

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE & FOR YOUR WEDDING CHURCH OF THE DIVINE CHILD

(Revised 2/1/2012)

A Message from the Pastoral Staff

Congratulations on your recent engagement! In the coming months, you will be actively involved in making preparations for your marriage and wedding. You may feel overwhelmed, and that's to be expected. We at Divine Child want to assist you in preparing for both the wedding and for married life. Our prime concern is to help you marry well and be "together for life" with God's active presence.

The date and time that you inquired about is tentative, pending the completion of the Pre-marriage File (A-Form) to ensure freedom to marry as well as the acceptance of the terms listed in the marriage preparation agreement and completion of the marriage preparation.

If you have not set up an appointment with a priest, please contact the priest you would like to officiate your wedding ceremony.

There are two distinct preparations which you will be undertaking: (1) for marriage; and (2) for the wedding day. The engaged couple agrees to willingly participate in the process of marriage preparation different from the details of the wedding day. The wedding date is contingent upon the couple's successful completion of the steps of marriage preparation.

This newsletter includes the guidelines and policies of Divine Child Parish for weddings. **You are responsible** for knowing these policies, so please read over this document thoroughly. It is our hope that through these policies your wedding day at Divine Child will be a special time of prayer to be warmly remembered, and your marriage filled with God's life and love.

- The Pastoral Staff of Divine Child Parish

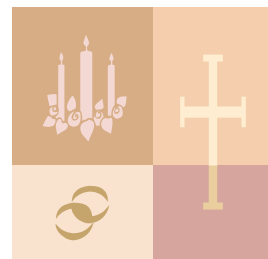
Prerequisites for Marriage at the Church of the Divine Child

Parish Membership

Registered, participating members of the Church of the Divine Child are given preference to schedule a wedding at Divine Child Parish and must be attending Sunday Mass regularly for **at least six months** before a wedding may be scheduled.

Freedom to Enter the Sacrament of Marriage

- 1) Both parties entering the marriage must establish that they have never been married or that previous marriages have been annulled by the Catholic Church.
- 2) The couple must agree not to live together until after the wedding.
- 3) The couple must meet the requirements of the Law of the Catholic Church as it pertains to marriage.



Preparing for Marriage

As prescribed by the Catholic Church, a couple must begin their preparations for marriage with the church **at least six months** prior to the proposed date of the marriage. During these six months prior to the proposed date a couple **must complete the following requirements:**

The couple must complete all the required forms, including the “Premarriage Investigation Form” (A-Form), which will be completed with the priest. In some instances, it may be necessary to obtain a dispensation from the Archbishop’s office. The priest will help you with this process.

Provide the priest with an official copy of your baptismal record that has been issued within the last six months. The official record is readily available from the parish of your Baptism. **Please do not bring the original certificate or an old copy**; it will not fulfill the requirement.

Couples are required to take a Premarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation (PREPARE) or other approved testing instrument administered by the parish. This may be scheduled by calling Lil Dominiak at the Rectory Office (313) 277-3110. The couple will take the evaluation in private. It takes approximately 30-45 minutes.

Couples must schedule appointments with the marriage counselor to review the results of the PREPARE evaluation. Those contemplating marriage who do not indicate a sufficient level of compatibility or maturity may be required to seek additional counseling before the marriage can take place.

Couples must attend one of the recommended marriage prep seminars. Information is included in this packet. Cost averages approximately \$50-100 and is paid to the sponsor of the seminar.

Couples must attend Natural Family Planning (NFP) instruction. Information is included in this packet. Usually, one to three sessions are required, in order. **Please register for the instruction at least six months or more prior to the wedding date.** Cost averages approximately \$135 and is paid to the sponsor of the instruction.

Couples will be provided a book containing the options for the wedding ceremony readings, etc. After completing the form regarding wedding choices for the ceremony, a final appointment will be scheduled with the priest to discuss these choices.

The couple may schedule a date and time for their wedding rehearsal by calling Lil Dominiak at the Rectory Office, Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM; it is closed from 12-1 PM for lunch. It is possible that there may be another rehearsal after yours on the same day; therefore it is imperative that everyone is present (especially ushers) and **on time**, for the rehearsal. Rehearsals generally take about an hour. The priest will NOT be present at the rehearsal.

