

Congratulations!!!

Dear Friends,

We at St. Bernadette Parish welcome the opportunity to be involved with the celebration of your marriage. We want to do all that we can to insure that the preparation and the ceremony itself will help to reinforce the ongoing living out of your loving commitment to one another. We consider ourselves privileged to be a part of this very holy and happy time for you. We believe that the Lord Jesus, who graced the wedding at Cana with the very first of His miracles, is eager to help you with your determination to love each other well, to be always “best friends” ahead of anyone else, and to do this in good times and bad—for now and forever.

All of our wedding preparation and traditions here at St. Bernadette Parish are intended to enhance the sacred and joyful nature of the celebration of marriage according to Catholic belief and practice. We ask that you give time to careful preparation through the reading of this packet, discussion with the pastoral staff, and letting us know about any questions and concerns that you may have.

Please devote the days ahead not merely to the arrangement for a ceremony, but to sincere prayer and thoughtful reflection about the wondrous thing you are doing; your life-giving commitment to each other! And we will join our prayers to yours, that God may strengthen your love for each other, and that all of us may be blessed by the witnessing of your love.

Sincerely,

The Parish Staff

GENERAL INFORMATION

A wedding is a time for you to commit yourselves to a life together. It reflects the hope and excitement you feel for each other. It is a very personal occasion. But, while you will make many of the final decisions, remember that family, friends and professionals can offer helpful advice.

Some families have particular traditions that have been carried on from generation to generation, involving the whole family. Others simply expect correct etiquette and formality to be followed without question, but sometimes it may be wise to take into consideration local customs and parent's desires.

There is a tendency when planning a wedding to get caught up in all the extraneous details. But more important than how the church or the wedding party looks is how meaningful the ceremony is. Take time to focus on the meaning and sacredness of marriage; then concentrate on making your ceremony a reflection of that. St. Bernadette has its own rules and guidelines, so hopefully the following will be helpful to you as you are making decisions regarding your marriage preparation and wedding ceremony. These will be discussed with you in greater detail with our Parish Staff.

CHURCH WEDDING COORDINATOR

A good wedding coordinator is invaluable: she saves the couple from unneeded apprehension; she saves the priest or deacon from excess time; and she very often saves everyone from a large degree of confusion. She is aware of the parish's policies concerning the use of candles, appropriate music, photography, and even any clean up that is expected. The parish wedding coordinator is also familiar with possible options for your ceremony and any liturgical or parish limitations. She will be acquainted with the sound system, know which rooms are the dressing rooms, and be able to show you the parish's wedding provisions, such as flower standards and kneelers. She is a wealth of information!!! She will be able to provide lists of rehearsal dinner sites, caterers, photographers, florists, printers, etc. She'll know the quality you can expect because she will have had previous experience with each of them. Not only can a parish wedding coordinator offer you resource lists, she can also provide the rules for proper wedding etiquette. When you initially meet with her, she will most likely bring to mind decisions that you weren't aware you'd have to make. We have two wedding coordinators: Roberta Alley 206-246-1678 and Julie Johnsen 206-246-2275. Please contact your assigned coordinator within a month after your initial meeting with the Parish Administrator.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION CLASSES

According to Archdiocesan guidelines, you are required to participate in a marriage preparation program. The Archdiocese sponsors a weekend experience called Engaged Encounter. Please see the enclosed brochure for further information.

CHURCH DECORATIONS

Our parish tries to be as cooperative as we can in this area. Our guidelines include the following:

