wedding Rehearsal**

The wedding rehearsal is typically held the evening before the wedding date. The rehearsal only takes about one hour.

Everyone in the bridal party, anyone processing prior to the bridal party (i.e. grandparents & parents) and anyone who will play a part in the Mass ceremony (i.e. lectors & bearers of the gifts) should attend. Please bring important items to the rehearsal to alleviate stress the next day. Items to bring may be: ring pillow, guest book, unity candle, programs.

Why 10 Steps?

The preparation policy is set by the Diocese of Phoenix. The emphasis is on facilitating the deepening of the relationship of the couple so that people enter into marriage with a strong, loving, wise foundation. We also emphasize the couple's relationship to God and we hope to deepen their appreciation of God's role in a successful and enduring marriage.

Required Documents

For all Catholics:

A Baptismal Certificate issued within 9 months of the wedding date. When you request this from the church of baptism please ask them to fill out the certificate "with notations." We can help locate churches of baptism if you do not know how to contact them.

If possible, Catholics are also requested to submit copies of their First Communion and Confirmation certificates.



For non-Catholics:

If the non-Catholic is a baptized Christian, we will need a certificate or letter from the Church of Baptism verifying the date. If this is not possible, a copy of the original Baptismal certificate may provide some of the necessary information.

If we need more to verify Baptismal status we will help you obtain what is needed. If the non-Catholic is not a baptized Christian, no documents are required.

The following documents are to be completed and returned to the church, despite religious affiliation:

Affidavits of Free Status

To be completed by people who have known you for all or most of your life (i.e. parents, siblings, aunts or uncles.) These affidavits must be signed in the presence of a priest, deacon or church representative.

Agreement for Weddings

This will reserve a tentative wedding date for the church. A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is due with this agreement. This deposit will be applied to the church fee of \$250.

Marriage Life Skills Workshop

You, as a couple, are required to take the following class:

Love for Life Engaged Weekend

This is a diocesan engaged weekend and takes place at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Downtown Phoenix. The class will begin on a Friday night and continue all day Saturday. phxmarriageprep.org



Additional Required Courses

Along with your Love for Life Engaged Weekend selection, you will also be asked to take the following courses as a couple:

God’s Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage

This course is available in many different parishes. It will take place on one single Saturday or be divided into two weeknight sessions.
Phxmarriageprep.org

Natural Family Planning

To ensure you have the tools to plan your family effectively and in line with God’s plan, you will have the opportunity to learn about Natural Family Planning by taking a full course in an approved NFP method. The diocese has classes scheduled in over 30 locations. phxmarriageprep.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Planning a wedding is a once in a lifetime experience and there are often many questions regarding the “how to” of it all. The following may put your mind at rest in planning this wonderful event.

When Can We Schedule Our Wedding Date?

A tentative date and time may be scheduled at your first marriage appointment with the Pastor.

What Days & Times Can Weddings Take Place?

Weddings are typically celebrated on Friday evenings at 5 pm or Saturdays at 10 am or 1 pm. Other days of the week are permitted, providing that both the church and priest are available.

Are There Any Days That Weddings are Not Permitted?

In the Diocese of Phoenix, weddings are not permitted on Sundays. Also, the universal Church prohibits weddings on any Holy Day of Obligation and the Feast of All Souls Day (November 2).



What Time are We Able to Get Into the Church?

The church is available one hour before your scheduled wedding time and one half hour after the wedding ends. Outside vendors will not have access to the church before this time unless previously scheduled with the Parish Wedding Coordinator. We ask that your entire bridal party arrive no later than 45 minutes before the scheduled ceremony time. You are welcome to take pictures before, during, and after the wedding. Please review and share with your photographers/videographers the parish directives regarding photography/videography.

WHO WILL OR CAN PRESIDE AT OUR WEDDING?

We invite you to meet with Father Wilfred Yinah if you are going to marry at the Parish of St. Benedict. Deacon Ed Winkelbauer may also witness your marriage. Guest priests are welcome at the parish to help celebrate your special day, however they will need to provide a Celebret Letter.



WILL OUR CEREMONY BE A MASS?

If both the bride and the groom are Catholic and the Eucharist is meaningful to them, celebrating a marriage within a Mass is recommended since the Eucharist is our main sign of unity. The entire liturgy will be approximately one hour in length.

If either the bride or the groom is not Catholic, it is recommended that the marriage be celebrated without a Mass. Since at present, Catholics and other Christians do not have shared Communion, it would be inhospitable to have only the bride or groom receive the Eucharist. This Communicates a strong symbol of Disunity. Without Communion, the entire liturgy will be approximately thirty minutes in length.

WHO WILL HELP PLAN THE LITURGY?