The marriage license must be brought to the Rectory Office by the Monday prior to the wedding date if possible. Please keep in mind that the marriage license is only valid for 30 days and takes three days to process. Also, when bringing in the license, please bring the signed videographer and photographer forms, as well as an envelope containing the check for the church fees, organist stipend, and marriage counselor fee (see page 7).

The Sacrament of Marriage

Marriage, like every sacrament is a sacred event in the life of the Church. The entire Church celebrates with you. The Catechism of the Church describes Marriage in this way:

1659. St. Paul said: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church.... This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church” (Eph 5:25, 32).

1660. The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been endowed with its own special laws of the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament (cf. CIC, can. 1055 § 1; cf. GS 48 § 1).

1661. The sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on their way to eternal life (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1799).

1662. Marriage is based on the consent of the contracting parties, that is, on their will to give themselves, each to the other, mutually and definitively, in order to live a covenant of faithful and fruitful love.

1663. Since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in a framework of a liturgical celebration, before the priest (or a witness authorized by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful.

Your marriage is sanctified before God and before the whole Church as well as your family and friends who come to join you for this celebration.

The context of your marriage presumes a faith in God, and in the sacredness of this sacramental action. While your wedding involves you and your family, that is only part of the picture. Your wedding is a celebration of the faith of the parish community and the Church. Because of this, there is a specific liturgy for marriage that clarifies the sacredness of this event and its place in the life of the Church.

The Celebration of Marriage

Again the Catechism instructs us:

1621. In the Latin Rite the celebration of marriage between two Catholic faithful normally takes place during Holy Mass, because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Pascal mystery of Christ. [120] In the Eucharist the memorial of the New Covenant is realized, the New Covenant in which Christ has united himself for ever to the Church, his beloved bride for whom he gave himself up. [121] It is therefore fitting that the spouses should seal their consent to give themselves to each other through the offering of their own lives by uniting it to the offering of Christ for his Church made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice, and by receiving the Eucharist so that, communicating in the same Body and the same Blood of Christ, they may form but “one body” in Christ. [122]

1622. “Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the liturgical celebration of marriage...must be, per se, valid, worthy, and fruitful.” [123] **It is therefore appropriate for the bride and groom to prepare themselves for the celebration of their marriage by receiving the sacrament of penance.**

1623. In the Latin Church, it is ordinarily understood that the spouses, as ministers of Christ’s grace, mutually confer upon each other the Sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church.

1624. The various liturgies abound in prayers of blessing and epiclesis asking God’s grace and blessing on the new couple, especially the bride. In the epiclesis of this sacrament the spouses receive the Holy Spirit as the communion of love of Christ and the Church. [124] The Holy Spirit is the seal of their covenant, the everavailable source of their love and strength to renew their fidelity.



THE IMPORTANCE OF SUNDAY EUCHARIST

Again, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is a helpful reminder of the role the Eucharist plays in the life of the Catholic Christian:

2177. **The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life.** "Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church." [110]

2180. The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: "**On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.**" [117]

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AND CONFESSION

In the belief of the Catholic Church, when two baptized Christians marry, it is the awesome undertaking of a sacramental vocation. *We encourage couples to pray together individually for God's loving and guiding presence in their relationship.* With any need in praying or knowing the faith of the Church, just ask the priest.

We highly encourage all Catholics to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) before receiving the Sacrament of Marriage. If you have not gone to confession for a long time, the priest will assist you in making a good confession. Please do not ask to go to confession at the rehearsal (a priest will not be present) or on the day of your wedding (the priest is busy with preparations for the ceremony).

CONFESSIONS ARE REGULARLY HEARD AT DIVINE CHILD ON SATURDAYS FROM 3:00 TO 3:30 PM AND AGAIN FROM 5:30 UNTIL ALL ARE HEARD.

Pictures & Videos

You are responsible for sharing this information with your photographer and videographer!

Your wedding is a memorable event in your life and the life of your family; therefore, photographs and videos are permitted.

Photographs may be taken **without** a flash:

* Before the wedding, as the wedding party enters the church, after the wedding ceremony, and when the wedding party has left the main aisle of the church.

* During the exchange of wedding vows and the exchange of rings (**MUST BE IN BACK OF CHURCH**).

