

**ST. VICTORIA PARISH FAMILY**  
8228 Victoria Drive  
Victoria, MN 55386  
(952) 443-2661

## **Wedding Preparation and Ceremony FAQs**

**Dear Friend,**

**Congratulations! Thank you for your inquiry about our facilities for your upcoming wedding. We hope we will be able to assist you in celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony. But even more importantly, we desire to be a community of faith that assists couples before the wedding day and beyond in building both a loving and lasting relationship.**

**The wedding day has always been a significant event in people's lives, but weddings are often more complex than they once were. These FAQs will help answer some common questions regarding our wedding preparations, procedures and expenses. We likely will answer many more questions as we go through this process together.**

**We are excited to proceed with preparing you both as you initiate this new life journey. If you elect to proceed with having your marriage celebrated at St. Victoria, please complete the [Marriage Intake Form](#) found on our website and become familiar with the [Marriage Formation Process Overview](#) to assist with understanding the timeline. You may also call Mary Harvey in the parish office (952-443-2661) to initiate the wedding process.**

**May God Bless You,**

**The St. Victoria Parish Family**

### **St. Victoria Wedding FAQs**

#### **Is St. Victoria the right parish for your wedding?**

We are very excited you are considering St. Victoria for your marriage! As you think about proceeding with the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Victoria, also know that we believe having a wedding at St. Victoria implies that you are an active part of the life of our parish. Church law specifies that the proper place for a baptized

Catholic to marry is the parish in which they live. Only one person of the engaged couple must meet this requirement. Those not residing in the parish, and not registered, will ordinarily be required to marry in the parish in which they reside. An exception may be possible if the parents of one member of the engaged couple meets the residence requirements or in certain other situations. Contact the parish office if your circumstances may suggest we should evaluate your specific situation.

### **When should we begin our marriage preparation process?**

Marriage is an important, life-long commitment. The challenge of carefully preparing for a marriage while simultaneously planning a wedding and juggling other day-to-day responsibilities can be difficult. We encourage engaged couples to begin the preparation process at least nine to 12 months prior to their marriage. An absolute minimum of six months of preparation time is needed before a wedding.

## **WEDDING SCHEDULE**

### **How to schedule your wedding?**

Before scheduling can take place, the engaged couple must complete the [Marriage Intake Form](#) which can be found on the St. Victoria Parish Family website, [www.stvictoria.net](http://www.stvictoria.net) and email it to Mary Harvey at [mharvey@stvictoria.org](mailto:mharvey@stvictoria.org). Once received, Mary will contact you to tentatively advise you if St. Victoria is available for your wedding and how to proceed with scheduling a meeting with the wedding celebrant. Or, call Mary Harvey in the parish office at 952-443-2661.

### **When does St. Victoria Parish Family usually host weddings and when can't we host weddings?**

Usually, weddings are held on Saturday beginning at 2:30 p.m., with rehearsals on Friday evenings between 5 and 7 p.m. If an alternate time or day is preferred, please discuss this with your celebrant. It's important to know that the Catholic Church sets aside times for penance and spiritual renewal during Advent and Lent and weddings are discouraged during these times.

### **What are the fees and expenses?**

There is a wedding fee that covers the preparation, materials and church rental for your wedding. This fee is based on where your wedding will be held. An initial \$100 deposit must be paid at your initial meeting with the wedding celebrant when you meet to determine the date and time of your wedding. The initial deposit eventually will become your damage deposit to ensure that the church remains in the best condition possible following your wedding. The damage deposit will be returned after your wedding if the facilities are clean and undamaged. The full fee schedule is below:

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
New Church	\$500+ \$100 damage deposit	\$700 + \$100 damage deposit
Historic Church	\$250 + \$100 damage deposit	\$400 + \$100 damage deposit
Preparation Only	\$100	

### **Do I need to be a parishioner to schedule a wedding at St. Victoria?**

One member of the engaged couple ordinarily needs to be a registered, active, contributing member of St. Victoria to have their marriage vows witnessed by the community. If neither of the engaged couple, nor their parents are current registered members of St. Victoria, we encourage you to formally register as members

of the parish before initiating your wedding preparation process. Please note: Beginning January 1, 2011, you must register as a parishioner at least 90 days prior to your first meeting with Fr. Bob or Deacon Ray to receive the member discount.

