

Wedding Policy & Guidelines  
St. Joseph\St. Michael  
Iota\Egan, LA

“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish themselves a partnership of the whole life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1601)

In the Catholic Church, weddings are acts of the Church’s public worship, and though the ceremony must conform to the prescribed rite of marriage, there are ample ways in which a couple can personalize the occasion. These guidelines are meant to help prepare a couple for a meaningful ceremony on that happy and holy day, and since the rite of marriage is a civil act as well as a moment of God’s grace, both the Church and the State have certain requirements.

**Civil Requirements:**

Louisiana State Law requires that a marriage license to be obtained from the Clerk of Court’s office no earlier than 30 days before the wedding, and at least 72 hours before the ceremony begins. The ceremony and marriage license must be witnessed and signed by the celebrant, the bride and groom, and two witnesses. The celebrant is responsible for returning the signed documents to the courthouse. Please contact the Clerk of Court office for other information on civil requirements for marriage in the state.

**Diocesan Requirements:**

An appointment with the pastor must be made at Least six months prior to the intended wedding date. The couple should be mature and responsible enough to do this- not the bride’s or the groom’s parents. Any ordained Catholic priest or deacon may officiate the wedding, especially if there is a bond of friendship or kinship shared with the couple. The rectory office must still be contacted for church availability of the chosen date. No dates will be set by phone conversation. Before the church is reserved, all deposits and fee (if applicable) must be paid in full.

A recent copy (i.e. issued within six months) of the baptismal certificates of each person should be provided at the initial meeting. These will have notations of First Communion, Confirmation, and previous sacramental marriages in the back of the certificates. These are issued from the church where one was baptized. If a person has been baptized here, we have those records on file.

Diocesan requirements also include workshop (or classes) of marriage retreat and preparation, and/or a brief course in Natural Family Planning. The available dates for these are provided by the priest/deacon who will be officiating at the ceremony.

**Times and Seasons:**

Wedding Masses are not permitted on Holy Days of Obligation, or once the Parish Sunday Mass schedule has begun. Therefore, ideal times are; Friday at 6PM or 7PM: Saturday at 11AM, 12PM or 1PM. The Liturgical Seasons of Advent and Lent are sacred times of penance and spiritual renewal for the Church, and weddings in these seasons should be appropriately simple.

**Decorations:**

Decorations in church must always be tasteful and in good form. Christ is the center and the focus of all that we do in church and the environment should express this. Please take into account the decorations for Christmas and Easter, Advent and Lent. These decorations should remain in the church. Ceremonies during the Lenten season should be especially simple.

Tape is never to be adhered to the pews and walls, or any other object.

**Music and Photography:**

Photography and videography is permitted. Photographers should check in with the celebrant before the ceremony begins for instructions. All photography before or after the wedding should be done with decorum and reverence for the sacred space of the church. No photos will be permitted behind the altar, only in front of it.

All music during the ceremony should be of religious nature. The traditional marches and other secular music are allowed for the processions before the wedding. Please check with the celebrant for approval. The church does not provide musicians.

**Fees and Deposits:**

There is no set fee by the church for the wedding of those persons who are actively supporting parishioners. A donation for the cost of utilities would be helpful. A fee of \$250.00 is required for those who are not domiciled within the canonical boundaries of the parish, and non-registered persons (you must have registered with the parish within six months of the initial meeting with the celebrant).

A refundable deposit of \$100.00 is required to secure the church building for the ceremony. This check will be returned, provided that the church is in the same condition as it was before preparations for the ceremony began. All clean up is the responsibility of the families.

**Additional Guideline:**

A maximum of 6 couples are allowed to serve as wedding attendants. This will be addressed on a case by case basis.

If a visiting priest or deacon presides at the wedding, he must follow all policies and guidelines.

Cohabiting couples: When a couple is living together, there will be no nuptial Mass offered.

There are no dressing rooms on site, so the wedding party should show up for the ceremony dressed and prepared to begin.

If you have any questions, please call the rectory office at 779-2627 or e-mail at [stjosephiota@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephiota@gmail.com)

## Deposit and Fee Form

As evidence by our signatures below, we fully understand the above policy requirements and do hereby agree to be responsible for observance of the policy, and do hereby release St. Joseph/St. Michael church and the Diocese of Lafayette from any accidents caused by any infraction of this policy.

Signed at Iota, LA this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, in the  
Presence of the undersigned witness, for our rehearsal on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ AM\PM, and our wedding on the  
\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM.

Groom \_\_\_\_\_  
print name signature

Bride \_\_\_\_\_  
print name signature

Parish Witness \_\_\_\_\_  
print name signature

Deposit paid on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Non-parishioner fee paid on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_