



St. John the Baptist

Founded
1867

CATHOLIC CHURCH

0S 233 Church Street
Winfield, Illinois 60190-1291 - 630-668-0918



Dear Engaged Couple,

May God's blessings be with you as you journey toward your Covenant of Christ's Love, the celebration of your Sacrament of Marriage!

St. John the Baptist Parish congratulates you on your engagement and prays that God will bless you with much joy in your married life.

Your decision to marry will be one of the most important choices you will ever make. First and foremost your "Marriage in Jesus Christ" is very special. This is a "Holy Day" and a day in which all of us seek to be happy as well as spiritual. Your marriage is a beautiful and special proclamation of the Covenant you will make with God and with one another.

The Sacrament of Marriage, as it is lived, is a manifestation of your love for each other, for God and for the whole world. It will not happen automatically. The more you put into your preparation for Marriage, the more it will be able to fulfill your needs and desires. The love of husband and wife is called to be a mirror of the Love that God has for us. Openness, acceptance, forgiveness, and commitment characterize such a love. It is through this "Love" that you bring life to one another.

Your engagement is a special time in your lives. It is a time of love, preparation and reflection as well as a time to explore the implications of Marriage as a Sacrament. Prayer should be a key element for both of you during your journey toward the Sacrament of God's Love.

We believe very strongly in the importance of a good preparation before a couple enters Marriage. Even though you may have had a course in school about what Marriage may be like, you are now on the threshold of your own Marriage. You are ready for a more in-depth consideration of the meaning of Marriage. You will discover that there are many things you can still learn about each other.

Within this booklet you will find information on guidelines and procedures to help you prepare for this important day. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the priest/deacon preparing you for your marriage or one of the staff involved in the process.

May God bless you in your love for one another.

In Christ Jesus,

The Staff of St. John the Baptist



Revised

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YOUR ENGAGEMENT

Through a series of meetings you will be asked to consider the implications of Marriage before you begin your life together. There are also some very important things to keep in mind when planning your Marriage. As part of your spiritual and personal preparation for Marriage, you will be required to do a communications instrument with a married couple, called the FOCCUS, and to attend an “Engaged Encounter” weekend, sponsored by the Diocese of Joliet. For those civilly married over five years, there is a “Marriage Encounter” weekend. We will be explaining to you in greater depth what is involved in the “Encounter Programs”....














St. John the Baptist Pre-Marriage Preparation


















-  **The Sacrament of Marriage is a Sacred Celebration that proclaims Christ present in our lives and witnesses to Christ among us in a prophetic way** that calls us to live our lives most authentically. **We are called, as Catholics/Christians, to witness personally to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.** We are called to live lives based on God's Commandments and celebrated in the Sacraments. **Love of God, self, future spouse and others** is a key part of our pre-Marriage preparation. The **Sacrament of Marriage IS a relational commitment between the BRIDE and the GROOM and GOD.** If **God** and **Weekend Mass** are not a part of your preparation, then the wedding ceremony is a shallow celebration that does not reflect the truth of your relationship with God or the Parish Community. If you have not been attending Mass every Weekend thus far you are asked to do so. It is suggested that you sit up front so that the priests and the deacon may get to know you. As you leave church make sure you pass him by and say “**Hi Father...!**” “**Hi Deacon...!**” and chat with them. This will help your priest (and deacon) to get to know you better.
-  Taking more time to **turn to God and pray for your fiancée, yourself** and to **ask God to be close to you in your Marriage** is essential. Praying together, inviting God to be with you is a wonderful way to help deepen your relationship.
-  Your Wedding Ceremony centers on your **VOWed commitment** to one another and to God. Your vows are the center of the Religious Ceremony. It is very profound, very touching and very powerful if you are able to **memorize your Vows.** They will have a deeper impact upon you and your new spouse. **YOUR VOWS**, entered in Love (*not the party or the dress or the band....*)
.....ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY!
-  **Choosing your Scripture Readings** together is very important. You need to set aside quality time in order to read, reflect, discuss them with each other and finally, dialogue about which Scripture Readings most express your Spiritual Journey with each other and Christ. (One reading from the **Old Testament**, [options 1 to 9] one reading from the **New Testament** [options 1 to 13] that is not a Gospel and one **Gospel** reading [options 1 to 10]. There is also a Responsorial Psalm... you need to choose this with your musicians.) **If** there is any one you know who is able to **proclaim the Scriptures**, then you are encouraged to involve them in reading the First and Second Readings and if you wish the General Inter-










