



ST. JOHN XXIII
CATHOLIC PARISH

WEST HAVEN, CT

WEDDING & MARRIAGE
PREPARATION GUIDE



“There was a wedding in Cana...and Jesus...had also been invited...”

—John 2:1-2

Congratulations! We are honored that you have chosen to celebrate this important day with Saint John XXIII Parish, West Haven. This guide aims to give you some basic information in your preparation to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage.

Marriage Preparation

In accordance with the policy of the Archdiocese of Hartford, a minimum of 6 months is required for marriage preparation.

Preliminary Interview & Overview of Marriage Preparation

A Preliminary Interview will be administered by the priest or deacon to declare freedom to marry followed by an overview of Marriage Preparation. Once a Preliminary Interview is administered by the priest or deacon and you have furnished the following certificates:

- Certificate of Baptism*
- Certificate of First Communion
- Certificate of Confirmation

the date and time of your wedding may be reserved with the priest or deacon. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is requested to reserve the date. Once the necessary documents are submitted then the Pre-Marriage Inventory will be scheduled.

If you are not a parishioner of Saint John XXIII Parish, West Haven, a letter from the pastor of your parish granting permission for the wedding to take place in Saint John XXIII Parish (Saint Lawrence Church or Saint Louis Church) will be required.

*NOTE: The Certificate of Baptism must be recently issued (within 6 months of the wedding date). You can obtain the certificates from the parish(es) where you received these sacraments. You need not obtain certificates for any sacrament you have received within Saint John XXIII Parish, West Haven (Saint Lawrence Church, Saint Louis Church, and Saint Paul Church).

- 1st Meeting: Date:_____ Time:_____

Pre-Marriage Inventory

A Pre-Marriage Inventory, *Better Together* by Dynamic Catholic, will be administered assessing a couple's agreement or disagreement on statements related to important issues as communication, problem solving, religion and spirituality, family and friends, careers, parenting, intimacy and finances.

- 2nd Meeting: Date:_____Time:_____

Evaluation of Pre-Marriage Inventory

An evaluation of the Pre-Marriage Inventory will be discussed in order to facilitate on-going open and caring communication and understanding between married couples. The Church's teaching on Marriage & Family life will also be discussed during this meeting.

- 3rd Meeting: Date:_____Time:_____

Together for Life Booklet

The Offering and the Marriage License will be requested at this time. A wedding rehearsal will be scheduled if it has not been discussed earlier. Selections made from the *Together for Life* Booklet provided to you will be reviewed. Then the *Pre-Marital Investigation* (PMI) will be administered. The next meeting will be the wedding rehearsal followed by the Wedding.

Engaged Couples Conference

In addition to the meetings with the priest or deacon for marriage preparation, you will attend an Engaged Couple's Conference sponsored by the Archdiocese of Hartford Office of Marriage and Family Life. A schedule of dates and locations with registration information can be found online at www.hartfordmarriage.com for you to arrange at your convenience.

Optional: Catholic Engaged Encounter

This optional Catholic Engaged Encounter Retreat is recognized, both nationally and internationally, as a quality, highly effective, marriage preparation program designed to meet the needs of today's engaged couples. It is a weekend experience during which each couple can concentrate exclusively on one another, free of the tensions, pressures and interruptions of the world. An informational video and more can be found online:

www.hartfordmarriage.com (Please note that this fulfills the Archdiocesan requirement as an alternative to the Engaged Couples Conference).

Rehearsals

Our wedding rehearsals are normally scheduled the evening before the wedding. Please be sure your wedding party is ON TIME because there may be other rehearsals or liturgical ceremonies following.

Marriage License

In accordance with law, a marriage license must be acquired from the city/town in which the ceremony will take place.

City of West Haven | Office of the City Clerk
355 Main Street, 1st Floor | Tel. (203) 937-3535

It is recommended that you bring the marriage license to the Parish Office as soon as you receive it from the Town Clerk's Office up to the date of your last meeting with the priest or deacon. We will keep it with your records and return the signed license to City Hall following your wedding. Please note that it is illegal for a priest or deacon to officiate a wedding without this license.

If you have already exchanged vows before a civil official, a copy of the civil marriage certificate will be requested.

