

Planning Your Wedding at St. Peter Church

2600 Maine Street Quincy, Illinois 62301
(217) 222-3155 stpeterquincy.com church@cospq.org

Congratulations on your engagement! The Church not only supports your love, but it seeks to support your entire married life by helping you to prepare for this very important Sacrament. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you prepare for a committed life-long relationship with one another, blessed in the love of Jesus Christ through His Church. God Bless!

Getting Married in the Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church takes your love and desire to be married very seriously. Our Church believes that marriage is an exclusive life-long commitment between a man and a woman for the good of each other and the procreation and education of children. Through our marriage preparation process, the Church provides special counseling, education and support for couples getting ready to take this important step. The process aims to do three things:

1. *to help you assess whether you are ready for marriage:* You will meet with a Catholic priest who will ensure you are free to marry in the Church and guide you through a process to ascertain you are ready for the life-long commitment of a Catholic marriage.
2. *To encourage you and your future spouse to address issues that will impact your life together:* Through a pre-marital inventory and a Church-sponsored marriage preparation program, you will be guided to identify issues you need to resolve before marriage.
3. *To help you plan a Catholic marriage celebration:* Your Catholic wedding will be a liturgical event that takes place at the Church of St. Peter. The Catholic Church and the Church of St. Peter have rules to preserve the sanctity and the beauty of your wedding within the Catholic faith tradition.

Preparing for Marriage

STEP ONE: At least *six months before your proposed wedding date*, phone the parish office and arrange to meet with the Pastor and/or priest. Weddings frequently are scheduled more than a year in advance! Please contact the parish office by phone or e-mail church@cospq.org to arrange a meeting with the Pastor or priest.

During your meeting, Pastor/priest will:

- make sure you are free to marry (i.e., no prior marriages, etc.)
- outline requirements for the marriage to be valid in the Catholic Church and for weddings to take place at the Church of St. Peter, Quincy (i.e., at least one person must be an active, practicing Catholic and a registered parishioner or child of a registered parishioner)
- cover co-habitation guidelines.

STEP TWO: Fill out the Wedding Intake Form included in your packet that you received at your first meeting with Pastor/priest and return to the parish office within two weeks.

STEP THREE: You will receive an invitation via email from the Foccus test company. This questionnaire identifies issues that could derail a lifelong marriage commitment. After you complete the inventory at home, you and your fiancé/e will meet with the Pastor/priest to discuss the results. Most couples meet with the priest for two follow-up counseling sessions.

STEP FOUR: Call to set up a consultation with the parish Music Director at 217-214-0131.

STEP FIVE: Every couple married in the Catholic Church in our Diocese is required to attend marriage preparation program. You will be contacted by Gina Bergman, our Director of Religious Education, with more information about these marriage preparation options.

Cohabitation (Living together before marriage)

The Roman Catholic Church does not condone cohabitation. According to church law those who live together prior to marriage place themselves outside of the grace of the Church. The Pastor/priest will instruct you further on Church guidelines regarding cohabitation.

If neither you or your fiancé/e live in Quincy, it's still possible to get married at St. Peter's providing your parents are registered parishioners and you are a practicing Catholic.* You will need the written permission of the chaplain at your Newman Center, military base or the Pastor of the parish where you are registered. You will also need to arrange to go through the required marriage preparation process for the diocese in which you reside. *Please note you will still have to arrange an initial meeting with our Pastor and return the Wedding Intake Form before your wedding is scheduled.* You also will need to observe all requirements for weddings in our parish church.

A priest from another parish can marry you.

Our Pastor is responsible under Canon Law for all marriages performed in this church. Other priests and deacons may also celebrate with his permission.

- **According to the Church, an active, practicing Catholic:**
 - Participates in Mass every Sunday and Holy Day:
 - Leads a sacramental life receiving Holy Communion & Reconciliation regularly.
 - Is confirmed and continues to study and advance the cause of Christ.
 - Observes the marriage laws of the Church,
 - Strengthens and supports the Church locally and universally.
 - Does penance, including abstaining from meat and fasting as required.
 - Joins in the missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church.

(Adapted from Handbook for Today's Catholic © 1994, Liguori Publications)

Planning Your Catholic Wedding

Every Catholic wedding is a sacred liturgy – an act of worship where family and friends gather to praise God who has called you to celebrate your life-long commitment through marriage.

