



One In Christ

Wedding Guidelines

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

*2 Xavier Circle
P.O. Box 130669
Birmingham, Alabama 35213
Phone: 205/871-1153
Fax: 205/871-9831*

The Diocese of Birmingham requires that you contact the parish six months in advance for setting a date for your wedding. It is also important that you speak with the parish priest before setting a date for your wedding or making arrangements.

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church Wedding Guidelines

“Since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in the framework of a liturgical celebration, before the priest (or witness authorized by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993

SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

The first step in scheduling your wedding is to make an appointment with one of the parish priests. Diocesan policy requires a six-month preparation period before the wedding can take place. (*Catholic Marriage Policy for the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.*) The initial meeting with the priest involves getting to know each other and setting the dates. No wedding will be placed on the calendar until this meeting takes place. At this session the priest will discuss with the couple what matrimony means in the Church community. This meeting also deals with any of the questions regarding the “Freedom to Marry” in the Catholic Church. Parish policy will be more fully explained and you will be given a list of people to contact. Weddings will not be scheduled during the season of Lent. Catholic weddings are to be celebrated in the Church, not to be celebrated on Sunday. (*Catholic Marriage Policy for the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.*)

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

During the six-month period, the couple, with the help of the priest, completes the various requirements set by the Church:

1. The completion of the prenuptial inventory and the outline of the preparation in the coming months.
2. A discussion of any dispensations or permissions needed (if applicable).
3. You will be encouraged to attend *Engaged Encounter Weekends*. (The priest encourages all couples to attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend. A schedule will be provided at the initial meeting with the priest.)
4. You will be asked to complete a *Couple Communication and Understanding Survey*.
5. You will be given a book that allows you to plan the ceremony. The book entitled *Together for Life* by Joseph M. Champlain contains all the readings and prayers from which you may choose, and gives you a full outline of the ceremony. There is an edition for Marriage celebrated within Mass and another for Marriage celebrated outside of Mass. There is a helpful form in the back of the book which should be completed and given to the wedding coordinator four weeks before your wedding date. Please read the accompanying guidelines regarding the use of the parish church.

PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage involves the couple to be married and their families, but also the priest, the music director and cantor, the wedding coordinator(s) and the church building itself. After your initial meeting with the priest, you will be put in contact with a wedding coordinator who will help you organize your wedding within the guidelines acceptable at St. Francis Xavier Parish. The wedding coordinator will work with your florist, photographer and video camera operator, and will be able to refer you to the proper authority for answering questions regarding the acceptability of para-liturgical additions to the liturgy. The wedding coordinator will also assist you in assigning altar servers for your wedding.

AVAILABLE TIME AND DAY FOR YOUR WEDDING

Available times for wedding celebrations are:

Friday, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m.; 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.

MUSIC

Music for weddings is under the direction of the music coordinator. Following contact with a priest, you are expected to set up an appointment with the music coordinator who will assist you in the selections of music. It is suggested that you do not wait until the last minute to meet with the coordinator. Music is a key component of our sacramental celebrations. All music must be appropriate music since the celebration of a wedding is part of our worship. The music coordinator will assist in the selection of music in accordance with church policy. Please do not contact other musicians before meeting with the music coordinator. All visiting musicians and soloists must coordinate their activity through the music coordinator. Additional information is provided as a supplement to these guidelines for your reference.

PICTURES

Pictures and videos must always be in perspective to the central significance of the sacrament. We ask that you use one designated photographer and/or videographer. No photography or video equipment may be positioned in the sanctuary (the raised section in the front of the Church).

Pictures should end approximately 45 minutes prior to the ceremony. On Saturday, no pictures can be taken in the Church or in the vestibule between 3:30 p.m. and 5:45 p.m.

In keeping with the solemnity of the occasion, no flash pictures are to be made during the ceremony. Photographers customarily take pictures of the wedding party before the ceremony or during a period not to exceed **thirty minutes** immediately thereafter.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

ENVIRONMENT

The Church is a sacred space. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Church, dedicating it to God's presence. Anything done for the wedding must reflect and respect this understanding.