cessions the options or one you or the priest compose. If you do not have anyone who can proclaim the Scriptures, then the Priest/Deacon will do that for you. If you are only having a Wedding Ceremony without Mass then you may also choose your readings from the options in the Wedding Planning Booklet. For mixed marriages between a Catholic and a Baptized Christian of another Denomination it is the custom that the wedding be held during a Wedding Ceremony outside of Mass unless the couple specifically requests mass as their choice. For a wedding mass between a baptized Catholic and a non-baptized spouse you need to ask your priest to contact the bishop for permission.

5.  **The Diocese of Joliet, as do all diocese in the United States, requires a minimum of SIX months preparation time for Marriage in the Catholic Church.** For anyone under the age of 19 the Diocese also requires that there be pre-Marriage counseling and a positive recommendation be given prior to the date being set for marriage. At St. John the Baptist Parish we require that both Bride and Groom must be at least 18 years of age in order to be married.
6.  Wedding dates are set by the pastor/associate pastor after your Marriage Orientation meeting, not by the parish secretaries. *(Each Priest does only one wedding on any particular day.)*
7.  The normal time for weddings at St John the Baptist is at 2:00 pm on Saturday and may not be scheduled later due to Confessions and Mass. Other days during the week are negotiable with the priest who is celebrating your wedding here at St. John's. There are no weddings on Sundays nor Holy Days of Obligation. 
8.    **A Recently Issued Copy of the Baptismal Certificates** - for all Catholics (not the Original nor a photo copy or a FAX copy, and dated no more than six months) need to be **Obtained Immediately**. Please call or write the parishes where you were baptized this week to obtain these. Baptized Christians of other denominations are asked to present some form of Baptismal Record.
For Interfaith Marriages -Catholics marrying a non-Catholic or an un-baptized person are required to make the following promise: *"I reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ and, with God's help, intend to continue living that faith in the Catholic Church. I promise to do all in my power to share the faith I have received with our children by having them baptized and reared as Catholics."* Please be sure you have discussed this with your future spouse!
Remember, Original copies or photo copies of your Baptismal Certificates are NOT ACCEPTABLE. To reserve the church for your wedding, if one or both of you were born outside of the United States, we need in hand your Baptismal Certificates. If baptized in the US we need you to get them to us as soon as possible. If baptized outside of the country we need the certificate to reserve the church.If you were Confirmed, we also need a copy of your Confirmation Certificates.
9.     Attendance of an **Engaged Encounter**, Retreat (**EE**) is required. This is a retreat-like weekend that starts on Friday Night and ends on Sunday afternoon. This takes place at St. Charles Pastoral Center on Rt. 53 and Airport Road in Romeoville (just north of Lewis University & one mile south of Romeoville High School). Communication skills and an orientation to the Church's ideals of marriage are at the center of this weekend. You are asked to make your reservations for your EE Weekend immediately after your Orientation Meeting. (Because of large numbers attending it some times takes 3-4 months to get reservations for an **EE** Weekend.) There will also be at least one follow up session with Father/

Deacon after your **Engaged Encounter**. Dates and other information for this weekend may be obtained by calling **630-375-7072**.

