



The Church of St. Peter

2500 Maine Street
Quincy, Illinois 62301

Abbreviated Marriage Guidelines

Revision of 14 Dec 06

Congratulations on your engagement to be married! Each of you have taken a very big step by choosing to spend your entire life with each other. The Church supports your love for one another and seeks to support your married life through preparation for this very important Sacrament! This preparation will focus on your marriage to each other and also upon the Wedding Day. The following guidelines will help you prepare yourselves for a committed lifetime relationship with one another blessed in the Love of Jesus Christ through His Church.

STEP ONE: Contacting the Parish Priest (Fr. Dan Bergbower: 222-3155, d.bergbower@cospq.org)

In accord with Diocesan regulations this is to be accomplished no later than SIX (6) MONTHS BEFORE the proposed wedding date. At this initial meeting the priest will make sure that the couple is free to marry (i.e. prior marriages). He will outline the specific requirements for a marriage to be valid in the Catholic Church (i.e. *one person must be an Active Practicing Catholic, Registered Parishioner, Cohabitation Guidelines*). He will also outline the required preparation. After this initial meeting, **signing the Policies and Agreement Statement** (download from website: www.cospq.org click on weddings), and paying the \$350 parish wedding fee (check is payable to the Church of St. Peter, Quincy), a date can be set for the wedding if everything is in order. A complete and helpful Wedding guide is also on our website, click on weddings.

STEP TWO: Marriage Inventory

The couple is then asked to set a time to participate in some type of pre-marital inventory. We use the **PREPARE** inventory of 165 questions. This is a useful tool in surfacing issues pertinent to a lifelong marital commitment. After completing this, it is sent to be scored and then the couple meets once with the priest/counselor to discuss and evaluate the information. These meetings can be flexibly arranged if scheduled well in advance of the wedding day. Please have this accomplished 4 or more months prior to wedding date.

STEP THREE: Formal Marriage Preparation Program

The couple is then required to participate in some type of formal marital program. These range from *Evenings for the Engaged (Norm for Quincy Area)* to *Engaged Encounters* to *Pre-Cana Workshops*. You can access this information from the link on our website: www.cospq.org, click on Weddings.

STEP FOUR: Details & Preparations

This step is divided into 7 categories. These are: 1. *Liturgical Music*; 2. *Art & Environment*; 3. *Photography*; 4. *Wedding Fees*; 5. *Rehearsal*; 6. *Other Faith Traditions*; 7. *Other Considerations*.

1. **LITURGICAL MUSIC:** The wedding Mass/Ceremony is a Sacred Event held in a Sacred Place. A good rule of thumb in choosing music is: Sacred Music belongs in Sacred Places and secular music belongs in secular places. **All elements of the music must be coordinated through and approved by our Music Coordinator, Monica Scholz (224-8014) at least 3 MONTH PRIOR to wedding date.** Please contact Monica *before* making any arrangements so she can assist you in making arrangements that are workable for everyone.

2. ART & ENVIRONMENT:

The decorations in the Church must also reflect the Sacredness and Dignity of the House of God. Our Parish Church is used to celebrate our weekend Masses as well as Baptisms, Funerals, weekday Masses, Holy Day Masses and other special Sacramental events such as 1st Reconciliation, 1st Communion and Confirmation. Your wedding is just one of the many celebrations that we welcome to our Parish Church. In order to coordinate these many Parish Celebrations, **I ask you to coordinate ALL ASPECTS of the Church's decoration with Fr. Dan Bergbower (222-3155)**. By speaking with Fr. Dan first you will be able to alleviate any conflicts with other Parish Celebrations.

3. PHOTOGRAPHY:

Your Wedding Mass/Ceremony is a very Sacred event which happens in a very Sacred Place. We offer the following guidelines.

