

# PLANNING YOUR WEDDING *day*



Archdiocese  
OF Wellington

Guidelines and information for engaged couples,  
as they prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of  
Marriage in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas.



# Kia ora!

Welcome to this guide on planning your Catholic wedding day in New Zealand or overseas.

As you make plans for your wedding day, there will be a number of things to check off your list. Please allow at least 6 months to complete the Catholic marriage preparation requirements outlined in this guide.

Every wedding is unique, and your situation will differ from that of other couples, making this guide not a one-size-fits-all solution. There may be things that crop up in the planning of your wedding ceremony that you'll want to discuss. Your Officiating Priest, Marriage Celebrant, Parish Secretary and Archdiocesan Marriage Ministry Staff are all there to help you.

For more information, please welcome to contact:

Marriage Ministry - Church Mission Team  
Archdiocese of Wellington  
**[marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz)**  
**(04) 496 1719**

**Website:**  
**[www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/](http://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/)**

**Facebook:**  
**[www.facebook.com/marriageadw](http://www.facebook.com/marriageadw)**

## CONTENTS

### SECTION 1

Getting married in the Catholic Church  
What you need to know

### SECTION 2

International Weddings

### SECTION 3

Marriage preparation programmes

### SECTION 4

Civil requirements in New Zealand  
Civil requirements for overseas  
weddings

### SECTION 5

Your ceremony

# Getting married in the Catholic Church

## What you need to know...

- The first thing a couple needs to do is to contact the local Priest or Parish Priest or Parish Office where you live and make an appointment to see your local Priest/Parish Priest/Marriage Celebrant.
- You must ensure you have a Priest/Marriage Celebrant who has agreed to officiate your wedding.
- You must book the Church where you wish to marry. Some churches require this booking one year in advance of your wedding date. It is important to check with your Priest/Marriage Celebrant before you set the date for your wedding as some churches require you to sign an agreement and pay a deposit.
- The Catholic Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Forms for each person marrying are to be completed by the couple with a Priest/Marriage Celebrant present to guide you. You will need to provide:
  - A Baptismal Certificate for marriage purposes. This is to be issued from the place of baptism within 6 months of the proposed marriage date.
  - Confirmation details, if not recorded alongside baptismal details (a separate certificate or copy).
- If you are marrying a non-Catholic, your Priest/Marriage Celebrant will ask you, as the Catholic party, to sign a specific form. It is a simple process. Any necessary permissions and dispensations will be handled accordingly. Your Priest/Marriage Celebrant understands that you may have questions and aims to make this process as friendly and stress-free as possible.
- Enrol in a Marriage Preparation Course (see Section 3 of this booklet).

## SECTION 2

# International Weddings



### ARRANGING FOR A DOSSIER TRANSFER OF YOUR PRE-NUPTIAL ENQUIRY PAPERS TO ANOTHER COUNTRY FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

- Whether you are planning to get married in New Zealand or overseas, it is essential to reach out to your Priest as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to complete the Pre-Nuptial marriage documents.
- Please see your Parish Priest to fill out the required pre-nuptial enquiry papers and necessary dispensations for your wedding. These papers will be passed to the Vicar General at the Marriage Vicariate at the Wellington Archdiocesan Office for processing. They will then be sent to the diocesan offices in the country and city where your wedding is to take place.
- Your marriage documents should be prepared in the location where you currently reside.
- The completed marriage documents will be sent by your Priest to the Vicar General, Monsignor Gerard Burns, in the Archdiocese of Wellington. The Vicar General will then provide any further documentation required and send overseas to the Bishop's representative (either the Vicar General or Vicar for Marriages) in the Diocese's Chancery Office where your wedding is scheduled to take place.
- Once received, these documents will be forwarded to the Priest/Marriage Celebrant who will be officiating your wedding ceremony.

**Please allow at least 6 months for this entire process.**

- The shipping cost of this service will be on-charged to the couple after the documents have been delivered.

For support with this process please contact your local parish office or the Coordinator for Marriage Ministries, [marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz) (04) 496 1719

## SECTION 3

# Marriage Preparation Programmes



**ENROL NOW**

Our aim is to support you in making your marriage the best possible.

Couples are offered to choose one option from three marriage preparation pathways which are mentioned below.

### **Option 1: Love is a Decision (LIAD) & COMMIT programmes**

LIAD is a group in person programme run over two consecutive Sundays in Wellington. Presented by a married couple covering topics such as, family of origin, communication, shared values, managing conflict and the Sacrament of marriage. It is open to couples of all faiths and beliefs. COMMIT is an inventory-based programme conducted over two sessions prior to participating in the LIAD course. It is an opportunity for a couple to reflect on their relationship at a moment in time, identifying strengths, challenges and areas of growth. This is the beginning of your marriage preparation. COMMIT can be scheduled with a Marriage Educator at your convenience. The cost for this option is \$130.00 per couple.

### **Option 2: Smart Loving**

This course is an online Catholic marriage preparation course for engaged couples where one or both partners cannot attend a face-to-face course. It consists of 9 self-directed modules and takes about 1 week per module to complete. A certificate of completion is issued at the end. The cost is AUD \$99.00 <https://smartloving.org/wellington>

### **Option 3: Engaged Encounter weekend**

The weekend “away from it all” gives couples an opportunity to form a closer bond with each other and create a solid foundation for a happy future. It runs from Saturday 8am to Sunday 4pm. The cost for this experience is \$180.00 per couple.