* After the ceremony, pictures of the wedding party may be taken by the photographer for no more than a half hour. Respect for the sacredness of the church must always be maintained. **Only pictures allowed in the Church are:**

Bride alone & Groom alone	Bride & Groom
Bride w/ parents	Groom w/ groomsmen
Bride/Groom w/ parents	Groom w/ parents
Bride/groom w/ wedding party	Bride w/ bridesmaids

ALL OTHER PICTURES MUST BE TAKEN OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH (weather permitting) OR AT THE RECEPTION HALL.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES TO BE OBSERVED:

- **Couple is asked to inform their guests not to take flash pictures after the ceremony while the photographer is taking formal pictures.**
- No spotlights are allowed.
- Photographers and videographers are not allowed to rearrange/move any of the furniture in any part of the church.
- The church is not a photographic studio. Backdrops, special lighting equipment, and other equipment are not to be set up in any part of the church.
- Photographers and videographers are not allowed to take pictures from the Sanctuary, from the Choir Loft, or from the Sacristy.
- Photographers and videographers must sign the appropriate form indicating that they will be in compliance with parish policy.

VIDEOTAPING

Two camera positions will be allowed and designated for videotaping. These are fixed locations in the church. Cameras may not be moved around during the ceremony. Artificial lights, sound systems, and microphones are not permitted. It is not permitted to tap into the electronic outlets or sound system of the church.

MUSIC

The Music

Music is an important element of any liturgical celebration and enhances the celebration of your wedding. As an integral part of the wedding liturgy, music has the power to create a festive mood appropriate for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. Whether a Nuptial Mass or the Wedding Rite Outside of Mass, liturgical music is always required, including during the Psalm.

Planning the Music

The couple is required to contact and utilize the Parish Music Ministry. If you wish, the Divine Child Director of Music Ministry, Mr. Raymond Staroscik, will assist you in planning appropriate liturgical music for the celebration of your wedding. Even if you have no preferences with respect to music, please contact Mr. Staroscik no later than a month before the wedding ceremony to discuss the music for the ceremony. Please negotiate all liturgical music with Mr. Staroscik, especially if you are bringing in guest musicians and/or soloists. It is preferred that soloists bring in their own accompanist.

Musicians or soloists are only allowed in the Choir Loft and not in the Sanctuary.

Since the music supports the liturgy, only sacred/liturgical hymns/instruments are permitted at the wedding Mass. Secular music must be played at the wedding reception.



Musicians

The Divine Child Director of Music Ministry is the only organist that may play at Divine Child. The ONLY exception that may be made is if the requested organist is an organist at another Catholic Church. As stated above, arrangements must be made well in advance with Mr. Staroscik.



Stipend

The wedding stipend for the Director of Music Ministry is \$150, which is in accord with the guidelines set by the American Organist's Guild. It covers the time and expertise of the musician. This fee is included in the total fee paid to Divine Child (see page 7).

If you require an additional rehearsal before the wedding date with the musician present, this will result in an additional fee of \$50 per rehearsal.

FLOWERS, CANDLES AND DECORATIONS

Flowers

Flowers add beauty to a wedding. If you choose to have flowers for your wedding, your florist should bring the flowers no earlier than an hour before the ceremony. Flowers should not be placed in such a way that would interfere with the liturgy.

Flowers or bows **may NOT be taped** to the pews. Please use ribbon or an elastic band to secure anything to the pews. Pew bows must be removed from the pews **immediately** after the ceremony. Flower petals, either real or silk, **may NOT be dropped** along the aisle by the flower girls.

When decorating with flowers, it is customary to leave the flowers behind for others in the parish to enjoy.

Candles

The *Unity Candle* is not a Catholic rite. However, if you are considering using a *Unity Candle* at Mass, please discuss this with the priest who is preparing you for your marriage. (Fr. Bechill does not permit use of the unity candle.) Under no circumstances may the candle be placed on the Altar. If the priest approves the use of the *Unity Candle*, he will instruct the couple on how and when it will be lit.

Runners

Runners are **no longer permitted** at Divine Child because of the liability involved with people tripping.

Other Decorations

The priest preparing you for marriage must approve any other decorations. Remember, you want to keep the focus on the wedding liturgy without distraction.

Rice, confetti, etc.

The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, the use of balloons or bubbles, or spraying of foamy substances from spray cans does not relate to any part of the Catholic Marriage Liturgy and is **forbidden** on Divine Child church property, indoors AND outdoors.

SOME NOTES ABOUT THE CEREMONY

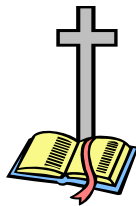


THE WEDDING PARTY

When selecting couples for the wedding party, keep in mind that only two witnesses, besides the church minister, are required by civil and Church law. Please select only one Best Man and one Maid/Matron of Honor. Please select a reasonable number of groomsmen/ushers and bridesmaids.

