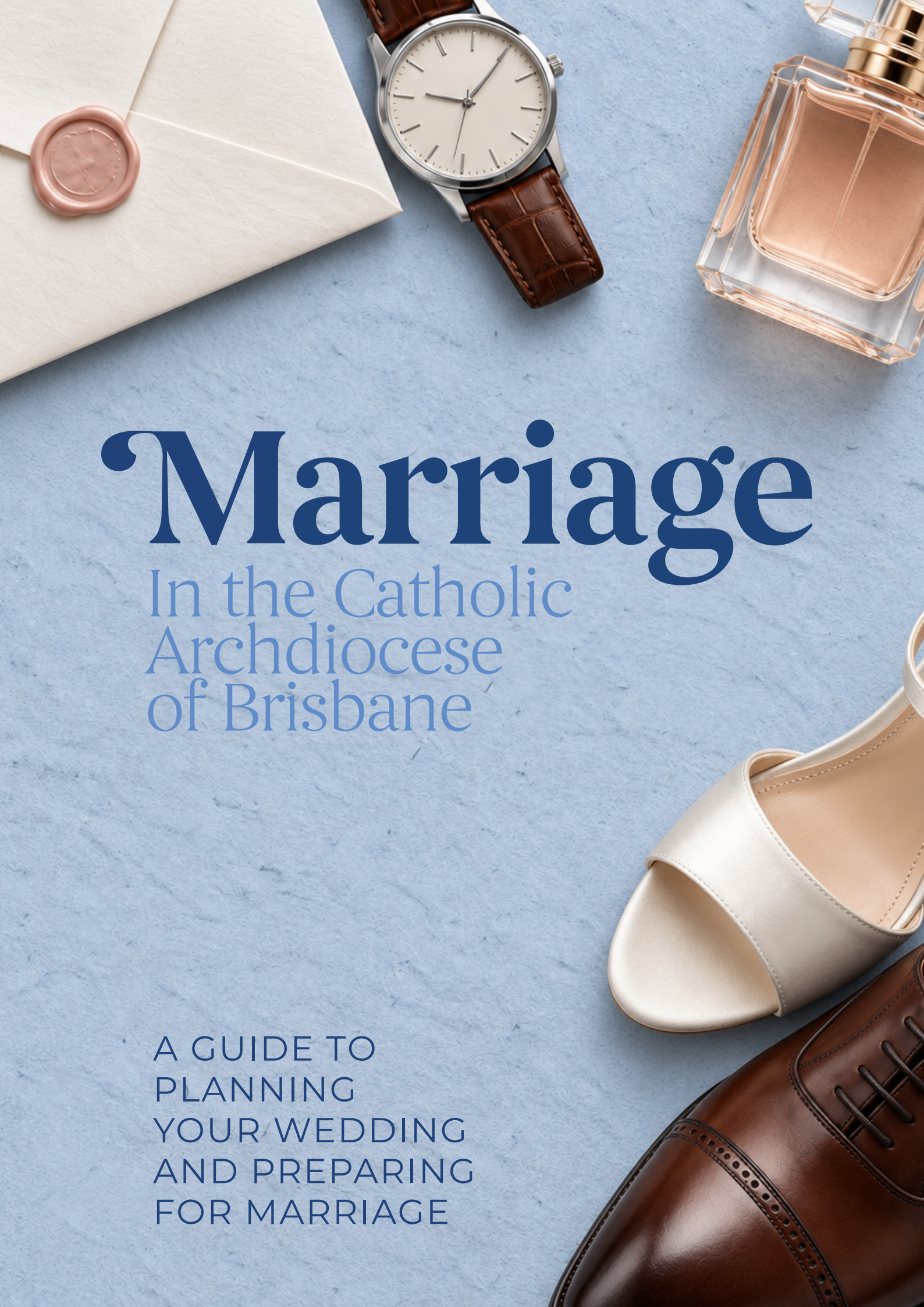


# Marriage

## In the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane

A GUIDE TO PLANNING YOUR WEDDING AND PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE



“Beloved,
let us love
one another
because love
is from God.”

1 John 4:7

# Congratulations!

**Engagement is an incredibly exciting time!**

When a couple marries in the Catholic Church, the whole Church celebrates with you! This is 'your day', but it's also a day for your friends, family and faith community.