Church and Vestibule Furnishings: We ask that no articles of furniture—either in the church or in the vestibule—be moved.

Unity Candle: Unity Candles are not a part of the Catholic wedding ceremony and will not be allowed at St. Francis Xavier Church.

Flowers: At St. Francis Xavier, we have a Flower Guild that provides flower arrangements for all of our liturgies except weddings and funerals. Flowers are an integral part of our Church worship environment. Therefore, all weddings must provide flower or greenery arrangements for the sanctuary. These arrangements will remain in the sanctuary for all weekend liturgies. Two free-standing floral or green arrangements are to be placed in the sanctuary. You must use our flower stands. The wedding flowers placed in the sanctuary are for God's greater glory. The flowers must remain throughout the weekend. No artificial or silk flowers may be used for decorations anywhere in the Church.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Flowers provided by the Church from Christmas Eve until the celebration of the Epiphany (poinsettias) and arrangements provided at Easter (lilies) MUST NOT BE REMOVED FROM THE SANCTUARY. (More in-depth information regarding flowers is provided on page 8.) A member of the wedding guild will be available to meet with the florist or answer questions on the phone in order to prevent misunderstandings regarding decorations.

Children: Children must be six years of age or older to participate in the wedding.

Flower Girls: We do not allow loose flower petals anywhere in the Church or on the premises. The girls may have flowers in a basket. No petals are to be thrown. Loose flower petals cause a hazard on the floor.

Pew Markers: Only pew marker stands, provided by the Church, are to be used. Nothing should be taped to the pews. No candles are allowed on the pew markers. (If ribbon bows are to be used, they may be tied to the end of the pews.)

Aisle Cloth: Aisle cloths create a tripping hazard and may not be used. Our insurance will not cover a claim for slipping on an aisle cloth or “runner”.

Liturgical Furnishings: The placement of the liturgical furnishings is legislated by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. The celebrant’s chair, the ambo and lectern, the credence table and the cantor’s chair, are to remain in their original position and may not be moved.

Outside Decorations: Two floral arrangements/bows/wreaths are allowed to be hung on the outside columns. (Nails are in place in the columns to accommodate your decorations.)

Rice and Birdseed: We ask that nothing—rice, birdseed, confetti, glitter, or flower petals be thrown or scattered anywhere on the premises. Again, our insurance will not cover any claim submitted if used on our premises.

Food: Because the Church is dedicated for worship, it is inappropriate for food or drinks to be in the Church. You may have food or drink in the Bride’s Room or the Joseph Room. Please take care to try and keep food off of the floor in those areas.

Attire: With consideration to the fact this the Church is the House of God, appropriate attire should be worn by those in the wedding party. Please make every effort to ensure “low cut” or “short” dresses are not worn.

Alcoholic Beverages: No alcoholic beverages are to be consumed by members of the wedding party at any time prior to the wedding rehearsal or ceremony. Any member of the wedding party appearing to be inebriated will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony.

RITUAL

Wedding Guild: For each rehearsal and wedding, a coordinator from our Parish Wedding Guild will be present. Our coordinator will be available from the beginning of wedding planning to help with the Church details. She will also function as a coordinator during the rehearsal and wedding to guide you

through the details. The Wedding Coordinator is assigned 6 months prior to your wedding and will meet with you soon after her assignment.

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal sets the tone for the ceremony the next day.

Rehearsal Times: Generally, rehearsals will be scheduled between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. the evening before the wedding.

Rehearsal reminders:

- Please bring the marriage license with you.
- Please ask your parents, attendants, and all who have a specific role in the wedding, to arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal. Only those people who have specific responsibilities in the wedding need to be present at the rehearsal. If you have additional guests invited to the dinner afterwards, please ask them to meet your party at the dinner.

