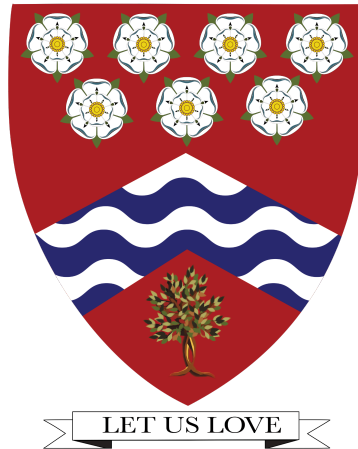


# Church of the Little Flower Wedding Planner Guide



310 Plainfield Avenue  
Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922  
Parish Center - 908-464-1585

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding!

The Church of the Little Flower extends a sincere welcome to you as you enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony. We are privileged to be part of this sacramental occasion with you. We pray that the grace of God that has brought you to this point of engagement will continue to guide you through your preparations and each day of your married lives.

In our Catholic Christian faith, *“the Sacrament of Marriage signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with 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 the way to eternal life.”* (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1799)

For this reason, weddings customarily take place in the sanctuary of a church in the presence of Christian witnesses and invited guests. We recognize Matrimony as a sign of God's presence in this world, a sign made visible for all to see through the love, fidelity and commitment of two people of faith. As such, our Christian tradition celebrates matrimony as a solemn and sacred event. We hope that your marriage celebration in our church will be blessed with God's grace and with all that you desire.

### **Getting Started**

Please contact one of the parish priests to schedule a date and time for your wedding. The Catholic Church in New Jersey asks that the wedding date be set at least one full year in advance so that all necessary requirements can be fulfilled.

The priest will then set up a time to meet with you to fill out some initial paperwork.

### **Rules for priests from another parish or religious order visiting Little Flower to witness or participate in your ceremony:**

- *If your Catholic presider is from outside the parish, but within the State of New Jersey, he* is responsible for requesting permission to marry you at Little Flower by contacting the pastor, Fr. JC Merino at the parish office or by email at [frjc.littleflower@gmail.com](mailto:frjc.littleflower@gmail.com). He also must submit a copy of the front and back of his "Suitability of Priestly Ministry" card. If a Little Flower priest is not involved in your ceremony, the presider will also be responsible for your marriage paperwork and preparation. All details regarding your rehearsal and wedding at Little Flower will be coordinated with your presider and our sacristan once we receive the above information.
- *If your Catholic presider is from outside the parish **and** from another state, he* is responsible for requesting permission to marry you at Little Flower by contacting the pastor, Fr. JC Merino at the parish office or by email at [frjc.littleflower@gmail.com](mailto:frjc.littleflower@gmail.com). He will need to send a copy of his proof of faculties and a letter stating that he is in "good standing" with his diocese. This letter should be received from their Diocesan Bishop or Provincial Superior addressed to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Newark (171 Clifton Ave., PO Box 9500, Newark, NJ 07104 or fax to 973-497-4525). The letter must

include the nature and duration of the visit. If a Little Flower priest is not involved in your ceremony, the visiting presider will also be responsible for your marriage paperwork and preparation. All details regarding your rehearsal and wedding day at Little Flower will be coordinated with your presider and our sacristan once we receive the above information.

## Fees

Check For:	Amount:	Payable To:
Church	\$500	Little Flower Church
Sacristan	\$100	Cash
Cantor/Soloist	\$200	Cash
Musician	\$300	Cash

*\*\*It is customary to give the priest a gift in the form of a monetary donation, however, to do so is at your discretion.*

Checks should not be dated further than six months before the wedding date. **All payments should be brought to your wedding rehearsal.**

## Documentation

The following documents are required for every marriage:

- Baptismal Record:** Dated no earlier than six months prior to the wedding date. The bride and groom must obtain a **new** baptismal record from the church where you were baptized. (Be sure to tell the church contact person that you need the certificate for your upcoming marriage). If you were baptized at Little Flower, your records are here.
- As part of the instructional portion of the marriage preparation process, you must participate in:
  - **Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter**
  - **God's Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage**
  - **FOCCUS Pre-Marriage Inventory**

A certificate will be awarded to you upon your completion of the instruction.

- **License:** The license is issued by the Municipal Clerk's office in the municipality where you reside or where your wedding will take place. **If you live outside of New Jersey, please consult your priest prior to getting your license.** It is valid for 30 days. There is a 72 hour waiting period from the time you apply to the time the license is actually issued. It is a good idea to apply no later than one week prior to your wedding date. You will need to have one witness who can testify for you at the time of your application. **You must bring the license to the wedding rehearsal.**

### **Order of Celebrating Matrimony Within Mass or Without Mass?**

The marriage liturgy can either be celebrated within Mass or without Mass. A celebration within Mass consists of the Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, the Rite of Marriage, the Liturgy of the Eucharist (Communion) and the Concluding Rite. A celebration without Mass includes all of the above except the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

If both the bride and groom are Catholic, they are encouraged to celebrate within Mass. In the case where one partner is not Catholic, a celebration without Mass is recommended.