This booklet will give you an overview of what it means to be married in the Catholic Church, information to help build a solid foundation for your life with your spouse, and what ceremony options are available in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

**Contents of this booklet include:**

- What marriage means in the Catholic Church
- How to choose a celebrant and a church
- What legal and Church paperwork you'll need to complete
- How to prepare your liturgy
- Selecting music for your ceremony
- Other details for the day
- Information about Pre-Marriage Education courses
- Information about Natural Fertility options
- Tips for newlyweds
- Further reading on marriage and family life

Finally, as you prepare for your wedding day and your life together, we pray that you experience God's grace and blessings in new and wonderful ways!



# The Sacrament of Marriage

Whether you decide to have Matrimony within Mass, or Matrimony without Mass (see page 8 for a full explanation), the core of a Catholic wedding is the *Celebration of Matrimony*, which is composed of three parts: the statement of intentions, the solemn consent, and the blessing and exchange of rings.

## 1. Statement of Intentions

The celebrant will ask the bride and groom three questions. To each they respond, "**I have**" or "**I will**".

> "... have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly?"
>
> "Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honour each other for as long as you both shall live?"
>
> "Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

## 2. Solemn Consent

The bride and groom say their vows.

> I, NAME, take you, NAME, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be faithful to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. to love you and honour you all the days of my life.

Alternatively:

> I, NAME, take you, NAME, for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

## 3. The Exchange of Rings

The bride and groom exchange rings.

> NAME, receive this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

## A visible sign of an invisible reality

The Church celebrates seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Marriage.

With God's grace, through sacred words and gestures, each sacrament makes visible an invisible reality.

In marriage, a man and woman give themselves to one another and truly become one.

Unlike the other sacraments of the Church, it is the husband and wife who are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage; the celebrant is the witness.

In the Catholic tradition, the vows spouses make on their wedding day reflect four important ways they give their 'gift of self' to one another: freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully.

| | |
|---|---|
| **FREELY** | I choose this marriage willingly, not because I am being forced or pressured. |
| **TOTALLY** | I give you my whole self, not just part of my life or love. |
| **FAITHFULLY** | I am committed to you alone, through good times and bad, for as long as we both live. |
| **FRUITFULLY** | I am open to welcoming and raising children, and to the good that our shared love can bring about. |

Because they are the ministers of the sacrament, spouses reaffirm these vows throughout their married life in the ways they intentionally give themselves to one another. This is expressed particularly when they lovingly engage in sexual intercourse, but also in the many ways they serve and care for one another 'all the days of their life'.







# Choosing a Celebrant and Church

A key consideration for your wedding will be selecting a venue that suits your location, budget, guest list, and taste. There are more than 150 churches spread across the Archdiocese of Brisbane to choose from, and weddings can be held at any of these. You can contact the Parish Office of any Catholic church in the archdiocese to discuss availability and logistics.




Follow this link tinyurl.com/FindCatholicChurch or scan the QR code to find a Catholic Church near you.

Priests and deacons typically celebrate weddings held at their church, but couples can request priests who are family members or friends (which requires permission from the parish and potential additional paperwork if the celebrant is from another diocese).

If you want a priest from overseas or another part of Australia as your celebrant, contact the Episcopal Offices for guidance on necessary professional standards paperwork (e.g. Blue Card, Queensland Marriage Licence) that may need to be obtained.

**Contact the Episcopal Office:**
Phone: 07 3324 3415
Email: faculties@bne.catholic.net.au

If your fiancé is from a different Christian denomination or another religion and wants a religious representative to participate in your wedding ceremony, please speak with your Catholic celebrant.

# Completing Legal and Church Paperwork

To be married in the State of Queensland, the following documents must be signed:

- Notice of Intended Marriage (signed no later than one month before the date of your wedding)
- Declaration of No Legal Impediment to Marriage
- Official Certificate of Marriage

The Catholic Church also requires the following documents:

- Pre-Marriage Inquiry Form
- Permission for Mixed Marriage (that is, when one person is baptised in a non-Catholic Christian tradition) or Dispensation from Disparity of Worship (when one fiancé is not a baptised Catholic).
- In the instance of previous marriage, proof of an annulment

Your celebrant will prepare these documents with you as part of your pre-marriage meetings and submit them to the Queensland Government and Archdiocese of Brisbane after your wedding.