1. **Church Decorations**: You will need to work with the decorations already in the Church for that particular liturgical season. All wedding decorations must be removed immediately following the ceremony, unless you would like to donate the flowers to the Church. We would welcome them and use them well. All other rooms that you have used must also be cleared. Please appoint someone in your wedding party to be in charge of this so you won't have to worry about it!!
2. **Flowers**: You should make plans for your floral arrangement with the florist of your choice. We recommend that you keep them simple for the greatest effect. The parish has two standards for flowers and several vases. Please ask the wedding coordinator about these.
3. **Aisle Runner**: Our beautiful carpet in the church provides a noticeable contrast with a bride's train, making it more visible. Thus, we suggest not using an aisle runner. It can also be a safety concern if it becomes wrinkled. Please be careful if you use one. (The parish does not provide this)
4. **Candles**: Please use drip less candles as this protects our carpet and floors and gives a much nicer appearance. If you wish to use candelabras, you must provide your own.
5. **Attachments**: Please do not use nails, tacks, rough clamps, wires or tape with your decorations. If you wish pew bows, please attach them with special plastic clips or clamps.
6. **How many pews?** Our parish church has 32 large pews, with 16 on each side. There are also 4 pews to the side of the altar. The aisle is approximately 60 feet from the vestibule to the bottom step leading to the sanctuary, and it is approximately 4 feet wide.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Posed pictures are permitted before and/or after your ceremony, as long as you do not overlap with another ceremony or liturgical celebration. The photographer should be finished one-half hour before the ceremony begins to allow seating of guests. Please remember this is a church and that the Blessed Sacrament is present. We ask you, therefore, to maintain the dignity of the setting. Pictures are allowed during the ceremony as long as the photographer is unobtrusive. **No flashes** are allowed during the ceremony because of the distraction it creates. *Also, no soft drinks, alcohol or food is allowed in the church at any time, including during the taking of pictures or in the process of decorating.*

Videotaping is allowed and is a wonderful way to remember your wedding day for years to come. However, since additional flood lighting creates a studio setting and destroys the sacred character of the ceremony, we ask that all videotaping be done without additional lighting. We highly recommend that the person in charge of videotaping comes to the rehearsal. Out of reverence no video cameras are allowed in the sanctuary area. Please talk to the wedding coordinator for other suggestions and guidelines.

LET'S CELEBRATE!!!

Your family and friends will want to celebrate with you as you leave the church and at the reception. The throwing of rice, confetti, or birdseed as part of the festivities is not permitted. Not only is it difficult to clean up, it is also a safety hazard, especially for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Guests have been known to slip and fall on the rice and seed. As an alternative, we suggest the use of bubbles. (You might also check with your reception site as they too, might have the same restriction.)

Our parish also has hall space available for use for receptions. Please contact the Parish Office for further rental information.

WEDDING PARTY

If you have a flower girl or ring bearer, please have them no younger than 5 years of age. Children are indeed wonderful people, but those younger than five are simply incapable of the disciplined behavior required by such a ceremony, and it is unfair of us to expect them to be. Any exceptions need to be discussed with wedding coordinator and/or presider.

It is suggested that you have one usher for every 50 guests for the smooth seating of your guests. An extra usher is advised to remain in the back of the church for late arrivals and to watch over the gifts during the ceremony.

GUEST PRIESTS OR DEACONS

We welcome guest celebrants, especially when they are a relative or friend of the wedding couple. If an out-of-parish priest or deacon is presiding at your wedding ceremony, he must contact the pastor of our parish for delegation prior to the wedding. If the person resides outside of the Archdiocese, he must first receive permission from the Archdiocese. Appropriate forms need to be signed and returned as soon as possible. ***Our wedding coordinator is still to be used and our wedding guidelines are to be followed.***

MARRIAGE LICENSE

A marriage license is available--**cash only**--from the fourth floor of the King County Administration Building. Both parties need to be present to apply for a license and no blood tests or birth certificates are required. In King County, a marriage license is valid for 60 days. Be sure to plan this important trip downtown with these facts in mind. The Courthouse hours are 8:30-4:30 Monday through Friday. We will also accept a license from any other county in the state of Washington. ***YOU NEED TO TURN IN THE LICENSE TO OUR PARISH OFFICE WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF THE WEDDING TO ALLOW US TIME TO COMPLETE THE PAPERWORK!***

REHEARSAL

This is usually the night before the wedding ceremony and will also be attended by the parish Wedding Coordinator. Please call the Wedding Coordinator to schedule the starting time (once set, the starting time must be strictly kept as we may have other appointments to keep later). **Please....do not schedule a dinner or special gathering after the rehearsal until you have finalized the rehearsal time with the Wedding Coordinator!!!** You should pick a time that is convenient for all the members of your wedding party; they should be told that they must be present and ready to begin on time. Also, please be sure to give directions to any who may not be familiar with the location of the Church.

