

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

A Christian marriage is a sacrament – a sign of God's active involvement in the life of a couple as well as a sign of their openness to God in their lives. When a man and woman marry, they enter into a process of growth, discovery and learning together, believing that the love, which animates Jesus, lives in them also.

The love between a husband and wife is a sign of the love of God made visible, a sacrament. Just as Jesus is made visible and tangible through the bread of the Eucharist, so too the life of the couple and their mutual love make God visible to those with whom they interact daily.

Your wedding day is your day, but it is not yours exclusively. On that day you make a solemn life-long promise, a covenant with each other and with God, witnessed by your friends and relatives.

This booklet is offered to help you plan your celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony in light of the Church's understanding of marriage and the Catholic traditions, which flow from it. It provides details, which will not only make the ceremony flow smoothly, but also enhance the sacred meaning of the event.

May you find true joy as husband and wife, not only on your wedding day but all the days of your life.

Monsignor Ronald J. Swett
Pastor
833-2218 Ext. 112

WEDDING COORDINATOR

The services of a Wedding Coordinator are required at St. Philip's. She will help you with your wedding plans, answer all questions concerning the wedding, and be present for the rehearsal and the wedding to assist the priest and help the wedding proceed on time and in the proper manner.

The Wedding Coordinator should be contacted within two weeks after meeting with the priest.

Wedding Coordinator: Carolyn Duran, 833-2404 or 205-7231
Assistant Coordinator: Rosie Culver

MARRIAGE AND REHEARSAL TIMES

The usual day for marriages is Saturday, although another day of the week may be chosen as long as it does not interfere with scheduled church activities. Marriages are not permitted on Sunday.

The times for marriages on Saturday are:

11:00 a.m.

2:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Rehearsals are usually held on the Friday evening before the wedding, although another time earlier in the week may be scheduled. Please contact the Wedding Coordinator to arrange your rehearsal time.

In keeping with the penitential spirit of the season, marriages are not held at St. Philip's during the six weeks of Lent.

NECESSARY DOCUMENTS

Baptismal Certificate – A certificate of baptism must be submitted for each baptized party. For Catholics, the certificate must be dated within the past six months.

First Communion and Confirmation Certificates – Though not required, it is recommended that each Catholic present the dates and places where First Communion and Confirmation were received. For any Catholic who has not celebrated these sacraments, the priest will discuss with him or her how these sacraments may be received.

Pre-Nuptial Forms – These permanent records are filled out by the priest as he meets with each couple.

Civil Marriage License – It will be necessary for you to obtain a civil marriage license. This can be done at the County Courthouse here in Bakersfield, or at any County Courthouse in California. California law does not require a civil marriage before a church marriage. The priest officiates for the State of California as well as for the Catholic Church. Once issued, the civil marriage license is valid for ninety (90) days. Therefore, you are encouraged to obtain your license well in advance of the wedding date.

The marriage license, certificate and envelope addressed to the “County Recorder” should be given to the church office to be placed in your marriage file. After the wedding ceremony, the officiating priest and two witnesses will sign the license. The newly married couple will receive the certificate. The priest will mail the license to the County Recorder.

PRE-MARRIAGE PREPARATION

We call our marriage preparation program *Journey into Unity*, a title which indicates that marriage is a process of growing together. In a real sense it is analogous to the spiritual experiences of every Christian as he/she grows in relationship to Christ. Both are a process of ever deepening awareness and openness to what is available.

The average couple will spend several hundred hours planning and arranging for the wedding, a ceremony that usually lasts less than an hour. The hours you will spend in marriage preparation will give you skills and insights to last a lifetime. It is our prayer that this preparation program will give you not only tools and insights but also, a sense of excitement and hope as you begin your lifetime marriage journey.