**What to bring to your first wedding appointment with your celebrant:**

- [ ] Photocopies and originals of your birth certificates
- [ ] Photocopies and originals of your passport or drivers license
- [ ] Proof of residence (e.g. a recent utilities bill)
- [ ] Your baptism and confirmation certificates, if applicable

**Topics that may be discussed at your first wedding appointment:**

- [ ] Whether either of you has been married before, and whether an annulment has been granted (in the case of a previous Catholic marriage)
- [ ] Your faith backgrounds, and whether one partner is a non-Catholic
- [ ] What your understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage is, and why you wish to be married

# Preparing Your Wedding Liturgy

Because marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church, a Catholic wedding has a standard order of service called a liturgy. However, many details can still be tailored to suit you. For example, you have the choice between a full Nuptial Mass and a Wedding Ceremony.

### What is the difference between a Nuptial Mass and a Wedding Ceremony?

A **Wedding Ceremony** is when the celebration of a wedding takes place in a Catholic Church with a short Liturgy of the Word (bible readings), the exchange of vows and rings, a series of prayers, and a final blessing. This may suit couples who aren't both Catholic, or who'd prefer a shorter service (around 30 minutes).

A **Nuptial Mass** is when the celebration of a wedding takes place in the context of a full Catholic Mass, with the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This is a longer ceremony, usually taking about an hour. This may suit couples who share a Catholic faith and would like to receive communion together on their wedding day (See page 9 for further details).

Your celebrant will discuss your preference and the specific details of your Liturgy. For the Liturgy of the Word, there are several different Bible readings to choose (see Appendix A). For more resources on Liturgy planning, please visit liturgybrisbane.net.au.

Your wedding booklet will usually include an order of service, which helps family and friends follow the liturgy. For non-Catholic guests it can be helpful to include instructions on when to sit, stand and kneel, as well as any responses they can join in saying. Again, your celebrant can give you guidance regarding your wedding booklet.



# Example Liturgies

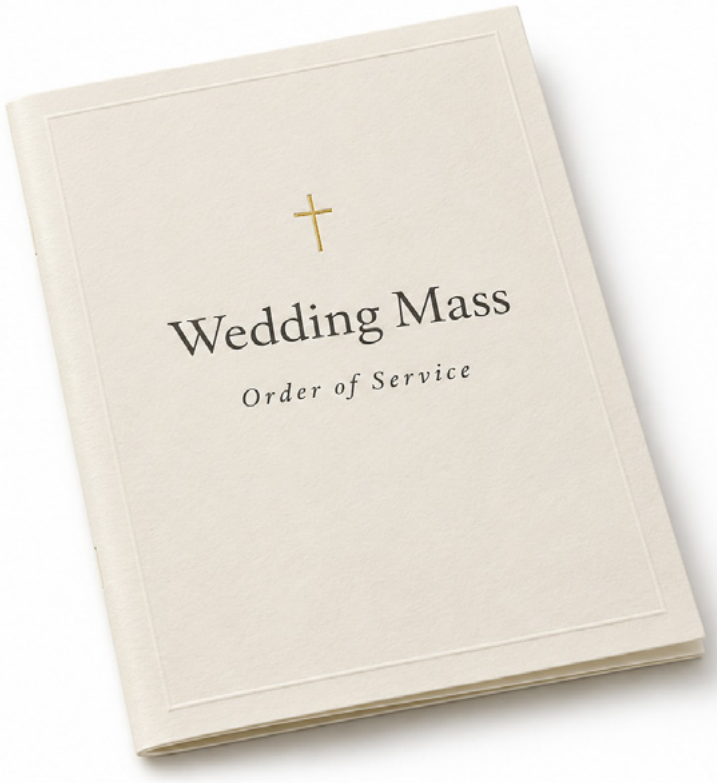
**Nuptial Mass**
(Matrimony within Mass)

*Bridal Procession*
Introductory Rites
First Reading
*Responsorial Psalm*
Second Reading
*Gospel Acclamation*
Gospel Reading
Homily
**Statement of Intentions**
**Declaration of Consent**
**Giving of Rings**
*Hymn of Praise*
Prayers of the Faithful
*Offertory*
Preface
*Holy, Holy, Holy*
Eucharistic Prayer
*Memorial Acclamation*
*Great Amen*
The Lord's Prayer
**Nuptial Blessing**
Sign of Peace
*Lamb of God*
*Communion*
*Thanksgiving Hymn*
Final Blessing
*Signing of the Register*
*Recessional Hymn*

