



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church
Wichita, KS 67235

Wedding Guidelines

CONGRATULATIONS on your upcoming wedding. This booklet is intended to offer an overview and to clarify any questions you might have concerning the Sacrament of Marriage and how it is celebrated at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

THE WEDDING

Only the parish priest may finalize the date for the wedding. Dates will be finalized only after the priest has had sufficient opportunity to meet the engaged couple and to arrange for their participation in a marriage preparation program. It is the responsibility of the engaged couple to secure the date for the church before making commitments with caterers, florists, reception halls, etc.

The wedding is a sacrament of the Church and the reception is yours to fully personalize. The wedding can be either a Nuptial Ceremony or a Mass. If a preponderance of guests are not Catholic it is better to have just a nuptial ceremony without a Mass. You will meet with your priest to discuss.

WHO MAY MARRY AT ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CHURCH?

The proper place for a marriage of two Catholics is the parish of the bride or groom. To be married at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, you must be a **registered** member for at least **nine months**. This includes active stewardship in time, talent, and treasure; otherwise, there will be a \$400 charge for the use of the Church.

SETTING THE DATE & TIME

Couples are expected to contact the parish priest at least **six months** prior to the date on which they hope to celebrate their wedding. The church can be tentatively be reserved no more than 15 months in advance. Contact the parish office to make arrangements.

If either party has been previously married and an annulment is needed, or pending, a wedding date cannot be set. Please contact the parish pastor for an appointment.

Weddings are celebrated on Fridays or Saturdays. Saturday weddings may take place as early as 11 AM, but not later than 2 PM to avoid conflicts with regularly scheduled services. When setting a date for the wedding, a date and time for the rehearsal should also be set. Out of consideration for the participants, guests, and other scheduled services, rehearsals and the wedding ceremony must begin at the hour appointed.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

For couples contemplating marriage in the Catholic Church, diocesan statutes require a **minimum of six months preparation time**. During this time the couple must:

- 1. Meet with the priest.**
- 2. Complete the Natural Family Planning Class:** The Diocese of Wichita offers Natural Family Planning Classes by trained and certified teachers in two methods: Ovulation Method and Sympto-thermal method. Multiple locations and class times are offered. Please contact the Diocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life.
- 3. Engaged Encounter** is a weekend experience at the Spiritual Life Center. This weekend creates an atmosphere for the couple to concentrate exclusively on one another and their relationship. For weekend registration information on Catholic Engaged Encounter, please contact the Spiritual Life Center at (316) 744-0167 or visit www.slwichita.org.

PARISH WEDDING COORDINATOR

A **parish wedding coordinator** will be assigned to assist at the wedding and rehearsal. She will contact you approximately 2 months before the wedding date to review detailed plans for the wedding rehearsal and liturgy. The coordinator will be present for both the rehearsal and the day of the wedding to provide for the needs of the bride and groom, their attendants and families, to assure security and to assist the priest in various ways. The parish wedding coordinator will assist with decorations. The Coordinator will assist you in creating a Catholic Art and Environment for the Sacrament of Marriage and will assume the responsibility of setting up and removal of any parish items. They will also assist photographers and florists. In consideration of the time and energy the Coordinator invests, we request that you give them a stipend of \$100.

WEDDING STIPENDS

It is thoughtful of the bride and groom to prepare envelope-offerings in advance to be given to the officiating priest, musicians, and altar servers. Please give to the wedding coordinator for distribution.

REHEARSAL

The Rehearsal is a simple affair to practice procession and recession. The rehearsal will take place the evening before the wedding and will last no more than 30 minutes. The wedding party, parents, lectors and ushers you have asked to take part in your wedding are making a commitment, should be in attendance, and are expected to be on time. Altar servers (*if not from St. Elizabeth*) should also be in attendance. As a general rule, 6PM is the usual starting time. If there is more than one wedding or event on that particular weekend, times might vary.

THE MINISTER FOR A WEDDING

The bride and groom minister the sacrament of marriage to one another; a priest and at least two witnesses are also required to be present. Non-Catholics may act as witnesses.

The Priest - Ordinarily, a priest assigned at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish will preside at weddings celebrated at our church. If a couple has a special relationship with another priest, they are free to ask him to preside provided that the parish pastor has been informed and assured St. Elizabeth Ann Seton marriage prep is followed. Please remember, as a sign of gratitude to the priest, a stipend is appropriate and most welcomed by the priest or deacon. A suggested amount is \$200.

