

The Sacrament of Marriage

at Saint Brigid Catholic Church



Congratulations on your engagement.

Preparing for your marriage is an exciting and wonderful time in your life. We hope this booklet will answer your questions about preparation for the Sacrament of 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 near your home. Register as a parishioner, introduce yourself to the staff of that parish, and find some way to become active in that parish community. You will be abundantly blessed by your connection to a spiritual home.

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 of Saint Brigid Catholic Church

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1. Who can marry at Saint Brigid?

Catholic / Non-Catholic?

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.

In an interfaith marriage, the Catholic party is required to "make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power so that all children are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church" (Code of Canon Law 1125). The person of a different faith needs to be clearly aware about this promise.

Parishioner Status

You do not have to be a registered parishioner of Saint Brigid to marry here.

Freedom to Marry

Both the bride and groom must be “free to marry” in the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church recognizes all legal marriages as valid. This means that if either the bride or groom was previously married – whether in a Catholic or non-Catholic wedding, civil or religious ceremony – your previous marriage must be considered in determining your freedom to marry.

If one of you has been previously married, your Freedom to Marry may be established with the help of a deacon by completing a marriage case with the Tribunal of the Archdiocese. (either an Annulment or Lack of Form case). If this is necessary, a deacon of Saint Brigid can help you contact the Archdiocese of Atlanta to start the process. A wedding date may not be scheduled until Freedom to Marry has been granted. Please contact us with any questions.

2. Scheduling your Wedding

Weddings at Saint Brigid are celebrated on Saturday at 11:00AM, 2:00PM or 7:00PM. The wedding times cannot be changed.

To check availability, please contact the wedding office at [**weddings@saintbrigid.org**](mailto:weddings@saintbrigid.org)

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

Before scheduling your wedding date, you must first meet with our pastor, Father Neil Herlihy, to discuss your desire for marriage and plan for marriage preparation. After your meeting you will be able to schedule your desired date.

Clergy and Visiting Clergy

Usually a priest or deacon from Saint Brigid will preside at your ceremony, or you may invite clergy from a different parish to come to Saint Brigid for your wedding.

We will need the name, parish and contact information of your visiting clergy to verify their willingness and availability for your wedding. communicate directly with them.

All visiting clergy will need to request delegation (permission) from our pastor to celebrate the sacrament at Saint Brigid. Additionally, clergy who are not part of the Archdiocese of Atlanta will also need to arrange for faculties in Atlanta by providing a Statement of Good Standing to the Archbishop's office.

Interfaith Marriages

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

3. Facilities and Fees

We have 2 sacred spaces that can accommodate weddings: the Main Church or Chapel.

The Main Church can accommodate up to 800 guests.

The Chapel can seat 75 people, including the wedding party. The altar area in the chapel is small, so we recommend a limited bridal party (2-3 bridesmaids at most) for a chapel wedding.

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.

Bride's Room: The bride's room with attached bathroom is available for the bride and her bridal party starting one hour before the scheduled wedding time.

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

Fees

Your wedding date is confirmed upon receipt of the signed Reservation Form and wedding fee.

We do not accept credit cards for wedding fees. Personal checks or money orders can be made payable to **Saint Brigid Catholic Church**.

Main Church: \$1,800*

Chapel: \$1,200*

The wedding fee includes:

- Reservation of the church and bride's room for your rehearsal and wedding.
- A Wedding Director who will meet with you to help plan the ceremony and facilitate your rehearsal and ceremony.
- A Music Consultation with our music department.
- An Organist to play at your ceremony
- Marriage Preparation materials

Discount for Active Parishioners of Saint Brigid: The wedding fee is discounted if the couple (or their parent) is an "active and registered parishioner" of Saint Brigid. To qualify for this discount, you must be registered and active at Saint Brigid for at least six months **before reserving 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 weddings@saintbrigid.org for more details.*

Optional Fees

Additional Musicians: An organist is included in your wedding fee. You may choose to schedule a vocalist or additional musicians or with our music director for a separate fee.

Altar Servers: If there are altar servers at your ceremony, it is customary for the groom to give them a stipend to the altar servers. The suggested amount is at least \$20 per server.

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.

Refund Policy

The wedding party may cancel their wedding date at any time and receive a full or partial refund. The refund is sent to the party who paid the fee.

Full refund if the wedding is cancelled more than six months before the wedding date.

