

Attention Couples

Please read over the following policies thoroughly, as our entire process has been revised and some individual policies changed and added.

Policies Revised

12-01-17

Policies in Effect

12-01-17

St. Jude the Apostle Catholic Church
9150 Highland Road
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70810
225.766.2431

Couples Please Read

December 2017

Dear Couples:

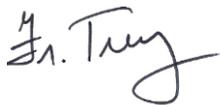
Congratulations on your engagement! Should you choose to request to be married at Saint Jude Church, we would like to do all that we can to help make this experience a true celebration for you and your families.

Attached to this brief letter is a copy of our marriage policies. I would ask that you please take the time to read them thoroughly. These policies exist to enhance the experience of the marriage liturgy. Before moving forward with the final scheduling of your wedding, you will need to read over the enclosed policies, sign the agreement form, and pay a non-refundable deposit. (See page 8 for deposit information.) ***This must be done prior to your first meeting with the priest.***

I would make one suggestion to you at this point: many couples fail to read over these policies and are, at times, caught off guard and surprised by some of the contents contained herein. I cannot stress enough the need for you to read them before meeting with the proposed celebrant of your wedding.

Thank you very much. Congratulations. Please be assured of our prayers for you as you prepare to take this very important step in your lives.

Sincerely yours,



Fr. Trey Nelson
Pastor

St. Jude the Apostle Parish *Marriage Preparation Guidelines and Policies*

The following is an overview of the **Marriage Preparation Guidelines and Policies** for all weddings that take place at St. Jude Church.

For a complete description of all policies, please carefully read all of the contents of the enclosed Policy Packet.

The following are some of the most important policies...

- ✠ Couples may not be married any sooner than 6 months prior to the requested wedding date
- ✠ The date and time of any wedding is tentative until the couple has completed their first session with the priest
- ✠ Couples who are living together must separate and live separately prior to their wedding
- ✠ No children below the age of 5 years old are allowed to stand in the wedding.
- ✠ The maximum number of attendants allowed to stand in the wedding is **14 total**. (This includes adults and children.)
- ✠ Unity candles and aisle runners are not allowed.
- ✠ All couples must use the church Wedding Coordinator for wedding planning. No other coordinators are allowed
- ✠ **No trollies or busses of any type** may be driven across the front plaza
- ✠ Couples are asked to read and sign this agreement and pay a non-refundable deposit prior to their first meeting with the priest. (See page 8 for deposit information.)

All couples are asked to review this agreement, sign it, and turn it in prior to your first session with the priest.

We have read the **Marriage Preparation Guidelines and Policies** and will make the commitment to the required process of preparation and wedding planning according to these policies.

Bride: _____

Groom: _____

Date: _____

Guidelines for Marriage Preparation

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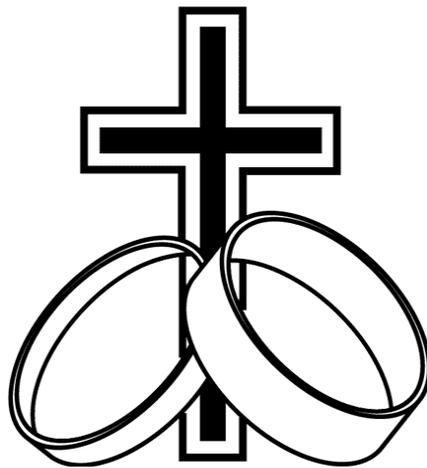
Marriage Preparation Guidelines

for

St. Jude the Apostle Parish

Revised

December 1st, 2017



“Father, through Christ you entered into a new covenant with your people. This outpouring of love in the new covenant of grace is symbolized in the marriage covenant that seals the love of husband and wife and reflects your divine plan of love.”

(Second Preface, The Rite of Marriage During Mass)

These marriage policies are effective
December 1st, 2017.

St. Jude the Apostle Parish Wedding Personnel

Mrs. Peggy Villavaso- initial requests for the scheduling of all weddings is coordinated by Peggy. She is also the liason between a couple, the parish facilities scheduler, music and liturgy director, and the celebrant. Peggy coordinates all documentation associated with any wedding in St. Jude Parish. She can be reached at 225-766-2431.

