

# Holy Family Parish Marriage Preparation

## Marriage in Christ

Fantastic! You're engaged, and you want to get married at Holy Family Church! We want to support you in your decision to marry, which is itself counter-cultural these days. We also want to make sure you're well-prepared to marry *in Christ*, which is a commitment that is even more radical!

This web page is designed to help you complete your preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. We've put together a checklist of things to do, along with the parish's requirements for couples desiring to celebrate their wedding at Holy Family Church. Please feel free to call us with any questions that are not answered here.

## Who may be married at Holy Family Church

Church law requires that the celebration of Catholic marriage, with a few specific exceptions, must take place in the parish church of one of the two parties being married. Any parishioner (a Catholic who either lives within the territorial boundaries of Holy Family Parish, or who has made this his/her place of worship) who is free to marry may do so at Holy Family Church. In addition, non-parishioners who were baptized at Holy Family may request to be married here. Other Catholics who have substantial family ties to this parish may also request that their wedding be celebrated here, and we will do our best to accommodate them.

## What to do first

As soon as you're engaged, you should contact one of the priests at Holy Family to arrange for a meeting between him, you and your fiancé(e). At that meeting, the priest will ascertain your freedom to marry and will help you to schedule a date and time for the wedding.

Weddings may be celebrated on Saturday mornings at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday afternoons at 1:00 p.m., or Saturday evenings at 5:30 p.m. If you wish to have another day or time, it may be possible to arrange that with the priest, depending on the parish schedule for the day you choose. We generally do not celebrate weddings on Sundays at Holy Family Parish.

*Please do not book a reception hall prior to making plans with the church.*

## What else you will be asked to do

After meeting with the priest and scheduling a date, the Church asks you to:

- ❖ Attend a marriage-preparation (pre-Cana) course;
- ❖ If necessary, contact the parish where you were baptized and have a baptismal record sent to Holy Family;
- ❖ Meet again with the priest who will celebrate your wedding for a discussion and to complete a pre-marital questionnaire;
- ❖ Assist in planning the wedding liturgy;
- ❖ Obtain a civil marriage license;
- ❖ Schedule and participate in a wedding rehearsal.

## **Marriage Preparation (Pre-Cana) Course**

It will be your responsibility to register for and participate in a Marriage Preparation Course. These courses are offered around the archdiocese at various locations all year 'round, and at Holy Family Parish twice a year (in March and October). You'll need to sign up for these courses well in advance, as they generally restrict the number of couples and fill up quickly.

## **Baptismal and Confirmation Records**

You will also need to contact the parish where you were baptized, and ask them to send a long-form copy of your baptismal record directly to the priest who will be witnessing your marriage at Holy Family Church. This "long-form" will indicate whether you were confirmed or previously married.

## **Assist in Planning the Wedding Liturgy**

At the second meeting with the priest who will witness your marriage, you will receive a booklet that offers a selection of readings and prayers as options for your wedding liturgy. You may select appropriate readings (one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament, and one reading from the Gospels) and readers (note: the priest or deacon will always read the Gospel). Proclaiming the Word of God at a wedding is an awesome responsibility; you will want to choose someone for this task who will do it well.

## **Obtain a Civil Marriage License**

It will be your responsibility to contact a city or town hall in Massachusetts to obtain a marriage license. Marriage licenses are valid for sixty (60) days, so don't get it too early! Any town hall can give you exact details on how to apply.

## **Schedule a Wedding Rehearsal**

Usually rehearsals are scheduled for a weeknight just before the wedding itself. You will need to contact the priest who will witness your vows to arrange for the rehearsal. Again, don't wait too long to do this!

