

St. Edward's Guidelines for Weddings:

Contacting the Church. The Priest or Deacon who is to celebrate the Sacrament with the couple should be contacted at least six months prior to the marriage. No wedding plans or invitations should be made until the person preparing the couple for marriage has assured the couple that all the necessary steps for marriage within the Catholic Church can be taken.

Music. The Music director at St. Edwards, Susanne Tullos, must be contacted before any plans are made for the music.

- The director is happy to assist you in selecting the music for your wedding. She also has the names of organists, soloists and choirs available for weddings. There is no charge for consultation for the music.
- A monetary stipend should be paid for music at the ceremony. The director can make suggestions for the amount. Some organists, soloists, etc. have set fees.
- Since a wedding is a celebration of one's faith, we ask that all music at the ceremony be religious. The organists who play at St. Edward's are trained as to what music is appropriate. Secular music should be reserved for the reception or the prelude with the explicit approval of the priest or deacon presiding at the ceremony.

Flowers and Decorations. Flowers, candle stands, etc. are the responsibility of the wedding party. It is also the responsibility of the wedding party to share these guidelines with the Florist. It will be assumed that the florist knows what is and is not allowed.

- The church has a beautiful sanctuary with many candles all of which will be lit for your wedding. Should you choose with the permission of the presider to bring in other candles, they should have a piece of plastic under them to protect the floor from drippings.
- The unity candle is not a part of the Catholic tradition. As such, we discourage their use. However, priests and deacons are accustomed to working them into the marriage ceremony. Should you choose to have a unity candle, the presider will tell you where it may be placed and when the couple should light it.
- Any cultural customs that a couple wishes to include in their wedding should be discussed with the priest well in advance.
- Simplicity should be observed. Too many flowers may distract from the beauty of what is really important: the ceremony, the love of God, the love of the couple, and the vows.
- Flowers should not be placed in positions that obscure the vision of or movement in and around the sanctuary area and tabernacle. If any additional stands are placed in the church, they should be removed by the florist immediately after the wedding; the florist should be advised that this is their responsibility and that the wedding will take about one hour.
- If you schedule weddings during special liturgical seasons (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Pentecost - No weddings during Advent or Lent), be aware that the church will already be decorated and that those decorations will remain even during the wedding. Also, during a special liturgical season the church may not be decorated as if it is a different season. For example, during advent the church may not be decorated for Christmas.
- Tape may not be used to hold flowers or candles in place. Should you decide to have candles or flowers on the pews, for example, padded clips or wire that has been wrapped to protect the pews must be used.
- Florists should be made aware that they are not to leave any of their equipment in the church and that all material is to be gathered up immediately at the end of the wedding. Also, boxes in which the flowers come should be discarded in the trash. A dumpster is located behind the church for large boxes. Small ones may be placed in the trash can in the sacristy or the parish hall.
- All flowers used at weddings should be removed immediately after the ceremony unless other arrangements have been made with the Pastor of St. Edward's prior to the wedding.
- Floral arrangements to be used at Saturday evening marriages may not be delivered prior to the Saturday evening Mass unless permission has been given by the pastor. They should arrive at 6:00 P.M.

Bridal Consultants. Bridal consultants are neither needed nor encouraged for the ceremony. The priest and deacons have been trained to conduct weddings and know also the social conventions connected with them. Should a bridal consultant be used, the presider will inform him or her as to where his or her talents may be used.

Stipends. There are not set stipends for weddings in our Diocese. Generally the minister who presides at a wedding is given a monetary gift as a token of appreciation unless he is a family member or close personal friend. Consider what you are spending for your wedding, including the reception. Weigh the part of the minister with everything else taken into consideration. Then, give what you think is appropriate. Unless acolytes are family members, they are generally paid for serving. (\$10 each is a suggested amount.)

Dressing Rooms. A very nice bride's room is provided for the bride and her attendants. It is, however, not large and it generally works better for the bride and her maid of honor to dress at the church, while the other bridal attendants to dress at home. Someone should be appointed to clean out all personal items from the dressing room prior to the wedding party leaving the church. Small Boxes may be left in trash cans in the brides room. Boxes that are larger should be taken to the dumpster with other large trash. Please remove all purses and valuables before the ceremony or have a person make sure they are secured. The ministers will be happy to lock valuables in a cabinet in the sacristy before the wedding. The groom and groomsmen should dress at home, then gather in the sacristy. For Saturday evening weddings they should not arrive before 6:00 P.M.

