

Preparing and Planning a Wedding

18 Months – Contact the Priest, book the Church

Before you make any other wedding plans, contact the parish where you plan to be married. Most parishes require at least six months notice prior to the wedding. It's essential to meet with the priest of the parish as soon as possible to discuss your plans and book the church.

If you wish a Priest whom you know to perform your ceremony, this will also need to be discussed by the priest of the parish to grant permission for use of the church.

Inter Church and Inter Faith Marriages will require further permissions and couples should meet with their priest as early as possible to discuss their requirements.

12 Months – Music, Marriage Preparation Course

Now that you have agreed the date with your Priest and arranged the Church it might be a good time to discuss with him the music for your Ceremony and booking the Musicians.

It is also a good time to discuss with the priest your plans for attending a marriage preparation course. Your priest will advise you on the type of marriage preparation he wishes you to undertake. A lot of couples live together before they get married and presume that they have nothing to learn from attending a course. They can get caught up in the build-up to the big day and lose sight of why they are getting married. A marriage preparation course gives couples time to focus on their relationship and to become aware of some potential problem areas which may benefit from discussion. Attending a marriage preparation course should be a really positive experience for you and your spouse.

9 Months – Attend the Marriage Preparation Course, Paperwork

The Catholic Church out of a duty of care for those choosing to get married in the Catholic Church offer marriage preparation courses throughout all Dioceses. Upwards of 7000 couples attend these ACCORD Catholic Marriage Care Service courses on an annual basis. ACCORD has been involved in the provision of this service for over 50 years and in most cases, the courses are conducted by married couples.

Meet with your priest to prepare the paperwork. The Pre Nuptial inquiry form has to be completed by both parties in the presence of their priest.

6 Months – State Notification, Mass Booklet, Music

Notify the state of your intention to marry 3 months notice is required

Meet with the priest to discuss the readings and the Mass Booklet

Meet with the Musicians to discuss the choice of music for the Ceremony

3 Months – Mass Booklet

Finalise the Mass Booklet

For Irish couples celebrating a church wedding abroad

a) Get your church documents early

Catholics living in Ireland but having a church wedding in another country must have their wedding documents prepared in the home parish and sent to the bishop's office abroad. Pre-marriage course certificate should be one that is approved by your home diocese.

b) Have your Pre-marriage course certificate authenticated

Many parishes abroad want your certificate to be authenticated by the priest responsible for your pre-marriage course, and stamped with a seal. To avoid complications, if marrying in Italy, France, Spain, Croatia or Poland, ask for your certificate to be sealed by the priest directing your marriage course.



Photograph of the restored Marriage Window in Halston Street Church. Here we see the priest blessing the newly married couple. With their hands joined together and gently bound in the sacramental stole, he prays in these or similar words

"what God joins together man must not separate. May the Lord confirm the consent that you have given, and enrich you with his blessings."