



ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC CHURCH

219 East Bridge Street - Breaux Bridge, LA 70517
(337) 332-2159

St. Bernard Church Parish Wedding Checklist

Wedding Data Sheet has been sent in along with fee of \$250.00 for parishioners, \$500.00 for former parishioners, or \$700.00 for non-parishioners.

Scheduled initial appointment with the priest/deacon at least 8 months before wedding

Scheduled rehearsal date and time with the wedding coordinator

Called to verify that church is reserved on the correct dates and times for wedding and rehearsal. However, the wedding date will not be confirmed until you have begun the Witness to Love marriage prep program.

Director of Music has been contacted on choices of music and musicians/vocalist Organist has been contacted at least 3 months prior to wedding

Altar servers have been contacted and lined up

Chosen Readings and Rehearsal/Wedding Information Form have been submitted to Wedding Coordinator (Chasity@stbernardch.com)

Have provided or complied with the following:

- Current/updated Baptism Certificate within 6 months of wedding date
- Copies of legal documentation in reference to divorce, death certificate,
- Declaration of Nullity (if applicable)
- Completion of Pre-nuptial Inquiry
- Completion of Pre-Marital Inventory (Prepare/Enrich)
- Completion of Witness to Love Marriage Prep program
- Completion of paperwork for Marriage Prep Program, including NFP certificate mailed or brought to church office @ 219 E. Bridge St., Breaux Bridge, La.

Have applied for marriage license at least 72 hours prior to wedding date. (Note There is a 72-hour waiting period from time of issuance before you can be married and the license is valid for only 30 days from date of issuance).

Have marriage license ready to bring to rehearsal. This is signed prior to the ceremony, not during the ceremony.



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St. Bernard Church Parish Wedding Policy

Scheduling of Weddings:

A couple desiring to be married is expected to contact the priest/deacon at least eight (8) months prior to the proposed date of their wedding. This interval allows time to prepare well for such a sacred commitment. Only in rare circumstances will exceptions be permitted.

You may wish to plan your wedding at a time other than Lent. Couples are reminded that wedding plans should respect the special nature of this liturgical season and refrain from too much pomp or display.

Meetings with Priest/Deacon:

The first meeting deals with basic family and faith history information. Dates for the wedding and rehearsal are confirmed. Please ask about the Mentor Couple who will be a part of your marriage preparation process. After you meet with a priest/deacon, Chasity Soileau will then contact you to set up a meeting to begin the Witness to Love Program. If you have additional questions about your sponsor couple, please contact Chasity at 337-332-2159 or chasity@stbernardch.com

Fr McIntyre, 337-332-2159 (church office), mcintyre.gk@gmail.com

Deacon Jim Davis, 337-332-3968, dcnjimdavis@gmail.com

Place of Wedding:

Usually, the marriage is contracted in the church parish of the bride or groom. Garden or home weddings are never permitted. It is permissible to have a priest/deacon from another church (family friend, relative) officiate in our church. A Letter of Delegation will be sent to that particular priest/deacon from our parish office.

Time of Wedding:

Weddings can be scheduled any day of the week. Usually, it is as follows:

- Friday, 6:30 pm (with Mass)
- Saturday, 11:00 am (with Mass), 1:00 pm (with Mass) or 6:30 pm (no Mass)
- Sunday, no weddings, however, an exception may be made according to the circumstance.

Wedding Attire:

St. Bernard Church is a place of worship where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. In keeping with the sacredness of the church, please make sure that wedding party attire is appropriate and modest. This includes everyone who is a participant in the Wedding Ceremony. No low-cut tops/dresses (front or back), no bare shoulders, dresses/skirts must be knee length, no shorts, etc. If you are unsure contact wedding coordinator for approval.

Time of Rehearsal:

Rehearsals are to be scheduled at 6:30 pm on the Wednesday or Thursday before the wedding. Please make arrangements with the wedding coordinator as to the exact time of the rehearsal. The rehearsal date should be set up at the first interview with the priest or deacon. **Note: In keeping with the sacredness of the church, please make sure that wedding party attire is modest and appropriate. This includes everyone who is a participant in the Wedding Ceremony. No low-cut tops/dresses (front or back), no bare shoulders, dresses/skirts must be knee length, no shorts, etc. If you are unsure contact wedding coordinator for approval.**

Music:

Because a church wedding is a service of worship, the music is chosen to proclaim and exemplify the Christian understanding of marriage, particularly respecting the usual piety and practice of St. Bernard Catholic Church. **A marriage is a Sacrament of the Church. Therefore, musical selections should be appropriate to the solemnity of this occasion.** As a Sacrament, the marriage is not an expression of the love of two individuals, but rather is the outward sign of the Church's hope that two may become one as a sign of God's Kingdom in this world. Our general "rule of thumb" is this: If you are not likely to hear it in our church on Sunday, then it is likely not appropriate for your wedding.