The St. Philip’s program is tailored to each engaged couple. We do not utilize group meetings. Rather, you will work exclusively with one facilitating couple throughout the entire program. We have designed the program to build trust and rapport between you and the facilitating couple, to create an atmosphere conducive to free discussion. Our program consists of nine meetings, each about 60-90 minutes in length. These meetings are typically held weekly or biweekly.

All couples will be expected, prior to commencing the program, to complete a premarital inventory designed to indicate items of special relevance to you as a couple. We will use the Catholic version of FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding & Study), an instrument developed at Creighton University. Many parishes, both Catholic and Protestant, prefer this inventory because of its reliability and ease of use.

The St. Philip's preparation program consists of nine sessions, each covering a separate topic:

1. Orientation
2. Family of Origin
3. Communication
4. Marriage as a Sacrament
5. Gender Differences and Roles
6. Sexuality and Family Planning
7. Conflict Resolution and Forgiveness
8. Finances
9. Future Family Issues

The first three sessions will provide an opportunity to discuss the primary items indicated by the FOCCUS inventory; to analyze your family of origin's impact on behaviors, attitudes, and expectations; and to assist in developing effective communication strategies for considering issues raised as the program proceeds, thereby encouraging in-depth, honest and open discussion. The remaining sessions will consider specific topics, culminating in a final session to assist with future planning.

It is our goal that couples completing this program will enter marriage with tools essential for building a life-long commitment based on sacramental understanding and proven marital behaviors.

For couples who live elsewhere than Bakersfield, the priest will discuss with you how you may complete the required marriage preparation through the parish in which you live.

MARRIAGE MENTORING

St. Philip's has a marriage-mentoring program available for newly married couples. We hope that you will join with us in the year following your wedding. Our mentoring program will provide a support couple for your first 1-3 years of marriage, a couple who can offer mature insights and help with the adjustments and challenges most couples typically experience. The mentoring couple will schedule meetings with you 2-3 times a year or more often if you wish. Mentoring

couples are individuals who have been married for ten years or longer and who demonstrate a quality relationship. In some instances, it might even be possible for the mentoring couple to be the same individuals who conducted your marriage preparation program.

PLANNING THE CEREMONY

There are many options available covering such elements of the wedding ceremony as scripture readings, prayers, etc. The priest and Wedding Coordinator will discuss these options with you and encourage you to make choices, which will personalize your ceremony. Some things to consider in your planning:

- > Marriage involving two Catholics is normally celebrated with a Nuptial Mass. In the case where either the bride or groom is not Catholic or if a Catholic couple so choose, the marriage ceremony may be celebrated without a Mass. The ceremony outside of Mass consists of the Liturgy of the Word together with the wedding service. The ceremony with a Mass is approximately 45 – 60 minutes; without a Mass it is approximately 25 – 30 minutes.
- > It is not permissible to replace any of the scripture readings of the ceremony with secular or popular readings.

For your information, there are several different liturgical seasons during the church year. Each of these seasons is marked by the use of color, often used in the environmental artwork for that particular season. Artwork used in the worship space may not be removed for weddings, so it is important that you know ahead of time what the season is and what colors may be in use in the church. Artwork for the weekend worship is usually in place by Friday.

Advent (December)	blue/violet
Christmas Season (until mid-January)	white
Easter Season (7 weeks after Easter)	white
Pentecost (last Sunday of Easter Season)	red
Ordinary Time (all weeks not mentioned)	green

You may wish to contact Marydith Chase at 833-2218, Ext. 117 for information on the specific seasonal artwork and decorations that may be in place at the time of your wedding.

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal will begin at the time scheduled. The wedding party is to arrive fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled time. The bride and groom are asked to urge all members of the wedding party to be as prompt for the rehearsal as for the wedding. This is necessary because of other scheduled activities. Please inform members of the wedding party that church regulations do not allow smoking or gum chewing inside the church. No rehearsal will be conducted when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol.