10.   →  Meet with a **Natural Family Planning Couple**. In this local area, call Jean Daniell at 630-653-5681.
11.   &  **Prenuptial Questionnaires** will be given to both Bride and Groom. We normally do this right after you have finished your **Engaged Encounter** Weekend. Call a week or two after your **EE** for an appointment.   &   For both Bride and Groom there must be **two witnesses to their freedom to marry**. Witnesses need to be blood relatives who have known them from the age of 12 on. Parents are preferred to be the witnesses if possible. (There needs to be **4** witnesses in all.) It is easiest to bring in your witnesses at the same time we do the Prenuptial questionnaires and to come in three cars so witnesses do not have to linger as the priest/deacon speaks to you after their testimony.
12.   Couples will also participate in taking the **FOCCUS**, an instrument that helps couples further address marriage and communication issues. This will be given with the help of an experienced married couple from St. John the Baptist Parish who will meet with you, to share their vision of marriage.
13.  Your **Marriage License** can be obtained at the **DuPage County Clerk's Office for 60 days** beginning one day after it is issued. The priest does both the **Civil** and the **Church** ceremonies at the same time. So there is no need to first have a Court House wedding and then a Church wedding after. There are 2 sections of the license: one that is sent back to the county by the priest or deacon who officiated, and one ceremonial copy given to you on the day of your wedding. Bring both sections of the license to the rehearsal. For validations of existing Civil Marriages, a photo copy of the Marriage License is required. Do not wait to the last minute to get it. **Without a Marriage License a couple cannot be married.**
14. ✓ If there was a **previous Sacramental Marriage** entered by either party then **no wedding date may be set until the Church grants an Annulment.** Annulments-Dispensations must also be obtained for previous non-sacramental marriages, but these are far easier to get than a formal Annulment.
15.  If one of you belongs to another faith tradition and wish to have your minister participate in your wedding day this can be worked out easily with us. If you are of mixed Christian faith tradition, and want to have a valid marriage in the Catholic Church, but also desire to have the ceremony done in the church building of the non-catholic spouse-to-be, then you need to go through all the preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church, but may obtain a dispensation from the Diocese of Joliet, to allow the minister of the other Christian denomination to do your ceremony **in that church**. With this dispensation your marriage is held as valid and licit in the Catholic Church.
16.  There are many customs and traditions that are often used in a wedding ceremony, but it is important to remember that too many ceremonies can drag out a wedding and can take away from the two most important customs: your vows and the giving of your wedding rings. Also a large number of bridesmaids and groomsmen and other people involved in your ceremony can also be a distraction.

A wise rule of thumb to remember is.... **“LESS IS MORE”**.

