



Wedding FAQs for Brides and Grooms

Bridal Party

What are the guidelines for Bridal gown and Bridal party dresses?

Please remember that your wedding is a sacred and public act of worship, taking place in a consecrated place of divine worship. Please understand that, because your wedding is a public act of worship, no exceptions to this policy are possible.

All of your wardrobe selections should reflect the modesty appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy. Dresses should be modest and not low-cut.

What about personal flowers, corsages, and boutonnieres?

The wedding party is responsible for making all arrangements for personal flowers, corsages, boutonnieres to be worn or carried by anyone in the wedding. These flowers must be brought to the church by the wedding party, or delivered to the church by your florist not less than 1 hour before the wedding. If the florist delivers the flowers, they must be left in the vestibule (lobby) inside the doors facing Marconi Avenue. The flowers must be in a cardboard disposable box that will be thrown away after the wedding. Flowers should be labeled with the name of the person designated to wear or carry them, and the florist should be asked to include two white pins with each corsage and two black pins with each boutonniere. Please note: florists should stay to assist with pinning corsages onto family members and groomsmen. The Wedding Coordinator is not responsible for pinning flowers. If the flowers are delivered in vases, it is your responsibility to remove the vases immediately after the wedding.

How many attendants may be in the wedding?

The church sanctuary can accommodate up to eight bridesmaids and their accompanying groomsmen. Larger wedding parties will be required to sit in the church pews.

What is the seating arrangement for the Bridal party?

Usually the Bride and Groom kneel in the center of the sanctuary. On either side is a kneeler for the maid (or matron) of honor and the best man. If desired, chairs can be available for these four individuals to be seated.

The remainder of the bridal party will be seated in chairs in front of the first row of pews.

Where is the Bride's Room?

There is no Bride's Room at St. Ambrose. Bride and Maids will congregate in the north corner of the church vestibule. This area will be sectioned off from the rest of the vestibule for privacy.

What about food, drink, alcohol, etc.?

No food or drink is permitted in the church before, during or after the rehearsal or wedding. Smoking and the use of chewing gum are also prohibited on the campus of St. Ambrose at all times.

The wedding party is expected to refrain from using any alcoholic beverages before both the rehearsal and the wedding. The priest or deacon celebrating the wedding reserves the right to remove from church anyone under the influence of alcohol. Please remind everyone in the wedding party to preserve the sacred character of this event by not abusing alcohol.

Church Décor

What about Church flowers?

St. Ambrose welcomes flowers for the sanctuary of the church. The flower arrangements should be designed according to the needs of the sacred liturgy, and they will remain in church after the wedding.

No flowers or greenery are permitted in the windows or aisles of the church, and no flowers or flower petals may be dropped inside or outside the church before, during, or after the rehearsal or wedding. No decorations are permitted outside the church, including on the railings of stairs.

Pew markers for reserved pews are provided by St. Ambrose. Aisle runners, rice, birdseed, bubbles, and balloons are not permitted either inside or outside the church at any time.

Please remove all items left in pews and the back of church, including programs and pew decorations, immediately following the wedding.

What is the capacity of the Church?

The church aisle is about 85 feet long. There are 25 pews on each side. Seating capacity is about 450.

What provisions are available for disabled guests?

There is a ramp on the south side of the building, accessible from the parking lot. Please inform your Wedding Coordinator of guests with special needs.

The Sacred Liturgy

Who plans the wedding liturgy?

Weddings are public liturgical actions of the Church, and the celebration of weddings is governed by liturgical law. No variations from the basic form of the wedding liturgy is permitted.

Within the basic form, there exists the option to select Scripture readings. These decisions are made using the Scriptures appropriate for weddings, and in consultation with the priest or deacon who is celebrating your wedding. Your Wedding Coordinator will provide you with a Liturgy Planning sheet which must be returned, completed, to your Wedding Coordinator no later than 2 weeks prior to your rehearsal.

For your wedding, you will choose one Old Testament reading, one New Testament reading, one Gospel reading, and five petitions for the Prayers of the Faithful. To assist you in choosing the readings and petitions, we have placed document links on our website under the heading “Your Wedding Mass/Ceremony.” Please take the time to preview these readings before meeting with the priest or deacon celebrating your wedding:

<https://www.stambroseonthehill.com/wedding-planning-guidelines/>

What about candles and liturgical furnishings?

The furnishings for the sacred liturgy are provided by the church; this includes all vestments, books, candles and candlesticks, kneelers, chairs, and other elements as needed. We cannot use family heirlooms in the celebration of the sacred liturgy.

