Planning Your Catholic Wedding

ST. RAPHAEL
CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Raphael Catholic Church

1376 Snell Isle Blvd NE

St. Petersburg, Fl 33704

727-821-7989

Congratulations on your engagement! These are the days you will never forget! We are happy to share them with you as you prepare to celebrate your love for each other and Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Marriage. We offer this prayer for your journey to marriage.

Prayer for Engaged Couples

Loving God

You have so exalted the unbreakable bond of marriage

that it became the sacramental sign of your Son's union

with the Church, His Spouse.

Help us who are preparing to marry in Christ. Grant us

pure love and spirit of generous prayer. Bless our marriage and our family and lead us always to your peace and love.

We pray that in good times and in bad, we will grow in love with each other. In our struggles let us rejoice that you are near to help us. In our needs, let us know that you are there to rescue us. In our joy, let us see that you are the source and completion of every happiness.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Wedding Guidelines

The faith community of St. Raphael is committed to making your wedding day memorable and prayerful for all. As with all sacraments, preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage is not a luxury or option, but a serious responsibility. Not only will you grow but those who assist you will experience a renewal of love and commitment. To help facilitate the planning of this joyous event, we have prepared the following guidelines.

Reserving Your Wedding Date and Time

The bride and groom must be free to marry in the eyes of the church. This is determined by meeting with a member of the clergy. Once it is determined the couple is free to marry, a wedding date can be reserved. A wedding date and time is fully reserved when we have Form B's, Baptismal certificates, and deposit of $500.00.

Weddings are scheduled around the availability of the church. Most weddings are celebrated on Saturdays. Weddings can be celebrated on other days upon consultation with the clergy. Weddings on other weekdays are more flexible with dates and times.

- Nuptial Masses may take place on Saturday at 11:00am or 2:00pm
- Wedding Ceremonies may take place on Saturday at 11:30am or 2:30pm
- Couples have the option of a Wedding Ceremony at 6:30pm on Saturday.

**Weddings are not scheduled on Sunday, Holy Days of Obligation, Christmas Eve, Palm Sunday or during Holy Week.*

Nuptial Mass or Wedding Ceremony

Practicing Catholics are expected to have a celebration of Matrimony within Mass. A Nuptial Mass may be celebrated for a Catholic and non-Catholic marriage with permission of the Bishop. This is not recommended as the non-Catholic party would not be able to receive Holy Communion. In these cases, a Wedding Ceremony is recommended. A Nuptial Mass is never permitted for a marriage between a Catholic and non-baptized person. The Nuptial Mass and Wedding Ceremony are both beautiful ceremonies and include prayers, readings, and music.

Marriage Preparation

Please plan to begin your marriage preparation at least six months prior to your planned wedding date. At St. Raphael the marriage preparation process includes meeting with the clergy, a premarital investigation which includes premarital inventory and meeting with counselor, and either a retreat at the Diocese or an online progam. If you are prepared in another diocese, their requirements for marriage preparation are accepted. If you are getting married in another church or diocese in the United States, we are happy to prepare you for marriage and send your documents to the diocese of your marriage. If you are getting married outside of the United States, we will send your documents to the Tribunal for approval and provide them to you to send to the church of marriage.

Planning Your Ceremony

The church allows the couple to select prayers and readings to be used during the liturgy. The book, *Together for Life*, will be provided to you so you can make your selections.

If you wish to have a priest or deacon from another Catholic Church officiate, please notify St. Raphael clergy as soon as possible. The visiting clergy is required to receive permission to perform the

Celebration of Matrimony from the pastor in advance of the wedding date. If the visiting clergy is from outside the Diocese of St. Petersburg, he must provide a Letter of Good Standing. The couple is responsible for the honorarium for a visiting priest.

Members of the bridal party, friends or family may act as lectors. The couple should select the lectors in advance of the wedding and provide a copy of the text of the scripture to be read to each lector.

There are some traditions that are not part of the Celebration of Matrimony. For example, lighting a unity candle is not part of the celebration at St. Raphael.

Each couple married in the state of Florida must obtain a license. You should contact the clerk in any city hall in the state about six weeks before your wedding regarding the proper procedure. The license must be brought to the wedding rehearsal.

