

Instructions for a Wedding

For a marriage to be valid sacramentally by the Orthodox Church, the following conditions must be met:

1. The Sacrament of Marriage must be celebrated by an Orthodox Priest of a canonical Orthodox jurisdiction, according to the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church, in a canonical Orthodox Church, and with the authorization of the metropolitan of the Metropolis.

Before the sacrament the Priest must verify that:

- a. neither of the parties in question are already married to other persons;
- b. the parties in question are not related to each other to a degree that would constitute an impediment;
- c. if either or both parties are widowed, they have to present death certificates of the deceased spouses;
- d. If either or both of the parties have been previously married in The Orthodox Church, they have to bring their ecclesiastical as well as civil divorces;
- e. if either the bride or groom are not stewards of St. George they must provide verification of stewardship from their home church;
- f. A month prior to the wedding a civil marriage license from the Town Hall must be obtained and brought to the priest

Spiritual Preparation

If you are an Orthodox Christian, you are urged to attend church Services regularly, and receive the Sacrament of Confession and the Sacrament of Holy Communion as preparation for your marriage. By doing so, you will bring a new vitality, a spirit and bond to your marriage that will enhance and deepen your relationship & lives.

If you are not an Orthodox Christian, you are urged to contact your parish and partake in a sacramental preparation, which will grant you Spiritual renewal, thus enabling you, also, to prepare for your wedding.

The Koumbaros/ Koumbara

- ⤴ Your sponsor must be a steward in good standing at an Orthodox church.
- ⤴ They must provide a verification letter of being a steward in good standing at their home church. This letter should include an envelope number or parishioner number and be given to the priest at least 2 weeks prior to the wedding date.
- ⤴ If the person is not in good standing with the church they cannot be a sponsor. Non-orthodox persons may be members of the wedding party, but can not exchange rings or crowns.

Dates marriages are not permitted

- ⤴ During fast days or fasting seasons. From December 12 to Dec 26, January 5th and 6th, From Clean Monday to Easter Sunday, from All Saints Sunday to June 29, from August 1 to 15, Aug 29, Sept. 14.
- ⤴ On the Great Feast Days of our Lord. January 6, Easter Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, Christmas December 24 & 25. On these days weddings are performed if it is an extreme emergency and if special permission is obtained by the Metropolitan.

Fees

In the Greek Orthodox Church there are no fees for receiving the Sacraments.

However, to cover costs incurred by the church during the wedding, there is a Church Usage Fee of \$500.

To waive the church usage fee you must:

- ⤴ Be a steward of St. George for the last 12 months,
- ⤴ Pledge a minimum of \$500 during those last 12 months. If you pledged less than \$500 then the church usage fee is reduced to the difference between your pledged amount and the \$500 fee. (I.e. if you pledged \$300, then your fee is only \$200).
- ⤴ You must be active in the life of the church during the 12 months preceding the wedding date.
- ⤴ Of course, if you are having financial difficulties then you should discuss your situation with the priest.

Required Items for the Sacrament

- ▲ Affidavit for License to Marry (must be received prior to first meeting).
- ▲ Couple's stewardship pledge (must be received prior to first meeting).
- ▲ Copies of Baptismal certificates (must be received prior to the first meeting).
- ▲ The sponsor's current stewardship pledge or stewardship confirmation.
- ▲ Civil Marriage License (to be provided to the office or priest prior to the rehearsal). Please check with your local civil authorities for the requirements.
- ▲ The wedding bands. Please bring at rehearsal.
- ▲ The marriage crowns or "stephana". They are placed on your heads during the wedding ceremony. They may be purchased or you may make them yourselves. The crowns are joined with a 3' white ribbon. Please bring to the rehearsal.
- ▲ The church cantor does not need to be contacted directly.
- ▲ Two white candles 18"-24" in length.

Optional Items

- ▲ Floral arrangements may be set up one hour prior to the ceremony. Pew arrangements or bows may be used provided they are attached in a way that does not mar the wood and they must be removed following the Sacrament.
- ▲ A runner may be used (usually provided by the florist).

Photographs & Video

Photographs & video recordings of your wedding ceremony are permitted, as long as they do not impede or distract from the Sacrament. Photographers should not be conspicuous about what they are doing. The priest should be consulted prior to the ceremony and will inform them of the procedures to be followed. Cameras used by family members should be discouraged in church during the Sacrament. Photographers should be aware that they must dress in a manner befitting a church.

Wedding Day Items

Among the many items the bride and groom will want to bring to the wedding ceremony, from a religious standpoint the following are required:

- ▲ Stephana (Crowns of Marriage)
- ▲ Rings for the bride and the groom
- ▲ Two white candles
- ▲ Civil marriage license

Clergy Guests

- ▲ Guest clergy may participate in the wedding ceremony in the Orthodox Church. If they are Orthodox Christian clergy in communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, there are no hindrances. If they are non-Orthodox Christian clergy, the following are to be observed:
 - ▲ They do not take part in any of the liturgical parts of the ceremony.
 - ▲ They will be given a designated position on the Solea of the church or in the first pew.
 - ▲ At the conclusion of the Orthodox ceremony, they may be acknowledged, may read a suitable prayer, and may address brief words of good wishes to the couple and guests. Non-Orthodox elements may not be added or incorporated within the Orthodox Wedding Ceremony. These include religious songs and prayers from other traditions, poems, recitations, musical numbers, vows and the like.