Parish Offering

The parish offering for the wedding is \$450. This amount includes the \$50 deposit, the *Together for Life* booklet, the Pre-Marriage Inventory, the Engaged Couples Conference, the rehearsal, as well as the wedding ceremony in the church. Checks should be made out to: "Saint John XXIII Parish" with your names and the date of your wedding on the lower left hand side of the check.

If you have exchanged vows in the presence of a civil official or in the presence of a

minister from other religious traditions and are seeking to bring your marriage to the Church, the parish offering for a convalidation is \$300. You will be notified should any changes be made in the requested offering.

Liturgical Musician's Offering

The only additional fee will be for the liturgical musician \$200. If you desire an outside liturgical musician that has been approved by the priest a \$50 bench fee will be required. The amount for the musician should be paid separately and in consultation with our parish secretary/administrative assistant for the names to be placed on the check. The balance of the offering may be paid at any time during your preparation up to the date of your last meeting with the priest or deacon.

Music

Contact information for the liturgical musician will be provided to you by our parish secretary/administrative assistant. Please provide your music selection from the approved list of wedding music no less than 6 weeks in advance of your wedding date. Special musical requests will be considered on a case by case basis and approval is determined by its suitability for the occasion and availability. A special request fee of \$50 will be added to the stipend to cover the cost of the purchase of the music as well as rehearsal time. Special requests must be submitted no less than 8 weeks in advance of the wedding date. We request that you consult with and seek the parish musician's approval regarding choices of music and the use of outside musicians and/or soloists. "Please note that everything [including music] in the ceremony should contribute to the awareness of the sacred character of the Sacrament. The music used in the ceremony should be in conformity with the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Hartford." (*Sacramental Guidelines of Archdiocese of Hartford*) Therefore secular music is appropriate in the context of your wedding reception.

Flowers, Runners & Pew Decorations

These are not required, but if desired it is your responsibility. Delivery of flowers to the church should be arranged with our parish secretary/administrative assistant at least one week before the wedding. The Saint Lawrence Church aisle is 80 feet long from the inside door to the altar with 24 pews on each side of the main aisle. The Saint Louis Church aisle is 100 feet long from the inside door to the altar with 25 pews on each side of the main aisle. Only artificial flower petals can be used if being dropped on the floor, due to the damage real flower petals incur on the carpet. Pew decorations may be used without tape. The runner, pew decorations, and/or artificial flower petals must be removed after the wedding ceremony. Please make arrangements for someone to do this beforehand.

Receiving Line

A receiving line may be in the back of the church or outside. There is to be no throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, etc. due to safety concerns.

Candid/Video Photographers

These should not interfere with the liturgy or in any way unduly delay the ceremony. They are welcome but should conduct themselves in a way conducive to the sacred character of the celebration. They are not allowed to enter into the sanctuary of the church.

Church Address

For the purpose of wedding invitations so that your guests may arrive to your wedding, the following are the physical addresses of the churches of our parish:

Saint Lawrence Church
of Saint John XXIII Parish
207 Main Street
West Haven, CT 06516

Saint Louis Church
of Saint John XXIII Parish
89 Bull Hill Lane
West Haven, CT 06516

Online Resources

The following are online resources to assist you in preparing and planning your wedding:

- Better Together: www.dynamiccatholic.com/better-together
- For Your Marriage: www.foryourmarriage.org
- Archdiocesan Office for Marriage & Family Life : www.hartfordmarriage.com

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in the above matters. It is our hope that your love for each other will grow stronger as the days and years go by. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at Saint John XXIII Parish Office (203) 934-5249. May God bless you always in His love!



Prayer for an Engaged Couple

Lord Jesus Christ,

we give you thanks for the love we share,
and for bringing us together.

Teach us to prepare for our wedding
by an increase of love towards each other,
by an increase of generosity to others

and by the prayers we make for a long and happy life together.

Bless all those who are helping us to prepare for our wedding.

Keep us good-humored and joyful as the day draws near.

May Mary, our Mother, and Saint Joseph
keep us always in love with each other.

Teach us to live as you did and to love Christ with great devotion
all the days of our life together. Amen.