



PLANNING YOUR WEDDING *day*

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



Kia ora!

Congratulations! The Catholic Church delights in your decision to marry.

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 contact:

Marriage Ministry - Church Mission Team
Archdiocese of Wellington
marriage@cadw.nz
(04) 496 1719
www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/

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Getting Married in the Catholic Church

What you need to know...

- The first thing a couple needs to do is to contact your local Parish Office and make an appointment to see your local Priest/Parish Priest.
- You must ensure you have a Priest/ 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. (Please note this is different to an original certificate issued at the time of Baptism.)
 - 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 2 of this booklet).

SECTION 2

Marriage Preparation Programmes

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



ENROL NOW

Love is a Decision (LIAD) & COMMIT programme

These two steps are designed to be completed together and take place in person in Wellington. LIAD is a group course over two consecutive Sundays from 10am to 4pm, while COMMIT can be scheduled with a Marriage Educator by arrangement. The cost for this is \$150.00 per couple.

We urge couples to register for a course that is well in advance of their intended wedding date, to allow for time and space to reflect on your relationship and your future together before the busyness excitement of the lead up to the wedding celebration. It also means that should either of you find you cannot attend the course you're booked for there is another course to attend before your wedding.

For course dates, further details and registration visit the link below, or by QR code.

www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/marriage-ministries/

or contact: marriage@cadw.nz



Marriage Preparation Programmes

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



ENROL NOW

Smart Loving (9-week Online, Self-Directed course)

This course is available for members of our Archdiocese who live in the South Island, or exceptional circumstances that mean you cannot attend our courses together. Together as a couple, work through the course on your own. We urge couples to be intentional about making time in your schedule to spend time on this course.

Consider it like a regular date night and make it an intentional commitment. think of ways to make it fun, perhaps with a special meal so that is an enjoyable and relaxed experience built around quality time together.

If you live in separate time zones, consider how you might discuss the course topics together. It would maximise the experience if you can complete the course work together, if the time zone difference makes it difficult, plan to make some time throughout the 9 weeks to discuss the more challenging or important topics.

To get started with SmartLoving please contact the Archdiocesan Marriage Coordinator, marriage@cadw.nz

Getting Married Overseas?

Arranging for a Transfer of your Pre-Nuptial Enquiry papers to another country for your wedding

Whether you are planning to get married in New Zealand or overseas, it is essential to reach out to your local Priest as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to complete the Pre-Nuptial marriage documents.

Your marriage documents should be prepared in the diocese where you currently live, a priest from your local parish here will assist you.

The completed marriage documents will be sent by your Priest to the Vicar General, in the Archdiocese of Wellington. The Vicar General will then provide any further documentation required and send overseas to the Bishop's representative 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.**

There is an administrative cost for preparing and sending papers. This includes the delivery costs of sending via international courier. We will advise you whether your destination is Tier 1 or 2 beforehand.

Tier 1 is \$100.00 Total

Tier 2 is \$150 Total

(These charges are effective from 1 January 2026)

This can be paid to the Archdiocesan bank account. Please be advised that this fee needs to be paid and confirmed before papers are to be prepared.

Bank account name: Archdiocese of Wellington;

Bank account number: 02 0536 0003306 00

Reference: one of your surnames

Code: MPIC

any queries about this process can be directed to marriage@cadw.org.nz

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/



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.

Plan your wedding ceremony in conjunction with the Priest/Marriage Celebrant who is officiating and celebrating your wedding.

It is also important to choose prayers, readings, hymns and other music, that are meaningful to both of you and suit the joy-filled and prayerful celebration and sacred space of the Church.

Continued in this section is guidance on what to consider when planning your liturgy.



Liturgy Planning

The Ceremony's Form Selection

Select either a Nuptial Mass (which entails the Eucharist's celebration) or a wedding ceremony that does not include a Mass. This criterion may be more appropriately determined on the basis of the couple's and their families' religious backgrounds.

Choosing Readings and Prayers

Choose scriptural readings that resonate with your relationship. This usually consists of an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, a New Testament reading, and a Gospel passage. Work with your priest to incorporate appropriate prayers and blessings.

Participation of Family and Friends

Including family members in your liturgy from both sides of the family is important as you are to become one family. Involving both Catholic and non-Catholic family is a wonderful way in which to include them in the celebration. Ask family and friends to take part by doing proclamations, leading the Prayers of the Faithful, or bringing forward the gifts during the Offertory.

Rituals and Symbols Vows and Rings:

Get ready to declare your consent and exchange rings as symbols of your commitment. The Catholic Church has set formulas for the vows that the bride and groom say; however, if you want to personalise your vows, talk with your priest about doing so.



Liturgy Planning

Incorporating Cultural Customs

New Zealand weddings often feature the lighting of family and unity candles. Talk with your priest about including these or other cultural rites or symbols to ensure they mesh with what is suitable within this prayerful setting. Similarly you may wish to express certain wording in other languages.

Choosing Liturgical Music

Select hymns and instrumental music that enhance the occasion's holiness. Ensure that all selections are in keeping with the prayerful nature of the ceremony and the sacred space of the Church.

Church Environment

Although it is welcomed to enhance the beauty of the church, ensure that embellishments respect the sacred space, please discuss with your priest /Office parish plans of flowers, candles, and other adornments. Ensure the sanctity of the ceremony is maintained by upholding guidelines related to photography and videography.

Rehearsal Planning

Involve all participants in the rehearsal to guarantee familiarity with roles - yours and theirs - that ensures a ceremony's smooth execution when it counts.



Your Ceremony

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

www.catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/order-wedding-outside-mass.htm

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).

If you are going to be attending the Archdiocese's Marriage Course - Love is a Decision you will receive a copy of 'Together for Life'.





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.