The priest makes no assumptions regarding invitations. If you wish him to attend specific functions connected with the wedding, please make every effort to invite him early.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

***Maintenance & Utility Fees: Due 30 days after the initial meeting with the parish priest and the wedding date has been posted on the parish calendar. Contact the Parish Secretary.**

Church

Registered Parishioner	\$150.00
Non-Parishioner	\$1,000.00

Parish Hall

Registered Parishioner	\$350.00* (*this fee includes a charge for insurance.)
Non-Parishioner	\$700.00
Damage Deposit	\$200.00

Damage Deposit: A refundable \$200.00 damage deposit is required for use of the Parish Hall. Physical damage or non-compliance with rules will result in forfeit of damage deposit.

Should any parishioner experience a financial hardship, please meet with the priest for other arrangements.

DUE ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE OF WEDDING DATE

- Liturgy/Ceremony Outline
- Flower/Decoration Plans for Church
- Outstanding Fees (Wedding Coordinator, Music Coordinator)

FEES Individual Fees: (when applicable) Please make checks payable to the individual persons.

Accompanist :	\$200.00
Instrumentalist:	\$200.00
Soloist/Cantor:	\$150.00

(Generally speaking, musicians will not be present at rehearsals. If you ask them to be present, it is the responsibility of the bridal couple to make these arrangements.)

Wedding Coordinator:	\$150.00
Celebrant (Priest)	There is no set fee, but a stipend for the priest is customary
Altar Servers, Lectors, Extraordinary Minister of Communion (a small, monetary gift is customary)	
Security	\$20 per hour (for evening weddings)

We are happy you chose to celebrate your wedding at St. Francis Xavier Church. These guidelines will assist in making your wedding experience a holy and memorable event.

(PLEASE READ THIS PAPER BEFORE HIRING
ANY MUSICIANS!)
Wedding Music Information

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding! I pray your marriage will be a long and happy one, filled with God's choicest blessings.

My name is Nancy Grundhoefer and I am the Music-Coordinator for St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church. I accompany and sing for various choirs in our parish. I will be the person to assist you in your selection of music. Wedding music must meet the standard defined by the wedding music directives of the Diocese of Birmingham. I, or my designate, will be your accompanist for the wedding. ***All musicians are to be scheduled through me. This includes any other instrumentalists such as trumpet players or string instrumentalists.***

Cantors must come from the St. Francis Xavier Music Department and scheduled through the Music Department. *Guest soloists may sing, but must audition either in person or via tape or CD. They must come prepared.*

As a policy of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, the responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, and Eucharistic acclamations are always sung, never spoken. Please contact me at least **four (4) months** prior to the service.

Music plans must be finalized at least four weeks before the scheduled date of the wedding & musician fees must be paid at that time.

Thank-you and God bless you as you prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Sincerely,

Nancy Grundhoefer (803-5415) Music-Coordinator

*"There are but three things that last: faith, hope, and love;
and the greatest of these is love."*

Florist Information

It is most important that the environment in the church be in keeping with the liturgical guidelines. We call your attention to the following areas:

Liturgical Furnishings: The placement of the liturgical furnishings is legislated by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. The celebrant's chair, the ambo and lectern, the credence table and the cantor's chair are to remain in their original position.

Church and Vestibule Furnishings: We ask that no articles of furniture – either in the church or in the vestibule be moved.

Unity Candle: Unity candles are not a part of the Catholic wedding ceremony and will not be allowed at St. Francis Xavier Church.

Flowers/Pew Markers: At St. Francis Xavier we have a Flower Guild that provides flower arrangements for all of our liturgies (except weddings and funerals). Flowers are an integral part of our church worship environment. Therefore, all weddings must provide flower or greenery arrangements for the sanctuary. These arrangements will remain in the sanctuary for all weekend liturgies.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Flowers provided by the Church from Christmas Eve until the celebration of the Epiphany (poinsettias) and arrangements provided at Easter (lilies) MUST NOT BE REMOVED FROM THE SANCTUARY. During the Easter season (Easter to Pentecost) a small wreath of flowers should be placed around the Paschal (Easter) candle in the sanctuary.