50% refund if less than six months before the wedding date

4. Marriage Preparation and Required Documentation

The Archdiocese of Atlanta requires about six months of Catholic marriage preparation, including meetings with clergy and a Sponsor Couple or Pre-Cana program.

The following documents will be required for marriage file which is completed with clergy during the Marriage Preparation process.

Baptism Certificates: For Catholics: you will need a **recent** copy of your baptism certificate from the parish where you were baptized (dated within 6 months of your wedding). Request a "newly issued baptism certificate with all notations."

If you were baptized in another Christian religion, provide a certificate or other proof of baptism.

Affidavits of Freedom to Marry: The affidavit forms will be provided and are usually completed by parents, but may be completed by anyone who has known the bride or groom since childhood. Two (2) affidavits each are required from both the bride and the groom testifying to their Freedom to Marry.

Marriage License: You must obtain a Georgia Marriage License. A marriage license can should be obtained at the probate court in either the county of your residence or Fulton County (the county of Saint Brigid).

The Marriage License can be turned in to the Saint Brigid office for safe keeping before the wedding, or you may bring it with you to the wedding rehearsal. ***Please note it is illegal in Georgia for clergy to officiate at a wedding unless the license is in hand. Assurances that the license has been issued are not sufficient. The rehearsal and wedding will not take place if the license is not in hand.***

5. Planning the Ceremony

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

A Simple Ceremony includes the Liturgy of the Word and the Sacrament of Marriage. A Simple Ceremony is often chosen for an interfaith marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic when many in the congregation will not be receiving Communion. (though it is possible to have a Nuptial Mass at a mixed marriage if desired.)

A Priest or a Deacon may preside at a simple ceremony.

A Ceremony with a Full Mass (also known as 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 Priest is required for a Nuptial Mass.

Readings and Prayers

Your clergy will provide a booklet of options for readings and prayers at the ceremony, and explain how to make your selections. Your selections should be given to both your clergy and your wedding director at least one month before your wedding date.

Your Saint Brigid Wedding Director

We are happy to provide an assigned wedding director for your wedding at Saint Brigid. The wedding director will assist you to plan your ceremony and coordinate both the rehearsal and wedding to organize the procession and make sure everything flows smoothly.

Your wedding director will contact you approximately two to three months before the wedding to schedule a meeting, and will be able to answer all of your questions about the ceremony.

Outside Wedding Consultants: If you choose to hire an additional Wedding Consultant, please advise them of the wedding policies and procedures of Saint Brigid. The consultant should know that the ceremony and rehearsal are under the direction of clergy and the Saint Brigid Wedding Director.

Music

You will receive a separate music packet by email when your wedding is confirmed on the calendar. The packet includes a list of music selections to choose from for your ceremony.

Since the wedding is a worship service, only sacred music is allowed. *Please note that any music not on the suggested list must be approved by the Music Director.*

The Wedding Music Director will contact you about 3 months before your wedding to discuss and finalize music for your ceremony.

The organist is included in your wedding fee, but the Music Director can also arrange for a vocal soloist or other musicians if you like. There is an additional fee for vocalist and instrumentalists.

General Guidelines for Music at your Wedding

- Only live music is allowed; *recorded music is not allowed.*
- All music, including vocal solos, must be sacred in nature and suitable for liturgy. The Director of Music must approve any requested music not on the suggested music list.
- All musicians, either instrumental or vocal, must perform in the upper level gallery (choir loft) of the Main Church.
- The Director of Music must approve any guest organists, instrumental musicians and soloists. A member of our music staff will be present at the wedding, even if you have other musicians, to assist and oversee the equipment.

Flowers, Candles and Decorations

Altar Flowers

Each weekend two fresh flower arrangements are placed on the altar on each side of the tabernacle. You may sponsor the flower arrangements for the weekend of your wedding if you wish. The cost to sponsor the flower arrangements is \$200 (\$100 each)

If you do sponsor the 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. The flowers will then remain at Saint Brigid after the wedding for the rest of the weekend.

If you would like to sponsor the flowers please contact the Saint Brigid receptionist at office@saintbrigid.org

Other options for Flowers

You may order custom arrangements from your own florist. Any custom arrangements provided by your florist should be removed immediately following the ceremony and the church's arrangements put back in place.

Silk Flowers: Two large white silk flower arrangements are available at Saint Brigid for your use. There is no cost to use the silk arrangements.

