



ST. JOHN XXIII  
CATHOLIC PARISH

WEST HAVEN, CT

WEDDING & MARRIAGE  
PREPARATION GUIDE



*“There was a wedding in Cana...and Jesus...had also been invited...”*

*—John 2:1-2*

Congratulations! We are honored that you have chosen to celebrate this important day with Saint John XXIII Parish, West Haven. This guide aims to give you some basic information in your preparation to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage.

## Marriage Preparation

In accordance with the policy of the Archdiocese of Hartford, a minimum of 6 months is required for marriage preparation.

### Preliminary Interview & Overview of Marriage Preparation

A Preliminary Interview will be administered by the priest or deacon to declare freedom to marry followed by an overview of Marriage Preparation. Once a Preliminary Interview is administered by the priest or deacon and you have furnished the following certificates:

- Certificate of Baptism\*
- Certificate of First Communion
- Certificate of Confirmation

the date and time of your wedding may be reserved with the priest or deacon. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is requested to reserve the date.

If you are not a parishioner of Saint John XXIII Parish, West Haven, a letter from the pastor of your parish granting permission for the wedding to take place in Saint John XXIII Parish (*Saint Louis Church or Saint John Vianney Church*) will be required. A parishioner is determined by domicile (*resident of the City of West Haven*) or if one is officially registered to the parish (*whether resident of the City of West Haven or not*).

\*NOTE: The Certificate of Baptism must be recently issued (*within 6 months of the wedding date*). You can obtain the certificates from the parish(es) where you received these sacraments. You need not obtain certificates for any sacrament you have received within Saint John XXIII Parish, West Haven (*includes Saint Louis Church, Saint John Vianney Church, the former Saint Lawrence Church, the former Our Lady of Victory Church or the former Saint Paul Church*).

## Online Marriage Preparation Program

*Better Together* by Dynamic Catholic is the online marriage preparation program. To register for the program visit: [www.hartfordmarriage.com](http://www.hartfordmarriage.com) and follow the steps indicated on the website. Dynamic Catholic will email you the sessions on Thursdays which take about one hour per week for six weeks. Once you have completed the six sessions a certificate of completion will be emailed to you. Print the certificate or forward the email to the priest or deacon to let him know you have completed the preparation. This program is free of charge. There is no cost to you.

## Together for Life Booklet

Once Marriage Preparation has been completed, the Offering and the Marriage License will be requested at this time. A wedding rehearsal will be scheduled if it has not been discussed earlier. Selections made from the *Together for Life* Booklet provided to you will be reviewed. Then the *Pre-Marital Investigation* (PMI) will be administered. The next meeting will be the wedding rehearsal followed by the Wedding.

## Rehearsals

Our wedding rehearsals are normally scheduled the evening before the wedding. Please be sure your wedding party is ON TIME because there may be other rehearsals or liturgical ceremonies following.

## Marriage License

In accordance with law, a marriage license must be acquired from the city/town in which the ceremony will take place.



City of West Haven | Office of the City Clerk

355 Main Street, 1st Floor | Tel. (203) 937-3535

[www.cityofwesthaven.com](http://www.cityofwesthaven.com)

It is recommended that you bring the marriage license to the Parish Office as soon as you receive it from the City Clerk's Office up to the date of your last meeting with the priest or deacon. We will keep it with your records and return the signed license to City Hall following your wedding. Please note that it is illegal for a priest or deacon to officiate a wedding without this license. If you have already exchanged vows before a civil official, a copy of the civil marriage certificate will be requested.

### Parish Offering

The parish offering for the wedding is \$750. This amount includes the \$50 deposit, the *Together for Life* booklet, the music provided by a liturgical musician, the rehearsal, as well as the wedding ceremony in the church. Checks should be made out to: "Saint John XXIII Parish" with your names and the date of your wedding on the lower left-hand side of the check.

If you have exchanged vows in the presence of a civil official or in the presence of a minister from other religious traditions and are seeking to bring your marriage to the Church in a brief ceremony (*Liturgy of the Word*) with witnesses and immediate family, with no rehearsal or music, the parish offering for a simple convalidation is \$200. You will be notified should any changes be made in the requested offering.

### Music

Contact information for the liturgical musician will be provided to you by our Parish Office to schedule a consultation. Special musical requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and approval is determined by its suitability for the occasion and availability. If needed, a special request fee of \$50 will be added to the offering to cover the cost of the purchase of the music as well as rehearsal time. Special requests must be submitted no less than 8 weeks in advance of the wedding date. We request that you consult with and seek the liturgical musician's approval regarding choices of music

and the use of outside musicians and/or soloists. “Please note that everything [including music] in the ceremony should contribute to the awareness of the sacred character of the Sacrament. The music used in the ceremony should be in conformity with the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Hartford.” (*Sacramental Guidelines of Archdiocese of Hartford*) Therefore secular music is appropriate in the context of your wedding reception.

### Flowers, Runners & Pew Decorations

These are not required, but if desired it is your responsibility. Delivery of flowers to the church should be arranged with our Parish Office at least one week before the wedding. The Saint Louis Church main aisle is 100 feet long from the inside door to the altar with 25 pews on each side. The Saint John Vianney Church main aisle is 50 feet long from the courtyard glass doors to the altar with 14 pews on each side. Only artificial flower petals can be used if being dropped on the floor in St. Louis Church, due to the damage real flower petals incur on the carpet. Real flower petals can be used in St. John Vianney Church since it is not carpeted. Pew decorations may be used without tape. The runner, pew decorations, and/or flower petals must be removed after the wedding ceremony. Please make arrangements for someone to do this beforehand.

### Receiving Line

A receiving line may be in the back of the church or outside. There is to be no throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, etc. or blowing of bubbles due to safety concerns.

### Candid/Video Photographers

These should not interfere with the liturgy or in any way unduly delay the ceremony. They are welcome but should conduct themselves in a way conducive to the sacred character of the celebration. They are not allowed to enter the sanctuary of the church.

## Church Address

For the purpose of wedding invitations so that your guests may arrive to your wedding, the following are the physical addresses of the churches of our parish:

Saint Louis Church  
of Saint John XXIII Parish  
89 Bull Hill Ln  
West Haven, CT 06516

Saint John Vianney Church  
of Saint John XXIII Parish  
300 Captain Thomas Blvd  
West Haven, CT 06516

## Online Resources

The following are online resources to assist you in preparing and planning your wedding:

- For Your Marriage: [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)
- Marriage and Family Life Ministries (*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*): <https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries>
- Archdiocesan Office for Marriage & Family Life: [www.hartfordmarriage.com](http://www.hartfordmarriage.com)
- Better Together: [www.dynamiccatholic.com/better-together](http://www.dynamiccatholic.com/better-together)

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in the above matters. It is our hope that your love for each other will grow stronger as the days and years go by. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at Saint John XXIII Parish Office (203) 934-5249. May God bless you now and always!





## Prayer for an Engaged Couple

Lord Jesus Christ,

we give you thanks for the love we share,  
and for bringing us together.

Teach us to prepare for our wedding  
by an increase of love towards each other,  
by an increase of generosity to others  
and by the prayers we make for a long and happy life together.

Bless all those who are helping us to prepare for our wedding.

Keep us good-humored and joyful as the day draws near.

May Mary, our Mother, and Saint Joseph  
keep us always in love with each other.

Teach us to live as you did and to love Christ with great devotion  
all the days of our life together. Amen.