



*Holy Spirit Catholic Church
Virginia Beach, Virginia*

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased that you seek to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage at Holy Spirit Parish. We want to help you in every way possible. We pray that you will be blessed during this time of preparation. It is a hectic time no matter what the size of your wedding. Do not let yourself get so overwhelmed by details that you do not take time to emphasize the really important dimensions of this event: its real meaning, seriousness, holiness, and life-long effects in your lives. We hope that the following guidelines will answer some of your questions. Please read them over and indicate your understanding and acceptance by signing the agreement at the end. We encourage you to call the parish office for any assistance you may need.

Let the community of Holy Spirit Parish share in your journey of faith. We are here to encourage the growth of your relationship so that you may come to thoughtful, prayerful decisions around these all-important questions of marriage. We hope that your married life together will be a life of joy and continuing growth in the love of Christ. In turn, your sacrament of love will inevitably enhance and strengthen our parish community and be a visible sign of God's love.

These Wedding Guidelines will focus on two particular times: your marriage preparation, and the celebration of the wedding liturgy. Although these times may seem of the utmost importance now, there is a third period of time which is the most important one of all: the everyday living out of your marriage commitment.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

To be married at Holy Spirit Catholic Parish, one of you must be a registered and participating member of the parish for at least four (4) months prior to making an appointment with the priest or deacon to begin the preparation process. You, the couple, should contact the parish office **AT LEAST 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR DESIRED WEDDING DATE**. The six-month period allows for more in-depth discernment and for personal interaction between the couple and priest or deacon during which aspects of the marriage commitment are discussed.

During the initial appointment with the priest or deacon, the following will occur:

- Introductions
- Review a date for the wedding
- Review your reasons for wanting your service in the Catholic Church
- Overview of the process
- Overview of the documentation required
- Complete the *Pre-Nuptial Investigation* Form
- Receive the schedule for marriage preparation classes (Unveiled Sessions) conducted by The Center for Marriage, Family & Life of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond or access it to register at www.cdrcmfl.org
- Discussion of Dispensations, permissions, invalidations, etc.

The Diocese of Richmond offers couples two programs as part of Christian Marriage Formation. Participation by the couple in ONE of the programs is required prior to marriage. You may choose the regional program, Unveiled Sessions, offered by The Center for Marriage, Family & Life, which is held locally for one full Saturday session, or an Engaged Encounter Weekend, which is held in various locations around the diocese. See the information sheet at the back of this booklet for phone numbers.

Both programs encourage you to take time for yourselves and reflect on the richness of your future life together. Experience shows us that couples have found these programs helpful in looking more closely at the spiritual, emotional, and practical aspects of marriage.

You will then be required to schedule an appointment so that you can complete the Prepare/Enrich an online inventory of compatibility. It is designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. Prepare/Enrich provides individualized couple feedback on where each partner stands in regard to topic areas important to marriage. There will be one follow-up meeting required to review the Faith & Foccus results.

Before a wedding date is set, your freedom to celebrate the sacrament must be determined. You will be asked to provide the names of two people who will testify to your freedom to enter marriage. They will be given an AFFIDAVIT OF FREEDOM TO MARRY form to complete. If one of you is in need of an annulment from a previous marriage, formal plans for the wedding must not take place until an affirmative judgment is obtained from the Marriage Tribunal of the Church. The annulment process takes *at least* 8 months and sometimes longer. You should discuss all of this with the priest or deacon who will walk you through the process.

Each of you must obtain your current baptismal certificate with notations (dated within 6 months of the wedding date). Catholics may obtain their certificates from the churches where they were baptized. A person baptized in another Christian tradition should obtain his or her baptismal certificate if possible.

Following the completion of your Prepare/Enrich and Unveiled Session/Engaged Encounter weekend, you will need to make a follow-up appointment with the celebrant for your wedding.

It is the couple's responsibility to obtain all necessary documents.

During your second session with the priest or deacon, you will:

- Review any questions dealing with the Prepare/Enrich exercises and Marriage Preparation Session/Weekend
- Review the wedding ceremony
- Turn in all required documentation

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

An ecumenical or interfaith marriage may affect the type of wedding ceremony which the couple will celebrate. In deciding between the Rite of Marriage with Eucharist or without Eucharist, the priest or deacon takes into consideration those from other Christian traditions or faiths who may not be familiar or comfortable with a Catholic Eucharistic celebration. Interfaith weddings will be the Rite of Marriage without Eucharist. When a Catholic marries someone who is not Catholic, the pastor of the non-Catholic party is welcome to participate in the ceremony. Please talk this over with the pastor. Under ordinary circumstances, the parish deacon presides at ecumenical weddings.