Further details and registration are available via the link below:

[www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/](http://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/)  
or contact: [marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz)

# 2024 Course Dates and Information

## LOVE IS A DECISION & COMMIT

When you book for the “Love is a Decision” course, you will automatically be booked for the COMMIT Programme. An Archdiocesan Marriage Education facilitator will contact you to discuss a suitable time and place to meet to complete the COMMIT step prior to beginning your LIAD Course. We suggest you enroll for a course well in advance of your wedding date just in case of illness or needing to defer and to avoid the busyness leading up to your wedding. This course is also helpful in planning elements of your ceremony.

## COURSE DATES

- March 3 & 10
- June 2 & 9
- September 8 & 15
- November 3 & 10
- Venue: Wellington area (confirmed closer to the date of the course).
- Times: 10.00am – 4.00pm
- Cost: \$130 per couple

Book online at: <https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/>

Or contact: [marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz) or (04) 496 1719.



## ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

A weekend course to plan your marriage. Quality time with your partner. Real life experience shared by married couples. Relationship education and communication tools.

## COURSE DATES

- 16 & 17 March
  - 27 & 28 July
  - 19 & 20 October
- Venue: TBC

To book contact Simon and Kate Olsen: 027 486 0700 or [engagedencounterwellington@gmail.com](mailto:engagedencounterwellington@gmail.com) [www.cee-wellington.co.nz](http://www.cee-wellington.co.nz)

# The Catholic Church congratulates you on your decision to marry

Our aim is to give you knowledge and skills in order that you might make your marriage the best possible. The transition from single life or a cohabiting relationship to marriage is an exciting and challenging one. Working as a team your priest and the marriage educators will:

- Offer you some insight into the dynamics of intimate relationships.
- Provide an understanding of the Sacramental nature of Christian marriage.
- Take a realistic look at the challenges of commitment and offer you some strategies for success.
- Establish the concept of lifelong relationship education.
- If you are preparing for a second time marriage there are specific issues you will be facing. An experienced couple can work with you in your marriage preparation to address these issues.

## Parish Programmes

Some parishes have developed their own marriage preparation programmes. Sessions are held with the engaged couple and cover aspects of marriage.

Contact phone numbers for these parishes are as follows:

### SOUTH ISLAND

#### **Star of the Sea Parish**

03 578 0038 Blenheim, Kaikoura and Picton

#### **Our Lady of the Bays**

03 544 8987 Richmond, Motueka, Takaka, Waimea West and Wakefield

#### **Holy Family Parish**

03 539 1251 Nelson and Stoke

### WAIRARAPA – WELLINGTON

**Catholic Parish of Wairarapa** 06 378 2028

**DIFFERENT LANGUAGES** If you would like your marriage preparation to be presented in your first language, please contact us to discuss options available.

All courses in this  
brochure are approved  
and supported by the  
Archbishop of  
Wellington.

# Civil requirements in New Zealand

## GETTING A MARRIAGE LICENCE

Before you get married, you need to apply for a marriage licence. This confirms it's legal for you to marry. A marriage licence costs \$150.

- You need to arrange your licence at least 3 working days before you get married.
- It expires after 3 months.
- Your Priest/Marriage Celebrant will officiate your marriage and is 'the celebrant'. Priests/Marriage Celebrants in New Zealand are registered celebrants with the Department of Internal Affairs. To check if your Priest/Marriage Celebrant is registered, please ask them, if you are unsure. The Vicar General will be able to help with this if any further information is needed.
- Only one of you need to complete the application, but they need all the correct information about the both of you.
- Apply online.

More information on how to apply for a civil marriage is at this link:

**[www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/getting-married/get-a-marriage-licence/](http://www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/getting-married/get-a-marriage-licence/)**



# Civil requirements for overseas weddings

## CERTIFICATE OF NO IMPEDIMENT (CONI)

Some countries will ask you for a document that proves you are not already married in New Zealand. In New Zealand, this document is called a 'Certificate of no impediment to marriage', other countries might call it something different. The Department of Internal Affairs can help you with this.

## Your ceremony

Your ceremony is the most important aspect of your wedding as it is here that you declare your love and commitment to each other for the rest of your lives in the sight of your family, friends and God. Marriage is a life long commitment and the time you take to prepare your marriage ceremony will bring you lasting memories of a wonderful day.

- It is always important to plan your wedding ceremony in conjunction with the Priest/Marriage Celebrant who is officiating and celebrating your wedding.
- It is also important to choose readings, hymns and prayers that are meaningful to both of you.
- Including family members in your liturgy from both sides of the family is important as you are to become one family.

For more information about planning your wedding ceremony, please talk to your officiating Priest/Marriage Celebrant. The following links may help with your planning.

**[www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-with-mass.htm](http://www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-with-mass.htm)**

**[www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-outside-mass.htm](http://www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-outside-mass.htm)**

**[www.togetherforlifeonline.com/catholic-wedding-ceremony/](http://www.togetherforlifeonline.com/catholic-wedding-ceremony/)** (this book is used in the USA and may differ to current NZ customary practices. Please check with your Priest/Marriage Celebrant about your particular circumstances and wedding ceremony planning).



## Notes

## Notes



May your love for each other reflect  
the enduring love of *Christ*  
for his Church.

As you face the future together,  
keep in mind that the

*Sacrament of Marriage*  
unites you with *Christ*

and brings you, through the years,  
the GRACE and BLESSING of God our Father.

(Blessings for Couples)