



St. Anthony of Padua
MARRIAGE

 *preparation*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Marriage Between A Catholic & A Non-Catholic	Page 4
Types of Marriage Ceremonies & Scheduling	Page 5
Wedding Fees	Page 6
Marriage Preparation Steps	Page 7-8
Documents Needed	Page 9
Marriage Preparation ONLY	Page 10
Marriage Timeline/Checklist	Page 11
Holy Family Prayer	Page 12

CONTACT INFORMATION

Jess Lambert

Coordinator of Marriage

jlambert@ap.church

Marriage Preparation at St. Anthony's

ap.church/marriage

Planning Your Wedding Day Resources

ap.church/brideresources



MARRIAGE PREPARATION AT ST. ANTHONY'S

Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: "It is not good that the man should be alone." The woman, "flesh of his flesh," his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a "helpmate"; she thus represents God from whom comes our help. "Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been "in the beginning": "So they are no longer two, but one flesh." - *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1605



Thank you for taking this step to not only prepare for your wedding day but to also prepare for a life-long marriage. No matter where you are at in your faith journey, **you are welcome here**. We know that many of you come from various faith backgrounds or you are marrying someone from a different faith background. If that is the case, we ask that you read the section **"Marriage Between a Catholic & a Non-Catholic"** on page #4.

In this guidebook you will find the information and requirements you need to complete Marriage Preparation here at St. Anthony's.

- **If you are getting married at St. Anthony's:**

In addition to this guidebook, please read through the "Planning Your Wedding" guidebook at ap.church/brideresources

- **If you are getting married at another Church :**

Please read through the "Marriage Preparation Only" Section on page #10

"The intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by him... God himself is the author of Marriage. The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator."

CCC #1603

MARRIAGE BETWEEN A CATHOLIC & NON-CATHOLIC

The Catholic Church believes that marriage between one man and one woman is a natural institution; that is, it is woven into the very fabric of what it means to be part and parcel of the human family and reflects God's plan for that family. When these two people are baptized Christians, this natural institution of marriage becomes a sacrament. In other words, because each person shares in the life of the Holy Spirit and discipleship to Jesus, their whole life together becomes a vibrant, visible sign of the invisible reality of God's unending love for the world. Marriage brings the couple God's rich blessing of grace, and the couple becomes a medium of God's grace to others.

It is quite common, of course, for a Catholic to marry a member of a different Christian tradition. For example, many Catholics marry Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, members of non-denominational communities, or Christians who for one reason or another remain unaffiliated with a particular faith community. Other Catholics marry someone who has never been baptized. The person may be Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or unaffiliated with any faith. Keep in mind that whether a Catholic enters into a sacramental marriage with a Christian of a different church or a valid marriage with a non-Christian, the Church supports the witness of love and fidelity the couple offers to the world.

During the course of your marriage preparation, issues of faith and belief should be addressed in an open and honest way, both about the faith you share and the significant differences in what you believe and how you practice your religious faith. Speaking candidly about these issues with the priest or deacon preparing you for marriage is very important. – *Together for Life*

Wherever you are at in your faith journey, we are here to help. If you are a Catholic and have questions about faith and the Church's teaching, we are here to discuss your questions with you. If you are not Catholic and want to learn more about the Catholic Faith, or have questions of your own, we are here for you. We have a very educated and trained Staff at St. Anthony's who are ready to discuss these topics.

An important note: it is not required that the Non-Catholic converts to Catholicism.

However, if the non-Catholic party is interested in becoming Catholic and wants more information, please contact our Adult Sacraments Coordinator, Mary Batey. mbatey@ap.church

"Asking questions is not a sign of a lack of faith, rather it is a sign of a mind that is awake and takes the faith seriously."

-Michael Gormley

CEREMONY OPTIONS

When you exchange your vows you publicly proclaim your unending love for each other and your intention to remain together for life. By doing so, the love you received as a gift from God becomes a gift to the whole Church and the whole world. When the Church says marriage is a sacrament, it means that your visible love and faithfulness to each other become a witness and an effective sign of God's love and care for all people. Your marriage is a sacramental sign not just to each other, to family and friends, or to the Church, but also to the entire world. There are three forms of celebrating matrimony.