St. Raphael has a wedding coordinator who will answer any questions about preparing for your wedding day. They will assist the priest at the rehearsal and help the wedding party on the wedding day. The coordinator will also ensure liturgical and parish practices are maintained. If you have hired a wedding planner, please let them know the rehearsal and ceremony are the responsibility of the St. Raphael Wedding Coordinator. Your rehearsal will be scheduled for the evening before the wedding ceremony and generally lasts an hour. The rehearsal allows those involved in the ceremony to get an idea about their role and become familiar with the church.

Bridal Party

The bridal party often includes parents, grandparents, and small children. Children under the age of 4 are discouraged from participating because they have difficulty handling the rigors of the processional and ceremony. The number of attendants should be limited to eight bridesmaids and eight groomsmen. This excludes a flower girl and ring bearer.

Please be reverent and respectful of the church during the rehearsal and ceremony. Inform the members of the wedding party that alcohol, smoking and chewing gum is not allowed. The couple and witnesses should not be impaired when attending the rehearsal and ceremony. The attire of the bridal party may be as simple or as formals as desired. Appropriate dress is requested for the rehearsal and ceremony.

Music

Please contact the Director of Music six months prior to your wedding date. All music planning must be done with the Director of Music. Outside musicians (includes cantors) may be used for your wedding music. Please discuss the use of outside musicians with the Director of Music. Fees for musicians from outside of St. Raphael are the responsibility the couple. A musician from St. Raphael must be present to welcome, orient, and run the equipment for outside musicians, therefore, there is no discount for using outside musicians. Music selections must be finalized one month prior to the wedding date.

Decorations

Floral arrangements are provided by the couple. The wedding coordinator can guide you with the placement of flowers. The liturgical season during which the wedding takes place will affect the types and limitations of decorations. The church will have seasonal arrangements during Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter which cannot be altered. Also:

- Decorations on the pews are permitted, but nothing may be taped or tacked to the pews.

- Candles and candelabras are prohibited in both the sanctuary and pews.
- Flowers may be delivered an hour and a half before the ceremony.
- Safety and damage issues restrict us from allowing aisle runners or flower petals (artificial or real) for the ceremony. Using bubbles, glitter, throwing rice, seeds, or other material outside is not permitted.

Photography

The photographer may not take pictures in a way that disturbs the clergy or congregation. The photographer is not allowed on or behind the altar area during the ceremony. Flash photography is not allowed during the ceremony.

Couples have 30 minutes after the ceremony for pictures to be taken in the church. Once a group has completed their pictures, we ask that they leave the church so parishioners arriving for Confession and Mass are not disturbed. Additional pictures may be taken in scenic areas around the church property.

Wedding Fees

The fee for Marriage at St. Raphael is $1600.00
The deposit of $500.00 is non refundable.

If you are getting married at St. Raphael your wedding fees include:

- Marriage preparation
- Administrative Paperwork
- Clergy Stipend
- Church
- Director of Music*
- Cantor
- Wedding Coordinator

If you are prepared by a different Diocese or Archdiocese the deposit is due upon receiving confirmation of the wedding date. A letter from church of preparation is required.

The final balance is due 30 days prior to the wedding date. The deposit is applied to the total fees.

*There is no discount if you are using outside musicians. Any outside musicians must be paid separately by the couple.

If you are getting married at another church, the preparation fee is $500.00.

Marriage Preparation Checklist

- ☐ Initial Meeting with the clergy
- ☐ ___Prenuptial Investigation Form for Bride and Groom (Form A)
- ☐ ___Distribute Witness Testimony Forms (Form B)
    - Two for bride and two for groom
- ☐ Certificate of Baptism: For Catholics, please call the church where you were baptized and ask for a Baptismal Certificate with notations for marriage preparation. For a Baptized Non-Catholic a copy of the Baptismal certificate will suffice.
- ☐ Prepare and Enrich Survey
- ☐ Prepare and Enrich review with Krista Jones, LMHC, NCC
- ☐ Certificate of Completion of Pre Cana program
- ☐ Final Payment

If you are getting married at St. Raphael complete the following:

- ☐ Contact Director of Music six months prior to your wedding date
- ☐ Complete and return selections from *Together for Life* book a week prior to wedding date.
- ☐ Marriage License: Bring to the wedding rehearsal.

St. Raphael Wedding Contacts

Director of Parish Life: Loretta Soulnier Pheeny loretta@st-raphaels.com 727-821-7989

Parish Office Coordinator: Christan Aisenbrey caisenbrey@st-raphaels.com 727-821-7989

Director of Music: Vincent Sclafani vsclafani@st-raphaels.com 727-821-7989

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