*Please note, the use of italics indicates a moment when music may be included in the liturgy*

**Wedding Ceremony**
(Matrimony without Mass)

*Bridal Procession*
Introductory Rites
First Reading
*Responsorial Psalm*
Second Reading
*Gospel Acclamation*
Gospel Reading
Homily
**Statement of Intentions**
**Declaration of Consent**
**Giving of Rings**
*Hymn of Praise*
Prayers of the Faithful
**Nuptial Blessing**
Final Blessing
*Signing of the Register*
*Recessional Hymn*



# Selecting Music for Your Wedding

Music selection is important for many couples. Different churches in the archdiocese follow different procedures to select music and musicians for ceremonies; some have choirs, vocalists or musicians accustomed to playing at weddings, and others may not. Most churches will have digital sound systems.

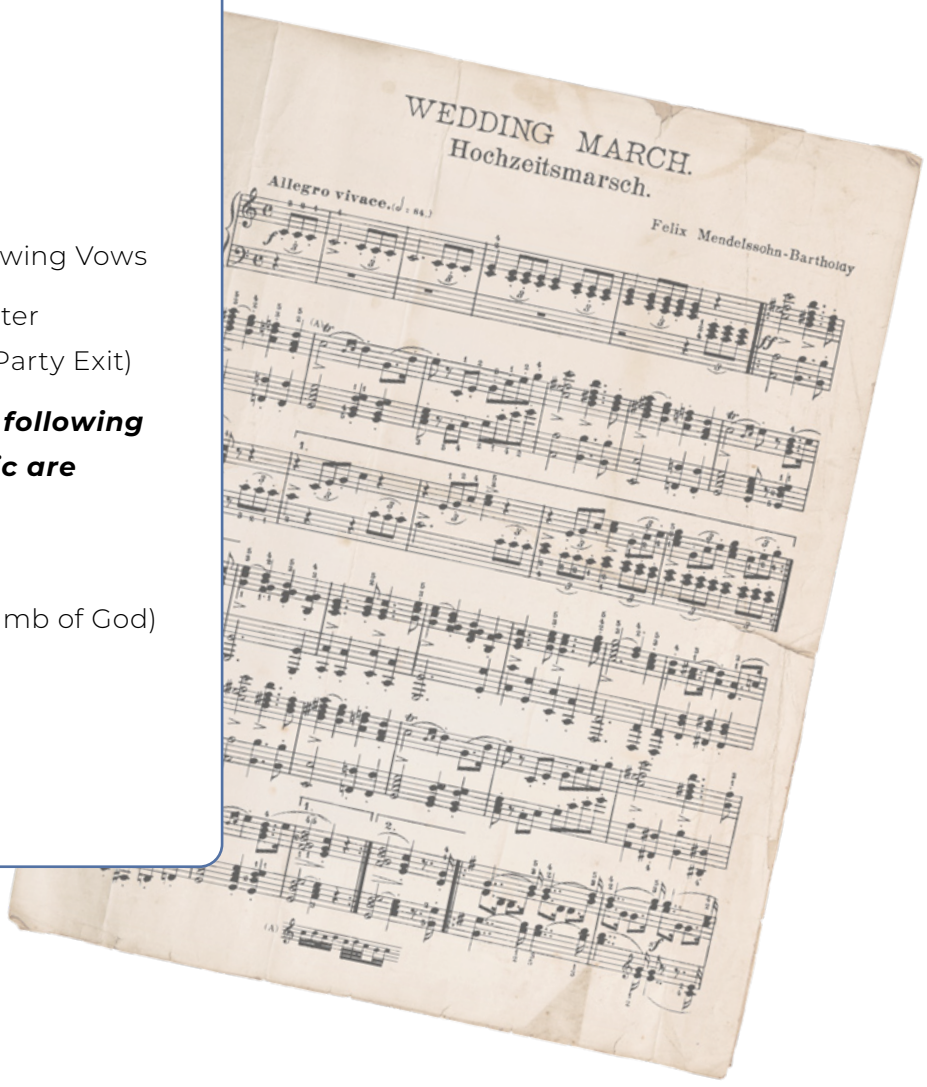
Because it is a sacred celebration, there are some guidelines around when music can be used and what kind of music is appropriate. That said, many Churches embrace contemporary sacred music. Your celebrant and musicians can help you with your choice.