The Wedding Coordinator will direct the rehearsal unless other arrangements have been made. The rehearsal will take approximately 45-60 minutes. Parents of the bride and groom both should be present for the rehearsal. It would be helpful to all concerned if grandparents could also attend the rehearsal. All members of the wedding party, including the ushers, should be present. Please have the following information available for the Wedding Coordinator:

1. Who will light the candles?
2. Who will seat the Mothers? Grandmothers? Other family members?
3. How many family pews will be reserved?
4. Have a list of your attendants, in the order you want them to enter and leave the church. Be prepared to read the list name by name when asked to do so by the Wedding Coordinator.
5. Children in the wedding party must be at least five (5) years old.

You should plan at least one usher for every fifty (50) guests expected at the service. Groomsmen may serve as ushers. Ushers are asked to inform those guests with cameras that pictures may not be taken in the church at any time during the wedding.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIST AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

Instructions concerning the church's policies regarding floral decorations and use of photography follow. It is the responsibility of the bride or her family to review these instructions with both the florist and the photographer in making plans for the wedding so that there will be no misunderstanding or deviation from these established rules and policies.

PHOTOGRAPHER:

The wedding is a service of worship and photographers (amateur and professional) are asked to do nothing that would detract from the reverence and meaning of the service. The photographer may take pictures before or after the service in those areas designated for the use of the wedding party. Only time exposures are permitted during the wedding and then only from the rear of the

church. It is understood that the service begins when the family members (grandparents, parents, etc.) are seated. No “special” lights are to be used and no pictures may be taken during the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass. The priest can advise you on this. Thirty minutes are allowed for pictures following the ceremony. If the ceremony starts late, this time may be shortened.

A video camera is permitted, provided it does not distract from the prayerful atmosphere of this celebration. The camera must be set or held in place without benefit of artificial lights. The Wedding Coordinator will be happy to answer any questions the video photographer might have as to placement of his/her equipment.

The photographer shall not stand on the pews or place camera equipment on the pews or furniture in the church, nor shall he/she move any church furnishings. He/she will be held responsible for any damages.

FLORIST:

A beautiful sanctuary requires very simple decorations and does not lend itself to elaborate decoration. In keeping with this conviction, the church has carefully developed this policy to guide the family and the florist in making plans for a wedding at St. Philip’s. We expect the cooperation of the family and the florist in not making any plans regarding decorations that are not in harmony with this policy of the church.

No flowers are to be placed directly on, behind, or in front of the altar. No decoration shall hide from clear view the worship symbols and the furnishings in the sanctuary. Candles should not be used in close proximity to flowers or greenery. Permission must be received from the Pastor to move any of the “seasonal” symbols. Everything must be returned to its proper place immediately following the wedding.

Full cooperation is expected regarding the following regulations:

1. No furnishings are to be moved.
2. Neither fresh nor artificial flower petals may be strewn in the aisles, nor may flowers be handed to guests by Flower Girls in the procession.
3. Lighted candles are not to be carried by participants.
4. There will be no alteration of the physical appearance of the sanctuary (such as the construction of a trellis or the addition of other equipment), which would detract from the altar.
5. No tacks, pins, nails, glue, or tape shall be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or the building. Only wrapped wire, large

rubber bands, or ribbon that will not mark the pew ends may be used to fasten bows.

6. The church furnishes only kneelers, unity candle and candles used on the altar. Any other candles shall be provided by the florist, who is responsible for using drip less candles. Wax savers are also required to prevent dripping on the floor or furniture. There must be ample polyethylene or similar fireproof material used under the candelabra to protect carpets and furniture.
7. The florist shall call the church office at least one week in advance of the wedding to set a time for decorating the church. One hour before the ceremony is provided for decorating.
8. The florist will be held responsible for any damage done to the building or furniture and is responsible for cleaning any wax from the carpet or furniture that may have taken place during the wedding.
9. If you desire to donate your wedding flowers to the church, please let us know in advance so the Liturgy Team is aware of your plans.
10. The church's flower stands are not available for weddings. Similar stands may be rented from the florist.
11. In the main body of the church there are twenty-one pews.

