

## Wedding Policy for Saint Margaret Catholic Church Lake Charles, Louisiana

### APP. DOC. # 1.4A

Great care is taken to see that the prayer for this special moment is reverent, graceful, beautiful, and open to the movement of God's Spirit among us. In this spirit, Saint Margaret Catholic Church provides the following policy for celebrating weddings in our church. This policy must be followed in order to preserve the dignity and beauty of your wedding.

1. Respect for the Church and its facilities and grounds must be shown at all times.
2. Smoking is **NOT PERMITTED** anywhere in the Church, the sacristy, bride's dressing room, and surrounding areas.
3. ***Drinking is absolutely forbidden*** anywhere on the Church grounds. NO alcoholic beverages of any kind – wine, beer, etc., may be brought on the Church grounds, in the Church, the bride's dressing room, the sacristy, or gathering space for the groomsmen.
4. ***No food may be brought into the Church, the bride's dressing room, the sacristy, or the place of gathering for the groomsmen. Likewise, gum chewing is not permitted in the Church.***
5. For safety reasons, no rice, birdseed, confetti, or other materials may be thrown on the Church grounds following the wedding. Likewise, no flower petals (real, silk, or paper) may be thrown in the Church or on the Church grounds. This is for insurance purposes, as well as, for safety reasons.
6. ***Limited space is available in the bride's dressing room. Therefore, it is recommended that only the bride dress at the Church.*** All other members of the wedding party should come properly attired for the wedding.
7. All personal belongings must be removed from the Church facilities **IMMEDIATELY** following the wedding. The Parish cannot be responsible for articles left unattended.
8. **NOTHING** may be moved in the Church, sacristy, bride's dressing room, or any other facility of the Church without the explicit permission of the Pastor or one of his Associates. This is to include furnishings, plants, flowers, and liturgical decor. Photographers and video tapers are not to move anything, even though things may interfere with photographs.

### OUT OF PARISH WEDDINGS

Couples from other parishes may celebrate their wedding at Saint Margaret Catholic Church. However, since the parishioners of Saint Margaret provide the financial support, maintain the Church, and pay for all the expenses of its operation, including utilities and up-keep, and since weddings of persons from outside the parish incur expenses beyond the normal parish use of the facilities, ***a fee of \$900 is required of non-parishioners*** desiring to have their wedding celebrated at Saint Margaret Catholic Church.

### THE CELEBRANT OF THE WEDDING

Ordinarily, one of the priests of the Parish staff will preside at weddings celebrated in the Parish. On occasion, a couple may have a priest friend or priest relative they wish to invite to preside at the wedding or to assist at the wedding. In this case, the couple should mention this to the priest early in the process. When the couple is of different faiths (i.e. Catholic-Methodist), the minister of the non-Catholic party is invited to participate in the celebration. The priest should be notified of this so that he may include the minister in the celebration. Visiting priests will be asked to observe Church law and Parish policy and customs regarding the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage.

### SIZE OF WEDDING PARTY

Weddings are a celebration of God's love found in the lives of two people which is solemnized in liturgical prayer. Only two adult witnesses are necessary, however, to preserve the reverence and dignity of the celebration, ***no more than six (6) couples are allowed in the wedding party. This includes maid/matron of honor, best man, junior bridesmaids, and miniature bride and groom.***

Ring bearers and flower girls are not ministers, nor are their services required for the celebration of marriage. Couples will be asked to consider the age of children involved in these roles and whether their presence will add to or detract from the joyful solemnity of the celebration. ***If couples choose to use ring bearers and flower girls, it is the policy of this Parish that these youngsters be a least FIVE (5) years of age.***

### UNITY CANDLE

The Unity Candle is a commercial product of which no mention is made in the liturgical documents of the Roman Catholic Church. This is an example of a gimmick. It has no real history or tradition behind it. For this reason, ***we do not include the unity candle in weddings celebrated in our Parish.*** We do encourage you to prepare carefully the many signs and symbols of unity already available in the Rite of Marriage, the exchange of vows being the most important.

