



Sacramental Marriage Planning Information

Congratulations on your engagement!

As a Christian community, we want to provide you with the guidance necessary to help you plan for not only a beautiful wedding day, but a happy and fulfilling Sacramental Marriage.

Celebrating this Sacrament in a church setting must be approached with prayerful planning.

We look forward to assisting you in preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage!

Your preparation process includes the following: (*If you are preparing for a wedding to take place at another parish, items 9-12 are done at the church where the wedding is being held.*)

- 1) Complete *Initial Eligibility Form* to establish freedom to marry in the church
- 2) Once freedom to marry is established, church may be reserved for your wedding date
- 3) Meet with a parish clergy to complete the *Form A* (pre-nuptial investigation)
- 4) Schedule and attend a *Marriage Preparation Workshop* at least 4-6 months before your wedding date
- 5) Provide newly issued Baptismal Certificates (issued within the past 12 months with notations)
- 6) Provide notarized Freedom to Marry *Testimonial Form B* for both bride and groom
- 7) Take the online *Fully Engaged* assessment in a timely manner (set up by parish office)
- 8) Meet with the mentor couple for *Fully Engaged* review sessions
- 9) Meet with Music Minister to plan your wedding music at least 2 months before wedding; music fees are paid at the time of the meeting or no later than 30 days before wedding.
- 10) Choose reading/prayer selections from *Together For Life* booklet
- 11) Obtain a Marriage License from the state of North Carolina. For information [click here](#)
- 12) Provide [Wedding Day Information](#) form to Marriage Office for rehearsal/ceremony

St. Michael Marriage Preparation Contact:

Mary DiSano, Associate Director for Marriage and Family Life

919-468-6134 or email mdisano@stmichaelcary.org

Mary will assist you throughout the wedding preparation process.

Parish Affiliation:

To request a wedding or sacramental marriage preparation at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, the couple must either be established registered members of the church or live within the territory of the church. If you are not a member of St. Michael's and live outside of the territory of St. Michael the Archangel Church, you are welcome to request a wedding date here if you have local family currently affiliated with our parish. In this case, the church where

you are a registered member or the church closest to your residence should assist you with preparation and the required paperwork.

Please Note: If you wish to reserve St. Michael's church for your marriage and will do your marriage preparation at another church, *your reservation will only be confirmed once we receive a letter from the parish doing your preparation, within 30 days of your request.*

If the bride or groom are registered members of another Catholic Church, a Pastor Permission Letter should be requested from the Pastor of the bride and/or groom in order for the wedding to take place at St. Michael the Archangel.

Wedding Date/Time:

After verification that you are eligible to be married in the Catholic Church, the date and time of your wedding can be reserved. A \$100 deposit is requested with your church reservation with the additional \$200 paid prior to the wedding day. Music fees are additional, details below.

Weddings at St. Michael the Archangel Church are scheduled for Saturdays at 1:00 p.m.

Formation for the Sacrament of Marriage

Form A - Diocese of Raleigh Pre-Nuptial Investigation:

St. Michael the Archangel Church will designate a member of clergy to meet with you to complete the Prenuptial Investigation (Form A) interview in person. Once completed you will work with the Marriage Preparation Office staff throughout the preparation leading up to your wedding day.

Diocesan Marriage Preparation Workshop:

All couples must attend a One-Day Marriage Preparation Workshop either sponsored by the Diocese of Raleigh or a host parish. This is a **marriage requirement of the Diocese of Raleigh**. Visit the [Diocesan of Raleigh](#) website for information on marriage preparation program dates and locations or contact the parish for upcoming workshop dates.