### Opportunities for Music in your Wedding Ceremony

- Processional (Bridal Party Entry)
- Responsorial Psalm
- Hymn of Praise following Vows
- Signing of the Register Recessional (Bridal Party Exit)

***In a Nuptial Mass, the following opportunities for music are also present:***

- Parts of the Mass (Gloria, Holy Holy, Lamb of God)
- Offertory Hymn
- Communion Hymn
- Thanksgiving Hymn



# Opportunities to involve your family and friends

Whether a wedding ceremony or nuptial mass, there are opportunities to involve family and friends outside the bridal party (but please note that some of these roles may only be filled by Catholics). If you have any questions, please talk with your celebrant.

### Wedding ceremony

- As readers for the First or Second reading from the bible
- As readers for the Responsorial Psalm
- As readers for the the Prayers of the Faithful

### Nuptial Mass

As well as the Readings, Responsorial Psalm and Prayer of the faithful, a Nuptial Mass has other opportunities to involve family and friends.

- Taking up the gifts of bread and wine for the Offertory
- Serving as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



### Other ideas

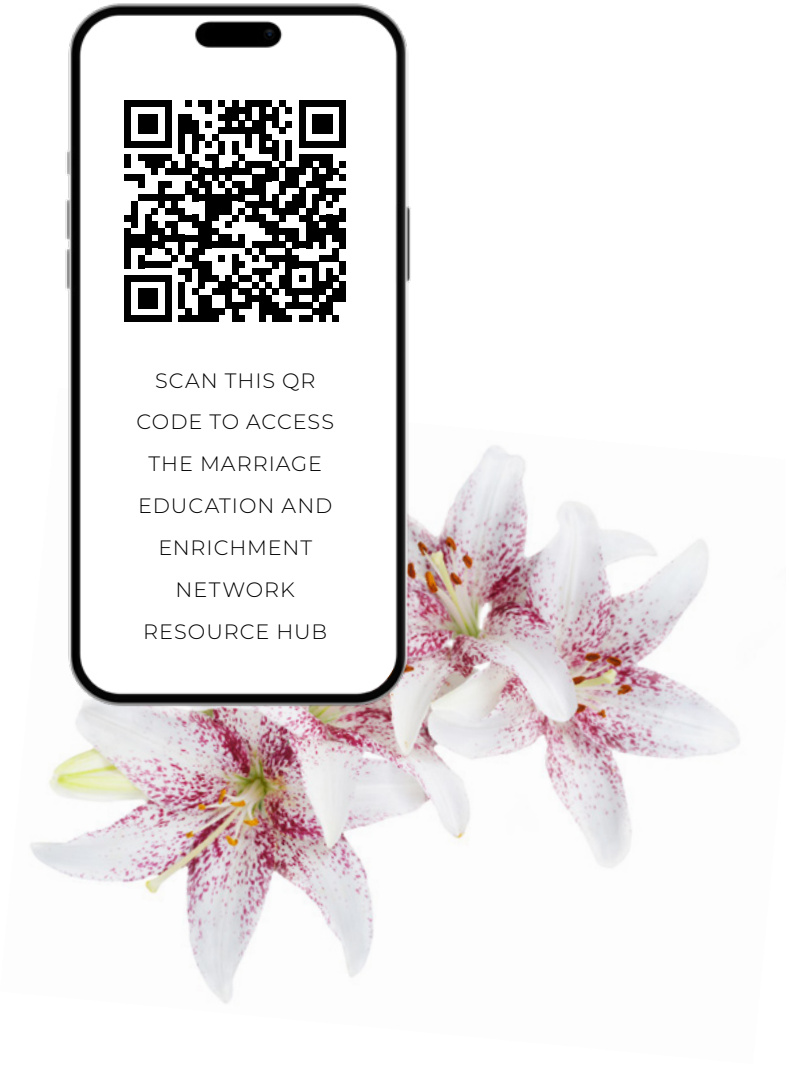
Occasionally couples want to add something into the ceremony (for example, parents of the couple lighting candles from which the couple lights a single candle). As with music, there are some guidelines around what can be done in the Liturgy. Talk with your celebrant to work out the details.

# Enrolling in a Pre-Marriage Education Course

Planning a wedding is time-consuming, but your wedding day is still just one day! It's just the beginning of the life you'll build together, which is why the Church asks couples to enroll in a Marriage Preparation Course during their engagement.

