

Celebrating
the
Sacrament of
Marriage

At
Saint Brigid
Catholic Church

Johns Creek, Georgia



Congratulations ~

Together you have decided to begin a great journey of love. Preparing for your life together is an exciting, wonderful and special time in your life. The contents of this booklet will help answer your questions about preparation for marriage and the celebration of your wedding at Saint Brigid.

After you are married and settled in your new home, I urge you to seek out a parish where you live. Introduce yourself to the staff of that parish, register as a parishioner there, and most importantly become active in that parish community.

Please feel free to call on us at any time if you have questions. The staff and clergy of Saint Brigid wish you every blessing as you begin your married life together.

God bless,

Father Neil Herlihy, Pastor

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I. Who can marry at Saint Brigid?

To marry at Saint Brigid at least one member of the couple must be Catholic, but it is not necessary for both the bride and groom to be Catholic. Many of the weddings at Saint Brigid are interfaith marriages. You do not have to be a parishioner of Saint Brigid.

Also, both the bride and groom must be “free to marry”. If either party was married previously *anywhere* (in a Catholic church, any other church, or in a civil ceremony) and the former spouse is still living, an annulment will need to be obtained from the Tribunal of the Archdiocese before you can marry in the Catholic Church. If an annulment is needed, a priest or deacon of Saint Brigid can assist you in starting the annulment process. A wedding date may not be scheduled, even tentatively, until the annulment has been granted.

II. Scheduling your Wedding

If you are considering a wedding at Saint Brigid, your first step is to contact Kathy Hogan in the Saint Brigid wedding office at:

Weddings@saintbrigid.org or 678-393-0060 ext. 830.

Please include the name of both bride and groom, contact information and any wedding dates you are considering. She will be able to check availability for you and answer your questions.

All reservations are made on a first come, first served basis. Weddings should be scheduled at least 6 months before your desired date, but not more than 18 months before the date.

Wedding Times

Weddings at Saint Brigid are celebrated on Saturdays only
at 11 am, 2 pm or 7 pm only.

You may arrive at the church one hour before your scheduled wedding for preparations and photographs, and stay 30-45 minutes after the wedding for photographs.

Clergy

After you receive information on availability from the Wedding office, your next step is to meet with Father Neil to discuss your desire for marriage and plan for marriage preparation. After your meeting you will be able to schedule your desired date.

Usually one of the priests or deacons at Saint Brigid will be available to preside at your marriage, or you may invite a priest or deacon from a different parish to come to Saint Brigid for your wedding.

Please note: As weddings are usually scheduled in advance, it is occasionally necessary to reassign your wedding to another member of our clergy due to clergy reassignments to other parishes. This rarely happens, but we want you to be aware of the possibility.

Visiting Clergy

Visiting priests or deacons from other parishes are welcome to celebrate weddings at Saint Brigid with the delegation of the pastor at Saint Brigid. You may invite a clergy relative or family friend to celebrate your wedding if you like. Please let us know and we can give you the procedures to arrange for delegation.

Also, if you are registered at another parish in the area, it would be appropriate for you to invite the priest from that parish to come to Saint Brigid to celebrate your wedding.

Interfaith Marriages

If you are marrying someone of a different faith, we are happy to welcome his/her minister or rabbi to participate in the ceremony in some way, usually by giving a special blessing. You can speak to your priest or deacon for more details.

Facilities

Main Church or Chapel: Weddings may be scheduled in either the Main Church or the Chapel. The Main Church can seat approximately 1,000 guests. The Chapel can seat up to 75 people, including the wedding party. The area around the altar in the chapel is small, so we recommend 2-3 bridesmaids at most for a chapel wedding.

Bride's Room: A beautiful bride's room is available for the bride and her bridal party. The bride's room will be open for your use one hour before your scheduled wedding time.

Elevator: Saint Brigid is equipped with a centrally located elevator for anyone that may have difficulty with the stairs.

Fees

A wedding fee is required to help maintain the church facility and provide wedding services.