Mrs. Lori Layman- Lori is our coordinator for music for all weddings. All inquiries regarding music, musicians, and vocalists for any wedding in St. Jude Parish must go to her. Conversations with Lori should take place after the pre-scheduling process has been completed with Peggy. (See above). Lori can be reached at 225-769-2344 or 225-766-2431.

Mrs. Kendall Hebert- Kendall is our parish Wedding Coordinator. As is stated in our marriage guidelines, she is the only coordinator allowed to serve in this role. There is a fee for her services. Her role has basically 3 parts: discussion with the couple prior to the wedding regarding the ceremony itself, conducting the rehearsal, and being present to coordinate the ceremony on the day of the wedding itself. Please do not contact Kendall initially. She will contact you after the pre-scheduling process has been completed with Peggy. (See above).

Fr. Trey Nelson- pastor of St. Jude Parish. At present, Fr. Trey facilitates the process of marriage preparation of couples for whose wedding he will be the celebrant. Please note: Fr. Trey does not conduct marriage preparation if he is not the scheduled celebrant of that wedding, and he does not celebrate weddings outside of St. Jude Parish. He can be reached at 225-766-2431.

Communication with Parish Office

To ensure the most accurate communication regarding any wedding in St. Jude Parish, we ask the following procedures be followed:

1. Please make all initial contact by way of a phone call, not email.
2. The bride or groom must make all inquiries regarding a wedding. No conversations will be had with anyone other than the bride or groom.

St. Jude the Apostle Parish

Wedding Coordinators

St. Jude Parish has 1 wedding coordinator. *Our coordinator is the **only coordinator** allowed to assist with the preparation of the wedding ceremony, to conduct the rehearsal and assist with the ceremony itself.*

Regarding the planning of your wedding ceremony, our coordinator will assist you and contact you initially after you have completed the necessary pre-scheduling paperwork, paid a deposit, and finalized your date with the church.

The fee for the Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator is \$300 (\$150 for the rehearsal and \$150 for the ceremony).

The following is a brief outline of the wedding coordinator's job description:

Review (completely) with each couple the sections of the policy packet pertaining to the ceremony itself.

1. Explain to the couple the prescribed outline of the wedding ceremony itself, whether wedding takes place within or outside of Mass.
2. Assist the couple in the selection of the scripture readings for their wedding.
3. Conduct the wedding rehearsal.
4. Be present to assist with the start of the wedding ceremony.

St. Jude the Apostle Parish

Policies Specific to:
Fr. Trey Nelson, Pastor
and Potential Guest Celebrants for Weddings at St. Jude

Fr. Trey Nelson

Father Trey does not celebrate weddings outside of St. Jude Parish.

GUEST CELEBRANTS

Priests and Deacons currently serving in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are welcome to preside at weddings in St. Jude Parish. They are asked to contact the pastor of St. Jude, either verbally or in writing, to request delegation. Delegation is a requirement and must be requested at the beginning of the marriage preparation process.

Priests and Deacons of a diocese other than Baton Rouge or a religious order must contact the pastor of St. Jude, either verbally or in writing, to request delegation. Delegation is a requirement and must be requested at the beginning of the marriage preparation process.

Also, priests and deacons of a diocese other than Baton Rouge or a religious order must contact the Chancery Office at the Diocese of Baton Rouge to request permission for ministry in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. This is mandatory and must take place at the beginning of the marriage preparation process.