1. **Matrimony within a Mass**

(Includes: Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist and Celebration of Matrimony)

2. **Matrimony without a Mass (Liturgy of the Word)**

(Includes: Liturgy of the Word and Celebration of Matrimony)

3. **Matrimony between a Catholic and a Non-Christian/Unbaptized. (Liturgy of the Word)**

(Includes: Liturgy of the Word and Celebration of Matrimony)

OPTIONAL ITEMS:

1. **Arras** - *In the Liturgy of the Word and the Mass, the Arras follow the Blessing and Giving of Rings.*
2. **Lazo & Veil** - *In the Liturgy of the Word and the Mass, the Lazo and Veil take place before the Nuptial Blessing.*
3. **Flowers to the Blessed Mother** - *The Presentation of flowers to the Blessed Mother is not apart of the ritual but may be done at the end of the celebration right before or after the final blessing has been given.*



SCHEDULING INFORMATION

WEDDING DATES & TIMES

- Weddings are celebrated in the main sanctuary on Saturdays at either 2:00pm or 7:30pm or in the Chapel at 11:30am if it is available. Friday evening weddings may be scheduled if the Church is available. Special weekday wedding dates are permitted only if the parish schedule allows. There are no weddings on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligations.
- **Rehearsals** are generally on the evening before the wedding. Rehearsals are conducted by one of our St. Anthony of Padua Wedding Coordinators and last approximately 1 hour.

WEDDING FEES & HONORARIUMS

St. Anthony of Padua is pleased to celebrate your marriage ceremony at our Parish. As with everything else, there are costs associated with keeping our beautiful Church operational and properly maintained. The Reservation Fee can be paid via Credit Card, Cash, or Check. Payment plans are available. **All wedding fees must be paid in full 2 weeks before the Wedding Date.**

TO BE PAID ONLINE

The Marriage Coordinator will send you an email with instructions to pay the online fees.

Parishioner = the Catholic individual or their parent(s) are registered members of St. Anthony's for at least 6 months prior to the request for a wedding date.

1. CHURCH RESERVATION FEES

- Wedding in the Church or OLA Chapel (Parishioner): \$ 750.00
- Wedding in the Church or OLA Chapel (Non-Parishioner): \$ 1,000.00
- Wedding in the Adoration Chapel / Small Wedding in Church
Less than 40 people (Parishioner): \$ 300.00
- Wedding in the Adoration Chapel / Small Wedding in Church
Less than 40 people (Non - Parishioner): \$ 500.00

2. MARRIAGE PREPARATION FEES

- Prepare & Enrich Assessment \$ 35.00
This is a one-time payment for the couple to take the Prepare and Enrich Assessment.

TO BE PAID VIA CHECK OR CASH 2 WEEKS BEFORE WEDDING

Deliver these payments to the Parish Office at least 2 Weeks before the wedding. Please notify the Marriage Coordinator a few days in advance to when you will be delivering the envelopes.

Place each payment in a SEPARATE envelope marked with the following information: Groom & Bride Names, Wedding Date, Payment for: Clergy (Indicate whether, Clergy, Altar Server, Accompanist.. etc.)

2. WEDDING CEREMONY FEES

- **Clergy Offering** \$ TBD By Couple
- **Altar Server** (Required for Mass) \$ 25.00

3. MUSIC & AV FEES

- **Accompanist** \$ 200.00
- **Cantor** \$ 150.00
- **Outside Musician(s)** \$ TBD By Couple
- **Technician Fee** \$ 75.00

Technician Fee may be applied if additional set up is required or an Outside Musician is used.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION STEPS

1. Fill out the "Request for Marriage" form at ap.church/marriage

Upon receiving the Request for Marriage form, the Marriage Coordinator will reach out to you and schedule your wedding date and time.

2. Begin or Continue to attend Mass as a couple

As you are preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage the most important thing you will do is attend Mass together as a couple every week. If it has been awhile since you have been to mass, we can provide you with resources to help you jump right back in!

