

ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S

Marriage Guidelines

Introduction

While all who are not prohibited by law have a right to marry (ref. Canon 1058), Pastors have an obligation to provide couples with proper preparation for entering marriage (ref. Canon 1063). With this in mind, couples wishing to marry in the Catholic Church should contact their parish priest at least one year prior to the anticipated date of the wedding to begin the marriage preparation process. This process will include:

1. **Meeting with the Parish Priest** to complete the Prenuptial Investigation Form, provide him with the required Sacramental and Civil documents, and set the proposed date for the wedding ceremony.

Please note:

- a. A definitive date for the wedding ceremony should not be set until after the Prenuptial Investigation Form has been completed.
- b. Couples residing outside of the proposed parish where the wedding is to be celebrated are responsible for contacting their local parish and arranging to have the Prenuptial Investigation Form completed there and sent to the parish in which the wedding is to take place.

2. **Participate in an authorized Marriage Preparation Course** by contacting the Archdiocesan Director of Family Catechesis, Mr. Ed Connolly via email at econnolly@rcsj.org or via telephone at 709-726-3660 or online at <https://rcsj.org/chancery/marriage-preparation/register>.

Please note:

Marriage Preparation Courses are most effective in helping couples prepare for marriage when taken six months or more before the wedding date.

3. **Sacramental and Civil Documents required:**

- a. **Baptismal Certificates issued within the last six months** (When requesting this document from your parish of baptism be sure to inform them you require it as part of your marriage preparation.)
- b. **Confirmation Certificates** (if applicable)
- c. **Affidavits of Freedom to Marry** (when required)
- d. **A Provincial Marriage License:** Application for a marriage license must be made in person to a Marriage License Issuer no earlier than 30 days before the wedding and must be dropped off at the parish office at least 5 days in advance of the wedding date. (Information regarding Issuers is available from Vital Statistics via telephone at 709-729-0305 or online at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/dgsnl/birth/marriage-cert>.)

4. **Official Marriage Witnesses:** Provincial government regulation require that the two official witnesses be at least 16 years of age. Because of the religious significance of the wedding ceremony, it is desirable that these witnesses be Christian and preferably Roman Catholic.