Also, your wedding is a sacred rite and not an occasion for "something cute." Thus, you may have a ring bearer and flower girl, but please make sure they are old enough to process comfortably down the main aisle without being afraid.

The bride and groom, with the best man and maid of honor, are the only people permitted in the Sanctuary. Other members of the wedding party are seated in the pews.



THE READINGS

Only readings from the Scriptures may be used.

Please make sure the reader/lector is capable and rehearsed. It may be an imposition to ask anyone to read if they are not motivated by faith, do not have an adequate voice, have limited mobility, or are not accustomed to speaking before a group.

Fees and Honorarium

COSTS PERTAINING TO DIVINE CHILD

Divine Child does not *rent* the church out for weddings. As you have no doubt experienced, everything related to a wedding is costly and by no means inexpensive. A total fee of \$510 covers the following expenses related to your wedding at Divine Child:

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR/EVALUATION	\$210
ORGANIST	150
CHURCH STIPEND	150
TOTAL	\$510

A MARRIAGE PREPARATION CLASS PLUS A NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP) CLASS ARE ALSO REQUIRED, BUT PAYMENT IS DIRECTED TO THE SPONSOR WHERE THE CLASS IS HELD.

You may drop off the total fee of \$510 in an envelope when you drop off your marriage license and any remaining paperwork to the Rectory at least **one week** prior to the ceremony.

To keep costs at a minimum, we respectfully ask that the couple leave the church building as it was before the ceremony. Please do not leave any food containers, empty flower boxes, water, other beverage containers, extra programs or pew bows behind. **It is expected that the couple take the responsibility for this minimal amount of clean-up.**

HONORARIUM

The priest who is responsible for your wedding preparation and celebration has given a great deal of his time, expertise, and personal support in helping you prepare. If you choose to give a monetary gift (honorarium), it is appreciated but not required. **Also, if you wish to invite the priest to the reception, please do this by way of written invitation.**

A small (\$5-10 each) honorarium is also requested for the altar servers (usually two).