### REHEARSALS

***Rehearsals are conducted by the priest-celebrant or wedding coordinators from our parish.*** If you have a wedding planner that person is most welcome to assist the bride on the day of the wedding in the bride's room. Because they are familiar with the policy and procedures at St. Margaret, all other responsibilities will be taken care of by our parish coordinators.

***Rehearsals must begin on time*** since there are often other services or wedding rehearsals to take place in a single evening. It must be remembered that rehearsals are conducted in the Church; therefore, shorts, cutoffs, etc., are not considered to be appropriate attire for the occasion. ***Wedding party members should not come to the rehearsal drinking or chewing gum in the Church.***

### CHURCH DECOR

During certain liturgical seasons of the Church year, such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, particular decor is used in the Church. The colors used by the Church should be considered when planning weddings, as these colors and decor CANNOT be removed or changed for the seasons.

### LITURGICAL MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

1. A Roman Catholic marriage is sacramental, not just legal; sacred rather than merely secular; public, as well as personal. It is therefore of utmost importance when you are planning this significant event in your lives that the focus of the preparation is to help those in attendance to pray; the primary purpose of music in any liturgical celebration.
2. You are welcome to have an organist of your choice at your wedding. St. Margaret Catholic Church does have a number of organists who can serve at your wedding. These organists are most familiar with our organ. Financial arrangements for an organist's services are between the bride and the organist. Payment is usually expected ten (10) days before the wedding.

3. Before planning any of the music for your wedding, you must arrange an appointment with the organist to discuss the liturgical suitability of all music, vocal and/or instrumental, to be used for your wedding. Please keep in mind that the rules of liturgical music and good liturgy for Sunday worship shall not be comprised for weddings. If you are unsure of these principles, the organist will be happy to discuss these with you.
4. Love songs from Broadway plays, secular rock, country and western ballads, or “pop” music of any kind, are not permitted during your wedding liturgy. For our Parish, the wedding liturgy begins with the seating of the mothers. These kinds of pieces have texts which do not conform to the principles of liturgical suitability in sacramental celebrations and should be reserved for the wedding reception.
5. When a cantor or soloist is present, it is recommended and encouraged that the Response to the Reading (Responsorial Psalm) and the Alleluia (Gospel Acclamation during Lent) be sung during the Liturgy of the Word. Selection of the text for the Responsorial Psalm must be restricted to musical settings from the Book of Psalms or other Canticles as required in the liturgical documents. Other parts of the Mass (Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, Agnus Dei) may be sung as well. Vocal or instrumental selections may be performed during the Mass at the Presentation of Gifts (Offertory) and at Communion. However, the Lord’s Prayer is a part of the liturgy that is expressly intended to be a prayer of the entire community, and a solo rendition of this prayer at its proper place in liturgy is not permitted.
6. A listing of appropriate wedding music is available to help you and your organist prepare for your wedding.
7. Vocalists and instrumentalists may enhance your wedding celebration. Arrangements with these individuals are between the bride, groom and these people. They are expected to follow the principles of liturgical sacred music as outlined above.

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***The Wedding Policy of Saint Margaret Catholic Church has been carefully read and understood, and we, the undersigned bride and groom, by our signature, agree to follow the policy as stated.***