The Preparation, Time, and Place of Weddings

1. MARRIAGE PREPARATION: *Length of Time and Elements Involved:*

- a. The required waiting period prior to the celebration of marriage is 6 months, assuming that no prior bond and the need for an annulment exists. No couple may be married any sooner than 6 months from the day that they approach the priest about being married.
- b. The role of the priest in marriage preparation is to assess the couple's readiness for marriage. If for some good reason the priest (conducting the preparation) discerns that a couple's marriage should be postponed, no other cleric may be allowed to celebrate their marriage without permission of the local Bishop.
- c. There are four elements involved in marriage preparation. The first is the completing of a "prenuptial instrument," in this case, the "P.M.I.," which stands for "Pre-Marriage Inventory," of another appropriate instrument, to be determined by the priest facilitating the marriage preparation. A couple is given the instrument during their first meeting with the priest and asked to take it home with them and complete it as soon as possible. Upon completing the P.M.I. the couple should return it to the church office for processing. Once the results are processed, the priest will then telephone the couple for their next appointment. During that appointment (and usually one more to follow) the priest and couple review the P.M.I. results.
- d. The couple is also asked to schedule and attend one of the pre-marriage weekends available in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. These two weekends are: The Life Choice Weekend and The Engaged Encounter Weekend. A couple is asked to choose one of the two and make arrangements to attend. During the two sessions (in which the P.M.I. is reviewed) the priest and couple will also review and reflect upon the couple's experience of this weekend.
- e. After the review of the P.M.I. results and the pre-marriage weekend are complete, the priest and couple will meet one more time to finalize the plans for the wedding ceremony itself. (At some point between their first meeting and this meeting, the priest will give the couple a wedding ceremony planning guide.) All appointments with the priest are scheduled with Mrs. Peggy Villavaso, Assistant to the Pastor and Marriage Records Keeper.
- f. The overall purpose of the process of marriage preparation is for the priest to assist the couple in discerning as best as possible the meaning of the sacramentality of marriage, to give the couple an opportunity to reflect on the strengths in their relationship, their faith life, and the challenges that they will face in married life, as well as to give the couple and priest a chance to get to know each other better.

- g. So, to review, the average process of marriage preparation is outlined as follows:
 - g.1- Couple makes initial contact with priest at least 6 months prior to wedding
 - g.2- Initial meeting, priest outlines process and gives couple the “P.M.I.”
 - g.3- Couple schedules and attends a Pre-Marriage weekend
 - g.4- Priest sets appointment with couple to review P.M.I. results.
 - g.5- Priest assists couple in planning their wedding ceremony
 - g.6- Usually, in total, this process consists of 4 meetings with the priest
- h. All contact with the priest regarding marriage preparation and the wedding ceremony itself must be made by either the bride or groom.
- i. All marriage preparation must be done by the priest who will actually celebrate the wedding itself.

2. WEDDINGS IN THE DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE: *Time, Day, and Place:*

- a. In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, weddings may not be celebrated on Sundays or holy days of obligation.
- b. In St. Jude Parish, the latest that a wedding can start on Friday evening is 7:00pm. On Fridays only 1 wedding can be scheduled. On Saturday, the latest is 1:00pm. On Saturdays only 1 wedding can be scheduled.
- c. In St. Jude Parish, weddings may not be celebrated during the Season of Lent, specifically, from Ash Wednesday through the weekend following Easter Sunday.
- d. In St. Jude Parish, weddings may not be celebrated during the Seasons of Advent and Christmas, specifically, from the Friday of the first weekend of Advent through the first weekend following January 1st.
- e. No wedding date and time is final until the priest himself has confirmed this with the couple.
- f. In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, no wedding ceremony may take place outside of a church building.
- g. Persons who do not reside in the geographical area of St. Jude Parish but have some tie to the community may celebrate their wedding at St. Jude Church, with the permission of the pastor.

3. REGARDING INTER-FAITH MARRIAGES: *Also known as “Mixed” Marriages:*

In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, “the celebration of a mixed marriage most appropriately takes place at a non-Eucharistic ceremony,” also known as “The Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass.”

4. PRIESTS OR DEACONS NOT FROM ST. JUDE PARISH: A priest or deacon not currently assigned to St. Jude Parish may preside at your wedding. In order to do so, the following are required:

- a. If from within the Diocese of Baton Rouge, he must request (in writing) delegation (permission) from the current pastor of St. Jude Parish. This letter must be sent directly to the pastor by way of regular mail before the wedding can be scheduled.
- b. In recent years the policy and process for visiting priests (from another diocese) have been revised and are very specific. If from outside of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, a priest or deacon must follow these policies. He must contact the Bishop of that diocese and follow the normal process regarding “testimonial of suitability for ministry.” After this has been done, he must request (in writing) delegation (permission) from the current pastor of St. Jude Parish. This letter must be sent directly to the pastor by way of regular mail before the wedding can be scheduled.
- c. *Any priest or deacon who is then scheduled to preside at a wedding (at St. Jude Church) must himself conduct the entire process of marriage preparation with the couple. He is also responsible for sending the completed premarriage preparation file to the church office no later than 1 month prior to the wedding.*

5. THE WEDDING CEREMONY ITSELF: *Planning, Music, Decorations, and Wedding Party:*

- a. All questions regarding the wedding ceremony itself should be directed to our wedding coordinator.
- b. “Wedding Coordinators” other than those supplied by our church parish are not allowed. The planning and the conducting of the wedding rehearsal will be done by the coordinator assigned to your wedding.
- c. All questions regarding music, musicians, particular songs, and so on should be directed to Lori Layman (Coordinator of Wedding Music, 225.769.2344 or 225.766.2431).

