
Planning Your Wedding

Congratulations to you, the future bride and groom! This is a very important and exciting time of your life as you prepare to exchange sacred vows. We know what a happy and busy time this is and share with you in wanting your wedding day to be as beautiful as possible. Since you have shown an interest in having your wedding at Our Lady of Grace Church these guidelines have been prepared so that we may help you realize your goal.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

By having your wedding in a Catholic Church you are making a religious statement about your commitment to each other in the Lord. Likewise you are making a statement to the Lord as He is the author of marriage and to the whole community concerning the sacredness of your commitment.

IMMEDIATE PREPARATIONS

With the above in mind we offer you the opportunity to participate in the Marriage Preparation of the Diocese. These programs include:

- The Pre-Cana Conference
- The Evenings For The Engaged
- The Engaged Encounter Program or the Remarriage Program

Further information about these programs will be given to you when you meet with the priest or deacon whom you select to perform your wedding.

WEDDING DATE

The customary church of marriage is that of the bride, but it may be performed at the church of either the bride or the groom. If the bride or the groom is not Catholic, the proper church of marriage is that of the Catholic party. No wedding date may be set before the couple has met with the priest or deacon of their choice. Nine months notice is required to ensure enough time for preparation. The date and time of the wedding should be discussed with the priest or deacon at the initial meeting. The hours during which a wedding may be celebrated are 10:00 or 11:00 o'clock in the morning and 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon on Saturdays. **No marriages are scheduled on Sundays, Holy Days or holidays.**

VISITING CELEBRANT OF WEDDING

It is presumed for non-parishioners that you are inviting a priest or deacon friend or relative as presider at your wedding. A letter from your proposed presider is required indicating his commitment to the date and time before your reservation is confirmed. If this priest or deacon is from out of town, the priests of Our Lady of Grace will be happy to assist you with the required

paper work. If you are a parishioner at Our Lady of Grace Church and wishing to get married at another church in the diocese, you may request to have our priest or deacon perform your wedding. In this case you need not give a stipend to Our Lady of Grace Church but a stipend for the priest or deacon is required.

DOCUMENTS NEEDED

The pre-nuptial questionnaire should be completed with the priest or deacon performing the marriage. Catholics should submit the following documents:

1. BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE: Must be issued by the Church of baptism within six months of the planned wedding date.
2. FIRST COMMUNION CERTIFICATE
3. CONFIRMATION CERTIFICATE
4. STATEMENT OF FREEDOM TO MARRY: This form is to be filled out by parents or if they are deceased, by a relative who has known the party to be married since birth.

The following documents are required of non-Catholics:

1. PROOF OF BAPTISM
2. STATEMENT OF FREEDOM TO MARRY: Requirements the same as number 2 above.

CALIFORNIA MARRIAGE LICENSE: This document is issued by the state of California. It can be obtained from the County Clerk's Office, Marriage License Bureau, 220 West Broadway, San Diego (619)531-3173, or in El Cajon, 200 S. Magnolia Ave (619)237-0502. Give them a call before you go to find out what documents you need in order to get a license. Do not wait until the last minute to get a license! You cannot get married in this church without a license. The license should be given to the priest or deacon no later than the wedding rehearsal date. The marriage license is good for 90 days after it is issued. The marriage license is to be signed by two adult witnesses (18 years or older) immediately after the ceremony. This is usually the maid of honor or matron of honor and the best man.

DONATION AND STIPEND

In the Diocese of San Diego, the offering made for a wedding is placed in the general operating expenses of the Parish at which the wedding is performed. It is not retained by the presiding celebrant. Extra donation to the priest or deacon is optional. The customary offering for *registered, active parishioners or their children is \$200.00. The liturgy and wedding coordinator's fee is \$150.00. If altar servers are used, the usual stipend is \$5.00 for each server. A \$50.00 non-refundable fee is required to hold the date of the wedding. All stipend and fees should be given at least two weeks before the wedding date.

Because of high operating expenses of our church, we are at this time allowing non-parishioners to use our church and asking for a stipend of \$500.00 for usage fee; \$100.00 non-refundable deposit on the date the wedding date is settled. You will pay the rest (\$400.00) two weeks prior to the wedding date. The liturgy and wedding coordinator's fee is \$200.00 for non-parishioners.

*REGISTERED: Making regular weekly offering through the envelope system for one year prior to the marriage.

REHEARSAL AND LITURGY PLANNING

This is to be arranged and performed by our liturgy and wedding coordinator. The coordinator will help you with the planning of the wedding liturgy and performing the rehearsal before the wedding. Only members of the wedding party and the parents need to be present for the wedding rehearsal. Remember to make an appointment with the coordinator after you have seen the priest or the deacon.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Floral arrangements and church decorations are the responsibility of the couple. If runners and pew bows are used, they must be removed immediately after the ceremony by the party involved. No candelabra or candles other than the church candles are to be used unless permission is granted. If you are having the unity candle lighting in your ceremony, you have to bring your own candles for this. The candle must fit our candle holder stand. NO RICE, FLOWER PETALS, BIRD SEEDS-OR CONFETTI are to be thrown anywhere in the vicinity of the church. Not only are these things untidy to have around the church, they are a safety hazard as well.

USE OF THE BRIDE'S AND USHERS' ROOMS

You are welcome to use the bride's room (nursery) in the church to dress before the ceremony. This room is used on Sunday mornings for small children so you need to remove all your belongings and tidy up the room immediately after the ceremony. The groom may use the usher's room to dress. The bride's room and the usher's room should be left in the same order as you found it. NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE CHURCH (OR CONSUMED IN THE PARKING LOT). This means no beer, wine or champagne etc. in the usher's room or the bride's room. NO SMOKING IS ALLOWED in the usher's room or the bride's room

MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS

You have selected to come to Our Lady of Grace for your marriage ceremony. We are happy that you choose to be married in the Catholic Church. Since you are getting married here in this church, you will have to abide with our guidelines for your wedding music. Only liturgical songs and music will be allowed before and during the wedding ceremony. You will not be able to use secular songs or songs that are not appropriate for the liturgy. You will be given music guidelines to help you with your selection of songs. With the exception of family members, you are required to use parish musicians for your wedding. They will determine the amount of the fee required. You will be expected to give the required stipend to them two weeks in advance. Contact our wedding coordinator to make your arrangements for music. She will direct you to the proper person for the kind of music you want (organ music, guitar, piano and singers).

PHOTOGRAPHER

The photographer should consult the priest or the wedding coordinator before the ceremony. There is usually the opportunity for photographs to be taken inside the church after the ceremony.

If there is another wedding after yours, be considerate and not take too long for pictures after the ceremony. In regard to candid shots, please inform your guests to refrain from taking pictures during the ceremony as very distracting to the presider and the congregation present.

ONE LAST NOTE

Thank you for reading and following these instructions. We hope that your wedding will be beautiful and well organized. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the priest or the liturgy/wedding coordinator at the OLG rectory (619)469-0133.