

ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL WEDDING

THE REHEARSAL:

- Be sure to set the time for the rehearsal along with the wedding date itself.
- Be sure the timing for the rehearsal and the time for a rehearsal dinner are both considered.

THE WEDDING:

- Choosing the date for the wedding often depends on the reception arrangements. Make sure you know what/when/where the reception will be.
- Do you know what type of service you want?
- Is it a full ceremony as in a Catholic mass or without?
- Figure out the overall timing of the events and layout a timeline so that you know that all your expectations can happen.
- Be sure to have all agreements in writing such that if there is conflict; you know that you have the information correct. This is a big event and mistakes do happen.
- Be sure to understand all expectations for the wedding and reception. Put as much in writing as possible so expectations are clearly communicated. Church's often have wedding coordinators. Knowing requirements early can greatly help Ensure you understand/agree on rules/customs/etc.
- Be sure to have needed information in time to get invitations ordered and received. Identify key people to proof names/spellings etc. Don't assume! Allow time to address & mail them by the appropriate time. It is never too early to make the invitees list. Be sure you have the latest addresses for everyone and that exactly who you are inviting is clearly indicated. Making the decisions on who is invited can be one of the most grueling parts of the wedding planning.
- Know what is available to you and what is acceptable to bring into the church, i.e. church bows, musicians, vocalists, photography, etc.
- Know when things can be brought to the church, i.e. can special candles, ring bearer pillows, bows, etc. be brought to the rehearsal and left for the wedding day or do they have to be brought on the day of the wedding?
- What liberty/control do you have with the music?
- It is advisable for the members of the bridal party (especially the bridesmaids, maid/matron of honor, flower girl, etc. that may be getting ready or finish getting ready at the church to have a labeled bag with their name on it and to keep their things together. After the ceremony is over, everyone will be going in different directions, especially if the reception is not in the same location and it is difficult for someone else to determine what is whose and can take away attention needed or wanted toward the wedding couple or other aspects of the event.
- Determine whether you will be leaving or taking the flowers from the church/wedding facility after the wedding. Some places do not allow you to leave the flowers.
- Determine whether you will have a program for the wedding and do your planning as you go.
- Will you have real or silk flowers at the wedding and at the reception?
- Do you want candles or other remembrances to be part of the wedding décor for family members that are deceased, overseas, or otherwise not able to physically be there?
- When choosing the wedding party; consider where they are located and how they can be measured and fitted for dresses and tuxes. Communicate also how they will have to be paid for and how and when those transactions will take place.
- Be sure of who will have the wedding rings to the wedding.

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THE RECEPTION:

- How far is the reception from the church? Have you considered the time it takes to get there?
- Is it catered for you? Are you providing the refreshments or meal? Does the caterer provide the dishes, glassware, napkins, silverware, serving items? Be sure to sit down and go through a thorough list of what they provide so that you know that it is all "covered" Don't assume anything! Write it down.
- If you are providing anything for the receptions, when can items be brought to the facility? It can often be only hours before the reception. Do you have support to assist with that such that you will be able to focus on the wedding?
- Will you have a D.J.? Do they know what type of music you want played and when. Will the bridal party be introduced? Do you know who will be introduced? Provide that information including "how to pronounce" names to the D.J. in advance. Be sure that the D.J. knows what special requests you have and how you want them to be introduced/explained.
- Do you have a florist? Make sure they know when and where the various arrangements need to be. Be sure to have them label corsages, boutonnieres and who they go to . **Be sure** if flowers are required to be integrated with things like a wedding cake at the reception that **it is clear to someone at the facility.**
- Will you need to provide centerpieces, table cloths, chair covers, etc. When can they be set up?
- Will you have candles on the tables? Who will make sure they are lit? Do the candles require water (floating?) Do candles have to be drip less?
- Will you have favors at the tables? How are you going to provide them? Who will be getting them placed on the tables?
- Will you have a seating chart? Will you use place cards? Do you have any special needs or issues to deal with relative to seating? Do you have provisions for anyone with special needs?
- Do you have specific people you want to be involved in the event?
- Do you have special books, albums, photo mats, etc. that you want signed at the wedding? Do you have special "acid free" pens to write with?
- If you have special requests for how things are arranged at the reception, you can make samples, show layouts, settings, etc. with pictures and provide to caterer or those helping you get ready.
- Will you have bird seed, bubbles, etc. Be sure to know what is allowed where you will be. Where will these be placed and in what type of container?
- Did you want balloons? Make sure balloons are allowed in the location you want. Some places with very high ceilings will not allow balloons.
- Will you have special glasses for a toast, special knife to cut the cake? Who will be sure they are retained for the bride and groom after the reception?
- Will a cake be brought in from a bakery or other third party? Be sure it is clear where the cake is going and if there is anything to incorporate with the cake; as in cake topper or flower arrangements.
- It is often nice to have pictures of the bride and groom as they have grown up as part of the décor. Consider that ahead of time such that pictures can be located, copied, framed, etc.
- Do you plan to have liquor served? Will that be part of your reception location/hall? Will you be responsible for providing it? Do you need to identify the bartender. Does the bartender provide the glasses, condiments, etc. or do you?
- Determine where the wedding party will be sitting and who the wedding party consists of. Will the wedding party have spouses or significant others joining them?

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OTHER AREAS:

- Have a list of businesses, contacts, phone numbers and addresses in case something does not happen or show-up as planned. Someone else may need to get in touch and determine a status of where things are.
- Photographs: Determine ahead of time if you have special pictures you want taken at the wedding and reception. Make sure these wishes are written down and that someone (photography preferably) knows what they are in advance. You will not remember many things you have planned on the day of the wedding.
- Make hotel arrangements for out of town guests. You can usually get a discount rate for a minimum number of guest staying at the same hotel.
- Make sure you are clear on who is paying for things that need to be settled the day of the wedding.
- Determine how the bride and groom are getting from the wedding to the reception (if not in the same location) and how they will be leaving from the reception.
- If bride and groom are leaving from the reception with gowns, tuxes, etc. Determine if someone needs to make arrangements to retrieve them if they will be leaving to go out of town.
- Make sure if someone needs to get luggage to bride and groom at end of wedding such that they will have it to leave with.
- Determine if bride and groom will be taking a "to go bag" of food with them. Bride and grooms often do not get to eat much at their own wedding.