PRINTED INVITATIONS

The address for St. Bernadette Church as shown in the phone book, causes confusion, as this is the location of the Parish Office. To help guests locate the Church, it would be better if your invitations read: SW 128th and Ambaum Blvd. SW or 1028 SW 128th Street. We have included a map to the church in this marriage packet. You are welcome to copy it and include it in with your invitations.

DRESSING ROOMS

The Wedding Coordinator will direct the Wedding Party to the appropriate dressing areas. We suggest that you do not leave any items of value there for security reasons.

WEDDING FEES

Couples will be asked to pay a wedding fee of \$500.00 (see enclosed wedding fee invoice) to help cover the costs to provide the best marriage preparation and wedding environment possible.

This fee does not include the music that you choose for the wedding. Musicians must be contacted separately.

WEDDING AGREEMENT

All couples getting married at St. Bernadette are required to review the Wedding Agreement. This will insure that there will be a mutual understanding of the parish and couple's expectations of marriage and wedding preparations and policies. It will also help in your arrangements with florists and photographers.

MUSIC

Matrimony is a sacrament celebrated within a wedding liturgy. Because weddings are a part of the liturgical prayer of the whole Church and not merely a private ceremony of the couple and families, music must be selected for weddings using the same criteria as for any other liturgy.

Music in Catholic Worship (US Bishops' Committee on Liturgy, 1972) provides three standards by which music for any liturgy must be judged:

- a) The Musical Judgment: Are the music and text good quality?
- b) The Liturgical Judgment: Does the piece fit into the direction of the rite itself? Would the piece be appropriate for a Sunday Eucharist with scriptural readings on the subject of married love?
- c) The Pastoral Judgment: Does the music express the faith of the couple and the Catholic community? Is the music prayerful?

Two examples might be helpful in observing the three criteria. Set Her As A Seal, a song by Ted Marier, often used at weddings here, includes the text, "May you be a sign of life in Christ and a witness to his Word; a pledge of the Covenant of Peace, and of union with the Lord..." This selection illustrates a belief that Christ is at the heart of a Christian marriage. The songs Evergreen and Endless Love are not appropriate. They are beautiful love songs, but have no expression of faith or prayer. Because of this, they, and songs like them, are best suited to the wedding reception or while guests are being seated. **We strongly recommend that you use our parish organist/pianist, Roger Berger 206-650-7647.**

LITURGY PLANNING

You have a responsibility as couple to participate in the planning of your wedding liturgy with the presider and Wedding Coordinator. Your main task is to select the Scripture readings that you would like to use in the liturgy. Please refer to the book, Scripture at Weddings, for possible selections. The Together For Life book is also an excellent resource for planning your wedding liturgy. The priest, deacon or the Wedding Coordinator will also assist you in planning other aspects of the liturgy, from choosing the kind of procession you would like, to what if any special cultural traditions that you would like to incorporate into the liturgy. One of our primary tasks as staff is to help you as couple understand the significance of the various symbols and actions that you choose. For example, even though in the past it has been tradition to have the bride escorted down the aisle by her father, our Catholic wedding ceremony tries to proclaim the truths we affirm about the equality of man and woman, and the importance of the families of both the bride and the groom. Thus, we suggest that both sets of parents participate in the wedding procession. Planning your wedding liturgy is a very important, if not central element of your overall wedding planning.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Planning the shape and details for your wedding is an opportunity to express, as two adults, your persons, your relationship, your hopes and needs before God and a community of believers who gather with you to celebrate this most important moment in your life. This is the time to express your faith and the depth of your love for each other before God and this people. It is no time to be superficial or showy; here you want to be most sincere and honest in what you say and do. You want to plan well so you will mean everything you say and say everything that has meaning for you.

The careful selection of the prayers and readings should articulate what is sincere hope and sound faith to which the people around you can say “Amen.” Your priest, deacon or other parish staff members would be happy to work with you to make available materials for these selections. Since the religious ceremony is a faith event, this will demand some sharing on both your parts, and a willingness to work with those who will help in the planning. What you believe, what you hope and pray for, is what you will celebrate on your wedding day.