

ST. THERESE CHURCH

Marriage Preparation
& Wedding Guidelines



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The Sacrament of Marriage

A marriage is so revered by the Catholic Church that we call it a Sacrament—a visible sign of God’s indivisible presence in our lives.

Though it was the last Sacrament added to the official list, the Church views marriage as vital to its life and mission. A Catholic marriage is seen as a permanent covenant by which a man and woman freely establish a community of life and love, which is faithful, indissoluble and open to life. These three elements are essential for a valid, sacramental marriage.

Marriage is clearly a vocation in the Church by which we live out our baptismal promises. All registered parishioners are welcome to prepare for and celebrate the Sacrament in our Church. A “registered parishioner” presumes a census card is on file in the Parish Office for one year, coupled with regular Mass attendance and financial support.

We congratulate you on your engagement and your plan to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Therese. Please know we are here to assist you in making your wedding day a joyful celebration!



Reaffirmation of Faith

If you will be having an ecumenical (interfaith) marriage, the Catholic party will be asked to make a reaffirmation of their faith. The Catholic party must promise to do all in his/her power to have the children of your union baptized and raised in the Catholic faith. The non-Catholic partner acknowledges the moral obligations to which the Catholic partner is bound and the promises he/she is making.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The steps outlined below are the policies set forth by the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. All steps must be completed prior to marrying in the Church. (For more information, visit the diocesan website at www.kcsjfamily.org/marriage-preparation)

Step 1: **Contact the Parish Office**

Before you set a date or book a reception venue, contact the Parish Office. Your first appointment should be scheduled with the Coordinator of Marriage Preparation at St. Therese Church. This is our opportunity to become acquainted with you as a couple, discuss your faith life and understanding of the commitment you are planning to make, and to be assured that you are canonically free to marry. Please allow approximately 30 minutes for this appointment.

Following your visit, you will complete an online marriage preparation inventory. This inventory is designed to assess each of your habits, expectations and values and will provide you with a personalized profile of your relationship's strengths and weaknesses.

Diocesan policy on marriage in the Church states that, "No date is to be confirmed until the parish priest (or his designated parish associate) is comfortable that the inventory shows you are ready and committed to marriage and one another."

Step 2: **Pre-Marital Inventory**

At your second visit, we will review the results of your Pre-Marital Inventory and answer any questions you may have regarding your marriage preparation. If review of the inventory shows you are ready and committed to one another, you may set your wedding date on the parish calendar.

Step 3, 4, 5: **(THRIVE!)**

This all-inclusive program completes steps 3, 4, and 5, all in one weekend. Couples will learn about cutting-edge brain science, positive psychology, women's health, the theological vision of marriage, insights from Theology on the Body, practical guidance for managing finances, and developing a life of prayer and virtue.

The fee for this program is **\$225 per couple** (online or in-person). The course is currently being offered at various locations throughout our Diocese. Please visit the Diocesan website for more information and to register for this program. <http://www.kcsjfamily.org/thrive> * this program may be offered online

(or) Step 3: God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage

This "Saturday seminar" is based on Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* and is offered at various locations throughout the Diocese. (See brochure schedule for dates.) The fee for this course is \$50/couple. Registration can be completed by going to the Diocesan website at <http://www.kcsjfamily.org/Godsplan>. You may also register via telephone by contacting Kristin at 816-714-2373.

Step 4: Married Life Training Skills

This course builds on the knowledge you gain from your pre-marital inventory.

Together in God's Love/Lead Couple

You will be paired with a lead couple from our parish. Your meetings with the lead couple will take place in their home and consists of five weekly sessions, each lasting approximately 2 hours. Key topics include: faith; communication; sexuality; stewardship; and family. Scheduled sessions are coordinated between you and the lead couple. Your flexibility in scheduling is appreciated.

To be paired with a lead couple, please contact Scott McKellar in the Parish Office at 741-2800 X213.

This option is available only to those preparing to marry at St. Therese Church.

Step 5: Natural Family Planning Instruction

To ensure you have the tools to plan your family effectively and in accord with God's plan for your marriage, you will have the opportunity to learn about Natural Family Planning (NFP). We ask that together you attend a one-time introductory session. This course, offered by Fertility Care of Kansas City, offers instruction in the Creighton Model and has affiliated doctors who use NaPro technology to assist those struggling with infertility. The course is offered at various locations throughout the Diocese. The cost for this course is \$40/couple. Registration is required 48 hours in advance and may be completed at www.fertilitycarekc.com or by calling 816-858-0198. * this program may be offered online

Step 6: Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Church invites all Catholics to prepare themselves spiritually prior to their marriage by celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. At St. Therese, reconciliation is offered every Saturday from 3:00–4:15 p.m., Wednesday mornings from 8:00–8:20 a.m., and any time by appointment.

Step 7: Final Meeting with Your Pastor

Prior to your wedding, you should contact the presider to schedule a final appointment. At this meeting, you will review your liturgy plan you have created with our parish liturgy coordinator. You will also need to come to the parish *in person* to sign the Marriage Registration paperwork. If you have not already done so, you'll need to provide a recently dated copy of your Baptismal Certificate. This copy **must** be dated within the last six months and can be obtained by contacting your parish of baptism.