PLANNING THE LITURGY AND CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT

The primary goal of your planning is the full and active participation of all who will gather to celebrate your marriage. This takes careful planning. The celebration of the sacrament of marriage is a sacred occasion. It is a time of joy, prayer and worship. The rite of marriage allows the couple to make a public declaration of love and commitment in the presence of God and the faith community. The bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament. They give the sacrament to one another through their exchange of vows. Through the liturgical celebration, the faith community witnesses the couple's commitment of love.

Normally, we celebrate marriages in the church. Permission to celebrate the wedding in other places is granted by the Bishop only in very exceptional circumstances. The seating configurations and liturgical arrangements in the church, which we have for our weekly worship, are the same for weddings. The liturgical celebration is guided by the Catholic Rite of Marriage alone. Marriages are never celebrated on the eve of Palm Sunday, nor during Holy Week. The pastor of Holy Spirit Parish is in charge of the entire service, including the appropriateness of all arrangements. When another priest is officiating, all the traditions of Holy Spirit are to be followed.

Normally, the pastor or parish deacon will officiate at weddings. With the pastor's consent, another Catholic priest or deacon may be delegated to assist at the wedding. If the visitor is from out of state, he should know about and comply with the Virginia law in regard to registering at the Circuit Court to be able to officiate at marriages. Couples desiring such clergy should inform the church immediately. A written confirmation from the visiting priest or deacon, whether from in state or out of state, should be sent to the parish to make sure of clear communications and expectations. The priest who will marry you will be responsible for preparing your wedding file and presenting it to the church at least one week before the wedding. It is important for the couple to remain in contact with the parish office throughout the preparation process.

The bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament and therefore both must be present to plan the liturgy with the priest or deacon and the wedding liturgy coordinator. Liturgy planning involves choosing scripture readings and music. Scripture readings are available to help with the planning process.

You are encouraged to choose lectors for the scripture readings. Lectors should be people who are capable of, and comfortable with, public reading. A good reader ensures that the Word of God is proclaimed clearly to the assembly. If other liturgical ministers are needed, you should make arrangements for them in your ceremony (Eucharistic ministers, who are currently serving as such in their own parishes, gift bearers, a reader for the General Intercessions, etc.).

There is one entrance procession at the wedding. It includes the principal participants in the liturgical rite. The usual procession includes the priest/deacon, the groom, the bride, the bridal party, and the parents of the groom and the parents of the bride. The parental role at a marriage is to give their blessing to their son or

their daughter. This is best symbolized by their accompanying their son or daughter to the altar for the sacrament.

If you plan to have a ring bearer and/or flower girl, ***he and/or she must be at least five years of age*** so that they may more maturely enter the liturgy. It has been our experience that very young children tend to detract rather than enhance the ceremony.

Try not to get caught up in unnecessary details. ***Remember what is really essential:*** you will stand in the presence of God and God's people to declare your love and to commit yourselves to one another.

MUSIC

Sacred music must be used throughout the wedding liturgy and must be approved by the Director of Music who will sing at all weddings. She should be contacted at least two months prior to the date of your wedding. Recorded music is never played before, during, or after the wedding ceremony.

During your meeting with the Director of Music, you will be asked to provide:

- the signed acknowledgment of these wedding guidelines
- your selection of readings
- names of lectors (readers for the 2 readings and the Universal Prayer)
- your music selections
- the names of your witnesses (Maid/Matron of Honor, Best Man)

THE PRINTED PROGRAM

The church will provide a program template to assist the couple in producing their own program with more detailed information regarding the wedding liturgy and the participants. The order for the Mass, Rite of Marriage.

THE WORSHIP SPACE

The arrangement of the Worship Space may not be changed. The set-up of the Worship Space for our regular weekend liturgies is conducive to prayerful wedding liturgies. Remember that in certain liturgical seasons there is a special environment in the Worship Space. This is especially true of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. The seasonal decor of the Worship Space may not be altered. You may wish to take this into account when choosing your wedding date.

An aisle runner is not used at Holy Spirit because of safety considerations and insurance liability. We do not permit balloons, the throwing of rice, birdseed, or other material inside or outside of the church building. Receiving lines are not to be held at Holy Spirit due to time restraints. The reception is the appropriate place for the receiving line.

Photographers are welcome to take pictures or video tape during the ceremony. Photographers must set up their equipment in a stationary, unobtrusive place. Photographers should not roam around the worship space during any part of the wedding liturgy. Flash is never permitted during the wedding ceremony. The photographer and/or videographer is/are **never** allowed on the altar or in the choir area. Photographs of the wedding party may be taken immediately after the ceremony for a period of twenty minutes. The photographer is to be instructed to consult the priest or deacon before the ceremony begins.