Fully Engaged: The Diocese of Raleigh has partnered with a pre-marital inventory assessment called *Fully Engaged*. **The cost to the couple is \$30.** The couple will receive a link to bride and groom emails directly from *Fully Engaged*, and complete the inventory questionnaire separately (app. 150 questions). Once completed, the results will be sent to the parish Marriage Preparation Office. Each couple will be assigned a mentor couple who will reach out to the preparing couple to arrange 2- 3 sessions. (Each with a duration of 1 and ½ hours). Evaluations of the sessions will be held in strict confidence and shared only with the Priest or Deacon who is the officiant. These sessions are designed to foster deeper discussions on important topics and components of married life with a mentor couple who are trained and have lived a committed Sacramental Marriage.

Meeting with your Officiant:

The priests and deacons of St. Michael Church rejoice with you as you begin your marriage preparations and are happy to preside at your wedding. Your Officiant will want to meet with you prior to your wedding day and this can be arranged through the Marriage Preparation Office.

Documents Needed

Baptismal Certificates:

Bride and/or Groom who are Catholic must provide a *recently issued* baptismal certificate (dated within 12 months). Your Church of Baptism must issue these certificates. Usually you can request these certificates by phone.

Bride and/or Groom of other Faiths are asked to provide a copy of their original baptismal records (this copy does not have to be certified).

Testimonial Letter Regarding Freedom to Marry:

[This document](#) is required by the Diocese of Raleigh. Both the bride and groom are asked to provide two witnesses (ideally family members) who can testify to their freedom to enter into marriage. These documents are to be notarized and turned into the Marriage Preparation Office at the parish at the time of preparation.

Prior-Marriage Documentation:

If either party has been previously married (Catholic or not, civilly or in a church), the necessary documents must be obtained to determine his/her freedom to marry in the Catholic Church. This matter must be discussed before a church reservation may be made. For assistance please contact your priest, the Marriage Preparation Office or the [Diocese of Raleigh Tribunal Office](#) to discuss.

Civil Requirements - Marriage License:

You must obtain a Marriage License Application from the Wake County Register of Deeds, no more than 60 days before your wedding. For information: <http://wakegov.com/rod> or call (919) 856-5490 (both the bride and groom are required to be present together at the ROD office).

You must bring your marriage license on the day of the wedding rehearsal and give it to the Priest or Deacon. The Priest or Deacon **must have your wedding license before the wedding can take place.**

Additional Information

Wedding Rehearsal:

Rehearsals take place in the afternoon or evening the day before your wedding. Your rehearsal can be scheduled at the time of your church reservation. The allotted time for a wedding rehearsal is one hour, and therefore, it must begin and end on time. Anyone with an active role should plan to attend the rehearsal. This includes parents, wedding party and readers. Attendance is optional for grandparents, ushers (if separate from groomsmen), gift bearers and Eucharistic Ministers (full Mass only). Readers will have the opportunity to practice their readings. The readings will be printed and available. Generally speaking, St. Michael clergy will only attend the portion of the rehearsal pertaining to the exchange of vows. However, out of town priest/deacon should attend the rehearsal if possible.

*Please bring the civil marriage license to the wedding rehearsal. A wedding may not be performed without this license.

Wedding Ministry

Our Wedding Ministry Committee members are an essential part of your rehearsal and wedding day. Committee members are volunteers who generously give their time to assist the presider and the couple at the rehearsal and on the wedding day to ensure that everything runs smoothly. There is no fee for their services. Members do their best to have someone at your rehearsal and wedding but, occasionally, there might not be anyone available.

Offering to your Priest or Deacon

There is no fee for the wedding celebrant, however if you wish to make an offering in appreciation of their service you may do so directly.

Offering to the Church

An offering of \$300 is requested to defray the expenses related to use of our facilities. \$100 is paid at the time of the reservation, and the balance is paid when the music fees are paid, 30 days prior to the wedding date.