- d. The wedding ceremony will begin and conclude with a normal liturgical procession, including cross-bearer, book-bearer, readers, wedding party, and the priest. The specific order of this procession is as follows:
- D.1- Cross Bearer
 - D.2- Readers
 - D.3- Groom and Priest
 - D.4- Wedding Party (two by two)
 - D.5- Bride (and Her Escort)
- e. The wedding rehearsal must be scheduled when the wedding itself is scheduled. Wedding rehearsals may not be scheduled to begin any later than 7:00pm.
- f. During the wedding ceremony, *the following are not allowed*:
- i. unity candle
 - ii. wedding aisle runner
 - iii. No trollies or busses of any type may be driven across the front plaza
 - iv. the throwing of any type of flower petals, rice, or any other similar materials (inside or anywhere on church property)
- g. Children standing in the wedding must be at least 5 years of age. **This is non-negotiable.** They are allowed to walk in procession and, if the couple likes, they may stand in the sanctuary for the opening prayer only. From that point on in the liturgy they are to be seated with an adult other than those adults standing in the wedding party. They may walk out in procession at the end of the ceremony.
- h. Since the unity candle does not have its origin in the Catholic Rite of Marriage, it may not be used during the wedding ceremony.
- i. Readers and gift-bearers at a Wedding Mass must be practicing Catholics.
- j. Readers at a non-Eucharistic wedding ceremony (in other words, no Mass) must also be practicing Catholics.
- k. A couple may invite a friend or family member to assist with the distribution of communion, if that person is currently a eucharistic minister in his or her Catholic parish. For Mass during which the Precious Blood (Cup) will be offered, you will need 3 ministers (other than the celebrant.) For Mass without, you will only need 1.

- L. Couples are asked to pay a wedding/utility fee. These fees are as follows:
 - L.1 For Parishioners the fee is \$300.00.
 - L.2 For Non-Parishioners the fee is \$500.00
 - L.3 At the beginning of the preparation process (and prior to their first meeting with the priest) couples are to pay a non-refundable deposit: (Parishioners- \$200.00, Non-Parishioners, \$300.00)
 - L.4 The remaining balance of the fee must be paid no later than 1 month prior to the wedding itself.

- m. Scheduling for the delivery of flowers to the church and for decorating the church must be coordinated through the church office with Peggy Villavasso (225.766.2431). Couples will be asked early on in the process whether or not they will leave their floral arrangements in church after their wedding for use during weekend Masses.

- n. Photographers and Videographers are not allowed at all in the sanctuary area of the church. (The sanctuary area is the altar area.) ***It should also be noted that Father Trey does not wear microphones for recording purposes (i.e.- video.)***

- p. **Candles may not be attached to the pews.** An appropriate amount and style of candles may be used in the sanctuary (altar) area, however, the style and type must be approved through the church office. The candles must be drip-less and enclosed in glass protective globes.

- q. Church decorations already in place at the time of the wedding ceremony may not be altered.

- r. Wedding photographers or videographers are not allowed to assist with the coordinating of the wedding itself. They should remain within their role of photographer. This has been known to cause confusion. Please make this clear to your photographer(s). ***Our church has an Audio-Video Room—no one is allowed in this room for any reason.***

- s. The maximum number of attendants allowed to stand in a wedding is 14 total (this means, 7 and 7, including adults and children.) As a reminder, children must be 5 years of age or older at the time of the wedding in order to participate in the wedding.

- 6. FLOWERS:** No flowers are to be placed on the altar (table). No floral arrangement should obstruct the view of the altar or interfere with the ceremony. The pulpit (ambo) and the readers should be clearly visible from all parts of the congregation out of respect for the Liturgy of the Word. If there is any question about placement of flowers, please consult the wedding coordinator no later than 2 weeks prior to the wedding.

- 7. THE CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE:** The civil marriage license (obtained from the Clerk of Court Office) must be delivered to the parish office no later than Tuesday of the week of the wedding, as the wedding scheduler must complete certain information on the license.