Your wedding is very important to the life of our parish, but we ask you to remember that it is *only one of many sacred events that take place in our church day*. We trust that you will extend proper respect for our space, our faith traditions, and members of our Pastoral Staff who work to preserve the sanctity of every sacrament celebrated within our walls. **The following requirements will ensure that your marriage celebration reflects the sanctity, the dignity and the importance of the vows you will exchange.**

What Type or Marriage Celebration Is Most Appropriate?

A wedding during Mass can be celebrated when two practicing Catholics are marrying. In other cases, marriage outside of Mass during a Liturgy of the Word service is the norm. The priest will explain these options to you.

All Catholic weddings will include *Liturgy of the Word* and the *Rite of Marriage*. They also may include an *Entrance Processional* and *Recessional*. The marriage celebration during Mass also includes the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

When Can Weddings Be Scheduled?

Catholic marriage celebrations normally are not scheduled during Lent or Advent. Friday evening weddings provide greater leisure and flexibility. Saturday weddings may be scheduled at 2 p.m. The marriage celebration normally takes less than an hour. You are welcome to arrive at the church up to two hours before your wedding and, for Saturday weddings, remain for photography until 3:30 p.m. The church must be vacated by that time because of our Saturday Reconciliation and Mass schedules. *No exceptions can be made*. A half-hour rehearsal will be scheduled at church prior to the day of the wedding.

Participants in Your Wedding

As you plan your wedding, you'll want to give some thought to ways you can involve family and friends. The following information is based on the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois' Guidelines for Marriage:

- *The assembly* includes everyone who is gathered to celebrate and witness your marriage.
- *The bride and the groom* are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage.
- *The priest* presides and is the official witness for the Church. When a wedding is outside of Mass, a deacon may preside.

- *2 witnesses* are required under Canon Law (think “maid/matron of honor” and “best man.”) Other attendants serve an honorary rather than a liturgical role.
 - *Lectors* proclaim the Word of God. They should be good public speakers. You may invite 3 people to participate as lectors: two for scripture readings and one to present the intercessions.
- *Ministers of Hospitality* greet guests at the door, hand them a Wedding Program, and help them find a seat. Ministers of Hospitality may include a guest book attendant at the church, a person who distributes Wedding Programs, and ushers.
 - *The Cantor*, a vocalist trained in liturgical music, leads the congregation in song and the psalm from the ambo. St. Peter’s Music Director will arrange a cantor, help you plan your music, and may be separately contracted to provide music as well. (See “Planning Music for your Wedding Liturgy, below)
- *Flower Girls and Ring Bearers* are not required. Should you choose to include young children, please consider their ages.

For wedding Masses only:

 - *Gift bearers* present the bread and wine to the priest. You may choose up to 4 practicing Catholics.
 - *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion* have been commissioned to help distribute the Body and Blood of Christ. Normally 2 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are enough.
 - *Altar servers* are not required. If you choose to include them, they should be experienced. If they have not served at St. Peter’s, they should attend your rehearsal.

Planning Music for Your Wedding Liturgy

*Before you begin selected wedding music or contact any musicians, contact our parish Music Director. He will help you plan music for your wedding and can help to arrange for an approved cantor to proclaim the psalm and lead the congregation in singing. He is ordinarily the pianist/organist for all parish weddings. The Catholic Church requires that *all* music used in a Catholic wedding liturgy be sacred music. Secular music is not suitable for the wedding ceremony. The music director will help you select appropriate music that best fits your taste and preference and helps to “draw in” all who are present by encouraging them to participate in song.*

To schedule a meeting with the music director or discuss any music questions, please call the parish office at 217-214-0131.

****All music fees must be arranged in advance and paid to music personnel prior to the wedding rehearsal.**

Flowers and Decorations

Our church is a sacred space used by our entire parish family for liturgical celebrations. Seasonal decorations are planned to ensure they are liturgically correct for the season of the Church Year being observed. While Church decorations cannot be removed or altered, you will be able to provide flowers or plants and specify additional decorating elements to make your wedding unique.

Guest Book Stand

We can provide a stand for your guest book. It will be located in the narthex when you arrive. It is up to you to provide the guest book and pen.

