

**CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH
49 WINTER STREET
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WEDDING GUIDELINES

WELCOME!

We are happy that you have expressed a desire to be married at Corpus Christi! The marriage of a Christian couple is a time of joy and blessing for them, for their families and friends and for the Church. It is a time of great significance in the life of a man and a woman as they make the commitment of a lifetime to each other. For people of faith it is a time of grace; for us Catholics it is a sacramental moment where the grace of Christ is given and His love is made visible in the love of husband and wife.

We have written these guidelines to help you prepare well for your wedding day. Please read these guidelines very carefully. In the midst of all the physical preparations we remind you of the deeper, spiritual aspects of these months that will lead to your wedding day. We want to assist you in highlighting the Christian dimension of your relationship and to help you make your wedding day not only a celebration of your love but also a celebration of faith and a time of prayer to God who has brought you together.

STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARATION

1. First meeting with the priest or deacon:
 - determine the individuals' freedom to marry.
 - set the date and time of the wedding and rehearsal
 - review the process of preparation
2. Take the "Fully Engaged" Inventory – about 45 minutes
 - set up meetings to review the Fully Engaged" (4 – 6 hours in two or three sessions)
3. Participate in Pre-Cana classes or "One in Christ" weekend experience.
 - “One in Christ” is offered on two weekends during year in Vermont
 - Pre-Cana classes are offered at various times in different parts of the State.
4. Complete the paperwork that is required:
 - Fill out the “Pre-Marriage Questionnaire”
 - The necessary documents are listed below.
5. Prepare the Wedding Liturgy
 - “Together for Life” booklet with readings and prayers is reviewed.
 - The priest or deacon reviews the music guideline
 - The priest/deacon and couple review the liturgy (ceremony)

DOCUMENTS NEEDED

1. Recently-issued Baptism Certificate(s) (to be obtained from the Church of Baptism)
2. Find dates and place of First Holy Communion and Confirmation
3. An "Affidavit of Freedom to Marry" is needed for non-catholic parties
(This document is to be filled out in the presence of a Catholic Priest, under oath,
By a parent or close relative of the person in question.
4. Dispensations or Permissions from the Bishop are needed whenever a Catholic marries a person who is not Catholic. The priest will obtain this for you after the other documents are completed.
5. "The Promise to Raise Children in the Catholic Faith" The Catholic party is asked to sign a document reaffirming his/her Catholic faith and intention to continue living that faith and promising to share that faith with children of the marriage.
6. The Marriage License. This is the only legal requirement for the wedding. The license is obtained from the town of residence of either party. Out-of-State residents must obtain the license in the town where the wedding will take place.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

1. The individuals must be mature enough to make this commitment, and understand the meaning of Catholic Christian marriage.
2. The parties should make proper spiritual preparation through daily prayer, regular attendance at Sunday Mass and the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance prior to the wedding.
3. Two witnesses are required for your wedding. This is the role of the best man and the maid of honor. It is not required to have bridesmaids or groomsmen, although we recommend that you have ushers.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. We encourage couples to reserve the church as early as possible. This is done by contacting the pastor. We ask for at least a six month notice and will not perform a wedding in less than three months after being notified. This is for the purpose of making proper preparation.
2. Weddings are usually celebrated on Saturdays until 2:00 PM. We cannot do them later because of confessions and Mass. Weddings may be celebrated on any other day of the week except Sundays.
3. We recommend that you choose family members or friends to read the first two readings at your wedding. When Mass is celebrated we recommend that someone be invited to bring up the gifts of bread and wine for the Eucharist.
4. Some couples like to light the Unity Candle during their wedding. Although this is not part of the Catholic Liturgy of Marriage, it may be done after the exchange of the vows and the rings. The couple is responsible for purchasing the Unity Candle and the two accompanying candles.
5. Flowers may be placed in the sanctuary, but not on the altar table itself. It is appreciated when couples leave a flower arrangement in the church after the ceremony. No flowers may be used during Lent. Though not recommended, an aisle runner may also be used.
6. Photographers and videographers are welcomed provided they are discreet. They must speak with the priest before the ceremony; we recommend that they attend the rehearsal.
7. We do not allow confetti, birdseeds, etc. to be thrown on church property.
8. Please remember that the church is a place of worship; the gowns of the bride and bridesmaids should be modest. Low-cut, strapless gown are not appropriate attire in church; shoulders should be covered.