The fee is \$1500 for a wedding in the Sanctuary, or \$1000 in the Chapel.*

**Discount for Active Parishioners: The wedding fee is discounted if the couple (or their parent) is an "active and registered parishioner" of Saint Brigid. In order to qualify for this discount you must be registered and active at Saint Brigid for at least six months before you call to reserve your wedding date. An "active" parishioner is defined by regular attendance at Mass, volunteer work in parish ministries and/or financial contribution on record at the parish. Please contact us for more details.*

Your Wedding Date is confirmed upon receipt of a signed Wedding Reservation Form and wedding fee.

Checks should be made payable to: *Saint Brigid Catholic Church*

The wedding fee includes:

1. Reservation of the church and bride's room for your rehearsal and wedding.
2. A Wedding Director who will meet with you to plan your ceremony and facilitate at your rehearsal and ceremony.
3. A Music Consultation with our music department.
4. An Organist to play at your ceremony

If you complete your marriage preparation at Saint Brigid, the fee also includes:

5. Meetings with the priest/deacon who will celebrate your wedding to review the engaged couples survey, complete necessary paperwork and plan your wedding
6. Participation in the Sponsor Couple marriage preparation program

(Most couples do complete marriage preparation at Saint Brigid, but if you live in another area it is fine to complete marriage prep at a church more convenient to you.

Documentation of Marriage Preparation is required.)

Stipend for Clergy: Many couples make a personal gift to the priest or deacon who presides at their wedding. The amount is entirely up to your discretion.

Altar Servers: It is customary for the groom to give a stipend to the altar servers. The suggested amount is at least \$10 for each server. Two Altar servers are provided for each wedding.

Refund Policy: If a wedding is cancelled at least six months before the date of the ceremony, the fee is fully refundable to the party who paid the fee. The fee is non-refundable if cancelled less than six months before the ceremony.

III. Marriage Preparation

Marriage Preparation is required to marry at Saint Brigid.

The Marriage Preparation program at Saint Brigid includes:

- 3 or 4 meetings as a couple with the priest or deacon who will perform the ceremony *and*
- Participation in the Saint Brigid Sponsor Couple Program

If you do not live in the Saint Brigid area, or are registered at another parish, you may complete your marriage preparation program at another parish that is more convenient to you. Proof of attendance at the marriage prep program is required.

Importance of Marriage Preparation: Right now you are probably focused on the details of your ceremony and reception, but marriage preparation as a couple is very important to the success and happiness of your future life together. A marriage preparation program gives you the chance to examine your relationship with each other, and with God. It helps to ensure your readiness to be united in the holy bond of marriage.

Your engagement is also a good time to reflect on the practice of your faith, your prayer life, your Sunday Mass attendance, and the frequency of your reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. All these will give you a solid foundation on which to build your married life and your family life.

Required Documentation

The following documents will be required for your permanent wedding file at Saint Brigid:

Baptism Certificates

If you are Catholic, a *recent* copy of your baptismal certificate will be required. This may be obtained by requesting a “newly issued” copy of the certificate from the parish in which you were baptized. Please request a baptismal certificate “with all notations.” If you were baptized in another Christian religion, you will be asked to provide some form of proof of baptism.

Affidavits of Freedom to Marry

Both the bride and groom, whether Catholic or not, will each be asked to provide two affidavits testifying to their Freedom to Marry. The affidavit forms will be provided to you. They are usually completed by parents, but may be completed by anyone with knowledge of you since early teenage years.

Marriage License

You *must* obtain a Marriage License. The license for a wedding in Georgia can be obtained at any county Probate Court in the State of Georgia, and is valid anywhere in the state.

The Marriage License, and return envelope furnished by the County, should be turned in to the Saint Brigid office at least one week prior to your wedding. The license will be kept in your file for safekeeping until the day of your wedding. ***Please note it is illegal in Georgia for a clergy member to officiate at a wedding unless the license is in hand.*** Assurances that the license has been issued are not sufficient, and the rehearsal will not take place if the license is not in hand.

IV. Planning the Ceremony

Nuptial Mass or Simple Ceremony?

When planning your ceremony, your first step is to decide whether you would like a Nuptial Mass or Simple Ceremony.

A Nuptial Mass is a wedding that includes both the Sacrament of Marriage and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Communion is distributed to Catholic members of the congregation. A marriage between two Catholics is often celebrated during a Nuptial Mass. The sacramental graces received thru the reception of the Eucharist, in addition to the sacrament of Marriage, will continue to bless and strengthen their marriage throughout their life.