Flowers in the Sanctuary

Flowers can add beauty to your wedding ceremony, honor special family members living and dead, and draw the entire congregation at St. Peter's into your marriage celebration. Our church has an assortment of vases and silk flower arrangements that are available for your use at no charge. Decorating guidelines follow:

- No flowers or plants are allowed over the tabernacle.
- No flowers or plants are allowed on the altar or may touch the altar.
- Arrangements may be placed in front of the ambo to honor deceased relatives, or on the side altars under the statues of Mary and Joseph.
- Flowers and decorations must be removed after your ceremony.
- You may add flowers and/or greenery to the sides of pews up the main aisle.
- We do not allow the use of aisle runners.

Photography and Videography

As the bride and groom, you can help us to preserve the sanctity and dignity of your marriage celebration by understanding our photography and videography requirements and sharing them with your wedding party, photographer and videographer. Jesus is present in our tabernacle: therefore, we always expect proper reverence and respect in our church. Our photography and videography rules are designed to preserve the reverent environment of our church. We ask that you keep posed photography in our worship space to a minimum.

Posed Church Photographs

You are welcome to take posed photographs until 1/2 hour before your wedding and for up to 30 minutes after the ceremony. The church must be vacated by 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

- No altar furnishings or decorations (including those in place for your wedding) may be moved and no extra backdrops or decorations (other than those that are in place for the wedding) may be brought into the church.
- Posed photos in the sanctuary may only be taken in front of the altar. Photos in other parts of our sanctuary are prohibited.

- No inappropriate poses, behavior or language can be tolerated. No smoking, food, or beverages are allowed in our worship space, and no alcoholic beverages are permitted on our church property.

Photographs and Videos during the wedding

- Photographs and videos may be taken during the ceremony, but photographers and videographers must be discreet.
- Flash photography and extra lights for video are prohibited.
- The photographer and videographer may take pictures of the wedding party from the front of the church only during the processional. All other photographs and operator-assisted videos must be taken from the rear of the church
- The videographer may also set up a camera on a tripod by the family chapel before the ceremony for stationary videos.

Your Wedding Rehearsal

Rehearsals at St. Peter's are typically scheduled for the evening prior to the wedding, but please set up with our pastor or your celebrant. They normally last 30 to 35 minutes. We ask that you and your wedding party arrive promptly and meet in the narthex (the space inside the main doors to our church).

What to bring to your rehearsal

Adams County marriage license

Who Needs to Attend Your Rehearsal:

Bride and groom
Pastor (or Pastor's designee)
Couples' parents
Two witnesses
Other attendants, ushers, flower girl and ring bearer
Lectors with their readings
Gift bearers and servers (if you are having Mass)

The musicians do not attend the rehearsal.

The Day of Your Wedding

2 hours before your ceremony:

Flowers should be delivered and placed.

Up to 2 hours before your ceremony:

The Martha Jane Room in the south side of the lower level of the church will be available for women and the Father Bauer Prayer Room, next to the sanctuary, for men. You may bring light snacks and non-alcoholic beverages to the cafeteria or the Martha Jane Room. *We assume that you will treat church property with respect and will clean up after yourselves.* Consider arriving at the church dressed for the wedding and minimize the amount of time you spend at the church before the wedding.

The Martha Jane room will not be locked during the ceremony. Leaving valuables there will be at your own risk.

1½ hour before your ceremony:

The sanctuary area in front of the altar will be available for posed photographs. Please refer to our photography and videography requirements. Please maintain reverence and respect in our worship area.

After Your Ceremony:

Dismissing Guests and Receiving Lines: Due to tight time limitations, we discourage couples from dismissing wedding guests row by row or having lengthy receiving lines at church. In all cases, the church must be vacated after Saturday weddings by 3:30 p.m. St. Peter's does not allow rice, birdseed, rose petals, balloons, etc. to be thrown or released on church property.

½ hour before your ceremony:

Pre-wedding photography in church is completed.

Guest book ready, staffed.

Ushers ready to seat guests.

5 minutes before your ceremony:

Remaining guests should take their seats.

Wedding party lines up for processional.

Up to ½ hour after your ceremony or by 3:30 p.m. Saturday:

The sanctuary in front of the altar is available for posed photographs.

Personal belongings plus flowers you plan to use at the reception should be removed.

Fees and Honorarium:

St. Peter Parish charges a fee of \$300 for couples married at our church. This fee covers costs of the pre-marriage inventory and the use of church facilities. Please make this payment to St. Peter Church prior to the rehearsal.

The suggested honorarium for priest is \$150. Organists/pianists, cantors, instrumentalists, and other musicians set their own fees. *Due by the night of the rehearsal.*