FEES

1. According to diocesan policy the stipend for a wedding is \$75 for parishioners.
(We ask for a larger voluntary gift from non-parishioners.)

NOTES FOR COUPLES WHO DO NOT LIVE IN VERMONT

We are very happy to welcome couples from out of state. However, your situation demands special attention. We want to serve you as best we can. **Please read the following guidelines very carefully, and show them to the priest who will be working with you, especially no. 3.**

1. Complete and return the "Application Form." Without this form we will not reserve the church for you.
2. You must fulfill all the requirements for Catholic marriage as stated above. Please note that in case of inter-faith marriages the dispensations are obtained from your own Bishop (the Bishop of the Diocese where you live now.). The priest/deacon in your parish will take care of getting it for you.
3. We **must** receive a **written permission** from your pastor to be married here. In this letter he must indicate his willingness to guide you through the months of preparation. He will help you to find and register for Pre-Cana. He will fill out the Pre-Marriage Questionnaire with you. In the event that you are marrying someone who is not Catholic, your pastor will obtain the necessary dispensations. **Proof of attendance at a marriage-preparation course and all necessary papers should be mailed to Corpus Christi at least three weeks before the date of marriage.**
4. You **must** obtain a Marriage License; no priest can officiate without this document. This license is obtained from the local town clerk.
5. A couple may invite a priest or deacon from another parish to officiate. If he is not a resident of Vermont, he must obtain a license to perform the wedding by writing to *The Caledonia County Probate Court*. The priest/deacon must provide proof that he is a priest in good standing. This is obtained from his Bishop and sent to the Diocese of Burlington. He must also obtain written delegation from the pastor of Corpus Christi.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

1. **Can the wedding be in a place other than a Catholic Church?** Two Catholics must be married in a Catholic Church. In the case of a mixed marriage (one is Catholic and one is not) it is possible, with permission from the Bishop, to be married in the church of the non-Catholic party. The priest will help you obtain the proper permission. Special exceptions may be obtained for Catholic-Jewish ceremonies.
2. **Couples living together:** This situation presents special pastoral concern. Although it is common in our culture for couples to live together before marriage. It is against Catholic moral teaching and is considered seriously sinful. (People living with another person outside of marriage may not receive Holy Communion.) Our concern is all the greater because recent studies indicate that there is a higher instance of divorce among couples have lived together before marriage. These matters should be discussed with the priest who is helping you prepare for marriage. Couples who are living together are strongly encouraged to find a way of living apart for the months that precede the wedding.
3. **Mass attendance:** Participation in the Eucharist every Sunday is a serious obligation. Individuals who have not been attending Mass for a while, ought to begin going to church regularly again. This is especially important as you prepare for the sacrament of marriage. Prior to the wedding Catholics ought to make proper spiritual preparation by going to **Confession** (the Sacrament of Reconciliation).

**APPLICATION FORM
FOR WEDDING AT
CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH**

NAME OF GROOM: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home: _____

Work: _____

E-mail: _____

Age: _____

Religion: _____

NAME OF BRIDE: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home: _____

Work: _____

E-mail: _____

Age: _____

Religion: _____

CHURCH OF WEDDING: St. John's _____ St. Elizabeth _____ Queen of Peace _____
(St. Johnsbury) (Lyndonville) (Danville)

DATE OF WEDDING: _____

Time of Wedding: _____

Date & Time of Rehearsal: _____

PRIEST (OR DEACON) WHO WILL HELP YOU IN THE PREPARATION:

Name: _____

Church: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

NAME OF PRIEST (OR DEACON) WHO WILL OFFICIATE:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

PLEASE MAIL THIS FORM TO: Rev. Bernard E. Gaudreau
Corpus Christi Parish
49 Winter Street
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819