A Simple Ceremony includes only the Liturgy of the Word and the Exchange of Vows. This is often the choice for a mixed marriage (the marriage of a Catholic and a non-Catholic) when many in the congregation would not be receiving Communion, though it is possible to have a Nuptial Mass at a mixed marriage if that is desired.

A Deacon *or* Priest may celebrate at a Simple Ceremony, but a Priest is required for a Nuptial Mass.

Readings and Prayers: Your priest or deacon will provide a booklet listing the various options for readings and prayers at the ceremony. He will explain how to prepare the list of your selections. You will give your selections to your clergy one month before the rehearsal.

Wedding Director

We are happy to provide a Wedding Director for your wedding at Saint Brigid. The Wedding Director is assigned by the parish, and will assist you with the planning of your ceremony. She will be present at both the rehearsal and wedding to organize the procession and make sure everything flows smoothly.

The Wedding Director will contact you approximately two to three months before the wedding. She will meet with you and be able to answer your questions about the ceremony.

Wedding/Bridal Consultants: If you choose to have an additional Wedding Consultant, please relay the wedding policies and procedures of Saint Brigid to your consultant. Let your consultant know that the ceremony and rehearsal are under the direction of clergy and the Saint Brigid Wedding Director.

Music

You will receive information about wedding music and selections after your wedding has been confirmed on the calendar. You will meet with a member of our music ministry about two months before your wedding date to discuss the music for your ceremony.

Before your meeting you will receive a list of suggested and appropriate music selections for your consideration. *Please note that any music not on the suggested list must be approved by the Music Director.*

The music staff can also assist in arranging for a vocal soloist or other instrumentalists. The organist is included in your wedding fee. There is an additional fee for vocalist and instrumentalists.

General Guidelines for Music at your Marriage Ceremony:

1. Only live music is allowed; *recorded music is not allowed.*
2. All music, including vocal solos, must be sacred in nature and suitable for a Sunday liturgy.
3. All musicians, either instrumental or vocal, must perform in the upper level gallery of the Main Church.
4. The Director of Music must approve any guest organists, instrumental musicians and soloists. A member of the music staff will be present at the wedding, even if you have other musicians, to provide assistance and oversee the equipment.

Flowers, Candles and Decorations

Two flower arrangements are provided by Saint Brigid each weekend. These arrangements are located behind the Altar on either side of the Tabernacle.

Sponsoring the Flowers: You may sponsor these flower arrangements for the weekend of your wedding if you wish. If you sponsor the flower arrangements you may choose the *color* of flowers in the arrangements, but the actual flower type will be chosen by the Saint Brigid florist based on seasonal availability.

If the flower arrangements are sponsored, they must remain at Saint Brigid after the wedding. *For more information on sponsoring the flowers please contact the Altar Flower Ministry.*

If you do not wish to sponsor the arrangements, you may choose to use the two white silk flower arrangements available for your use at no additional charge, or you may order custom arrangements from your florist. Any custom arrangements should be removed immediately following the ceremony and the church's arrangements put back in place.

A florist may be engaged for other floral arrangements in the Church or in the Chapel. You will receive a Florist Agreement for specific guidelines regarding the placement of floral arrangements in the church. Your Wedding Director will also be able to assist you.

Candles and Unity Candle: We have a unity candle stand and two seven-candle candelabras available for your use at no extra charge. Each wedding couple should provide their own unity candle. The other candles in the candelabras and the outside candles on the unity candelabrum are all oil candles and are provided by Saint Brigid. Your florist may decorate the candelabras and the unity candelabrum.

Unity Candle Size: **3¼ inches.** The unity candle stand will accommodate a pillar candle that is 3¼" or less in diameter.

Pew Decorations: If pew decorations/ bows are used, they must be affixed with plastic clips or ribbon. Tacks, staples, tape or putty are not permitted on the

church walls or furnishings. Pew decorations may not contain any type of shedding greenery or candles.

Aisle runners are not allowed because of insurance/ liability. Thank you for your understanding.

Outside wedding decorations are allowed on the outside stair handrails. The entry doors may **not** be decorated and any outside wedding decorations must be approved by the Wedding Director. As with other decorations, outside decorations must be removed immediately following the ceremony by either the Florist or representative. The Wedding Directors are not responsible for removal or cleanup.