17.  There are many wonderful rituals that are part of our different cultures that we often incorporate into the wedding liturgy. The Latino custom of the **Lazo** is the same as the American custom of the lighting of the **Nuptial Candle**. If you are interested you may choose one or the other, but **please do not choose both** for the Wedding Ceremony. (Some times the lighting of the Nuptial Candle is done at the banquet table at the wedding reception as part of the blessing of grace).
18.  Sometimes couples choose to include in their wedding ceremony a “**Gift for the Poor,**” either a basket of food (for our Parish Food Pantry) or a container of coins (that can be used to help with rent assistance or utilities payment for the Poor of the Parish through the St. Vincent de Paul Society) that are brought up during the offertory. If you wish you may choose to read a special “**Prayer of the Couple**” at some point either at the end of the vows-rings.... or after communion.
19.  A spiritual ritual/custom that is very beautiful is to present to the couple a “**Family Bible**” during the Wedding Ceremony. Here at **St. John’s** we **give you a large, nice Bible**. You may choose to have the priest present it to you or some one else in your wedding party, i.e. parents, godparents, grandparents or some one else, or you may either use it to have your readings proclaimed from this Bible. (If rosaries are to be presented, it is a better sign to give **two rosaries**, one to the bride and one to the groom, if both are Catholic.)
20.  If roses (flowers) are to be presented to the Blessed Virgin by the bride, the groom will accompany her as they pray that their marriage and family will be blessed as was that of Mary and Joseph & Jesus. A different option is to take the flowers to the Tabernacle.... Acknowledging that Christ is the third spouse in a Sacramental Marriage. If you wish to present a rose to each of the Mothers then discuss this with the priest or deacon.
21.  Floral arrangements that are in place for a particular liturgical season or celebration such as Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter, or other special times may not be moved, re-arranged or removed. You are not to have arches in the church, they are often distracting to the liturgy. You are also asked to not have ribbons hung between the pews as decorations. In the Catholic Liturgy they will be pulled down when people go to Holy Communion. Your decorations on the pews are to be simple. **No tape is to be placed upon the wood of the pews** (tape pulls the varnish off the wood). Real flowers are preferred over artificial flowers.
22.  **There will be no confessions the night of the Wedding Rehearsal.** You are asked to inform all members of your wedding who might feel a need to go to confession to do so in their own parishes at least a week or two before the wedding. It is wise for the Catholic Bride/Groom to prepare themselves for the Sacrament of Marriage by going to Confession. At the rehearsal **parents of the bride and groom should be present**, as well as **those who will be reading at your wedding**. The couple should make sure to bring the following items with them to the rehearsal. (1. Marriage license. 2. Unity candles ...if these are to be included in the ceremony).
23.    No alcohol is permitted on the premises at the practice or at the wedding ceremony. **The Wedding Liturgy is a Sacred Rite** held within a sacred space. Marriage celebrated in the context of a Church wedding is a serious commitment and should not be trivialized by the use of alcohol and/or drugs. On the day of the wedding the bride, groom, and members of the bridal party must not consume alcohol or drugs prior to coming to church or on church property. **If either party is found to be under the influence of alcohol during the time of the wedding ceremony, the celebration of the marriage vows will be postponed until that person is**

sober. Hangovers from too much celebration the previous night can also ruin a wedding.

24. 🍷 It is important to **have a good breakfast** the morning of your wedding. Brides and Grooms have a greater tendency to faint when their blood sugar is low and they are nervous. NO food or beverages are allowed in the church.
25. 💬 Some Grooms choose to rent two tuxedo shirts and have an extra T shirt available, especially during hot weather. Grooms are sometimes very nervous during the ceremony and sweat, a change of shirt between the ceremony and the festivities is sometimes a blessing. Brides and brides maids need to remember that as much as a beautiful dress makes them look fantastic, that **the church is a place of modesty**. Please remember that over exposure of a bride or bride maid can be a source of embarrassment to the priest and to the congregation.
26. 🔔 Liturgical norms and guidelines are important to follow for the Wedding Liturgy. These norms strive to make the liturgy more authentic. It is Liturgically correct for the celebrant of your wedding to enter as part of the entrance procession. Also **it is most appropriate that both sets of parents of the bride and the groom accompany them during the entrance procession or that the couple enter together.** (Woman in our society are NOT the property of their fathers or of any other man.) *In the ancient tradition of the church it was the custom that the bride was escorted to the home of the groom by both her parents, whereupon the father of the bride gave the father of the groom the dowry, the hands of the bride and the groom were joined at the home of the grooms parents and together the bride and the groom processed to church and entered it with all their parents immediately in front of them, preceded by bridesmaids and groomsmen in front of them.*
27. 📄 For **couples Civilly Married** or **Cohabiting** it is important that the ritual for your Wedding Ceremony express the truth of your already existing commitment to each other.... i.e. that during the entrance procession, since you have already given yourselves to each other, it is most appropriate that you enter and process down the aisle together. To express the reality of your commitment and existing unity with one another.
28. 🚲 Children younger than 4 years of age quite often panic during processions when they are asked to walk down the aisle without their parents. It is encouraged that in planning your wedding that you look for children at least 4 years of age if not older. Younger children are best brought down the aisle in the arms of one of their parents.
29. 📄 For any couple **where neither the bride or groom lives or worship at St. John the Baptist Parish,** but wishes to be married here or through the parish, they **need to obtain a letter of permission from one of the parish priests where they live,** to be married at St. John's. This even includes when one grew up in St. John the Baptist and whose parents still live here but neither the bride or groom do now.
30. ✉️ The decision to marry is done by two mature and responsible adults. Your parents are no longer in charge of your lives or faith formation. Each of you is to register individually in your own Parishes, (*those married civilly or cohabiting can register as a couple*). You are to make sure you support your Parishes who serve you. **The use of Parish envelopes is an important sign of stewardship in your faith community.** A minimum weekly donation to help your Parish to do the work of the Lord should be equivalent to as least one hours wages.
(Sacred Scripture, in the Old Testament: Numbers 18:21, says "I have given the children of Levi all tithes (ten percent) in Israel as their heritage in recompense for service." Many Christians are sensitive in "tithing", giving a tenth part of one's annual income, contributed voluntarily, for the support of their church.)
31. 🎵 **Music for weddings is to be arranged with the Parish Organist.** Your fee is paid directly to the musician not to the Parish. The Organist's Fee is **\$250.** - The Can-