Candles are a symbol of the Lord Jesus and the Baptized’s participation in Him. The “Unity Candle” is not a part of the Catholic wedding liturgy and it may not be used at St. Ambrose. Likewise, “Unity Sand” is prohibited. The exchange of rings is the symbol of committed love and fidelity to one another.

What about a visiting Priest or Deacon?

Only the pastor of St. Ambrose can grant permission (canonical delegation) for a visiting priest or deacon to preside at a wedding in this parish. If the visiting priest or deacon is from outside the Archdiocese of St. Louis, he will need to present a Letter of Good Standing from his Ordinary or Superior before permission will be granted.

If you desire to invite non-Catholic clergy to participate in the wedding liturgy, you must submit a written request to the pastor of St. Ambrose at least 60 days before the wedding date. This letter must include the name, title, address, phone number, and email address of the clergy person. Please note: non-Catholic clergy are permitted to participate in a Catholic wedding by their presence in the sanctuary, but they cannot preside at the liturgy. This means, among other things, that the Catholic priest or deacon must receive the wedding vows and impart the nuptial blessing.

Who may lector at our wedding?

The texts of Sacred Scripture are proclaimed from the ambo, and the person who performs this function is called a lector. Most couples choose one or two persons from among their families and friends to fulfill this role. Those whom you select should be good public speakers and must be at the rehearsal to practice the proclamation in the church.

Who plans the music?

Darren Modde (darren@stambroseonthehill.com) is the Music Director at St. Ambrose. Because the wedding is a public liturgical action of the Church, only sacred music is permitted at weddings. Under the supervision of the pastor, Darren will make all decisions about music allowed at St. Ambrose.

You are encouraged to visit Darren's website at www.moddemusic.com where you will find several helpful resources to start helping you plan wedding music. You will find templates outlining where music is used, a repertoire list of common selections as well as a sample page of several recordings.

If you choose to invite outside vocalists or instrumentalists, they will need to meet with Darren to discuss music choices and the sound-board and microphone set up in St. Ambrose. There is a \$100 consultation fee for Darren's time and effort for this.

What about programs?

The bridal party is responsible for the design and printing of the wedding program, but the content of your program is determined by whether or not the wedding takes place within the celebration of Mass.

Order of the Sacred Liturgy for the Sacrament of Matrimony

Procession

Introductory Rites (including *Gloria*)

The Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading

Responsorial Psalm

New Testament Reading

Gospel

The Celebration of Matrimony

Questions before the Consent

The Consent (wedding vows)

Reception of the Consent by the Priest or Deacon

Blessing and giving of rings

The Prayer of the Faithful

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Nuptial Blessing (after the *Our Father*)

Reception of Holy Communion
[Presentation to the Blessed Virgin Mary]
Recessional

Photography/Videography

Your photographer or videographer must speak with your Wedding Coordinator to ensure clarity regarding St. Ambrose's policies. Before the wedding, photographs or videos may be taken outside the church but not inside.

Photographers and videographers are not permitted to enter the sanctuary. Flashes and camera lights may be used, but not during the Consecration of the Eucharist. Videographers must remain stationary during the ceremony.

After the wedding, the photographer or videographer may gather the entire wedding party in front of the sanctuary gates for pictures or outside the front doors of the Church. The only photographs permitted inside the sanctuary gates are these: Wedding Couple, Wedding Couple and their parents, and Wedding Couple and their grandparents.

All photos and videos must be completed within 30 minutes of the end of the wedding. The photographer may arrive at the church one hour before the wedding, but no earlier. If a video is to be made, no microphone for the video will be worn by the priest or deacon who is presiding.

Required Documents

1. The Baptismal certificate for the Bride and Groom (if Baptized) that has an issue date no older than six months before the wedding. This document must have the Church seal. Contact the parish where you were baptized and ask for a certificate of Baptism for your upcoming marriage. (In the Archdiocese of St. Louis, if the parish where you were baptized has closed, contact the Archdiocesan Archives at (314) 792-7020).
2. If Catholic, a certificate of Confirmation. Please note that this should be listed on your recently issued Baptism certificate.
3. A copy of the Completion Certificate for your Marriage Preparation course.
4. A copy of the Completion Certificate for your Introduction to Natural Family Planning class.
5. Marriage License. Please note: the Marriage License should be presented to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal. The Wedding Coordinator will complete the form, except for the signatures of the priest or deacon and the witnesses, which are added after the wedding. No wedding is permitted at St. Ambrose without this document. Licenses may be obtained from any City License Office, but by law no earlier than 30 days before the wedding.