Contact the parish about flowers. If there are two weddings on the same day, you may wish to share the cost. Flowers should enhance the ceremony, not interfere with it.

It is your responsibility to designate someone in your party (i.e. a wedding coordinator or mistress of ceremonies) to set up and clean up all wedding related materials used in the worship space and any other rooms occupied at the time of the wedding, including floral boxes, pew bows, garment bags, makeup cases, etc.

THE TIME AND DATE OF YOUR WEDDING

Weddings normally take place either Friday afternoons or Saturdays. Weekday weddings are possible during the day or in the evening. Friday weddings are scheduled between 4 PM and 6 PM and Saturday weddings are scheduled at 11 AM or 3 PM. Rehearsals take place on Thursday or Friday afternoons at 4 PM, 4:30 PM or 5:00 PM. All wedding times must be tentatively scheduled with the celebrating priest or deacon. Once your date has been confirmed as available on the parish calendar, you will receive a phone call from the parish office.

In consideration of all the people involved in your wedding celebration, please make a conscious effort to be on time for the rehearsal and the ceremony. We will begin promptly at the times you set on our parish calendar. Rehearsals are especially important. Be sure all members of the wedding party can arrive from work or out of town in time to begin promptly.

The priest or deacon and the designated staff member from Holy Spirit Church are solely responsible for the liturgical celebration. Personal wedding coordinators may assist with non-liturgical wedding issues.

FEES

The parish fee for a wedding for registered parishioners is \$525 and \$900 for non-registered parishioners. The fee is due in the parish office one month prior to the wedding. The fee includes the following:

Parish Organist/Pianist
Wedding Liturgy Coordinator
Cantor
Use of the Parish Facilities

CIVIL REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA:

The marriage license must be obtained from the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Building 10B, 3rd floor, Virginia Beach Municipal Center. Marriage licenses may also be obtained from any Circuit Court office in the state of Virginia. Both parties must be present to obtain the license and identification (driver's license, certified copy of a birth certificate, etc.) is required. The cost of the license is \$30.00, \$32.00 if using a credit card. It is good for 60 days.

The marriage license (*along with* the Commonwealth's Certificate of Marriage provided by the clerk's office) must be provided to the parish office at least one week prior to the wedding. ***Remember that neither the priest nor the deacon may celebrate the marriage without the license in his possession.***

CLOSING STATEMENT

Remember that your ongoing Christian marriage is a source of strength for our faith community and the entire Catholic Church. In turn, our parish community of Holy Spirit can be a source of strength and support for your journey in married life.

As a married couple you will experience both good times and difficult times. Share your joys with your parish community and also turn to your parish community in times of difficulty. Our individual journeys of faith are indeed intertwined as we work and live together to build the Kingdom of God.

If you have any further questions or concerns about your wedding, please call the parish office at (757) 468-3600.

CHECKLIST

- Registered in the parish for at least 4 months prior to making your initial appointment with the priest or deacon
- Initial appointment with priest or deacon (at least 6 months prior to desired date)
- Reserve church for wedding/rehearsal dates
- Make appointments with the priest/deacon/Music Director for Prepare/Enrich evaluation and results
- Register for marriage preparation classes with The Center for Marriage, Family & Life or for an Engaged Encounter Weekend
- Make appointment with the celebrant of the wedding following the completion of the Prepare/Enrich and “Unveiled Session”/weekend
- Gather documents:
Baptismal Certificate with notations (dated within 6 months)
Proof of Freedom forms (affidavits)
- Contact and meet with Erin Laurence, Director of Liturgy & Music (8 weeks prior to scheduled wedding date)
- Provide signed acknowledgment of wedding guidelines to the Director of Liturgy & Music
- Submit the wedding fee to the parish office one month prior to the wedding
- Present marriage license to the office one week prior to the wedding

CONTACTS

Rev. Matthew Kiehl, Pastor	(757) 468-3600, ext. 103
Rev. Mr. Robert Smithberger, Deacon	(757) 468-3600, ext. 109
Erin Laurence, Director of Liturgy & Music	(757) 468-3600, ext. 114
Joy Palm, Parish Secretary	(757) 468-3600, ext. 116
The Center for Marriage, Family & Life, Catholic Diocese of Richmond (Marriage Preparation)	(804) 622-5204
Clerk of the Court, Virginia Beach	(757) 385-8926

I understand, accept and agree to adhere to the wedding guidelines of Holy Spirit Catholic Church.

Bride's Signature _____

Groom's Signature _____



Office Copy

I understand, accept and agree to adhere to the wedding guidelines of Holy Spirit Catholic Church.

Bride's Signature _____

Groom's Signature _____



Couple's Copy