## **WEDDING PREPARATION**

### **Meeting with celebrant?**

As a couple, you will meet with Fr. Bob White or Deacon Ray Ortman a number of times to prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony. Your initial meeting will focus on establishing a rapport so your celebrant can effectively counsel you at this most important time in your life. Additionally, you will likely discuss motives for your marriage and explore any special circumstances that may affect your marriage. The celebrant will also explain the process in further detail and answer any questions you may have.

### **What is a mentor couple?**

In the next step in the process you will be assigned a mentor couple. A mentor couple, members of St. Victoria, represents the church community by demonstrating their life experiences as a married couple to an engaged couple preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. Through a series of meetings with a set format, couple-to-couple interaction takes place in the privacy of the mentor couple's home. A mentor couple facilitates and helps the engaged couple talk through issues they likely will face during their married lives together. A FOCCUS® Inventory is used during the discussions.

### **What is FOCCUS?**

FOCCUS® is an inventory of your views on various areas in your relationship with your fiancé. FOCCUS® is not a “test” and there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. This tool is not intended to predict success in marriage, but rather to identify both the strengths in your relationship as well as any problematic areas for you to address with your fiancé. It provides a basis for the couple to discuss issues in their relationship during mentor couple sessions.

### **What documents are needed?**

- Baptism Certificates: Certificates are required for both the bride and groom if they were baptized Christian. It is required for the Catholic parties to have a newly issued copy. Call the church where you were baptized and ask them for a newly issued baptismal certificate.
- Affidavit of Freedom: This form asks one of the parents or another relative of each of you to be a witness to the fact that you are free to marry. The priest or deacon preparing you will provide you with this form, if necessary.
- Civil Marriage License: This is obtained from any County Clerk or City Clerk within the State of Minnesota. There is a five-day waiting period before the license may be used, and it expires in six months after issuance. A wedding cannot be celebrated unless you present a valid marriage license. If you complete all the pre-wedding requirements (meetings with your presider and with your mentor couple) you will be eligible for a substantial discount when applying for your license. A certified letter will be provided to you when these requirements have been completed.

## **WEDDING CEREMONY**

### **Who do I contact about planning the music for my ceremony? Can I bring my own musicians and pick my own music for my wedding music?**

St. Victoria Music and Liturgy Director, Jamie Moore, will assist you in planning the music for your wedding. The first step in this process is to set up an appointment with Jamie to discuss your music.

You may bring your own musicians or Jamie is available along with other parish musicians who can serve as potential cantors, soloists or instrumentalists.

As this is your wedding, it is appropriate that you have the opportunity to make selections of music that will be special to you, particularly those selections that will be played and/or sung immediately before the processional and those during the ceremony. Please remember, as you make your plans, that this ceremony is a sacred occasion, and as such it calls for thoughtful and appropriate planning. "Secular" music is often used, but it should be in good taste, complimenting the sacredness of the ceremony. Both the lyrics and style of music should be carefully considered when you make selections.

Regardless of your choice of a musician, you will need to schedule a meeting with Jamie to discuss music planning and your music choices for your wedding.

### **How do I know what readings to select for my ceremony?**

You will receive a booklet with suggested readings at the first meeting with your presider. In addition, your presider and Jamie Moore will also be more than happy to help you select the appropriate readings for your wedding.

### **Who is a wedding coordinator and what do they do?**

St. Victoria has wedding coordinators who provide services as a gift to every bride and groom. A wedding coordinator will be assigned to your wedding approximately three months prior to your wedding and will contact you approximately six weeks prior to the wedding. The wedding coordinator can help you understand the ceremony requirements in advance. The wedding coordinator will assist with your rehearsal and on your wedding day your coordinator will be present at least one hour before the wedding and throughout the entire wedding.

Some basic recommendations of wedding coordinators are:

1. Make sure your invitation includes accurate directions.
2. Request your guests turn off all cell phones before entering the church.
3. Inform your guests either with your program, or by those distributing programs, that NO PHOTOGRAPHS are permitted during the ceremony by anyone other than your professional photographer.

### **Can I be married someplace other than the Historic Church or New Worship Space?**

God is present everywhere. You and your fiancé may have found a beautiful location where you would like to gather. However, a Catholic wedding is not just a private affair affecting only your family and friends -- it affects the entire community. The church building is an important symbol of your faith community; those who

helped form your beliefs, those who will witness your vows, and those who will benefit from your service. You and your beloved will find spiritual strength in the people whom that church represents. For these reasons, a wedding between two Catholics is generally celebrated in a Catholic church. A wedding between a Catholic and another Christian should be held either in a Catholic church or at another sacred location. Permission for this can be requested during the primary steps of marriage preparation.