3. Initial Meeting with the Marriage Coordinator

In this initial meeting or phone call, you will discuss the logistics for your marriage preparation and wedding day. You will complete the Prenuptial Questionnaire with her and go over the required documents, required preparation, and logistics for your wedding day.

4. Complete the "Prepare & Enrich" Online Questionnaire.

The Bride and Groom will each receive a login code by email so that you both take your Prepare-Enrich assessment online separately. There is an online one-time **fee of \$35** that covers the both of you to take this online assessment questionnaire. If you cannot pay this fee, please inform the Marriage Coordinator.

5. Prepare & Enrich Sessions

You will meet with a Prepare and Enrich Facilitator for at least 2-3 meetings to go over your Prepare and Enrich results. You will discuss various topics and go over strengths and growth areas in your relationship. After you complete these meetings you will be paired up with a Sponsor Couple.

6. Sponsor Couple Sessions

You will be paired with a Sponsor Couple to meet for about 5-6 meetings. The Sponsor Couple will contact you directly when you have been paired up. You will go over various topics relating to Marriage, Family and Faith. Sponsor Couples are married couples who are volunteering their time to meet and journey with you while you prepare for marriage.

7. POMS (Preparation of the Marriage Sacrament)

At any point during your marriage preparation process you can go online and take our POMS Session. It covers Theology of the Body, Natural Family Planning and Your Wedding Ceremony. After the videos you will answer discussion questions.

8. Natural Family Planning ~ *Highly Encouraged*

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is fertility awareness, which is simply knowledge of a couple's fertility. It is a means of reading the body's signs of fertility and infertility. A married couple can use NFP to either achieve a pregnancy or to postpone a pregnancy. Practicing NFP is 100% natural — there are no drugs, chemicals or devices involved, which is one reason many today find it to be a positive and refreshing alternative to contraceptive methods. NFP honors our dignity as persons by respecting the natural rhythms and functions of the body. It is very common to hear couples who use NFP speak of an increased awe and respect for femininity and their mutual fertility, and a greater sense of empowerment through self-knowledge.

There are various “Methods” and ways to practice NFP. For more information, resources, online classes, or lists of in person classes, www.foryourmarriage.org/family-planning

9. Contact Music Ministry Coordinator ~ *At Least 6 Months Before Wedding*

If you are wanting Music for your Wedding Ceremony, please contact our Music Department **at least 6 months in advance** to your wedding date. Other instrumentation can add to the beauty of the music, and our Music Department can give you contact information for various instrumental ensembles. Please fill out the “**Request for Music**” at ap.church/marriage and our Music Ministry Coordinator will contact you for further details.

If you are planning on contracting the service of **outside musicians**, please fill out the “**Request for Music**” at ap.church/marriage and our Music Ministry Coordinator will contact you for approval of your request. Please note that there may be a **technician fee** charged to set up the equipment for the outside musician.

10. Complete Your Liturgy Selections ~ *2 Months Before Wedding*

Review the “Planning Your Wedding Day Guidebook” for instructions on choosing your liturgy selections. This includes the Readings and your Vows (Consent). This is a great time to select your Lectors, Ushers, and EMHC’s. Once you have made these selections you will fill out the Liturgy Selection Form at ap.church/brideresources

- **Lectors:** The readers you choose should be given the chosen texts well before the wedding date to rehearse. They must be at the rehearsal. If it is a Mass the lectors must be Catholic. If it is without mass, then non-Catholic readers are allowed. In both cases the lectors are expected at the Rehearsal. You will need at least 2 Lectors.
- **EMHCs:** If your wedding will include a Nuptial Mass you are encouraged to provide Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion from among your guests. These ministers must be Catholic and are expected at the rehearsal. The Wedding Coordinators can also function in this role if needed. *Due to COVID Restrictions, you will not need to choose EMHCs’s.*
- **Ushers:** We encourage at least 2 gentlemen, separate from the groomsmen, to serve as ushers. Their primary responsibilities are to welcome and seat guests and family members. This is a great opportunity for the groomsmen to help out and welcome the community to the wedding ceremony.