- a. No flash pictures permitted during the wedding ceremony.
- b. The photographer is not permitted in the sanctuary or any other "high visibility" areas during the ceremony.
- c. The couple is to inform the photographer, in advance, that 30 minutes is the maximum time allowed after the ceremony for photo's. **The Church must be vacated by everyone at 3:30 pm.** Pictures prior to the wedding are allowed starting at 12:00 p.m. and ending at 1:30 p.m.
- d. **The Church is a Sacred Place whether it is BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER THE WEDDING. It is not a photographer's studio. PROPER CONDUCT IS TO BE OBSERVED AT ALL TIMES BY EVERYONE WHEN IN THE CHURCH.**
- e. Video-taping is permitted provided it is in the back of the church or far to one side of the church. No camera person in motion around the sanctuary is permitted.
- f. The photographer and or the video person should be instructed by the couple to introduce themselves to the priest before the wedding (hopefully at the rehearsal) in order to touch base about these guidelines.
- g. Any photographer going beyond the 3:30 p.m. deadline will be charged a studio fee starting at but not limited to \$300.
- h. The photographer may be subject to prior approval. Please check with the priest.

4. WEDDING FEES:

Church of St. Peter: (Payable before wedding is scheduled)

- A. Parishioners: \$350.00
- B. Non Parishioners: \$500.00
- C. Off-site Wedding fee: \$150.00

This fee includes:

- Priest's honorarium;
- Pre-marriage inventory and marriage preparation costs;
- Use of church facilities for the rehearsal and up to two hours before and one-half hour after the wedding;
- Music director's consultation and planning assistance;
- Parish-provided cantor to lead the psalm and congregational singing;
- Normal and customary custodial services before, during and after the wedding ceremony;
- Decorating consultation services by the parish wedding coordinator;
- Use of church musical instruments and decorations (silk flower arrangements, candelabra, vases, marriage banner and swags);

The fee does not cover costs of a keyboardist and other musicians; purchased flowers and materials; photography; unity candle; guest book and pen; or reimbursement for damage or extra cleaning resulting from your wedding.

5. REHEARSAL:

The rehearsal is usually the night before the wedding, generally beginning around 6:00 pm. If everyone is there on time it will conclude at 6:35 pm. **Please bring the following items to the wedding rehearsal:**

- a. Marriage License (Couple obtains this from county clerk up to 60 days in advance. Do not wait till the last minute!).
- b. Unity Candle (if you plan to have one).

6. MARRIAGES WITH PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITH TRADITIONS:

A **Wedding Ceremony** is the norm (Liturgy of the Word and Vows) as opposed to a full Wedding Mass. Inter-Communion is not allowed in the Catholic Church. Many faith denominations find it offensive not to be offered communion. It would be as if one invited a large group to dinner and then only allowed half of them to eat the actual meal. These considerations are handled delicately and individually by the priest and the couple.

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- a. The wedding time is on Saturday at 2:00 p.m. Weddings can also be celebrated on Friday Evenings and during the week. Church is available beginning at 12:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- b. Receiving lines are most appropriate at the reception and not necessarily in the church.
- c. Rice and/or birdseed, etc. are not permitted.
- d. Alcohol, drugs, etc. either internally or externally, are not permitted in the Church or on Church Property.
- e. Red wagons, carts, strollers, etc. are not appropriate for a ceremony and not allowed in the Church.
- f. If a Unity Candle is desired the couple must provide this.
- g. Aisle runners are not allowed.
- h. We strongly discourage couples dismissing the wedding guests. The Church must be vacated at 3:30 p.m. regardless.

COHABITATION GUIDELINES

(Living together before marriage)

Choosing to cohabitate (live together) before reception of the Sacrament of Marriage presents particular challenges to the local faith community. The Roman Catholic Church does not condone cohabitation. According to church law those who live together prior to marriage place themselves outside of the grace of the Church. This means they choose not to be active, practicing Catholics in the fullest sense (reception of the Eucharist is not allowed under these conditions).

It is recognized that many couples do choose to live together before marriage because of social or economical reasons. The following guidelines exist to minimize any scandal and recognize this reality yet still allow for the reception of the Sacrament in the Roman Catholic Church.

Couples who live together before marriage are encouraged to live separately until the Sacrament of Matrimony is received.

Those couples who are unwilling or are unable to separate may be married in the Church through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word and the Exchange of Vows (not a Mass). They may have two witnesses (Best Man and Maid of Honor). This service is to be low key with immediate family and all elaborate trappings are to be avoided. This service then is kept simple as it formally recognizes the informal arrangement that is already occurring, namely the cohabitation (living together). An Evening Ceremony would be very appropriate.