There are several options for Pre-Marriage Education in the archdiocese, varying from one-day group sessions, to weekend retreats, to private courses with a mentor couple or counsellor. Topics covered in marriage preparation courses often include – Family of origin; Lifestyle expectations and values; Communication and decision making; Romance, Sex and Sexuality; Parenting; Finances; Prayer and Faith; Resolving conflict and forgiveness.

These courses equip couples to be intentional about the life they are building, equipping them with knowledge, skills, and habits that will lead to many anniversaries! To find a course that suits your circumstances visit the Marriage Education and Enrichment Network Resource Hub at archdiocesanministries.org.au/marriage-resources/ or scan the QR code below.



# A few tips for newlyweds

Throughout your marriage, life will change. All couples experience times of sorrow and joy, sickness and health, and changing resources. And as you grow in maturity and experience, you will also change. Putting some things in place early can set you up for success!

## 1. Pray

God's grace is available in all the seasons of married life, and you can deepen your experience of this grace through prayer; either using pre-prepared prayers (see appendix B) or just praying in your own words. Either way, asking God to be with you in the ups and downs can bring peace and clarity. Also remember to give thanks, even for the little things. Gratitude is a powerful antidote to the negative things that can affect marriage and family life.

## 2. Find a 'village'

Cultivating relationships with a supportive network of people who believe in your relationship can be an anchor to support you through tough times.

Many of our Catholic parishes, ministries and organisations can be great places to build relationships with others. Following your wedding day, we encourage you to attend Sunday Mass, perhaps in the Church you were married in, to meet parishioners and touch base with your celebrant.

## 3. Make time

For marriages to grow, there needs to be time for deeper communication. Intentionally planning time and space for each other is important. This could consist of regular daily check-ins and weekly 'date nights' through to weekends away each year; whatever your budget and lifestyle allow. The most important thing is to make them a priority. The more you know your spouse and what's happening in their life, the better able you will be to love them.

If you'd like a little help making that time together, Archdiocesan Ministries' Date Night offerings give couples a chance to step away from everyday routines, talk and reconnect. archdiocesanministries.org.au/date-night/

## 4. Words matter

Some worry that saying 'I love you' too much lessens its meaning or potency, but in marriage the opposite is true! Saying 'I love you' to your spouse affirms your commitment and tells them they're loved and lovable.

Another powerful phrase is 'I appreciate you', particularly when life gets busy. Expressing appreciation tells your spouse that you see them, you notice all they're doing, and they make a difference in your life.

## 5. Traditions and Celebrations

Intentionally marking milestones and special days is important for families. The traditions and celebrations you choose to observe help to put your faith and values into action, create a healthy rhythm for the life you share, and contribute to the story of your family for generations to come. Some will be unique to you and others won't. Either way, you get to choose! The Church has many wonderful traditions that help make faith a part of your family story so take some time to find out more about seasons like Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and All Saints!

## 6. Give back

Rather than a private agreement between two people that build a comfortable life together, Catholic marriage is about giving yourself to each other, being open to children and raising them well, and nurturing your life of faith, in the community and beyond. Achieving this depends on your current circumstances, but doing things for others can create a great foundation for your relationship and family. Try some of these to get started:

- Get to know your neighbours and make a point of saying 'hello'.
- Visit older family members together.
- Get involved in your local parish charity, even just occasionally.
- Talk together about a charity to donate to and make a donation.

There are so many options out there! Giving back to the community helps us practice generosity, cultivate gratitude in our relationships, and become couples who reflect God's love to others.

# Further Reading

### Vatican Documents

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1601 -1658

Amoris Laetitia: On Love in the Family (Pope Francis, 2015)

Theology of the Body (St John Paul II, 1979-1984)

Familiaris Consortio: On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World (St John Paull II, 1981) Gaudium et Spes, Part II, Chapter I: Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family (Pope Paul VI, 1973)

Humanae Vitae: On the Regulation of Birth (Pope Paul VI, 1968)

### Books and Online Resources

The Gottman Institute: gottman.com/blog

Smart Loving Blog: smartloving.org/blog

YOUCAT Love Forever: https://youcat.org/products/love-forever/

When We Marry (Liturgy Brisbane)

Flame of Faith (Children's Sacraments of Initiation): https://archdiocesanministries.org.au/flame-of-faith/

### For enriching your faith

Catholic Christianity: catholicchristianity.org

The Secret Catholic (book by Dcn Peter Pelicaan): https://archdiocesanministries.org.au/the-secret-catholic/

