

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING DAY

The following information and guidelines will help you as you plan to celebrate together the Sacrament of Marriage

GETTING MARRIED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH - WHAT IS NEEDED?

1. The first thing a couple need to do is to contact their local parish clergy where they live.
2. They must book the church where they wish to marry.
3. They must ensure they have a priest who has agreed to marry them.
4. The pre-nuptial enquiry form for each person must be completed by the priest, for which the following are required:
 - **A new long form Baptismal Certificate** issued within six months of the proposed date of marriage from the parish of Baptism.
 - **Indication of Confirmation** (separate certificate if not recorded on baptismal certificate).
 - **Proof of Freedom to Marry**
This can be established through the traditional letters of freedom from each of the parishes the person has lived in for six months or more since he/she was 18 years of age.

Alternatively they can ask a parent or somebody who has known them all their lives to write a letter stating their relationship to them and that to the best of their knowledge they have never been married religiously or civilly in any jurisdiction.

Another possibility is for the person to swear an affidavit before a Commissioner of Oaths attesting that he/she has never been married religiously or civilly in any jurisdiction.

It is always best to check with your local priest with regards to methods of establishing freedom to marry as practices vary from place to place.

- **Marriage Preparation Certificate**
- **Permissions and Dispensations** where applicable need to be applied for. If either party has been previously married, it is essential that freedom to marry be established before any marriage arrangements can be confirmed.

It is always best to check with your local priest with regards to the regulations and practices in your own Parishes and Dioceses with regards to planning your Marriage

in the Church.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMME

ACCORD cares about your relationship and your future together. The marriage preparation course they offer is designed with you in mind.

Your Marriage Preparation Course offers both of you the opportunity to reflect on how you communicate, to explore your understanding of commitment, how to manage conflict, how to be responsible parents and live the sacrament of marriage.

During the Marriage Preparation Programme they invite you to:

- Spend quality time together reflecting on your relationship and your future.
- Relax and enjoy an atmosphere that is respectful, confidential and fun.
- Meet other couples preparing for marriage.

Be assured that at no time during the programme will any couple or individual be placed in a situation that will cause embarrassment or distress.

CIVIL REQUIREMENTS—REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The couple must arrange to meet in person a civil registrar at least three months before the wedding to give the required three months notice of their intention to marry. (In advance of meeting the registrar, meet one of the local clergy, book the church and know the name of the priest (solemniser) who has agreed to celebrate the Marriage).

- Receive the Marriage Registration Form (MRF) from the civil registrar—without this document no marriage can take place.
- Show the MRF to the priest (solemniser) to check that details are correct.
- Make verbal declaration of no civil impediment not more than two days before marriage.
- Return the signed MRF to any civil registrar no later than one month after the wedding.

For details see www.groireland.ie

CIVIL REQUIREMENTS—NORTHERN IRELAND

- The couple may give a maximum of one year (but not less than a minimum of twenty eight days notice) of their intention to marry.
- They must approach the local registrar in the district in which the marriage is going to take place to obtain a Notice of Marriage Form (one for each party).
- Bring at least one of the Notice of Marriage Forms to the priest (officiant) who has agreed to marry them. He must sign the form(s) to indicate his willingness to officiate.
- Forward both signed Notice of Marriage Forms to the local registrar.
- One of the parties must collect the Marriage Schedule (the document to be

signed on the day of the Marriage) from the local registrar's office. The schedule cannot be issued more than fourteen days before the marriage and the Registrar will advise the couple when the marriage schedule can be collected.

- Bring the Marriage Schedule to the priest of the parish where the marriage is to take place in advance of the wedding. No marriage can take place without this Schedule.
- Return the Marriage Schedule to the local registrar within three days after the wedding.

For details see www.groni.gov.uk

The Church requirements for getting married in the Catholic Church Abroad are similar to those in Ireland. If you have arranged to get married abroad you should talk with your local priest about the necessary church documents and marriage preparation.