

*Congratulations and may God bless you  
on the announcement of your engagement!  
The priests and staff of St. Gabriel  
share your joy and are happy to prepare you for the  
Sacrament of Marriage.*

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION AT SAINT GABRIEL

### FIRST STEP

You should answer these important questions:

1. Am I a Parishioner?  
A Parishioner is someone who is a registered member of the parish and lives in the area of Saddle River.
2. Am I a practicing Catholic?  
A practicing Catholic joins his or her fellow Parishioners for Sunday Eucharist on a weekly basis, has a mature understanding of the Catholic Faith and participates in the life of the community.
3. Am I free to enter the Sacrament of Marriage?  
In order to be married in a Catholic ceremony, each party, whether Catholic or not, must be free to marry. If either of you have been married, whether civilly or in a Church ceremony, you will need to have your marriage annulled by the Catholic Church. This needs to be discussed with the priest who is preparing you for marriage.

### THE NEXT STEP

- At least one year before the desired date of marriage, you should contact a priest here at Saint Gabriel. That priest will want to discuss your answers to the first step questions.

- Persons 18 years old or younger must enter a special counseling program and receive approval from the Archbishop before a wedding date can be set.



### ONCE YOU HAVE A DATE, THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE NEEDED

- As a couple, you will fill out a Pre-Nuptial Investigation form with the priest, stating identity, status in the Church and freedom to marry.

- For Non-Catholics, testimony is needed from a relative or close friend confirming the truth of your personal freedom to marry.

- You will need to provide a **newly** issued Baptismal Certificate, providing evidence of a Catholic (or other Christian) Baptism. It must be a new certificate (dated within six months of the marriage).

- A marriage License needs to be obtained from the State of New Jersey's Registrar's office. It is valid for one month.

### GOD'S PLAN FOR A JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE AND PRE-CANA CONFERENCES

The Archdiocese of Newark offers both (pre-marriage) conferences at a variety of locations and times throughout the area.

The priest who will be celebrating the Sacrament with you can tell you how to make a reservation, or you can call the office Ministry for Pre-Cana at 973-497-4328.

You can also visit their website to register.

<http://www.rcan.org/famlife/marriagefamily.htm>



### PLANNING THE CEREMONY

You will plan the ceremony, together with the priest who will witness your marriage. We recommend a Nuptial Mass for couples who have been practicing their faith regularly. Otherwise, we recommend a simple wedding ceremony especially for interfaith marriages. We will assist you with all the liturgical details of your wedding. The Church encourages innovation and personal planning - the active involvement of the couple in the planning as well as the celebration of the wedding itself. We recommend the active participation of as many family members and guests as possible, in the readings and prayers.

### WEDDING TIMES

- Friday afternoon and evening is flexible depending on what is already booked in the Church.

- Saturday afternoon at 1:00pm or 3pm.

### REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are booked around events already scheduled in the Church. We have a first-come, first-served policy. You may want to book your rehearsal on your first appointment with one of the priests so as to avoid conflict with the other Church events.

### TRAFFIC

Sometimes Route 17 is heavy with traffic. Please make every effort to have your wedding party be on time for the rehearsal and wedding.

### PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

Photographers and videographers are welcome in our Church during the ceremony. Picture taking without a flash or video without lights is permitted during the ceremony. Naturally, photographers are not permitted to enter the sanctuary, choir loft, or disrupt the ceremony. Please advise them of these rules. We recognize that picture taking is important, but it should not distract us from the ceremony.

### DECORATING

- Flowers: any and all kinds of flowers are more than welcome in the Church. Most couples order two arrangements. Normally, we never place anything on top of the altar except the bouquet to the Blessed Mother. We would greatly appreciate it if you left your flowers in the Church after the wedding so that the whole parish community can appreciate them during the weekend.

- Seasonal decorations in the Church building are a part of the community's expression of worship and will enhance your ceremony as a reminder of the season in which you exchanged your vows.

**- Aisle runners are not permitted in the Church, according to the insurance regulations of the Archdiocese of Newark.**

**- Flower girls are not permitted to drop flower petals (real or fake) when they are walking down the aisle.**

**- We do not permit the throwing of any substances (rice, bird seed, rose petals, confetti, etc.) at the Church because of safety reasons. Bubbles balloons and hand bells are allowed outside on the Church Steps.**



#### OFFICIAL WITNESSES

Your Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor do not have to be Catholic, but must be at least 18 years of age.

#### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

We encourage Catholics to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Penance shortly before their wedding so as to enter marriage as selflessly and spiritually whole as possible. Arrangements may be made for this to occur after the rehearsal or on the Saturday before your wedding ceremony.

#### FINANCIAL OFFERING

It is impossible for a couple to express adequately their thanks to God for the gifts of their lives and their vocation together. Financial offerings are one small way to express such sentiments. The suggested offering for Saint Gabriel is \$300 for parishioners and \$600 for non-parishioners. The offering can be made to the parish before the ceremony.

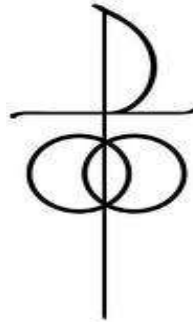
#### WEDDING MUSIC GUIDELINES.

The Music Director of our Parish, Stacie Yao, is available to assist you in the planning of Sacred Music for this Sacrament. Prior to your wedding, you should download and read the Music Ministry's Wedding Music Guidelines and listen to wedding music samples on our website (<http://www.stgabrielsr.org>). The music planner will guide you to select wedding music that is both appropriate and beautiful for your ceremony. The organist's fee is \$325, and the parish cantor's fee is \$200. Please contact Stacie after your first meeting with the priest, so that she can reserve your wedding date in the music calendar and answer any questions you might have about the role of music in your Wedding Mass or Ceremony.

Stacie Yao– Director of Music  
email: [syao@stgabrielsr.org](mailto:syao@stgabrielsr.org)

*Peace and blessings to you  
as you continue with your marriage  
preparation.  
We hope you can appreciate  
our set of policies and procedures*

*and not see them as merely “do’s and dont’s.”  
We are committed to making the  
Sacrament of Marriage beautiful and  
meaningful for you and your guests as well as  
respectful  
to our rich heritage as Catholic Christians.  
Please be assured of our assistance and  
prayers as we journey together in preparation  
for your wedding day.*



St. Gabriel the Archangel

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Saddle River, NJ 07458

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## The Sacrament of Marriage

At

## Saint Gabriel the Archangel



**88 East Saddle River Road  
Saddle River, NJ 07458**