Patrick Menard currently serves as St. Bernard's Music Director. As a staff member of this church, he has oversight of all music, including weddings. Beth Hebert currently serves as Organist. **All musical selections are to be made in consultation with them.** Patrick may be reached at 319-5744 and Beth at 849-4506. You will first make an appointment to meet with them. At that meeting, you will discuss:

- An overview of the music you want (ancillary musicians such as cantors, trumpet player, violinist, etc.)
- Where vocal or instrumental music is appropriate during the service
- Suggestions for and selection of music that will be used
- Additional fees, if applicable

The base fee for St. Bernard's organist is \$200.00. Other organists, family members or friends, will **not** be allowed to provide music for weddings unless approved by the music director in consultation with the organist. In such rare cases where a guest organist is allowed to replace St. Bernard's organist, a bench fee of \$200.00 to the organist still applies. Recorded music is not allowed.

All additional musicians utilized must also be coordinated through St. Bernard's organist or music director - whether they are to be paid or not. Patrick Menard is also available as a vocalist, if desired. If a rehearsal with other musicians is needed or if the organist is required to learn music specifically for your wedding, an additional fee of \$25.00 will be added to the base fee. All fees must be paid at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

Since the wedding rehearsal is designed to familiarize the members of the wedding party with their respective roles during the liturgy, the organist does not attend.

Right of First Refusal for Organ and Keyboard:

The parish's goal is to allow parishioners to have an immediate family member be a part of this lifelong memorable service, while at the same time, ensure the protection of the costly parish equipment for which we are called to be stewards and insure the appropriateness of musical selections for these sacred liturgies.

Right of First Refusal is an agreement entered into by the parish and musician whereby the musician is the only one allowed to play the specified instruments, with exceptions specified below.

St. Bernard Church Parish has established a policy giving the parish organist ***Right of First Refusal***. The arrangement protects our parish equipment which is extremely valuable and costly to repair.

- The organist is the only one allowed to play the organ.
- In the event the organist cannot make an engagement, she will provide a qualified replacement.
- The couple or family is free to select any vocalist they desire.
- The family is free to select any accompanist they desire.
- ABSOLUTELY NO AMPLIFIERS can be plugged in anywhere into our sound system.

Non-parishioners are required to use our organist with no exception. If organist is not available, organist or director of music provides the replacement organist.

Wedding Party:

By state law, two (2) adult witnesses of legal age of eighteen (18) or older are required. There may be no more than eight (8) bridesmaids and eight (8) groomsmen. The age limit for the flower girl or ring bearer is not younger than four (4) years of age. As Christian witnesses, all in the wedding party should be practicing their faith and models of disciples of Jesus Christ.

All male attendants must dress in an appropriately masculine manner and be seated together with the groomsmen. All female attendants must dress in an appropriately feminine manner and be seated together with the bridesmaids. Bridesmaids and groomsmen are merely a common social tradition. They are not required for Catholic weddings. If a couple chooses to have attendants at their wedding ceremony, they must follow the above guidelines.

Altar Servers:

When your ceremony includes Mass, we recommend at least one altar server (will be provided). None is needed for the nuptial ceremony only (i.e. no Mass). If you have an altar server(s) in mind, please let the officiant know you will be providing this.

Lectors:

It is recommended that you choose experienced lectors. These lectors should be of the Catholic faith and good public speakers. Anyone you select to serve as a reader must be dressed appropriately in modest attire. Ex: No low-cut tops/dresses (front or back), no bare shoulders, dresses/skirts must be knee length, etc. Note: Both lectors and servers should attend the rehearsal.

Floral & Decoration Guidelines:

Flowers and decorations can add much to the beauty of the ceremony. However, care must be taken in preparation and in clean up after the wedding.