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Bride’s Signature

Date

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Groom’s Signature

Date

Policy Revised: July 2009

**FLORISTS AND CHURCH DECORATIONS  
as they pertain to WEDDINGS**

APP. DOC. # 1.5A

1. Flowers, plants and trees, genuine, of course, are particularly apt for the decoration of liturgical space (the church and sanctuary) since they are of nature, always discreet in their message, never cheap or ill-made. (From the document Environment & Art in Catholic Worship.)
2. Floral decorations should never impede the approach to or the encircling of the altar nor obstruct any of the ritual movement and action. However, there are places in most liturgical spaces where it is appropriate to place floral decoration. The priests of the Parish Staff will advise you in this matter.
3. ***The Church is available one hour before the time of the Wedding for pictures and decor, with the exception of Saturday evening weddings.*** Wedding and floral decorations for Saturday afternoon weddings must be cleared away following the wedding so that they do not interfere with the Saturday afternoon Masses. ***Wedding and floral decorations for Saturday evening weddings may not be set up until after the Saturday, 6:00 p.m. Mass, and must be removed immediately after the wedding.***
4. We *WELCOME* any floral arrangements you may wish to leave in church after the celebration of the wedding, but we also respect your plans to bring these arrangements to your reception hall. During certain liturgical seasons the church uses no flowers (Advent and Lent) and thus, we ask you to remove these floral and wedding decorations.
5. ***DO NOT*** use tape to attach flowers or bows to the ends of pews. Please tie these decorations to the pews or use some type of holder. Tape removes the varnish from the surface of the pews.
6. If aisle candles are used, these **MUST** have glass globes placed over them and they must be securely fastened. The construction of the pews at Saint Margaret often makes it difficult to secure aisle candle holders. ***Only real candles may be used - no electric or battery operated.***
7. If an aisle runner is used, it must be rolled out ***BEFORE*** the wedding and it must be secured to the floor with white floral tape, not scotch tape. This method securing the runner is for the safety of all present, as well as, for insurance purposes.
8. The **FLORIST** is responsible for cleaning the church of boxes, aisle runners, candle holders, pew bows, etc., ***IMMEDIATELY*** after the wedding.
9. The **FLORIST** is responsible for contacting the priests of Saint Margaret to set the time for decorating the church for the wedding.
10. There must be nothing blocking the ends of the pews of the church (such as ribbon streamers, netting that drapes from one pew to the next, etc.) when weddings are celebrated within the context of the Mass. This does not allow for easy access during communion.
11. ***The “Unity Candle” is not a liturgical symbol, and thus will not be a part of weddings celebrated at Saint Margaret.***

This floral and wedding decoration policy must be shown to the florist when making arrangements with them. The florist and bride must abide by all aspects of the policy outlined above. By signing this policy statement, the florist and bride agree to the terms of this document.

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Florist's Signature

Bride's Signature

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE PARISH OFFICE 10 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING.

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING**

APP. DOC. # 1.6A

Photographers are welcomed, however, they must keep in mind that a wedding in the Catholic Church is liturgical worship service and they must be sensitive to the service. Likewise, since most weddings are formal occasions, photographers should dress in a manner befitting the occasion. Open shirt collars and shirt tails hanging out are inappropriate attire for male photographers.

The wedding liturgy is a celebration of a sacred moment. While we understand the desire to record this moment, we ask that the following policy be observed so that the *sacred joy* of this day will not be marred by photographic and video taping equipment and personnel.

1. Photographers and video tapers are not permitted to roam about the church once the liturgy has begun. Photographers and video tapers are not permitted on the sanctuary platform at any time. Video taping should be from a stationary tripod.
2. Every effort should be made to let the wedding guests know that picture taking and filming is limited to professionals hired by the bride and groom.
3. Only the lighting already available in the church may be used. No additional lighting may be brought into the church.
4. After the wedding celebration, the church will remain open for the taking of pictures. However, since other weddings, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or Parish Mass may be scheduled immediately following your wedding, *you must restrict the taking of pictures to 15 minutes*. Please keep in mind that you are still in church and proper respect and consideration must be given to anyone wishing to offer prayers in the church.
5. Photographs may be taken as the bridal party walks down the aisle during the processional and recessional. Pictures may also be taken prior to the wedding, but must be completed at least *20 minutes* prior to the appointed time of the wedding, so that guests may be seating and the wedding can begin on time.
6. Photographers and video tapers are not permitted to move anything in the church, sacristy, bridal dressing room, or any other part of the church, even if objects may interfere with the taking of pictures.

This form is to be read carefully by the bride, groom, and the photographer, and/or video taper. All members of the wedding party, the photographer, and/or video taper must abide by all aspects of the policy outlined above. By signing this policy statement, the involved persons agree to the terms of the document.

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Bride's Signature

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Photographer's Signature

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Groom's Signature

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Video Taper's Signature

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE PARISH OFFICE 10 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING.**