MUSIC

The Director of Music has jurisdiction over all music. Wedding music, whether vocal or instrumental, should be proper and fitting for the sacred occasion of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Our music director, David Downing is experienced in offering the couples choices for selecting appropriate music and hymns for the wedding ceremony, as well as instrumentals and vocalists. David can be reached at (316) 721-1686, ext. 226.

Music Ministers in the parish provide the music for weddings celebrated in the parish. The organist and vocalists scheduled are paid separately by the couple. Music selected must express the Christian dimensions of marriage and good liturgical practices.

Lectors - The wedding ceremony will have a reading from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and a Responsorial Psalm, as well as the Gospel proclaimed by the priest. A lector from the parish or a family member or friend with some experience with public reading would be a good choice for the first and second readings, and petitions. **The lector for the readings must be Catholic.** Lectors are expected to attend the rehearsal.

Offertory - If the Liturgy of the Eucharist is a part of the wedding ceremony, two people will be needed to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine at offertory. They need not be Catholic but would need to know and understand when and why we have an offertory.

Altar Servers - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish will select experienced wedding servers for your ceremony. Friends or relatives who are altar servers at another Catholic Parish may serve at your wedding, however, one experienced server from St. Elizabeth must assist. **If server(s) is from outside of our parish, they must attend the wedding rehearsal.** Please let your wedding coordinator know your server needs.

Ring Bearers and Flower Girls - Couples are asked to consider the ages of children involved in these roles and whether their presence will add to or detract from the solemnity of the celebration. **There may be no placards or wagons, etc...**

DECORATIVE ENVIRONMENT – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

You may make arrangements with any florist to provide flowers. Floral pieces should be kept simple and should not detract from the tabernacle. **No dropping of petals in the aisle whether real or artificial.** If you choose to have your wedding around either the Advent/Christmas season or Lent/Easter season, all seasonal church decorations (flowers, banners, liturgical displays) are to remain in place.

Pew Bows are allowed. Because anything attached can damage the pews and other surfaces, tape, tacks, nails, wires, glitter, and other adhesives are not to be used in the Church, on the furnishings, or on the Church doors. Rubber bands or ribbons are your best options for attaching flowers or bows. **Candelabras** and a holder for the **unity candle** are available for your use if you desire. **Aisle runners and aisle candles are not allowed.** The altar appointment for the color of the season will not be changed for the wedding.

Mass or Wedding Pamphlets are common among many couples. Consult your priest for the Order of Liturgy and for samples from previous weddings. Please gather left over pamphlets after the wedding.

CERTIFICATES

All parties planning to marry are required to furnish a Certificate of Baptism. For Catholics, the certificate must be dated within six months of the wedding date.

RESPECT IN THE CHURCH

Respectful silence is always the proper conduct in the house of God. Members of the wedding party should conduct themselves with dignity and reverence around the Church, before and after the wedding.

ATTIRE

Bridal gowns and attendants' dresses should be in accord with Christian modesty.

GUEST BOOK AND RECEIVING LINES

The guest book will be closed 5 minutes before the ceremony begins. Receiving lines are not permitted at the Church. Following the wedding ceremony, the wedding party will recess from the Church to a designated room until the guests have cleared. The wedding license will be signed at this time.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Sanctuary is not to be used as a studio. A limited number of "key shots" may be taken before and after the ceremony. As a courtesy to your guests...plan pictures to be taken in advance so that you do not keep reception guests waiting, or infringe upon other scheduled parish services.

DRESSING ROOMS

The parish has a *Bride's Room* (attached to the cry room) and a "*Groom's Room*" (aka the Gilmore Room) available to dress. The bride and her attendants are welcome to **dress** in the bride's room. Due to the size and airflow of the room, **hair and makeup is to be done off sight**.

Bride's Room/Groom's Room Access:

- ❖ **Friday wedding** – Access to church 3PM -7:30 PM
- ❖ **Saturday wedding:** Access to church 10AM- 3:30PM

PLEASE NOTE: When school is in session (August thru May), access to either dressing rooms can be no earlier than 3:45 PM.

Nothing may be brought in before or left after the scheduled access times. It is very important that the dressing rooms be left clean for the next wedding, Mass, or parish event. Please ask certain family members or attendants ahead of time to assist with this.

OTHER INFORMATION

The following are NOT allowed:

- Throwing of rice or birdseed and all other forms of "shower petals".
- Food, drinks, and gum.

The wedding party is responsible for leaving the church and grounds in the state of original repair and cleanliness.

RECEPTION INFORMATION

Contact the Church Office.