Offering to Altar Servers Youth from the parish serve as Altar Servers, volunteering their time for weddings. We recommend a small cash offering of \$20 to be given to each of them on the wedding day. (Normally two youth assigned to each wedding)

Wedding Music:

Once your wedding date is secure, contact the parish Director of Music and Liturgy, Alex Hill at ahill@stmccary.org to arrange a meeting. Alex will assist you in selecting appropriate music for your wedding and can provide information about the fee schedule. Outside musicians and/or singers must be approved by the Director of Music and Liturgy *before* contracted and will include a bench fee for staff assistance. Additionally, all selections must be sacred music and preapproved by our director.

Music Fees are as follows:

Organist or Pianist \$225

Cantor/Soloist \$125

Additional Instrumentalists priced per request

The Nuptial Mass or Ceremony:

When both parties are Catholic, it is expected that they have a Nuptial Mass. If one party is of another faith, the norm is to have a Wedding Ceremony outside of Mass. Please discuss this with your clergy and notify the Marriage Preparation Office of your plan as it is necessary to know if you are having a Mass or a Ceremony.

It is our desire that your wedding day go smoothly. Due to the numerous events and liturgies that take place at St. Michael Church, couples must strictly adhere to the following:

***Arrive on time for the wedding rehearsal, arriving more than 15 minutes late, will cause your rehearsal to be cancelled**

***Arrive at the Church at least 45 minutes before the wedding ceremony late arrival will minimize or eliminate your formal photography time**

Planning the Ceremony:

You will select your wedding prayers, vows and scripture readings from the *Together For Life* booklet. Your selections should be given to the Marriage Preparation Office and your presider at least 2 weeks prior to your wedding. (Booklet given out at initial clergy interview)

Wedding Attire:

Modest and appropriate dress befitting the house of God is expected of all members of the bridal party as well as anyone assisting with the liturgy (ex: readers). If you have specific questions, please contact the Marriage Preparation Office.

Readers at the Liturgy:

You may have members of the wedding party, family, or friends as readers at your wedding provided *they are Catholic and in good standing with the Church*. Please keep in mind that anyone who is a reader should be comfortable in proclaiming the Word and doing it clearly and reverently. Readers will read from the book that will be placed on the ambo for the wedding. Readers should attend the rehearsal to practice so that they can be familiar with the ambo, the book, the layout of the Church, and the use of the sound system. Reading the text before the ceremony is strongly recommended.

Visiting Clergy:

We welcome Priests or Deacons from outside St. Michael the Archangel Church to officiate at your wedding. The visiting Priest or Deacon must be approved by the Pastor and will be expected to follow all the policies of St. Michael. When the officiating priest or deacon is from outside the Diocese of Raleigh, he must submit a letter of suitability from his bishop or superior from his Archdiocese or Diocese. The [letter of suitability](#) shall affirm that the priest or deacon is in good standing with full faculties. Once necessary documentation is submitted by the officiating priest or deacon for validity, delegation will be given by the Pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Church.

Children in the Wedding Party:

Your marriage ceremony is a sacred occasion and the decision to include children in the wedding party should be treated realistically. Children who participate in the wedding ceremony must be well behaved and under adult supervision. Our policy: Any child in the bridal party must be at least 5 years old. Flower girls are **not** permitted to drop flowers during the procession. Ring bearers are not to carry the actual wedding rings on the pillow, these rings should be given to the adults. Children in the bridal party should attend the wedding rehearsal. Costume attire and/or props are not allowed (i.e. dark glasses, signs, wagons, unusual attire).

Veneration of the Blessed Mother:

Many couples choose to take flowers to the statue of the Blessed Mother in the church and say a prayer. Please discuss this during your wedding ceremony planning.

Memorial Candle or Unity Candle:

Memorial candles and Unity candles are **not** permitted as they are not a part of the Catholic wedding liturgy. The Unity Candle has no liturgical significance in the Catholic Church. For couples who wish to light a Unity Candle, we recommend this take place at the wedding reception. If you wish to remember a loved one at your wedding, you may have their name(s) mentioned in the intercessions (Universal Prayer) and/or in your wedding program.