11. Presider Meeting ~ *1 Month Before Wedding*

If one of our Parish Priests or Deacons is going to Preside at your Wedding, they would love to meet with you a few weeks before your wedding ceremony. To schedule a meeting, please contact our Clergy Assistant, Sue Dewlen at sdewlen@ap.church.

12. Go to Confession ~ *1 Week Before Wedding*

As you are about to receive one of the 7 sacraments, it is important for you to go to Confession before and be in a state of grace. If it has been a while since you have been to confession, we can provide you with resources to help you prepare.

DOCUMENTS NEEDED

When you begin your Marriage Preparation, the sooner you collect your documents, the better.

All documents need to **be collected at least 3 months** before the wedding, except for the Marriage License. All documents can be emailed to the Marriage Coordinator at jlambert@ap.church

1. Bride *and* Groom's Baptismal Certificate

- If Baptized Catholic, a baptismal certificate re-issued 6-12 months before the wedding date is required. **We cannot accept the original.** Please call the Church of your Baptism and request a newly-issued Baptismal certificate with sacramental notations on it. If you are having trouble tracking down your certificate or need help requesting it, please contact The Marriage Coordinator ASAP.
- If Baptized in a Protestant Denomination, then a copy of the baptismal certificate is needed. The original certificate is acceptable. If you are having trouble tracking down your certificate, please contact The Marriage Coordinator ASAP.

2. "Freedom To Marry" Witness Affidavits – 4 Total

The Bride and the Groom will each need to have 2 people fill out a Freedom to Marry Witness Affidavit for them. Typically, parents, siblings, or life-long friends (more than 10 years) are great Witnesses to fill out these affidavits. 2 Affidavits for the Bride. 2 Affidavits for the Groom.

3. Prenuptial Questionnaire

You will fill this out with the Marriage Coordinator at your Initial Meeting (Step #2 in Marriage Prep Steps).

4. Marriage License ~ *At least 2 Weeks Before Wedding Ceremony*

The marriage license should be obtained 2-3 weeks prior to the ceremony. In Texas, marriage licenses are valid for 90 days and you may not use it until 72 hours after purchase. The marriage license should be given to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal.

5. Permission Letter from your Pastor to marry at St. Anthony's ~ *If Applicable*

If you are not living in our Parish boundaries and are not a registered parishioner of St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, we will need a letter from the Pastor of the Church you belong to stating that (1) you are a registered parishioner at that Parish and (2) that the Pastor of the Church gives you permission to be married at St. Anthony's.

6. Letter of Good Standing & Delegation Letter ~ *If Applicable*

If your presider is not from St. Anthony's, then that Priest or Deacon will need a Letter of Good Standing for ministry from his religious superior or Bishop. We will provide the Delegation Letter.

7. Decree of Nullity or Death Certificate ~ *If Applicable*

In the case that you have been previously married, you will need to provide either the Decree of Nullity or a Death Certificate. We will inform you if this is applicable to you.

8. Dispensation/Permission to Marry a Non-Catholic ~ *If Applicable*

The Marriage Coordinator will inform you if this is applicable to you.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION ONLY

If you are planning on only doing marriage preparation at St. Anthony's and are getting married at another Parish below are the steps for you.

1. Fill out the "Request for Marriage" form at ap.church/marriage

Upon receiving the Request for Marriage form, the Adult Sacraments Coordinator will reach out to you and confirm your wedding date plans at the Church you are getting married at. **There is a \$50 marriage preparation fee that must be paid online.**

2. Begin or Continue to attend Mass as a couple

As you are preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage the most important thing you will do is attend Mass together as a couple every week. If it has been awhile since you have been to mass, we can provide you with resources to help you jump right back in!

3. Initial Meeting with the Marriage Coordinator

In this initial meeting or phone call, you will discuss the logistics for your marriage preparation and wedding day. You will complete the Prenuptial Questionnaire with her and go over the required documents, required preparation, and logistics for your wedding day.