Seasonal Decorations: Any seasonal church decorations flowers (such as for Easter or Christmas), all sanctuary furnishings, coverings, flags, etc. must remain in place and may not be moved for your ceremony.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers: Flower petals, real or artificial, may not be tossed or sprinkled on the floors of the church, chapel or anywhere in or outside the church building or parking lot. For ring bearers, the “real” rings to be used in the ceremony should not be attached to the ring bearer’s pillow. After many years of experience with many weddings, we suggest a minimum age of 4 years for both flower girls and ring bearers.

Clean up: Floral arrangements, pew decorations, and any other decorations should be taken down and cleaned up by the florist or their representative immediately after the ceremony. The Wedding Director is not responsible for clean up. We ask that you leave the church as you found it so the space will be ready for the next parish event.

Photography and Video

Photos are important part of the remembrance of your wedding day. Please ask your professional photographer and any unofficial family photographers to keep in mind the sacred nature of the occasion and conduct themselves accordingly.

For example, during the processional and ceremony the photographer must stay in the back of the church and not come forward of the last pew (pew closest to the doors) in the center aisle. Flash photography is only allowed from the back of the church during the ceremony. The photographer should not be anywhere near the altar or in front of the congregation during the procession or ceremony.

The photographer is allowed 30 minutes after the ceremony for posed photographs. Any posed photographs involving clergy and/or altar servers should be taken first.

The photographer should be dressed appropriately for a formal church service.

Video equipment is allowed in the designated camera areas in the choir loft only and should be in place at least 30 minutes before the ceremony. Cameras should be stationary during the ceremony (no roving cameras) and may not be set near or around the Altar area.

You will receive a Photographer Agreement and Videographer Agreement for a complete list of photo and video guidelines. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make sure these guidelines are communicated.

Saint Brigid Church reserves the right to ask anyone (member of the wedding party, outside wedding consultant, photographer, videographer or other vendor) who is in violation of these rules to either correct the violation immediately or to leave the premises. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to advise the photographer and videographer of the regulations.

V. The Rehearsal

The rehearsal is almost always scheduled on the Friday before your ceremony. The Friday rehearsal times in the Sanctuary or Chapel are 6:00 pm, 6:45 pm and 7:30 pm. These rehearsal times cannot be changed as they are set around the schedule of other Church events.

The wedding rehearsal and ceremony are under the direction of the Saint Brigid Wedding Director and clergy. If you choose to have an additional bridal consultant please ask them not to interfere with the direction of clergy and the Saint Brigid Wedding Director.

The rehearsal is limited to forty-five (45) minutes to allow for other wedding rehearsals and special events that take place on Friday evenings at Saint Brigid. The bride and groom are asked to ensure the prompt attendance of the wedding party and ask all involved in the rehearsal to arrive at least 20 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time.

All members of the wedding party should be mindful that they are within a sacred place; respectful behavior is expected from everyone.

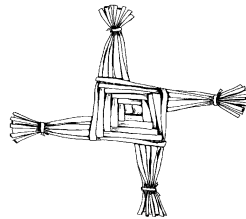
VI. General Guidelines

- **No smoking** is allowed anywhere in the parish buildings.
- **No food or alcohol** is allowed on parish grounds or in the church or bride's room. Please make sure your wedding party is aware of this policy so that they eat before they arrive.
- No rice, bird seed, confetti, bubbles or flower petals may be thrown or used on the parish grounds. The stairs especially can be dangerous if slippery. Please advise your guests of this policy.
- The receiving line should not form at the back of the church. The receiving line should take place at the reception.
- The Bride's Room is for the exclusive use of the bride and her bridesmaids. *Please remember no food or drink is allowed in the Bride's Room.*
- All personal items must be removed from the Bride's Room prior to the ceremony. The parish is not responsible for the security of personal items.
- It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make sure the florist, photographer, videographer, wedding party, family and guests are aware of and follow these policies. For the sanctity of the church, protection of parish property, and security of your guests these policies will be strictly enforced.
- Saint Brigid reserves the right to cancel the wedding if the legal requirements for marriage under the State of Georgia or Church law are not met.

If you have any questions after reviewing this booklet,
please contact the Wedding Office at:

weddings@saintbrigid.org

We are happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.



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