St. Francis Xavier is happy to provide the following:

- Black wrought iron stands for the main altar (paper-mache pots/size #7)

- Black wrought iron pew markers (six are available)

- Urn on center table in the vestibule (foyer)

- Commercial cooler for storage of pre-arranged bouquets, boutonniere, corsages, flower girl baskets

The florist is to provide containers for use in the sanctuary and in the church vestibule (foyer). A 38" piece of acrylic for the vestibule table centerpiece must be used at all times. If you are using a cloth, please place the acrylic on top of the cloth. Pew marker stands, provided by the church, are to be used. Nothing should be taped to the pews. No candles are allowed on the pew markers. (If only ribbon bows are to be used, they may be tied to the ends of the pews.)

A member of the wedding guild will be available to meet with the florist or to answer questions on the phone in order to prevent misunderstandings regarding decorations.

Florists are to remove any storage boxes, pots, etc. from the church prior to the wedding. They may be taken to the dumpster on the property. Any special containers, vases, etc. used in the wedding not picked up from the church by the following Wednesday afternoon will be thrown away.

We invite you to use the cooler in the Flower Room the day of the wedding to store bouquets, boutonniere, corsages, or flower girl baskets. However, flowers to be used in arrangements are not to be stored at the church un-arranged. Flowers for use in the wedding may be stored in the coolers

only 24 hours prior to the wedding.

If arrangements are not pre-arranged prior to being brought into the church, containers for the sanctuary and vestibule arrangements are to be prepared prior to being brought into the church. If flowers are to be inserted into the containers at the church, they should be arranged with the containers in place and not in the flower room.

All containers are to be pre-prepared with oases, wire, tape, etc. prior to bringing containers to church. Please make sure that the containers do not leak or drip.

The St. Francis Flower Room is for use by the church Flower Guild for church functions only. The workroom is not available to commercial florists. Only the refrigerator in the flower room is available for use by florists.

St. Francis Xavier cannot be responsible for any flowers or materials left at the church the day prior to a wedding or 24 hours after a wedding.

Children: Children must be six years of age or older to participate in the wedding.

Flower Girls: We do not allow loose flower petals anywhere in the church or on the premises. The girls may have flowers in a basket, but no petals are to be thrown. Loose flower petals cause a hazard on the floor.

Aisle Cloth: Because an aisle cloth creates a hazard, no aisle cloth may be used. Our insurance will not cover a claim for slipping on an aisle cloth or “runner”.

Outside Decorations: Two floral arrangements/bows/wreaths are allowed to be hung on the outside columns. (Nails are in place in the columns to accommodate your decorations.)

Rice and Birdseed: We ask that nothing - rice, bird seed, confetti, glitter, or flower petals be thrown or scattered anywhere on the premises.

Flowers must be in place four (4) hours before an evening wedding and three (3) hours before a 1:00 p.m. wedding

FLOWER / DECORATION PLANS

FLORIST NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ CELL: _____

WEDDING OF: _____ AND _____

DATE OF CEREMONY: _____

Detailed plan (to be submitted to church office at least one month prior to wedding date). This form may be faxed to 205-871-9831.

ALTAR AREA:

AISLES:

PEWS:

VESTIBULE:

OTHER:

APPROVED: _____

DATE: _____

PHOTOGRAPHER INFORMATION

Pictures and videos must always be in perspective to the central significance of the sacrament. We ask that you use one designated photographer and/or videographer. No photography or video equipment may be positioned in the sanctuary (the raised section in the front of the Church).

Pictures should end approximately 45 minutes prior to the ceremony. On Saturday, no pictures can be taken in the Church or in the vestibule between 3:30 p.m. and 5:45 p.m.

In keeping with the solemnity of the occasion, no flash pictures are to be made during the ceremony. Photographers customarily take pictures of the wedding party before the ceremony or during a period not to exceed **thirty minutes** immediately thereafter.