### **What are some photography considerations?**

We suggest photos be taken before and/or after your wedding. NO PHOTOGRAPHS are permitted during the ceremony by anyone other than your professional photographer. Flash photography may not be used during the ceremony. Photographers should stay half way up the aisle in the Historic Church and near the baptismal font in the Worship Space to take pictures.

### **What can't I use during the ceremony or bring into the church?**

Confetti, birdseed, bubbles, balloons, rice or other similar items cannot be used on church property.

### **What are the churches policies about food, alcohol and drugs with respect to the wedding?**

Smoking, drinking, food and/or alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the church itself. Any indication that members of the wedding party have been drinking may result in the cancellation of your wedding, or the offending parties may not be allowed to participate. We want to ensure all your guests are of sound body, mind and soul to serve as witnesses and/or to give matrimonial consent.

### **How long can we use the church and what spaces are available?**

You will have use of the facilities for up to six hours on your wedding day. The church and preparation rooms will be opened for you as early as four hours prior to the ceremony. All decoration and personal belongings should be removed from the church and preparation room within one-half hour after the ceremony. It is your responsibility to assign someone to clean up all spaces used after the ceremony, leaving the rooms as you found them.

### **How many people can be seated in the Historic Church or the New Worship Space?**

The Historic Church seats about 225 people maximum and the New Worship Space seats about 800 people.

### **Are there any decoration considerations?**

All decorations must fit in with the seasonal decorations already in place in the church. You may not remove any part of the liturgical environment. All candles must be drip less. You may add flowers, candles, pew bows, or other decorations to the environment if you choose. All decorations must be removed immediately after the wedding. Flowers may not be placed directly on the altar or on stands in front of the altar (obscuring the altar.) They may be placed on the floor in front of the altar, along the side of the altar on stands, or on the pews.

## **OTHER**

### **What do we do if one of us has been married before?**

If either of you have been married before, whether in the Church or by any other civil or religious authority, even if you are not Catholic, you will need to obtain an annulment/dispensation before being married in the Catholic Church (unless the previous spouse is now deceased). Please let us know about this situation on your

Marriage Intake form. We cannot confirm a wedding date for any couple who will require an annulment until it has been issued.

### **Can we be married if one of us is not Catholic?**

Only one partner is required to be a baptized Catholic as long as the Catholic partner affirms his or her faith and pledges to impart his or her Catholic Faith to any children of the union. The celebrant will assist you in completing any necessary paperwork. As part of your marriage preparation, you will also participate in specific activities or workshops that will allow you and your partner to discuss your spiritual/religious beliefs and find the gifts in both your similarities and differences.

### **What if we haven't been attending church; is it important to be an active Catholic?**

You are welcome to prepare for marriage at St. Victoria. Many couples use this window of opportunity as a chance to rejuvenate and renew their faith. They find that they have been meaning to start going to Mass again, but for whatever reason have not done so. If you do not have a parish that you can call "home," we welcome you to consider St. Victoria. We ask that you attend Mass for a few weeks to get a sense of our community. Then, complete the registration process. Once you are a part of the community, then it would make sense to begin your marriage preparation here.

### **How do I obtain a marriage license?**

A Marriage License can be obtained at any county court house. In Carver County, you can obtain a license at Auditors Office of Carver County, 600 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Chaska. 952-361-1910. For information and fees visit their website. [http://www.co.carver.mn.us/departments/prts/marriage\\_licenses.asp](http://www.co.carver.mn.us/departments/prts/marriage_licenses.asp). Under current law, you can obtain a discount on your marriage license for completing the process of marriage preparation at St. Victoria.

### **Can we bring our own priest to be the celebrant?**

Please consult with Deacon Ray or Fr. Bob during your initial meeting to discuss this option.

### **We plan to get married elsewhere. Will Deacon Ray or Fr. Bob help us with the preparation work for our marriage? What is the process for that?**

The answer is very likely yes. Please complete the Marriage Intake form and note that you only want to proceed with preparation. At your first meeting we will discuss the preparation process pertinent to your situation. The fee for preparation only is \$100.