MUSIC

Music Director: Javier Valenzuela, 833-2218, Ext. 123

Marriage is:

- A. An act of worship on the part of all present to offer thanks and praise to God and to ask his blessing on the couple's lives together.
- B. A sacrament of the Church.
- C. A solemn, public exchange of vows in the presence of God and witnesses.

The music used at weddings must be consistent with the sacred nature of the ceremony. It must be thematically related to the Church's blessing of the marriage and the couple's vows made before God. No matter how personally meaningful certain music may be to the individuals, the guiding principle for acceptability of any wedding music is the music's basic relationship to the ritual of marriage and the celebration of the Christian community gathered to witness and seek God's blessing on such a union.

Lyrics in songs used before and during the ceremony should not only celebrate the human love between two persons, but more importantly should have some

reference to God, who IS love. There is much beautiful and appropriate music in the church hymnal that speaks of God and Christ in your lives; of the holiness, joy and beauty of marriage; and of the special Christian significance of this sacrament.

Any music, which has strong associations with situations and activities contradicting Christian values, is to be avoided. Music, which brings to mind strictly secular situations, Broadway plays, Hollywood movies, or popular discussion of love and marriage, should not be used.

In general, the following music and related types of music are not to be used:

1. Any music which refers only to the secular nature of love and neglects the sacred union of the couple, not only to each other but also to the Church.
2. Wagner's "Bridal Chorus" from Lohengren or Medelsshon's "Wedding March" from Midsummer Night's Dream.
3. Songs from films, musicals, popular radio or television shows, e.g., "Here Comes the Bride."

A partial list of selected music for weddings will be given to you by the priest when you meet to arrange the wedding. The Parish Music Director must approve all music to be played or sung at your wedding, even if the musicians are from outside the parish. Musicians and soloists must be approved by the Music Director. Once a parish musician is booked, it is considered a firm commitment and no cancellations are permitted or fees waived.

USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES FEE SCHEDULES

All fees are payable thirty (30) days before the wedding.

Sanctuary Wedding	\$400.00
Wedding Coordinator	\$200.00
Honorarium for Priest	\$ 75.00 - \$100.00
Organist/Pianist	\$100.00 - \$150.00
Soloist	\$100.00 - \$150.00
Instrumentalists	To be determined

For invitation purposes, the church address is:

**St. Philip the Apostle Church
7100 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, CA 93309**

RECEPTION

If you wish to use Msgr. Logan Hall for your reception, please contact the Office Manager, Barbara Lomas at 833-2218 Ext. 110 during regular office hours, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Proper Conduct – The Church is the House of God. Respectful silence is to be maintained at all times when in the church. Attire for both the rehearsal and the wedding should be appropriate to the church setting.

Be On Time – Although it may be fashionable in some circles to arrive late for a wedding, not only is it impolite to the priest and guests to be late, but it is also disruptive to the schedule of church activities.

Rice, Confetti, Birdseed, Etc. – **NO** rice, confetti, birdseed, etc. may be thrown inside or outside the church. Not only is it wasteful and unsightly, but it can be dangerous and cause people to slip and fall.

Smoking, Food and Drink – Smoking, food and drink are not permitted in any part of the church, e.g. front entrance, sacristy, church itself.

Guest/Receiving Line – The appropriate place for a guest book and receiving line is the reception hall, not the church. Therefore, a guest book to be signed before the ceremony and a receiving line after the ceremony are not permitted. Also, wedding gifts should not be brought to the church; they should be taken to the reception.

Clean Up – The wedding party is responsible for the cleaning up of materials (flash bulbs, cellophane, film packages, etc.) left in the church, at the entrance, or around the grounds.

Sacrament of Reconciliation – Reception of this sacrament is an appropriate way to prepare for your wedding day. Bride, groom and attendants are encouraged to go to confession the Saturday before the wedding or to make special arrangements with the priest.