### **Selection of Liturgical Texts**

During the course of your marriage preparation process, you will receive a copy of "Celebrating Marriage." This workbook contains the selections of readings and prayers used in the Order of Celebrating Matrimony. We ask that you read these selections and choose the readings that speak to you about the spirituality of your marriage. **Please note that the readings from the Mass of the day and not the workbook must be used if your wedding takes place on a Sunday during the seasons of Advent, Lent, Easter or on a Solemnity.** The priest will guide you in these choices during your preparation meetings.

### **Participants in Your Wedding**

You may want to invite members of your family and friends to participate in your wedding in ways other than in the bridal party. Three readers (one each for the First Reading, the Second Reading and the Universal Prayers), as well as two people to present the gifts of bread and wine (within Mass only), may be invited to participate. You may wish to include

friends and family who are Eucharistic Ministers to participate as well. The priest will guide you in these choices during your preparation meetings.

## **Music**

The suitability of the words of songs chosen for your wedding ceremony is an important consideration. The concept of “love” is characterized by commitment and fidelity, and supported by the love of Christ. Popular songs often stress the couple only and exclude God and Church.

When planning the music, we invite you to reflect on what you are coming to understand in your preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage as a mirror of Christ’s love for the Church. The music you choose should reflect that understanding.

Our Pastoral Associate for Music Ministry will guide you in your selections. You will plan your music approximately 3 months prior to your wedding.

## **Rehearsal**

Rehearsals are approximately 45 minutes and are arranged between you and the priest presiding at your wedding. The sacristan will be present to assist at your rehearsal as well. Please be prompt for your rehearsal time. Rehearsals can be held anytime from one week before the wedding through the day/evening before the wedding.

## **Wedding Day**

It is important for you and for the parish that your wedding begins and ends on time. The entire wedding ceremony is scheduled for one hour (within Mass) and 45 minutes (without Mass). Please plan your ceremony within that time frame.

## **Program**

If you have prepared a worship aid to be distributed at your wedding, you can bring them to the rehearsal. We recommend that the groomsmen distribute them to the guests upon arrival at your wedding. You are not required to have a worship aid. **If you intend to do so, a draft must be sent to your presider and the Pastoral Associate for Music Ministry prior to printing.**

## Photographers and Videographers

The photographer/videographer is requested to comply with the rules of the parish regarding photography/videography during liturgies. **Flash photography is prohibited.** The photographer/videographer is requested to introduce themselves to the sacristan upon arrival at the church to review the rules.

## Flowers/Florists

Flower arrangements should be no higher than 3 feet. Flowers cannot be placed directly in front of the altar. **It is required to provide the name and telephone number of the florist to the sacristan ([LfLiturgy.Lf@gmail.com](mailto:LfLiturgy.Lf@gmail.com)) at least two weeks prior to the wedding.** The florist should contact the sacristan directly to arrange a drop off time as there is no weekend staff at Little Flower.

Flowers may be used in two areas:

- On the steps of the sanctuary leading up to the altar or near the presider chair
- On the pews - ribbons and sprays may be tied on the ends of the pews or attached with plastic clips or rubber bands. Tape of any kind is prohibited.

## Runners, Rice, etc.

The following items are permitted/not permitted for your wedding:

Permitted	Not Permitted
Ringling bells	Runners
Streamers	Flower Petals
Releasing butterflies	Rice, confetti, birdseed
Electric candles (at ends of pews)	Bubbles
	Helium Balloons
	Banners or Signs
	Wagons
	Live Animals
	Drones (inside the church)

## **ADA Accessibility**

The church has a ramp at the front entrance to access the building. Upon request the lower level of the church can be opened for guests to enter and use the elevator to enter the church. All restrooms are accessible.

## **Invitations**

Wedding invitations should say the following for the church:

The Church of the Little Flower  
310 Plainfield Avenue  
Berkeley Heights, New Jersey 07922

## **Bridal Party Vehicles For Arrival**

Vehicles with the bridal party should plan to stop in the designated area directly in front of the church on Plainfield Avenue. In cases of extreme weather, the sacristan will provide the driver(s) with alternate arrangements upon arrival.

## **Wedding Planners/Consultants**

Some couples hire a wedding consultant to plan their wedding day and wedding reception. **It is your priest and the parish wedding team who will plan and direct your wedding at the church. It is required to provide the name of your wedding planner/consultant to the sacristan ([LfLiturgy.Lf@gmail.com](mailto:LfLiturgy.Lf@gmail.com)) at least two weeks prior to the wedding.** Wedding Planners/Consultants are more than welcome to be present at your rehearsal and wedding ceremony.

## Sample Flower and Pew Arrangements

