



GETTING MARRIED/MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Sacred Heart Parish, Seattle, Washington

These Frequently Asked Questions are intended to answer a few of your questions as you prepare to enter into holy matrimony. We want to support and assist you in the best way possible as you plan your wedding and, more importantly, your life-long commitment in marriage.

The first section deals with marriage preparation, whether you decide to get married at Sacred Heart or somewhere else. The second section includes questions and answers related to having your wedding here at Sacred Heart of Jesus.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The Catholic Church sees marriage as a sacrament for the baptized, or as a sacred celebration for a marriage that involves an unbaptized person. In either case, it is a life-long commitment. One of the ways we value and honor this sacrament is by taking time to help couples prepare. Sacred Heart provides marriage preparation for couples, whether the wedding takes place in our church or somewhere else. We ask couples to participate in a marriage preparation program. You will be given information about the options for these programs at your initial interview with the priest of the parish.

The following link has schedules and locations for Catholic Engaged Encounters in and around Seattle: <http://www.ceeseattle.org/?content=3>

You will be asked to complete a comprehensive Pre-Marriage Inventory or questionnaire, followed by an interview with the priest who is working with you.

The fee for Marriage Preparation is \$250, which includes all in-person meetings with the priest, relevant forms, and preparation of marriage documents.

Ready to start the process? If so, please contact the parish office at (206) 284-4680 or by email (debbie@sacredheartseattle.com) for more information.

HAVING YOUR WEDDING AT SACRED HEART

Who can be married at Sacred Heart Church?

Normally, those who are registered parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish may hold their wedding at Sacred Heart. Registered parishioners are those who have registered either online (www.sacredheartseattle.com) or by completing a Registration form available in the parish office. In addition, registered parishioners are those who have been actively involved at Sacred Heart for at least the last six months and contributing members during that time.

The Catholic Church has a long tradition of celebrating the sacraments within one's community of faith. There are some exceptions to this. For example, couples whose parents or grandparents were married at Sacred Heart or couples who once belonged to the parish. In those cases, we ask that the couple contact the parish office for more information.

Who officiates at weddings?

Normally one of the priests assigned to Sacred Heart Parish. Permission can be given for a priest or deacon friend to officiate. If you belong to another parish in the Archdiocese, your pastor may be the appropriate person to officiate at your wedding.

Are people who are not of the Catholic faith able to be married at Sacred Heart?

Yes, IF they are marrying a Catholic. We do not rent the church out for "other" weddings.

What are the times for weddings at Sacred Heart?

Saturday is the usual day for weddings at Sacred Heart. The suggested times are: 10am, 12:00pm, and 2:00pm. We do not schedule weddings later than 2:30pm on Saturdays. Weddings may also be scheduled on another time during weekdays (i.e., Friday evening). Wedding celebrations during the season of Lent are generally discouraged.

Do Catholic weddings always take place during Mass?

No. A wedding may be celebrated either during the celebration of Mass or during a Liturgy of the Word. Normally, weddings are celebrated during Mass only when both parties are of the Catholic faith.

Does Sacred Heart have policies regarding the content of the wedding service, the music to be used, etc.?

Yes. The content of the service is given in the Church's official ritual book for weddings. We have a booklet that contains the official prayers and readings with various options. This booklet is given to the couple to plan their wedding ceremony. We also have guidelines about music at weddings and these will be given to the couple for help in planning the music for their wedding.

What about photographs before, during, and after the service?

The wedding party may use the church for photos an hour and half before the wedding and for a half hour after the wedding.

During the service one official photographer may take pictures from the body of the church. The photographer may not enter the sanctuary (be near or behind the altar) to take pictures during the ceremony. We ask that the couple, the wedding party, the family, and the photographers be respectful of the sacred space.

May we have bows on the pews and flowers on the altar?

You may have bows on the pews (but no candles) if they are attached by string or ribbon (no wire, fasteners, tape, or pins that could damage the pews). You may have flowers in the sanctuary, near the altar but not on the altar. The flowers do not have to be left at the church.

How does one arrange a wedding at Sacred Heart?

You may call the parish office and arrange for an interview with a priest to begin the preparation process. Please read the "Marriage Preparation" section.

IMPORTANT: It is best to begin this process at least six months before your intended wedding date.

Registered Parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish have priority for a specific date and the use of the church for their wedding.

Are there documents that we will need for our marriage?

YES. You will need the following documents:

1. A recent copy of each Catholic's baptismal certificate issued within the last six months. This can usually be obtained by contacting the church where you were baptized. For those baptized in a Christian church, we need proof of their baptism.
2. The sworn testimony of two competent witnesses that can vouch for the freedom of each party to marry. The parish supplies these forms.
3. A civil license to marry. This is usually obtained from King County. This document **MUST** be given to the priest no later than the week of the rehearsal.
4. Your wedding planning sheet that you bring to the priest when you are making your final plans for the wedding ceremony. Certainly no later than the time of the rehearsal.

Is there a fee for a wedding at Sacred Heart?

The fee for the use of church facilities and services is \$800.

Registered parishioners who have been active and contributing for at least the last six months, can contact the office for special consideration. Please be prepared to provide proof of income.

A deposit of half of the total amount is required to reserve the date. The balance is due no less than three (3) weeks before the wedding date.

If you honestly are unable to afford the fee, please make explicit arrangements with the priest.

No one will be denied a wedding at Sacred Heart due to an inability to pay.

We pray that your wedding will be the memorable day you want it to be and we pray your marriage will be truly blessed. For more information: <http://catholicweddinghelp.com>

Do you have a cantor who is available to sing at our wedding?

We do. You can contact Pam Nim (Cantor, Choir Director), 206-910-9439 (*mobile*) or 206-938-7820 (*home*).

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please contact our parish office if you have other questions that you'd like to ask prior to starting the marriage preparation process. You can call or email the parish office. In either case, you'll be asked:

- If you are a registered parishioner at Sacred Heart
- For the wedding date (tentative or scheduled)
- If you want to have your wedding at Sacred Heart, or if it will take place somewhere else
- Your name and that of your fiancé
- Your contact information (mobile phone number and email)

The parish office is open Monday – Friday, from 9:00am – 12:00pm and 1:00 – 5:00pm. You can call (206) 284-4680 or email debbie@sacredheartseattle.com.

**We wish you all the best
as you embark on your new life as a married couple.**