Planning Your Wedding Liturgy

Approximately three months prior to your wedding date, it is your responsibility to contact St. Therese Music Director, Karen Engebretson, who will assist you with preparing your wedding liturgy. Karen will work with you to select the readings and music for your ceremony. Karen is in the office Wednesday-Friday and can be reached by telephone at (816) 741-2800 x258 or via email at kengebretson@sttheresenorth.org.

Prior to your meeting, please take time to review the “Together for Life” booklet of scripture readings and choose those that are most meaningful to you. (Refer to the back of the booklet for an outline of the ceremony.)

Apply for your Marriage License

Both parties must be present to apply for a Marriage License. You will be asked to provide your driver's license or other picture ID. Once received, the Marriage License is valid for thirty (30) days from the date issued. The License must be paid for in cash (or credit card) at the time of application. The nearest location:

Platte County, Recorder of Deeds
415 3rd Street, Suite 70
Platte City, MO 64079
(816) 858-3326
<https://www.co.platte.mo.us/marriage-license>

Please bring your Marriage License to the Church on the day of your rehearsal. The St. Therese wedding coordinator will secure it until your wedding ceremony. Once signed, the priest will return the signed copy to the Recorder's Office.

Your Wedding Day Celebration

Your wedding day is a joyous event for you, your families, and the Christian community. Since you have chosen to celebrate a sacramental marriage in the Church, you have a responsibility to maintain the sacredness of this occasion. This building is a place of prayer and worship. Appropriate behavior and attire are expected of the wedding party and their guests.

The Rite of Marriage

There are three different forms of celebrating the Rite of Marriage in the Catholic Church. When two Catholics are marrying, the celebration will normally take place within a Mass which includes the Eucharist. The second form, which does not include a Mass, is used when a Catholic marries another baptized Christian. A third form, also outside Mass, is usually celebrated when a Catholic marries someone who is not baptized. Although the third form is considered good, real, and binding, it is not considered sacramental.

Visiting Priest

If you wish to secure a priest from outside the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, we will need a letter of suitability from his Diocese stating he is a practicing priest in good standing.

Wedding Coordinator

A St. Therese Wedding Coordinator will be assigned to assist you. It is the coordinator's responsibility to guide the wedding party through the rehearsal and assist with the wedding ceremony.

If you secure a professional wedding coordinator, it is imperative they contact Scott McKellar in the parish office to go over our policies and procedures. They must comply with all policies stated in this booklet. No exceptions will be made.

Fees

We do not have a set fee for weddings, however, we ask that you consider making a free-will offering of \$100 to cover the expenses and services the Church incurs regarding marriage preparation.

There is not a set fee for the presiding priest/deacon. However, if you plan to have a visiting priest, a stipend is appropriate.

Marriage Preparation and Ceremony ~ Non-parishioner

A flat fee of \$500 is expected of all non-parishioners wishing to marry at St. Therese. A \$100 deposit is due upon booking your ceremony, with the remaining balance due one month prior to the wedding date. Additionally, we must receive a letter of permission from your parish pastor with if prepared elsewhere, a guarantee of preparation according to Diocesan guidelines.

Due to other liturgical activities, you will not be able to set the Church for your wedding on the day of your rehearsal.

Rehearsals

The bride and groom should plan to arrive a minimum of 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. The rehearsal will begin promptly at the scheduled time.

The parish wedding coordinator is in charge of the rehearsal and will see that all necessary preparations are made. Rehearsals will be run through one time and should take no longer than 30 minutes. A well-organized rehearsal will result in a stress-free ceremony.

Clearly communicate to your wedding party the importance of being courteous and on time.

Musicians

St. Therese has many experienced soloists, organists, and pianists to assist with your wedding celebration. If you wish to have an individual musician participate in your wedding liturgy, please inform the Music Director at your liturgy planning meeting. The Director will contact the musicians regarding their availability.

Soloists/Cantors: Karen Engebretson, Maureen Fiudo, Anna Guastello, Rosemary Cherian and Chris Maag

Organist/Pianists: Karen Engebretson, Lisa Klose, Polly Roe, and Nancy Womack

Each of the above musicians charge a fee of \$150. Should you engage one person to sing and one person to play, your total cost would be \$300.

Payments for those hired should be delivered to the Parish Office one week prior to your ceremony. Checks should be made payable to the individual musician.

Live Streaming Your Wedding

There is a \$ 500 fee for this service. Please contact Deacon. Scott for more information about booking this service.

Readers and Communion Ministers

Your readers are not required to be Catholic in order to participate, however, they should be comfortable reading from the altar.

On the day of your rehearsal and wedding, the St. Therese wedding coordinator will provide a notebook of your prepared readings. It is suggested your readers familiarize themselves with the selected readings and be prepared to practice their reading at the rehearsal.

Ministers of Communion should be practicing Extraordinary Ministers that are familiar with handling the Body and Blood of Christ.

Guest Book

We will provide a stand for your Guest Book. Please ask your attendant to close your guest book five minutes prior to the scheduled start of your wedding to ensure that all guests are seated.