Bible in a year (Hosted by Fr. Mike Schmitz): available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, and the Ascension Web App

Catechism in a year (Hosted by Fr. Mike Schmitz): available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, and the Ascension Web App

Hallow: https://hallow.com/

Word on Fire: https://www.wordonfire.org/

Bible Gateway: https://www.biblegateway.com/



"Love is always patient and kind
Love is never jealous; love
is not boastful or conceited.
Love is never rude and never
seeks its own advantage.
Love does not take offence
or store up grievances.
Love does not rejoice at
wrongdoing, but finds
its joy in the truth.
Love is always ready to make
allowances, to trust, to hope
and to endure whatever comes.
Love never comes to an end."

1 Corinthians 13

# Appendix A: Commonly Used Wedding Readings

### First Reading

This reading is usually taken from one of the books of the Old Testament.
The following are often used:

Genesis 1:26-28

Genesis 2:18-24

Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67

Tobit 7: 6-14

Tobit 8:4-8

Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16; 8:6-7

Sirach 26:1-4, 16-21

Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

### Responsorial Psalm

This is taken from the book of Psalms. Excerpts from Psalm 32, 33, 102, 111, 127, 144 and 148 are all popular choices

### Gospel Reading

This is selected from one of the four Gospels. The following are often used:

Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:13-16 Light and Salt

Matthew 7:21, 24-29
The House on Rock

Matthew 19:3-6
What God has united

Matthew 22:35-40
The Greatest Command

Mark 10:6-9
The two become one body

John 2:1-11
The Wedding at Cana

John 15:9-16
Love one another as I have loved you

John 17:20-26
I pray that they may be one

### Second Reading

This reading is usually taken from one of the letters in the New Testament.
The following are often used:

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39

Romans 12:1-2, 9-13

Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13

1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20

1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:8

Ephesians 4:1-6

Ephesians 5:2, 21-33

Philippians 4:4-9

Colossians 3:12-17

Hebrews 13:1-6

1 Peter 3:1-9

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-12

Revelation 19:1, 5-9

# Appendix B: Prayers for Your Marriage

### Praying with scripture

Catholics can read and pray with the scripture readings found in the lectionary. Before you read, ask God to open your heart and mind so that you can understand how it might apply to you, then read the scripture and reflect on it. Using these Daily Reflections can help. Just subscribe at archdiocesanministries.org.au/daily-reflections/

### The Examen

This is a simple examination of your day, usually just before bed. This may include reflecting on and/or sharing with your spouse the moments when you experienced God's grace, the things you are grateful for, anything you want to say 'sorry' for, and your prayers for the next day.

### The Rosary

A familiar Catholic prayer involving five 'decades' of prayer, each consisting of an Our Father, ten Hail Marys and the Glory Be, while contemplating the Joyful, Sorrowful, Luminous and Glorious mysteries of Jesus' life. For a helpful example of praying the Rosary follow this link and pray along with Fr Mike Schmitz. tinyurl.com/RosarywithMike



# Appendix C: Thinking about kids

### Planning your family naturally

"The use of methods based on the 'laws of nature and the incidence of fertility' (HV 11) are to be promoted, since 'these methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them and favour the education of an authentic freedom" Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 222.

Along with 'freely, totally and faithfully' the fourth defining element of Catholic marriage is 'fruitfully'. Essentially, the love between spouses who embrace Catholic marriage is creative and life-giving. Couples give themselves totally to each other in the Sacrament of Marriage, along with the gift of their fertility and their openness to children. Therefore, the Church promotes fertility awareness methods that work with the rhythm of the human body, promote communication between spouses and long-term health for both husbands and wives.




There are a number of different Fertility Awareness Methods of natural family planning that help couples identify their windows of fertility in order to achieve or delay pregnancy. For more information, see the Marriage Education and Enrichment Network Resource Hub (QR code included).

### Raising kids in the faith

St Mother Teresa said "How can there be too many children? That is like saying there are too many flowers".

One day, we pray that you and your spouse have the joy of welcoming children into your family. When that time comes, remember the Church is here to help you raise them in the faith, know God's love, and the great gift of life.

Baptism is the doorway to relationship with God and the Church. You can arrange a baptism for your child by contacting the celebrant who presided at your wedding or by phoning any of the Catholic churches previously listed.

For information about the Sacraments of Initiation for children head to flameoffaith.org.au or scan the QR code.



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