Additional Flowers: Additional floral arrangements or decorations are allowed in the church if desired, but must be in line with Saint Brigid guidelines. You will receive a *Florist Agreement* detailing the specific guidelines about placement of floral arrangements in the church, and your Wedding Director will also be able to assist you.

Unity Candle and Candelabras

The unity candle is a common wedding tradition but is not required. A brass unity candle stand is provided, but the couple must provide the center unity candle. The unity candle stand will accommodate a pillar candle that is 3¼" or less in diameter.

There are also two seven-candle candelabras available for the altar if requested. The candles in the candelabras are provided by Saint Brigid. Your florist may decorate the candelabras and/or the unity candle stand if you like, but that is not required.

Pew Decorations

Pew bows or decorations may be used but 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

Aisle Runners are **not** allowed because of our insurance and liability concerns. Thank you for your understanding.

Permanent or Seasonal Decorations

All sanctuary furnishings, coverings, flags, as well as any seasonal church decorations flowers (such as Easter or Christmas) must remain in place and may **not** be moved for your ceremony.

Decorations on Exterior of Church

You may decorate the outside handrails of the main stairs. The entry doors may **not** be decorated. Please discuss any outside wedding decorations with your Wedding Director to make sure they meet Saint Brigid guidelines.

Clean Up of Decorations

All wedding decorations, with the exception of sponsored flower arrangements, must be taken down and cleaned up immediately following the ceremony by your Florist or other designated individual. This includes pew decorations, outside decorations and any additional flowers.

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.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

We recommend children participating in the ceremony be at least 3½-4 years old.

Flower petals, real or artificial, may not be tossed or sprinkled on the floor anywhere in or outside the church building or parking lot.

If you include a ring bearer, the rings he carries will be symbolic. The "real" rings will be placed on the altar or with the best man.

Photography and Video

We ask that your professional photographer, as well as any unofficial family photographers, maintain the sacred nature of the occasion and conduct themselves accordingly. The photographer should be dressed appropriately for a formal church service.

To minimize distraction during the liturgy, the photographer should remain in the back rows of church (behind all guests) during the procession and ceremony. Any "down the aisle" pictures are only allowed from the back of the church. The photographer should not be near the altar or in front of the congregation during the procession or ceremony.

You are allowed 30 minutes after the ceremony for posed photographs. Posed photographs involving clergy and/or altar servers should be taken first.

Video: Video equipment is allowed in designated areas of the choir loft only. All equipment should be set up and in place at least 30 minutes before the ceremony. Cameras should be stationary during the ceremony (no roving cameras) and may not be near or around the Altar area. It is not possible to "plug in" to the church sound system for an audio feed.

Livestreaming: Saint Brigid does not provide livestreaming, but you may arrange for livestreaming on your own. You will need to plan for the required equipment and

internet platform. Please discuss your plans for livestreaming with your Wedding Director.

A Photographer Agreement and Videographer Agreement will be emailed to you after your wedding is confirmed. This complete list of photo and video guidelines is to be shared with your photographer/videographer. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make sure the guidelines are communicated to their vendors, guests and family.

Saint Brigid Church reserves the right to ask anyone in violation of these rules to correct the violation immediately or leave the premises. This includes members of the wedding party, outside wedding consultants, photographer, videographer or another vendor.

6. The Wedding Rehearsal

Wedding Rehearsals are scheduled on the day before your ceremony, usually on Friday at 5:00pm.

The rehearsal is limited to forty-five (45) minutes and will begin on time to allow for other wedding rehearsals and special events that take place on Friday evenings at Saint Brigid. **Please ask your wedding party 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.

Both the wedding rehearsal and the 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 or the Saint Brigid Wedding Director.

7. General Guidelines

- Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the parish buildings.
- Food, drinks or alcohol is not allowed in the church, bride's room or on parish grounds (no picnics). *Make sure your wedding party is aware of this policy so they can 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.
- Do not form a receiving line after the ceremony. You have a limited time for photographs after the wedding. The receiving line should take place at the reception.
- The Bride's Room is for the exclusive use of the bride and her bridesmaids only. 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 ensure the florist, photographer, videographer, wedding party, family and guests are aware of and follow the applicable policies.
- These policies will be strictly enforced to maintain a sacred environment and for the safety of your guests.
- Saint Brigid is not obligated to proceed with the wedding if the requirements for marriage under the State of Georgia or Church law are not met.

Please contact the wedding office with any questions at

weddings@saintbrigid.org

We look forward to helping you with your wedding!

Saint Brigid Roman Catholic Church

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www.saintbrigid.org