Church Décor

Simplicity in our Church décor enhances the dignity of this sacramental occasion and, as such, the environment for the liturgical season shall remain as is. We ask that you not move or remove existing church decorations or rearrange anything in the Sanctuary.

When planning your wedding, keep in mind Church décor. The liturgical seasonal colors are as follows:

Advent: Purple
Christmas: Red/Green/Gold
Winter Ordinary Time: Emerald Green
Lent: Purple
Palm Sunday weekend: Red/Palms
Easter: White/Pastels/White Lilies
Pentecost: Red
Summer Ordinary Time: Green/Gold/Taupe

Floral Arrangements/Pew Bows/Candles

We will provide a pillar on each side of the altar for your floral arrangements. Your florist can deliver and place your flowers in the gathering space "Welcome Center" as early as 9:00 a.m. on the day of your wedding. Please have the florist dispose of delivery boxes.

Pew bows may be used on either side of the center aisle. These should be fastened with a soft elastic or plastic clip so as not to mar the wood finish. There are a total of 23 rows of pews.

Flower petals **may not** be dropped by the flower girl. Experience has proven this to be a slip hazard. Young children in the wedding party must be able to get down the aisle without the use of a wagon, stroller or cart type item.

We have candles on stands in the sanctuary, but not candelabras. You may use the white candles we have available or you may provide your own. (We use 3" wide x 12" tall candles.)

Church décor cannot be set up until the day of your wedding and must be removed immediately following your ceremony. Please assign someone to this task.

For your safety, **we do not permit the use of aisle runners.**

Photography

Photographs may be taken in the Church 1 1/2 hours before the wedding liturgy begins and for no more than 30 minutes following the ceremony. For Saturday weddings, all photography should conclude by 3:00 p.m.

We have carefully studied the locations from which your photographer can shoot. Photographers should not be in the sanctuary during the ceremony and should avoid "roaming" during the service. **Flash photography cannot be used during the liturgy.** (It would be wise to mention this in your program.) If your photographer has any questions regarding our policy, please have them contact Scott McKellar in the parish office.

WEDDING POLICIES

Please observe all policies set forth in this booklet. They will enhance the beauty of your wedding and the safety and convenience of your guests.

Wedding Times

Weddings are generally celebrated outside the seasons of Lent and Advent. Exceptions can be made with permission from the Pastor.

Weekday Evenings: Begin between 5:00 and 6:30 p.m.
Friday Evenings: Begin no later than 6:30 p.m.
Saturdays: With or without Mass ~
begin no later than 1:00 p.m.

For Saturday weddings, the Church is available from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Your floral delivery can be made any time after 9:00 a.m.

Note: Reconciliation services begin at 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

*Saturday funerals, on occasion, are scheduled from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Dressing Rooms ~ Bridal Party

The bride and her attendants will have use of the library which is located downstairs. *Please do not leave your valuables unattended.* We do not accept responsibility for any equipment or personal belongings lost, stolen or left behind.

You may bring in food and drink, but **alcoholic beverages are not permitted.**

Please delegate someone to check the room after the ceremony to remove all personal belongings and discard trash, including floral boxes, in the appropriate trash receptacles.

Dressing Rooms ~ Groomsmen

The groom and groomsmen should plan to arrive dressed and ready. They will have use of the family “cry room” to store items or visit prior to the ceremony. Again, we do not accept responsibility for any equipment or personal belongings lost, stolen or left behind. Please check the room before you leave and dispose of all trash in the appropriate receptacles.

Please do not bring food/beverages into the Church space. If available, the groomsmen may use the Wooldridge Center (Church basement) kitchen area for food/drink. Again, **alcoholic beverages are not permitted.**

Alcohol Policy

The Church has a zero tolerance policy on alcohol use. Alcoholic beverages **are not permitted** in or on the Church premises. It is *not* acceptable for the wedding party to consume alcohol prior to the wedding ceremony. The presiding priest will not conduct a wedding ceremony if there has been consumption of alcohol.

AFTER THE CEREMONY

Receiving Lines

Due to time constraints, there will not be time for a receiving line following your ceremony. Please reserve this time with your guests for your wedding reception.

Bride/Groom Exit

Rice, birdseed, balloon releases, Chinese lanterns, and confetti are not permitted in or outside the Church exit. Bubbles are permissible, but only outside the front entrance.

Clean up: Please designate someone from your wedding party to pick up any items left in/on the pew (wedding programs, pew bows, flowers, etc.) and in the dressing areas.

Wedding Receptions

The Wooldridge Center is available for wedding receptions following the 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturdays. The Center will accommodate up to 200 guests. The rental fees are as follows:

Rental Fee: \$350—Parishioner \$500—Non-parishioner

Cleaning Fee: \$200

Liability Insurance: \$125

Security: \$30/hour (4-hour minimum)

Update Your Records

If you plan to continue worship at St. Therese following your wedding, please contact Donna Patti at the Parish Office with your updated mailing address.

7207 HW 9 Highway, Kansas City, MO 64152 Phone: (816) 741-2800