

**Wedding Policies  
St. Leo the Great  
Lafayette, LA**

To begin marriage preparation, the engaged couple must first meet with the priest to begin paperwork and to review the marriage prep checklist. The marriage prep process hinges upon three pieces in particular:

**1. Prepare-Enrich**

Prepare-Enrich is a premarital assessment that aims to give couples a more in-depth understanding of their own relationship, including their particular strengths and the areas where they can grow as they prepare for marriage. Once both have completed the questionnaire online, the results will be sent to the priest officiating the wedding. This typically takes about 2-3 weeks.

**2. Witness to Love**

Witness to Love is a marriage prep program that connects the engaged couple to a mentor couple of their choice. These two couples will meet on 6 different occasions to discuss real life experiences based on the correlating chapter in the workbook. Couples are encouraged to have fun with this by making each session a date night.

**3. Natural Family Planning**

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is an umbrella term for certain methods used to regulate pregnancies based on the observation of the naturally occurring signs of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's cycle. These methods, which respect the dignity of human sexuality and do not resort to artificial contraceptives, are in line with Catholic moral teachings.

**WEDDING GUIDELINES**

**The Nuptial Mass**

Baptized Catholics are encouraged to celebrate their marriage in the context of Mass, which gives full expression to our Catholic faith, but also may prefer a simple wedding rite.

According to diocesan policy, weddings between a Catholic and non-Catholic may not be celebrated within a Mass.

## **Fees**

There is a \$500 fee charged to non-parishioners for the use of St. Leo the Great Church. This fee helps to cover the costs of marriage preparation materials, staff, and utilities for the wedding ceremony. This check must be made out to St. Leo the Great Church and received before a date is secured.

For those who have been *active* parishioners or whose parents have been active, contributing parishioners for at least a year preceding the initial meeting with the priest, the fee is discounted to \$300. Active parishioners are defined as registered parishioners who regularly attend Mass at St. Leo the Great.

All necessary paperwork is to be delivered to the parish office at least two weeks prior to the date of the wedding.

## **Baptismal Certificates**

Both the bride and groom must submit a recently issued (within the last six months) baptismal certificate from the parish where they were baptized. Please note that the wedding date will not be secured on the calendar until these are turned in.

## **Marriage License**

Couples must obtain a marriage license from the Parish Clerk of Court Office two (2) weeks prior to the wedding date. A 72 hour waiting period between the issuance of the license and the actual celebration of the ceremony must be observed. Please bring the marriage license with you to the rehearsal. Alternately, it may be delivered to the parish office no later than 11:00 am on the Tuesday before your wedding.

## **Sacrament of Penance**

All Catholics are urged to receive the Sacrament of Penance prior to their wedding day as preparation for their marriage. Arrangements may be made with any priest. A good confession should be made as close to the wedding day as possible.

## **Wedding Rehearsal**

The rehearsal will be during the week before the wedding. The priest celebrating the wedding will be the one responsible for the rehearsal. All bridal attendants, lectors, ushers and servers for the wedding are urged to attend the rehearsal. The marriage license is signed by the bride, groom and witnesses at the rehearsal. The use of any alcohol and/or drugs during the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony itself is *strictly* prohibited since it may affect the validity of the marriage.

### **Proper Attire**

The couple, their attendants, and servers are to dress modestly and respectfully for both the rehearsal and the ceremony itself. Please understand that the church is a sacred place and immodest attire is not acceptable.

### **Wedding Party**

There can be a maximum of 7 bridesmaids and groomsmen. Flower girls and ring bearers must be able to walk down the aisle unaccompanied by an adult.

### **Servers for the Wedding Mass**

Servers for the wedding Mass may include lectors, altar servers, and extraordinary Ministers of Communion; however, none of these are required. All servers are to be baptized and practicing Catholics who are in good standing with the Church.

### **Photographers and Videographers**

Photographers must remain outside of the altar area at all times and outside of the center aisle except during the entrance procession. During the procession, step to the side after each picture so those processing in can bow to the altar.

No flash photography, except during the entrance procession.

Never stand in the sanctuary (the altar area).

No pictures during the homily!!

### **Reception of Holy Communion**

We welcome all active Catholics who are well prepared, in good standing within the Church, and not conscious of serious sin, to join us in receiving Holy Communion. Non-Catholics or Catholics unable or not prepared to receive are invited to come forward to receive a blessing.

## **WEDDING MUSIC POLICIES**

### **Planning Music for the Wedding**

Music is not a requirement of the marriage ceremony, but the musical tradition of the Church is a treasure of great value and forms an integral part of the liturgy.

#### **Parish Musician**

Rafael Henry, Director of Music and Organist (337) 739-8173      henrymusic80@yahoo.com

\*If you would like an out-of-parish musician to provide the music, the pastor must approve them along with whatever music they have selected.

#### **General Guidelines for Music**

1. No pre-recorded music is allowed before, during, or after the wedding liturgy.
2. All music used during the liturgy must be church songs.
3. If there is any question of the appropriateness of a given musical selection it must be approved in advance by the priest.

## **DECORATING POLICIES**

Decorating Hours: The church is available for decorating two hours prior to the start of the wedding. The parish has a 4 pm or 5pm Mass on Saturday afternoons. Decorating must wait until the conclusion of this Mass.

Church Decorations: Liturgical decorations may not be moved or altered in any way. The church is specially decorated for the Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter seasons. If your wedding is to take place during one of these seasons, additional decorations should not be used (except pew markers). All sanctuary furnishings must remain in place for the wedding.

Pew Markers: Bows and any other decorations on the pews should only be tied with ribbon or soft tulle in order to prevent scratching of the wood. Lit candles may not be incorporated as a part of decorations.

Adhesive: Under no circumstances are tape, tacks, nails or sticky tack to be used on the pews, walls, or any surface in the Church.

Confetti: The throwing of flower petals, rice, birdseed, bubbles, or any other type of confetti is not permitted inside church or anywhere on the church grounds.

Clean-up: It is the responsibility of the wedding party to remove all decorations from the church immediately following the ceremony. Flower arrangements may be left in donation to the church. The cry room and the sacristy must also be left as they were found.

Additional rituals: The use of a Unity candle or similar additional ritual is not allowed within the content of the wedding Mass. However, it is customary for flowers to be brought by the bride and groom to the statue of Mary at the end of the ceremony.