The Parish Wedding Coordinator will assist you in planning the details of the liturgy using the “Together for Life” book. Plan to meet with the Coordinator at least four weeks prior to your wedding.

CAN WE WRITE OUR OWN VOWS?

Some couples like to write their own vows as a way of expressing their love for one another more personally. Because the Rite of Marriage does not provide an option for couples to write their own vows it is unlikely that the priest or deacon who assists at your wedding will allow you to do so.

The Rite of Marriage does provide several wording options for the exchange of consent.

What About Wedding Customs?

Flowers to the Blessed Mother is a practice that serves as a personal religious devotion. It consists of presenting flowers to the statue of Our Blessed Mother. The couple silently asks Mary to remain close to them throughout their marriage. This custom is optional. Unity candles are permitted but are not considered a Catholic custom.

How Do We Select Scripture Readings & Who Should Read Them?

The recommended readings can be found in the book “Together for Life” and are the readings most appropriate for this liturgy. The Word of God should be the primary message which is proclaimed in the liturgy and should precede any other choices in regard to music, prayers and other details.

You need to select three readings for your wedding: one from the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures, one from the New Testament/Christian Scriptures, and one from the Gospels in the New Testament. When you have made your scripture selections, select two wedding guests, one to read each of the first two scriptures. The priest or deacon will read the Gospel. If you are having a Mass, the readers must be Catholic. Select one person, to read the Prayers of the Faithful. The person reading the Prayers of the Faithful does not have to be Catholic. Please remember when selecting readers it is best to choose people who read clearly and distinctly, who can project their voice, and who are not afraid of a microphone.

Give all of the readers a copy of their reading well in advance so they can practice. Please consider also selecting readers who can attend the wedding rehearsal so that they can practice in the actual space with the sound system. If you are having a Wedding Mass, you will also need two people to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine. The gift bearers do not have to be Catholic.

What Kind of Music Can We Have?

You will need to meet with the Parish Music Coordinator at least 6 to 8 weeks prior to the wedding date to select the music for your wedding. The music must be liturgical in nature or instrumental. Even if you choose to bring in outside musicians (string quartets, other liturgical musicians etc.) you must still meet with the Parish Music Coordinator to have them approved.

Are Flowers, Pew Bows & Runners Permitted?

You are welcome to bring flowers to decorate the church. During the Lenten Season flowers are permitted, but you are asked to keep them to a minimum in honor of the season. If you do have flowers at this time please know you can take them with you following the ceremony. Should they be left in the church they will be donated to a senior center to respect the austerity of the Lenten Season in the worship space. Flower girls may not drop flower petals, real or artificial at any time. Your bridal party is welcome to carry flowers all year. You may use pew bows, but please do not use tape to attach them. If you or your florist have questions as to how to attach them, please ask the wedding coordinator so as not to damage the chairs. Aisle runners are not permitted.

WHO SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN OUR BRIDAL PARTY?

The size of your bridal party is up to you. The

Catholic Church does require that you have two witnesses present. These witnesses must be at least 16 years of age and do not have to be Catholic. However, the State of Arizona requires that two witnesses sign the marriage license and must be at least 18 years of age.

WHAT COSTS CAN WE EXPECT?

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|---|--------------------------------------|
| Facility: (Payable to St. Benedict) | \$250 |
| Deposit/Marriage Preparation: (Payable to St. Benedict) | \$100 |
| Presider(s): (Payable to Appropriate Person(s)) | Discretionary Suggested: \$100 |
| Wedding Coordinator: (Payable to Appropriate Person) | \$120 |
| Optional Worship Aid Creation: (Payable to St. Benedict) | \$ 50 |
| Cantor/Pianist: (Payable to Appropriate Person) | \$150 |
| Sound Technician*: (Payable to Appropriate Person) | \$100 |

*Musicians from outside the parish must have a parish approved Sound Technician.

WEDDING PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- * Meet with the Priest
- * Complete Marriage Preparatory Inventory (FOCCUS)
- * Meeting to Review FOCCUS (Possibly two meetings)
- * Return all required documents
(Affidavits of Free Status, Current Baptismal Certificates)
- * Register/Complete Marriage Preparation Classes
- * Follow-up Meeting with Priest After Courses are Completed
- * Plan Liturgy (Readings, Vows and Special Customs)
- * Plan Music
- * Meet with Parish Wedding Coordinator & Music Coordinator
- * Wedding Rehearsal * Wedding Day!



PARISH CONTACTS

Priest – Fr. James Aboyi
480.961.1610 ext. 302
fraboyi@stbenedict.org

Priest – Fr. Augustine Acheme
480.961.1610 ext. 306
fraugustine@stbenedict.org

Wedding Coordinator
Michele Frederick
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Music Coordinator
Phil Arkfeld
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Deacon Ed Winkelbauer
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