

Marriage Preparation Packet

Congratulations on your engagement to be married. By choosing to be married in a Catholic Church, you have chosen a sacramental marriage – a marriage blessed by God. God’s graces in a sacramental marriage will make the good times more joyful and provide the strength to endure the trials that may come. We at St. Pius X are pleased to assist you in making preparations for your wedding ceremony. We hope the following material will be of help in planning for this special day.

Contact Information at a Glance

Monsignor Mark Merdian, Pastor	793-7373 ext 211
Father Jeremy Freehill, Associate	793-7373 ext 220
Deacon Joseph Dockery-Jackson	786-2385
Deacon Timothy Granet	794-0246
Deacon Paul Martin	236-1715
Deacon Russ Swim	786-3097
Rectory	793-7373
Mr. Cary Young, Farrell Hall Manager	793-7373

Parish Requirements

1. Preparation for marriage should begin 8 to 12 months before the wedding. Couples must consult the Parish Priest for the wedding date and time **before** setting the date and place of the wedding and reception. A deposit is requested to hold the wedding date (\$300 for contributing parishioners, \$400 for non-contributing parishioners, \$600 for non-parishioners).
2. Marriage preparation has two parts. First, there are the preparations for the wedding day, with the countless details that involves. Careful planning can make your wedding day a much richer experience. But, more importantly, marriage preparation is designed to prepare you for a joyful life together as a couple and family. Good planning takes time. A consulting priest or deacon and others at the parish will assist you in both planning your wedding day as well as preparing for your life together. Your consulting priest or deacon will work out a preparation schedule with you.
3. Celebrant: The ordinary celebrant for weddings is the Pastor or his associate, or one of the parish deacons. Priests from outside the Parish may be invited to either preside or concelebrate, by agreement and prior consultation with the Pastor. The Pastor is responsible for keeping records associated with the marriage. The Pastor is also responsible for the premarital investigation. The celebrant will conduct the rehearsal with the support of the Parish Director of Music Ministries.
4. A rehearsal for the entire wedding party is normal procedure. Everyone is expected to be on time for both the rehearsal and the wedding.
5. Weddings during the Lenten season are discouraged. Both the range of songs and the decorations available are subdued during Lent.
6. Weddings may be scheduled any time **except** Saturday Evening, Sundays, or Holy Days of Obligation. Regular weekend Masses begin at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. Without special arrangements, the church is available **1 hour** before your ceremony.
7. Clerical fees and Church expenses are incurred with every wedding. The minimum suggested offering for the Priest or Deacon celebrating the wedding is \$100. A minimum suggested offering for covering church expenses is \$300 for contributing parishioners, \$400 for non-contributing parishioners, and \$600 for non-parishioners. If either of you or any of your parents are participating members of St. Pius, then you are considered parishioners.
8. During the process of marriage preparation, Catholics are encouraged to complete their Christian Initiation if they have not yet received the sacraments of Penance, Communion, or Confirmation. Catholics should make a good confession shortly before their marriage. Making a good confession before marriage ensures that God's graces flow into that marriage unobstructed. It is usually better to schedule a time other than the rehearsal for going to confession.
9. Catholics to be married in this Parish are expected to be practicing Catholics by their Sunday attendance at Holy Mass and living a life consistent with Church teachings. This gives God the best opportunity to support the couple in their marriage.

Diocesan Requirements

1. If you were baptized a Catholic, we must have a copy of your baptismal certificate. This certificate must be less than six months old and is obtainable from the Church where you were baptized. If you were baptized, but not in the Catholic Church, we would like a copy of your baptismal certificate if at all possible.
2. If your Confirmation is not noted on your baptismal certificate, a Confirmation Certificate, obtainable from the Church where you were confirmed, is also required.
3. Two affidavits confirming each party's freedom to marry must be submitted in most cases. The consulting Priest or Deacon assisting you in marriage preparation will advise you. Parents, brothers, sisters, and close relatives are preferred witnesses.
4. To help couples better learn about their chosen mate and where areas of agreement and disagreement may come up in their marriage, a premarital inventory for both the bride and groom must be completed with the consulting Priest or Deacon. Knowing how your partner feels and discussing differences openly can avoid later problems.
5. Two witnesses are required for the ceremony and generally should be Catholic. The Priest or Deacon assisting you in your marriage preparation will advise you if you wish witnesses who are not Catholic.
6. The Diocese of Peoria has the following two requirements for marriage preparation:
 - a. Attendance at either *The Engaged Couple Encounter Weekend* or the *Pre-Cana Conference*.
 - b. Attendance at either the *Christian Sexuality Workshop* or the *Natural Family Planning* classes.

We believe the Sacrament of Marriage consists of proper preparation as well as the celebration itself. All Diocesan Marriage Preparation information, schedules and registrations forms will be available on the diocesan website at cdop.org. Couples should print the registration form and send it into the Office of Family Life in Peoria to register. If you do not have web access, the priest or deacon can print you a copy.

7. When both parties are Catholic, the full Catholic Rite of Marriage with the Mass is preferred. This is the most complete way in which you can invite God to bless and share in your wedding and marriage. If one or both of the Catholic parties are not practicing the faith, the Sacrament of Marriage may be celebrated within a Mass if the person of another faith requests it. Reception of Holy Communion by non-Catholics is not permitted. **Special Note:** The Bishop's permission is also required should a couple wish to be married in a Church other than a Catholic Church.

Civil Requirements

1. A Marriage License must be obtained from the Rock Island County Clerk's Office at least one day before the wedding ceremony and no more than 60 days before the wedding day. The celebrant must have the certificate before the wedding can be performed. **Bring the Marriage License with you to the rehearsal.**