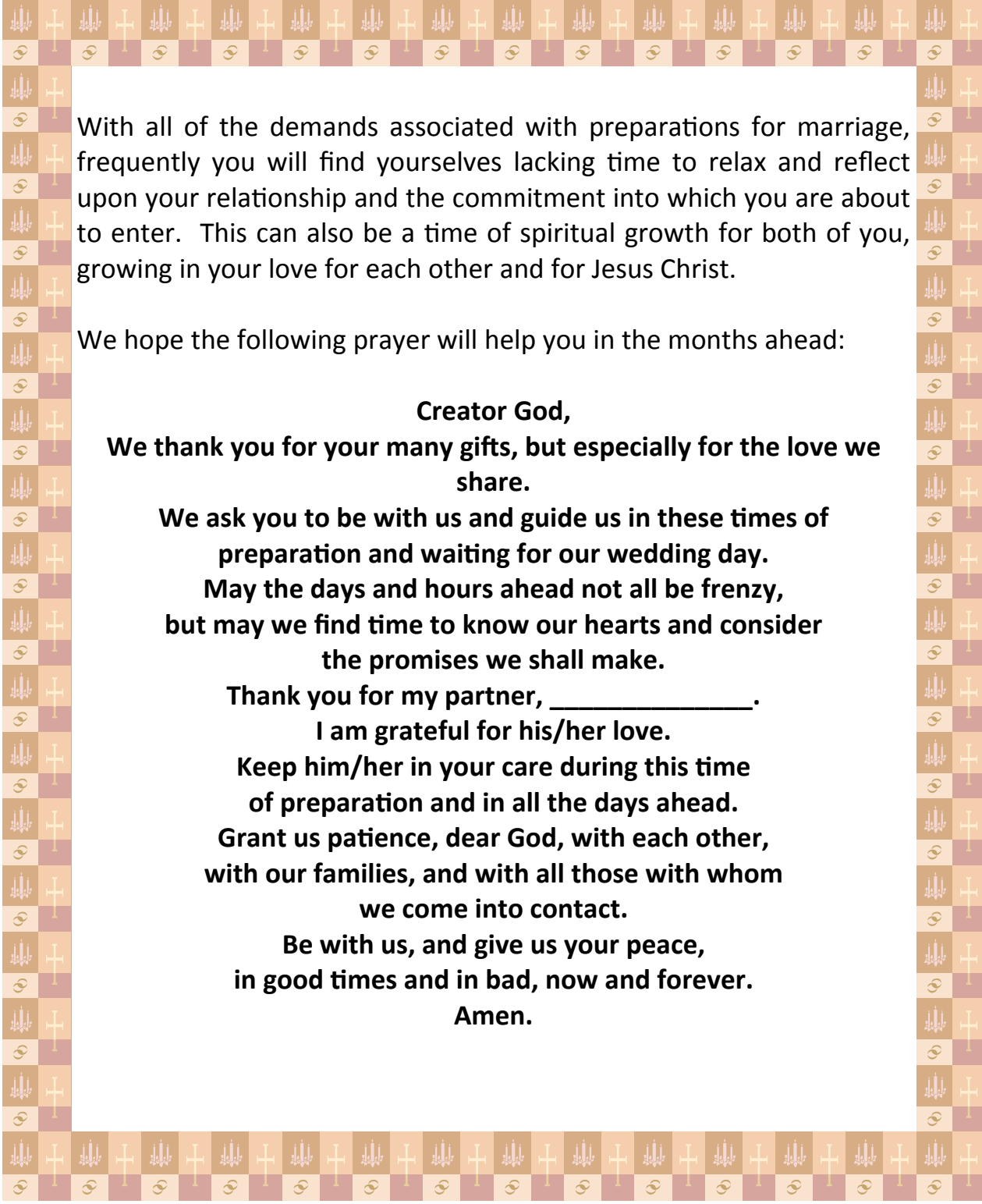
"To Do" Marriage Checklist

- Complete required marriage forms.
- Obtain a copy of your Baptismal Certificate **dated within 6 months of the wedding date** and deliver or have mailed to the Rectory Office.
- Complete the PREPARE evaluation, including meetings with Marriage Counselor and priest.
- Attend Natural Family Planning (NFP) instruction.
- Attend a Marriage Preparation class.
- Plan the liturgy and ceremony (choosing readings) and consult with the priest celebrating the wedding approximately one month prior to your wedding date.
- Schedule the wedding rehearsal.
- Apply for the Marriage License with the County Clerk. There are some requirements, and the Clerk's Office will advise you of these. Remember, the Marriage License is only valid for 30 days.

At Least One Week Before the Ceremony

Deliver to the Rectory Office:

- Signed photographer and/or videographer contracts.
- The Marriage License (3 original copies).
- Your envelope with payment (\$510) for marriage expenses performed at Divine Child: Organist fee (\$150), Church fee (\$150) and Marriage Counselor fee (\$210) - make check payable to "*Divine Child.*"



With all of the demands associated with preparations for marriage, frequently you will find yourselves lacking time to relax and reflect upon your relationship and the commitment into which you are about to enter. This can also be a time of spiritual growth for both of you, growing in your love for each other and for Jesus Christ.

We hope the following prayer will help you in the months ahead:

**Creator God,
We thank you for your many gifts, but especially for the love we share.**

**We ask you to be with us and guide us in these times of preparation and waiting for our wedding day.
May the days and hours ahead not all be frenzy,
but may we find time to know our hearts and consider the promises we shall make.**

**Thank you for my partner, _____.
I am grateful for his/her love.**

**Keep him/her in your care during this time of preparation and in all the days ahead.
Grant us patience, dear God, with each other, with our families, and with all those with whom we come into contact.**

**Be with us, and give us your peace,
in good times and in bad, now and forever.
Amen.**



Rules for the Bride's and Bridesmaids' Dresses for the Wedding



Every individual is judged not only by what he/she says or does, but also by their appearance. The way a person grooms and dresses should be a reflection of their values and attitudes.

Often we get phone calls from brides asking about the appropriateness of certain dress styles for their bridesmaids or themselves. Below are two rules that our Divine Child priests say you **MUST** follow:

Use good judgment and exercise discretion. You are receiving a holy sacrament in church and should keep this in mind when choosing your dress style.

Maintain a standard of appearance which reflects the modesty and the seriousness of the marriage ceremony.

We discourage you from choosing dresses that are strapless, low-cut, backless, clingy, tight-fitting or sheer.

If you or your bridesmaids choose a strapless or spaghetti-strap dress, you must wear some type of jacket, shawl or wrap during the church service.