tor's Fee is to be negotiated with cantor - You need to pay the Musicians before the night of rehearsal. Please contact the parish music coordinator **Adrienne Rose - 630-653-1489** to set up an appointment. She will assist you in planning the music for your wedding. By contract, St. John the Baptist's Music Director is entitled to provide music for all St. John's weddings. If couples desire to use someone other than St. John the Baptist's Music Director, there is a \$100 consultation fee to be paid to St. John's Music Director, who must approve the selections of music you make with other musicians. Any outside musicians must be OK-ed by Mrs. Rose, the Director of Music for St. John the Baptist Parish. Fees for a guest organist and/or vocalist are arranged individually between you and them.



Music must fit the Liturgical tone of the ceremony. Music at your wedding is an essential part of the celebration, and prayer for all of those gathered to take part in this occasion. Music used at the wedding should be God Centered, for we are here to praise and thank God and ask God's blessing upon your life as husband and wife. All music, whether vocal or instrumental, whether before, during or after the marriage liturgy, must be sacred, rather than secular. It must be music appropriate for Catholic worship. Secular-Popular music is not to be used and is more appropriate for the reception afterward.

32. All involved in the **Practice and Wedding Ceremony** are to be at the church building at least **1/2 hour before** the time of the practice or the marriage ceremony is to begin.

St. John's asks that you let the secretaries know if you want Altar Servers for the Wedding Ceremony. If you personally know an altar server or one is a member of your family you are free to have them take part in your Wedding. (*Any servers who assist with your wedding should be given a gift of \$10.00 - \$20.00.*)

33. A late start of your wedding inconveniences many people. Because the Parish and priest/deacon are on a schedule, a late start in the ceremony may result in a shortening of your service and possibly the elimination of some of the rituals/ceremonies of the wedding and possibly even the reception of Holy Communion during Wedding Masses (we do not want this to happen). **COME PREPARED:** We do not have a bride's room; therefore, all members of the wedding party are to arrive at the church dressed for the wedding.

34. **Cameras and Videographers** are to check with the celebrant of the ceremony 20 minutes before the services begin. Flash photography is permitted. Additional lighting for video is not permitted. It is important for all to remember that this is a Sacred Ceremony and not a Hollywood movie set. Also family members and friends who are ***"Super Camera Bugs"*** and who can not resist taking a multitude of pictures at weddings, need to check with the celebrant. All must be out of the church by 3:30 pm, since confessions begin at 3:30 pm, followed by Mass at 5:00 pm. Also please remember to remind all in your wedding party that the Church is a house of prayer and a reverent decorum and level of talking needs to be present.