Flowers:

Providing flowers for the Church for your wedding is optional. Because of the beauty of our Sanctuary, we recommend, if a couple chooses to have flowers, that the arrangements be simple and tasteful. All floral arrangements already in the Sanctuary must be kept in place. Flowers may not be placed on the steps leading up to the altar or on railings or columns. Arrangements should not stand any taller than the altar. Pew bows/pew greenery are permitted; these items must be attached by ribbons or pipe cleaners to avoid damage to the wooden pews. It is your responsibility to be sure that pew decorations are removed from the church after the wedding pictures are taken.

Pre-Existing Liturgical “Props” and Flowers:

If your wedding is scheduled during a specific liturgical season such as Christmas or Easter, you are welcome to enjoy and use the special floral arrangements that are already in the Church. The colors chosen for additional floral arrangements should match those of the liturgical season. Any flowers and liturgical “props” that might be in the Church at the time of your wedding may not and will not be removed. Altar flowers are not permitted during Lent.

Wedding Programs:

Most couples create their own wedding programs or have a printing company do it for them. A sample program used at St. Michael Church can be e-mailed to you. Before your final program is printed, please provide the Director of Liturgy with a sample copy to be sure that the program is in the correct order for the Mass or Wedding Ceremony.

Runners in the Main Aisle of the Church:

Carpet (or any other material) runners are not permitted in the Church because they can be hazardous.

Photographers:

Good photography provides a couple with lasting memories of their wedding day.

A good photographer is virtually “invisible” and, at no time, is to be a distraction to the bride and groom, other members of the wedding party, or guests. Because the Church is a holy and a sacred place and your wedding is a sacred event, we expect photographers to conduct themselves with reverence and respect for the Church and for those who attend your wedding. The member of the Wedding Ministry Committee who assists at your wedding will advise the photographer on locations photographs may be taken from.

Please note: No flash photography during the ceremony. Umbrella reflectors and lighting stands are not allowed in the church. Drones are not allowed on the St. Michael campus.

Photos After the Wedding Liturgy:

After the liturgy, the wedding party and families may return to the Church for formal pictures. Due to scheduling, we can only permit a 20-minute session after the wedding for pictures. During this time, please remember that the Church is a place of worship and not a photo studio. This is especially true regarding “staging” photographs of a humorous nature. We highly recommend that you give the photographer, in advance, a list of the pictures that you would like to have taken.

Videographer:

Video cameras must be on a stationary tripod and are only permitted in designated areas. The member of the Wedding Ministry Committee who assists at your wedding will tell the videographer where the proper tri-pod location is in the Church.

Receiving Lines:

Due to time factors, receiving lines are not permitted in the St. Michael Church building. The wedding party will process from the Church, wait until guests do the same, and then return to the Sanctuary for your wedding photos. Usually, couples have a receiving line at the reception.

Bride’s Room:

Some brides prefer to dress at home, but for those brides who wish to dress at the Church, we do have a bride’s room for your use. This room is to be used for **dressing only**, no hair/make-up stylists permitted. Please be sure to remove all personal items and return the room to its original condition for the next group. No food or alcohol is allowed in the bride’s room. The groom and groomsmen should arrive at the Church in full attire. There is no designated place in the Church for the groom and groomsmen to get dressed.

Food, Drink, Smoking, Alcohol:

Food, drink (except for water), smoking and alcohol are *not allowed* in the Church or on the property. Any violation may result in the immediate cancellation of the wedding ceremony. Any indication of inebriation on the part of the bride or groom or any member of the wedding party before the ceremony begins will be grounds for the cancellation of the wedding ceremony.

Thank you in advance for adhering to these guidelines!

*“From the beginning of creation,
God made them male and female.
For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother
and be joined to his wife,
and the two shall become one flesh.
So they are no longer two but one flesh.
Therefore what God has joined together,
no human being must separate.”*

Mark 10:6-9