1. For Saturday evening weddings, placement of flowers, plants, and arrangements may be placed after the 4:00pm Mass on Saturday. Normally, one or two large arrangements are sufficient for a wedding ceremony. Placement in the Sanctuary is as follows:
 - a. One large arrangement on both sides of the Tabernacle atop the pillars
 - b. Near the pulpit area
 - c. Near altar rail
2. Pew bows/flowers must be attached with elastic or ribbon (no tape/wire is allowed).
3. The use of an aisle runner is prohibited as there is a possibility of tripping and/or falling causing personal injury.
4. The use of flower petals (artificial only) is allowed and only in church - not outside. Someone in the wedding party must clean up immediately after the wedding. Glitter, rice, birdseed and wagons and/or carts are not allowed.
5. Archways are not permitted.
6. Unity candles are not permitted.
7. During Lent, due to the sacredness of the season, altar decorations are not allowed. In the Christmas and Easter seasons, please contact Chasity (Wedding Coordinator/Chasity@stbernardch.com) about what can/cannot be moved.
8. Sanctuary furniture is not allowed to be moved.
9. Signage of any sort with or without wording is not permitted.

Documents Needed and Other Requirements:

The following documents and requirements must be presented or complied with before the marriage ceremony takes place:

1. **Current Baptismal Certificate** of any party (Catholic and non-Catholic) not Baptized at St. Bernard. Be sure to inform the parish where you were baptized that this is for marriage. There are notations to be filled on the back of the certificate which include 1st Communion, Confirmation and Marriage information. Certificates may not be more than 6 months old at the time of the wedding as they provide certification of freedom to marry. If you were baptized at St. Bernard, it is not necessary to obtain a certificate. We will prepare it. We ask you to request the certificates in enough time to receive and have them for the first meeting.
2. If one or both have previously married, **divorced papers or death certificate and Catholic Declaration of Nullity are required.**

3. Parties not from St. Bernard Parish need **written permission from their home parish pastor to marry outside of their church parish. Please bring this with you to give the priest at your initial meeting.**
4. **A Pre-Nuptial questionnaire** is filled out by the priest/deacon and couple on your personal status and convictions.
5. In an interfaith marriage between a Catholic and a Christian of another church or a non-Christian, the Catholic party **promises to live the faith and to encourage baptism and education of the children according to the Roman Catholic tradition.**
6. Before final arrangements, the couple must **complete the Witness to Love marriage prep program. All completed paperwork must be turned in to the office prior to the wedding or at your final meeting with the priest. It is a requirement for us to place this in the parish file for your wedding records.**
7. **Marriage licenses may be obtained at the office of the Clerk of Court at the parish courthouse.** At least one of the persons must be a resident of the civil parish where the license is purchased.
 - **There is a 72-hour waiting period** from the time of issuance before **you can be married.**
 - The marriage license is **valid for only 30 days from the date of issuance.**
 - **IMPORTANT: Please bring the marriage license to the wedding rehearsal. The license will be signed at the rehearsal or prior to the ceremony, but not during the ceremony.**

Use of Buildings and Fees:

- **Parishioner** – Someone who is a registered, active and supportive member of St. Bernard Church Parish for at least one year prior to the date of the wedding.
 - **Fee \$250**
 - Note: It is at the discretion of the pastor to waive this fee if inability to pay is an issue
- **Former Parishioner** – Someone who grew up while attending St. Bernard Church but has moved away; received sacraments at St. Bernard AND parents who are still registered parishioners of St. Bernard.
 - **Fee \$500**
- **Non-Parishioners**– Someone who is registered at another church parish and/or not currently residing in the St. Bernard parish boundaries.
 - **Fee \$700**
- These fees cover the cost of marriage prep materials, including a parish retreat and the use of the church for the rehearsal and wedding.
- It is customary to give a stipend/donation to the officiant. This is not required, but is always appreciated.

Registering with our parish:

If you decide that after you are married, you would like to be parishioners of St. Bernard Church Parish, please complete our New Parishioner Registration form that can be found on our website. We will not be able to update your records without your permission nor can we register you as a new parishioner without your permission.

“Beautiful indeed is the marriage of two Christians, who are one in hope and one in love, one in the manner in which they live, one in the religion they keep. Neither in the flesh nor in the spirit does anything divide them. It is to these Christ gives His peace.”

-Tertullian