35. **There is to be no dropping of flower petals or throwing of rice or birdseed or blowing of bubbles or dropping of confetti on church premises.** These sometimes cause accidents and are a mess to clean up. Rice is food and to throw it away is an insult to the millions of poor who go to bed hungry each night. If you use Balloons, they are not to be brought into the church building at any time. **Please inform your Florist as to whether your wedding is in the New-Big-Church or in the Old-Small-Church/Chapel.** (on more than one occasion the bride and groom have shown up on the day of their wedding only to discover that the florist had decorated the wrong church/worship-space. **Runners:** at St. John's the runner length of the small-church/chapel is 75 feet and in the big-church it is 65

feet. If you do use one, it is the florist's obligation or your obligation to remove it. Candles are not allowed in or on the pews. Candelabra are not allowed in church. Please be responsible for cleaning up any decorations from your wedding, ribbons, programs etc. Please take all boxes, etc out with you, as we have no custodian. The Old Chapel can seat up to 140 people, tightly! When the temperature outside gets to 80 degrees the wedding will take place in the New Church. At 75 degrees it becomes very difficult for all in the Church especially the elderly and the priest.

36. ✠**\$\$** **The offering for St. John the Baptist Church is \$500.⁰⁰.** (This includes the fee for Wedding Coordinators, Natural Family Planning Fees and the cost of the Bible the parish will present to you.) We tentatively reserve the church for your wedding when you speak to the priest at your first meeting. The donation for the church needs to be paid within 30 days of this meeting, otherwise your reservation for the day and time of the wedding in the church will be forfeited, and if someone else comes looking for that date, it will be given away to that couple. The offering goes to the upkeep of the church building. *(If you, as a couple, are experiencing financial difficulty, please speak to the priest or deacon who is helping you to prepare for your wedding. No one will be denied the blessing of the celebration of their love sacramentally because of economic hardship. If you have been blessed by God and you wish to donate more to St. John's Parish you are welcome to do so and it would be greatly appreciated.)* The priest/deacon of our Parish receive nothing from your offering to the church.*For those wishing to marry in St. John's church but who have never been affiliated with the parish at all, and are practicing Catholics, attending Mass every Sunday, the same pre-marriage preparations are required. You need to meet with one of the priests here at St. John's and you will be asked to have your home pastor help you with the paperwork, write a letter stating that you go to church every Sunday and that he gives permission for you to marry at St. John's,the offering for out-of-parish-weddings is \$750.⁰⁰.*
37. ✠ If you have **outside clergy** preside at your wedding it is up to you to provide him with his due stipend, at least **\$150.00**. If he is traveling from a long distance it is important to be aware of the time-expense he will be incurring to come serve you. **Any outside priest coming to celebrate your wedding must be given delegation by the pastor/ associate pastor of St. John the Baptist Church.** If you wish to have a priest from another parish do your wedding you need to have him call and confirm with the pastor of St. John's that he will be celebrating your wedding in order to reserve the church building.
38. 😊 If you wish to thank the parish priest/deacon here at St. John the Baptist Parish who has given you his time to help you prepare for the celebration of your wedding, a monetary gift is suggested and welcomed.



Above all, when planning any aspect of the wedding ceremony, one must remember that Catholics regard marriage as a Sacrament.

The Wedding Liturgy is a liturgical celebration, a gathering of the People of God joining together to offer praise and thanksgiving to the Father, through the Son, and in union with the Holy Spirit.

May God bless you as you spiritually prepare for the celebration of your Sacrament of Love.

Remember: Things to do right away are to;

- 1. Call or write immediately for a recent copy of your baptismal certificates and confirmation certificates *(and if baptized outside of the United States your baptism certificate will be needed to reserve the church)*.**
- 2. The donation to the Church should be given within 30 days of meeting with your priest and reserving the use of the church, otherwise the wedding date may be forfeited to another couple who are seeking to be married.**
- 3. Call this week and immediately enroll in an Engaged Encounter Weekend, 630-375-7072.**
- 4. Call this week and immediately enroll in your Natural Family Planning Class: Jean Daniell at 630-653-5681.**
- 5. Call Mrs. Adrienne Rose 🎵🎵 at 630-653-1489, to set an appointment to begin planning the music for your wedding.**
- 6. Make sure that all needed paperwork is submitted that deals with former marriages. No wedding date may be set until Formal Church Annulments are granted.**



We look forward to seeing you