Cost of Parish Facilities. There is no charge for the use of the church to members who have been registered for at least one year. The membership of other family members, parents, siblings, etc., is not sufficient. The parish hall can be rented according to the Facility Use Guidelines/Fees. The pastor is contacted concerning all things in the Church; the parish office is contacted concerning the use of the hall. Catholics eligible to be married in the Catholic Church but who are not members of our parish may apply for permission to use the church for marriage no earlier than four months prior to the wedding. By then they should have seen a priest or deacon who has agreed to prepare them for marriage and to celebrate the wedding itself. The cost to non-parishioners for the use of the church itself is \$350. The church will not be reserved until a non-refundable check has been received. All other fees for the use of the hall, the choir director, etc., are in addition to this fee. The cost of the hall will be explained by the parish office.

Rice or Birdseed. Rice, birdseed, confetti, and balloons may never be used. However, you may use bubbles.

Photographers/Videographers. Photographers and videographers should not set up in areas that block movement or the view of others--please consult with the presider. Flashes may not be used.

No photograph session may conflict with Mass, Confessions or any other scheduled event in the church.

Programs. Programs are not required. If you decide to have them, have someone appointed to gather them up from the pews immediately after the ceremony.

Times. Weddings may be scheduled any day except Sunday. On Saturday, they may take place during the morning hours, afternoon up to 1:30 P.M. or after 6:30 P.M. Please be aware the Saturday evening Mass is at 5:00 P.M. with confessions 30 mins. prior. Thus, the pictures and clean-up of the church should be completed by 4:00 P.M. Also, please note that the hall is not available, even for cleanup or setup, between 4:30 and 6:00 P.M. Please note that receptions held in our hall must be over and cleanup completed before any Mass, confessions or other scheduled event in the Church begins. Also, all events in the parish hall must be over no later than 10:00 P.M. with cleanup time concluding by 11:00 P.M.

Marriage License. You are being married in Miller County, Arkansas. Be sure to purchase your marriage license at the Miller County Courthouse, County Clerk office, prior to the wedding date. You cannot be married by a Catholic Priest or Deacon without the License. It is recommended that you bring the License to the celebrant at the rehearsal. He will fill it out and give it to you the next day so you can return it to the County Clerk office.

Hall. The Hall may not be reserved until the pastor has scheduled the Church for the wedding. So, You may only schedule the Hall for decorating on the day of the wedding and the preceding day. Several days before the wedding you may contact the pastor. If he is certain that the Hall will not be used for any other reason, he may allow you to get an early start on decorating. The hall is not available, even for clean up, at times when services are taking place in the church.

Marriage Preparation Process. The marriage preparation process is meant to help the couple determine if they are ready to enter into marriage at that time. It also attempts to open channels of communication in order help the couple begin to build a foundation for a marriage that will last a lifetime. The process is as follows:

1. **Pre-nuptial investigation.** The person preparing the couple for marriage is responsible for the pre-nuptial investigation. It is usually done at the initial meeting.
2. **Foccus inventory.** Generally done at the initial meeting, unless otherwise arranged. The couple is responsible for making follow-up appointments with the priest/deacon preparing them for marriage in order to discuss with him the results of the foccus inventory.
3. **Baptism Certificate.** It is the responsibility of the Catholic party to obtain a baptism certificate issued within six months from his or her church of Baptism. This may be done by calling the Office of their Church of Baptism during regular office hours. Please tell the Parish office that the certificate is needed for marriage. If you do not know the phone number of your church of Baptism, the person preparing you for marriage can look it up for you in the Catholic Directory.
4. **Freedom Form.** Non-Catholics entering into marriage for the first time will be given a form to be filled out by a parent, sibling or other person, who knows the non-Catholic well, testifying to his or her freedom to enter into a sacramental marriage. The form must be notarized or signed in the presence of a Catholic priest, who will witness the signing.

5. **Second marriages.** A person entering into a second marriage must prove their freedom to enter into a second marriage by providing a divorce decree or proof of death of their former spouse. Under no circumstances may a wedding be scheduled for a divorced person until he or she has received an annulment from the Catholic Church.
6. **Pre-Cana.** After the couple has taken the foccus inventory and discussed the results with the person preparing them for marriage, they should attend a Pre-Cana day. It is a day where five married couples offer their practical experience of the areas covered in the foccus inventory.
7. **Readings and prayers.** Toward the end of the marriage preparation process the couple should obtain from the priest / deacon presiding at their marriage a booklet to help them select the prayers and readings to be used at their ceremony. The couple should fill out the last page in the book as they plan their ceremony. This should be returned to the presider when the couple meets with him a week or two before the ceremony unless other arrangements have been made.