4. Complete the "Prepare & Enrich" Online Questionnaire.

The Bride and Groom will each receive a login code by email so that you both take your Prepare-Enrich assessment online separately. There is an online one-time **fee of \$35** that covers the both of you to take this online assessment questionnaire. If you cannot pay this fee, please inform the Adult Sacraments Coordinator.

5. Prepare & Enrich Sessions

You will meet with a Prepare and Enrich Facilitator for at least 2-3 meetings to go over your Prepare and Enrich results. You will discuss various topics and go over strengths and growth areas in your relationship. After you complete these meetings you will be paired up with a Sponsor Couple.

6. Sponsor Couple Sessions

You will be paired with a Sponsor Couple to meet for about 5-6 meetings. The Sponsor Couple will contact you directly when you have been paired up. You will go over various topics relating to Marriage, Family and Faith. Sponsor Couples are married couples who are volunteering their time to meet and journey with you while you prepare for marriage.

7. POMS (Preparation of the Marriage Sacrament)

At any point during your marriage preparation process you can go online and take our POMS Session. It covers Theology of the Body, Natural Family Planning and Your Wedding Ceremony. After the videos you will answer discussion questions.

8. Complete and Collect All Preparation and Documents 3 MONTHS IN ADVANCE.

Since you are getting married at another Church, possibly in another Diocese. We will need to send your completed Marriage Packet to the Archdiocese for the Bishop's Approval. it takes some time to get the approval and mail it to the respective diocese.

MARRIAGE TIMELINE

7 TO 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE CEREMONY (or as soon as you are engaged)

- ☐ Fill out Request for Marriage Form online: ap.church/marriage
- ☐ **Begin or Continue to attend Mass as a couple.**
- ☐ Schedule Wedding Date & Meet with Jess Lambert
- ☐ Contact Jess Lambert jlambert@ap.church with your Presider Request
- ☐ Take Prepare-Enrich Questionnaire Online and Meet With Facilitator
- ☐ Begin Sponsor Couple Sessions
- ☐ Start Collecting Paperwork

6 MONTHS BEFORE THE CEREMONY

- ☐ Submit your Music Request at : ap.church/marriage
- ☐ Complete POMS Online (Preparation Of Matrimony Sacrament)
- ☐ Complete the Natural Family Planning Class (*optional, highly encouraged*)

2- 3 MONTHS BEFORE THE CEREMONY

- ☐ Complete Sponsor Couple Sessions
- ☐ Make an appointment to meet with your musicians to finalize music selections.
- ☐ Turn in outstanding paperwork

2 MONTHS BEFORE THE CEREMONY

- ☐ Submit your Liturgy Selections at ap.church/brideresources

1 MONTH BEFORE THE CEREMONY

- ☐ Schedule a Meet & Greet with your presider by contacting Sue Dewlen sdewlen@ap.church
- ☐ Acquire marriage license from County Clerk's office.
- ☐ Remind everyone participating in the ceremony of the time of the **rehearsal** and time of **expected arrival on wedding day**. This includes Photo/Videography, Florist, etc.
- ☐ Make final payments for the Church and gather payments for the musicians, clergy, etc.
- ☐ Go to confession.

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

ALL DOCUMENTS TO BE TURNED IN 2-3 MONTHS BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Bride Baptismal Certificate
- ☐ Groom Baptismal Certificate
- ☐ 4 Witness Affidavits
- ☐ Prenuptial Questionnaire
- ☐ Marriage License
- ☐ Permission from your Pastor to Marry at St. Anthony's (*If you are not a Parishioner of St. Anthony's*)
- ☐ Delegation Letter for Presider outside of St. Anthony's (*If Applicable*)
- ☐ Decree of Nullity or Death Certificate (*If Applicable*)
- ☐ Permission/Dispensation to Marry a Non-Catholic (*If Applicable*)



Prayer for a Holy Marriage

Holy Father, I place this marriage in Your hands because it belongs to You. I pray that with all humility and gentleness, with patience, we bear one another in love like You have called us to do. I pray that we remain eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let us seek to keep the peace within our marriage while the enemy uses things to stir up trouble, let us put aside our impulsive emotions so that we can create lasting joy, Amen.

